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**Union Council**

**30/11/21**

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| **Present, Apologies and Quoracy** | |
| Chair of UC,  no voting rights | Robert Nutkins |
| Part-time Officers, full voting rights | **Present at this meeting**  Part-time International Students Officer – Al-Ameen Taiwo  Part-time Welfare Officer – Daniella Marley  Part-time Men’s Welfare Officer – Will Styles  Part-time Postgrad Taught Officer – Tonari Arikekpar  Part-time Students with Disabilities Officer – Kenza Kadri  Part-time Women’s Officer – Saffron Deemer  Part-time Academic Officer – Leah Gray  Part-time Environmental & Sustainability Officer – Will Jones  Part-time Societies Officer – Owain Gullam  **Co-opted at this meeting**  Part-time Postgrad Research Officer – Ahmed Hammad  **Vacant Roles**   * Part-time Sports Officer * Part-time Faith and Belief Officer * Part-time Mature Students Officer * Part-time BAME Officer * Part-time LGBT+ Officer * Partner Institutions Officer |
| School Reps, full voting rights | Peninsula Medical School – Emily Schenk  School of Society & Culture – Lucy Metaj  School of Biomedical and Healthcare Services – Rimsha Bashir  School of Nursing and Midwifery – Amy Bishop  Plymouth Institute of Education – Medb O’Kane  Plymouth Business School – Antonia-Roxana Vrabie  School of Art, Design & Architecture – Wendy Villalba Pillajo  School of Psychology – Joyita Ashton-Simon  School of Biological & Marine Sciences – Freya Rose  Peninsula Dental School – Ruby-May Allen  **Co-opted at this meeting**  School of Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences – Morgan Davies  School of Engineering, Computing, & Mathematics – Michael Riley-Wallace  **Vacant Roles**   * School of Health Professions |
| Sabbatical Officers, full voting rights | VP Wellbeing and Diversity – Fawziyyah Ahmed  VP Activities – Mads Morton  VP Education – Charlie Atkinson  UPSU President – Emi Dowse |
| Other attendees, without voting rights | UPSU Chief Executive – Nicky Goldthorpe  epresentation and Democracy Manager – Tracy Priestman (Minute Taker)  Representation and Democracy Co-ordinator – Steph Martin  Representation and Democracy Co-ordinator – Emma Quinn  **Observers to meeting seeking co-option, no voting rights prior to successful co-option**  Ahmed Hammad  Morgan Davies  Robert Jones  Adam Macintosh  Michael Riley-Wallace  Kayode Ajayai  Ruhin Ahmed  **Vacant Roles**  Accountability Board Members |
| Apologies | Chair of Accountability Board - Alex Butters  School of Nursing and Midwifery Rep – Amy Bishop |
| Not present at the meeting and did not send apologies |  |
| Quoracy | In order for a motion to be passed 75% of the elected voting members need to be present, quoracy was 20. |

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| **Minutes** | |
| Welcome | The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance and explained that members will be asked to vote for, against or abstain.  Vote by raising hand on the reactions button online or by raising hand in person.  This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the SU Safe Space Policy, the M&A’s, Bye-laws and policies of the Union. |
| Matters from the Last meeting  Accuracy of minutes | There were no matters arsing  The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting |
| Notice of Any Other Business | Will Styles, Saffron Deemer, Owain Gullam and Daniella Marley gave notice of one item each |
| Matters To Discuss | Co-option |
| The Chair explained that the process of co-option is that the Union Council will vote, as elected members, rather than a cross campus ballot. Each candidate for each role will give a short speech and then be placed in a breakout room with a staff member from Student Voice whilst the vote takes place.  **Part-time Postgraduate Officer**  Ahmed Hammad  For: 14  RON: 0  Ahmed Hammad was elected  **School of Geography, Earth and Environment Rep**  Morgan Davies gave a short speech  For Morgan Davies: 13  RON: 0  Morgan Davies was elected  **School of Computing, Engineering and Maths Rep**  Robert Jones, Adam MacIntosh, Michael Riley-Wallace, Kayode Ajayai and Ruhin Ahmed gave a short speech  Robert Jones: 1  Adam Macintosh: 1  Michael Riley-Wallace: 10  Kayodi Ajayai: 1  Ruhin Ahmed: 2  RON: 0  Michael Riley-Wallace was elected |
|  | Changes to the Board of Trustee Bye-law |
| Nicky Goldthorpe, CEO gave an overview of the update to the Board of Trustees Bye-law. A document summarising the changes was circulated with the proposal paper prior to the meeting.  There were no questions regarding the changes  For: 15  Against: 0  Abstentions: 1 |
|  | Student Life Committee (SLC) |
| Emi Dowse, President explained that SLC is one of the highest decision-making meetings in the university for non-academic issues. There is space on the committee for representatives from Union Council but there has been no interest so far.  Please contact [president@su.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:president@su.plymouth.ac.uk) for further information about the role or to suggest an item tot take to the meeting. |
| Reports | Officer Reports |
| Officers gave a verbal update in addition to their written reports which were circulated prior to the meeting.  Sabbatical Officers also gave updates about the Sub-committees which have been started this term  President  Supports the Environment and Sustainability Sub-Committee. Unfortunately, this was not very well attended, possibly due to timing but there was a lot of discussion. Emi updated the meeting on what UPSU have been doing and what had happened previously.  There was feedback about the lights being left on in the bar in the Little Room. Emi queried this and found out that all the lights are on the same circuit so it is not possible to turn them off without effecting all the other lights.  It was suggested that the brightness of the screens can be turned down, which has been done and there was a question about the cups in the Coffee Spot being recyclable - they are.  Emi also updated on the following things in addition to her written report   * COVID and Exam concerns   Many students have expressed concerns about returning to in person exams, as many have not experienced these before. Sabbatical Officers and Reps have lobbied to keep 48 hour assessments, however, at this time the university are returning to in person for the January assessment period.  To support those students with concerns, Emi would like to set up the SU Sports Hall with tables similar to exam set up so that students can bring past test papers and do them in an exam style environment. More detail will be sent out when this has been confirmed.  Leah Gray, PT Academic Officer added that final year students are also concerned about semester 2 assessments   * DVC Education and Student Experience   Emi reported that Julian Chaudhuri, Deputy Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience has now left the university and no replacement has been recruited. This many have an impact on the timescales to update policy and initiate new protocols.   * Drink Spiking   Emi updated that temporary drinks covers have been ordered, the foil tops are thought to be better for safety reasons but the SU are still looking into sustainable alternatives as well.  The Police provided limited testing kits under the scheme the SU are part of but this is not enough so more tests are being purchased from an external company.  Sabbatical Officers are going to be meeting with partner night clubs to better understand what happens in their venues.  Sabbatical Officers are collating resources to be promoted to students.  Students are welcome to join the weekly drink spiking meeting the sabbs have on Thursdays at 14:00  Owain Gullam, PT Societies Officer queried how long the SU would wait before they took action against bars and clubs who were not acting in students best interests?  Emi Dowse, President responded that she though a few weeks seemed reasonable  Owain added that at the last Societies Forum, it was promised that resources regarding staying safe on nights out would be circulated, this has not yet gone out, Owain was told that Fawziyyah Ahmed, VP Wellbeing and Diversity was leading on it.  Fawziyyah noted that the resources collated by all the Sabbatical Officers have been forwarded to the Societies Development Manager to send out following the last Wellbeing and Student Experience Sub-Committee.  VP Education  Supports the Academic Sub-Committee. At the next meeting the library will receive feedback about open access computing which is not as accessible now Babbage is closed and quite a lot of it has moved to Emdeck.  At the previous meeting the Careers Service explained their offer to finalists and got feedback from those in attendance. UCU attended to explain the ballot for strike action  Charlie also updated on the following in addition to his written report   * Hosted the second round of coffee morning style networking meetings and online events to tackle isolation, also raised the issue of PG isolation with the Vice Chancellor at the Sabbatical Officers catch up meeting with them. * Attended an employability focus group with other student reps and staff from other institutions which is part of a national research project into careers service support development   VP Activities  Mads updated on the following in addition to her written report   * Student Group of the month   This is being worked on and is about to launch, please do suggest any student groups who deserve it   * Sustainability   Met with Matthew from the University sustainability team   * Training for Chairs   Worked with University student services to provide mental health and wellbeing training  VP Wellbeing and Diversity  Supports the Wellbeing and Student Experience Sub-Committee.  Key feedback from the meeting was regarding University Support Services and how accessible they are and support from lecturers and support staff. The Head of Student Services attended the meeting to receive the feedback.  Shelter will be attending the meeting on the 15th December to explain about their housing campaign and to get student feedback on their experiences.  Also supports the Equality, Diversity and inclusion Sub-Committee where attendees discussed the need for more inclusive support services and support around the holiday period  Fawziyyah updated on the following in addition to her written report   * Working on a statement for Disability History Month and considering an event * Looking at more daytime and non-drinking events in the SU   Saffron Deemer, Women’s Officer explained that the student law clinic would like to start workshops about things like what to look out for when considering tenancy agreements, tenancy deposit schemes etc. |
|  | Other Reports/Updates |
| Alex Butters, Accountability Board Chair noted that he will be contacting all UC members to see how they are getting on.  Daniella Marley, PT Welfare Officer explained that the C-card is having a revamp but the SU will still be a distributor – hopefully more to update on this soon.  Daniella added that they will be starting Welfare Wednesdays, an Instagram takeover with weekly themes which is open to all reps. They will also be hosting a series of activities to keep students connected over the winter period. |
| AOB |  |
| Council Tax  Will Styles pointed out that having the Faculty Office generate emails for students to declare their exemption from Council Tax was a significant admin task for those staff and suggested that the process could be automated through the DLE.  Emi suggested this might be a good thing to raise at Student Life Committee  Part-time roles Events  Daniella Marley explained that Part-time Officers and School Reps can create web events which appear on their webpage as well as in the what’s on calendar.  Information Specialist and Library Support  Saffron Deemer, Women’s Officer explained that they had met with staff from the library that explained what support was on offer such as inter library loans and information specialist, it was really helpful and they would recommend asking them for support  Charlie Atkinson, VP Education agreed that the support is excellent the library have done videos about these things, but it sounds like that have not been widely received, they will raise it with the library.  Owain Gullam, Societies Officer addressed their AOB during Sabbatical Officer Updates |
| Dates for the Diary |  |
| Monday 1st November – Academic Sub-Committee  Wednesday 3rd November – Wellbeing and Student Experience Sub-Committee  Tuesday 9th November – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee  Tuesday 16th November – Papers and Reports Deadline for Union Council |
| Next Meeting | Tuesday 30th November 2021 |

**Part-time Officers Updates November**

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| **Will Styles – Men’s Welfare Officer** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| A student reached out with interest in the Men’s Group, which is no longer running. I told this student I would speak to the Counselling services and explore setting this up once again. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| 1. UWE Contact   I have made contact with the UWE Sister Role and we have set up a group chat with some other prospective Men’s Welfare Officers. We have begun drafting a letter to promote these roles to other Uni’s.   1. Men’s Welfare Forum   This has been set up, though due to admin reasons I have postponed this with the date pending.   1. Sub-committees   The subcommittees were to be an output of the Forum and are likewise delayed.   1. Other   -A letter is being drafted to the Board of Trustees regarding the historic statement which, without revocation, may still be used to cause harm to the welfare of men on campus. This is to be consigned by nominated supporting roles.  -Research and preparations have been made to celebrate International Men’s Day and Transgender Day of Remembrance.  -Following the Wellbeing Sub-Committee, I explored the Chestnut Charity and found there is no reliable non-invasive test for prostate cancer, and it is not recommended to be tested until the age of ~40. I am drafting some end-of-Movember posts to highlight what students should be aware of regarding this.  -I have set up a “Welfare Calendar” shared with the Welfare role to mark key upcoming dates and plan proactive pr campaigns around these. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| -The social media platforms are slowly gaining a student following and I am being reached out to by students. |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| N/A |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
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| **Daniella Marley – Welfare Officer** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| A student reached out with concerns of a spiking within the Student Union which was shared on social media anonymously through a member of the pole dancing society. I contacted men’s welfare to share the issue and we reached out to both the pole dance society and the student union for further information. The pole dancing society were not actively involved in the issue as it had not occurred on a club night; however, they have assured me that they encouraged the student to report the issue to the student union. I have not heard back the Student Union; however, the initial post detailing the alleged event has been removed from social media. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| 1. Open Communication with members   I have been drafting an email to all clubs, societies, and course representatives to pass onto students with an introduction of who I am, what my role entails and how to contact me. I plan to include a welfare survey which I am currently working with the Men’s Welfare Officer on which will provide an opportunity to anonymously share student experiences and raise any concerns, queries, or suggestions.   1. Welfare/Well-being Wednesdays   I have been working to create a weekly takeover of the UPSU social media, titled welfare Wednesday, which will have a theme each week tackling key areas for students. Welfare themes I plan to include are topical issues like spiking and exam stress, as well as financial advices, accommodation, mental health, physical health, policing within the city, travel, and practical services such as food services (access to food banks, details of local communal fridges, food parcel delivery services and community hubs). I aim to dedicate one week per month to our Men’s Welfare Officer and one week per month to our Women’s Officer, as well as working with any other officers who would like to contribute to the plan. Resources shared on the UPSU Instagram would primarily be signposting based infographics.   1. Counselling Promotion Research   My next key aim is to communicate with the university counselling services and their related web team to ensure that all of the services offered are being promoted clearly. I plan to gather information on specific counselling services available and ensure that these specific condition-related services are promoted. I also plan to ensure that the counselling service has an effective follow-up programme from those who no longer access the services.   1. I attended both the academic sub- committee and the well-being sub committee. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| -I am being reached out to by students; I hope to improve this engagement through the social media takeovers and the introductory emails. |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| N/A |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
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| **Tonari Arikekpar - Postgraduate Taught Officer** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| Feeling of not being included and feeling like they do not belong to the general student community especially among the younger postgraduate taught (PGT) students.  This is also because it is a rather short period (1/2 year(s)) for the PGT program. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| Actively reducing the feeling of isolation amongst postgraduate taught students by finding ways to support postgraduate taught students to meet up and network.  Mental health support for PGT students  Providing an academic support system for PGT students especially considering International PGT students. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| Providing a welcoming inclusive environment all through their stay |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| Planning and hosting a postgrad taught meet and greet. |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
| I would like support with visibility using social media to connect with the postgrad taught students |

Al-Ameen Taiwo – International Officer

Report for the Month

I dug deeper into the areas that were most mentioned, both adversely and positively, for this report. We've focused on what students have said are their top priorities and while current information on the pros and disadvantages of the student experience has never been more vital, it is important to realize that unnecessary requests for feedback might generate a perception among students that nothing is being done with feedback that has previously been received. This report is more than simply a glimpse of student difficulties; it is about delving into them, comprehending them, and perhaps acting on them.

Plans

Helping some of the international students integrate with the local community by increasing and facilitating access to learning English language, raise awareness and enabling international students’ participation in activities and societies, increase the visibility of help for international students by increasing number of resident assistants and proportional representation of students (home, EU, and international) in hall flats. Make advice more visible in terms of housing for students (home and international students) and continue to pressure the best guarantor agency to act as guarantors for international students with no local guarantors with a fairer terms and conditions and finally work with other officers to ensure that the University of Plymouth Student Union is a comprehensive and capable body to advance agendas on behalf of students. Also, working to assist student in-terms of their well being

Steps to meet the Plans

I believe that the interest of the local student body is important as well to sustain the University of Plymouth Student Union as a comprehensive and capable body. Steps to be taken Is to campaign against the inadequacy of counselling services and propose for a new staff, who is professionally trained, in each department to handle issues on staff and students’ emotional and mental well-being to avail the academic staff members in departments to carry out their research and improve on the quality of education within the departments. Furthermore, working with other part time officers, school reps and societies leaders to bring together the international student’s body for them to share their beliefs and opinions and to pressure the university to act as a guarantor for students.

Listening to what students say and acting on that knowledge is as important as it has always been. I think that this report will be beneficial in presenting a picture of student opinion on the academic and social experience across UOP during this moment, complementing the specific feedback channels that currently exist at the program, department, and faculty levels.

**Updates not received from**

* Academic Officer – Leah Gray
* Societies Officer – Owain Gullam
* Environment & Sustainability Officer – Will Jones
* Saffron Deemer – Women’s Officer
* Kenza Kadri – Students with Disabilities Officer

**Vacant Roles**

* Postgrad Research Officer
* Faith & Belief Officer
* Mature Students Officer
* Sport Officer
* Volunteering Officer
* BAME Officer
* LGBT+ Officer
* Trans and Non-Binary Officer
* Partner Institutions Officer

**School Representative Reports November**

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| **Lucy Metaj - School of Society and Culture Representative** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| It has been brought to my attention that some students are receiving an excess of emails that do not respond to their stage or sometimes course. I gathered feedback from other Course Reps to see if the issue is exclusive to the one course (which is what I have found) and have reported this issue. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| I plan to send out a Mental Health survey (within the next 2 weeks, I did not want to spam their inboxes) for Course Reps to pass on to students. I want to make sure that students:   1. Know where they can access mental health resources 2. That the mental health services provided by the University are of a high and effective standard   On December 8th, I will be leading a School-wide staff/student liaison meeting in which Course Reps can attend and offer feedback based on themes such as student wellbeing and the return to face to face etc (themes will be narrowed down and communicated to reps closer to the date.) |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| **Students will have their issues heard, improving overall student satisfaction.** |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| I am contemplating planning a mental health awareness campaign, but this is in its very early stages of planning and will depend based on the feedback I receive from the survey I will send out. |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
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| **Antonia-Roxana Vrabie - Business School Representative** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| As a main issue that has been raised by the students within business management was the seminars, which have been addressed at the PBS meeting and I will be in further contact with Danielle B. to discuss any changes and potential steps.  We are still waiting for the course reps to be communicated with us, the school reps to contact them and receive in depth feedback from a wider range of courses. I am hoping that this will be communicated soon, so I can therefore make progress with any kind of feedback.  We have been discussing a wide range of campaign ideas and policy proposals within our subcommittee meetings and are working on developing them, such as decreasing the length of the process when applying for university counselling, as there are many forms that must be completed and that can decrease some students’ confidence in applying. We are also looking at ways of increasing international students' involvement and providing them more support, as well as introducing Christmas schemes that will buddy students up, meaning that they will not be alone for Christmas, in times where financial issues and Covid are significant barriers. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| I have been working on listening to the students and addressing their concerns within meetings, especially the previously motioned method, such as the seminars. I am planning to prioritise contacting the rest of the business course reps and get a chance to increase my collected feedback, so I can support more students and extend on my manifesto point that focuses on listening to worried students and work hard to make their university experience more enjoyable. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| There has been communication about the main issue discussed with the seminars, so the programme leader is aware of it and further communication with Danielle B. will establish a positive outcome that we can benefit from. |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| I would like to support with the advertising of materials and support available for international students and help them feel more confident. |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
| I am planning to email some of the members I met at meetings to combine their campaigns for international students as well as take a few actions in regard to advertising myself as the business school rep, making sure that the students will know who to contact when having certain issues. |

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| **Joyita Ashton-Simon - School of Psychology Representative** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| Currently my main focused as School Rep is to foster a reconnection between all Reps within my school. The feedback from current reps is that they need more support even after the training. I am in the process of scheduling my first informal meeting with Reps- One to be held in person and the other on zoom. That way I can not only offer support but document any issues and the progress. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| I am currently in the process of working on the points raised in my manifesto. I have just been co-opted into the role therefore I am diligently planning to best support my school. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| **Majority of Reps have completed their training.** |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| I have made a note to hold a vote within our informal meeting to support a current campaign or to agree on working on one that can positively affect our cohort. |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
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| **Freya Rose - School of Biological and Marine Sciences Rep** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| * Students wanting online instead of in-person exams, this was brought up in the academic committee meeting for biological sciences, Chair and Programme leads brought up issues with accreditation within courses. Exams are done by accrediting bodies and not necessarily in uni control. * Possible letter being put together to the school trying to gauge numbers on students wanting online exams instead of in-person exams. |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| N/A |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| **N/A** |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| N/A |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
| N/A |

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| **Wendy Villalba Pillajo - Arts, Design & Architecture Representative** |
| **Key feedback I have received and how it is being progressed** |
| I have received a feedback form regarding the need of free sanitary products in the toilets.  The form has very few responses, 10 people agreed that this was an issue. However, I am planning to make a bigger form for the whole school of arts humanities and architecture to fill as this form was only answered by a small class |
| **Manifesto points/Priorities I have been working on – key issues facing students represented by this role** |
| To increase diversity within the student union. I have contacted the FOAHB and intend to collaborate with them to help me contact societies so I can go further ahead with my project. In this project I intend to welcome students to an cultural dancing event that I plan to take place in an open area for everyone who wishes to join. |
| **‘Wins’ or other outcomes for the students this role represents** |
| **Students will learn more about different cultures within the university and become more confident speaking to other students about it. This would also help increase diversity within the university as different cultures can interact at the same place at once.** |
| **Collaborative campaigns or things I would like support with** |
| I would like support from the international Latin society, African Caribbean society and Indian society.  Furthermore, I would love to help support the cultural fashion week, that is happening this December running by the FOAHB and hopefully receive some help by those running it. |
| **Other updates** (see above) |
| Union Council meeting attending on the 30th of November.  I have had my 1-2-1 with Stephanie and Fawziyyah and discussed further actions and ideas that we all had. |

**Reports not received from**

* Medb O’Kane – Plymouth Institute of Education
* Amy Bishop – Nursing and Midwifery
* Emily Schenk – Peninsula Medical School
* Ruby-May Allen – Peninsula Dental School
* Rimsha Bashir – Biomedical Sciences

**Vacant Roles**

* Health Professions
* Engineering, Computing and Maths
* Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

**Sabbatical Officer  Updates**

President Update

*Emi Dowse*

October was a busy month for me, filled with lots of meetings and papers to read. The team has had to work hard and fast to address the concerns around drink spiking in Plymouth, which is still something that remains ongoing. Unfortunately, this meant I was unable to progress much on my manifesto goals.

**Manifesto Points**

**Increase Engagement**

**Empower Students**

**Covid Recovery**

**Other:**

**Drink Spiking:**

One of our main priorities as a Sabbatical Team this month has been to address students concerns around drink spiking. As a team, we have been working with our commercial director to put measures in place to protect students within our venue. I also worked with the other Sabbatical officers and our comms team to release a statement about the SU’s response. Alongside this, the team has been working on gathering resources to launch a campaign around drink spiking.

The sabbatical team, our head of security, the President and the manager of PCA met with the Police and a representative from Best Bar None Plymouth to discuss spiking and Student Safety in Plymouth.

**UCU meeting:**

The VP Education and I met with representatives from University and College Union (UCU) to discuss the upcoming ballot. A representative from UCU was then invited to the first Education subcommittee to get students feedback.

**Board of Governors:**

I attended my first in-person board of governors meeting. This was followed by a tour at the box and a speech from their new CEO. The following day we had the board away day at The Box. I had positive feedback about my contribution at the meetings.

**USCP meeting:**

I attended the University Catering Sustainability Group. They updated about the new coffee drink cup bins on campus. I was actioned to get student feedback about the new traffic light system in loafers. However, I was unable to do this, as it was not there.

**Sustainability advisory meeting:**

I attended the sustainability advisory meeting. Some of the discussed topics were the climate emergency response, the Universities Green Gown Submission and student and staff sustainability town hall meetings.

**Meeting with estates:**

The team had an introductory meeting with the Head of the University Estates Team. This allowed us to raise issues with the lift in Rolle being restricted to set times and student groups not being able to get into booked rooms in the evening.

**Fitness to Practise:**

I sat on the panel for a fitness to practise in the faculty of health. Fitness to practice determines whether a student is still fit to study on professional courses.

**Sabbatical Officer 1-1s:**

I meet with each of the officers monthly to check in on how they are finding the role, how their manifesto goals are progressing and whether they need any additional support.

**VC Meeting:**

The sabbatical officers met with the Vice-Chancellor: We raised the following subjects:

How she felt the return to campus went, 2020 Graduations, Black History Month, freedom of speech legislation, student loan repayments and the recruitment of the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience.

**Rich Avery meeting:**

Following the meeting with the VC, where the she agreed to holding a formal graduation for the 2020 graduates. I met with the graduation manager to discuss the plans for the 2020 Graduates. We decided to send out a survey so that the Graduates could state what they wanted from the ceremony. We discussed the issue that not all students would have shared their email with the university, and I agreed to share it with graduates through the SU social media. I raised that they would need a way that graduates could get a reminder of their student number, as not all of them would remember it.

**Student Life committee:**

I co-chaired our first Student Life Committee of the academic year. Some of the key discussions included: Open Access facilities on campus, postgraduate engagement, digital skills training, suicide safety strategy and prevention of violence and sexual misconduct strategy.

**Student life magazine:**

I did a Q&A for the Student Life Magazine, which will be sent out to applicants. Some of the questions include: What’s the difference between studying at school and uni, what advice would I offer any incoming students and what support can the SU offer new students.

**Other meetings attended:**

Finance and Staffing, University Student comms meeting, 1-1’s with the SU CEO, UEG Advisory meeting, Meeting with the VC, Meeting with the Dean of Science and Engineering, 1-1 with the Deputy Chair of the Trustee Board, meeting to set the officer budgets, academic registry meeting, freshers, wash up, student life sub-committee planning, wonkHE meeting.

 Vice President Wellbeing & Diversity Update

*Fawzy Ahmed*

October was an exciting month. There was a calendar filled with Black History Month events, international students settling event, and much more. As a sabbatical officer team, we had to put together a drink spiking campaign to address the increase in spiking in the UK.

Manifesto Points

**Better Wellbeing provisions**

Wellbeing Subcommittee/Forum: I chaired the first wellbeing and student experience forum of the academic. In attendance, where some school reps and part time officers. On the agenda, we discussed the following: Mental health training of staff, feedback on support services and accommodation issues.

Based on the feedback we received as an SU last year. There was a lot of feedback on the support staff provided students. The general consensus was that although staff have undergone mental health training, there is a disconnect leaving some students feeling unsupported. The action was for me to enquire what type of training does the University provide to staff. We further discussed feedback on support services. Useful feedback was given on the services, which have been passed to the support services. It was thought that it would be a useful to invite the head of student services for a Q/A and feedback session at the next EDI committee

**Better Accommodation**

Accommodation Fair: The SU put in dates for an accommodation fair for students for the 2022/2023 academic year. I raised at the team meeting and the Senior leadership on why the dates for the fairs were too early in the academic year. I raised concerns of students feeling pressurized to sign up to a new tenancy agreement so early in the academic year. We had a follow up meeting with Advice and the Senior leadership team on the way forward with having accommodation fairs in the SU.

Worked with the SU advice team on the day of the first fair on the 26th of October to ensure that students get the right information when looking for accommodation for 2022/2023. The advice team had a brochure promoting the stop and think before signing up to a new tenancy and the free tenancy check with advice

Right to Rent Workshop: As part of my manifesto point, I am putting together a right-to-rent workshop, which will be at next wellbeing forum. The SU has been contacted by Shelter, which is a charity, that campaigns for good housing in Britain. As an SU, we will be inviting the representative from Shelter to a wellbeing forum where students are invited to ask questions about Renting a house as a student.

**Empowering Underrepresented Groups**

Black History Month: Black History Month was a huge success. I worked closely with some of our student groups such as the Afro-Caribbean society. We had events such as film screenings, Karaoke night, a Debate night, Dance class. The events this year were aimed at education and celebrating the history and diversity of black people. The engagement for the majority of the events was very high in comparison to the virtual events from last year. I organized a BHM charity tournament which was the most engaged. The UPFC men's 1 and a group of Nigerian students battled it out for the spot of the winning team, with the Nigerian students winning the tournament. We raised £50 for the chosen charity: Black Minds Matter which is a UK-based based charity that provides mental health provisions for black people. The debate topics were interesting and sparked a lot of conversation including mental health discussion in the black community.

Decolonization of the curriculum campaign: Officially launched a campaign to decolonize the curriculum. The aim of the campaign is to educate and create awareness of the need for a decolonized curriculum. I am still putting in some plans to launch the video highlighting students’ experiences.

Link to decolonization campaign article:

https://www.upsu.com/news/article/upsu/Decolonising-the-Curriculum/

Diversity Showcase: I had plans of hosting a diversity showcase that involved a celebration of our diversity at Plymouth. The plan was to have a fashion show, poetry in different languages, food from around the world, and musical performances. As part of the showcase, I intend to launch the BeAnAlly campaign, which focuses on being an ally to underrepresented groups. Unfortunately, the event was postponed to allow time for more planning. I am working with Student Voice, Societies manager, and the Comms team to discuss a new date in the new year.

Student Representation on EDI committee: I raised the need for more student engagement in the University EDI committee to promote a more inclusive environment on campus in our monthly team meeting with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience. The DVC welcomed the idea and gave three suggestions. I went with the suggestion of having relevant part-time officers get involved with the subcommittees of the EDI. I have booked in a meeting with the chair of the EDI committee in the new year to discuss how we can have more students involved with matters they are passionate about.

Other Updates:

Drink Spiking Campaign: As an officer team, we had to put together a campaign to address the increased spiking incidents in Plymouth and the UK. As an SU, we put out a statement saying that we are aware of the current climate and taking a strong stance on it. We also put a statement updating changes to the venue to keep students safe in the SU.

We are in the process of creating a resource page as an officer team that highlights three areas; education, prevention, and communication. Each of the officers had the action point to research particular areas of the strands. we also had actions to share the resources with the societies managers to share with student groups

We had a meeting with the Police, the Best Bar None Plymouth representative and the Sabbatical officer from Plymouth College of Arts. In this meeting, the police gave us a through run down of the steps they are taking to keep people safe in the night time economy.

TalkAboutSex Week: I worked with the VP activities for talkaboutsex week in November. We were looking to host a debate night and were also looking to work with student groups. The debate will feature topics like sex education, healthy relationships, drunken sex, STIs and more.

International Student Settling event: I attended the international student settling event with the President and the VP of education. We made a short speech on what the SU is all about and how we can support international students. The Sports and Advice department also attended and gave small speeches about their departments. There were quite a few students who were interested in taking up sports following the speech. It was a nice networking event and we had the opportunity to speak to many international students who were enjoying their study in Plymouth so far.

Meeting with Careers (support for international students): I had a follow-up meeting with the careers team about support for international students and the Access, Progress, and Participation (APP) of underrepresented groups. In that meeting, we discussed the potential barriers international students may face when it comes to access and progression. I gave them an overview of my experience as an international student. We discussed that it may be worth changing the wording of some of the activities set out by the careers service, to make the wording more inclusive. We also discussed the possibility of having success stories of students who have utilized some of the activities to encourage other international students to engage with the services. An action point that arose from that meeting was for us to meet more regularly and for us to invite some representatives of the careers team to attend the SU EDI forum for feedback on support.

Vice President of Activities Update

*Madeleine Morton*

The start of October was largely taken up by Board of Governors, reading papers, meetings and away day. There was a lot more work being done with student-les groups this month which was very exciting. Little progress was made on my manifesto this month unfortunately, but plans are in place to work on this in November. The end of October was unprecedented with the spiking epidemic coming to the forefront, a lot of work was done around this.

**Manifesto points UPDATE:**

**Celebration and Inclusion**

* Continued use of Team.Plymouth Instagram to promote events from both sports and societies.

**Mental Well-being**

* Used the Facebook committee groups to promote active bystander training.

**Sustainability**

* Meeting with Matthew (University sustainability Team) to catch up on work he is doing with the university including a new webpage area that has helpful tips and advice and everything sustainable.
* Got in touch with relevant societies to put them in contact with Matthew to help him work on promoting waste management etc.

**Other:**

* **Board of Governors** - October board of governors meeting was followed by a dinner at the box and an away day in the Faulston room at the box the next day.
* **Societies funding** - Term 1 funding was allocated to all societies that applied. The funding allocations were passed at forum.
* **New societies** - The Hong Kong society was officially passed as a new society at forum, as well as 4 adopted societies back up and running.
* **Meeting with Dean of FoSE** - Meeting with Kevin to discuss how we may work together in the year and how we can help each other.
* **Freshers wash up** - As a sabb team we discussed how we thought freshers went as whole. It was agreed that it was brilliant to see students back on campus but there are some things we can improve on for next year.
* **Catch up with DVC E&SE** - Our monthly meeting with Julian was used to talk about ...
* **Sports forum** - This forum was used to approve funding allocations, discuss fresher's week, talk about initiations, updates from Nadine and I, and student elections
* **Societies forum** - This forum was used to approve funding, approve new societies, department updates, society updates and general information. There was also a big debate/discussion around drink spiking and what the SU is doing.
* **Student representative elections** - Elections for part-time roles took place this month, with majority of school rep roles being filled. There are still vacant roles for both school reps and PTOs which can be filled through co-option at Union council.
* **Union council -** My first union council meeting as a sabbatical officer was mainly taken up by voting in co-opted roles for the student representatives.
* **BUCS** - BUCS has made its return this month after 18 months of no games. Although our Plymouth sides saw a few losses over the first week, we have already gotten back into our stride and it has been amazing to be out seeing those blue jerseys on the field.
* **Drink Spiking** - One of the biggest arising issues this month has been the epidemic of drink spiking withing clubs and bars around the whole of the UK. The SU has released a statement regarding this issue which is available on the SU website. During this month we were involved in many meetings with the senior management team, as well as a meeting with the police and licencing in Plymouth to see how we can work together to combat the issue.

Vice President Education Update

*Charlie Atkinson*

October has been a busy month. The first half of the month was filled up with introductory meetings with groups and departments within the University to focus on developing and working towards the aims of my manifesto. The second half of the month was re-focused to support the work being done by the Students’ Union around drink spiking.

**Returning from Covid: I will endeavour to ensure that students feel safe to return to campus, and I will also fight and lobby the university to ensure that those students who do not feel comfortable or ready to return to face-to-face teaching have alternate methods for teaching, as I understand the potential impact on student's mental health. If COVID-19 remains an issue next year, I will be aiming to ensure that the issues that have arisen from Zoom lectures and that staff understand how to improve teaching, by working with student groups such as Course Reps to communicate feedback of the issues students face with Zoom straight to the university.**

* I have had the opportunity to raise the concerns of students about Covid and feeling safe on campus at both UTLQC and the FTLQC for the Faculty of Science and Engineering. In these meetings, there were also discussions on how students best access teaching this academic year.

**Student Development: I want to advocate and express the opportunities that are available to students to work and gain experience within the city, be that through placements, part time work or volunteering, with the aim of helping students to leave university with as wide a range of experiences as possible.**

* I have had a meeting with the Digital Champions team, to find out how the Students’ Union can support the work that they do.
* I have also had an introductory meeting with the team at The Cube, to understand what they can offer to students, as well as to understand how what they do can work alongside the work of the Students’ Union.

**Postgraduate Engagement: As a postgraduate, I understand that postgrad students can feel isolated and unrepresented within the student union. I will raise awareness of the role that Course Reps play within the SU, as well assisting the Postgraduate Officer to cultivate an attitude of inclusivity between Postgraduate Students and the SU.**

* As the lead officer among the Sabbatical team for Postgraduate Students, I attended the Doctoral College Board on the 21st. This was the first time which I had attended this meeting, and I use the opportunity to raise the point that the Students’ Union now has a Part-Time Postgraduate Research Officer, as well as raising about the events that the Students’ Union is putting in place for Postgraduate students.
* The first of the online and in-person coffee mornings for Postgraduate Students took place. Run alongside the Doctoral College, these both had over fifty students attend, and was a great opportunity to explain what we offer, and how we can support students on a Postgraduate course. It also gave students the opportunity to let us know what they wanted, which we have began to put into place, including running more of these networking events.

**Other Updates:**

* Academic Sub-Committee – Took place on the 1st of November, but I’m including it here. This was the first Academic Sub-Committee of the year, and the first to take place with the new structure of Union Council. There was timed business with the Careers Service as well as a representative of UCU. It was a good opportunity for students and representatives to raise issues regarding education and the academic side of university, as well as allowing the ground rules of the sub-committee to be set.
* QAA Quality Matters – This month, I was able to attend a virtual conference held by QAA, which was an ‘annual student-focused event providing an introduction to student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement and preparing student representatives for the year ahead.’ One of the most relevant seminars was focused on the importance of student engagement alongside the issue of Essay Mills.
* Fitness to Practice Video – Alongside the Advice Team at the SU, I took part in filming a video which covered the new Fitness to Practice policy, to try and explain the new aspects and changes from the previous policy.
* Undergraduate Open Day - On the 9th of October, I worked the Undergraduate Open Day, alongside a Student Ambassador, giving talks on Student Life in Plymouth as well as what we offer to students at the Students’ Union.
* Postgraduate Open Evening – On the 13th of October, I also worked the Postgraduate Open Evening. With a table in the Rolle Marquee, we asked potential Postgraduate students what they would like to see from the Students’ Union while they studied here.
* International Student Welcome Event – On the evening of the 19th, alongside the President and VP Diversity and Wellbeing, as well as Sports and Advice, we attended the international student welcome event. This was an opportunity to explain how the Students’ Union can help international students while they are studying in Plymouth.
* Part Time Officer Training – I attended the Part-Time Officer training on the 25th of October, to explain the roles of Sabbatical Officers, and introduce the team and our objectives.
* Course Rep Training – I also attended the Course Rep Training for the Faculty of Science and Engineering. This was a great opportunity to talk to Course Reps within the Faculty in which I act as Faculty Rep.