# Scrutiny Report of Shannon McCaul

## January 2021

*Shannon McCaul, current Vice President of Societies and Media at Lancaster University Students’ Union, was interviewed by two members of the Union’s Scrutiny Panel (Nathan Shoesmith and Maria Avram) on 14 January 2021. This interview and other information researched and supplied to the Scrutiny Panel forms the basis of the following Scrutiny Report.*

*While acknowledging a change in circumstances during the Coronavirus pandemic, this report refers to the manifesto provided by Shannon ahead of the 2020 Students’ Union Officer Elections, a copy of which can be found* [*here.*](https://lancastersu.co.uk/resources/societies-2020-21-manifesto/download_attachment)

*The Scrutiny Panel have gone to reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of information included in this report at the time of publication.*

**Visibility**

In her manifesto, Shannon pledged to improve visibility of the Union and its societies and student media. In particular, Shannon pledged to make use of the online Union calendar and other mediums to promote society events. Given Coronavirus restrictions, the number of events that have taken place has been severely limited. Shannon was advised that it may not be worth trying to make use of the online Union calendar in the short term, due to a website upgrade. The Panel recognise that Shannon was passionate about these ideas and is likely to bring them up again in the future if they become more viable.

Shannon pledged to be transparent and keep students informed through increased activity on social media. The Panel feel that Shannon has worked hard to maintain a strong presence on social media and offer praise for these efforts.

Also, Shannon pledged to make herself available to students during working hours and to hold weekly drop-in hours. The Panel understand that students with questions pertaining to societies and media have generally been able to access information, though often delayed and through the activities team, rather than always through Shannon. The Panel felt Shannon’s consistency of engagement with students could be improved and also recommended online office hours, which had not been tried by Shannon.

**Collaboration**

In her manifesto, Shannon pledged to holding Wednesday afternoon open sessions for student groups to enable non-members to try out a new activity, thus encouraging involvement into more activities and highlighting what each society is doing. The Panel recognises that given Coronavirus restrictions, this has not been possible. However, she has found ways to still help societies collaborate and organize events even with these restrictions, such as helping plan Veganuary or collaborating with LA1TV for a reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas’. Both of these projects show collaboration and Shannon’s ability to adapt her projects and vision to respect the health measures. Shannon also made multiple pledges in her manifesto related to the Roses sporting competition, though it seems unlikely that Roses will take place given the latest Coronavirus restrictions. However, she talked about organizing a fun, inter-collegiate sporting event that would involve multiple societies as an alternative to celebrate the end of the year.

**Training**

Shannon recognized that this area was hit the most, as most societies are focused on surviving another year during these times rather than attending training sessions about social media or other such topics, so she is working to change her training ideas to be more suitable to the current needs of societies. However, she has worked to increase EDI training for the JCRs, and this will later be rolled out to the societies. It is a good sign that the idea of anti-discrimination training came from one of the societies, as it shows the lines of communication working as well as Shannon’s openness to listen and adapt. Other activities, such as team building with the student-media teams, have not taken place at all due to the current restrictions, but Shannon has indicated that she will think of new ideas for the next cohort of students that can take place remotely, if needed. She also wants to introduce more training aimed at developing leadership and conflict resolution skills to the reaffiliation process for Societies, but this proposal is still in its early stages.

**Other Remarks, Overview & Recommendations**

One of the issues that Shannon admitted she had was her communication with the different societies and students on campus, so this has become an added goal for her this term. She pledged to reach out to students directly, which shows her initiative and her ability to recognize areas where she can improve. She also plans to reach out to staff members, as she recognizes that now, they are likely the first point of contact for students, so they can help them reach out to the union.

Shannon has also shown that she is able to adapt to the constantly changing regulations by making a “plan A and B”, to prepare for any situations when restrictions increase and the format of campaigns, events or anything else that is planned needs to change at short notice.

Overall, while some of Shannon’s specific goals and proposals from her manifesto had to change due to Covid, she has been able to adapt them so that the work she is able to do still reflects the vision she outlined.