

The University of Surrey
Students' Union

Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Mustie Smith
President



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above.
The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

Introduction

I'm sure almost every president has the same feeling when their term of office comes to an end, however that does not take away from the abrupt finish that this moment brings. For me, this marks the end of five years at Surrey, a University that I joined by accident. I never intended to come here, it was only by chance that a friend suggested that I apply and Surrey appeared as my fifth choice.

Fate must have been smiling on me however, as what has come to pass has been a truly transformative experience. From my very first year I began to get involved in the Union, through the Afro-Caribbean society as a first year rep, and it is incredible to believe that my journey took me to the office of Students' Union President.

Surrey fosters an atmosphere of success, and this atmosphere must be maintained; where there are barriers and prejudice then the entire student community must work to remove or overcome them. We are beginning to really see all sections of the community open up and come together, however our research has confirmed there are still some gaps. Chinese students, mature students, PGR's, and others have particular needs or cultural differences that remain as barrier to involvement.

It is also becoming evident that the new generation of student is putting the classification of their degree above all else. This is a dangerous precedent that diminishes the unique quality of the Surrey experience. It is for all of us to show students that there is a bright world outside of exams and coursework, and in the end it is just as important as your degree.



What did we set out to achieve?

Looking back 365 days, when as a new sabbatical team we presented our aspirations to Council – what did we want to do with our year?

Our aim as a Union this year

- **Our main priority this year is engagement**
- **Why is engagement so important?**
- **How are we engaging our members from day one?**



The University of Surrey
Students' Union

We knew that it was vital to capture the imagination of our students from the very beginning of the year, and not just first years – but this year we had to reach out to all students with our new mission as a Union for all of their student life.

Engagement also meant more than just shouting at students, however we had to make sure they knew we were listening to them and beyond that we were able to do something with what they told us.

It was absolutely critical that we were able to convince our membership that the faith they had shown in us, in moving to our new zone structure was the right thing to do.



102 candidates put themselves forward during Surrey Decides



5000 votes were cast

We trained 280 course reps



We had our first Course Rep social, Rep of the month awards, and overall Course Rep awards for the year.

2 of our sabbs stood for NUS national office with Munya being elected onto NUS Executive Council



VOICE ZONE 2016



250

people came to our EU Referendum debate

1500

have since watched online

Successful celebration of Black History Month

The Voice Zone

The student voice is communicated in many ways, however for us the main focus was the continued development of Course Reps, and the promotion of the Union elections. Course Reps advanced with the invaluable help from our University colleagues who continue to encourage students to become Course Reps throughout the year; and those who inspire our Reps during their training. Course Reps are elected by their cohort to voice the concerns of those whom they study with, to their department, faculty and at the assemblies - senior management. Questions may be fielded on almost any subject from noise in the library, to the availability of specialist tutors. It is our aim to empower the reps to be bold, but not pursue a selfish agenda.


Additions and improvements this year were

- Rep Feedback Form
A simple reporting mechanism for reps to let us know what is happening in their department and if they need any help
- Course Rep Awards
Recognising those Reps who went above and beyond this year
- Course Rep of the Month
To reward the outstanding work each month of a particular Course Rep.

Elections were set the highly ambitious target of 100 nominations, which was achieved - to create a very powerful set of candidates for the membership to choose from. Elections are important as they are the period of the year when we can reach out to all parts of the campus and talk about student issues, and importantly hear



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479



what is important to the voter. Our elections did suffer a number of setbacks, with candidate conduct. We are indebted to the support and assistance from the University Secretary to resolve some very delicate issues.

“I didn’t actually realise the Union had so much influence, I mean look what happened with Graduation”

Second year student.

Graduation Referendum

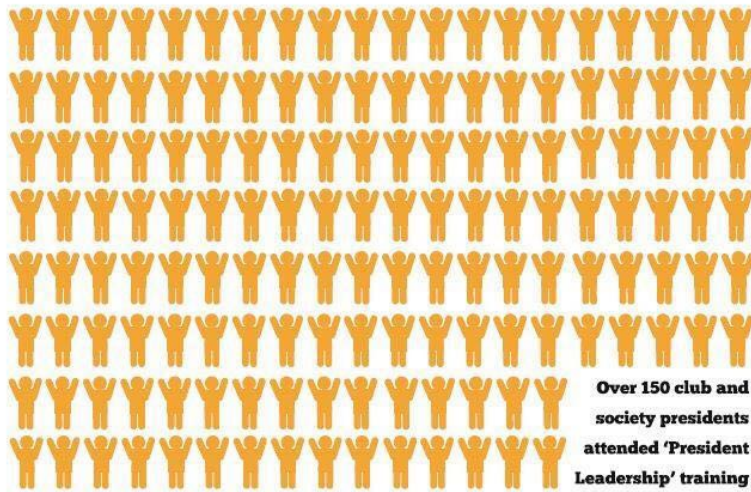
There are occasions when the student voice does need to be spoken a bit louder, and the topic of graduations was one of those occasions this year. For us as a Union it is important that members believe that the Union is the correct route for these issues, and with the co-operation of the management team, we were together able to produce a satisfactory outcome for this year’s cohort of graduates.

This was in part due to the extensive work carried out in previous years to make the democratic structures accessible, relevant and open which allowed ordinary members to trigger a referendum vote.

Get Fit Fortnight had a number of activities for students to try out for FREE!

OVER **4000** registered society and sports club members

ACTIVITY ZONE 2016



Over 150 club and society presidents attended 'President Leadership' training



The Activity Zone

The Zone for students who like to 'do things', the Activity Zone is our area of growth as an increasing number students get involved in extra-curricular activities (however, still not enough!). The Union is moving back from the hands-on governance of Clubs and Societies and trying to create the space in which the committee members can lead and develop their own identity.

The governance framework for our groups is now designed to allow freedom for innovation. There are important exceptions for Sports Clubs who have closer supervision from Surrey Sports Park for performance. This year we were proud to extend the training delivered to our Club and Society signatories to give them additional skills that will help them lead and develop.

The AGM season itself, sees over 150 elections take place over a month, as each Club or Society elects a new committee. Each year the information that the committee must absorb gets more onerous with additional legislation and sensitivities, which is why it is important for the Union to support and develop our groups, rather than tell them what to do.

Varsity

For six years now we have partnered with the University of Kingston for our annual Varsity tournament, however it has been clear that our movement up the league tables now requires a tougher match. We are pleased to announce that from 2017 onwards our new Varsity rivals will be Royal Holloway. We look forward very much to beating Dr Ashtons team in March ...



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

Outdoor gym session during Healthy University Week

INTRODUCTION OF
PERSONAL TUTOR
CODE OF PRACTICE
AND TRAINING
SESSIONS

Funded the printing of 1000 x
MindSoc mental health booklets

**Supported the Vet School
'Peer Support Programme'**

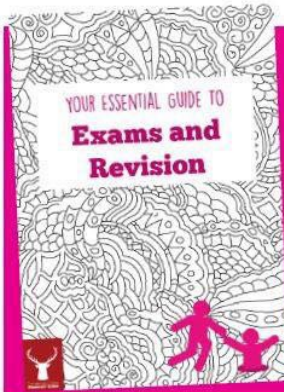
1000 visitors to

wellfare

2016

attractions included - Smoothie bikes | Guide Dog
puppies | 25 charities | 3 drama performances |
Bouncy castles & Disco Dome

SUPPORT ZONE 2016



Exam Season Support -

1250 Revision guides given out

500 revision goody bags free in tees and teas

10 dog therapy sessions

Free smoothie bike session

Revision zone in front room with colouring, refreshments etc.

**Negotiated with
University to secure a
rent freeze
on band A B and C
accommodation**

The Support Zone

Every year, a great number of students are needing help, this is a combination of the daily pressure of student life along with a more open attitude to mental health. We are fortunate to have increased commitment in this area from the Centre for Wellbeing - however we continue to try to help students to help themselves and others.

Our biggest rise in demand this year however, has been for academic related support. To suggest to a student ten years ago that the Students' Union would close its nightclub during exam period would be unimaginable. This is perhaps indicative of the new student here at Surrey as well as their new attitude to University life.

The exam support we provided this year consisted of an exam revision guide which was distributed across campus, along with 'revision kits' and the promotion of alternative campus study spaces.

Your Essential Guide to Exams and Revision



Leave Your Phone and Notes in a Safe Place

1. Try to leave them at home

Mobile phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the exam rooms. If you have one on your person then you may face being penalised for academic misconduct and not pass your exam. The best thing to do to avoid any action is to leave your phone at home, or hand it in to security (or a friend you trust) and collect it after the exam.

If you cannot leave your phone at home or with a friend, then take a bag with you to the exam, make sure your phone is switched off (this is important as otherwise it may disturb other students) and put it into the bag which you can leave at the back of the exam room.

2. Check your pockets and pencil case for any pieces of paper etc.

If you take anything into the exam that you are not supposed to have, whether this is your mobile phone, the wrong calculator or revision notes then you could be penalised for academic misconduct, even if you have no intention to cheat. If you find you have taken anything into the exam by accident, alert the invigilator – it is much better to do this than for them to find the phone, notes etc later on.

When in the Exam Hall

1. Listen carefully

Make sure you listen to the invigilators at the start, during and after the exam. Even if you have done many exams before, you should always listen to the announcements at the start of the exam – this information is given in order to help you. Always listen to the instructions of the invigilators and do what they ask you to do.

2. Keep quiet

You must not talk to other students or communicate with them in any way. If someone is causing a distraction to you, raise your hand to attract the attention of the invigilator. If you feel unwell or need any help, raise your hand to attract the attention of the invigilator. It is very important that you do not disrupt any other students taking the exam.

3. Check the official rules

You must read and fully understand the 'Instructions for Candidates' which tell you what you can and cannot do during an exam – see below. If there is anything in this document that you do not understand, seek advice from us (your Students' Union).

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/Files/Instructions%20to%20Examination%20Candidates.pdf>

Good Luck!

(You'll be fine)

Wellbeing

Promotion of health, and wellbeing is just as important as solving problems when they occur. This year all the campus wellbeing services as well as Security, Equality and Diversity, and Student Services joined forces to promote health and wellbeing at the 'Wellfayre' event on PATS field. There students could learn about the services open to them as well as techniques they can use to promote their own mental health.



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

Launch of the **COMMUNITY REPS SCHEME**, helping to strengthen the relationship between students and the Guildford community

VOLUNTEERS CAN NOW LOG THEIR HOURS, ALLOWING THEM TO GAIN RECOGNITION FOR THE WORK THEY DO.

COMMUNITY ZONE 2016

More students attending local Community events
(Fireworks, pancake races, Guildford light switch on)

Events held at Manor Park and Hazel Farm and an alternative End of Year social

BIGGER RE-FRESHERS' FAYRE

Including more stalls and Performances on stage

charity 3000 items collected for local food banks

FACILITATED THE MOVING OF DONATIONS FOR MIGRANTS IN CALAIS

Donated bedding packs for local homeless organisation

students welcome nice to meet YOU! join in.

Welcome home booklets sent out to students living in private accommodation

VOTING POLLS HELD ON TWITTER FOR RUBIX EVENTS AND A POST-IT NOTE FEEDBACK WALL AT CITRUS.

The Community Zone

This Zone brought together all the elements of the Union makes students a community as well as the interaction they have with Guildford. This year we have made some huge strides forward, particularly in community relations.

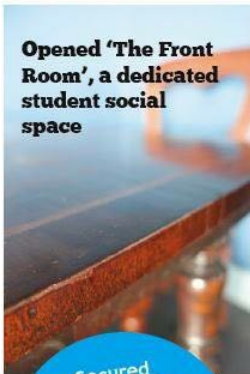
Guildford has a long history of an uneasy relationship with University students. In the latest 'Forever Surrey', Pro-Chancellor Varney describes his mission to convince Guildford residents that the arrival of students would not ruin the character of the town. The one phrase that we hear over and over again however is 'The University must do more'. Those who love the University look to us to 'sell it' to the local community. This has been a big focus of the Community Zone this year.

We have reached out to local residents and engaged with resident's associations and increased our presence at local events including the annual mascot race in the town centre.

For the first time ever, we had the leader of the Council (both in one year) attend the Union to discuss student issues with the Union Trustees with further meetings and real progress being made in key areas such as: refuse collection, police profiling, transport services.

Rubix nightclub continues to be a popular service for students on campus, with increased numbers attending our events. The decline in alcohol sales continues, however this is not something which we are overly concerned with. We continue to promote and create alcohol-free nights as well as developing our programme of trips and activities.

Introduction of Union Officer update videos at **Surrey Decides** to improve awareness, transparency and accountability



Opened 'The Front Room', a dedicated student social space

Secured full University divestment from fossil fuels following challenges put forward by the people and planet society

Secured a new Campus Shop **simplyfresh** working with the VP Community, Katy

Assisted in the interviews for the University's new VC and their appointment of **Professor Max Lu**

669

Christmas Cards & Valentine's day cards delivered by hand to kitchens on Stag Hill, Manor Park and Hazel Farm.

CONDUCTED A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE UNION BYELAWS

Secured a cap on student growth from a 1370 increase, to a 450 increase, following challenges on pressure to University infrastructure such as accommodation, library and learning spaces, catering outlets etc.

PRESIDENT 2016



Installed 24 new Digital Screens around Stag Hill, Manor Park and Hazel Farm to increase awareness of Union activity

Voted 3RD BEST UNION in the UK & 7th best Union in the world for Students' Union Satisfaction (iGrad 2016)

RECRUITED **2** NEW EXTERNAL TRUSTEES FOR THE UNION

Voted **4TH BEST UNION IN THE UK** for formal student welcome (iGrad 2016)

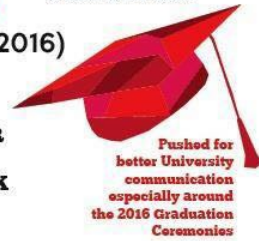
Secured an increase in street food provision on campus



DIRECTED THE SABBATICAL AVENGERS WELCOME VIDEO



5TH BEST NOT-FOR-PROFIT TO WORK FOR 2016



Pushed for better University communication especially around the 2016 Graduation Ceremonies

Increased interim support and pastoral care for students staying off campus and looking for permanent accommodation at the beginning of the year

Our Other Achievements

Engagement in everything we do was our aspiration for the year, and throughout the calendar we spoke with, and met as many students as possible. Nothing can replace the 'doorstep' as many politicians describe it, and evidence shows that these interactions bring students into the Union, and into the community of students. This year we used Christmas and Valentines as an opportunity to go and meet student out and about by visiting student residences as a team.

Best Companies

We were delighted to achieve our fifth place ranking in the not-for-profit list, however less publicised was our 2nd place ranking for leadership as voted for by the staff.

"FORMER STUDENT Alan Sutherland has overseen some big changes in his role as chief executive at the University of Surrey Students' Union. The closure of some sections of the union resulted in eight compulsory redundancies, but despite the upheaval employees feel secure in their jobs (ranking first among small not-for-profit organisations, with an 80% positive score) and say they are confident in the skills of the management team (85%, ranking second).

The Guildford-based union needs to work hard to create a team spirit as the five full-time sabbatical staff are re-elected each year, and managers were given an opportunity to bond during a cookery course. Employees say their team is fun to work with (90%)."
Sunday Times Best Companies Profile



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

The Front Room

The closure of Chancellors Bar opened an opportunity for a new way of considering social space. Too often, 'social space' is the name given to an unloved, empty room with left over office furniture. With The Front Room we wanted to create an area based on student feedback and current trends. The main things students wanted were: comfort, small kitchen, and tranquillity. With this in mind we developed a Victorian theme for our new space. Since opening, The Front Room has seen a far greater success than we could have imagined with students using the room until the early hours of the morning



Communication

Our members continually tell us that they want to know more, and so this year with the assistance of the Annual Fund, we have created a network of 24 new digital screens across campus running on the RISE Vision network to allow us to create compelling content across the estate. We hope to continue to expand this network each year, to create a great visual communication system. We are also delighted that the Partnership Group agreed to our request for additional communications support as we enhance our staff team in this area for next year.

The NUS

Last year, we almost left the National Union of Students (NUS). At the conclusion of that vote we pledged to get much more actively involved and push the National Union in a direction more akin to what our students would wish. Our VP Voice, Munya and I both stood for national positions during this year's elections, however the influence of the left on the NUS is now all consuming.

Since the NUS conference there has been a series of disaffiliations and staff resignations. A series of failed commercial ventures, increased competition and a political leadership alienating itself from the membership is creating a toxic combination of decline. We believe it is now only a matter of if, rather than when this house of cards finally collapses.



34 Alex VP Activity @ussuactivity · Apr 20
We're all backing Munya! @SurreyUnion #NUSConference
#MunyaMovement 🙌👏

NUS Delegates from across the UK, supporting Munya in his bid to become VP Welfare.

Conclusion

At the start of the year, we were concerned over the practical implementation of our new structure. It is testament to the hard work of our officers and staff however that it has become such a great success. Looking forward to the future, it is now for the Union to refocus and strategize the next five years with this bedrock in place.

There are, of course, areas in which we can do better. As previously mentioned, we need to look at what we provide for our postgraduate community, our international community and our mature community as an example. We also need to continue to work with our friends in Guildford to remind the local residents that students are an invaluable part of the borough.

The pride felt among the student community is stronger than I have ever seen it, and as the reputation of the University increases, so does the expectation. The toughest experiences I have had as president is dealing with the abject despair on the part of a newly arrived student who has been unable to find a room. For those students that are part of the 'overflow' student life is disproportionality hard. When we review the work to mitigate these challenges in Council, we are still recognising that many hundreds of students will be experiencing a very different time at University and it is of vital importance that we never forget the human element of our recruitment decisions.

I have also been privileged this year to be a part of the recruitment of many talented leaders who have taken positions here at our University, and I wish them all the best of luck for the future.

I would like to extend my thanks to all those who have worked together, and supported us to create an amazing year for our students, in particular my fellow Trustees, officers, the Union staff team, the Vice-Chancellor and his colleagues, and my fellow Council members.

Thank you, once again, for your support, love and dedication.

Mustie Smith
Union President
2015-2016



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

Election Address for NUS Black Students Officer

Vote MUSTIE SMITH #1 Black Students Officer

BEYOND LIBERATION

My name is Mustie Smith, and I am standing to be your next black students officer, and I want to take us beyond liberation.

At this moment, we need to look at our movement.

What does it mean for us?

What does it mean for the students we work for?

What does it mean to those who support us?

What does it mean to those who are against us?

Positive Liberation

As black students today we have benefitted from the struggle that those who have come before us faced. The law is on our side, but society is not. As a movement we now need to celebrate with those who believe in a liberated and diverse society; and take the bold move of speaking to those who we disagree with, of challenging head on the perceptions of the xenophobes. We need to build an ever growing and sustainable movement where we educate and empower the next generation of black students as role models and leaders. This is what I have done as a student leader, I have done this as the leader of my own campus Afro-Caribbean society, I have done it as a Vice-President of my Union, and I have done it as President of my Union. My work in moving beyond liberation has given our Union the highest number of elected BME officers next year **ever** in the fifty-year history of our institution.

Vote for me to continue this work on a national platform

Engaging Black Students:

The rise in the number of black students becoming full-time elected officers in their Students' Unions has meant that there are more black students shaping the student experience and paving the way for others to follow. Employing the right strategy to engage black students in student life on campus will lead to a better student experience for black students. However, there are still many black students that are disengaged with their SU's, and there are also black students and sabbatical officers that are completely disengaged/unaware of our national movement that is fighting for their voices to be heard. This has to change.

If elected I will:

- Develop a helpful and practical guide on how Student's Unions can engage more black students into student life and into the Students' Union from a grassroots level
- Continue the Black Sabbs network and reach out to new black sabbatical officers once they've taken up office to engage them in the national movement



The University of Surrey Students' Union is a private limited company, registered in England & Wales with registered number 07470232, registered at the address above. The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

- Continue supporting black students on campuses running to become elected officers in their SU's
- Increase the awareness of the BSC by working with Students' Unions to reach out to black students on their campuses
- Work on increasing the profile of the Black Leaders Conference so more black students can attend
- Ensure the BSC is fully accessible by all students that identify as black.

Education and Employability:

The black attainment gap, student satisfaction gap, employability gap and just about any other gap you can think of are issues that we know all too well and not enough is being done about them by academic institutions and the government. The Race for Equality report by NUS has highlighted the issues that need to be addressed by institutions and there are numerous amounts of reports and articles talking about the employability of black students, with one of the most recent articles by the guardian saying black students are 2.5 times less likely to be employed than their white counterparts.

If elected I will:

- Continue supporting the 'Why is my curriculum white?' campaign
- Organise for more up to date research to be done around the black attainment gap, satisfaction gap, dropout rates etc. to show what progress has been made and how much more needs to be done by institutions
- Organise for research to be done that looks beyond FE & HE to challenge the government on issues arising in schools that is affecting the experience of black students once they reach FE & HE
- Ensure Students' Unions have access to a tool kit showing them how to lobby their university to take action on narrowing the attainment gap
- Continue training on liberating the curriculum across FE & HE
- Challenge the government to do more to tackle the issue of qualified black graduates being less likely to get employed

The Same Difference:

There are many different sections of the black community and different issues disproportionately affect some sections of the black community more than others. We must be mindful of this and take action to ensure effective representation for all members of our community. We also need to ensure that there is a clear definition of what it means to be black in this movement and why the term black is used, so that we don't lose students to the movement that we can support because of their lack of understanding what the campaign stands for.

If elected I will:

- Continue the Annual Black Women's Conference

- Arrange organisation of other annual conferences subject to discussion and approval by members of the black students committee e.g. Black LGBT Conference, Black Disabled Students conference etc.
- Ensure that policies passed highlight which sections of our community are disproportionately affected by issues
- Support LGBT, Disabled and Women black students committee reps on different campaigns
- Ensure that the definition of what it means to be Black within this movement is as simple and as clear as it can be

Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism:

Racism and fascism continue to be prevalent in our society we need to do more to tackle the issues more directly. We must however realise that we cannot tackle the issues separately because the root cause of these issues is hate, prejudice and misunderstanding. We must continue to educate ourselves, our communities and challenge society to do better.

If elected I will:

- Lobby the government on the Prevent agenda to review its approach to tackling radicalisation.
- Provide tool kits for students unions with toolkits so that they understand what racism and fascism looks like on campuses alongside solutions on how to tackle it.
- I will develop an ally network so those that do not identify as black can contribute to the battle against racism and fascism as it degrades not just the black community but society as a whole.
- Work with NUS International Students' Campaign to tackle xenophobia and ensure that international students feel safe on their campuses
- Continue Supporting Islamophobia Awareness Month
- Support campaigns that tackle anti-semitism

Students' Union officers-elect 2016/17



The University of Surrey
Students' Union

VOICE ZONE Tai Ademola VP Voice @ussuvoice	ACTIVITY ZONE Becky Ibbotson VP Activity @ussuactivity	SUPPORT ZONE Koyin Akinsiku VP Support @ussusupport	COMMUNITY ZONE Saskia Cochrane VP Community @ussucommunity	Zainab Donli Union Chair @ussuchair	Debbie Martin RAG Chair*
Anna Ouston Voice Committee Member (Exec)	Hana Bibi Team Surrey Chair (Exec)	Lauretta Alonge Support Committee Member (Exec)	Nadia Zamba Community Committee Member (Exec)	*Non-Voting Exec Members	
Natasha Ivory Voice Committee Member (Exec)	Joanne Tattersall Societies Exec Chair (Exec)	Dan Bradshaw Support Committee Member (Exec)	Sophie Bradbury Community Committee Member (Exec)		
Amaad Alam Voice Zone Committee	Emily Clarke Activity Zone Committee	Deanna Richards Support Zone Committee	Mohammed Koubani Community Zone Committee	NUS Delegates 2016 Munya Mudarikiri Mustie Smith Alex Mackenzie Smith Becky Ibbotson	
Hannah Androulaki-Khan Voice Zone Committee	Josh Rye Activity Zone Committee	Leke Gbajumo Support Zone Committee	Angel Adjei Community Zone Committee		
Megan Harris Voice Zone Committee	Peter O'Shea Activity Zone Committee	Theresa Raj Support Zone Committee	Jadene Doak Community Zone Committee		