

# TL SU

Trinity  
Laban  
Students'  
Union

## Annual Report

Who ran TLSU this year?

PAID



Luke Faber  
**President**



William Branston  
**VP of Music**



Lydia Touliatou  
**VP of Dance**

VOLUNTARY



Aaron Bennett  
**MT  
Academic  
Officer**



Emily Maloney  
**Music  
Academic  
Officer**



Michael McEvoy  
**Dance  
Academic  
Officer**



Molly Jenkins  
**Publicity &  
Comms.  
Officer**

# Our Goals

These goals were defined and agreed by the TLSU sabbatical team (Luke Faber, William Branston & Lydia Touliatou) on the 24/07/2017 during our handover training with the outgoing team.

We have tried to use these as a benchmark for all our efforts during the year.

## 1. Improve Democracy & Participation

- Better SU inclusion into institutional process, ethos & mindset
- Take a leading role in the Student Rep. System
- Form a Student Committee to hold the SU to account
- Create internal alternative to the NSS

## 2. Improve Student Experience

- Provide foundation for more, and diverse, student-run societies
- Foster better channels of communication from the SU to the students
- Improve the SU facilities & spaces, including liberating an SU space @ Laurie Grove
- Develop an "SU PASS" system for delivering extra-curricular classes

## 3. More Business-like & Self-Sufficient

- Look into forming a limited company for TLSU
- Improve the branding, marketing, advertising opportunities & social media
- Explore new revenue streams
- Re-invest profit & build-up reserves for future teams

## 4. Student Development & Awareness

- More outreach programs
- RAG Week & Fundraising campaigns for charity
- Employability conference
- Liberation weeks
- Health & Mental Health campaigns
- FAQs & literature for new students

# Some Highlights from our Year

- Two weeks of Freshers with over 18 large-scale events.
- Re-branded TLSU with a new logo and colour scheme.
- Launched a new website with e-commerce capability (<http://tlsu.org>).
- Introduced the “EXCEL Card” for dance students to purchase blocks of extracurricular dance classes.
- Weekly dance classes as well as one-off workshops with James Pett, Ian Garside and Elly Braund to name just a few.
- Raised over £500 for charity through various fundraising events.
- Helped student-led societies flourish by offering financial support to any new and existing groups. This year a new gaming society was established, the football society took part in an intercollegiate league and, notably, the PuzzlePiece opera society lead community outreach projects at local schools.
- Ran weekly bar nights and one-off special events like ‘Refreshers’ and ‘Let it Show Drag Night’ to help students socialise and unwind outside of class.
- Arranged student welfare events through the year including ‘Doggy De-Stress’, ‘An introduction to Hypnotherapy’, ‘Meditation workshops’, ‘Mental Health Awareness Forums’ and more.
- Sold TL merchandise including hoodies, joggers and travel mugs.
- Organised the TLSU Summer Festival, a new concept event to replace the Summer Ball which is a celebration at the end of the academic year.
- We canvassed student opinion on a number of issues through online surveys. This included the provision of the cafés at Laban and KCC as well the state of the SU spaces.
- Made additions and changes to the constitution through an EGM to reflect the realities of running TLSU.
- The SU had greater inclusion into the student representation system.

# The Positives

## **Freshers Fortnight**

We started this year with a fantastic two weeks of freshers entitled “Get On The Fresh”. We were not only able to put on over eighteen brilliant and fun events for the incoming students, but also connect with them and welcome them into the student body. This year we also presented an “Introduction to TLSU” talk that was well received by the attending students. It gave them a chance to ask questions and meet the team in a semi-formal setting. This is something we hope will set a precedent for future teams to have a personal and involved approach to induction from the onset of the year. We also produced a high quality, professionally printed welcome guide to TL and the SU. This included information about the SU, local amenities and student life.

## **Branding**

With great thanks to the Vice-President of Music, William Branston, we have drastically changed the online presence and visual style of TLSU. As you can see from this document, we have changed the TLSU logo to give it more vibrancy and also to steer it away from the TL branding to give TLSU its own identity. Alongside this we have improved our emails, Facebook and other social media platforms with the new style and tried to maintain a younger narrative throughout. We set a standard that was high at the beginning of the year and trying to maintain it has taken a lot of time and effort. We feel it is an important especially considering that this is an expectation of the current generation.

## **Dance Classes**

Additional dance classes have long been synonymous with the Student Union and with thanks to the Vice-President of Music, Lydia Touliatou, this has continued this year. James Pett, Ian Garside and Elly Braund are just a select few of the amazing teachers for classes that Lydia has sourced, contacted, publicised, organised, financed and attended.

*(Continued on next page)*

# The Positives

## Student Welfare

Student welfare has been a priority for us throughout the year and we've tried to address student needs through a variety of different approaches. This has included arranging social events and bar nights all the way through to organising events for Mental Health Awareness week.

## Facilities and Spaces

We've been proactive in trying to improve facilities for students at TL. In particular, the student-liberated spaces at all three sites - KCC, Laurie Grove and Laban. Progress has been slow, but a few notable changes include a new water fountain and tables at the KCC space, new exercise balls, mats and rollers at Laurie Grove and a new printer at Laban. Work towards more drastic and necessary improvements is ongoing.



**TLSU SABBATICAL TEAM 17-18**

# The Difficulties

## **Time Management**

Time management has been a huge difficulty for us, and we're sure is the case for all previous teams. This is something that we, as a small conservatoire Student Union, do not face alone as we have discovered from dialogue with other small and specialist Student Unions. It has been extremely difficult to view the bigger picture for the SU and what it can achieve; we get so easily bogged down by organising lockers, selling merchandise or having to find time to trek to wholesalers to purchase stock. Every SU is different and these are all things that are vital to the running of ours, however these are things that take up 80% of our time and they are not necessarily the best use of that time.

## **Money & Funding**

We spend a great deal of time worrying about our financial position. The grant we receive from Trinity Laban (£48,364) is not enough to cover all our activities. Once sabbatical team salary, accountant salary and our NUS membership is deducted from this figure we are left with a paltry ~£6,000 for the year. Naturally this puts a lot of pressure on the incumbent teams to raise money and sell event tickets. Thankfully our freshers this year was a big success and we raised significant sums of money. This sustained our activities through the year. This was, however, at the sacrifice of increased ticket prices for our new students. A better funded SU would have less burden to raise money and could put on events that were more affordable. It would also free up time that could be ploughed into more fruitful ventures like student welfare and student representation.

## **Continuity across teams**

Lauren Mckillop (president 2016-17) fought passionately to have a dedicated member of SU staff. As of today we are still no closer to reaching this goal, despite numerous meetings and dialogue with TL in collaboration with the NUS. Obviously there would be significant expense to make this a reality. However it is our belief that it would make TLSU much more effective at both operating on a day-to-day basis and also freeing up the elected sabbatical officers to pursue manifesto pledges. A staff member would take up the slack so some of the burden of responding to a myriad of internal emails, attending excessive committee meetings and worrying how we will make enough money to pay our salaries can be taken off the shoulders of the elected sabbatical team.

# The Difficulties

## **The Summer Ball / Summer Festival**

Last year the SU lost £15,198 on their Summer Ball. Unfortunately, this year we are set to make an even bigger loss of around £18-20k. This is due to very poor ticket sales despite the cheaper running cost than last year. We are very disappointed by the turnout but hope those in attendance have a great time!

These have been anomalous years as we have not had access to the Painted Hall. The venue of choice of previous teams which is hired to us at a discounted rate, as it is part of the ORNC complex. Losses of this magnitude are clearly not sustainable, but there is a great deal of pressure and expectation from the student body for a large-scale event. Similarly to freshers, ticket prices are high and sadly unaffordable to many students. We strive to include and represent all our students, but worry that events like this can be exclusionary and elitist to only those from a wealthier background that can afford to attend.

## **SU-run dance classes**

Planning and running dance classes takes up most of the time of the VP of Dance. It is clearly a worthwhile venture and students are always grateful to have extra dance classes available to them. However, in an ideal world this job would be taken on by a student society or another interested party. This would free up the VP of Dance (soon to be full-time President) to pursue other priorities.

## **Engaging with students**

This year we have had to contend with poor attendance at many events and poor turnout at the election. Future teams need to keep finding ways to innovate and engage with students. It is clear that we have very talented and passionate students, but their workload is more pressured than at academic institutions. The lack of engagement has at times been very disheartening. We have always tried to persevere and continue to offer a variety of events and represent our student body to our parent institution.

## **Slow progress making noticeable changes to SU spaces**

The student hub spaces are shabby and in desperate need of refurbishment. The SU needs a cash injection to make more than just temporary fixes and painting over cracks. Working with TL facilities has been frustrating and yielding little results.

# Elections for the Next Team

## Timeline of events

- Nominations Opened	Friday 27th of April @ 9am
- Nominations Closed	Thursday 17th of May @ 10pm
- Campaigning Began	Monday 21st of May @ 9am
- Hustings/Q&A event	Thursday 24th of May @ 5pm
- Campaigning Stopped	Tuesday 29th of May @ 8am
- Polls Opened	Tuesday 29th of May @ 8am
- Polls Closed	Tuesday 29th of May @ 10pm
- Results Declared	Wednesday 30th of May @ 7pm

## Results

Students voted online through the Moodle portal. Turnout was low with the highest turnout only reaching 10.61%.

<b>President of Music</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Anastasios (Tasos) Michalis:	78	50.00%
Re-open nominations:	78	50.00%
<i>Total 156 / Turnout 10.61%</i>		

Result was decided on a coin toss conducted by the deputy returning officer J.Wengraf. This result has subsequently caused quite a stir among the student body. There has been a petition to have the result overturned, but the individuals campaigning for this have since withdrawn their request.

<b>President of Dance</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Emma Holt	140	92.72%
Re-open nominations:	11	7.28%
<i>Total 151 / Turnout 10.27%</i>		

<b>Music Academic Officer</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Joe Tucker	112	89.60%
Re-open nominations:	13	10.40%
<i>Total 125 / Turnout 8.50%</i>		

# Elections for the Next Team

<b>Musical Theatre Academic Officer</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Brendan Mageean	108	88.52%
Re-open nominations:	14	11.48%
<i>Total 122 / Turnout 8.30%</i>		

<b>Post Grad Academic Officer</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Eleanor Strutt	109	92.37%
Re-open nominations:	9	7.63%
<i>Total 118 / Turnout 8.03%</i>		

<b>LGBT+ Officer</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Inès Murer	99	79.84%
Re-open nominations:	25	20.16%
<i>Total 124 / Turnout 8.44%</i>		

<b>Publicity &amp; Communications Officer</b>	No. of Votes	% of Vote
Peter Nieves	78	66.67%
Re-open nominations:	39	33.33%
<i>Total 117 / Turnout 7.96%</i>		

There are a number of unfilled positions:

Dance Academic Officer  
BAME Officer  
International Officer  
Welfare & Sustainability Officer

The successful candidates take over on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August following a period of handover training. We wish them the best of luck for the year ahead.

# Conclusions

Our tenure running the Student Union (TLSU) has been both rewarding and frustrating in equal measures.

This year TLSU has gone through big changes and difficult periods, it hasn't been the easiest of rides. We have persevered and tried to make lasting differences that we hope have and will progress TLSU in the coming years. However, we are disappointed that after a year we are still having the same conversations that previous teams have had. Issues such as lack of SU support staff, poor student engagement, incorrect use of the SU by both the institution and the student body, insufficient funding and the lack of well maintained and fit-for-purpose SU spaces. We have tried, and failed, to address most of these issues over the course of the year. We are also worried that future teams will face similar problems and make frustratingly little progress.

Despite this we hope that we have left the Student Union in a better state than we found it and can pass on our ambitions to the incoming team for them to learn from our year and continue to tackle what is still to be achieved. We have been lucky this year to have such a diverse skill-set across the sabbatical team. Everyone has been able to contribute their own expertise to help run TLSU.

We would be very grateful if the board of governors recognised the need to increase funding for the SU, if for no other reason than to employ a member of support staff. An excellent example of this would be the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama who have an elected sabbatical team and a full time general manager. Your support would lend weight to our cause when we lobby TL for increased funding over-and-above inflation.

We wish future TLSU sabbatical officers the best of luck in shaping the future of Trinity Laban and striving to continually improve it.

*Luke Faber, William Branston & Lydia Touliatou*