

The Officer Choice Awards 2022

Our GSU Officers - Aatika, Nele, Jabed and Zoë have curated an exhibition for the Student Led Teaching Awards this year under the title *The Officer Choice Awards*.

The exhibition showcases University staff - nominated by our Officers - who have gone above and beyond in supporting and empowering students and championed equality and diversity in education. We asked them to share their highlights from this academic year and tell us more about the initiatives they champion.

The Officer Choice Awards celebrates collaboration between University and Union staff and showcases some fantastic examples of what we can achieve together to create profound and positive educational experiences for our students at Greenwich.



STUDENT LED
TEACHING
AWARDS
2022



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Professor Andrew King

Professor of English Literature and Literary Studies

We all need to sink into the sofa sometimes. But when we are able, we need to ask who made the sofa, under what conditions, who sold it and why. It's what I ask of "English literature," whether it's trade magazines, popular fiction, Shakespeare or George Orwell. It's ultimately what I want students to ask themselves too. All our answers rest on our own shoulders. That's a heavy responsibility, an ethical burden. I'm really very proud that GSU, through its values, campaigns and activities, celebrates and energises that ethical charge, sharing and comparing our histories and languages. Amanda Gorman reminded us recently to "Call Us What We Carry." We aren't limited to our baggage, but to get off the sofa and go on the journey we need to know what it is.

"Everyone should have at least one Andrew teaching them, as it is people like him that make going to university the interesting and transformative experience that it should be. Plus, he bakes great cakes." - Nele Leitolf, GSU Officer



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Dr David Evans, OBE NTF

Professor in Sexualities and Genders: Health & Well-Being

My greatest highlights have been the students! That's not cheesy: I mean it! Whether pre-registration or post grad: nurses, midwives, health visitors, school and district nurses and paramedics, they have all studied amazingly. That's despite massive upheavals of on-going Covid-19! Some have experienced personal illness or bereavements; some volunteered for Covid testing; many transferred to front-line Covid services; most experienced unprecedented work-place challenges. Yet they have met the challenges, and continued studying. Giving pastoral care and signposting to Students' Union welfare, dyslexia and disability support, is always a win / win, such is the calibre of services.

I have taught new creative digital skills and championed on-line learning; students have been nothing less than inspirational in their engagement. I love technology, so I constantly learn more to implement and share across teaching, learning and assessing, including to colleagues and through wider academia. The result is such joyous learning and tremendous personal outcomes, for so many! My National Teaching Fellowship motif of 'Sharing learning outside the classroom' continues, with my use of Adobe Creative Cloud; implementing creative digital skills and even writing a chapter in (Turner and Fanner, 2021, eds) Digital Connection in Health and Social Work perspective from Covid-19. Another high-point was my belated Professorial Inauguration¹, on World AIDS Day 2021. I'm now in my 33rd year of teaching, starting in HIV studies, then widening out across sexual health, and I still love every minute of it!

Five more memorable highlights are being part of the Staff LGBTQ+ Community, and our work, under the leadership of our amazing Vice Chancellor, to achieve Gold Award in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers; my co-authorship of the Student Relationships, Sex and Sexual Health Survey, of the Higher Education Policy Unit; becoming a Recognised Research Supervisor of the UKCGE; on-going mentoring of Senior & Principal Fellows of the Higher Education Academy, ultimately boosting excellence across our own University, and, this morning, presenting via pre-recorded video, to around 400 GPs, gynecologists and nurses!

Ad multos annos! "To many happy years", for each and every one!

"David proactively supports our healthcare students, and his work related to sexual health and liberation is something to be proud of!"

- Nele Leitolf, GSU Officer



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Jeff Powell

Senior Lecturer in Economics

I want to thank the GSU for the support that they have provided to academic staff – working together to address the inclusivity of the curriculum. Given the limited resources made available, it is clear that all involved have gone the extra mile in their commitment to improving the learning of their colleagues. I was delighted when Ben Margolis responded to our department interest in inclusivity auditors saying that the GSU team could accommodate as many modules as we had staff interest!

My personal experience with the team regarding my modules was excellent. Conversations with Steph Larkin and Neha Ilyas provided me with opportunities to critically reflect on my own practice, and learn from their comparative experience and thoughtful interventions. It was clear from this experience that members of the team had both been carefully chosen based on their aptitudes, and well trained in how to work constructively with staff to try to advance this important agenda together. I can only hope that, in the next round, there are resources to allow the auditors to discuss these issues directly with our students! To any academic staff hesitating over whether they should engage with the inclusive curriculum tools, I can assure you that it will be worthwhile both for you and your students!

“Jeff Powell has highlighted great effort in encouraging inclusivity for his modules and demonstrated a lot of reflectivity.”

- Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer



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Dr Jessica Simpson

Lecturer in Sociology

Shortly after I joined the University of Greenwich, I reached out to GSU to find out if there is any support available at the university for students who are also sex workers. My interest in this area stems from my research with both student and graduate working in different areas of the sex industry and which highlighted the unique challenges they face due to the stigmatisation of their work. I received a prompt reply from GSU Officers, Zoe Campbell and Nele Leitolf, who are also sex worker allies and who were keen to meet. We discussed how, even though over 133,000 UK students are estimated to work in the sex industry, there is still an overwhelming silence around the topic and a lack of support both at Greenwich and more broadly.

I have since worked closely with GSU, and Nele specifically, who has been pivotal in the ongoing development and delivery of a wide range of evidence-based provisions for both students and staff. So far, we have created a steering group where we work collaboratively with staff from across the university with different expertise and perspectives to identify potential policy implications and to develop what we consider to be best practice in supporting students. We have also hosted a range of events on the realities of student sex work and to challenge harmful narratives as well as providing disclosure training for staff. Next term, we plan to host a student-led panel event where students can ask questions and learn more about how to be a good ally in a non-judgmental and inclusive space. Overall, it has been an absolute pleasure working with GSU and the ongoing support has been invaluable. I would like to take the opportunity to commend Nele for her commitment to and genuine care for student wellbeing, she is a credit to the university and will be sadly missed!

“Lecturers like Jessica, who are invested in activism beyond the classroom, make higher education a better and more accessible place.” - Nele Leitolf, GSU Officer



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Matthew Nadeau

Chair of the Staff Disability Network

This year I had the privilege of working with GSU Officer, Zoe Campbell. I was impressed with Zoe's extensive organisation of events for Disability History Month.

It was an union officers' email that gave reference to Disability Awareness Month that started the conversation, we immediately responded to Zoe to see if we could align our activities. This was during restrictions relating to the pandemic and despite this, we organised a collaborative event connecting our students and staff.

Going further we also worked with the Wellbeing team to host an event, titled "Navigating the World of Disability and Academia". We sought to create a dialogue between the students and staff who live, work and study, with a disability. In order to share our experiences and shine light on what it is to live, work and study, with a disability and through a pandemic.

An insightful introduction, I hope to see more collaborative work connecting all our staff networks with representatives from our students' union. By working together connected by our shared values of inclusion, collaboration, and impact, we can improve the experience for all of us here. We are stronger together.

"Matthew was incredibly supportive in helping plan and deliver this year's Disability History Month." - Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer



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Dr Mazia Yassim

Programme Leader - MA Marketing Suite of Programmes; Senior Lecturer in Marketing

University of Greenwich is very lucky to have a very proactive and engaged Students Union who are always willing to work with academics and faculties to enhance student experience. Over the last year, I have been privileged to work with GSU in various aspects.

My biggest wins in the past year has to involve the Poetry Project student mental health competition and the NSS support. Emma Caney was brilliant in pulling together the student mental health competition which aims to not only support anyone facing a challenging time with a motivational message but also normalises having bad days and needing support. It gives students from across the University an opportunity to work together to foster a sense of belonging. Engaging students with the NSS survey has been a challenge this year but we would not have reached our target without the support of GSU and Javed in particular. Javed was able to relate to the students in a way that academics would never have been able to. It also gave us an opportunity to showcase one of our excellent alumnus to our current students – a win-win all round!

A BIG THANK YOU to our GSU for always being willing to not only listen to my suggestions but also for coming up with ideas that enables us to do our best for our students.

“Mazia is always supportive to students. She goes above and beyond to help students especially those from marginalised backgrounds.”

- Yasinur Javed, GSU Officer



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Dr Melissa Pepper

Senior Lecturer in Criminology

It is always a pleasure to work with the Greenwich Student's Union (GSU). I've recorded a podcast with them exploring green criminology as part of The GREen Pod sustainability series, and most recently have engaged with their incredible work around decolonising the curriculum, including a really useful one to one session with an Inclusivity Consultant to review content and delivery of one of my modules. I'm always impressed with the volume and quality of work that they do and find their weekly emails a fantastic way to keep up with what is going on in the GSU, across the university, and beyond. They always have a grip on the most topical and important issues of the day.

The past two years have been tough for our students, and myself and my colleagues in the School of Law and Criminology have worked hard to support them in the best way that we can. I meet regularly with my personal tutees and work with them through a range of issues from academic support and financial concerns to accommodation challenges and wellbeing matters. It is fantastic to know that the GSU are there as well, and I often signpost and help my students to access their excellent services. Working with my students and seeing them develop as critical thinkers, innovative change makers, and skilled professionals is a privilege. I see the role that I play as a lecturer as in partnership with the GSU: together we can support our students to fulfill the amazing potential that I see in each and every one of them.

“Melissa demonstrated proactive effort in terms of encouraging EDI and addressing issues of unconscious bias.”

- Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer



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Professor Michael Talbot

Senior Lecturer in the History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Middle East

Although it's my mug beaming down at you in this display, I'm representing the fantastic History programme team in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. So, I'd like to recognise my brilliant colleagues: Dr Victoria Carolan, Dr Claire Eustance, Dr Sara Pennell, Dr Gavin Rand, Dr Vanessa Taylor, and Dr Chris Ware. Each one is dedicated, above and beyond, to supporting our students through world-class research-led teaching and exemplary pastoral support, and I learn so much from working with them.

I was so excited watching the elections livestream back in March 2021 and seeing my brilliant student Aatika elected as GSU President. The History team has worked closely with her and the wider GSU the past year, most notably in supporting the Union's events around Black History Month. I have been so proud of her, and have enjoyed working with her on a number of issues related to our common interests, including ways to support Jewish students and fight antisemitism, and advocate for student solidarity with the Palestinians in their struggle for justice.

This year, the highlight has been being back in the classroom with my students. I know how challenging things have been for so many of them, and I am always in awe of their dedication to their studies. I've particularly enjoyed the return of class trips to the British Museum, recreating an 18th-century Ottoman coffee house and literary salon, Ottoman Turkish and Japanese calligraphy competitions, and leading our new School-wide work placement modules. Finally, I'd like to give a shout out to my amazing PhD History Methodology class – postgraduate research students such as are a vital part of the student (and staff!) community.

“I can say with every fibre of my being that Michael is an incredible teacher and a phenomenal mentor. He instills in his students a love for the subject, a love for learning that, I must say, is an absolute skill.”

- Aatika Ayoub, GSU President



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Shapna Compton

Assistant Head of Student Wellbeing Service - Disability and Dyslexia

I have been at the University for 3 and a half years now and during my time, I have realised the important role that GSU play in advocating for students and ensuring that the student voice is loud and heard!

I personally have had the pleasure of working in collaboration with GSU many a times, but I have been asked to narrow this down to what I would consider top wins in the past academic year. This was hard to do as there are many wins but here goes:

1. Working together on the termly Disabled Students' Network forum. This gives our disabled students the opportunity to meet in one space and feedback about their experiences and let us know about what we need to improve to enhance overall disabled student experience. We want to say, 'you said and we did!' and with the help of GSU we have been able to.

2. Working with Zoe Campbell to organise a range of events to raise awareness of Disability History Month (DHM) such as an exhibition to showcase feelings and experiences of disability and what it means to individuals and a staff/student event on disability and life during the pandemic. Awareness raising of DHM was on a bigger scale this year because of GSU involvement and the message about disability and inclusivity and accessibility was bigger and better!

Thank you GSU for your continued support. I look forward to many a more opportunities to work with you on different initiatives and projects in the upcoming years!

“Shapna always brings passion to raising awareness of disability, inclusivity and accessibility.”

- Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer



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Stephanie Robinson

Internal Communications
Manager

I value the strong working relationship Comms has with the GSU, after all we are all working to help students get the most out of their time at Greenwich - so why wouldn't we collaborate?

What pleases me more is how this relationship continues and strengthens with every GSU Officer team, and that's credit to the officers themselves but also to the support they receive from everyone at GSU.

It's great to have - and to hear - GSU Officers representing students in the university meetings we're both in, keeping the student perspective front of mind. The pandemic has been tough for everyone and I've really appreciated how we've continued to work together to get messages out to students especially when so much of our world changed, and continues to change.

I've long been a supporter of the Student Led Teaching Awards and love to hear students recognising colleagues at the university, and to share these on the portal. I know how much colleagues value their nominations too. But every year without fail at awards night I always seem to have something in my eye!

Thank you GSU for making it so easy for us to work together.

“Stephanie’s continuous support of GSU has not gone unnoticed throughout the years! We wish to thank her for her invaluable contribution in ensuring communication and collaboration between University and Union staff.” - GSU Officer Team



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Tania Struetzel

Student Engagement Manager

It's been an exciting first year for the Student Engagement Team during which we have been able to launch some great new initiatives and projects from our Welcome Team supporting new registering students to our peer mentoring scheme in Business.

All of our projects and interventions are aimed at improving the experience of our diverse student body and of course we couldn't develop and deliver any of these without students themselves and working in partnership with GSU. I really value the insights, energy and ideas our GSU Officers and colleagues have when we develop new initiatives together or collaborate on existing projects.

I work closely with GSU on our delivery of Welcome, student voice and of course the Retention Project which has had such a positive impact on supporting our students who may have found it difficult to engage with their studies this year.

I am very grateful for the support, ideas and challenges from GSU Officers and colleagues over the last year which have inspired me and my team to think about new and different approaches to how we can best support our students, and am excited for what we will be able to deliver together next year!

“Tania is incredibly supportive of students and consistently goes the extra mile to help them. She is a genuine ally to international students and works hard to support their welfare and ensure that their education is as accessible as possible.” - Nele Leitolf, GSU Officer



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Dr Elaine Williams

Lecturer in Criminology

When we moved to online teaching in 2020, one of the things I really missed was the informal chats with students and the sense of community that was built through spontaneous encounters and interactions outside of timetabled classes. I started my @Radical_Crim Instagram page that summer as a way of letting students get to know more about me, have a bit of fun together and communicate in a more relaxed way.

Students have really engaged with the page, it's been so much fun and I feel like we've learnt a lot about each other and our interests beyond university. It's also been a great way to support the work of the SU; connecting and communicating SU initiatives, promoting university events and sharing opportunities. The SU produce amazing social media content and it's been great to share and discuss these with students in creative ways.

Since the move back to campus, I've become Community Lead in my department. I've been able to set up a criminology running club, a staff and student coffee morning, promote and support the Criminology Society and establish a regular law and criminology karaoke night at the Student Union bar. It's been great to have the support of the SU with all these initiatives and there's been a fantastic response from students.

Academic life is really busy and it's easy to lose touch with what's really important - the people! Making time for community activities and connecting more with students has brought so much joy to my work. It's often the stories shared over coffee or whilst running in the park with students that are the highlight of my working week. We have THE BEST students here at Greenwich and it's such a privilege to get to know them and be part of their university experience.

“Elaine cares deeply for her students, and you can tell she is genuinely excited and interested to spend time with them.”

- Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer



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Dr Myrtle Emmanuel

Senior Lecturer HRM & Organisational Behaviour & Equality Diversity & Inclusion Race Advisor

It is always a privilege to work with GSU to tackle the issues that affect students' lives and in particular for our BAME students. I am rightly proud of our collaboration on raising awareness of racial inequality faced by our BAME students and staff within the wider university community.

I am also honoured to work collectively with GSU Officers on actions which are close to my heart such as:

- Creating an inclusive culture for staff and students
- Reducing the BAME Awarding Gap
- Decolonising the curriculum and the University
- Implementing the Race Action Plan
- Black History 365

It would be remiss if I failed to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our GSU Officer Team especially Aatika Ayoub, Zoë Campbell, Nele Leitolf and Jabed for their commitment in supporting issues that really matter to all our students and staff. Wishing you all the best in your future endeavours.

“Myrtle’s work on reducing the BAME Awarding Gap and Decolonising the Curriculum deserves to be recognised and celebrated.”

- Zoë Campbell, GSU Officer