

Putting the needs of trans* students on the agenda

I've campaigned for the School to expand its gender neutral facilities and this year won a new gender neutral toilet in the library. I am now working with the School's Diversity Advisor to establish if there are any other gendered single-cubicle toilets which can be de-gendered so that anyone can use them.

The School has agreed to look at how to improve the admin system for trans* and non-binary students by either introducing the title Mx as a new option or by removing all gendered titles. This will be implemented with the next admin system update and I will be pushing for this to happen as soon as possible.

SOAS marked Trans* Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on 20th November by promoting why trans* issues are important to SOAS and a series of messages from across the School's community were projected in the JCR throughout the afternoon. A candle-lit vigil was held on the steps in the evening with an excellent talk from Nate Reidy on trans* history. A large number of SOAS later attended the London TDOR event at ULU to remember those trans* people who have been murdered or taken their own lives in the past year. Thank you to the many people who were involved with organising this and who came along.

I'm currently working with the School to achieve a 'Gender Charter Mark', which recognises the work done towards gender equality, and am helping with their submission on trans* people at SOAS.

Pushing for the School to support LGBTQ students

In February, I presented a paper to SOAS' Equality and Diversity Committee, co-written by myself and Co-President Welfare and Campaigns Leah Edwards, which recommended the introduction of diversity monitoring for sexual orientation and gender identity so we can monitor the retention and attainment of LGBTQ students and identify any access barriers. Similar information is collected about ethnicity, disability and gender and is a key tool in identifying areas where SOAS is not providing enough support for students to fulfil their academic potential or ensuring their welfare. I'll be continuing to pressure SOAS to introduce this as soon as possible.

Myself and Leah have also been speaking to the School about ensuring that hardship funding is available to LGBTQ students in need and that there is more targeted information provided on the School's website about the support available.

As part of improving the experience of year abroad students, me, Leah and David, Co-President Democracy and Education, are in discussions with the School about what advice needs to be provided to LGBTQ students and how the Students' Union can better support them.

For LGBTQ History Month, SOAS agreed to fly a rainbow flag. The School only agreed to do this last year after many years of us fighting for it, including students breaking onto the roof and flying a flag themselves in 2012.

Organising more socials and events

Freshers' week saw both a social in the bar and a coffee afternoon. Unfortunately, I have not been able to organise as many socials as I had hoped but I will try to ensure more are planned next year. The end of term coffee afternoon was well attended and I will be organise events over the summer for Masters students working on their dissertations.

At the end of LGBTQ History Month we held a party and hopefully we can do more things to bring together our community in the year ahead.

Stamping out harassment

Leah, the Women's Society President Ella and I launched a research project into harassment at SOAS so that we can identify the nature and extent of the issues we face on campus. Going forward we hope to be able to analyse and present our findings and work towards a more visible reporting procedure for harassment.

Alongside this I have represented the Students' Union's liberation officer on the School's Equality and Diversity Committee and represented SOAS at NUS LGBT Conference.