

## Sabbatical Officer Roles

Ben Whittle, SU President 17/18  
 Luke Myer, VP Academic Representation 17/18  
 Dan Bocharnikov, VP Activities 17/18  
 Rosie McKenna, VP Welfare 17/18  
 Molly Houghton, VP Welfare 18/19  
 (Abstain: Joe Bradford, SU President 18/19)

### The Union notes:

- 1.0 In January 2015, SU members voted to alter the **sabbatical officer roles**, removing a hierarchical faculty-based structure and creating a '**flat structure**' – where each officer was the lead of a specific remit. These remits covered student welfare, student activities, academic representation, and union development.
- 2.0 In September 2017, the SU convened a working group to examine governance structures and processes, one area of which included the sabbatical officer roles. The working group examined research into student feedback, and committed to making the 'flat structure' clearer.
- 3.0 A research group examined the context in other SUs, and the views of just under 3,000 Edge Hill students in five separate democratic and research-based exercises over three years.<sup>1</sup> The group unanimously found that there was a **lack of clarity about the role of President**, but there was **no appetite** amongst the student body for removing the existing remits.<sup>2</sup>

### The Union believes:

- 1.0 There is a lack of understanding about the 'flat structure' and the role of President.
- 2.0 There is no desire amongst the student body to remove the existing remits; Welfare issues, activities issues, union development issues, and academic representation remain essential to the union's purpose.

### The Union resolves:

- 1.0 To maintain sabbatical remits for welfare issues, union development issues, academic representation, and activities issues, with the descriptions attached.
- 2.0 To rename these roles, in line with a recommendation for a 'flat structure'.
- 3.0 That any further change to officer roles is evidence-based, through clear research into Edge Hill students' needs and priorities.

#### **Amendment:**

##### **Molly Houghton, VP Welfare 18/19**

- To add to Resolves 2.0, to 'President (REMIT).'

<sup>1</sup> 2015/16 Role of the President survey & referendum (998 views)  
 2016/17 NUS Insight – EHSU Reputation & Student Experience research (507 views)  
 2016-17 'Your Ideas' proposals to date – thematic analysis (1383 views)  
 2017 Officer Roles focus groups (14 views)

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Research Summaries

#### Breakdown

#### 2015/16 President research: survey responses

- Majority in focus groups 'felt that "Welfare, Activities, Academic Rep" gave the student body a better understanding of what their representatives were doing.'
- 67% in survey respondents did not know what the President does; 26% did.
- 72% feel there is a need for a President; 14% did not.

#### 2016/2017 NUS survey: 507

- When asked what was on their minds, 51% of students indicated that money and finance were priorities. (p.14)
- 30% of students had considered dropping out, predominately due to mental health or financial reasons. (p.20-21)

#### 2015-17 YI: 1383 (was 2649?)

Welfare	20%
Activities	3%
Academic	6%
Union	3%
Facilities	41%
Transport	3%

#### 2017: Focus Groups: 14

#### Narrative:

- Amongst students, research suggested that 72% felt there was a need for an officer with the current President remit; similarly, 51% indicated that their own priorities were welfare-based, and 30% had considered dropping out due to such issues, which were also the second-most common category of ideas suggested to the union (20%).
- Amongst Unions, research found that the most common remit-based role in comparator SUs was an Activities officer. The second-most common was an Academic officer. There was no role other than the four at EHSU which existed in significant frequency.

## **Appendix 2: Officer Role descriptions**

### **Union Development Officer**

- The SU Union Development Officer is the prime representative of the Union to the University on union development issues. They will represent the views of students to appropriate University Committees or members of staff and oversee the coordination of all Students' Union projects, campaigns and initiatives relating to union development.
- The Union Development Officer is also the Chair of the Board of Trustees and line-manages the Chief Executive, and oversees the democratic, financial, resource and strategic development of the Union along with the senior staff member.

### **Activities Officer**

- The Students' Union Activities Officer is the prime representative of the Union to the University on issues relating to student activities. They will represent the views of students to appropriate University Committees or members of staff and oversee the coordination of all Students' Union projects, campaigns and initiatives relating to all student activities.
- The Activities Officer is also the Chair of the Societies Council and Forum, the Team Edge Hill Panel and Forum, the Commercial Oversight Group and the Ethical & Environmental Committee.

### **Academic Representation Officer**

- The Students' Union Academic Representation Officer is the prime representative of the Union to the University on academic issues. They will represent the views of students to appropriate University Committees or members of staff, make representations on student academic issues to the appropriate Faculty managers and oversee the coordination of all Students' Union projects, campaigns and initiatives relating to academic issues.
- The Academic Representation Officer is also the lead representative to NUS and on national education-based campaigns, and oversees the development and support of the Student Representative system along with the Policy & Campaigns Manager.

### **Welfare & Community Officer**

- The Students' Union Welfare & Community Officer is the prime representative of the Union to the University on welfare & community issues. They will represent the views of students to appropriate University Committees & Departments, make representation on student/trainee welfare issues to the appropriate Faculty managers and oversee the coordination of all Welfare related Students' Union projects, campaigns and initiatives.
- The Welfare & Community Officer is also the Chair of the Faith Forum, the Nightline project, and the lead representative to the District Council Forum.