

# Deputy Returning Officer Elections Report: 2018

## 1. Elected Candidates

### Fulltime Officers

President	James Durcan
Academic Officer	James Hare
Student Activities Officer	Finn Judge
Community and Wellbeing Officer	Steph Hayle
York Sport President	Zac Sheppard

### Part-time Officers

BAME Officer(s)	Nayomi Kartigesu & Hannah Joseph-Ashikhia
Disabled Students' Officer(s)	Chloe Hann & Scarlett Bacchus O'Callaghan
Environment and Ethics Officer	Oscar Bentley
Mature Students' Officer	Hanna Bryszewska
LGBTQ Officer	Gem Card
Women's Officer	Sophie Meehan & Nadine Smith
RAG Officer	Elina Kukk & Lucy Waldren
Volunteering Officer	TBC in a by-election
International Students' Officer	TBC in a by-election
Working Class and Social Mobility Officer	Connor Drake & Sean Price-Regan

### Non-Officers

Policy Coordinator	Josh Mackenzie
Student Trustees	Maryam Taher & Christian Stickles
NUS Delegates	Maryam Taher, Josh Galea, James Everyman, Lucas North and Alex Urquhart (current YUSU President – ex-officio NUS delegate)
Faculty Reps	Zoe Disley (Science), the Arts & Humanities and Social Science Reps will be elected in a by-election

### By-Elections

We will be re-opening nominations (Monday 5 March 2018) and running by-elections (commencing on Thursday 8 March) for the following positions:

- Volunteering Officer
- International Students' Officer
- Faculty Rep (Social Science)
- Faculty Rep (Arts and Humanities)

### Re-Open Nominations (RON)

It is worth noting that this year a Presidential candidate ran on a platform of encouraging students to vote RON in order to disrupt the elections. The candidate said that a RON vote would result in a mandate for a second election and result in a consultation about how to “restructure” and

“transform” YUSU. Whilst RON did not win, the campaign mobilised support from students and RON ultimately finished second in the Presidential race. I believe an interesting by-product of this campaign was students’ understanding that RON is a viable democratic option and we saw this play out in the strong running of RON in both the Presidential and NUS delegate elections. It will be important, looking ahead, to fully understand the sentiments and dissatisfaction behind this campaign to address students’ concerns.

### NUS Delegate Election

Since the election of the NUS delegates on 24 February, we have discovered errors in the administrative process around the delegation entitlement and gender composition. After further discussion with the candidates and NUS, and in light of the fact that we are required to register a delegation for NUS National Conference that includes at least 50% of self-defining women (rounded down), I can announce that we have now elected a further NUS delegate (see the result below). That means that we now have a full delegation and will not be running a By-election.

## **2. Statistics**

### Officer and Non-Officer Roles (excluding the roles where nominations are to be re-opened)

#### Union President

- 4 candidates stood for election
- James Durcan won with **2609 votes**

#### Academic Officer

- 2 candidates stood for election
- James Hare won with **1786 votes**

#### Student Activities Officer

- 3 candidates stood for election
- Finn Judge won with **1564 votes**

#### Community and Wellbeing Officer

- 2 candidates stood for election
- Steph Hayle won with **2219 votes**

#### York Sport President

- 2 candidates stood for election
- Zac Sheppard won with **2014 votes**

#### BAME Officer

- 2 candidates stood for election
- Nayomi Kartigesu & Hannah Joseph-Ashikhia won with **611 votes**

#### Disabled Students’ Officer

- 1 pair of candidates stood for election

- Chloe Hann & Scarlett Bacchus O'Callaghan won with **971 votes**

#### Environment and Ethics Officer

- 3 candidates stood for election
- Oscar Bentley won with **743 votes**

#### Mature Students' Officer

- 3 candidates stood for election
- Hanna Bryszewska won with **728 votes**

#### LGBTQ Officer

- 1 candidate stood for election
- Gem Card won with 980 votes

#### Women's Officer

- 2 candidates stood for election
- Sophie Meehan & Nadine Smith won with **976 votes**

#### RAG Officer

- 1 pair of candidates stood for election
- Elina Kukk and Lucy Waldren won with **1080 votes**

#### Working Class and Social Mobility Officer

- 4 candidates stood for election
- Connor Drake and Sean Price-Regan won with **888 votes**

#### Policy Coordinator

- 1 candidate stood for election
- Josh Mackensie won with **689 votes**

#### Student Trustees

- 2 candidates stood for election
- The winners won with **576 (Maryam Taher) and 400 (Christian Stickles) votes** respectively

#### NUS Delegates

- 5 candidates stood for election
- The winners won with **503 (Maryam Taher), 341 (James Everyman), 281 (Jack Galea), 201 (Lucas North) votes** respectively.
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#### Faculty Rep (Sciences)

- 2 candidates stood for election
- Zoe Disley won with **565 votes**

### Voting and Nominations

- **Voter Turnout – the number of voters, 5753 (30%)** – was the highest ever in a YUSU election. Turnout was up by 1099 on last year and 656 on 2016
- **39,487 individual ballots** were cast
- **3149 (29%) voters were female compared to 2602 (31%) male**
- **5140 (34%) voters were home students, with 563 (16.2%) International (non EU/EEA) and 46 (11%) EU**
- **Turnout of 563 international students was a 177% increase (208 votes) from 2017**
- **93 nominations were received for 21 positions** (5x Full-time Officer, 10x Part-time Officer, 6x Non-Officers)
- **41 candidates ran for election** (47 students in total – PTO positions can be contested by pairs)
- We used the **Single Transferrable Vote (STV)** method to elect the candidates with RON (Re-Open Nominations) defined as an actual candidate.

### **3. Complaints**

During this year's election, we received an encouraging:

- 0 formal complaints
- 3 informal queries

The three informal queries related to campaigning before the commencement of physical campaigning, endorsements, club campaigning and the use of closed Facebook group to promote a candidate. As Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) I resolved these issues informally, and largely in line with the outcomes students' wishes to achieve.

#### DRO Comment on Complaints

I was extremely happy to receive no formal complaints throughout the election period. I believe this was testament to the candidates' commitment to the spirit of the Election Rules and to their collaborative and cordial approach to campaigning.

I also believe the dearth of complaints should be partly attributed to the way in which YUSU colleagues set a positive tone for the elections through the candidate briefings. Key messages of respect and positive campaigning were emphasised and candidates were encouraged to view the Election Rules as a set of shared principles as opposed to a punitive framework. Even when a rules infringement was raised, the candidates involved demonstrated high levels of trust in me as the DRO and in each other. For example, one complaint relating to early campaigning and eliciting endorsements was resolved through dialogue, and I was satisfied that the infringement was a result of a lack of clarity on the rules rather than an intentional attempt to gain an advantage.

It is also worth noting that the lack of club campaigning had a positive impact on the welfare of the candidates, the conduct of campaign teams and the accessibility of election campaigning. The overwhelming majority of candidates opted out of club campaigning this year and candidates were noticeably less tired by the end of the week. Club campaigning infringements are obviously extremely difficult to monitor, so the take-up of the opt-out policy really made this year's elections more equitable. The positive impact of the opt-out policy will be re-emphasised next year.

I believe the positive messaging around the Election Rules and the managing of expectations in terms of sanctions contributed to a cordial, fair and democratic election. I want to congratulate the candidates for their exemplary conduct and for contributing to a vibrant and fair election.

Nick Glover (Deputy Returning Officer)

#### **4. Recommendations**

- In light of the relative success of the RON campaign and the clear desire for students to engage in dialogue about YUSU's representativeness and how to increase student engagement with YUSU, we will be inviting all the Full Time Officer candidates to a roundtable discussion. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on manifesto pledges, candidates' experience in the election and contribute to the project evaluation, as well as longer-term representation and student engagement plans.
- We will continue to espouse the virtues of candidates opting out of club campaigning.
- We will continue to communicate the message to candidates that Election Rules are not punitive and are designed to promote respect, participation and trust.
- We will continue to set a positive tone for elections by taking a deliberative and light-touch approach to sanctioning, whereby the expectations of candidates are managed effectively.
- We will proactively ask NUS delegate candidates to tell us how they self-define in terms of their gender identity and self-definition eligibility criteria at the point of nomination.