

Sabbatical Officer Updates 2017/18

Date: 1/05/2018

Committee: Union Council

Lowri Jones - President

The role of the president involves:

- Leading the Sabbatical Officer Team
- Internal and External communications
- Representing Plymouth students in the local community, nationally and across the University, and developing community relations
- Leading on sustainability and key campaigns
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from Lowri
<p>Have your Say sessions to hold me to account and to give students an opportunity to talk about different things they would like to see change. Strengthening democracy including expanding the Union Council, empowering part-time officers, creating an online area for all students to get involved with council decisions and motions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FB Live was cancelled in April due to unforeseen circumstances, but quick updates were posted instead and there will be a FB Live in May! • We are still exploring having an anonymous way for students to ask questions and I'm hoping that this will be ready for the next Facebook live in March. • Supporting LGBT+ Part-time Officer: Gender Neutral Toilets – after the GNT motion passed at Union Council in the last academic year, the new signage for the SU has now been ordered and should be with us soon!
<p>Redo Students as Partners Policy. Ensure students have a louder voice on all matters and are always consulted, with a representative always at the forefront.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Maja, VP Education, and key staff members at the union and the University to create a Student Charter and Students as Partners Policy. - The Student Charter is now on its third draft after changes made thanks to Student Life Committee. The draft will now go to the University Executive Group, UPSU's Trustee Board and Union Council for the last round of feedback before being signed at a ceremony in June. • Gaining a fuller understanding of the university structure myself by observing extra meetings and pushing to be involved in committees that the SU hasn't been before - Remuneration Committee update: This is still on hold due to the consultation, but all of the information will be passed to the next student governors so that they can also fight for the same thing.
<p>A safety, wellbeing and health campaign around drugs, including confidential service on campus for drug-related advice, drug testing kits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A massive thank you to everyone who filled out the survey last month! I'm meeting with the University's Head of Counselling to create a top level document of results (which will be shared asap) and then she will continue the analysis into the Summer. - I've started bringing in Alex as the incoming President and starting work on a policy that he will bring to Union Council in October.
Key role related activities	Update from Lowri
<p>Student Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Away Day – Phil and I attended the University Board of Governors' second away day of the academic year. It was a really positive experience with lots of discussion about how the University's strategy is progressing. We can't share more details due to confidentiality. • Video for Board of Governors – Phil and I are creating a video for the Governors (to be shown in June) that will show lots of students talking about their experience at the University (the positive and negative). We decided to make this video because the Governors don't get to speak to many students during their time here and this is a perfect opportunity for them to hear what you have to say. If you're interested in being a part of this video (whether by yourself, with a friend, with a bigger group or on behalf of a group, please get in touch with either of us. Details about filming will be up soon!
<p>Environment and sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat, Sleep, Recycle, Repeat and Green Week – Green Week was very successful this year and had more engaged students than last year. Working in collaboration with the University, we held a Sustainability Fair which was also the launch of the new recycling signage. We also pushed on reusable cups and bottles, with there now being a 10p discount on hot drinks across campus if using a reusable cups. We also held The Green Conversation, hosted by the E&S Part-time Officer, at which we collected lots of feedback from students and staff, and heard from different groups what they've been doing regarding sustainability. • Green Impact submission – I've been working closely with UPSU staff members to complete our NUS Green Impact accreditation submission. We have now submitted the work and are awaiting our audit. • Working with the Chaplaincy – I have been in touch with the Chaplaincy and we are looking to support their annual end of year campaign where students donate items that they no longer want. Food goes to the local foodbank, bed sheets go to the Salvation Army and items such as pots and pans are saved and shared out to incoming students next year. Look out for the promotion of this!
Other key updates	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Taskforce – The first phase of this is now finished, and after I contributed to the main group and a sub-committee, the interim report created has gone for approval to the University Executive Group. We're hoping to see lots of positive action following this! • Alcohol Impact – The Safe Drinking policy was approved at Trustee Board and will be going for ratification at Union Council on 1st May. 	

Maja Smith – VP Education

The role of the VP Education involves:

- Representing Students of the University of Plymouth regarding education at, postgraduate and undergraduate level.
- Working to improve student experience in all areas related to education (feedback, course costs, placements etc.)
- Supporting the consistent improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leading on the development and support of the academic representation system
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from Maja
<p>Hidden Costs – To lobby for free printing for third years' dissertation and postgraduates and where this is not possible push for all courses to have online module hand ins.</p>	<p>Hidden Course Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will be writing a report to take the University Teaching and Learning Quality Committee as well as writing a number of recommendation to the University. • There are some exciting developments regarding printing.... WATCH THIS SPACE
<p>Promote academic excellence -- The creation of a graduation calculator, which supports students on the calculations of their degrees. Supporting the university in keeping graduations on the Hoe past 2020. Campaign for greater module selection support for students across campus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic regulation has now been changed and means that students who submit a document that is unreadable will now be sent to TIS to try to open the document! • This has been sent to all Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees for dissemination and immediate implementation! <p><i>If you have any questions then please get in touch!</i> Graduations There has been progression and all Graduations will be held on the Hoe for the foreseeable future, including that of 2020!</p>
<p>Study Spaces – To lobby for more fun, relaxed study spaces across campus, supporting the university in the estate strategy.</p>	<p>The Library will be under refurbishment on Level 1 over the next couple of weeks. See the following link in order to be able to see what the Library will be getting up to! https://twitter.com/PlymUniLib/status/979368743909445633</p>
Key role related activities	Update from Maja
<p>Student Attainment Gap</p>	<p>Myself and Debby cotton are co-chairing a working group to look into the current attainment gap at the university and how that we can ensure that all of our students have access to opportunities and have the support that they need in order to be achieving good degrees at the University of Plymouth. The recommendations will go to the University Teaching and Learning Quality Committee for implementation on 2018/19.</p>
<p>SSTAR AWARDS</p>	<p>The Student and Staff Teaching and Representation awards are an opportunity to say thank you to those staff and students that work tirelessly to ensure a great Student Experience as well as Educational Experience!</p> <p>Thank you to all students who sat on panels to decide on this year's winner!!</p>
Other key updates	
<p>LGBT+ Safety abroad- I have been working with Andy Grace (E&D HHS), Goda (LGBT+ Part Time Officer) and Lowri Jones on ensuring the safety of all students with protected characteristics when travelling abroad with the aims of creating structured protocol and an easily accessible document to inform Students and Staff of considerations they may wish to make.</p> <p>Student Charter- All of the pillars and comments have been written and will be finalised in the coming months</p> <p>Academic Representation- Myself, Sarah Davey and Julian Chaudhuri will be writing a position paper on the current academic representation in order to help inform before developing any changes to our current systems.</p> <p>Drop Ins- I will be creating a drop in session for students to come and talk to me, as well as Course Reps, to ask question!!</p>	

Philippa Williams – VP Sport

The role of the VP Sport involves:

- Representing Students of the University of Plymouth
- Working to improve student experience in sport and physical activity
- Supporting the short and long term development of UPSU sports clubs
- Developing sporting strategies and opportunities in the university and local community
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from Philippa
Facilities – In order to advance our sport and physical activity offer, we need facilities to rival other universities. I'll fight for suitable, local facilities for every club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to facilities is an ever going challenge across sport- with more space and access, we can encourage more students to get involved to reap the benefits to their physical and mental health. - David Rose and I, are currently working towards creating a sports strategy with a summary of suggestions to present to UoP.
Funding – To lobby Plymouth University to allocate a funding pot, allowing clubs to apply for funding to better their student experience e.g. to attend competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Led by Alex, VP Activities and in partnership with Mel Joyner, Director of Student Services, there is current discussion around the financial barrier that is associated with extra-curricular participation, and whether this can be alleviated. - Met with Alice Ludgate with regards to the Activities Hardship Fund.
Publicity – To build upon the platform to showcase the successes and commitment of our students, driving engagement and a sense of pride for UPSU sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UPSU Facebook page is getting better engagement, and clubs are increasingly using it to advertise their events. - Organised and ran a photoshoot for all the Varsity Captains, to bring the focus back to them and encourage students to engage more with the promotion and build up to Varsity. - With Lowri,
Key role related activities	Update from Philippa
Inclusivity in Sport and Physical Activity	<p>Barriers to Sport and UPSU activities survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The survey overall gathered 490 responses. - Has a strong focus on Wednesday afternoons and financial barriers <p>Results include: '96% of students agree that Clubs/ Societies/ Activities enrich my social experience at the university' '95% of students agree that Clubs/ Societies/ Activities allow them to unwind from their studies' '87% of students agree that their friends at University have been made through sports/ societies/ activities' '90% of students agree that their Wednesday afternoons should NOT be timetabled from 12pm' '35% of students surveyed currently do not have their Wednesday Afternoons free' '44% of students surveyed disagreed with the statement 'my lecturers/ teaching staff are flexible and supportive when it comes to clubs, societies and activities on Wednesday afternoon'' '88% of students agree that they would benefit from additional resources available if they were to miss a Wednesday afternoon session' '76% of students disagreed with the statement 'my student loan covers all the UPSU clubs, societies and Activities I would like to take part in', with the main barriers being membership (87%), equipment (81%) and transport (69%) 87% of students agreed that they would feel isolated if they were unable to participate in UPSU Sports Clubs, Societies or Activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently creating a PowerPoint, to be able to feed this back to the Student Life Committee - Writing a report about Wednesday Afternoons - Writing a report in conjunction with Alex about additional Barriers to Engagement <p>Inclusion Sports Festival 10th March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was invited into the Disabled students forum, and feedback suggested they would like to have more opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in sport. - Have met with the sports department, and have planned an event for March 10th. This has been shared with students at the Sports Forum and the chair of the Disabled Students Forum. - We so far have one student as a guest speaker, in addition to many who will be around to talk to the students attending. - Wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, blind football shootout, etc.

Keep Wednesday
Afternoons Free

Over the last couple of months, I have dedicated a lot of my time to collating evidence surrounding Wednesday afternoon timetabling.

- Next steps are to analyse responses gained from student feedback in the terms of emails and survey responses
- Tie this together with the information collated from timetabling
- Highlight areas and identify causes as to why teaching occurs on Wednesday afternoons
- Create a summary sheet with key recommendations

Other key updates

Varsity

- Taking an active role in organising and running the events
- Currently, the overall score is 4-1 to UoP, with Men's Rugby 2's winning 69-0 and the Men's Rugby 1's winning 23-17.
- Formal invitations will be sent out to Senior staff of the university, to hopefully get them involved in Varsity.

Sports Awards

- Beginning to plan ahead Sports Awards 2018- hopefully increasing student involvement in the event through performances and also through getting design student's involvement through designing and creating the actual awards.

Mental Health Task Force

- Attending the Mental Health taskforce created by the university.

Sporting Scholars:

- Have consulted with all of the University's Sporting Scholars, and have a lot of feedback and suggestions.
- Have organised a meeting with David Alder and External Relations regarding the Sporting Scholars experience, as suggested through feedback.

Elections

Alex Doyle – VP Activities

The role of the VP Activities involves:

- Representing Students of the University of Plymouth
- Develop and support societies, volunteering, employability, comms and Media.
- Supporting staff at UPSU and the University in key activities including training, fairs and award ceremonies.
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from Alex
<p>Enhancing the promotion of societies, recruitment drives and influence societies to get more involved in the 'Give it a go' scheme'</p>	<p>Increased student engagement via social media through means of the sabbatical officers having our own UPSU Facebook account has created a much more affective means to communicating with students. I have been collecting information through the societies committee pages, forums and word-of-mouth to then share through our Facebook pages, groups, newsfeed as-well as Instagram and Twitter. Enhancing the GIAG scheme has been successful. Though simply holding GIAG information sessions, mentioning opportunities in forums and being proactive when suggesting the scheme has increased societies hosting the sessions.</p>
<p>Front line SU: Media and use them to showcase what our clubs, societies and volunteering departments have to offer.</p>	<p>After many meetings and discussions, it has been a joint decision by the SU:Media committee that, SU:Media will once again be split back into three separate societies focusing on Radio, Print and TV. The experiment of having a joint committee has not worked with issues arising that majority of the committee focus on one area with other outlets being forgotten. They still wish to work together but feel a committee for each outlet would be most beneficial.</p> <p>SU:Print, SU:Radio, SU:TV will now search for full committees within the interest group of each outlet to run them and each chair will meet regularly in regards to collaboration and keeping with regulation. We hope this will give them the capacity to showcase what our clubs and societies do and become a bigger voice as our official student media outlets.</p>
<p>Support student groups in the process of external funding, holding advice sessions and ensure they are not taken advantage of.</p>	<p>Due to issues in the last academic year, many clubs and societies were taken advantage of by their sponsors. We will now be holding more training on sponsorship guidelines, do's and don't etc. During the committee training conference in the new academic year.</p>
Key role related activities	Update from Alex
<p>Barriers to engagement</p>	<p>A 'Student Engagement – Barriers involved in UPSU Activites' survey is now complete with over 500 responses. I am currently pulling this data apart and creating a report in which I hope could lobby the university and UPSU to make necessary changes to knock down barriers to engagement. One way this data has already been put to use is that it has helped support the creation of an 'Activities Fund' to be created. This will cover Sports & Societies Membership, Give It A Go sessions, MGA and potentially costs associated with the Duke of Edingburgh Award.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The environment has become a growing concern for students at the University of Plymouth – Working alongside some of our societies we have been exploring the different ways our campus can become more environmentally friendly. Our first milestone was the Students Union stop to straws at our bars. More recently alongside students we are working with me to make sure all future developments take into consideration the students' needs and wants to be more ecologically sustainable as an organisation.</p>
Other key updates	
<p>Employability: As part of the role review, the role of Vice President Activities has now been changed to Vice President Activities & Development, adding Employability into the remit.</p> <p>I now sit on both a UPSU and University of Plymouth employability working group to ensure the students voice is heard in this conversation. I am currently pulling together alumni stories from ex-student staff to find out how their time working with UPSU has directly affected how employable they are and how we can improve on this.</p> <p>Volunteering Awards / Society & Activity Awards: I have been working closely with both the Volunteering Department as well as the Society & Activity Department in bringing the awards and celebration evenings to recognise the amazing achievements of our students this academic year.</p>	

James Warren – VP Welfare

The role of the VP Welfare involves:

- Representing Plymouth Students and students in the community
- Improving student experience in all areas relating to welfare (Health and wellbeing, equality and diversity support services, housing, safety, student finance)
- Supporting mature students
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from James
<p>No means rape – UoP and UPSU currently lacks a Sexual Misconduct campaign and any policies surrounding rape. Now elected I'd bring both into play at UP.</p>	<p>On the 24th of January I attended a conference in regards to tackling sexual misconduct at Universities and the growing concern of rape culture. The day in itself was really informative and highlighted just how the issue has become and how statistically it hasn't gotten any better over the last ten years, in fact it has gotten worse. Reflecting on this I realised the No means rape campaign needed a joint working partnership with the University. Looking at on previous officer campaigns it was clear that 'Know the Line' had a large impact and had a great partnership with the University. So looking at my options, I've decided to bring back KTL and change the workshop. I've done this in partnership with UPNC and will start rolling out the workshops from the 6th of March.</p>
<p>UoP has started with its mental health awareness, I'm hoping to bring in a more detailed campaign which also looks at male mental health.</p>	<p>The new mental health worker will start sometime in March. The mental health workshops have not finished, with three sub committees being setup up, Lowri, Phil and myself will sit on one each in order to represent the student voice. The outcome of these workshops are becoming more uncertain but keeping positive will allow for progressive communication in order to improve the services provided by the university. It is important that students keep telling me their concerns and views in order to feedback to the University, this really helps highlight that they do need to improve their services.</p>
<p>this year in regards to sexual health, I wish to continue the work already in play and improve the awareness of sexual health</p>	<p>Over the next few weeks I will launch the 'T Talks' campaign. Called the 'T Talks' because 'T' is truth and also the participants in the video will have tea (or coffee, or water) in order to show these kind of conversations can happen over a cup of tea and shouldn't be a worry. The videos will discuss various misconception and bust myths in relation to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Sexual health • Sexuality • Gender • LGBT+ sexual education <p>They will be shared on social media platforms in order to reach people they may not necessarily engage with the SU. Condoms and sanitary towels are still free in the HIVE as well as lube so please do come get some.</p>
Key role related activities	Update from James
<p>Alcohol impact</p>	<p>On the 22nd of February I attended the first ever Alcohol Impact conference hosted by NUS in Leeds. The day itself was very insightful, looking at the various reasons and causes as to why students drink so much. It looked at the perception from pre-students who believe that drinking is something they have to do whilst they study at Universities. The speakers from the day also gave insight into glasses shape and size and various different causes. Alongside this is was a great way to network with other Student Unions in order to share ideas in regards to safer drinking and which Alcohol free events work and didn't work and why.</p>
<p>University Mental Health Day</p>	<p>on the 1st of March, the Students union and the University have worked in partnership to bring you a day of mindfulness and relaxation. Come into the SU to see what is going on, the event runs 10am – 3pm, there will be a quiet hour 11-12 with no music.</p>
Other key updates	

Hadiza Adah – VP International and Outreach

The role of the VP International and Outreach involves:

- Representing University of Plymouth International and Partner Institution students that fall within our membership
- Working to improve international and partner institutions students experience
- Supporting the Plymouth Partner Institution network within our membership, ensuring that they receive sufficient support, representation and access to facilities
- Ensuring progression students are adequately supported through their transition
- Working as a trustee of UPSU



Manifesto	Update from Hadiza
Accommodation: I would work towards providing a scheme that represents international students and helps them in knowing their rights	With the new draft being proposed, I'm currently working closely with Julian Chaudhuri to present this paper to the University Executive Group for approval. Following approval from the university, we would be releasing information on how students can access this scheme for the coming academic year. Also, together with advice, I would be uploading some articles to add to what is currently on the advice page.
Safe environment: I'd work towards providing a system that protects and defends international students and immigrants	Since stepping into the role, I realised that this falls outside my remit. However, I'm working with International Students Advice to ensure international students are fully supported. I'd also be bringing back the Prevent policy to Union Council which would continue to work with the university to ensure they exercise their prevent duties minimally.
I'd create avenues to develop employability and transferable skills by creating specific forums to cater for international and exchange students.	I'm currently working on a report concerning international students going on placements. The information collated from the focus group I held, would feed into this ongoing report. It would create recommendations on how we can better support our students. It would also raise awareness on the offers for development provided by the SU and careers and employability.
Key role related activities	Update from Hadiza
Improving engagement with Partner Colleges	The Facebook Live which happened March did not get as many viewers or questions as we had hoped for, but with doing it regularly, we could improve this. I have also been contacting course reps from all partner colleges concerning how their courses are going and if there are any issues they may want to raise. Most of the feedback so far it has been positive with a few queries which have been sorted. I'm currently working on the possibility of having a PALS scheme for progression students to help them integrate into the university better. Lastly, I'll be attending the city college student rep away day happening shortly and will continue the drop-in sessions scheduled for the rest of term.
Student Protection scheme	I am working on a report to go to the university on the benefits of offering some help to refugees or asylum seekers and the wealth of information we stand to gain. It would give us information on issues, numbers and how to tackle them. I would also be creating a leaflet, which would show steps refugees or asylum seekers could take to access higher education. Along with this, I would be submitting a motion to UC around the SU championing Equal access to HE for refugees or asylum seekers.
Other key updates	
I would be working with Victoria May from city college on a research project she is running around hate crime. I would be having a discussion around this and would be producing a leaflet to provide signposting information to students. I am currently organising a global week between the 23 rd and 28 th of April. This week will display the diversity we have in our membership. I have also been working with Maja and Debby Cotton in an Attainment Gap working group, which would suggest recommendations on steps to move forward. These would feed into UTLQC	