

UGM Officer Reports

10th May 2022

Sabbatical Officers

Khadijah Ankunda | Activities & Events

- Supported with the organising of Marxist Society late licence fundraiser for the Justive4Workers strike fund
- Supported Trans* Officer & LGBTQIA officers organising of the Queer Prom fundraiser- late licence for online publication oestrogenation
- Held the first part of a two part series conversation on Colourism with Black women. femmes nb&gnc folk
- Planned a conversation celebrating 6 months of Sambac Between Unlikely Skies Publication
- Running beginner DJ workshops for Black Queer folk
- Supporting with the organising of Sound design workshops for Black queer folk

- Currently planning a Yoruba Spirituality Series for this term
- Slow Fashion Market Day
- Second part conversation on colourism
- Poetry evenings
- Part of the Graduation steering group

Lucia Rodriguez-Pedroso | Democracy & Education

Hi everyone! Lately I've been busy with a variety of student queries and issues mainly about exams and some big changes to SOAS governance, as well as supporting our student body through some trying times, particularly the occupation and the strikes we experienced in term 2.

During the events that took place in late February my main concern was to support the students who were in the occupation and to oppose SOAS management in their shameful decision to forcefully evict the peaceful students who were demanding a free and decolonised education. For the duration of the occupation management proved time and time again their disdain for students welfare as well as their lack of empathy for students demands. All of us in the SU condemn their behaviour and continue to resist their push for an even more marketised education. If you'd like to get involved with campaigns and student groups who focus on this issue please send me an email so I can put you in contact.

Among some of the committees that have taken my time here are the more relevant items we discussed:

SEOC (Students Experience and Outcomes Committee)

- Exams: We discussed the format, timeframe and marking criteria for exams.
 - Exams are going to be unseen papers on which students will normally be expected to spend either 2 hours or 3 hours (each exam paper will specify).
 - 24-hour period to sit the exam, which will take into account any issues with work space, and we will ensure that there is sufficient study space on campus.

TeLSOC (Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee)

- Education Strategy Implementation Plan
 - We discussed SOAS new Education Strategy and the importance of liaising and consulting with the wider SOAS community on this, particularly students.
- Exams
 - Same as in SEOC but with some minor changes about preferred format and timeframe.
 - Highlighted the importance of accessibility and implementation of a plan for students who have SIP, which resulted in this policy:
 - For any student that is entitled to Special Exam Arrangements (SEA), the normal adjustment for the exams will be an additional 12 hours. Any student with a SIP will therefore have a 36-hour window in which to complete the exam.

Academic Board (AB)

- Changes to SOAS's Academic Governance
 - SOAS is planning on changing some of its academic governance structures, mainly what it is now the Senate and Academic Board.
 - The new two bodies are going to have different responsibilities as stated in the recommendations. One will be the higher body for academic decision making in the School while the other is a wider forum for academics to participate and discuss matters of importance to their community.
 - Students participating in both of these spaces was one of our priorities and managed to secure seats for them in both of these spaces.
- Emergency Taught Regulations
 - SOAS is considering pushing through changes to degree regulations that will allow exam boards to continue marking without the presence of external examiners (normally required as second markers), and change the number of award & progression requirements for students to pass and progress, including reducing the number of credits required for students to pass in 'exceptional circumstances'.
 - These moves ultimately devalue degrees and quality assurance - two things that SOAS is usually very concerned about.
 - We understand that these actions in "exceptional circumstances" are in line with the sector but we're concerned that if universities start breaking the mutually-interdependent nature of degree certification and quality assurance,

they open the door to further extreme marketisation of education down the line.

- If you would like to oppose this please consider [sending this email template to management](#) and continue to support our [academic staff in their strike action!](#)

Board of Trustees:

- Annual Financial Return (5 years forecast)
 - SOAS has to provide the Office for Students a forecast of our financial situation. Luckily it seems as if things are looking brighter this year in terms of the School's budget. Still transparency and accountability to the wider community are lacking and this is something that we will continue to push for.
- New Chair of the BoT Appointed, as well as two new lay trustees.

Besides committees I have also continued supporting and helping run the Students Representatives System. Among the things that are going on with Reps, here are the most relevant ones:

- Terms 2 Plenary
 - We held this at the beginning of the term to answer any questions and comments about the term ahead and how things went last year.
- In Person Social
 - We had some crisps and drinks at the SU Bar back in January which was lots of fun and are currently planning a new social for February. Hopefully we'll have one every month for reps to get together and do fun stuff beyond their own responsibilities.
- Term 1 Report
 - At the end of each term we ask reps for some feedback and make a report with this data. This then feeds into how we organise the /reps system next year.

We also held our Spring elections last term. We managed to fulfil all of our full-time sabbatical positions but there are still some [part-time voluntary positions available](#). If you're interested in having more agency in your Union and leading the change we want to see in SOAS you can put yourself forward for some of these positions!

And as you may know I act as the deputy chair for UGMs so I have been working closely with Jack to make sure our logistics are ready and that things run smoothly today.

Finally I've also been supporting students with mitigating circumstances and other academic issues as well as welfare support.

Hisham Pryce-Parchment | Equality & Liberation

No report submitted

Ella Spencer | Welfare & Campaigns

Sanctuary Scholarship proposal approved

The proposal the SU put forward to reinstate the Sanctuary Scholarship (a scheme to 'support those who might otherwise be blocked from embarking on a university degree, especially those with precarious forms of immigration status or who do not have access to Student Finance) from 2 to 7 places, increase the maintenance loan from £6000 to £12,000 and commit to accommodation support, mental health support and tailored academic support was successful! It will start in July this year. I am following up with the relevant departments to find out who will be in charge of providing the types of support specified in the proposal, getting SOAS to issue public communication about the changes to the scheme, and utilising the alumni network to fundraise for future costs as has been done in the past to make sure SOAS keeps renewing its commitment to the scholarship.

SU Sanctuary Hardship Fund

In 2019, the SU was given £10,000 from SOAS - £10 for every student that completed the NSS survey - which was intended to go towards the SU LGBTQ+ liberation campaign and to students on the Sanctuary Scholarship. From April onwards this money is now available as a hardship fund that students with unstable or unclear immigration status or those on the sanctuary scholarship can apply for.

Welfare

I am working with our Enough is Enough coordinator Heather & Hisham (Equality and Liberation sabb) on the Enough is Enough report which Heather drafted. The aim of the report is to capture the work of the project this year, the feedback we have received, and how we are incorporating feedback and expanding the project. I have also read and given feedback on the draft policy that Gendered Intelligence have drafted as part of their review of the Trans* inclusion policy at SOAS and I will be checking in on the progress of this talking to the new officer team during handover about how to make sure it is properly implemented once it becomes policy.

I have also been looking into the best way for the SU to consistently provide free welfare products (e.g. sanitary products, condoms, resources on mental and sexual health etc.) for students by reaching out to organisations and other SUs which I am waiting to hear back from.

Campaign archiving

As I have 3 months left in my term, I am prioritising archiving the history of campaigns and projects at SOAS to make sure that this knowledge is passed on and the work is continued in the future. I am focusing on the Sanctuary Scholarship, the Justice For Worker campaign, SOAS Against Surveillance & Securitisation and Trans Dignity at SOAS as these are all campaigns I have been active in and have good knowledge of. My intention is to make timelines with key moments of the

campaigns, as well as articles, photos & resources. I hope to pay someone to turn these into zines or something exciting that can be put on the SU website and printed off by students to use for their own campaigns.

Executive Officers

Mahek Arora | Academic Affairs

No report submitted

Neelam Aslam | Anti-Racism

No report submitted

Lena Koch | Campaigns

No report submitted

Ayat El-Naili | Entertainment

No report submitted

Jacynthe Roesch | Environment

This term generally has been very quiet in terms of workload for me. Since Green Week I have not been able to do very much due to my final year deadlines, however I have been on hand via email to support student with any queries and I have been in touch with a few societies I had been supporting to see how they are getting on; in terms of handing over to new members and organising activities. Unfortunately no student has put themselves forward yet to take over the environment officer role in the autumn therefore I might not be able to have a handover properly, which is something I was planning on doing this term.

Julia Soldzynski | International

No report submitted

Krizzel Mapaye | LGBTQIA+

Hello folks! As I retire from this role, I would like to break down what I have been doing through out this year.

1. As you know I was in charge of the LGBTQ+ History Month for this year and despite the controversy and lack of participation, I hope to those who participated in any events particularly the Queer Prom that they've enjoyed the events.
2. I've mostly been working behind the scenes mainly in the creation of the Trans and Non binary group chat with my fellow and great colleague, Alfie (who is the Trans* Officer)
3. Alongside helping some LGBTQ+ folks in their rights within the administration and trying to advocate for both LGBTQ+ and Disabled rights.

It has been quite a busy year at the start of this academic year and despite plenty of difficulties, I don't regret taking on this role and learning about our Student Union through it.

I know my fellow colleagues in this 2021-22 SU will have a great career wherever they go and I hope the same for everyone else in the school.

Anna L fstrand | Mature Students

No report submitted

Arianna Simonette | Part-Time Students

No report submitted

Anika Chauhan | People of Colour

No report submitted

Vasundhara Pandey | Postgraduate Taught

No report submitted

Valentine Godard & Grace Weston | Sports

No report submitted

Alfie James | Trans* & Gender Identity

No report submitted

Ellora Singh & Rbeeza Mobeen | Womxns

No report submitted

Maxine Mallon | Working Class Students

No report submitted