



Amar Mahmood, Danny McGuire, Ellie Best, Ste Smith and Wes Cosgriff line-up at the start of the election period. Photo by Tom Skarbek-Wazynski

Five-way fight for Students' Union President

23 candidates standing for LUSU Full Time Officer roles

Matthew Power
Editor

Week 8 will see the most contested Full Time Officer election since 2005. 23 candidates are standing for the six positions that are available.

In the contest of LUSU President, there are five candidates, the highest number of Presidential candidates since 2004 when six candidates stood.

Cross Campus LUSU Council Officer Danny McGuire, is contesting for the position against Cross Campus EWD Council Officer, Ellie Best. Wes Cosgriff, Bailrigg FM's General Secre-

tary, Ste Smith, current Cross Campus LUSU Campaigns Officer and Amar Mahmood, a postgraduate student, complete the line-up.

As with last year's election, there are two people standing for the role of Vice President (Academic). Richard Clark, Pendle JCR Sports Secretary and Elle Robinson, ex-County College JCR Magazine Editor, will contest the election.

The highest number of candidates standing for one position is six, in the contest for Vice President (Activities). The role, which is coming to the end of its first year in existence, oversees the 180 clubs and societies

within the Union, as well as organising the annual Roses competition against York University.

Each candidate has held different positions within the Students' Union and different groups. Liz Ashworth is the ex-President of Women's Rugby Club and current Social Secretary. She is contested by Richard Cadd who has been Snowboard Captain for the past two years on the Snow Sports Exec.

Also competing for the role is Rob Dickinson, who has previously held the position of Cross Campus Societies Officer, as well as being Furness President last year. The current Cross Campus

Societies Officer and ex-President of the History Society, Matt Haslam, is also standing for the position.

Also running is Nick O'Malley, who ran for Vice President (Media and Communications) in last year's election, and is on this year's Roses Committee. Completing the six running for Vice President (Activities) is Jack Taylor, a Grizedalian Fresh-er, who is the current Cross Campus Sports Officer.

There are two candidates standing for the Vice President (Equality, Welfare and Diversity) role. Grace Fitzpatrick, current Cross

Campus Welfare Campaigns Officer and ex-Lonsdale JCR EWD Officer, is contesting Rosalia O'Reilly, Pendle JCR Vice President (Equality and Welfare).

Jennifer Grayson, who recently directed the Vagina Monologues, was also standing for the position of Vice President (Equality, Welfare and Diversity) but decided to withdraw her nomination during the first week of campaigning.

The role of Vice President (Events and Democracy) is contested by four candidates, after James Beedie dropped out after two days of campaigning.

Continued on page 3

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THE CANDIDATES

LUSU PRESIDENT

Interviews by Erin O'Reilly (News Editor)

Ellie Best	Page 4
Wes Cosgriff	Page 4
Amar Mahmood	Page 5
Danny McGuire	Page 6
Ste Smith	Page 6

LUSU VP ACADEMIC

Interviews by Holly Sutton

Richard Clark	Page 7
Elle Robinson	Page 7

LUSU VP ACTIVITIES

Interviews by Rachel Stafford

Liz Ashworth	Page 8
Richard Cadd	Page 8
Rob Dickinson	Page 9
Matt Haslam	Page 9
Nick O'Malley	Page 10
Jack Taylor	Page 10

LUSU VP EQUALITY, WELFARE & DIVERSITY

Interviews by Ronnie Rowlands

Grace Fitzpatrick	Page 11
Rosalia O'Reilly	Page 11

LUSU VP EVENTS & DEMOCRACY

Interviews by Laura Kay

Emily Blanchard	Page 13
Parth Gautam	Page 13
Libby Martin	Page 14
Khairil Zhafri	Page 14

LUSU VP MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Interviews by Rachel Essex

Jonnie Critchley	Page 16
Tom Forrest	Page 16
Rachel Harvey	Page 17
Rizwaan Mohammed	Page 17

All interviews took place during the week of nominations and the first weekend of campaigning. All candidate information was correct as of SCAN going to print on Wednesday February 29.



Full-Time Officer Election Results Friday Week 8 From 8pm Free entry for the announcement of results!

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NEWS

Highest number of candidates to stand for FTO roles since 2005



Smiles at the start of the campaigning period. Photo by Matthew Power

Matthew Power
Editor

Continued from page 1

Emily Blanchard had to resign as Cross Campus Elections Officer in order to stand for the role of Vice President (Events and Democracy). Parth Gautam, currently PGSA Elections Officer, is also running for the role. The final two candidates for the role are Libby Martin, who has held the roles of President of LUDans and Vice President of County College, and third year Fylde student, Khairil Zhafril.

In the contest for Vice President (Media and Communications), whose remit

also includes editing SCAN newspaper, there are four candidates. The candidates include current SCAN Assistant Editor and ex-County JCR Magazine Editor, Jonnie Critchley and LA1:TV presenter, Tom Forrest. Bailrigg FM's Station Manager, Rachel Harvey, is also campaigning for the role. The final candidate to make up the four is Rizwaan Mohammed, a second year student from Lonsdale.

Oilly Trumble, current LUSU Vice President (Events and Democracy), is delighted with the number of candidates standing in the election.

Speaking to SCAN, Trumble praised the work of De-

mocracy Officers in the build-up to the elections. He commented, "this year we have seen an increased awareness of the nomination period as a result of the work of Elections Sub Committee. They have worked incredibly hard to support the process culminating in one of the largest candidacies ever seen for Full Time Officer elections."

Trumble also credited the nomination success to the introduction of an online nomination board that removed a large amount of administration work and "enabled Elections Officers to facilitate a bigger profile for the elections and greater logistical support for the elections

process."

In last year's Full Time Officer elections, there was just one female candidate. This year, eight female candidates are standing for the various roles. There is also an increase in postgraduate candidates, and international students standing for election.

For each of the positions, there is the option for the voter to select 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON) which Trumble "actively encouraged" students to vote for if they "not convinced that any of the candidates are right for the job."

Campaigning began on Sunday Week 6 and will take place throughout Week 7 and

Week 8. All candidates will make speeches at 'Candidates Questions' which takes place on Tuesday Week 8 at 6.30PM in the Minor Hall. Voting opens on Wednesday Week 8 and closes at 4PM on Friday Week 8.

During Week 7 and Week 8, candidates will be participating in block runs throughout on-campus accommodation.

The results of the Full Time Officer elections, as well as the results of the NUS Delegates election, will be announced at the Sugarhouse on Friday Week 8. The event begins at 8PM and there is free entry for everyone. LA1:TV and Bailrigg will also be streaming the results live.

LUSU PRESIDENT (Interviews by Erin O'Reilly - News Editor)

Ellie Best

PENDLE COLLEGE

"I want LUSU to be the best it can be"

"I want LUSU to be more accessible to people" Ellie Best told SCAN when asked why she was running for President.

Although a second year, Best has multiple different experiences under her belt. She organised the 'Slut Walk' during her first year, along with the 'Reclaim the Night' march this year, and is in the process of organising 'Lancaster Pride.' She also currently holds the position of Cross Campus Equality, Welfare and Diversity Officer and feels that she has good knowledge in regards to the different groups and structures on campus.

On the topic of next year's £9,000 fees, Best thinks it is

"really important to standardise the way departments work." As it stands deadlines and other matters, such as what is viewed as extenuating circumstances, vary amongst departments and she would like to change that. Best also wants "to lobby the university to budget people depending on their department for their hidden course costs." She would also like to publicise these course costs in the University Prospectus so that students know exactly what to expect, along with seeing more provisions for students put in place, such as a University-funded printing budget.

Moving onto the subject

of postgraduate representation, Best believes that many postgraduate students do not realise that "LUSU is their union" and thinks "that needs to change" so that they can become "more included in the process." One idea she has in terms of communicating with them is to go through departments rather than colleges, particularly as a lot of postgraduates "feel more aligned to their department than the Graduate college."

Many postgraduates also have compulsory obligations to work for a couple of hours per week, Best feels that these contracts are often "ambiguous and vary between departments." She



would "like to work to ensure that as far as possible, LUSU covers [these students] and that they are protected by their union."

In terms of accessibility, Best would like to create an online consultation to ensure that any students can have "a say on the issues they feel are important to them." She would also like to see Full Time Officers having their own office hours, along with the current open door policy.

Best views the University

as a community, and along with representing students believes that LUSU needs to be thinking about the wider University community as well. She has attended trade union meetings in the past, emphasising her belief that it is "important to support all people at the University."

"I'm not running for my C.V." she said, "I'm running because I want LUSU to be the best it can be and represent the students to the best possible ability that it can."

Wes Cosgriff

FURNESS COLLEGE

"I want to tackle the problems LUSU and students face"

Weekly "student surgeries" and a "presidential fundraiser" are just some of the ideas Wes Cosgriff would like to bring to the role of LUSU President.

Communication is one of the key concepts of Cosgriff's campaign. At the moment, he thinks that not enough students know what the Students' Union does and how it works. He would like to "open it up" and make it so that "everybody feels a part of the union." Embellishing on how he would like to achieve this, he placed particular focus on LUSU Council. It is one "of the key bodies" and is "massively important, yet no one

knows where it is and what is on the agenda", and this is something he would like to change.

His idea of "weekly student surgeries" means that Cosgriff would "sit down for an hour or two every week" at different locations and "let students come and speak to [him] about anything and everything - what's important to them, and what's affecting them." He would also like to see an online suggestions box on the LUSU website for students to communicate their ideas. "It's the little things that need doing" he commented.

Cosgriff also discussed

how he would like to donate £1500 from his salary that would go into a campaigns fund. He would make this fund accessible to students, whether they be sports teams, societies, or JCRs, in order to help them set up campaigns for "the issues that matter for students" such as the Still Human Campaign last term.

Fighting "for the issues that we care about" is something Cosgriff feels passionately about. With £9,000 fees in place for next year, he believes it is about getting "more for our money" such as more contact hours. He expressed that if students



are paying more, then they deserve more. He would also like to improve the standard of LUSU housing; putting a stop to the "horror stories" he has heard in the past.

The possibility of a Lancaster-Liverpool collaboration is also something Cosgriff views as being "at the forefront of whoever wins the election" and "certainly at the forefront of [his] mind." He would like to increase research quality in terms of this, and talk to

more students - particularly postgraduates - so that any decisions made will be based "on what students want."

Overall Cosgriff would like LUSU to be "everybody's Union", a Union that "anybody feels they can talk to, that people know what it's doing, and when it's doing it."

"I'm not a person who talks about doing something and leaves it" he said, "I'm someone who sees a problem and tackles it. I want to tackle the problems LUSU and students face."

Amar Mahmood

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"Change is needed and I can bring about those changes"

"A sense of optimism and a belief that things can be done, and done well" is Amar Mahmood's vision for LUSU should he be elected as President.

Academia is a big focus for Mahmood, after feeling complacent about the lack of space in seminars he was inclined to become a student representative for his course. In doing so, he became aware of multiple different issues surrounding the University resulting in an interest in the role of LUSU President.

One of these issues was the possibility of a merger between Lancaster and Liv-

erpool Universities. While he does believe in collaboration to some extent," he is "very much against" the idea of a merger, and feels that it will be "too much."

As a postgraduate student, meeting the needs of other post-graduates is another area of importance. Mahmood feels that they can be "under-represented" and that sometimes their needs can be different to those of undergraduates. An increase in library space and books that are more up-to-date are just some of the ideas that he has for increasing the requirements of post-graduates and undergradu-

ates alike. He would also like to see library opening hours being increased, particularly over the weekend.

Mahmood feels that these kinds of changes will help to meet the expectations of students, particularly with the start of £9,000 fees in the up-coming academic year. An increase in more Purple Card deals is another notion that Mahmood would like to see fulfilled in light of the fee increase, as at the moment he feels there are simply not enough available.

Women's issues and equality is another area of interest for Mahmood. "It is a shame that the Women's



Officer position was abolished" he commented, "as I believe some women would rather talk to other women about some issues." With men holding a large amount of positions on campus, he feels there "needs to be certain representation for women" and plans to take "affirmative action" to achieve this.

During the interview, Mahmood also divulged a story about a first year student who struggled to find accommodation at Lan-

caster and had to live in a caravan in Garstang for the first couple of weeks of their university experience. This struck a nerve with Mahmood, making accommodation a key area of focus for him in order to ensure that students have a positive impression of the university right from the start.

Overall, Mahmood believes that changes need to be made, and that he is someone "who can bring about those changes."

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LUSU PRESIDENT (Interviews by Erin O'Reilly - News Editor)

Danny McGuire

CARTMEL COLLEGE

"I have the experience to challenge the University about their actions"

Danny McGuire believes that the University needs a strong LUSU President to stand up for the students and their needs, and feels that he is the person to do so.

He labels himself as "a really engaged person in the Union", highlighting how his role as Cartmel Vice President allowed him to gain experience in multiple different areas such as "Academic Council, LUSU Council" and the organisation of Freshers' Week. He also holds the position for Cross Campus Officer for Welfare Campaigns. "I feel now that I have enough experience to start questioning and challenging the Univer-

sity about their actions" he said.

Strengthening the roles of the colleges is one of McGuire's key ideas. He would like to give the college JCRs "a bit more money" in order to put on bigger events that students can get engaged in. After the recent success of 'Big Night Out in Colour', he would like to see more "big one-off events" taking place. In terms of the colleges in general, McGuire believes them to be one of the main reasons that students choose to attend Lancaster and is keen to strengthen them in terms of the kinds of support and funding they get. He

would like to channel funding in a "more direct way to students" so that they are more aware of where the money is going.

On the hot topic of £9,000 fees, McGuire believes the "Union is in a fantastic position financially" to support incoming students. He would work "with the University throughout the year to ensure that expectations are met, and make it clear that the Union is there to support students." He does not want to see any hidden course costs, or students "paying for anything extra" and will "make sure the University delivers on everything they



have promised."

Moving onto the subject of the Lancaster-Liverpool collaboration, McGuire expressed that he had "been involved in quite a lot of the talks" in regards to this. He does not think a merger is going to happen anymore and stressed the importance of slowing the process down "and really having a look at making sure what happens is best for everyone." That being said, he does "like the idea of departmental collaborations," highlighting the current col-

laborative system in the Faculty of Health and Medicine and how it seems to be "working for them." He does, however, think that there should "be more options for departments" in terms of whether they do want to collaborate and who with.

McGuire believes that an approachable nature and engaging directly with students will be crucial to the role of President. "I'm always willing to learn" he said, "I love a challenge and I'm not afraid of asking questions."

Ste Smith

FYLDE COLLEGE

"I have the necessary skills for the job"

Ste Smith feels that he has "a passion for LUSU" and would aim to "improve the student experience for everybody" if he were to be President.

To date, Smith has had plenty of involvement with LUSU. He has been on Fylde JCR for two years, is currently Cross Campus Officer for LUSU campaigns, and is employed by LUSU retail. He believes that his previous role as Fylde President will be extremely beneficial to him. It involved "taking a widespread view of all the different aspects, whether it's socials, welfare, Freshers' Week or Extrav" he explained, and in order to lead LUSU, Smith thinks it is fun-

damental to "have an interest" in all aspects. He also feels that this role has given him the necessary leadership skills for the job.

Smith has a variety of different plans should he be elected, including altering the governance structure in an effort to make LUSU more accessible. At the moment, he feels that the structures are not clear enough, reflected in the frustration felt at the latest General Meeting where people were not fully aware of the amendments procedures or the voting regulations. He would aim for an "open source democracy" where "random selections of students" can be consulted in order to formu-

late new ideas.

Smith would also like to have a big act during Freshers' Week and labelled the fact that this has never been done as "criminal." Smith is also keen to work closer with the JCRs in their organisation of Freshers' Week, ensuring that the channels of communication are kept open.

This idea goes hand-in-hand with the rising expectation of incoming students as a result of £9,000 fees. "The union needs to be a watchdog" he commented, and that they must constantly be on the case of the university "to make sure they are living up to the promises and pledges they have made



to their students."

"We need to make sure the money that is being spent on students" he continued, "is being spent in the right way and that students are benefiting from it."

Smith would also like to see the Sugarhouse and LUSU retail services developing and "providing for what students want, not what they think students want."

On the subject of the possibility of a Lancaster-Liverpool collaboration, Smith believes that at the moment

there is still not enough information available. He thinks there are clear benefits and drawbacks to this possibility, and does not want to see "Lancaster being a partner that is abused in a way that Liverpool gets the benefits" and would tread with caution in regards to this.

"If I become President" Smith concluded, "I hope that when I leave I will be leaving behind a much clearer, defined structure for people to get involved in the Students' Union."

LUSU VP (ACADEMIC) (Interviews by Holly Sutton)

Richard Clark

PENDLE COLLEGE

"My experience will prove vital for this role"

Richard Clark has been involved in the academic sector of the University throughout his time at Lancaster, and believes that his numerous experiences provide him with the knowledge that he will need if appointed as the new Vice President (Academic).

Concerning the role, he said: "I am hopefully someone who can lead the students at times, but I am also aware that sometimes it is them who should lead me, directing me on issues of importance and helping me to represent them."

Last year, Clark was Vice President of Pendle, and was

the only member of the JCR to have an academic remit. He is currently the Cross Campus Academic Council Officer, and believes that both positions will "prove vital for the role as on-going issues from this year will be a part of [his] job as FTO if elected", and it is this belief that he feels will give him a strong starting point to build on.

Clark has strong beliefs relating to the academics of the University. When asked about the possible collaboration between Lancaster and Liverpool, he believes there are "pros and cons for the merger." A pro being that "a

lot of universities are thinking about a collaboration", so it is something we need to do if we want to "keep the funding that we're getting." In terms of negativity, Clark believes that one of the major concerns for students is that "we will no longer be just Lancaster." He added, "It's a great thing that we're getting degrees from Lancaster," however if the merger goes ahead, "[students] will end up with a Liverpool-Lancaster degree, which is something I think people need to be aware of."

Having attended the recent General Meeting, Clark feels that what the union



are doing in terms of the Business Process Review is "brilliant." "They're really addressing what the student needs and they're really showing the University that they're not willing to let this go by unnoticed" he said.

On the topic of £9,000 fees, Clark believes that students' priorities will "change slightly." He feels the student experience will be "vital as always in making sure that they enjoy their time at university." However, there will be "much more focus on

academic studies." He added that students will "expect a lot more in terms of what they have to pay for" such as hidden course costs, and Clark hopes this is something he will be able to fix if elected.

Clark believes that officers must work to effect as much positive change as possible during their year in office, adding that this idea "encompasses all of the things that [FTO's] do day to day, as well as offering scope for people moving above and beyond their remit."

Elle Robinson

COUNTY COLLEGE

"I want to standardise departments to make them fair for everyone"

Elle Robinson's interest in running for the role of Vice President (Academic) started with her degree in Natural Sciences, where she was able to take modules from different departments allowing her to gain a deeper insight into the academic side of the University.

She wants to "standardise the departments to make them fair for everyone," and also thinks the role "will be really fun and interesting."

As Robinson was Magazine Editor on County JCR in her first year at Lancaster and was also part of the Extrav committee, she

believes that she "knows how things in LUSU work." She also says that "one of the most important parts of the role is being able to listen to what everyone wants" and feels that one of her qualities is being "a good listener."

When asked about a number of academic issues throughout the University, Robinson was keen to express her views. She believes that the possible collaboration between Lancaster and Liverpool "can only be a good thing." "We can take things from Liverpool that we don't have" she commented, such as their "longer library open-

ing hours," which she believes is one of the main issues at Lancaster. She added that she doesn't think "[Lancaster] will lose [its] academic identity."

Robinson attended the recent General Meeting and does not agree with the Business Process Review judging from what she has seen of it. "There's not been enough talk with LUSU or students, so I don't think, in its current form, that it's a good idea" she said.

On the topic of tuition fees, Robinson believes that one of the ways in preparing Lancaster to be a £9000 university is "to make Part I count for maybe



10% of the degree, to make it not feel like a waste of time. I think if you make it count for too much then people will struggle." Another of her suggestions was to "create opportunities to be able to audit lectures in other departments that we find interesting." She feels that this "should be an option if you're paying so much and you've only got around five hours of contact time."

Discussing Departmental Reps, she suggested that the

training for the reps should be more standardised. "It seems to be a bit up in the air what people seem to get out of it, and I want them to be more approachable" she said.

Robinson believes that officers must work to ensure that long term goals and achievements for students are secured. "Even though the job is just a year long, everyone else is here for three or four years." She added, "long term is what you need to be looking for."

LUSU VP (ACTIVITIES) (Interviews by Rachel Stafford)

Liz Ashworth

COUNTY COLLEGE

"I want all students to get the best out of their experience at university"

Liz Ashworth believes that the position of Vice President (Activities) combines clubs and societies successfully. "It is really important that the two come within one heading and that they both get a fair overseeing." Although her background is mainly within sports rather than societies, her position on LUSU Activities Exec this year has given her the opportunity to learn more about the societies and therefore she feels that she would represent them both equally.

"Communication is the best way that students can

get LUSU to work for them." As the Women's Rugby Team President for the past year, Ashworth feels that she hasn't been aware of all of the funding that she's entitled to and would aim to rectify this were she to gain the position of VP (Activities). "All clubs will be given a breakdown of the money that they are entitled to receive at the start of the year."

As far as communication is concerned, Ashworth believes that it is crucial to attend as many of the clubs' and societies' matches and events as possible. "It wouldn't be fair to the teams

who have voted you in and who you are meant to be representing if you don't take an interest in what they're doing. Then you can best advise them on their next move."

"I would try to work alongside the Sports Centre"

Due to her experience within sports clubs, Ashworth can understand the



problems they may face stating, "I would like to work with the VP (Academic) and push for lectures to not be put on a Wednesday. This will increase the time which teams could meet and availability of space in general, as well as making it easier for full teams to attend away matches."

In terms of the current discussions with the Sports Centre and student unrest regarding this matter, Ashworth feels that a strong but fair approach is important. "I

would try to work alongside the Sports Centre so that it is benefitting the students at the University to the best of its ability. The centre is on our campus and the students should therefore be a priority."

A positive attitude is key to Ashworth's campaign of an open door, approachable policy. "In my year in office I would aim to make as much positive change as possible. I want all students to get the best out of their experience at university."

Richard Cadd

FYLDE COLLEGE

"I want to improve communication between the VP and student groups"

"A front man for the University" is how Vice President (Activities) candidate Richard 'Caddy' Cadd defines the role. "Over the past 6 months I have worked for LUSU on the info desk in the bunker. I have witnessed what each of the FTOs do and I believe that I can fulfil the role of VP (Activities)."

Cadd believes that the combined role of VP (Activities) has been a successful one over the past year and that it is better to have one person representing sports and societies, a visible icon. He also believes that it is crucial to treat all clubs and

societies fairly and that communication is an important part of this.

"I want to make clubs aware of funding"

Cadd believes that meeting with as many teams as possible at least once a term to review their progress and set aims and objectives will be highly beneficial.

"With Lancaster University

being in the top 10 in league tables in the country, I believe we should be aiming to up our BUCS ranking as well. We are currently 47th in the country for overall BUCS points and as VP (Activities) I would hope to try within the year to get us into at least the 30's and maybe lower." Cadd would aim to support BUCS teams with specialist coaches and as desirable training times as possible. He would also open discussions to look at the issues surrounding Wednesday lectures and seminars with a view to keeping Wednesdays' free, enabling full teams to travel



to away matches.

As 2013 would be the year of a Roses tournament in York rather than Lancaster, Cadd believes that relationships need to be built between the VP (Activities) and the sports captains from the beginning of the year. "In previous years there has been a lot of emphasis on the party side of the competition; I would aim to put a stronger emphasis on the sport itself." Cadd believes communication is crucial to the role and "developing strong connections with

the clubs would hopefully mean that clubs respect you enough to respect Roses and play well for you."

Cadd maintains that the most important thing is communication. "The main aim of my election campaign is to improve communications between the VP and the execs and members of the different clubs and societies. I would like to make sure the clubs and societies knew what funding was available so that they can improve over the upcoming year."

Rob Dickinson

FURNESS COLLEGE

"I am not afraid to speak out and act against things that are wrong"

Rob 'Dicko' Dickinson's experience is the key to his campaign for the position of Vice President (Activities) "having previously been college Sports Secretary and President, CCO Societies officer and being a part of all college teams, I believe I have a good insight into how BUCS, college competitions, clubs and societies work." He has really enjoyed his time as CCO Societies Officer and "would love to continue to help with the creation, maintaining and expansion of the University's clubs and societies."

Dickinson feels that the

key quality he possesses which would help him in the role of VP (Activities) is being "outspoken". He explained "if people come to me with an issue, I am not afraid to speak out and act against things that are wrong and stand up for the students."

"You can use the role to promote Carter Shield"

As far as a combined po-

sition working with both sports and societies is concerned, Dickinson feels that he would be able to support both sides equally and that the combined role "works better, especially where it comes to funding; it is much easier because all the money is in the same place and it brings everything together."

One of Dickinson's interests within the role is Carter Shield. He does not hold the feeling amongst some members of the student body that the event should be scrapped and would continue to promote and support it, "With the power of



VP (Activities) you can use that name and role to promote Carter Shield, I have never really seen it promoted enough by LUSU. I would aim to have the role more involved in aiding the continuing growth of Carter Shield, which has seen a steady increase in attendance."

As far as the away Roses competition of 2013 is concerned, Dickinson believes that the key issue is that of timetabling, with York using their home advantage and placing it within Lancaster's

exams period so they are unable to take a full, focused team. "If I were to gain the position of VP (Activities), I would try to argue with York to put the competition on a weekend easier to attend."

Finally, Dickinson feels that he has all the key attributes to make him a successful VP (Activities), "I am an outspoken, honest, committed, passionate and creative person. Anyone who will have seen me at sports events, I'm sure can vouch for that."

Matt Haslam

LONSDALE COLLEGE

"I feel that everything in my 10 point manifesto is accessible and achievable"

For Matt Haslam, running for Vice President (Activities) is about helping the student body to get the most out of their University experience, as Haslam feels that he himself has. He stated "I have always enjoyed engaging with activities outside of academic commitments and love encouraging people to do likewise and get involved." Haslam is confident that he has the relevant experience to be able to fulfil the role, saying "the experience of serving on 3 different Execs has given me a great insight into societies' organisation of events, socials and campaigns. As

Cross Campus Societies Officer I have already begun initiating ideas I have for the development of our groups, to initial success so far and I hope for greater success in the following weeks and terms."

From sitting on the Activities Exec, Haslam can see that there are no differences between sports and societies as far as the VP (Activities) and his team are concerned, and he feels that this combined FTO position has been a great success. "As VP (Activities) I would aim to attend as many society events and sports matches as I could. Events are

a great place for networking and letting the people who have elected you know who you are."

"I would aim to attend as many events as possible"

One issue that he has with the current system is that, "current societies don't use the Activities Office as much as they could; I think it's important to build one to one



relationships with as many of the societies and clubs as possible." Matt would aim to make the Activities Office more of a hub where people could drop in and get information and support.

Haslam also thinks that improvements could be made to the current relationship with the Sports Centre and that the current issues are down to a lack of respect from the student body, lacking communication from both sides. He feels that more work could be put into the relationship, with

LUSU encouraging a better attitude from the students and increasing publicity for the Sports Centre's events.

Haslam wants to stress that he feels that everything within his manifesto is accessible and achievable. "My manifesto is structured into 10 points to make it easy for people to read. All the things that are mentioned in my manifesto are realistic and workable. Through my role as CCO Societies I can see some areas where things can be improved."

LUSU VP (ACTIVITIES) (Interviews by Rachel Stafford)

Nick O'Malley

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"I would relish the chance to do my best for the teams, clubs and societies"

As the unofficial sports rep for Graduate College during the 2011/2012 season, Nick O'Malley has developed a team which has competed in all Carter Shield events, for the first time in three years. He hopes that this enthusiasm for the event will help him to increase participation across the colleges. "I love sports and activities and I love getting involved. I hope that my enthusiasm will come across and play an active part in helping more and more people get involved in different ways."

As VP Activities for the year 2012/2013 the successful candidate would be

in the position for an away Roses tournament, bringing with it its own set of challenges. O'Malley said "for me, it would be amazing to win an away Roses, I know that doesn't happen very often!"

"I will do my best and do what I think is best for clubs"

He feels that his experience with Roses within both SCAN and the sport itself will be invaluable as far as the

VP Activities position is concerned. "I understand Roses, having been involved in different capacities, as a sports writer and editor and also within the pool, darts and rounders teams for all of my three years I have been here." He added "I am on the 2012 Roses committee."

If O'Malley was to be elected for the role he would aim to be a "thinker, listener, doer [...]. The main thing for me would simply be finding out what people want from me and the rest of the Activities Office, and then do my best to provide it."

O'Malley feels that the combined role of VP Activities



has been a great success and that Marc [Handley, current VP Activities] has made great progress next year which he would love to continue with were he to be elected VP Activities. He believes that he would represent both societies and sports equally due to his experience within societies as well as sports, such as his role as "Vice President for the Referees' Society for this academic year." Nick would take a strong stance on the clubs and societies stating "I will not be afraid to speak up

on behalf of clubs and societies against any higher powers. I will do my best and do what I think is best for the sports teams, clubs and societies, as well as the University."

Nick believes he would do a good job in the role commenting "I care very much for sports and activities within the University. I hope this comes across. And, if given the chance to do my best for the University, teams, clubs and societies, that would be a chance I would relish."

Jack Taylor

GRIZEDALE COLLEGE

"I believe LUSU needs a VP who can secure as much funding as possible"

Jack Taylor believes that the skills he possesses which will give him the edge in the Vice President (Activities) election are founded in "campaigning, lobbying, accountability and communication".

Firstly he believes that the position is about representing societies and sports, within the student body and the University as a whole. Secondly he feels it is about working on behalf of the groups to get as much money as possible out of the University. Finally he believes it is important to ensure that students get the most out of their experience at University, including

involvement in societies and clubs.

As VP Activities has only been a combined position for the past year, Taylor feels that although the merger has gone well so far, there's more work to be done. "Marc [Handley, current VP Activities] merged the positions well but someone new needs to come in and build on that."

Accountability is very important to Taylor's campaign. "I would launch a weekly newsletter stating all the financial decisions made by the Activities Office and its Councils, as well as all the groups I had met with, my

timetable for the week and issues that had been brought forward to me."

"I will launch a weekly newsletter"

Although Taylor wishes to have a one on one relationship with as many of the societies as possible, he feels that attending the Wednesday sports matches is not the best way to do this, as they are "focusing on the game, not on meeting with LUSU."



Yet Taylor believes that there are communications issues to be addressed. "I spoke to the President of one society which had been around for eight years and had never been spoken to by LUSU. They have really failed this society and this needs to be rectified." He feels that he would be the person to enact this change. "My communication skills are second to none and my experience in this area has been so extensive and effective that I was nominated and selected from over 33,000 people to

carry the Olympic torch in 2012."

Taylor believes that as a LUSU FTO Officer it is crucial to have "one leg in the present and one in the future." He believes the University is currently in a period of renovation and that it is important for VP Activities to be involved in this. "I have experience of lobbying institutions and with £9000 fees coming in next year, I believe LUSU needs a VP who can secure as much funding as possible for Activities."

LUSU VP (EQUALITY, WELFARE & DIVERSITY) (Interviews by Ronnie Rowlands)

Grace Fitzpatrick

LONSDALE COLLEGE

"It's vital we justify 'safest campus' accolade"

Having worked as Lonsdale's Female Equality, Welfare & Diversity (EWD) officer and undertaken the Cross Campus Officer roles of Equality campaigns and Welfare campaigns respectively, as well as her current service as LUSU Council's Vice Chair, Grace Fitzpatrick feels that she has been given "a thorough view of the goings-on in LUSU", and is now ready to add a final string to her bow by stepping up to the task of overseeing the Union's EWD activities.

In her previous capacities, Fitzpatrick firmly maintained that events should be "manipulated in order to get the most out of them." She has played a large role in events

such as 'The Big Chill', a fundraiser for Lancaster District Council's homeless shelter and a showcase of student bands and societies.

Having sat on various councils, Fitzpatrick believes she has recognised the shortcomings surrounding the work of EWD officers; "as an officer, there hasn't been an opportunity for me to liaise with [University staff]" adding that "there should be more of a connection between all EWD officers and the University staff."

She also believes that a lack of consistent communication between the Vice President, Cross Campus and JCR EWD representatives has led to some initiatives not

reaching their full potential; "we have initial meetings where we design campaigns which are really innovative and interesting, then there is no communication between the meeting and the day of the event."

Fitzpatrick says that her creativity will combat this, bringing enjoyment to the more 'mundane' EWD related tasks; "we don't just have to sit there and say 'you do this and that', it can come about in ways that bond the officers together."

A lack of student awareness of services is a frequent criticism directed at LUSU, but Fitzpatrick asserts that the resolution is simply a case of "using the structures



we already have, such as posters, Facebook, SCAN and LA1:TV to promote what we offer."

Fitzpatrick has already addressed safety issues, working with current Vice President (EWD) Matt Saint on the 'Light the Way' campaign, a response to the lack of lighting between the Sports Centre and South West campus made in the hope that the University will install lamp-lights. A specific cause of concern to her is the fact that a student was recently run

over by a car near Lonsdale College; "there are footpaths that meet either side of some of the roads, and no crossings in between them [...] I plan to run a campaign on that next term."

If elected, Fitzpatrick's intention is to draw attention to the most basic welfare issues, believing that it is vital for Lancaster's accolade of having one of the safest campuses in Britain to be justified, and that the Union "shouldn't take this for granted."

Rosalia O'Reilly

PENDLE COLLEGE

"I've got the nerve and integrity to fight for EWD"

Rosalia O'Reilly's involvement in Equality, Welfare and Diversity (EWD) affairs far precedes her arrival at Lancaster. At the age of eight she was elected to the steering group of Article 12, a national children's organisation, and was involved in lobbying the government to legalise smacking children. At her secondary school, she ran its Amnesty International club for two years.

If elected, O'Reilly's first port of call is to address sexual health issues in an effort to "get rid of the stigma surrounding being checked for STIs."

Whilst the job entails working with the Students' Union, O'Reilly is eager to es-

tablish stronger links with the University. While the University offers good provision for EWD issues, such as Nightline and the disabled access fund, she stated that LUSU needs to "make sure that people know about them." In addition to this, O'Reilly intends to ensure that "every new building and refurbishment is checked for suitable disabled access." That such checks have been absent is exemplified by Pendle bar, which is now having disabled access installed as a result of O'Reilly's lobbying in her current role as Pendle College's Vice President of Equality and Welfare.

As well as disability issues, O'Reilly oversaw the organisation of 'Lancaster

Says Relax', an entertainment evening held to help alleviate stress. "Mental health is a very big issue that does not get given enough consideration," said O'Reilly, who hopes to address this by organising campaigns where students "take on a personal responsibility to make sure their friends are looked after."

O'Reilly also sits on the Your LGBTQ* committee and "would like to ensure that nothing happens to compromise them, and that we retain a CCO for their representation." She also holds presidency over the 'Student Assembly against Racism'; a group that she says "has been very useful during local elections."



As well as her own campaigns, O'Reilly wishes to run with existing campaigns and improve their longevity, such as the 'Easy Tiger' campaign, which advocates safe drinking. She believes that while it is strong, it "got on a lull after Fresher's Week, and that shouldn't be the case" adding that "you can't just endorse a campaign and then let it drop off the edge."

Once again, the issue of communication between the officer and the student proves to be a key issue.

O'Reilly is confident that the introduction of a fortnightly EWD 'surgery' will improve interaction and accessibility; "unless you provide a forum for communication, it's not going to happen."

Strong teamwork is also paramount, and O'Reilly plans to enforce this with a weekly check-in session with the head of every college EWD.

"I've got enough nerve and integrity to fight for EWD issues" she said, "in short, I'm a Gryffindor."

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LUSU VP (EVENTS & DEMOCRACY) (Interviews by Laura Kay)

Emily Blanchard

FURNESS COLLEGE

"I'm keen on increasing student participation"

Emily Blanchard hopes to ensure Lancaster's live entertainment scene is more student-led, by improving communication with the student body and encouraging students to suggest their own event ideas. She is keen on increasing student participation in democratic processes by making the Full Time Officer (FTO) team more accessible and the elections more understandable.

Having been Elections Officer for LUSU since 2009, Blanchard has been responsible for organising such events like candidate speech events, results nights and block runs. Her work as a social secretary involved organising events every week, ranging from movie nights to nights

out in Manchester. Between herself and her co-social secretary, Blanchard claims to have quadrupled participation rates for the events she helped organise.

When asked how she would improve the representation of postgraduate students, Blanchard replied, "I do think we're improving in our graduate representation in general but there's still a long way to go, [graduates] nowhere near match the turn-out or representation of any of the undergraduate colleges by a long shot."

She continued: "I think the entire structure of representation of postgraduates needs to be looked at. We're quite good at undergraduate representation but postgradu-

ates have got a different set of needs [...] I think reform will be on the cards."

Blanchard believes that small and large scale events are important, stating that they appeal to different kinds of students. "Small scale events, ones that maybe don't attract quite as many people, are more comfortable for people who might not enjoy the big loud and active socials; so they're both equally important and need as much attention as each other."

Discussing the expansion of the live music scene at Lancaster, Blanchard thinks "it's a case of building on successes that we've already had and working with different bands." When pressed for specific details of how she in-



tended to manage large acts, Blanchard confessed, "I'm not sure at the moment but I would be more than willing to learn and do whatever I can."

Blanchard was asked how she intended to integrate international students into the Lancaster student experience. "I think a lot of it is about information. I've been talking to the NUS International Officer about integration in both events and democracy. In terms of democracy it seems a lot of the information needed is either not given to inter-

national students or information is very sudden, so people don't really understand quite what's going on. I'd like to work to improve that."

Discussing the engagement of students in democratic processes, Blanchard believes that communication is key. "Once people begin to understand how much impact student representation can have they want to get their voice heard, and I think they [students] need to be aware of quite what LUSU can give them."

Parth Gautam

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"I want to increase integration and engagement"

Central to Parth Gautam's bid to become Vice President (Events & Democracy) is his experience as an international and postgraduate student. With insight into both these student experiences, Gautam aims to increase integration and engagement across the entire student body.

Currently PGSA Elections representative, Gautam believes that his level of study and experiences as an undergraduate will highly benefit the role, having been involved in student festivals while studying for a four-year management course in India.

"We used to have this annual festival for our college and, usually when I was in my second year, I was given the role for different plays and

acts – to set up the timings and organising them," he said. He also added: "In my final year, fourth year, I was given a team of six people who I coordinated."

For increasing graduate involvement in events and democracy, Gautam said: "My main motive would be to engage postgraduate students more into LUSU." He continued, "We don't really have the same brand value for Graduate College as compared to other colleges, so I intend to work on that." Gautam also suggested "a few other events" targeted at Graduate College beyond Gradstock and Gradball.

On events, Gautam would rather initially experiment with smaller scale events,

feeding into larger events. "Small scale events are extremely important because they will give us an idea of how many people are interested." When questioned as to whether large scale events would be considered as a consequence of student demand, Gautam replied: "We can have large events, but it will take time."

On improving Lancaster's live music scene Gautam was initially unclear. "One of the main measures will relate to more advertisement regarding this," he said. "If I talk about Graduate College, hardly any person [knows] compared to what undergraduates know. There aren't very many people who know, so more advertisement." Gau-



tam had nothing novel to add to this, but suggested further inter-college events and parties, including formal parties.

Regarding the engagement of students with LUSU's democratic processes, Gautam emphasised the importance of a strong team and greater student representation, but was somewhat ambiguous.

Considering ideas for events and democracy, Gautam was keen on "not doing things that are heard of but doing things that are visible to people. Yeah, the [democ-

racy] cow was a good example for that."

As an international student, he identifies the integration of international students with British students as a specific issue he wishes to tackle.

When asked whether his international status would truly make other international students step forward for positions within LUSU, he said "If I talk about this year, I don't think there is anyone in LUSU who is international. We can say it can be a start if I'm elected."

LUSU VP (EVENTS & DEMOCRACY) (Interviews by Laura Kay)

Libby Martin

COUNTY COLLEGE

"I'd like to increase awareness and involvement"

Libby Martin hopes to increase awareness and involvement in LUSU's democratic processes whilst also encouraging a greater diversity in events by engaging a wider variety of students.

Martin has sat on the Lancaster University Dance Society Executive for two years (President 10/11, Show Co-Ordinator 11/12) and was involved with organising 'Once Upon a Time in County', County Extrav 2011. She has been active as an Academic Officer (Departmental Rep/VP County/Academic Campaigns CCO) and previously expressed to SCAN experience in elections through 'three so-

ciety elections, a departmental election, a JCR election and a CCO election'.

Regarding big name events such as the upcoming appearance of Labrinth at The Sugarhouse, Martin said "In terms of having big name acts as this is pretty much the first we've done we're not sure how students will respond to it. Obviously £16 - or however much it is - is quite a lot of money for a night in Sugar. I mean if students respond well to that, and they're interested in that, and they want to do that then I'm happy to continue running events like that and maybe getting similar acts in at campus festivals as well."

Martin went on to

further discuss other live music events at Lancaster: "Battle of the Bands, I think, is wonderful and a great opportunity for student bands, and live music nights and concert nights are really good." She added, "Just helping the officers to continue with that" is her plan for live campus music.

When questioned whether she had any fresh ideas to bring to the table, Martin questioned the effectiveness of student questionnaires used previously by LUSU. "I don't know how many students actually fill them out," she said. "If there was something in the [Alexandra] Square and maybe having a thing to write on -



a board, to write your ideas on - a massive big thing in the square where everyone passes, everyday. Maybe that would be more beneficial than just an online survey when people get so many emails all the time, anyways."

On the engagement and integration of international students, Martin advocated the use of international officers, commenting that "using [international] officers that have been elected into such roles and helping them to go around in block

runs talking to [international students] and putting on special events specifically for international students like the cultural fusion events happening at the moment" was her perceived way forward. She added: "We should continue with those [fusion events], and make them bigger and better."

When asked how she would improve postgraduate representation in LUSU, Martin stated: "work with the postgrad college exec, definitely."

Khairil Zhafri

FYLDE COLLEGE

"I want to reform LUSU"

Khairil Zhafri aims to reform LUSU, feeling that LUSU has failed to meaningfully represent its members in the past.

In previous correspondence prior to his interview with SCAN, Zhafri made frequent use of the word 'we' in lieu of 'I'. When asked to elaborate upon this, he responded: "When I was finally persuaded to run for this position, I wanted to make it separate from me. I didn't want to make it about my candidacy and a campaign about me getting elected, I want it really to be about the issues, about bringing reform. So we - when I say we - it's essentially just about the people helping with the cam-

paign and people who support the campaign."

Although Zhafri is lacking in student officer experience, he believes that there is too great an emphasis placed on prior experience.

When questioned as to his unique selling point compared to other candidates who had mentioned reform and also possess experience in democracy and events, Zhafri said: "To be quite honest with you I don't think they quite, not many people really understand what democracy entails, what democracy really means. Because a lot of people when they talk about democracy and they talk about changing how LUSU functions, these ideas are not

actually guided by any sort of liberal principles."

On bringing in big name acts to Lancaster, Zhafri was somewhat unclear but commented, "on the events side of things, I think what LUSU has been doing is good. But I think a lot of the time these events are closed events; they're not open to everyone."

He continued: "The problem with these kind of events is that LUSU presumably subsidise the cost and I think we owe to all LUSU members the transparency in holding these events."

Zhafri further stated that he is keen on enabling students to promote their own events rather than initiating his own. "The role of the



VP (Events and Democracy) would be to just support them [students] in organising events." He also added: "if you want to, you know, start an event and you have the passion to do it, know the people who can do it, you can come to LUSU and get the support that you need."

Regarding the engagement of international students with LUSU, Zhafri believes: "[we need to] just take a step back and approach and engage with international students the same way we

engage with all other students."

Asked how he would increase engagement with postgraduate students, Zhafri commented: "I think the problem with participation with postgraduate students is because most of them are - they - at this university there is a small number of them and most of them are only here for one or two years." He gave no specifics but stated that he did not think postgraduates were less important than undergraduates.

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LUSU VP (MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS) (Interviews by Rachel Essex)

Jonnie Critchley

COUNTY COLLEGE

"I want a professional & quality media"

Jonnie Critchley is a candidate who is certainly not short of experience. Critchley currently holds the position of Assistant Editor for SCAN, was previously a part of the SCAN Investigations team, a breakfast presenter on Bailrigg FM, as well as former County JCR Magazine Editor.

He has also been involved in, and led, many cross media initiatives such as the coverage of last term's college elections. Critchley believes this experience is a key quality he would bring to the role of Vice President (Media and Communications), as it has provided him with extensive knowledge of the way student media is run, as well as vital awareness of Union is-

sues.

Critchley has a wealth of different ideas that he would bring to the role if elected. He feels it is fundamental that SCAN returns to its fortnightly print schedule, which he hopes will improve LUSU's transparency and accessibility. Transparency for LUSU is something Critchley would aim to achieve if elected, attaining this by communicating further with students through promotion of LUSU's website, personal Full Time Officer blogs, publicising LUSU meetings and events, and pushing for face to face student contact.

He aims to bring a more critical edge to LUSU's media outlets, which he believes requires "improving the quality,

perception and promotion of the media, creating a platform on which students can engage and discuss a wide variety of important issues."

Critchley also put forward his new idea for a joint media showcase website, in which all three forms of Lancaster media could be promoted on an easy-to-use and up-to-date site. Critchley also expressed a strong desire to improve the listenership of Bailrigg, which he believes this website could aid.

Critchley placed heavy emphasis on the importance of supporting JCR Media officers, and highlighted his awareness of the existing sub-committee for Media Officers. He wishes to further expand on this committee



and incorporate a member of the LUSU Design Team, providing support and guidance for JCR Media Officers, as well as ongoing training.

When asked on his thoughts about the role of Vice President (Media & Communications) also including SCAN Editor, Critchley made his opinion clear. He would like to explore the possibility of separating the roles, ensuring critical distance between the two positions.

Another issue Critchley will have to face if elected is

the recent upsurge of independent student media outlets. Critchley said he would be "happy to facilitate any new student media initiative" and praised the new papers as it gives student a choice over their own media.

Overall, Critchley, if elected, is extremely excited to use his passion, dedication, commitment and experience to create a "professional-quality media for our University" which is what he believes we should be striving for.

Tom Forrest

LONSDALE COLLEGE

"I want to inspire Lancaster students and ignite pride within the Uni"

The key to Tom Forrest's campaign to be the next Vice President (Media and Communications) lies in his emphasis upon greater unity between Lancaster's three forms of media: SCAN, Bailrigg and LA1:TV. Forrest wants to encourage more joint ventures between these medias as well as creating a new "joint media app." In general, he believes he has the skills and experience to fulfil this role and achieve these goals.

He currently holds the position of Head Sports Producer for LA1:TV and is heavily involved with many

different shows on the TV Channel, as well as being involved in organising large joint media events with Bailrigg FM. Recently, he was one of the main organisers for the successful 'Question of Sportscaster' event, which involved the collaboration of both LA1:TV and Bailrigg FM.

Forrest has already written for SCAN and would be keen to work with the current Vice President (Media and Communications) to gain further insight into the role. He has also worked freelance within media outside of LUSU for 3 years, and

is looking forward to engaging in two media placements over the Easter holidays.

Forrest placed a lot of emphasis on the renovation of Bailrigg in the hope of increasing its listenership. He aims to create a new feature for the station, "Bailrigg on Demand", in which students can listen to any radio show they wish to at any given time, thus increasing the number of students interacting with Bailrigg. Forrest also wants to ensure that the station has the right means to begin attempting coverage of more live events



around campus, as well as big sporting matches.

Forrest believes student media should be "more about the students, the societies, and the college events," offering them more coverage of what is happening in students' everyday lives.

When questioned on the issue of separating the roles of SCAN Editor and Vice President (Media and Communications) Forrest argued that the two roles should still be combined. He

expressed a strong desire to be heavily involved in editing SCAN and being very hands on with the paper, expressing that he would "love the opportunity to edit SCAN."

Overall, Forrest believes that with his experience, coupled with his commitment, great leadership skills and creativity, he can use the media to "inspire Lancaster students and ignite pride for the great parts of the University."

Rachel Harvey

COUNTY COLLEGE

"I will do whatever is necessary to get our media to where it deserves to be"

Rachel Harvey, Bailrigg FM's Station Manager and former Assistant Manager, thinks she has the creativity and innovation to reinvigorate LUSU's Media and Communications.

She feels the real core of the role is effective teamwork and leadership, with which she has had much experience through her extensive work with Bailrigg FM. As well as working with Bailrigg, Rachel has also been involved in other forms of media, starting up her own newspaper in her secondary school; an experience that she thinks would benefit her in working with SCAN.

Alongside this, Harvey feels what sets her aside for this role is her originality and ability to come up with new and inventive ideas. Harvey has been told before she can often "come up with too many ideas" which she views as working to her advantage if elected into this role.

She stressed the importance of collaborative work to encourage the growth of media within Lancaster, involving not just the three main forms of Lancaster Media, but also others such as LU Cinema. She is currently working on a joint media murder mystery with LA1:TV, and if elected she would like

to carry out more events like this.

She also emphasised that publicising issues and events will be crucial, actively publicising events to the student body so that everyone knows what is going on within Lancaster. One way she would achieve this is by advertising college events in SCAN, as well as improving the currently "underrated" college magazines in order to publicise events and LUSU issues on a college level. She acknowledged that communicating with the student body can be a "difficult issue" but she believes she has the ideas and creativity to



change this.

When questioned on the combination of the roles of SCAN Editor and Vice President (Media and Communications), Harvey maintained they should be the same role. However, she believes there should be more emphasis on the role of SCAN's Assistant Editor, providing critical reflection and an "outsider's perspective."

On the controversial topic of new independent medias surfacing at Lancaster, Harvey said she thought the

upsurge of new student media was "fantastic" and that these new newspapers were perfectly capable of working on their own, but she would provide support for these papers if they needed it. She also believes that having rival newspapers on campus would "push SCAN to get better and better."

Overall, Harvey is "incredibly determined," adding that she "will do whatever is necessary to get Media and Communications at Lancaster where it deserves to be."

Rizwaan Mohammed

LONSDALE COLLEGE

"ICE - Innovation, Commitment & Experience"

"I believe I can show strong and unwavering commitment to the Vice President (Media and Communications) role and not shy away from a workload" says Rizwaan Mohammed.

He sees the role as an opportunity to represent his fellow students and contribute to the Students' Union, which he believes has a "substantial effect on every student's life." Mohammed is highly involved with the communications side of the Islamic Society, with which he has been the primary creator of its new weekly newsletter, as well as using their Facebook page to regularly update members of the society.

Mohammed is also involved with media and communications at a national level; he is currently head of communications for the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), engaging in regular contact with major newspapers. He believes this experience means he has "dealt firsthand with communication between organisations and members" as well as enhancing his abilities to work with social media.

Personally, Mohammed sees himself as a confident, dynamic individual, who is not afraid to take risks, and would not shy away from student interaction, which he sees as a key part of this

role.

If elected, Mohammed's key focus would be to improve communication between LUSU and the students. He would like to see a "greater transparency between the Union and its members regarding the Union's activity in fulfilling its mandate and strategic aims." He aims to remove any feelings of alienation and isolation that students have towards the Union, ensure every student feels like they are involved with the Union, and reinforce to students that the Union is working for them. He aims to achieve reduction of isolation by simple methods, such as ensuring that articles and



websites are available in different languages. He also thinks that there should be greater awareness of what student societies are doing on campus, and creating a SCAN which is "first and foremost for the students."

On the topic of new student medias which have arisen on campus, Mohammed was positive, believing these medias should be praised. However, he did feel that if elected, he would like to engage with the student

body and find out why students feel that the "existing media isn't representing their voice" and address these problems accordingly.

Overall, Mohammed feels that his slogan ICE (Innovation, Commitment and Experience) encompasses his whole campaign, believing that he has the dedication, the prior media experience from his previous roles, as well as many new and exciting ideas, to refresh Lancaster's media.

COMMENT



Silly cow? Or the greatest purchase of livestock since a cheese company got a 'laughing cow'? Photo by Tom Skarbek-Wazynski

The Democracy Cow needs to be taken to the slaughterhouse

Ronnie Rowlands

The LUSU cow is an initiative so hilarious yet embarrassing that I am unsure whether it belongs in a surreal comedy or a cruel reality show. On the one hand, I am reminded of the Vic and Bob characters, Cox and Evans; two inept town councillors whose budgets were as ridiculous as their ideas, which included changing a car park into a helicopter landing pad to 'attract top international stars', and placing bins with installed shoe-shiners across the seafront. On the other, it is the sort of kooky idea that Lord Sugar would fire an 'Apprentice' contestant for.

What is the purpose

of this cow? To encourage people to stand. You can imagine at least one portion of SCAN's live hustingblog, can't you? "Cody Twankbanker has been asked what made him decide to run for presidency. His response; 'I saw an £800 fibreglass cow standing in the middle of Alexandra Square and thought... Yes. This fills me with mounds of scope for a better union.' Unless, of course, the intention is to draw candidates who want to make sure that such a bizarre entity never makes it past the confines of a weird mind ever again. Maybe its genius lies in its fatuity.

Its other purpose, once it has finished being the sole invigorator of 23 candidates (because communication is

key, and before the arrival of the bond bolstering bovine, none of the VPs-to-be knew what an FTO was), is to promote the election.

"An £800 fibreglass cow is not a valid argument for LUSU's importance"

OK, I will COW-tow (you won't beat me on puns, Paul Hannah) to its effectiveness here - an £800

fibreglass cow with 'LUSU' and 'STAND' crudely printed on its body is going to alert far more people to the election than posters; the ubiquity of campus posters is such that they stand out to students about as much as perpetual dissent stands out to a Conservative government. But COME ON. The solution to being a dullard is not to become a tedious showoff - there are middle grounds that can be occupied. You can attract attention for less than £800. Hell, paint 'LUSU' and 'STAND' across the arse of a rugby player and tell him to jumping-jack his way across the spine - he'd probably do it for free. The investment will attract attention, may-

be even votes, but it will not combat student apathy, because an £800 fibreglass cow is not a valid argument for LUSU's importance.

I am the only person with any affiliation to LUSU who is enraged that this election currently has more presidential competitors than America this year. Why? Because this sudden collective shirking of apathy, this surge in ambition to make significant changes to our student's union is inevitably going to be attributed, not to genuine frustration with the direction of the student's union, not to the inspiration to do something great, but to an £800 fibreglass cow.

No need for beef with the LUSU Democracy Cow

Paul Hannah
Comment Editor

Since its inception a couple of weeks ago, the LUSU cow has been swift and decisive in its polarisation of student opinion. Rampant, even. Like a bull in a china shop perhaps (I'll try to cut down on the terrible puns). The cow's mission was simple: to increase awareness about the upcoming Full Time Officer Elections. Whether you support the perhaps beefy amount of money spent (or invested) on it, it is undeniable that this bovine beauty has got tongues wagging.

Almost exactly a year ago, SCAN conducted a survey with frankly damning findings: 82% of students did

not even know what an FTO was, while 74% of students questioned did not even care who won between the two men running for LUSU President. This apathy is astonishing and goes some way to justifying the need for some kind of big brash (one might say bullish) initiative to get people to their laptops and click for who they want to represent them for the next academic year.

Of course this break from tradition will rattle a few cages and may prove something of an easy target for people to butcher (too far?) but the simple fact of the matter is that the student body's apathy is one of our biggest enemies. While JCR elections turnout last year were in fact over 20% above

the national average, the undeniably larger and arguably more important FTO elections were floundering in the doldrums of mediocrity.

"The cow, a visual icon of the elections, will turn heads and get people to vote"

The LUSU President, George Gardiner, at-

tained his role last year with 1,973 votes across all three choices. VP (Activities) Marc Handley won his election with 1,371 votes across five choices. In a university boasting over 12,000 eligible voters this turnout is frankly abysmal. Personally I feel that introducing a visual embodiment of the LUSU elections is an excellent way of getting heads to turn and getting people to vote.

While the cow has indeed cost the princely sum of £800 this is no four week advertising campaign, no flurry of meek and mild posters that blur into the background alongside the army of people selling Carleton tickets and the latest developments

at Sugarhouse. This now legendary livestock is the property of Lancaster University Students' Union; a tangible symbol of cross-campus democracy that may well in future become as synonymous with student life as Bowland Tower or the annual cut price poster sale. Who knows what else this cow could become?

No matter what the results of this year's FTO elections, one thing is clear: the statue of democracy incarnate is here to stay at Lancaster and will not be cowed into retreat. Instead of crying over spilt milk perhaps its pertinent presence will inspire students to vote for change or even run themselves. Make sure your voice is herd (!).

The end of the Students' Union Gentlemen's Club?

Matt Saint
LUSU Vice President
(Equality, Welfare & Diversity)

This year, for the first time since 1990 when LUSU went from having a President and a Treasurer to having six Full Time Officers, all of the LUSU FTOs are male. Until 2009 one of these officers was a dedicated Women's Officer, after which this and the Education & Welfare Officer became the VP (Equality, Welfare & Diversity) and the VP (Academic).

Some people will argue that it is a situation like this that highlights the necessity of a Vice President (Women) or a Women's Officer in some form. My personal opinion is that creating a position that only a woman can hold does not do much for engagement of women throughout everything that LUSU does and smacks of tokenism. However, this does not

negate the fact that in 2011, out of 16 candidates for FTO positions, only one was female and even then she was a candidate for VP (EWD), a role that is sometimes seen as traditionally a 'woman's role'. Had 6 men been elected out of a set of candidates containing more women, you could argue that the students voted for the people they thought would be best and those people happened to be men. However, the fact that only one woman ran is perhaps indicative of a problem.

Across all LUSU officer positions last year around half were women, including half of all college Presidents and Vice Presidents. This is where we should be in this day and age. However, this trend does not seem to apply to the Full Time Officer positions year after year. It must have been a long time since we had more than 2 female FTOs, if this has ever happened! This re-

flects a national problem with engaging women in democratic leadership positions; only 145 out of 650 MPs are female and so is by no means an issue unique to LUSU! However, we still must look at how we can, as a union, increase our accessibility to and our engagement with potential female candidates.

With this in mind, I asked Estelle Hart, National Full Time Women's Officer at the National Union of Students, to come to Lancaster and provide a training session called "I WILL Lead The Way". This training session was developed to try and combat the national issue of women not running for leadership positions within Students' Unions. Discussions regarding barriers to women running, winning and campaigning advice was discussed and, although I couldn't attend as I was male, the feedback I received was

extremely encouraging. In my opinion, this is reflected in the candidacy for the current FTO elections as, at the time of writing, there are 8 female candidates out of a total of 23. Still not perfect, but a significant improvement on previous years.

Moving forward, I think it is important that we remain progressive with how we look at engagement of our membership, not just with women but with all groups of people whom previously have not engaged proportionally with LUSU democracy. Creating an officer for that group will only lump a huge and complicated issue on a single individual when robust engagement with all students should be a concern for all officers at LUSU. Looking at further training sessions to reach out to and empower 'hard to reach' demographics should definitely be at the top of the agenda. Also, with

the new e-voting system we should now be able to gather information on what types of candidates are running for which positions, allowing us to see where more efforts need to be made to further access.

This year, the term "Gentlemen's Club" has sometimes been thrown around with regard to me and the other 5 FTOs. Being a gay man from a working class area of north Manchester who went to a state school, this accusation did smart a little. However, that is not an impression that we as a students' union can be giving out, incorrect or not. As time goes on we must engage a broader range of people with everything that we do or we risk becoming increasingly irrelevant. I would hope that the incoming FTO team, whoever they may be, is willing to champion diversity and I hope that the student body agrees that they should.

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STUDENT COMMENT AND NEWS

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