



## A Year in Review







## **FEBRUARY**



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#### **MARCH**



# CATE Award

The Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) recognises and celebrates collaborative work that has had a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning. Each award will recognise a team which has enabled a change in practice for colleagues and/or students at an institutional or discipline level.

MDX's sector-leading Student Learning Assistant scheme wins top accolade. Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) Award for initiative that supports students

When Middlesex adopted the Student Learning Assistants Scheme in 2009, the goal was to support student progression, tackle non-continuation and enhance student satisfaction by connecting students to the wider university and help them navigate their time studying.

The initial pool of 40 SLA's has grown to 320 in the last decade, with the initiative covering 136 modules across all Faculties in the University and supporting 30 per cent of the student population.

Now the highly valued scheme, which aims to support every student through at least one module in their studies, has won a prestigious CATE award, which signifies excellence in teamwork and significant impact on learning and teaching.





The SLA scheme complements teaching in various learning environments, reinforcing learning and building student confidence. SLAs also lead supplementary sessions outside the classroom.

The work carried out has positive demonstrable impact; last year 63 per cent of staff reported a major impact within student experience and engagement.

Meanwhile, 37 per cent of staff described the SLAs' impact over transition to and within HE and also student progression as 'major'.

In 2019/20 80 per cent of students stated that working with SLAs had a positive impact on grades and when asked to rate their experience with SLAs, more than 90 per cent rated this excellent or good.

Simbo Ajayi, Head of Peer Assisted Learning said: "The CATE award is a reflection of the calibre and commitment of MDX staff in working together in the interest of our students. It speaks about the collaborative efforts between staff and students to listen, engage and respond to the student voice, and its impact in transforming student learning, raising academic standards and enhancing students' employability skills.



This demonstrates the significance of the award and the value placed on the SLAs both as part of the approach to learning and teaching at Middlesex but also the value of the authentic collaboration of the scheme.

We are delighted that this has been recognised by the sector; congratulations to all the students and colleagues that have helped shape the scheme over the years.

and achievement, and also in ensuring that our students are valued, supported and have a



sense of belonging throughout their time at Middlesex University. David Clover, Deputy Director, Library and Student Support: Head of Library and Learning Enhancement, added: "The CATÉ award recognises the impact of the scheme, but also importantly recognises the different levels of collaboration between the Peer Assisted Learning team and academic and professional staff across the university in maintaining a high-quality scheme that is flexible and agile so that it meets the specific disciplinary aspects of learning within different programmes."



# A year to be remembered!

The moment has come to reflect on the last academic year. We all recall at least one magazine we go back to make us smile! That is why we present you with a catalogue of a VIP collection of memories you can look back on and feel proud of!

Once again, the SLA scheme flourished thanks to the efforts of a group of exceptionally gifted, dedicated, and enthusiastic people who put in long hours every semester to improve the experience of students, lecturers, and the Middlesex community! Each one of you made extraordinary contributions that are irreplaceable, and for that, those need to be recorded forever.

Despite the obstacles and the ever-changing world, SLAs never give up on improving and developing their creative ideas. No matter how imperfectly you think you have pieced together your year, the stories you tell are the most valuable celebration of your uniqueness!

As you read this Yearbook, I hope it brings you joy and a positive reminder of how far you have come alongside the SLA scheme!

And remember...

(Drum Roll, 1,2,3...)

NOT ALL SUPERHEROES WEAR CAPES. SOME WEAR SLA T-SHIRTS!



Diana Oliveira
Senior Student Learning Assistant
BA Dance Practices



The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Group has been instrumental in the sustained growth of the SLA Scheme. Simbo Ajayi, Dhana Letchmanan, and Beaullah Mlanjira are the three amazing members of the PAL Team. Having their unwavering assistance allows SLAs to do a fantastic job of assisting students. They are accountable for the SLAs' recruiting, training, mentoring, and coaching alongside the academics. By providing several helpful training sessions, and seminars and fostering reflective practice through OU Blogs and the Associate Fellowship, the PAL Team hopes to improve the SLA Scheme.

Keep reading for their lovely messages in this year edition!





It seemed only like yesterday when we met at the SLA training. Over the course of the year, I gradually got to know many of you through your sessions, meetings, various activities and events in your role. It has been amazing to see how much you have developed and grown as educators within a short span of time.

I am so proud of the feedback we received about the impact you made on the learning of students across the university. Due to the quality of work that you have done this year, several academic staff and students have been making requests to expand SLA support to other modules which haven't participated in the SLA scheme. This is down to your diligence and commitment to supporting learning. Well done!

As many of you know, we received the CATE (Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence) award at the start of the academic year on the 29th of September, 2022. This was in recognition of the partnership between you (SLAs) and members of staff in supporting overall student outcomes. The award also highlighted the opportunities provided for you as SLAs to enrich your own employment skills. Since receiving CATE, I am grateful for the efforts you have made to live up to expectations as a team both at Middlesex University and beyond. We have continued to share the sterling work you do with other universities and have also involved some of our SLAs in talking about their roles. Thank you!

Many of you would be embanking on new adventures and I am certain that you leave us equipped with passion, confidence and transferable skills to conquer the world you may find yourselves. Go well!

I am immensely delighted to have worked with you in the SLA scheme and as you browse through the pages of this Yearbook, I hope they bring you joy and the satisfaction of making a difference in the lives of other people. What a testimony!

Wishing you Godspeed, Simbo t has been a pleasure working with all of you, most especially witnessing the leaps and bounds you all have had to overcome previous two years. What I have enjoyed this year is that we have met each other more face to face and that has allowed a sort of bonding in away as you had more opportunities to engage with the PAL team and vice versa. In our quest of community building, this has had a positive outcome and beneficial for all.

It has been a challenging year but nevertheless, you all have transitioned and excelled with such tenacity and resilience in rendering academic support to your fellow students with so much ease. You ought to be proud of yourself for impacting the lives of others and their learning experience, mentoring and coaching even though you may have faced challenges of your own. As you embark on your various journeys, look back in introspection and remember the lessons, the successes and the failures you conquered, the smiles that warmed other's hearts. You are conquerors, unstoppable and amazing. Go do well, remember to always smile.

Best of luck in all your endeavours.





A s we close the 2022-2023 academic year and some of you embark on new journeys, I want to take a moment to reflect on the memories we made while at university.

While we've all experienced challenges and grown, we've also shared moments of friendship, growth, and learning. We will always cherish these memories, and I hope we continue to cherish them as the years go by.

I have enjoyed being a part of this SLA community and meeting so many talented, passionate SLAs (Student Learning Assistants) and SSLAs (Senior Student Learning Assistants). Our team is grateful for your help in facilitating, encouraging, mentoring, coaching and empowering students to achieve their study goals by creating a positive learning environment for all. As we apply our knowledge into action, the future holds great promise for all of us.

With what we have learned, let's shape a better future for ourselves and those around us. Thank you for another successful year, and congratulations and best wishes to those graduating this year.

Your support has been greatly appreciated, and those of you leaving will be missed!

## Meet our Senior SLAs

Senior SLAs work side to side with the PAL Team to provide care, guidance, and instruction to the SLAs. They accomplish this by providing assistance during training sessions and being accessible to their SLA peers who may need guidance or assistance. Seniors enjoy collaborating with one another, to be able to let their expertise and creativity grow in their own tasks.





My journey as a SSLA has been an eventful learning curve, helping me develop myself and understand others better through lots of training and practical experiences. Being part of the SLAs' journey, helped me become a better educator as I learnt so much from my fellow SLA's and their experiences. I had also become more involved in the classroom as an SLA myself and built amazing connections, collated many transferable skills and started putting all my training into practice. This is an experience that will always be valuable to me and practices I've learnt as both an SLA and SSLA will be coming with me into my new Med School journey after graduating from Middlesex this year.

Hi all, my name is Edgar. I'm a senior SLA for this year. This year has taught me allot about leadership especially the different meetings which have been helpful. I'm happy to have led my SLA cohort and advise them the tips required to succeed in their role. I've also learnt to build trust with my students and SLAs during this year which has enabled to communicate with them easily. Through different events, I've been able to network with people and learn from their experiences. The reflective cafe enabled me to improve on reflection writing and I've focused on my improvements each month. As the year ends, I'd like to say I've learnt a lot from this scheme and I look forward to adding these skills to my future.





I have had an interesting experience in the Senior SLA role. I have learnt a lot of new skills as well as refined skills I have had previously such as effective questioning and active listening. I believe these skills will be beneficial to me in the future.

It has been an enjoyable experience working with the other Senior SLAs. I have learnt a lot from what they have shared of their own experiences with the role and from the action learning sets we are a part of.

Overall, my time as a Senior SLA has been an enjoyable experience that has continued my professional development.



Hello everyone! My name is Marta and I am a Senior SLA. My Journey as an SLA began in 2021 supporting the dance programmes and evolved into the Senior SLA role in summer 2022. My training as a Senior helped me realise the amount of skills I had gained while being an SLA the previous year. It was great to reflect on how I had developed myself professionally and to be able to set goals to keep growing, however, my favourite part has been to share it with the SLAs I support. To be able to observe, coach and mentor SLAs has confirmed my strong interest in faciliation and has helped me develop my practice further. It also makes me really proud to support a group of SLAs that are so involved and excited about their role! It has been a great experience to see them grow and support each other in their practices. The Senior SLA role has brought a sense of community to me and I feel really greatful that I have been able to provide some of this feeling to my SLAs.

Another great thing I have got to experience as a Senior has been to put together a whole project that has helped me put in practice the skills I aim to develop further in my future career. I have learnt about professional environments, project planning and development and many other useful tools that I will carry with me.

I am really thankful that I was given the chance to be a Senior SLA this year and I am really happy that I got to share it with all the other Seniors and so many fantastic SLAs!

See you all soon

As an SLA, I also found that I had a greater appreciation for the challenges that students face in their academic journeys. Through my interactions with them, I became more aware of the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that students bring to their studies. This allowed me to approach my own coursework with a deeper level of empathy and understanding, and to be more attuned to the needs of my fellow learners.

Additionally, being an SLA gave me the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to take on a greater level of responsibility. I was entrusted with helping to guide and support the academic progress of other students, and this allowed me to hone my ability to make decisions, to manage my time effectively, and to communicate with others in a professional and effective manner.

Overall, my experience as an SLA was incredibly rewarding and enriching. It allowed me to give back to my academic community in a meaningful way, while also developing my own skills and knowledge. I would highly recommend the SLA scheme to anyone who is interested in supporting others and who is looking for an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.







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My experience as a SSLA has provided me invaluable skills while taught me how to overcome different challenges. I really enjoyed providing a positive impact in the community by helping others to enhance their knowledge and skills. This role not only allowed me to develop professionally and academically but also promoted my personal growth.

Being an ssla and SLA allowed me to grow professionally and personally - I worked with a great group of people who bought me out my shell and gave me opportunity to grow even when I doubted my own abilities.

I gained skills vital for my future career but seeing students who I assisted succeed in their studies is a feeling unlike any I've ever experienced and the role has been absolutely incredible opening so many doors I never dreamed possible!





As an Senior SLA, I had the pleasure of helping people going through the same path I took, and along the way I learn many things. I am very grateful for this opportunity, and I hope I inspired my students to help others, as much as my former Senior SLA inspired me.



#### THE FACULTY OF



#### Marta Guerra Doblas BA Dance Practices

Abeen Sami BA Interior Architecture

**Akifah Choudhury** BA Interior Design

**Aleksandra Czekala** BA Digital Media with FY

**Aleksandra Spinkowska** BA Digital Media

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**Alexandra Paceana** *BA Music* 

Alice Murphy BA Advertising PR & Branding

Alina-Stefania Ilin BA Film

Amani Leyli Green BA Advertising PR & Branding

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**Anezka Postlerova** *BA Advertising PR & Branding* 

Anna-Maria Leventi BA Animation

Argyris Pericharos BA/BSc Games Design with FY

Aya Mohammed BA Fine Art

**Aysun Cakmakkaya** *MA Photography* 

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BA Digital Media and Communications

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Connagh West BA Music Business & Arts Management

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**Dan Cooney**BA Visual Effects

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Dinis Pinto BA Music

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**Egle Rameikaite**BA Creative Writing and Journalism

Eleanor Leinster BA Theatre Design & Production

Elena Cornila BA Photography

Elly Young
BA Music Business & Arts Management

Elona Popova Fashion Textiles and Design

Francesco Asaro BA Music

Gesa Pfeiffer BA Film

**Isaac Morgans** *BA Film* 

Ivana Neto Dramisino BA Fine Art with FY

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**Jewel John** *BA Music Business & Arts Management* 

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Josseth Mabuti BA Animation

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**Lauren Ferraro** *BA Creative Writing and Journalism* 

**Lia Fairhead** *BA Photography* 

Lillian Cadwallader BA Creative Writing and Journalism

**Qi (Lee) Li** MA Photography

**Lolita Parekh** *BA Creative Writing and Journalism* 

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Mollie-Mae Rochester
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Nerea Comino Vaquerizo BA 3D Animation & Games

Nor Imran Shah Bin Razif Shah BA Film

Nurul Aliya Shahidan BA Interior Architecture

Patrycja Brzostowicz
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Philip Do BA 3D Animation & Games

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Valerie Moore BA Illustration

**Varshga Premarash** *BA Fine Art* 

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Cristiano Fiore BA Film

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Emily Foxhall BA Photography

Grace Baker BA Animation

**Lauren Sharman** *BA Fashion Communication and Styling* 

Leo Schartz BA Music Business & Arts Management

Michaela Thomasova BA Advertising PR & Branding

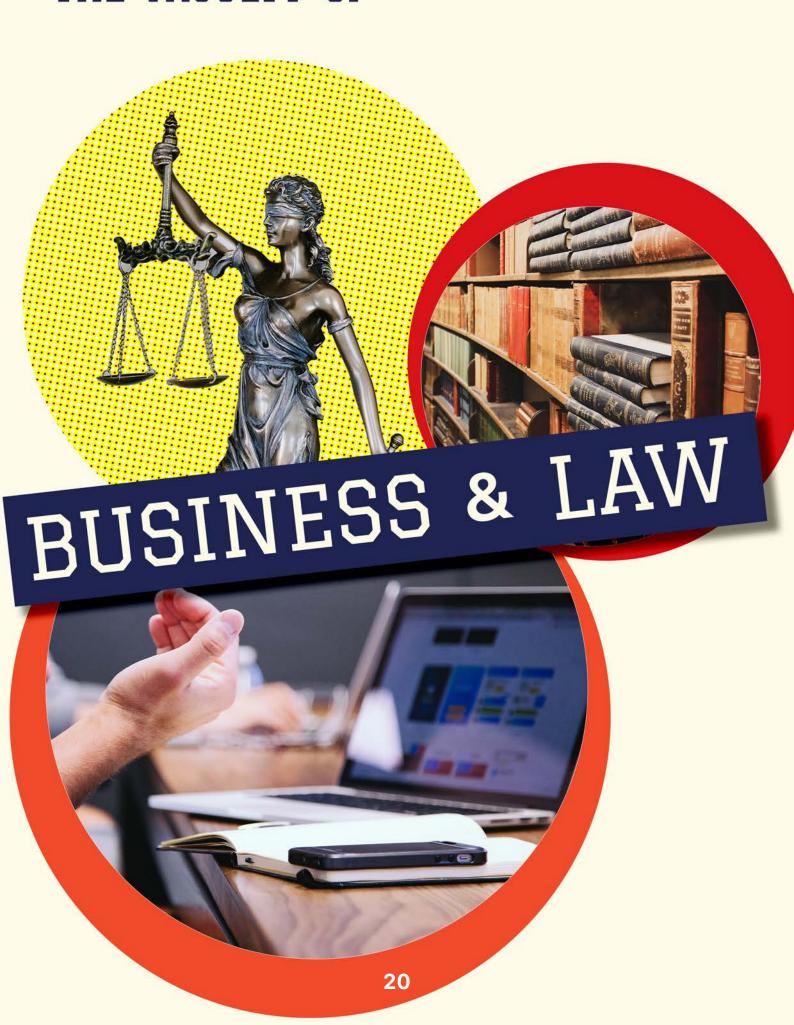
Michal Rzonca BA Fashion Design

**Charlotte Johnston** *BA Photography* 

Diana Sofia Parades De Oliveira Dance Performance BA Honours

**Jewel John** *BA Music Business and Arts Management* 

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Asika Pun

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Catalin Bulgaru

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Romina Iramloo

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Romina Vasileva

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**Aaron Palmer** 

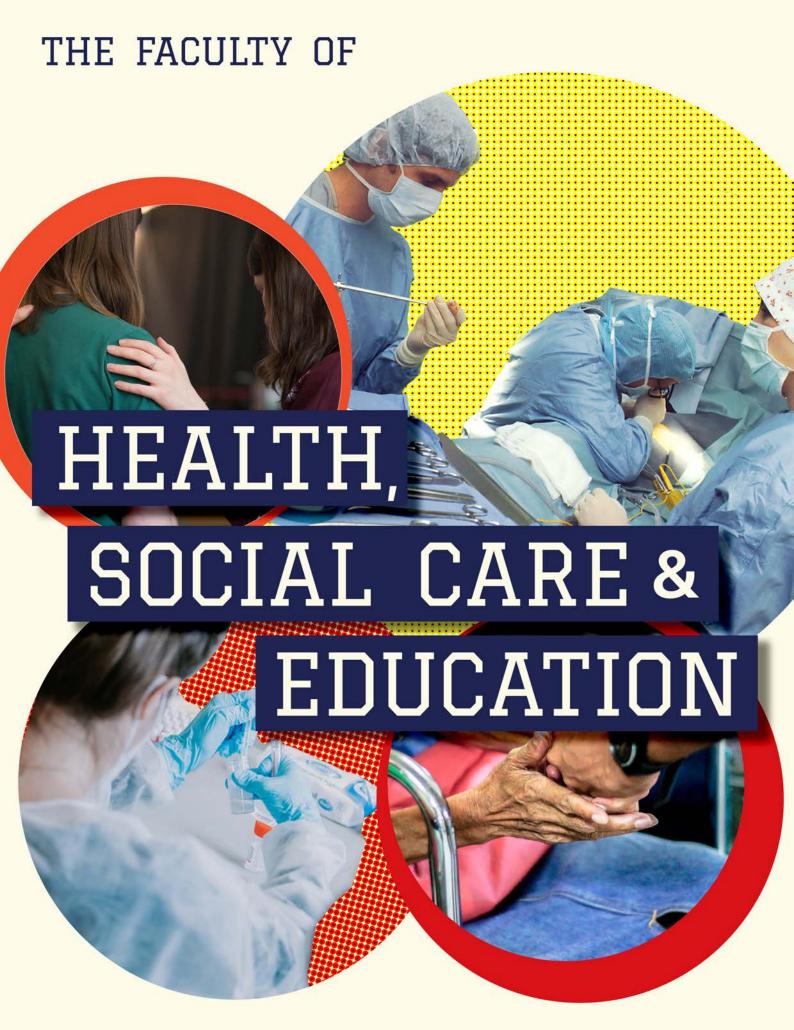
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VVILIT I

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**Vladislav Georgiev** *Trayanov BEng Robotics* 

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Angelica Argiolas BSc Pharmaceutical Chemistry

**Athvaithan Srisskandarajah**BA Product Design & BEng Product
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Bhavneet Kaur BSc Information Technology **Daniel Felipe Murillo Bermeo** BEng Electronic Engineering

**Dhruvit Talati** BSc Computer Science

Hadar Cohen BSc Computer Science

Kainat Shaheen MComp Computer Science

**Lucian Chiriazi** BSc Computer Science

Sunny Subash BSc Computer Science

**Teon Morgan**BSc Computer Science with FY

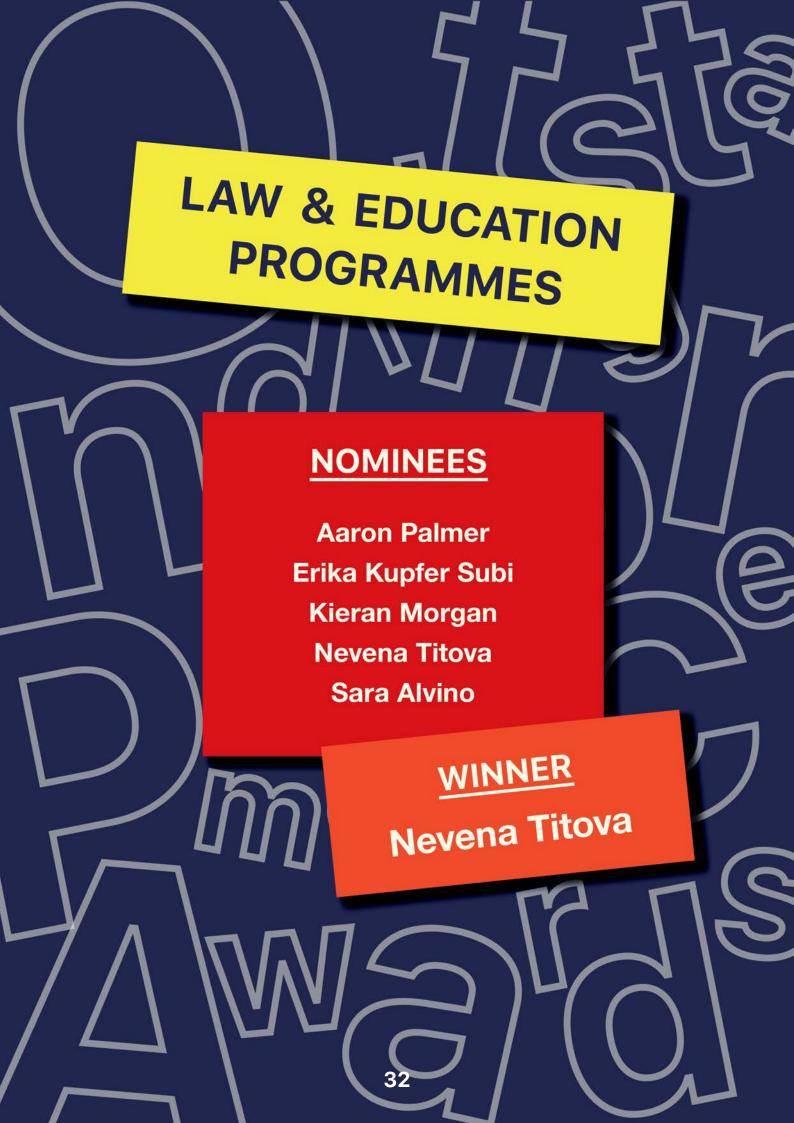
Vivek Sheth BSc Computer Science

William J Sartin
BEng Computer Systems Engineering with
FY

















































## SLA REFLECTIONS







Hello everyone, my name is Aayush Ramnani studying business management year 2. Being an SLA, an amazing, rewarding yet challenging experience. I have learnt to communicate and manage groups of students, helping them to understand the concepts and cope with assignments. Being an international student and helping other international students brings peace to my mind, the key is to understand every student is not the same and different way of approach is always required when guiding the student to the right direction. This role has taught me various skills which have helped me through my university life. It was a memorable and productive experience to work with such lovely students and other SLAs. I thank the team for giving me this opportunity to be a better version of myself.

I really enjoyed being an SLA this year as it gave me an opportunity to help 1st year students. As an SLA, I was able to develop my communication, time management and interpersonal skills. I would like to thank the SLA team for this amazing opportunity and to the lecturer to help me throughout the role.





Helping others is great, but helping them with subjects you're passionate about and seeing them grow is even better.





I've always had a passion for helping others, and when I first heard about the SLA (Student Learning Assistant) scheme, I knew it would be the perfect opportunity to channel my skills and expertise towards something that truly mattered. Joining the SLA team has been one of the best decisions I've ever made; it's provided me with a unique opportunity to put my skills to the test, develop new ones, and push myself out of my comfort zone, all while making a tangible difference in the lives of the students I work with. The experience of being an SLA has been incredibly fulfilling. Knowing that I have the power to impact a student's academic journey and help them navigate the complex and often challenging learning process is a feeling like no other. Of course, being an SLA comes with its own set of challenges, but the rewards are well worth the effort. Seeing a student succeed, knowing that I played a role in their progress, is the most satisfying feeling imaginable.





My role as an SLA has been short and sweet, it was amazing working with such a wide range of students and i'm so grateful for the SLA scheme for all the amazing opportunities it has brought me!

Being a Student Learning Assistant has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. It has allowed me to share my knowledge and expertise with fellow students, and help them succeed in their academic pursuits. Working with students has been both rewarding and challenging, as I have learned so much from them and their diverse perspectives. I found it fulfilling to be able to provide guidance, answer questions, and offer feedback to students as they navigated through their coursework. It was also a valuable opportunity for me to enhance my own skills in communication, organization, and leadership. Overall, this has been a valuable experience that will be serve me well in my future endeavours.







I can't help but feel proud and successful when I think back on my work as a student learning assistant this year. While I assisted other students with their study, this year was tough, but it was also full of development, learning, and priceless experiences.

Meeting and working with some of the most talented and valuable students in the music business was one of the biggest joys of my job this year. From singers to composers, podcasters to music producers, we all had the same objective in mind: we wanted to develop our skills and boost engagement to enhance the learning environment.

I had the opportunity to have one-on-one studio sessions every Thursday addressing various music-related topics with other students. In these sessions, we used a professional music studio to record songs, podcasts, interviews, instruments, and vocals. I was overjoyed to be able to guide students on how to make the best recordings possible using all of the studio's equipment. Seeing their progress and development over the duration of the sessions was a wonderful experience.

As a SLA, I believe that "Experiential Learning" is the ideal technique for structuring a lesson and enhancing student involvement and retention. As a result, I designed my SLA lessons to involve students in practical activities and reflection. By consistently asking questions that prompted students to choose the next steps for themselves, they were able to apply the theories and information they had acquired in the classroom to real-words situations.

Creating a positive, relaxed, and friendly environment was also essential in my SLA sessions. This helped to develop academic skills and explore subject material and personal approaches to study. It was a great pleasure to see students leaving my sessions feeling confident and happy with what they had achieved.

This experience has taught me the importance of determination, perseverance, and enthusiasm in all we do. I have personally witnessed how these traits may assist us in achieving our objectives and enhancing our abilities.

Being a student learning assistant, this year has been a wonderful and enjoyable experience for me. I am grateful of the chance to work with such talented students in the music business and for the chance to contribute to their personal progress. The most rewarding aspect has been their enthusiasm and positive feedback, and I look forward to continuing to assist students in achieving their objectives in the future.





My trajectory as an SLA this year has been the most rewarding so far, I have been having the opportunity to facilitate in class learning sessions to first year students and share my past experiences on their current modules, giving tips and creating spaces for their growth and artistic development, besides that I have been supporting new applicants audition day by giving a tour of our dance studios, and participating in other dance events on campus and outside representing and supporting our dance course. Overall, it has been the most incredible chance to connect with other dance students and all the SLAs in events and sharing our experiences throughout this year, that is what leads to new learning and growth.

Being an SLA is all about putting the students first and always being there for them. Students go through all kinds of situations during their time at university and having SLAs there to help always makes everything easier, personally I feel like being an SLA is extremely rewarding as we not only share the knowledge we possess but also constantly learn from students themselves.

This was my first year working as an SLA and I had the chance to support students from all kinds of backgrounds and parts of the world, this helped me enrich my knowledge, learn about different learning styles and different cultures and mainly guide all the students I worked with towards a path of academic excellence. This role also has its challenges as you'll have to learn to deal with different learning styles and learn how to adapt your teaching style so all students can understand you.





Overall, I found the SLA experience quite enjoyable. It came with unique challenges that were always an intrigue to face. It not only helped with my own development, but it made me feel like I was having a positive influence on the development of others as well. During the hectic times of the final year, seeing someone improve because of something you said or did was always the highlight of my day.







Dear fellow SLAs and readers of the Yearbook, It has been a privilege to serve as an SLA in the BEng Robotics and Mechatronics program this year. I have had the opportunity to work with students who share a passion for technology and innovation. Being an SLA has allowed me to support and guide students as they navigate complex technical challenges, develop problem-solving skills, and collaborate with peers. It has also been a great learning experience for me, as I have been able to further develop my own knowledge and skills in the field. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to have served as an SLA, and for the trust that has been placed in me to support my fellow students. I have gained so much from this experience, from the personal growth and development it has facilitated, to the satisfaction of knowing that I have made a positive difference in the lives of others. I am grateful to my program coordinators, my fellow SLAs, and to all of the students who have made this year so memorable.

Being an SLA has given me the opportunity to grow by sharing knowledge with other students in my course. The collaborative spirit involved in helping students progress academically has opened doors to others as well as to myself, creating a safe learning environment where curiosity and challenges are embraced.





My highlight of the year was winning the outstanding performance award for the Business School. In my experience the SLA role has been enjoyable, rewarding, and helpful to others!























































































## Goodbye for now...

Dear PAL Team, Senior SLAs, and the heart of this scheme, our Student Learning Assistants,

The SLA scheme has always been trying to leave the university a better place than it was before, and it could not do so without a unified team! This includes every single one of you! A big appreciation for your dedication and hard work during this year's programme, especially in learning facilitation and mentoring/coaching! I have no doubt that the students of Middlesex have benefited from your assistance and appreciated your sincere interest in connecting with them.

As Maya Angelou would say "Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud" and you went above and beyond to demonstrate this!

For that, thanks to everyone's efforts, including academics and Staff, who helped us accomplish so much over the 2022–2023 Academic Year. We were successful in fostering learning with a creative approach. This yearbook manifests the pride we have for continuing to spread knowledge across a wide community and supporting one another in the pursuit of success. Regardless of how you found yourself on this pathway, take comfort in the fact that you now own the most precious resource it is possible to acquire: memories of fantastic opportunities alongside wonderful human beings!

And remember...

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we lived. It is the difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

Nelson Mandela



