

AUTUMN TERM REPORTS 2011/12

STEERING GROUP

Jade Crossland

Before entering my third year I can honestly say I had little knowledge of what Union Parliament but since joining I have not stopped singing its praises. Being a third year I can't help wonder why that is. Perhaps my lack of union involvement up until half way through my second year? Either way deciding to run for a position in Parliament was one of my best university decisions so far! After a lively first Parliament and some much appreciated advice from Dan Steering Group now hold a meeting on the Thursday before parliament to check over proposals and suggest amendments. This has allowed for smoother running of Parliament. We are yet to fully take advantage of the new voting system but it seems straight forward enough. The Bye elections were good fun but I was surprised at how hard it was to get people interested. There seems to be a wariness about union parliament and a lot of misconceptions that only we can eradicate through spreading the word of how wonderful and positive it can be. Having welcomed many new international students I also took the opportunity to let them know of the glory that is a Tuesday night at parliament so you never know we may be seeing some new faces....

Lin Yu

As an international student, I do appreciate that I have been selected into the steering group in the Union Parliament. Students here are very friendly truly, especially the Union Parliaments, I do feel very warm and welcomed even I am an international student. In addition, I also introduced a Thailand friend to participate in co-operation, and she is so welcomed by the parliaments. As for me, I did not know anything about the British style Union Parliaments at the very beginning, but still want to be involved at most.

During this term, I, with very hard effort, gradually know what the Union Parliament is and what I can do for the parliament meetings. Actually, there is student union whose responsibility is to improve students' leisure life as here; however, there is no true union parliament whose responsibility is to express opinions on the behalf of all the students. With the observation and help of the parliament elections, I found that it do try to give the biggest right to the students. Every decision should be made by all the students here. Also, this principle is suitable and required for the steering group and parliament meetings as well.

Many worthy ideas have been discussed over the last two months. Among them, some are for environmental problems like oils on the sea, some are for university students' daily life like specially-identified food, and some are for academic supports like academic committees. These problems are highly focused in the meetings and parliaments are trying to give the best suggestions by sharing opinions and voting. According to them, inspiring campaigns, policy changes and setting up new helpful organizations have taken place with the process from white paper and proposal.

In the process of these movements, I am learning and doing my best to help as a steering group member. I managed to attend each steering group meeting and union parliament meeting. In the steering pre-meeting meetings, we steering checked each step of the meeting following. After read through the white papers and proposals, we would give some suggestions to ensure they are reasonable and clearly with referring to the union policy. Also, we are checking the regular attendance of parliaments and make some up-to-date adoptions of policies. All these are done for ensuring the parliament meeting being held step by step.

To sum up, I personally gain incredible experience with doing the steering works hard. What is more, with the experience I have already got over the last two months, I could be more helpful in the coming meetings. I am looking forward to it.

OFFICERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Ross Neale

This has been my first term on Union Parliament and it has been a very enjoyable experience thus far! It has taken me a while to get into the swing of things, but I think that I am finally there. The meetings I feel have been very highly debated and have thoroughly enjoyed listening and contributing, however, now that I have a good idea about the set up, I am hoping to be able to do this more now.

As a member of LUSUMA as well, I managed to get most our of committee down to the AGM, which I feel was a great achievement considering how unwilling they usually do that sort of thing!

I will be looking to submit my first white paper regarding bicycle storage next semester.

Science and Engineering

Lucie Harris

This term has been a brilliant start to the year with lots of interesting and important white papers and proposals being presented. I have attended every Parliament session so far and found them very enjoyable. I presented a white paper on the financial awareness of Union Parliament and received a really positive response which I hope will continue when I develop it into a proposal. Lots of excellent feedback was given to me by other parliamentarians which has been very useful and will hopefully mean that, once I have ensured the proposal is constitutionally sound, it can become a very well rounded proposal. I held three forums which all went well, including one at the same time as parliament training. I was also elected as undergraduate representative of the College of Science and Engineering academic committee, and am due to attend my first meeting in January. So far I have been able to get some feedback from students in my college but next semester I hope to

be able to work more closely with Course Reps from every course to closely understand their academic needs. I have tried to contribute positively in parliament discussions this semester in order to represent my college as well as possible.

Social Science

Alex Thompkins

As a very newly elected member to the union, I don't feel I have had time to fully know the workings yet which is why this report will be shorter than most. I am enjoying my duties as an Officer of the Union, particularly the Tuesday meetings themselves. I will use the Christmas break to formulate some proposals of my own, I didn't want to jump straight in with a White Paper this semester without fully considering the ideas I have and whether they are relevant for the student body as a whole. I look forward to debating these ideas because I feel that every individual in the Parliament has something to contribute.

ACADEMIC OFFICERS

Tom Arnold – Modern Languages

The past term has been especially productive in Union Parliament, and we've seen some great changes and ideas put forward. As Academic Officer for Modern Languages it has been great to see actions put forward that I am confident will benefit the students in my department. This has been my first term as a member of Parliament, and it's been great to see how quickly the Union reacts to pressing issues, in particular the work we've done on catering to students with specific dietary requirements. I look forward to taking part in similar projects next semester, and in particular putting forward some of the ideas that I have collected through working closely with the Course Reps and students of Modern Languages at Leicester.

Laura Brooker – Geology

Firstly, I would like to say I greatly appreciate the opportunity to join this fantastic group of people in student Parliament. In my time as an officer I hope to stand for the students I represent to the best of my ability by bringing to the Parliaments attention any issues that they may have and to ensure that I analyse White Papers and Proposals to the best of my ability, with fairness and always upholding the students best interests. A campaign that I hold close to my heart and wish to take up is the battle for food and awareness for those with dietary requirements such as nut allergies, lactose intolerance, Coeliac disease etc. I feel that these students need a voice as sadly in many places people are unaware of the struggle that they face in just trying to find something to eat. Our Union can change this and help spread better knowledge and understanding that can be a symbol for other student Unions. Over coming months I hope to continue this growing campaign and assist in any way I can the change towards a dietary requirement friendly Union.

Mohammed Idres - Chemistry

Last semester saw me elected as Academic Officer. Although my position was not well explained to me in the course rep meeting held by the Students' Union, I did catch on to things fast. So far I have voted on the passing of numerous white papers. From attending Union Parliament meetings and staying till the end out for my own choice I have felt I have understood facts and figures related to the University and Students' Union as a whole. I can honestly say that I now understand the meaning of all the campaigns that were run last year for elected Academic Officers to be elected higher positions. However from also understanding this I have learnt the incredible amount of money spent on these campaigns to students who find this a pointless waste of time and are apathy to the campaigns in general and find them a nuisance. I believe that making students feel forced to vote is something officers need to work on; this view coming from a number of students I have asked.

Next semester I have decided that I would like to propose a white paper for the opening of the Clinical Sciences Library to University students. Currently, emails have been sent and in the coming semester a more hands on investigation will be undertaken as to why it was closed down to the students and if it can be reopened for the next semester. I have decided to propose this idea because students that live around the Clinical Sciences library found it a good place to access the University network and to do work and revision. I think it is very important that this is taken seriously.

Another idea I am thinking about proposing was that the University emblem be given a license to students who request it or for Presidents of Societies. A number of students have asked that they just wanted a University jumper with just the logo. I will also be looking into this.

Amandeep Obhi - Arts, Humanities and Law

This is the first time I have had the pleasure of being elected as a Union Officer. I must admit that I did not know how much effort, time and involvement is put in by every member of the Union Parliament. I found it endearing that members of our University feel so passionate about issues that I undeniably had not even thought about. Whilst being a member of the Union Parliament I have been introduced to campaigns, discussions and debates allowing me to have a wider outlook on University life and wider issues concerning everybody. Whilst being on the Union Parliament members in my department have approached me and asked more about the role and types of questions and issues that they are able to raise thus I feel that students and other members of the university are now becoming more aware of the Parliament as I am.

I look forward to the remainder of this academic term and am hopeful of the change that our Union Parliament can bring.

Nathan Sherratt - English

After being elected as Academic Officer for the English department, I attended the Academic Officer Training. This was a very good session run by Thom French, where I found out about what is required of me in my role. I also worked in a group to think of a mock Policy proposal, which I presented in front of the others.

I have attended all three Union Parliament Meetings; however none of the meetings have been specifically relevant to my department. Nevertheless, several very important issues have arisen recently such as the 'Taxpon' Campaign, the University's 'Zero tolerance' Policy and also the issue of Dietary Requirements being catered for on campus and also at the Halls of Residence.

I haven't put forward any Proposals or White Papers myself, because no major issues have cropped up in SSC Meetings, which need to be taken further to Parliament. Next year, I would like to put something forward and also speak out in Parliament, if necessary, as these would both test my Public Speaking skills. I would also like to try to get involved in some of these important campaigns which come up in the Union Parliament.