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**Sabbatical Officer Updates**

**2017/18**

**Date: 29/01/2018**

**Committee: Union Council**

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| **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
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| **Manifesto** | **Update from Lowri** |
| 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.  | • The last Q&A session on FB Live was on Thursday 18th January, with James, VP Welfare, and myself. We had poor engagement regarding questions, but we did have plenty of views. • Thanks to student feedback, we’re now exploring having an anonymous way for students to ask questions. This would allow students to ask questions that are more private/personal to them. |
| 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. | • 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 draft will be circulated for more consultation as soon as possible in semester 2• 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: Phil and I are responding to the consultation, and once closed, we will be meeting with the Chair of the committee again• Arranging sessions for students to understand the uni structure better and for transparency- Since the first ‘Informal Conversation’ session was cancelled due to low uptake last term, we’re going to use the student forums for the same purpose instead:- After students asked questions around GSM and the fraud scandal at our ASM, we have invited 2 senior staff members of the University to the Societies Forum to answer questions (Feb 6th) |
| A safety, wellbeing and health campaign around drugs, including confidential service on campus for drug-related advice, drug testing kits. | • The University’s Head of Counselling and myself have created a survey on student drug culture which will hopefully be circulated in February, once it has passed the ethics approval• The campaign page for this is now up on UPSU’s website, so to see all of the updates together, head over there.  |
| **Key role related activities** | **Update from Lowri** |
| Elections  | • Nominations open for elections on 5th February, so we’ve been working hard already to make these the best elections ever.- The steering group is meeting with a wider group of UPSU staff members Monday 29th to discuss different ideas to further promote the elections and engage more students- As lead officer for the elections, I will also be participating in the Thinking of Running sessions and the training for candidates, and myself and Phil are working on a section of the training from a candidate’s perspective. |
| Environment and sustainability  | • Eat, Sleep, Recycle, Repeat- events linked to this will be during Green Week (below)• Green Week – 5th to 9th of February- Planning is full steam ahead, and with the help of Phil, Alex and numerous other staff members from both UPSU and the University, we have many different events and activities organised. All the details will be on upsu.com rather than listing them here, but I will be advertising it all on social media before and during the week. Thank you to everyone who has offered to help out in the week! |
| **Other** **key updates** |
| • Mental Health Task Force- Along with some other officers and UPSU staff members, I’m currently sitting on the University’s Mental Health Taskforce. The taskforce includes numerous representatives from across the University and local stakeholders, and aims to understand the increase in mental health issues within the student population, before finding short-, medium- and long-term solutions. There have been 2 workshops so far, both of which have been really informative and we’ve had some great opportunities to illustrate to the group the student experiences that we’ve seen around mental health.• Funding for student nurses- Since funding moved from the NHS to SLC, student nurses and other health profession students have suffered, losing approximately £720 per year. Thanks to the Advice Centre flagging this up, I’ve emailed both NUS and Luke Pollard, as our local MP, to see what can be done about this national issues.- Luke Pollard has offered to come in and meet with some student nurses to discuss issues that they’re having, as well as to do general student drop-ins.• UPSU’s Strategic Plan - Working with Gina, UPSU’s CEO, and other key staff members on UPSU’s new Strategic Plan. - Thank you to everyone who filled in the survey – we are now analysing the results and starting to gather ideas for the new strategy.• Alcohol Impact – Working on a Safe Drinking campaign with James, and putting together student and staff focus group to tackle particular issues• Met with the President of Marjon SU and of PCA SU to discuss many things, including starting a city-wide campaign on being a Good Citizen |

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| **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
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| **Manifesto** | **Update from Maja** |
| **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. | Hidden Course Costs* 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
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| **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.  | ***Background Context-*** *It is currently believed that this is not always being upheld and some tutors in the best interest of the student are seeking technical support from TIS to try to open the document. I have being trying to investigate this further.* *Over the past three years TIS has had 23 cases where academics have sort support with this, which is steadily increasing year on year.* * 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 and open the document!
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| **Study Spaces —**To lobby for more fun, relaxed study spaces across campus, supporting the university in the estate strategy.  |  After student consultation and conversations with the Library Staff, one of the large rooms on the top floor of the Library is now a Postgraduate only zone. This is going to be renovated with paint and new furniture. This means that there might be a shuffle round of some of your favourite study spots, but please visit the top floor of the library for information on Postgraduate Study opportunities as well to visit some new study areas |
| **Key role related activities** | **Update from Maja** |
| **Student Charter** | Myself and Lowri Jones (President) have been speaking to students, through focus groups, training events and other meetings. This has been an opportunity to collate feedback from students about what they want to be in the Student Charter. We hope to have an official signing ceremony during officer handover in June! |
| **Academic Representation review** |  -Myself and Sarah Davey (Director of Membership Services) have been speaking to a number of Course Rep champions and will continue to do so over the next few weeks. After this we will be meeting with Julian Chaudhuri with recommendation to how we can change our Academic Representations structures to the benefit of our students |
| **Other key updates** |
|  **TEF Submission-** I have been working with many senior members of the University in order to finish writing the Students Union contribution to the TEF Submission. The deadline for the submission is 18th January; it has been an honour to work with so many great members f staff looking at some of the incredible work that UPSU does in partnership with the University. I am very grateful for this opportunity to enhance my own skills as well as once again highlighting all of the work that UPSU and the University do for their students |

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| **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
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| **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. | * 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, whereby we could see much benefit in developing our own facilities.
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| 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. | * 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.
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| 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.  | * UPSU Facebook page is getting better engagement, and clubs are increasingly using it to advertise their events.
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| **Key role related activities** | **Update from Philippa** |
| Inclusivity in Sport and Physical Activity | **Barriers to Sport and UPSU activities survey.*** This went live on 17/11/17 and has so far gathered 200 responses.
* Has a strong focus on Wednesday afternoons and financial barriers
* So far, a lot has been raised about issues regarding mental health and how this can be a barrier for many students.
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| 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
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| **Other key updates** |
| * Promotional photoshoot planning for Varsity Captains
* Beginning to plan ahead Sports Awards 2018- hopefully increasing student involvement in the event through performances
* Begun to attend the Mental Health taskforce created by the university.
* Researching into the experience that Sporting Scholars have at the university, will summarise this in a meeting with the hope to improve upon feedback
* Taking a small involvement within UPSU’s annual green week planning
* Was invited into a Disabled Student’s Forum at the end of the 2017 year and asked about the provision and ability to put on sports for students with disability. This is something that I am looking into, as well as seeing whether there is a greater awareness campaign that I can run alongside Varsity 2018, as the charity we are supporting this year is the English federation of Disability Sport.
* Will be advertising ‘a day in the life of VP Sport’ through social media on 17/1/18
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| **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
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| **Manifesto** | **Update from Alex** |
| Enhancing the promotion of societies, recruitment drives and influence societies to get more involved in the ‘Give it a go’ scheme’ | 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. |
| Front line SU: Media and use them to showcase what our clubs, societies and volunteering departments have to offer. | **SU:Media**: A review of the SU:Media Byelaws, and how the project has worked so far is also beginning in order to make sure as student group, they are still being supported and heading into the right direction.**SU:TV:** TV is currently in need of its own equipment or a sustainable means of using equipment as they are currently borrowing from members which is not ideal. As a committee we are exploring the idea of having a small lockable cupboard in the Radio room in which we can store, and slowly build up a portfolio of SU:Media owned equipment over the next couple of years.**SU:Radio:** The Radio room equipment is very dated and has been used for storage of unknown, unclaimed equipment. I am looking into having the room cleared out and new equipment purchased where necessary.**SU:Print:** Print have had a very successful fresher’s Mag followed by articles being shared throughout the weeks on the website and social media platforms. The website is currently undergoing some changes to be more user-friendly with the committees ideas will be fed into these changes. |
| Support student groups in the process of external funding, holding advice sessions and ensure they are not taken advantage of. | Due to issues in the last academic year, many clubs and societies were taken advantage of by their sponsors. I’m currently looking into how we can include sponsorship guidelines alongside a sponsorship contract template within committee training starting September. I, alongside the most appropriate staff member will be holding a sponsorship workshop within the next two months as societies and clubs will be looking for sponsorships for the following academic year within this period. |
| **Key role related activities** | **Update from Alex** |
| Barriers to engagement - Activities Fund etc.  | A ‘Student Engagment – 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. This fund is now in its final stages and will be going for approval shortly.  |
| Sustainability & Environment  | 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. We are also working in partnership with the Universities sustainability team to reduce plastic cup wastage on campus and to make our bin signs consistent throughout campus. This is also all part of Green Week in February in which I will be hosting a ‘green conversation’ session in which I hope to be gathering more feedback from students. |
| **Other key updates** |
| 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. 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 effected how employable they are and how we can improve on this.I am also on a working group with our Personal Development Manager, bringing students a ‘Build Your Future’ conference in February which we hope will help empower our students to become leaders. |

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| **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
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| **Manifesto** | **Update from James** |
| 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. | The campaign is well under way, with Bystander training coming out soon so if you would like to become a Student Empowerer (that is the right spelling) then please give me a message. Alongside I am currently researching and then writing a new sexual misconduct policy for UPSU, this will flow nicely with the new University one that is due to be presented at the next UC. On the 24th of January I shall be heading to London for conference around tackling rape culture within University.  |
| 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. | After meetings with the University they have put out an ad for another mental health worker on campus, alongside this I am now attending various mental health workshops with other members of staff in order to look at how we can improve mental health services on campus.  |
| this year in regards to sexual health, I wish to continue the work already in play and improve the awareness of sexual health | In the University Wellbeing centre the Council will be hosting LGBT+ friendly service in order to reduce the stigma for trans or non-binary. It will also reduce negative stigma from service providers. Condoms and sanitary towels are still free in the HIVE as well as lube.  |
| **Key role related activities** | **Update from James** |
| Alcohol impact | On the 22nd of February I will be attending the AI conference in Leeds |
| NUS Delegate | Thank you all for voting for me to be one of the NUS delegates this year |
| **Other key updates** |
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| **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
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| **Manifesto** | **Update from Hadiza** |
| Accommodation: I would work towards providing a scheme that represents international students and helps them in knowing their rights | After taking a lot of feedback from the university and other university who have run the International Guarantor Scheme, a new draft has been proposed to the university for approval. I am also currently working on including some accommodation tips to the SU website.This is currently ongoing as I am awaiting a response from the university. |
| 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, Im working with James Warren to ensure international students are fully supported and given adequate avenues to report any form of hate crime.  |
| 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 creating sessions where international and exchange students can get advice on employment, and also get advice from employers who are of similar backgrounds and ethnicity. Also currently looking to empower students through various trainings and opportunities available for them to improve their skills.I am working with the students development manager and careers and employability service to see how we can increase applications for placements for international students and collaborating to increase awareness of the services provided by both teams. This is still ongoing, and is looking very positive.  |
| **Key role related activities** | **Update from Hadiza** |
| Improving engagement with Partner Colleges | The result of the survey carried out in September is currently being analysed. In the meantime, myself Alec and Gemma are working on drop-in sessions across partner colleges, to get feedback from students concerning their experience and provide information and support to students. We are also currently attending the JBS meetings for partner colleges and providing support to the student representatives.  |
| Student Protection scheme | This aims at providing equal access to education for asylum seekers. It will persuade the university to provide bursaries and scholarships for them and stop the university from charging them international fees.Currently working with Rosie Brennan, Director of the law clinic to access information concerning asylum seekers and refugees, and getting in contact with local organisations to create more opportunities for them. So far we are developing a survey which would give us information on issues, numbers and how to tackle them. It will also develop a model to protect international students in crisis. |
| **Other key updates** |
| As part of the sabbatical role review, a new position has been created which covers International students, mature students, and some other key departments. Partner colleges have now been split amongst all roles to help with a more effective representation.  |

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| **UPSU Sabbatical Officers- Team updates** |

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|  | **Update from Sabbatical Officers** |
| Campaign planning process | Over the past month, the Sabbatical team have been working closely with the Student Voice Department of the Students’ Union to review the process by which Sabbatical Officers organise and implement campaigns. The improved process is to ensure that before the officers produce robust campaign plans, they have been tested and research and are in the interest of the members of UPSU. This will not only be beneficial to the sabbatical officer team, but will also be in the best interests of our membership.  |
| Sabbatical Out and About/ Communicating with Students | Over the past few weeks the Sabbatical Officers have been trying a number of new strategies to try and support our campaign to become more visual on and around campus. - Hoodies- The officer team now have bright blue hoodies to become more visual around campus. - Out and About- The Sabbatical Officers are trying to make sure that they are out and about as much as possible around campus and have several surveys that they are asking students to complete to try and get feedback on a number of things such as the Student Charter. - Post It Notes- VP Education Maja Smith is currently awaiting the arrival of new post it notes to visit lectures and get feedback from students in order to work on what students want. |
| Complaints and Appeals | The Sabbatical Officer team have been dealing with a number of appeals, with the tremendous support of the Complaints and Appeals department. It is apparent that there is a need for an information piece, which will support students in obtaining the knowledge that they need for complaints and appeals well in advance so that they can escalate their information early and hopefully minimise the need to complain or appeal. |
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