Student Council

Tuesday 8 April 2025 6.00pm to be held online via Zoom

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies

Members are reminded:

- The meeting will be recorded and also live streamed.
- Please be respectful towards each other at all times.
- Please use the 'raise hand' function if you wish to speak during the meeting.
- Please remember to keep yourself muted during the meeting, unless asked to speak.

2. Chair's Introduction

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting *(appended at end)*

- 4 March 2025

4. Minutes from Sub-Committees *(appended at end)*

5. Reports from and Questions to the Executive Officers

The Executive Officers will be invited to give a brief verbal report highlighting any particular matters of interest, or concern. Council members and any students attending will then have an opportunity to put questions to the Officers.

Any students wishing to ask questions are asked to notify the Secretary (b.coales@qmul.ac.uk) before the meeting so that they can be given access to the meeting as participants, rather than just watching the live stream.

7. Bye-Law Changes

None submitted

9. Motions

----

a) Should the Union introduce a Christian Gospel Week?

_____

Proposed by: Matyl Kassouf
Seconded by: Sarah Rufai

What do you want?
We would like the SU to introduce a 'Christian Gospel Week' as an opportunity to share what Christians believe with students at Queen Mary's and Barts. We would like to ensure that more people to have more awareness of what Christians believe and why we hold these beliefs. We would like for this week to provide an opportunity for the SU to promote events that we will organise and invite people to, aimed at raising awareness about what Christians believe and welcoming everyone on campus to find out more. We would also like an opportunity from the SU for a student spotlight during this week on Christian celebrations and beliefs. We believe that this would work particularly well in the lead up to Christmas to share why Christians celebrate Christmas and increase understanding of all students on campus about this time of advent and Christmas and what it involves. Other ideas for this week could include a socials takeover or conducting student interviews which the SU could post/ repost.

Why do you want it?
We want this 'Christian Gospel Week' to increase awareness of what Christians believe and to celebrate this. As a diverse student body, there are many Christians on campus from a range of cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. We would like the SU to represent this cohort of students by having a 'Christian Gospel Week', as other groups have 'heritage' or 'awareness' weeks. We would like an equal opportunity to share the beliefs of a fair proportion of students on campus, as the beliefs of these other groups are represented by the SU. We particularly want this as we believe it is important to represent the Christians on campus, and provide an opportunity for all students to find out more about what Christians believe and celebrate, and why.

What impact will this have?
Introducing 'Christian Gospel Week' by the SU would allow for inclusion of all beliefs and religious groups on campus.Christian students and freshers will feel well represented by the SU, and non-Christians will be able to have increased awareness of Christian beliefs and celebrations. There is a diverse community of Christians on campus, seen by the members of the Queen Mary and Barts Christian Unions, and being able to show our diversity yet unity as Christians is valuable and will better represent students at QMUL. Moreover, we would like an opportunity, promoted by the SU to share our beliefs with our university and fellow students, and invite all students regardless of faith and beliefs, to find out more, to join our events, and to challenge pre-existing ideas and further explore Christian beliefs and celebrations. We therefore believe that having 'Christian Gospel Week' would be very impactful for the university in ensuring equal inclusion, promoting diversity, and increasing awareness of the beliefs held by many students on campus.

b) Should the Union Implement self-defence classes at Queen Mary (at Qmotion) using external trained professionals?

Proposed by: Sened Teklay

Seconded by: Diya Selastin

Why do you want it?

1. Enhancing Personal Safety – Universities are open environments where students may walk alone at night or encounter unfamiliar people. Self-defense training teaches students how to recognize threats and respond effectively.

2. Boosting Confidence and Awareness – Learning self-defense techniques increases students' self-assurance and situational awareness, reducing their chances of becoming victims of crime.

3. Promoting Campus Security – Universities that prioritize student safety by offering self-defense programs create a safer community and demonstrate a commitment to student well-being.

4. Encouraging Physical Fitness – Self-defense classes provide an active way for students to stay fit while learning valuable skills.

5. Supporting Mental Health – Knowing how to defend oneself can reduce anxiety and fear, especially for students who feel vulnerable in new or unfamiliar environments.

6. Preventing Gender-Based Violence – Universities often experience cases of harassment or assault. Self-defense training, particularly for women and marginalized groups, can be a proactive measure in preventing such incidents.

7. Building a Sense of Empowerment – Self-defense isn't just about fighting back; it's about setting boundaries, asserting oneself, and making informed decisions in high-pressure situations.

8. It aligns with Queen Mary's values of building a safe community (only campus based RG uni in London)

9. The whole point of self defense isn't to win, but it's NOT TO LOSE!

10. There already are programs like the Black Girls Therapeutic Group that is carried out at Qmotion now and then. This self defense element can supplement them.

11. Qmotion has the facilities

What impact will this have?

1. Increased Student Engagement

• Offering self-defense classes would attract a diverse range of students, including those interested in personal safety, fitness, and empowerment.

• It could encourage students who may not usually engage with QMSU activities to participate, broadening the union's reach.

2. Enhanced Student Safety and Well-being

• Queen Mary is an open-campus university, and students often travel around London at night. Providing self-defense training would help students feel safer and more prepared for real-world situations.

• It would align with the SU's existing initiatives on mental health and student support by reducing anxiety related to personal safety.

3. Positive Public Image and Advocacy

• The SU could position itself as a leader in student safety, showing proactive support for student well-being beyond academics and social events.

• It could attract media attention and partnerships with external organizations that support personal safety and self-defense initiatives.

4. Empowerment of Female and Vulnerable Students

• Given that universities experience cases of harassment and assault, self-defense training could be a proactive measure to empower students, especially women and marginalized groups.

• It aligns with campaigns such as #MeToo and student-led initiatives for safer university experiences.

9. Policy Renewal

Policy Renewal

8.1 *Policy passed more than two academic years earlier shall be presented to Student Council with a recommendation from the Executive Committee to renew, embed or lapse.*

8.2 *Any policy that is renewed will be debated again after 2 years.*

8.3 *Any policy that is embedded will be considered permanent policy until Student Council brings it back for debate to retain or lapse.*

8.4 *Recommendations shall require the approval of a simple-majority of Student Council to be passed and should be done in 1 vote for all policies at the same time.*

8.4.1 *Student Councillors should make clear to the Chair any individual recommendations they would like to be debated separately, the Chair shall bring these forward for debate before being voted on. The rest of the*

recommendations shall then be voted on in 1 vote.

    8.5   *A Union member may, at any time, bring policy that is considered to be out of date to the attention of Student Council to be debated.*

    8.6   *Policies which exceed the 2-year limit for any reason shall be brought forward for debate at the next meeting of Student Council.*

The following policies are now due for review and may be lapsed, renewed of embedded:

These will have been discussed by the Executive Officers, who will have made recommendations for each - Serena can lead on this and the Executive Officers can take any questions.

Policy	Recommendation

10. AOB

Student Council Meetings for 2024-25

Item	Outcome
Chairs' Welcome and Introductions	18 members present and meeting quorate - 16 required. *(Numbers in brackets below indicate members present at the time of the vote).* Apologies were received from Wenyu Huang - Postgraduate Research Representative - Science & Engineering
Appointment of a new External Trustee	Student Council unanimously ratified the appointment of a new External Trustee, Funmi Ogunlusi, in accordance with the Union's Articles of Association.
Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 were approved.
Minutes of Sub-Committees of Student Council	There were none to consider at this meeting.
Reports from and Questions to the Executive Officers	The Executive Officers gave brief verbal reports highlighting any particular matters of interest, or concern.
Democracy Review	The QMSU President presented an updated paper on the outcome of the Union's Democracy Review. Council were asked to agree the changes proposed in the paper and then approve the mechanism for implementing them. **Summary of proposal** Student Council were asked to agree: 1. Remove Student Council 2. Hold 3-4 all-student meetings per year and have this as the policy-making body 3. Replace the current part-time officer roles with 10 Union Officer Committee members 4. Create a new Union Officer Committee 5. Change the rules for subcommittees to make them more flexible and less homogenous 6. Devolve activities subcommittees and reps to the relevant activity areas 7. Hold more meetings in a hybrid format 8. Make it easier for students to suggest ideas and give feedback and have clearer pathways for how this feedback is acted upon 9. Update School Forums to enable effective collaboration between Course Reps and elected officers

	Student Council was asked to approve the following: That the Executive Officers take the necessary steps to implement the changes outlined on the Democracy Review paper. This will include updating the bye-laws in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. That the Executive Officers undertake further student consultation about the 10 new Union Officer Committee roles and how all-student meetings can be made more engaging. There were no speeches against. For: 10 Against: 6 Abstain: 2 The Motion was **Passed** *(18)*
Byelaw Changes	
There were no Bye-Law changes to consider	
Motions for debate: Please note that policies passed will be subject to review/approval by the Union's Board of Trustees where required.	
a). This motion was withdrawn by the proposer	-
b). Should The Students' Union pass a vote of no confidence in the QMUL Principal?	The proposer spoke in favour of the motion and there were no speeches against. For: 16 Against: 1 Abstain: 3 The Motion was **Passed** *(18)*
c) Should QMSU adopt an Islamophobia definition and lobby the university to do the same?	The proposer spoke in favour of the motion and there were no speeches against. For: 16 Against: 1 Abstain: 3 The Motion was **Passed** *(18)*
Policy Lapse	Council unanimously agreed to accept the Executive Officers' recommendations on the policies which were due for review.