

Updates from the Officers

President - Rohan Rajesh

This Officer did not provide a written update.

Welfare & Liberation Officer - Roshan Lal

Campaigns in Trimester 1:

Care down There: Spread Sexual health Awareness. SHAG Week Quiz Conducted for awareness and Free Contraceptive in Chelmsford and Writtle.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

Food pantry: provide Free Food and sanitary items to students who are in Need. Food pantry all set in Chelmsford, Cambridge, and Peterborough.

Mental Health Events : Conducted Event for Mental health in March (Mental Health Awareness month) to bring students together.

Union angels: provided de-stress bags to Support at the time of Exams and submission.

Education Officer – Jeena Thomas

Campaigns in Trimester 1:

Representation Reimagined (One Voice 2.0) - To bring about flexibility and change in how students can raise their voice and concerns on academic related matters.

The pilot implementation of School Reps within AHES (Arts, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences) was positively received. School Reps were described as highly engaged, supportive, and effective. However, both staff and School Reps reported significant challenges in engaging with Course Reps, which was rated extremely low (1/10). Feedback suggested that a model focused on School and Faculty Reps may be more effective than maintaining the current Course Rep structure. Additionally, we are exploring ways to introduce greater flexibility in how students can raise concerns promptly, as and when they arise. We have discussed this with MSL(student experience software) team who has proposed a potential model to support this approach. This is still an ongoing discussion for implementation in the upcoming year of 2026/27.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

1. Unboxed - To bring about open access after-hours study space for all students in Chelmsford. This issue has resurfaced, prompting the distribution of a survey to gather feedback. The Faculty of Health, Medicine, and Social Care (HeMS) has expressed strong support for the initiative. Following continued conversations with the colleagues in Student & Library Services, it was agreed to have the ground floor area of the library to be open 24/7 as a study space out of hours to support students who prefer individual silent studies. We are still looking into provisions to support students who require group studies as well and also for the campaign to be rolled out into all campuses of ARU.

2. One Voice (carried over from 2024/25) ARU is looking into implementing a One-stop shop within every campus to support students with their immediate concerns, especially around grades, academic misconduct, IT support, advice etc. We are supporting ARU with the roll-out of the same for the upcoming September 2027.

3. Pay the Placement (carried over from 2024/25) We have collaborated with Essex SU along with 14 other SU's and have implemented a Pay the Placement campaign because placements are work, and work deserves pay. We acquired 13,830 student signatures to bring this petition to the government for discussion and has received a response which is 'No. Students aren't workers. Try another route for funds as they have no plans to pay student nurses. We have contacted all our MPs and are in constant conversations with them to get what we need. And currently what we need is 100,000 signatures to have this as a debate in Parliament.

4. FlowCare - To identify the need in the availability and distribution of sanitary products for women. I have contacted the Head of facilities to have a discussion on this. My idea of the campaign is that currently, these are restocked by the facilities team each morning, but there is no system in place to track how many products are dispensed across different buildings or how many students or staffs access them daily. As a result, there have been instances where some students take large quantities at once, leaving others without access. This led me to think about introducing sanitary product dispensers (for example, with a capacity of 100 items) that are linked to staff and student ID cards. This could allow individuals to access a limited number of products per day (e.g. up to six). The aim of this would not be to restrict access, but to better understand usage patterns and ensure fair distribution. It could also help us identify students who may be facing financial challenges in accessing these products, allowing us to signpost them to the Money Advice team for further support,

if needed. The idea is similar to existing systems such as laptop or library loans, where access is facilitated through ID cards.

Non-campaign work:

1. Worked with the university to introduce student representation in the higher decision-making Education Committee*, attended by six students from the Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses.
2. Worked with the university to establish student voice representation within Leadership Forums and secure payment for students' travel and time. This initiative received around 50 applications at a time, which were shortlisted to 25 applicants based on inclusivity, diversity, course representation, and campus representation.
3. Conducted and executed a Role Reversal Session during one of the Leadership Forums for senior decision-makers within the university, giving them insight into the real-life experiences and challenges faced by students at ARU. The session focused on: Timetabling issues, including classes being cancelled without prior notice after students had already arrived on campus; Alleged academic misconduct cases and the impact on student progression when students are redirected between services without receiving clear answers; Exceptional circumstances processes and their impact on students' mental health, finances, and academic progression; Social anxiety and how it affects students' confidence, decision-making, and continuation of studies; The impact of IT and finance-related errors on students' academic progress; The increasing cost of living and its effect on students struggling with rent, accommodation, part-time employment, and placements; The additional challenges faced by neurodivergent students, students with disabilities, commuters, international students, and mature students returning to study.
4. Worked with the SHoKE team to promote the Citizens Essex Assembly to students as part of the upcoming 2027 Mayoral Elections. The initiative engaged 20 students from both the Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses.
5. Worked with the Anglia Learning and Teaching Team at ARU to implement a Student Art Competition in association with Adobe, providing students with the opportunity to design campus spaces.
6. Worked with ARU on the Imagine ARU 2036 campaign, focused on AI, to help students contribute ideas around 'how will AI change your course, your placements, your campus life, your first job?' 7. Worked with the university to ensure that the upcoming 10-year university strategy remains student-led and student-focused, while also considering staff perspectives.

Non-Campaign Work with the Union

1. Supported the Activities and Opportunities Officer in the execution of the Unity Cup for the Chelmsford campus (Team South).
2. Organised a free Dairy Milk chocolate giveaway as a gesture of appreciation for International Nurses Day on 12 May across the Chelmsford, Cambridge, and Peterborough campuses.

Non-Campaign Work with External Organisations

1. Presented a story from an international student's perspective at the Wonkhe Conference, focusing on AI, academic misconduct, and how such processes can disproportionately affect international students who are studying within limited visa timeframes and face challenges completing their courses.

2. Attended the NUS Lobby Day for the Loan Shark campaign and raised the issue with several MPs, including Marie Goldman, Apsana Begum, and Daniel Zeichner.

3. Attended a meeting with the Office for Students (OfS) to discuss ideas and explore collaborative opportunities for future elected officers to engage and work in partnership with the organisation.

*The Education Committee is a key university meeting that focuses on ensuring the quality, consistency, and enhancement of the student academic experience. It is attended typically by a mixture of university staff and student representatives to ensure balanced decision making and strong student voice. The membership of the committee includes the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) for Education; all faculty Deans, Deputy Deans and Heads of Schools; Quality Assurance and Enhancement Representatives; Library and Learning Services Representatives; Academic Registry Representatives; Student Experience or Employability Leads; Digital Learning or IT Representatives etc along with the elected President, elected Education Officer and the Director of Membership Services from the Students' Union/ Union.

International & PGR Officer – Gawdham Melath**Campaigns in Trimester 1:**

In Trimester 1, my main focus was on improving student engagement across the university. One of the key areas I worked on was the “Engagement is Not Only for Relationship” campaign. This campaign was about encouraging students to engage in every part of university life, not only social events. I wanted students to understand that engagement also means attending lectures, taking part in their studies, using university support, joining Union activities, sharing feedback, and being part of decision-making. The aim was to help students feel more confident, connected and active in their university journey. This was important because many students are still adjusting to university life, academic expectations, personal responsibilities and finding their place in the wider student community. I also supported the development of the International Students’ Assembly, giving students a platform to raise key issues and feel more connected with the Union. I worked on PGR support by listening to postgraduate research students and raising their concerns in the right university spaces. I was also involved in work around Safe Cambridge, looking at student safety, belonging and confidence in the city. This work focused on helping students feel safer, more supported and more confident in the places where they study, live and socialise. Alongside this, I continued to keep international student financial pressure on the agenda, including the wider conversation around international tuition fee payment structures. While this was a campaign that began previously, I kept the issue alive as part of the wider student wellbeing and affordability discussion.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

In Trimester 2, I continued my work on student engagement and focused on making the Union more visible, approachable and connected to students across the university. A key campaign this trimester was the Come On In campaign. This campaign focused on attendance, confidence and belonging. The aim was to encourage students to attend their lectures and understand the importance of being present in class. It was also about reminding students that they are not alone, and that support, community and opportunities are available around them. The campaign also focused on building a more welcoming culture in lectures. For some students, walking into a lecture can feel difficult if they are anxious, new to the class, or do not know many people. The message of the campaign was to make students feel welcomed, included and encouraged to take part in their learning. I also continued wider engagement work by encouraging students to take part in university life, attend lectures, join Union activities, share feedback and use the support available to them. This helped link academic engagement, student voice and belonging together. I worked on Global Week, helping celebrate the diversity of our student community and bringing students together through culture, performance and shared experiences. As part of this, I was also involved in ARU's Got Talent, which gave students a platform to perform, connect and celebrate talent across the university. I also worked on the One Voice campaign, helping bring together student issues from different campuses and raising them in a more structured way with the university. This campaign helped show that students across ARU share many common concerns and that the Union can bring those voices together. Overall, my Trimester 2 campaign work focused on attendance, engagement, belonging, culture, student voice and making sure students felt more connected to the Union and university life.

Non-campaign work:

Outside of my main Union campaign work, I was actively involved in wider student representation at local, regional and national levels. I worked closely with NUS and supported different national campaigns affecting students across the UK. This included campaigns around Renters’ Rights, student loans and student finance, trans rights, and wider national youth and student issues. I also supported

work around health and social care students' placement pay, raising the need for fairer support for students who are expected to complete placements as part of their course. I was also involved in the placement campaign, which focused on the financial pressure students face while completing unpaid or underpaid placements. This is an important issue for many students, especially those studying courses where placements are compulsory. At a local level, I worked on student travel and transport issues, including the Tiger Pass extension through council-level conversations. This work focused on making travel more affordable and accessible for students in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. I also raised and supported action around the university laundry issue, including the laundry concerns in Peter Taylor House. This was a practical student living issue, and I supported student-led action to make sure the problem was heard and taken seriously. Alongside this, I continued attending Union and university meetings, assemblies and committees to raise student concerns, guide students to the right support, and make sure student voice was included in decision-making.

Activities Officer – Ramees Nazar**Campaigns in Trimester 1:**

In Trimester 1, my work focused on the planning and development of the Unity Cup, alongside progressing other key campaigns. The Unity Cup was designed as a cross-campus, mixed-sport competition aimed at strengthening student belonging and campus identity through a competitive but inclusive environment. During this period, I established the structure of the competition, including the two-heat model and sport selection, while working closely with Team ARU and internal teams to ensure feasibility and alignment. Alongside this, I successfully introduced the Community Representatives initiative, selecting and onboarding the first cohort to improve communication and collaboration across society communities. I also strengthened the working relationship between the Union and Team ARU, contributing to better alignment on student sport, leadership, and engagement.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

In Trimester 2, the focus shifted to the delivery of the Unity Cup, including the successful completion of campus heats and the Finals Day. The event saw strong student participation and engagement across campuses, with over 200 students taking part in the competition. The Finals brought together teams representing ARU North and South, creating a competitive but friendly atmosphere and a strong sense of shared experience. Student feedback was particularly positive, with many highlighting how much they enjoyed representing their campus and being part of a cross-university event. This phase demonstrated the impact and potential of the Unity Cup as a scalable initiative, while also providing valuable insights for future expansion, including earlier planning, improved team confirmation processes, and opportunities to grow the event further in the next academic year.

Non-campaign work:

Alongside my campaign work, I have contributed to a range of operational and representative responsibilities throughout the year. This has included supporting student societies and sports clubs, engaging with students to understand their needs, and ensuring their feedback is reflected in Union activity and decision-making. I have worked closely with internal teams and external partners, particularly Team ARU, to strengthen collaboration and improve the overall student experience in sport and activities. I have also been involved in key university discussions, representing the student voice and contributing to wider conversations around engagement, inclusion, and student opportunities. In addition, I have supported major events and initiatives such as Welcome Week, society development, and leadership opportunities, helping to create more accessible and inclusive spaces for students to get involved.

Writtle Officer – Amelia Brewer**Campaigns in Trimester 1:**

During TRI1 we hosted a few campus assemblies to get some feedback from students on what they would like done with their student spaces (Thyme Out/The Baa and the HE Hub). We have gathered the feedback with hopes to invest some money into the spaces and give the students what they are asking for. During TRI1 we also got some feedback from students regarding catering and residential concerns and took this forward to the relevant departments for development. This was something that really hit the ground running within TRI2.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

The Union Cocoon was opened to provide a quiet, sensory space for students to use for studying, socialising, quiet time, or just a change of scenery. We have had some major success among some of the students using the space, with many compliments as to how cosy it is to work in.

A development plan for the residential halls and catering has been established with the Director of Estates, the catering department, the residential team, and the campus manager. Regular meetings with this group of people will help to tackle issues as they arise and get immediate feedback from students for improvements. There are specific dates arranged for in-person feedback opportunities from students outlined for September onwards, which will be overseen by the next Writtle officer, Millie Bridgeman and the union campus manager, Abi Knowles.

Non-campaign work:

We have had some major success with student engagement and purchasing tickets for events in The Baa and other social spaces. Some of these successful events include:

- Moulsham's Charity Pub Crawl
- Writtle's Got Talent
- Summer Festival/Carnifest

We are actively gaining feedback from students all the time in establishing areas for improvement.

London Officer – Nayem Hasan

Campaigns in Trimester 1:

Ablution Facilities This campaign focused on ensuring that students from all backgrounds have access to inclusive and hygienic prayer and washroom facilities. Following successful campaigning during Trimester 1, the proposal was approved, and the facilities were installed for student use from January onwards. We now have dedicated ablution facilities for both male and female students.

More Printers on Campus This campaign aimed to reduce student waiting times, especially during busy examination periods, and to improve access to colour printing services. As a result, two new printers have been installed on the 1st Floor and in the 4th Floor Computer Lab for student use.

Affordable Food Options I continuously pushed for more affordable and healthier meal options on campus. Student-led alternatives and feedback have been taken into consideration to improve food accessibility for students.

Increasing Student Societies and Campus Engagement I campaigned and promoted the creation of more student societies to make our campus more vibrant and engaging. As our student community comes from diverse backgrounds, we now have 20+ additional student-led societies. These societies are helping create a more inclusive and lively campus environment through cultural celebrations, food festivals, traditional dress showcases, and many other colourful events and activities.

Campaigns in Trimester 2:

Integration of Mooting into the LLB Law Module Campaigning to integrate mooting into the LLB Law module to provide students with more practical legal advocacy experience as part of their studies. I met with the Head of the Law School, who confirmed support for this initiative. This will greatly benefit our law students by helping them develop stronger advocacy skills and greater confidence in practical legal settings.

Better Library Facilities and More Books Working towards improving library facilities and increasing the availability of academic resources and books for students. Alongside the ARU Digital Library and e-book core texts, many students have expressed a preference for paper books, as feedback shows they feel more comfortable with paper book.

Permanent Courtroom for Law Students Campaigning for a permanent courtroom space where law students can practise advocacy and mooting in a realistic legal environment. This space would:

- Allow students to develop practical advocacy and mooting skills
- Support mooting competitions and legal networking events
- Enhance student confidence and employability
- Be available for seminars, workshops, and student events across departments

Non-campaign work:

- Meet the Officer Event (21 May)
- London Campus Assembly (First week of June)
- Law Networking Event (Second week of June)

Peterborough Officer - Ashmin Shaju

This Officer did not provide a written update.