

The Students' Union Elections 2018 saw a 28% voter turnout. This was 4% lower than the 2017 elections, however this was to be expected as four incumbent Student Leaders re-ran, which deterred many students from running. Those that did run against the incumbent Student Leaders also felt under more pressure and thus lacked enthusiasm as they believed they could not win. A total of 4045 students cast 29,441 unique votes over an eight day period. A total of 53.5% of representatives, 48% of sports and societies members and 17.8% of placed volunteers. This is in comparison to the 57% of representatives, 52% of Activities and 27% of placed volunteers who voted in 2017. In terms of gender breakdown, 59% of voters were female, and 41% male. This is only a 1% difference from 2017.

The three Schools with the highest voter turnout consisted of Marketing & Tourism (43.1%) Psychology (43%) and Social & Political Sciences (39.2%); the three with the lowest percentage turnout were Health & Social Care (12%), People & Organisation (12.8%) and Architecture & the Build Environment (18.2%). It should however be noted that Health & Social Care and People & Organisation are the two biggest schools.

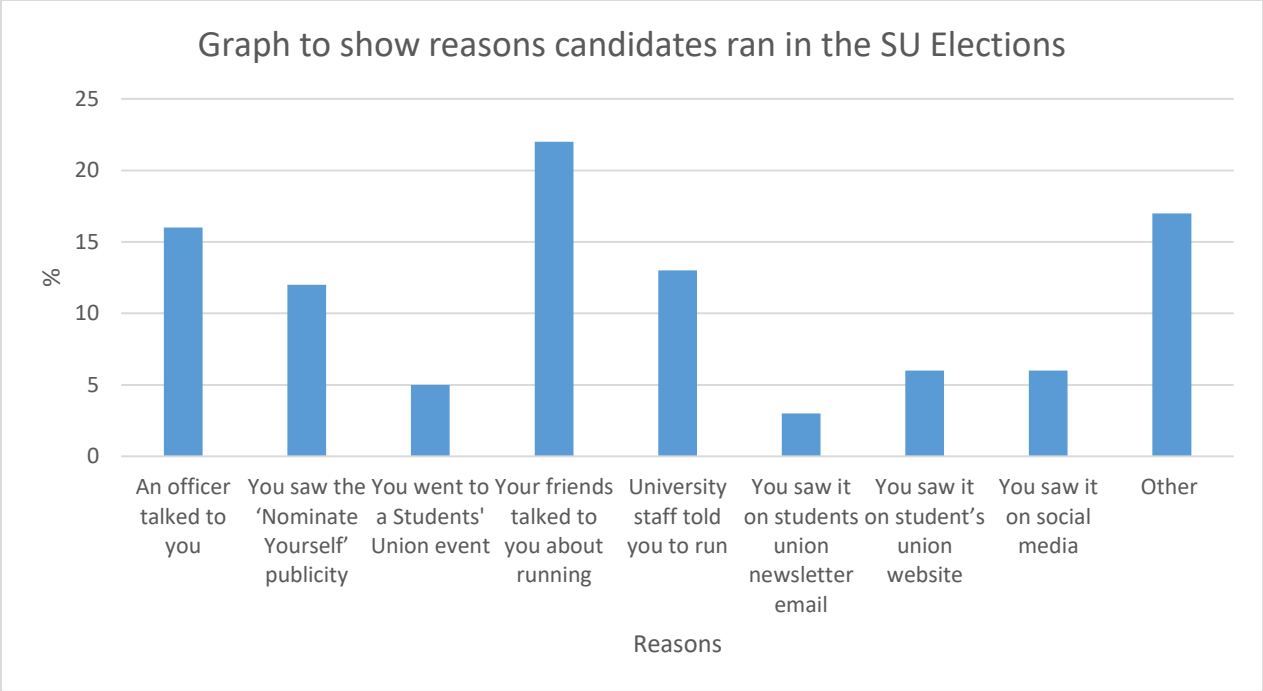
The Candidates

The 2018 elections saw 19 male (48%) and 21 female (52%) candidates run for 23 positions. All five Student Leader roles were contested, with two candidates running for SU President; 3 for VP Academic Affairs; 3 for VP Welfare & Community; 5 for VP Activities and 6 for VP International.

For Volunteer Officer roles, two positions were contested, with 5 students running for NUS delegate roles. Next year, there should be an aim to ensure all Volunteer Officer elections are contested. The Grid could be better used, with Student Leaders ensuring that they meet with the relevant potential Volunteer Officer candidates face to face, as opposed to just speaking through social media or emails.

Recommendation: For Student Leaders to meet with potential Volunteer Officer candidates face-to-face

Following the election, candidates were asked why they chose to run as a candidate in the election. The graph below shows some of the main reasons why they chose to run in the election. Other reasons candidates gave as motives for running included wanting to get more involved in the charity, and also having previously been a representative or Volunteer Officer.



The feedback showed that the main reason students wanted to run was because their friends talked to them about running, closely followed by an Officer having spoken to them. Conversely, the smallest reason students ran was because they had seen it in an SU newsletter, on the website or on social media. This demonstrates that peer to peer encouragement and interactions have played a more important role this year, whereas digital sources of information have played a significantly less important role. It would be useful for Student Leaders to tap into the social network of potential candidates to ensure that they are encouraging their friends to run. More use should also be made of the 'recommend a friend' platform, which should be introduced to staff and students earlier in the year.

Recommendation: To introduce the 'recommend a friend' platform, and promote this to staff and students in November.

Recommendation: For Student Leaders where possible to tap into the social networks of potential candidates to ensure encouragement to run is being provided.

The Training Sessions

This year, four training sessions were delivered for candidates in advance of the elections, along with an initial elections information session, and a compulsory candidate briefing.

The training sessions consisted of two 'Planning your Objectives' sessions, which supported candidates to create meaningful and attractive objectives for their

manifestos; two 'Effective Communication' session, which provided effective public speaking and GOATing strategies; two 'How to Run a Campaign' sessions, which gave hints and tips for delivering effective campaigns; and one 'Graphic Design' session, which gave strategies for designing eye-catching posters.

Following the elections, candidates were asked how useful they found each of the training sessions, the elections information and the candidate briefing.