

Manifesto Booklet

Liberation Officer Candidates





she/her

I want to be **your next liberation officer!**

#liberatewithsaarah
Destigmatise, decolonise and celebrate!



Why should you vote for me?

- I am extremely passionate about actively representing and fighting for minority groups.
- I use my academic and creative writing to represent Muslim and Asian voices.
- I wish to be an ally to black and LGBTQ communities.
- I want to use this role to celebrate inspirational BAME and LGBTQ individuals.
- I will be a confident voice for underrepresented groups, fighting for the respect and inclusion of all people in HE.
- I wish to be a voice for minority groups but not overshadow or talk over people.

- My name is Sarah Bhalwani.
- I am on the MA for Modern and Contemporary Literature.
- I identify as a British Asian Muslim Woman.
- A Leicester girl and so I know this city very well.
- I wish to use the arts to liberate and empower minority voices!
- People who know me would describe as kind, passionate and hard working. I wish to utilise my skills in order to be your next liberation officer for 2023/2024. Look at the next page to see my main ideas ...



@saarahforliberation

My priorities as liberation officer:

- **Accessibility:** To improve classroom accessibility for students with wheelchairs and other disabilities. Improve the subtitles in recorded lectures for hard of hearing students. Run free beginner British Sign Language classes at the union to normalise communicating through sign language.

- **Decolonising the canon:** Why is it important that we read more diverse literature? I will promote female, BAME and LGBTQ writers, poets and academics. This will be a part of my campaign to celebrate liberated, minority groups through sharing books of the month and by regularly introducing underrated writers.

- **Black and brown girl magic:** Empower women of colour. Focus on body positivity by normalising brown body hair as beautiful, not as 'unfeminine'. Celebrate black hair by destigmatising black hair and curly hair as being 'unprofessional'. Run workshops where we learn about the history of black hair. More halal food options on campus, henna art days, BAME food, clothes and music celebration days.

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- **Continue with intersectionality LGBTQ training:** Educate on the experiences of queer people of colour and of faiths. Supporting these groups and raise awareness to their struggles. Hold workshops to discuss the negative media portrayal of trans people.

- **Hijab and turban appreciation days:** Run events where Muslim women, discuss the hijab, niqab, burqa. Speak about their relationship with the hijab. Campaign to destigmatise the negative views of Muslims in the media, society and education system. Hold workshops where we openly discuss the media's views of Muslims and how we can celebrate and empower Muslim students. Similarly, have Sikh people explain the reasons for wearing the turban and it's religious importance and much more! I want to work on improving the prayer spaces available on campus for students of faith.



My achievements that make me well suited for this role:

- An intersectionality LGBTQ training workshop that I ran with our current liberation officer, Nic Farmer on 22.02.2023 at the student union!
- Course rep for my MA!
- Debates I held at Oxford Brookes: At my previous university I helped my professor lead the School of English and Modern Languages BAME Student Community. I ran two debates and wrote blogs based on BAME experiences at university and our representation in education. This experience has equipped me in being confident when challenging uncomfortable topics. I am capable in voicing change: a crucial skill needed as liberation officer.
- Creative writing: I use script writing in order to express myself. The Human Story Theatre performed and published my script, 'Punish a Muslim Day' on their YouTube page, which focused on Islamophobic hate crime.



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Fun facts about me!

My favourite Netflix series is Bridgerton.

The best YouTubers to watch is the Beta Squad hands down.

I enjoy dressing up and getting my perfect outfit photo for Instagram.

I love taking sunset photos. 90s-early 2000's RNB has a special place in my heart.

My biggest inspiration is Riz Ahmed. His short film, 'The Long Goodbye', shaped me as a Muslim artist.

Scan this QR code to vote for a liberation officer who will:

- Be passionate, brave and committed to this role!
- Listen to people's experiences as minorities and do my best to advocate and represent all students.
- Always have a book to recommend you!



DARE TO DREAM...

VOTE

JADE FOR LIBERATION

My name is Jade Thomas, I am a 3rd year Geology student and the current BAME Part Time Officer. Since starting as a student here back in 2016, I have always endeavoured to leave the University a better place than I found it. Whilst I have managed to achieve some amazing things over the years, such as getting the library to be open 24/7 for all students, I believe there is so much more I can do, if successfully elected as Liberation Officer.



RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- Current **PEER MENTORING ASSISTANT** helping to oversee the running of this years Peer Mentoring Scheme
- **STUDENT VOICE PROJECT WORKER** 2020/21, working alongside the Voice team, assisting with campaigns such as **#LeicsDecolonise**
- **COURSE REP** almost every year since 2016 and **DEPARTMENT REP** 2018/19 & 2020/21
- **SECRETARY** for PCSB Society 2019/20 and **VICE PRESIDENT** of the West Indies Society 2021/22
- **BAME PART TIME OFFICER** for 2021/22 and 2022/23

RECENTLY I HAVE...

Lead the campaign responsible for getting The Library to open 24/7

Collaborated with the Education Officer to allow Mitigating Circumstances for Period Pain

Hosted an event to raise awareness about the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

IF ELECTED, I INTEND TO...

Run events that raise awareness about **invisible illnesses** and ways that students can support, including hosting a **blood donor drive on campus**

Lobby the University and Students' Union to allow **sick pay for all student staff** who have passed their probation

Create an **online 'Jobs Desk'** that lists **local work opportunities** for students in Leicester, but also includes **internship/graduate opportunities** for students from marginalised backgrounds

Lobby the University to **make all teaching on a Wednesday afternoon asynchronous**, so that **postgraduates** may also get involved in sports

Lobbying the University to **increase financial support for PhD students**

Collaborate with the Sports Officer to make **sport more inclusive**, including **recommissioning the Running Track** at Roger Bettles Sports Centre to provide students with a safe, free place to run

Run more culturally inclusive events on campus, including **Night of Culture** and the celebration of various **Religious Celebrations**

Run campaigns and workshops to help tackle/address the **BAME attainment gap**

Collaborate with the Sports Officer to lobby the University to **extend the opening hours of both gyms**, to better accommodate students, including those who work and have caring responsibilities

Lobby the University to **increase support for International Students**, including creating resources in their home languages

IF ELECTED, I INTEND TO CONTINUE...

- Lobbying the University to add **more inclusive gender options** to My Student Record
- Running the **#LeicsDecolonise** campaign, including running events throughout the year
- Reviewing the **Senate Regulations** and University policies, ensuring education is **inclusive for ALL**
- Working with the University to **expand prayer facilities** across campus
- Reviewing the University and Students' Union **wellbeing services**, ensuring they suit the needs of ALL students
- Hosting regular events on campus to **promote significant liberation months** (i.e. Black History Month, Islamophobia Awareness Month, and LGBTQ+ History Month)



WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE FOR ME?

Throughout my time as a student, I have consciously made it my mission to leave the University a better place than I found it. I have always endeavoured to get involved and actively try to improve the student experience, working on a number of campaigns throughout the years. You genuinely will not find someone who cares more about students and the student experience; if elected, I promise to continue to do my best to make this University a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for all who come here.



SCAN TO VOTE: