

It's time to say goodbye to the RON and only

The popularity of the campaign to re-open nominations has shown the ambivalence towards the entire campaign

By [Imogen Bellamy](#), News Editor

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Image: RON Campaign

I feel this should come with a disclaimer: I was on my boyfriend's campaign team. He won, and became Student Activities Officer. While I'm happy for him (and oh so relieved that I never have to wake up next to him as he looks at voter stats again), my hatred of any cardboard has become a lot less inexplicable after I singlehandedly painted all of his slogans.

The cardboard covering selected portions of campus, for the average student, is the main way they know that the YUSU elections are happening. They aren't in the small percentage of students who will read Nouse. How will they know what a 60 Second Manifesto is? They won't listen to URY's interviews - they won't even listen to their best mate's 11am show every Sunday during second year! Engagement begets engagement, and the student populace don't particularly want to know who their next president is. Who would, after America?

Enter RON. RON knows what it's like to be you. RON cares. RON has a collective of people behind him. RON is a massive hell goose that looks like it'll leave your soul alone as long as it gets your first-born in return. RON is the average student. The rise in voter numbers is not for any lack of trying from YUSU - it's due to a group of third years stealing the James College mascot and haunting our nightmares.

This politicking disguised as apathy works for some, although people who have run in an attempt to say the exact same thing as the goose have been largely ignored. Probably because nobody before has had the physical presence of something that looks like the corporeal manifestation of the eternal damnation awaiting those who clap when a plane lands. The people who voted for RON only acted apathetic – in reality they wanted to be part of something, anything really, and anything was the scariest of the College mascots.

While some students do want to vote and have a say in who's lobbying the University on our behalf, some simply just don't care. They want to do their degree in peace, without some 10-foot beast of the depths (or a 21 year- old wearing the same shirt for the past four days) looming over their library desk to hand them a voter card requesting their support.

This particular kind of student will leave the library for reprieve, only to run into three more sabbatical hopefuls in the process, and try to reach the freedom of the Derwent computer labs, whereupon they're nearly run over by a rickshaw, YU- SU's "Voteswagon" created with the intent to get students involved, and someone on board yelling through a megaphone about how they need to vote. Seeking the retreat of the normally post-apocalyptically quiet realms of Campus East, they're confronted by more electoral candidates – or are they the same ones?! They're everywhere!

There's no escape for those who want to get away from the YUSU Elections in the constant drive to up turn out numbers. It's ridiculous. By making club campaigning opt-out, they have lost the truly apathetic vote. Nobody will lose their inhibitions long enough to select whichever candidate is dancing badly with cardboard outside, then happily forget about it, ever again. Anybody not engaged, after RON Goosu, chose not to be engaged.

YUSU needs to up engagement outside of elections. Office hours, such as ActiviTEAS and Pool & a Pint go some way to doing this, but students need to realise the Sabbatical social media accounts and YourSpace offices are there for people to be able to engage with YUSU. While charitable donations and temporary alcoholic discounts help in the short term, they aren't viable solution.

Meanwhile, I'm going to finally disengage. After a hectic, organisational nightmare, there is a cardboard pyre of blue painted fins just waiting for me to burn them. An offering to any gods listening: "Please, never let me run into the James College mascot again!"



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