

## Report on officer roles

### Background

In December 2011 with the review of the Union strategy taking place and a recognition from the existing team that their titles didn't really reflect what they did or needed, Byelaw 2.1.2 was suspended, with the result that a team of 5 officers were elected to lead the organisation, rather stand for historical titles, with the candidate receiving the most votes (after transferring all preferences) being offered the presiding role.

The Unions byelaws require that the officer positions should be reviewed every 2 years (2.1.3), but it was agreed that the current operation would be reported on at 6 months.

### Executive Report

After several discussions as a team we have reviewed our roles five months into our term in office.

From theory to practice we have seen the introduction of non-portfolio officers work well on the whole. As we're halfway into the first year we feel it's not long enough to determine whether it has been truly effective. As a result going forward we think it would be best to continue for another year.

So far having no named positions has worked in the strategic sense and has been useful, but has taken some unpicking as to who does what and who is best at doing certain tasks.

One of the representational challenges acknowledged are students not knowing who to come to with particular questions and help without a specific remit identified. However it is a question we're looking to pose to level 4 students to see if it is a widespread issue, or whether it's more of a concern for level 5 and 6 students who are familiar with the old labels and stuck in that mindset.

Without named positions we have also been able to move away from the departmental and operational feel that officers in previous years have become accustomed to. With no fixed departments we've been able to pick up where others have left off and work across strands on various projects allowing us to work as a team.

With faculties being reduced from six to four this year, having officers assigned to each faculty has generally worked well. We have discussed it could also work in future in a five-officer team with the president overseeing.

It is arguable having no named roles helped increase our candidate turnout as the 'best five to lead the organisation' were selected.

It also eliminates the problem of students identified as being less likely to run for president not coming forward (for example BME students or women) and makes the leadership race accessible to all. A wide spread of students from across our membership put themselves

forward. This approach has been of interest nationally, with specific interest from liberation groups, and we have been invited to deliver a session on it at the NUS training event in July.

With the loss of an officer at the start of our term, working as a team of four has been busy, but we've coped well and readjusted accordingly in terms of projects, boards and committees. At the moment going forward we would like to see how the lack of titles could work with a team of 5.

There continues to be a need to be a clearer emphasis throughout training and induction that all officers are equal in terms of representation and not a particular officer for a specific area in order for it to truly work.

### Summary

From our experience we seek council's guidance on whether the sabbatical team continue as a four or return to five for 2013-14.

We also recommend that we review the non portfolio officer titles from October 2013.