

## Initiating a discussion to create an elected post graduate officer.

### The Union Knows

- Post Graduates are underrepresented within the University
- None of the outgoing 5 SU presidents/ vice presidents are Post Graduate students
- Whilst the new SU president is a post-graduate student traditionally the post is filled by a first or second year undergraduate student in most universities.
- Of the 16 higher level representative officers and presidents coming into post only 2 are Post-Graduate student, the International Students' Officer and President.
- Out of the 15 lead reps there is only one Post-Graduate.
- For nearly 6 thousand post-graduate students we will have only three elected officials who have lived experience of post graduate life and the experiences
- Having opened up a discussion online in my capacity as academic board for post graduate taught students member 5 people replied stating they would like to see more targeted specific post graduate representation as they do not feel represented by The Students' Union.
- The issue of the under representation of post-graduates was raised at the NUS conference earlier this year. At this conference Bath University noted they were opening consultation to improve this area.

### The Unions Believes

- There is a fundamental lack of higher level leadership for post graduate students both within the University and The Students. Union.
- The SU has been criticised for being too undergrad focused. This is evident in its rules for election to officer president and vice presidential roles which almost always are filled by undergraduate students. The election model leads very little scope for dedicated post graduate activity
- Post Graduate students tend to be on average older then Undergraduate students the UK average is specified as 25-35. However I have encountered people in their 40's and 50's. I have had a mature Post Graduate student rep state they agree with my assertions in regards to older students.
- When only 2 people out of 31 elected higher level reps and officers are post graduate and are often much younger this can create a lack of connection. Also when there is no specific person to chair post graduate concerns where do Post Graduates turn to?



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- As an academic board member for post graduates I have been approached about problems which are outside of my remit because there is no other avenue available or person they feel they can talk to about them. For example students have approached me about parking issues and the new changes going on as they potentially may have a bigger effect on post graduates as they tend not to live on campus and may have busy professional lives. Who is taking up the mantle to protect and help these people? I cannot fulfil this in my current position but I feel there is no legitimate office that can handle this yet.
- There is too much apathy and a lack of integration between The Students' Union and post graduates. The Students' Union rightly or wrongly is seen as giving preferential treatment to undergrads and ignoring post graduates, the current structure does nothing to displace these ideas.
- This is why I believe a frank and open discussion should be facilitated in order to see if there is clamour for an elected post graduate official which from my own experiences and from speaking and listening to post graduates is what they want.

### The Union Will

- ~~— Canvass and engage with the post graduate population to confirm if a post graduate officer is wanted and in what format, e.g. paid unpaid, full/part time.~~
- ~~— If this consultation proves fruitful then to engage with decision makers and representatives at The Students' Union and the University to assess the feasibility of creating a post graduate officer role, be it full-time part time.~~
- ~~— To push forward and have the position in place subject to proper debate and feasibility requirements within 2 years of this application.~~
- Create a Post-Graduate Officer

### The Union Chooses

The President

**Proposer:** Robert Elvin

