



Manifestos For International Students' Officer

The following are the manifestos for the candidates running to be one of your Liberation and Campaign officers for the year 21/22. These officers will represent yourselves to the university and lead on campaigns to make student life better.

This officer role will champion the following areas of work but not limited to:

- This officer is responsible for leading, facilitating and supporting the concerns and views of international students at the university.
- This officer shall be responsible for taking a lead role in working with the relevant staff members to further the internationalisation agenda of LUSU
- This officer will encourage and help to facilitate campaigns with JCR officers in relation to their position

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

Mahir Nasibli

My manifesto gives us all a genuine chance to create meaningful change at Lancaster University. From educational issues, bringing the community together and increase productivity of students. Today's students face new challenges, from rising levels of competition, mental health, and chronic levels of loneliness. I've spoken to many young people who are driven with various unique gifts and talents with potentials to achieve greatness in our society, but no opportunity to showcase them to the wider community. By enhancing the representation of young people, we can work together on developing better policies that will transform the lives of young people and change our beloved borough for the good.

My three main objectives are:

1. Collaborating with university and build teams for helping students with understanding study materials.
2. Promoting youth centres and unleashing the borough's youth potential, giving them the opportunities to be creative and talented and develop these skills that'll guide them through their journey of life
3. 70% of Young people have had mental health problems but had no appropriate intervention or support. With the help of the university, we can establish services within the borough where young people can have space where they can get a break from the pressures and worries in their lives.

By voting for me, Mahir Nasibli, you'll be part of this change. So let's put our hands together and make the youth of today, the leaders of tomorrow.

Muhammad Muhammad

International Students Officer

Introduction

Hello Students! My name is Shaikh Muhammad and I am a second -year international student from Pakistan. I know that most of you don't know me but reading my Manifesto will be worth your time.

My Time at Lancaster

I joined Lancaster in 2019 as an International student, just like most of you and it wasn't easy at all to settle in the new environment. The horrible weather, homesickness and the urge to find new friends were the struggles I had to face. However, with time I started getting used to my new 'home' because of the immense amount of support available from the Student Unions. From guiding me ways to making new friends, the students union had always helped me throughout my journey. In 2020 I also became the academic rep for 'Accounting and Finance' in order to better serve students. Since then, I have gained experience in sorting out student problems and addressing them efficiently as possible.

Support by LUSU

On my first day, I was welcomed by the student ambassadors and was guided in detail about the university culture and norms. Therefore, I want to make the university experience smooth and enjoyable by taking up the post of the International Students Officer. I know the university inside out and the challenges faced by the international students on campus. These issues can range from homesickness to language barrier to adjusting in the new environment.

What I will do for the International Students

- I aim to encourage all students to take part in as much societies and university events as possible.
Trust me, these experiences are worth it and can really help in boosting confidence and enjoying the University experience. I had joined the Cricket and Pakistan society and loved the events as I had made so many new friends, who I am still in contact with.
- I aim to make it mandatory for prior notification on policy changes regarding fees changes, that affect us.
- Provide regular updates regarding Covid-19 affecting flights, Covid tests and how it affects studies.
- Making some sign boards and notices available in different languages also, like Mandarin/ Spanish.
- Organising counselling services for those in need.
- Design a newsletter specifically for international students which involves career tips.
- I will always be there to solve any issues faced by students being of academic or non-academic nature. I have experienced the struggles of an international student and will always guide and help new and existing students to my fullest ability.
- Under my role, I will be able to raise any concerns like visa issues/ dietary requirements or religious issues to the student body president or at the Executive Committee. There I will discuss with the committee members the possible solutions to any problems and will address them within a short time period.
- I also plan to organise international students only events where these students will get a chance to get to know each other and make friends/ acquaintances. Each event will be of a different theme, where students can get a chance to be an ambassador for their country and share their country's cultural or social aspects.

For example, small skits can be organised by each country which can involve some music and dance also.

- I also hope to organise more social events involving students of different communities, like the Bolly Night, as these events give students more exposure to how different communities behave and give them a chance to socialise.

My advice to Students

It is always best to be familiar with the University guidelines and to read the 'Handbook' as it will make your life much easier. Get involved in sports and societies which you like so that you can effectively manage your time.

I pledge to achieve all my mentioned goals during my time period of one year and provide the maximum support to international students and make their time even more memorable. I request all students to please look at my manifesto and vote for me for an exciting year ahead!

Rimaz Kintibay

Hello my name Rimaz Kintibay, I'm in my second year studying Accounting and Finance. I come from Sudan the land of Nubian pyramids and the great river Nile.

I aspire to make the Students' Union home to all you international students who have travelled miles away from your families. Especially during this period, we are encountering so many issues regarding COVID-19.

I'm aware that the uncertainty related to immigration following Brexit has raised several concerns among our international student and staff community regarding the EU students & staff:

- Current immigration status
- The Erasmus exchange programs
- The EU Research Funding, and much more.

Choose me as your Students' Union. As your International Students' Officer to work with the university, we(the university and me) will be accountable for assuring that we do our best to maintain our students informed about Brexit and how it will potentially influence our students.

Of course, there are other issues concerning and with me being elected, the aim is to (without failing to obey the UK government COVID-19 safety regulations):

- Ensure transitions and inductions are carried out smoothly during & after Fresher's Week so that international students can easily adjust and feel at home at university in no time.
- Encourage international students to take advantage of university life's social aspect by persuading them to join and participate in social and sporting activities from the very start of their programmes.
- Develop better relationships with the university's international societies, organisations and offices
- Host a larger number of new cultural events at and outside the university to allow people from various cultures to interact and get to know each other.
- Promote and campaign for equal opportunities within the university, union and broader community.
- Implement a feedback system or an online forum for international students to share their experiences at the university personally and what they would like to improve, addressed or looked into in the future.

Sonja Dembo

My name is Sonja, and I am running for International Officer.

I am the current International and Faith Officer for the County JCR Exec. I was elected in 2019 as the International Officer but I saw that there was an opportunity to better represent County's diverse community; so, I lobbied for the role to be added to our team. Things I have done as JCR Officer include:

- Organising a **Cuisine Event**, with over 70 students attending.
- Involved in the **Intercambio** programme, buddying together International and home students.
- Delivering an online, live-streamed **International Quiz** during Freshers Week.
- **Collaborating with the Chaplaincy** for a Pancake Day cook along.
- Creating a **databank of key information for International students**, including navigating banking, various paperwork and immigration forms.

As I have a lot of experience in working both online and face-to-face, I am keen on organising different events for International students, both on and off campus. The main areas I would like to focus on, if elected, are:

INTERNATIONAL INCLUSION IN MAJOR STUDENT ISSUES

I wish to do more for International students, to lobby for our voices to be heard and recognised. **International students must not be forgotten.** If we are truly fighting for equality, only supporting British students in LUSU Campaigns is simply not good enough. For example, there was a big representational gap in the recent rent strike, I was shocked by the lack of attention given to International students. Many of us could not go on rent strike as we fear removal not just from our campus accommodation, but from England. Some are stuck back in their home countries whilst paying for empty accommodation, not covered by maintenance loans, and there are others stuck in their accommodation that cannot return home because of border closures and visa issues. This is unacceptable. If elected I will lobby for greater support for International students and recognition of our unique financial and mental health difficulties in Union campaigns.

MENTAL HEALTH

Despite the efforts to reduce stigma around mental health in England, there is still stigma around mental health amongst our communities at home and in the UK, which results in numerous amounts of students not seeking help. As well as stigma, many international students do not know how accessible the services are, that they are free of charge, and are anonymous.

BUDDY SCHEME

From my work on County's *Intercambio* programme, I know just how rewarding buddying can be. By introducing a buddy scheme, I want to create a safe space for international students **to help provide mental health support without cultural barriers**. I would pair incoming and current students who have already spent time in the UK. The buddies would have already experienced the common issues that international students face such as homesickness or high parental expectations and would be able to help incoming students navigate life in Bailrigg.

DIVERSITY ISSUES IN SOCIETIES AND SPORTS TEAMS

Lancaster has a wealth of societies and clubs on offer, home students know how enriching they can be. Unfortunately, however, it seems, through no individual fault, that International students do not participate as much in society life. There are a number of possible causes for this such as clique culture and a lack of understanding about foreign cultural practices. I want to build on the BAME Officer's live diversity training to include tools for cultural competency & inclusion and how to boost international engagement. If elected, I would also work with VP Societies and Media to expand this live training to all Execs, not just JCRs.

By bringing different perspectives into the picture, I would help societies and clubs to create a healthier and more welcoming environment for everyone. I know that this will lead to a better understanding of the cliquiness and sometimes toxicity that can develop within societies. To further this, I would be keen on seeing college sports affiliated as societies for them to receive this training.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER LIBERATION GROUPS

As a liberation officer, I believe that intersectionality must be at the core of everything we do. If elected, I would be keen to work with other LCOs to **properly represent the huge diversity within our International community**. Our campus is home to people from across the globe and, if elected, I pledge to listen to the whole range of International experiences through the International Students' Forum.

A vote for Sonja is a vote for inclusion, support and diversity. Vote Sonja to ensure that International students are not forgotten.