

Starting in the summer I have attended multiple NUS events with a view to build links & share ideas with officers from across the country, while representing the interests of Birkbeck students. By attending these events I hope to ensure that the women of Birkbeck are characterised in the wider student movement. These NUS events are also an opportunity to witness the practises of other unions – I have been invited to discuss liberation with the officers of other campuses and evaluate what we can emulate here at Birkbeck.

In September much of our focus was directed towards “Fresher’s Fortnight”. The executive committee met frequently to discuss student engagement; I was heavily involved in the planning & execution of our Fresher’s Fayre & social events. Due to the lack of a Communications & Activities Officer this year, I began to dedicate much of my time to our clubs & societies. Female students indicated their interest in sports so we now have a women’s football team, mixed badminton & are still working on setting up a women’s rugby team. While determined that female students should have their desired sporting opportunities, I am mindful of the gender binary nature of competitive sports. Therefore I am investigating whether trans & non-binary students currently feel excluded from the current sporting activities, I will seek to consult with the LGBTQ+ officer (Richard Brinck-Johnson) & Trans rep (Luc Sei) to further this aim. I have dedicated hours each week to the general administration and support of our clubs & socs where the help is needed. I have recently been assigned by the trustees to work with the treasurer to review the current protocols & seek to improve them for committees & union officers/staff. Through speaking to students & looking at the practices of other unions, the women’s campaign proposes that all Birkbeck clubs & societies should have at least one woman on their committees. We believe this is in the nature of our commitment to liberation & pave the way to greater accessibility for all students.

In October I was assigned the role of Administrator Sole to the Birkbeck Law Society to support law students through a period of transition. As such – in consultation with law students – I ran the society to ensure that the union’s commitments to the school of law were met: this included ensuring a society presence at Fresher’s & Orientation week, running a successful welcome drinks social & creating a mock trial (that I wrote with fellow exec member Paul Tracey). I was also responsible for holding an EGM, which took place on the 6th November, to democratically install a new committee. We are now in a handover period; I will continue to support the new committee until they are able to run without this SU support.

The improved visibility of the Sabbatical Officers & the SU as a whole has been a key priority this term; as such I have helped to create & attended various student rep/interest events. These meetings hope to help students engage with union activities while helping us hear (& therefore promote the interests of) the student voice. Every week I spend time in the union office so that students can drop in & ask questions – these hours are currently unscheduled as a single time slot is not practical for all Birkbeck students. Less frequently I also spend time at the SU desk in the ground floor student services area; this also gives me the opportunity to meet students & hear their concerns. “Improving visibility” also refers to how the SU engages with the college: I have volunteered to sit on multiple college committees (including the Birkbeck Equalities Committee & Academic Board) and attend all invitations by college staff. Every meeting with the college is viewed as an opportunity to further the student voice & I strive to ensure that my presence means that the issues facing female students at Birkbeck are remembered alongside the interests of the union & the wider student body.

I have dedicated time to creating content for the pages of our new BBKSU website. I believe this is the key to reaching the wider student body as it is understood that many Birkbeck students are not able to be on campus frequently. My goal is to encourage more of our clubs, societies, & SU officers to utilise the website, so that students come to know it as a reliable source of up-to-date information. Since October I have helped clubs & societies upload their events to the website & have offered time in person to those that need it. More content on the website will enhance student opportunities through bringing students closer to the activities of the student groups that best represent their interests, this will further increase our campaigning power as a whole.

The sabbatical officers are keen to increase the campaigning presence of the union this year. We've committed to working as a team, where appropriate, supporting the various aims of our portfolios. In October we were directed by our Black Students Officer (Saba Shiraz) as how to support the campaign's Black History Month event. We're now looking towards the welfare campaign's support of the Prevent Day of Action (7th December) & a speaker event to encourage awareness & discussion of this issue. The women's campaign has held informal meet & greets while we discuss our direction, with a view to building a stronger network that represents the unique interests of Birkbeck women. Our primary focus is Women's History Month in March; we have already begun discussions with BBKSU clubs, campaigns & societies, many of whom have already agreed to hold an event of their choosing/in the style of their interest in March that revolves around women. It is hoped that by collating & promoting this collection of events, women's liberation will be encouraged as a topic of discussion that reaches a wider range of students. This project also seeks to support inter-society relations & provide greater exposure for our clubs & socs.