

AGM Report For VP Union Development

Name: Atree Ghosh

Role: Vice-President Union Development

Progress on Manifesto Pledges:

My manifesto was split into three sections; the commercial services, democracy and governance, and the student groups under my remit, the JCRs and PG Board.

Within commercial services, it has been a difficult year given the implications of the pandemic and its effects on these services. However, I've continually supported any work to not only ensure the longevity on our commercial services, but to also ensure they remain student focused. Whilst I've had limited opportunity to impact change on the Sugarhouse, I have had the opportunity to work with the management team at Central to deliver feedback to them from students to continually improve the service, particularly on the new zero waste section and it's pricing. On the note of LUSU Living, I worked with Amy (VP Welfare) at the beginning of the academic year to write a Board paper to not only support her wider campaign on Stopping Housing Haste but to also make commitments wherever possible with our own lettings arm.

Under democracy, I've managed to introduce a few reforms to the scrutiny system with the option for scrutiny officers to change the way that scrutiny is delivered, but there is more work to be done in this area, particularly moving to a wider reconstruction of accountability mechanisms through governance reform. I also fulfilled my pledged to run a referendum to review our membership to the NUS, and whilst the vote did not hit quorum, the direction was clear. There have also been reforms of the Executive Committee throughout the year that I've managed to work on with Oliver (SU President) to ensure it functions like a modern committee should. My final pledge around democracy focused on casting a wider net in the form of student focus groups that fed into our decision making. While I've not had the time in recent months due to picking up the Education portfolio to see the Lancaster 100 through, I've used platforms I do have access to gauge student insight, whether it be from the JCRs, Academic Reps or opening it wider as I did recently, giving students the option to ask questions to the VC at Senate. I've also supported the wider democracy reforms that we have been pushing for as even though they are different to focus groups in practice, the fundamental value remains, i.e., giving more students a say in decision making.

With the JCRs and PG Board, I've set out long term projects in terms of the Union refocussing it's work with the colleges which will go on beyond my time. I've managed to work with students, staff and the LCOs to also restructure the training we deliver to these groups and those changes have only continued based on feedback and next years training will only be adapted further. Working in a COVID world has been interesting to say the least but it has given me the opportunity to be flexible in the way we conduct our work with the JCRs by opening groups up to wider memberships, which can be seen in particular as we work together to plan social activities as restrictions continue to ease.

Other Projects I Have Been Working On:

The primary area I have been working on outside of my manifesto and remit, has been Education since I picked it up following Bee (ex-VP Education) leaving in February. I've covered almost the entire portfolio since February except for parts of the EDI remit within Education which I've shared with Amy and/or staff at the SU.

Priorities for the remainder of the year:

For the remainder of the year, I want to tie off any loose ends in terms of projects I've currently got going. This includes seeing through as much of the wider and governance and democracy review as possible. Ensuring the next VP Union Development and VP Education get a proper handover, and in a wider sense, make sure we as an SU capitalise on easing restrictions this term.

Officer Budget Expenditure:

I've had no expenditure from my officer budget so far this year.