

VP Welfare: Esther Dominy

For meeting of 15/02/2018

Summary

This report summarises my progress on the main projects I've been working on. To provide a bit of introduction, my three main objectives are around improving mental health support, preventing sexual violence and harassment and continuing work to improve students' day to day experiences, including facilities for parents and carers.

Special Circumstances

Summary	<p>Student Council has previously passed policy around improving the University's Special Circumstances and Extensions policies to make them more accessible – including to student parents and carers – and improving this system is one of my priorities for the year. The University is currently looking at how to improve the <i>process</i> of applying for Special Circumstances and Extensions to make it easier to use, fairer and more consistent and I am also working to make changes to academic <i>policies</i> for Special Circumstances and Extensions, amending them to cover a broader range of circumstances with more appropriate evidence requirements.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) alongside VP Education to support the addition of non-routine parental and caring responsibilities to Special Circumstances and Extensions policies. This was approved and will be updated for the 2018/19 academic year!• At CSPC supported the addition of exceptional and unanticipated employment commitments to the Extensions policy. This has now been approved and will be updated for 2018/19.• Developed a proposal to add 'experience of sexual assault or harassment' to Special Circumstances and Extensions policies

	<p>and to amend evidence requirements to give greater weight to statements given by staff members who have received disclosures. CSPC approved in late January, subject to a further amendment to list experience of harassment separately to sexual harassment or assault. The full change will be approved in March, for 2018/19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have continued to communicate students' concerns about the current <i>process</i> for applying for Special Circumstances and Extensions. Changes that are likely to go ahead are: more regular Special Circumstances committees to allow quicker responses to applications, the ability to make an application and have it accepted pending evidence, more standardised and reliable processes for approving applications and removing the supporting evidence requirement for all Extensions up to 7 days, among other changes. This should be implemented for 2018/19. • I have been comparing the information given to students in different Schools to understand the range of ways Special Circumstances and Extensions (as well as support services like the Student Counselling Service and Student Disability Service) are communicated. Ideally, I would like to see a 'template' of appropriate advice/guidance that is included in all documents on this type and am looking at how to do this.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be involved in the process of developing a new system for Special Circumstances and Extensions to make sure student feedback has been taken on board by the time changes are introduced. Meeting with the team working on the project with Chloë Marvin, our Disabled Students Officer, to check-in about our priorities. • Emphasising the need to back up new processes and policies with a culture that treats students fairly, with compassion and with an accurate understanding of the impacts of mental illness, caring responsibilities, sexual violence and other circumstances. • Working with the University to explore options for providing template wording around Special Circs/Extensions.

Sexual violence and harassment policy

Summary	<p>I have been working to improve the University's response to sexual violence and harassment. This includes looking at the policies and processes in place for students who choose to make a disclosure or report to the University.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the University and Advice Place staff to map out problems with University policies and processes has now concluded and there are now plans to open this to external stakeholders (including Rape Crisis organisations and Police Scotland), relevant student reps (Liberation Officers and society office-bearers) and student survivors. I am also compiling a paper to outline our key concerns and priorities for what should change.• I am pushing for a strategy group to be set up to take responsibility for this work, oversee the writing of a University-wide strategy on tackling sexual violence and harassment and ultimately ensure implementation of changes.• I have met with students and University representatives to allow students to communicate their concerns directly and am working with our Women's Officer, Kathryn Pearson, to develop ideas for consultation with student survivors to take place later this semester.• Staff-student sexual misconduct has been highlighted as an issue by the National Union of Students (NUS) and I have promoted opportunities to feed into the research being carried out by NUS. I have also been pushing for the introduction of a staff-student relationships policy that outlines acceptable conduct and boundaries – a draft policy is likely to be written up soon for me to provide feedback.• I have been lobbying for changes to the University's complaints form – this is currently the only way to report sexual violence to the University and is not fit for purpose. Myself and the Advice Place Manager have communicated changes to be made and I am following this up.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University has recently bought online training for staff on how to respond to disclosures. The Students' Association has access to this and it has been circulated to our staff in relevant positions. • Reviewing the Students' Association's Zero Tolerance approach – this outlines the operational procedure for if a student makes a complaint of sexual harassment in our venues. We are currently looking at developing our communications around this so that students are aware of what to do if they experience harassment. • I have helped secure money from Student Council to fund a supply of the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERCC) survivors' booklet. There have been delays printing the booklets, but once we have them will be circulated to the Advice Place, Student Counselling Service, and other places for students to access them. We will also promote the online version of the booklet through our channels. A bonus is that the booklets have been cheaper to produce than expected, so we'll receive 200!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that mapping work is complete, the discussion will be opened out to a wider group (including students with experience of reporting to the University, student groups and external organisations) to seek feedback on the current system for handling reports and proposals to improve them. This should inform a University strategy that should hopefully be written by September 2018. • Developing communications around our Zero Tolerance approach in venues. • Working with Kathryn to plan and run a consultation with student survivors on reporting mechanisms in March. • Continuing to push for changes to be made throughout the University based on the issues identified during the mapping process (including staff training, HR investigations, investigations under the Code of Student Conduct, complaints, policy gaps, etc.).

No One Asks For It and bystander training

Summary	<p>In 2016 No One Asks For It was launched as a joint campaign between the Students' Association, the University and the Sports Union. We're now looking to develop and launch a new campaign for September 2018, with a focus on survivor support alongside prevention and education and with more opportunities for student involvement. We are also looking at expanding the training available at the University on bystander intervention.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended a student consultation meeting run by Kathryn Pearson, our Women's Officer, and Sexpression to gather feedback on No One Asks For It and examples of other campaigns. This feedback was written up and will be used to develop the next campaign.• Met with representatives of other Edinburgh universities to discuss region-wide cooperation with campaigns. This is unlikely to develop into a single campaign, but was a useful opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.• Met with Kathryn and Students' Association staff to develop our proposals for a new campaign. Kathryn and I will present this to the University in late February or March.• Met with the University to discuss plans to train around 600 student leaders in bystander intervention this September, feeding in our priorities for training and what this should look like (both for this September as well as long-term plans for training on a larger scale).
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with Kathryn to use the feedback gathered from students as a basis for developing a new campaign over the coming months.• Presenting our proposals for a new campaign to the University; once we are agreed on how the campaign will move forward we can begin to plan the specifics.• Working to identify student groups to receive the bystander training due to be delivered in September.

Thematic Review of Support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers

Summary	<p>Last year, the University committed to conducting a Thematic Review into support for mature students and student parents and carers. This will take place over semester 2 and will involve consultation with students to identify recommendations for improvements.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended the first meeting of the Thematic Review, where I raised issues affecting mature students and student parents and carers, including library access, childcare, data collection, information/guidance, academic policies and changing facilities among other issues.• Successfully lobbied for the Students' Association reps for Parents, Carers and Mature Students to be invited to sit on the panel conducting the review. The next meeting of the review will take place with our reps in late February.• Worked to secure further opportunities for students to feed in through focus groups and interviews – these will take place in early March.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuing to shape the outcomes of the review alongside our reps for Parents, Carers and Mature Students by feeding in students' concerns.• Working with the University to set-up and promote focus groups and interviews.

Other

- Myself, the President and VP Community, our Disabled Students' Officer Chloë Marvin and Judith Drake have been involved in discussions around the University's plans for a new Wellbeing Centre at 7 Bristo Square. We pushed for more space for the Student Counselling Service and Student Disability Service and I'm pleased to say the plan has been approved with additional funding for several more rooms!

- I am involved in preliminary conversations around Mental Health Peer Support and am working with Students' Association and University staff to develop ideas for a pilot scheme to run later this year.
- Beginning to plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing Week 2018 and have started conversations with the University around support and funding.
- I met with Lindsay Moffat, our Student Parents Rep, and the VP Activities and Services to explore options for a child-friendly space in Teviot.

Vice President Education: Bobi Archer

For meeting of 15/02/2018

Summary

In the past 3 weeks I've dedicated most of my time to the Lecture Recording Consultation and the UCU Strike. I've been producing promotional material for the consultation as well as doing outreach on satellite campus' to engage with students to get a high turnout. Ensuring that we get good student engagement will give me good data to support the student requirement for consistent usage. In regards to the UCU Strikes I've been meeting with the UCU and University to ensure students are as up to date as possible regarding the action that will take place. This has been facilitated through our social media channels as well as replying to individual student enquiries. In what little time I've had outwit this, I've now also met with 19/21 schools regarding my proposals for the Programme Representative system.

UCU Strike Support

Summary	<p>On Monday the 22nd of January, the University and College Union (UCU) voted in favour of 14 days of strike action to protest against the proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme, which the majority of the University staff are enrolled in. The UCU are also using this strike as a platform to demonstrate the additional work that staff are required to do without pay. In the lead up to this, the Students' Association has been liaising with the UCU and the University to ensure that this has a minimal effect to a student's academia and welfare.</p> <p>The dates of the strike are as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1: 26th, 27th and 28th of February • Week 2: 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of March
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 3: 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th of March • Week 4: 19th and 20th of March
Actions/ Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Association <i>currently</i> has live policy to support UCU strikes • The Students' Association services will be in operation as normal, although we plan to provide a platform for UCU members who are marking assessments • Arranging internal meetings with the Sabbatical Officers and Students' Association staff to communicate to students strike protocol and how to support the strike action. So far we have; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Released an article to inform students of the strike ➤ Produced a set of FAQ's for students ➤ Directing student complaints to the University Principal and central management team • I've been meeting with the UCU on a weekly basis to stay informed of their proposed action and to encourage them to minimize the impact on students. We have requested that the Library is not to be picketed so students can study independently and access the counselling and disability service as normal. • Also meeting with the University to ensure that the strike action does not have an impact on a student's academic standing or welfare. So far negotiated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching will not be re-arranged for the end of Week 11 as this goes against the ethos of the strike. Additionally, students have already made holiday arrangements and this will significantly reduce the revision period. However, there may be exceptions for degrees which have professional requirements ➤ In-person assignment deadlines will be postponed to the next non-strike day and online assessments will remain the same. Students can still apply for extensions, which we would recommend if the tutor is unavailable etc. ➤ Students will not be examined on material that they have not been taught, therefore the appropriate adjustments will need to be made ➤ Boards of Examiners will take the strike into consideration and therefore students do not individually need to apply for Special

	Circumstances. However, if a student does not agree with their grade they can appeal
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently producing a video to inform students of strike protocol and what to expect, as well as explaining the ways they can help to support with this specific strike • Continue to meet with the University; where we'll be lobbying for a partial refund of tuition fees • Request that Schools signpost students to the correct place if any academics/admin or support staff are on strike, and with as much notice as possible • Continue to update students of plans and information as we liaise with the UCU and University • Plan the logistics of supporting the UCU with their action, such as booking space, teas and coffees etc.

Lecture Recording Policy Consultation

Summary	The University made in investment into new equipment to facilitate lecture recording. They scoped that this project would take 3 years to fit all university rooms with the equipment, with the first phase rolled out for 2017/18. The University did not have a current policy in place to decide how the equipment would be utilized and has been left for academics to decide. Due to the inconsistent usage of the equipment, I've been lobbying the University to implement an opt-out policy which will ensure that all lectures are automatically recorded unless there is a legitimate reason as not to.
Actions/ Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've been attending bi-weekly meetings to discuss the progress of the roll-out and to help create an opt-out policy • Organized for there to be a consultation on the policy with students so there is evidence to lobby for a consistent usage of the lecture recording equipment • Created promotional material and drafted Students' Association communications to ensure students are aware of the consultation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaised with School Representatives to ensure that they're aware of the consultation and for them to collect feedback from their constituencies • Led an outreach event at Easter Bush as well as providing other outreach events with promotional material so students on satellite campus' have the ability to ask questions about the consultation
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote the lecture recording consultation through Student Representatives, the Students' Association channels and outreach events • Gather direct feedback from our Liberation Officers and Section Representatives to ensure that we can emphasize the benefits for particular cohorts of students; for example, disabled students, parents and carers. • Compile a response on behalf of the student body to request an opt-out policy for the 2018/19 academic year

Other

- Continuing to work with the University to secure funding for student nurses through the Alumni and Development department. Also will now be presenting the motion at the NUS Scotland conference now that it has passed.
- Promoting the lecture recording policy to students to ensure that we get a diverse range of perspectives in favour of consistent usage. This is important in lobbying the University for an opt-out Policy, to ensure that all students are given equal access to educational material. The deadline for this is **Monday 19th February** and can be done through your School Representative or directly to the Educational Technology Policy Officer, Neil.McCormick@ed.ac.uk and the link is: <http://bit.ly/LectureRecordingConsultation>
- The second launch of the Student Partnership Agreement funding. Applications are now open for staff and students to place bids for funding for projects (up to a maximum of £500). Further information about submitting a bid can be found by contacting me at vpeducation@eusa.ed.ac.uk. Please note that the deadline for submission of bids is **Friday 16th February**

President: Patrick Kilduff

For meeting of 15/02/2018

Summary

It's an exciting time with the preparation for Elections '18 well under way as well as many other projects, some of which are outlined below. We've been working on a number of projects both individually and as a team; working with the VP Community we're honing in on securing a ten-year residential strategy with student accessibility and affordability at its heart to continuing to tackle issues of expansion with the University especially with the new Principal (Noting his statement in an interview with The Student Newspaper "My principle would be to say, 'let's get our house in order as best we can with our current size before we think about expanding,' because I think there's work to be done. I wouldn't want to carry on expanding without paying attention to the experience we're providing at the moment."). By the next Council our elections will have been held so it's a truly exciting time of year; make sure you and your pals vote, take part, ask questions of candidates and, most importantly, if you're running, GOOD LUCK!

Principal's Town Hall Update

Summary	Following the announcement of strike action dates and conversations with the UCU regarding the appropriateness of dates for the Town Hall with the Principal. As a result of these conversations we have decided to reschedule the Town Hall to the next most appropriate date which is provisionally Wednesday 28th March ; it will take place with the same format and at the same time of 6PM – 8PM at McEwan Hall with free food and drink.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We want to make sure we are not putting anyone, either staff or students, at a disadvantage by holding this event during a day of major industrial action.• We have made the decision to make sure the event has as good an attendance as possible, so students do not have to cross picket lines to attend whilst maintaining our drive to ensure our voice is key to shaping the Principal's vision as early as possible.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Principal will continue to make rounds of School Councils and groups by recommendation of the Sabbatical team.• Myself and other sabs have a meeting with the Principal in the coming week as well as some more in the near future; if you have anything you would like us to raise specifically let us know at council or email me at eusapres@ed.ac.uk.

Students' Association Elections

Summary	<p>It's amazing that it's been a year since last year's elections but it is an extremely exciting time coming up. Preparations are well under way for the elections, nominations have been open since November but the deadline is the 22nd February at 5:00PM. There are a brilliant multitude of positions; liberation officers (BME, LGBT+, Women's and Disabled Students), undergraduate School Representatives, full-time sabbatical positions, activities representatives and section representatives. These are all extremely fulfilling roles to take part in where your voice makes a real impact and creates real change for students in your school or across the University.</p> <p>If you have any questions feel free to come talk to me or email me at eusapres@ed.ac.uk. We have several candidates briefing sessions to help inform candidates of campaign tips and tricks as well as making sure you know you're supported.</p> <p>If you're running or thinking about running and just want some support or advice I'm also free whenever to chat!</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting excited to see a whole host of fantastic candidates from across the University standing to make real change and positive impact.• Give a good read of peoples manifestos.• Keep an eye out for the announcement of husting dates for Sabbatical Officers.• Encouraging as many people as possible to vote and take part and make their voice heard in an equally important way even if standing for elected office doesn't quite float your goat.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VOTE• VOTE• VOTE

Other

- Working to get a constitutional amendment to the University Estate's profile to make sure on *all* student facing projects there is a requirement to have a student on the board.
- Worked with the brilliant VP Activities and Services and the fabulous Sports Union President to disseminate the second tranche of funds from the Participation Grant as well as securing £25k per year for the next three years of the grant (2.5x more than where we were at the start of the year – Go Kai!!)
- Working with postgraduate representatives, the VP Activities & Services and Vice-President Community on developing plans around the new Postgraduate Centre at Old Kirk on Holyrood
- Working with the VP Welfare, Disabled Students Officer Chloë Marvin, Judith Drake and the VP Community in the development of the Wellbeing Centre at 7 Bristo Square
- Working with the VP Activities and Services to continue to develop more detailed plans regarding the Student Centre.
- Attempting to meet with rectorial candidates to discuss Students' Association and student priorities. Elections of the Rector will be taking place very soon and I am involved in the planning around the elections as well as wanting to update on why this is such an important position for students to have our say, make our voice heard and vote.

VP Community: Oliver Glick

For meeting of 15/02/2018

Summary

We got the Big'un folks- full divestment from the university. A lot of campaigning over the years, big ups to People and planet, other students and student groups, and previous sabs.

Thanks to all who voted for my Private halls motion- I'll be taking it with gusto to NUS Scotland. I've also been meeting Councillors and MSP's on the matter recently.

Good progress on better cycling and bike storage on campus

Housing

Summary	affordable housing, more co-ops, better tenant's rights
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I met with and lobbied MSP's, who have agreed to circulate my private housing motion to the right people at Holyrood

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myself and Patrick were consulted on the idea of new properties that are uni owned halls, but further out of the center. We gave our feedback on the importance of affordability and good transport for students should this be the only option for non-private halls going forward • The housing fair was a success! Great to see the alternate accommodation stalls, such as the housing co-op, getting good rep • We met with uni reps to discuss the best combined strategy to prevent scams and dodgy landlords • Patrick and I met with key architects of the new residential strategy to push for student needs on affordability, anti pbsa, and co ops
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with planning conveners at council on pbsa • Gain student feedback on whether cheaper halls, that have to be slightly further out of the center, is a good thing

Sustainability

Summary	<p>Save the planet...</p> <p>Focus on food waste, divestment and reinvestment, good food</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full divestment was achieved- the uni announced after court passed the paper. This is great for students seeing a sustainable university, and validates this association and its members efforts over the years • Georgia, our food waste intern, has started! She will be working on developing a redistribution system, and wasting less food at the creation stage • Feedback from myself and Kai's coffee cup proposal was very positive-we are now having a follow up meet with the uni for details • We have been busy organizing sustained! Food edition- it will have happened the day of this very meeting, and is enabling student groups to run their own events, as well as a big sustainable farmers market!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise keep cup and reverse coffee tax plan • Support food waste work towards a distribution pilot

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the university divests in its given time frame |
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Transport

- I am being consulted on a potential new bike hire scheme involving the university, so watch this space. Of course I'm striving to ensure its best for students!
- We will be reviewing the results of the big transport survey with estates- we will be lobbying for increased help for all campuses through buses, and better bike lanes
- I met with the travel focus group- I fed back student request for more bike storage, and the university are on the same page, and are undertaking a big appraisal of central and Kings, to best build bike storage students want

Vice President Activities & Services: Kai O'Doherty

For meeting of 15/02/2018

Summary

With only two weeks between Council and writing this report, there's not too much new to add – but you can find a few key points below! I largely want to highlight one success and one...less-than-success, regarding gender-neutral toilets and access to University rooms for societies, respectively. Work on encouraging reusable cup use is also going well!

Improving our Commercial Services

Summary	With a new Commercial Director having started, I'm working to incorporate student feedback in the strategic direction of our services.
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Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste: we've officially hired an intern to investigate causes and solutions to food waste in our commercial outlets, to investigate potentials for reduction and redistribution. • Reducing use of disposable coffee cups: Ollie (VPC) and I presented a paper to the University's Social Responsibility & Sustainability Committee, proposing a 'latte levy', which has been shown to increase use of reusable cups. This was met with positive response, and we'll be working to implement this at our outlets and the University's. • I had a stall at JCMB at King's Building for an afternoon to gain student feedback on the Students' Association, a lot of which revolved around our services. This will all be fed in to the strategic plan of services, or quick changes made where possible. • Esther (VPW) and I met with the Parents' Rep to explore potential space in Students' Association venues to be child-friendly for student parents. We'll be investigating this further. • The new Trustee Board sub-committee I chair, Strategic Development, will include student-led 'insight groups' as part of its feedback structure. At the final Trading Committee meeting, we discussed potential insight groups, including King's Buildings, catering, sustainability, and more. Stay tuned for what these groups will look like, and how to get involved in shaping your services!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Food Waste Intern in their research. • Meet with relevant stakeholders regarding the reusable cup proposal, and seek funding for this. • Secure Teviot space for student-parents.

Gender-Neutral Toilets

Summary	<p>A frequent element of my updates, a big milestone has been reached in the campaign to increase the provision of gender-neutral toilets across campus has been reached – so let's celebrate!</p>
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Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've presented a full report to the Head of Estates at the University, who has assigned a project manager to officially review existing buildings to implement gender-neutral toilet options, including those identified in the student-led audit! • Having a University agree to implement gender-neutral loos in existing and future builds is a great success, unparalleled with anywhere else! Yay!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up with Estates on the progress of gender-neutral toilet signage and provision. • Continue to encourage students to audit/report potential convertible toilets across campus.

Activities-related Projects

Summary	<p>My main Activities-related campaigns have related to broadening access to activities, and encouraging inter-society collaboration.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As announced at last Student Council, but not part of the report due to timings, the Activities & Sports Participation Grant has been successfully increased from £10,000 to £25,000 per year for at least three years! Ways to monitor and evaluate success in order to maintain this funding have been planned, and will be implemented before the end of the semester. • Applications for the Activities & Sports Participation Grant for Semester 2 have been reviewed, and funds will be shortly disseminated. • Access to University Rooms for Societies: following months of compiling research and paper proposals for University Estates to argue the worth of societies and their need for more bookable spaces, I met with the Head of Estates to plead our case. However, as happens sometimes in this job, I was unsuccessful – largely due to the University's current project to reduce the number of University rooms open after 5pm, diametrically opposing my goal. I'm sorry, folks!

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lot of time this month is being spent reviewing the almost 900 nominations we've received for the Activities Awards! This has almost doubled nomination numbers from previous years, which is great!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct evaluation interviews on the Participation Grant to elicit feedback on its impact, to continue to secure this funding for years to come.• Plans to conduct research with societies on widening participation, with a view to a policy/systemic change to seed more inclusive practices in societies.