



President: Eleri Connick

For meeting of 27/09/18

WE ARE EDINBURGH

<p>Summary</p>	<p>As I said during the election period and throughout my manifesto, we need a students' association for all students across all campuses and the We Are Edinburgh activity is designed to include as many students as possible to celebrate Edinburgh. With a high number of international students I think it's really important to challenge the beginnings of the 'hostile environment' and to demonstrate that we are all united in making Edinburgh a great place to live and to study.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Celebrating Students:</u> Edinburgh students are amazing and so busy doing so many incredible things for our University, our community and our world. Every Thursday across all of our social media channels, students' stories will be shared as part of the #WeAreEdinburgh campaign. Students can also nominate their friends – if they deserve some light shone on them for their work! • <u>International Student Participation Grant:</u> Working with Vice Principal International to launch an International Student's Participation Grant for International students on scholarships to apply for £100 towards extra-curricular activities. Deadline for Semester One applications are October 5th, there will be more funding rounds in Semester Two. • <u>Postcards:</u> Working with VP Community to produce postcards for returning students to send to their neighbours to introduce themselves. This is part of a larger plan to show the local community the benefits students bring to Edinburgh – more information on this coming soon. • <u>Varsity Buses:</u> 7 buses put on for travel to and from the Scottish Varsity match (Sept 22nd) at BT Murrayfield. Spaces were available for first year UG and PG students who have just arrived



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	<p>in Edinburgh. This will form part of a wider project on what the Students' Association and University to welcome new students into the Edinburgh student community.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be continuing to run events for people to get involved with; tell students what we are doing but to also open up communication lines to hear how we can be doing better. • Social media channels will see more content added which will hope to reach more students to tell them they are part of our community. • Work with students and elected reps to learn first-hand how the Students' Association can better represent student voice on campus and to learn more about what we should be doing.

MEMBERS

<p>Summary</p>	<p>The Students' Association exists for our members and in my time at Edinburgh University I've met so many people that are proud of studying here but it can sometimes be disjointed or difficult to engage or have the experience that everyone deserves. I am aiming to push for greater participation across our activity and to make those occasions open to everyone not just the few dependent on your budget or where you study.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Yoga: Have been working with the Sports Union, Yoga Soc and Tribe Yoga to start rolling out the campaign pledge of 'free yoga on all campuses'. Yoga has begun in the Main Library Monday's 1-2pm and begins at ECA on October 11th. • Big Cheese Pre-sale: All pre-sale big cheese tickets will now be £4 instead of £5 for UoE students. • KB Fair: Worked to put on the first Activities Fair at King's Buildings on Tuesday 25th September in KB House. Ensuring



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	<p>that KB students have the opportunity to meet societies and intramural teams based on their campus. Look forward to future events at KB.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be working over the next months to ensure the roll out of Free Yoga to King's Buildings, Little France and Easterbush. • The big focus will be away from central campus and to continue working to provide students with opportunities to get involved and not to feel like poor relations. This will also be extended to learning about how we can have a more meaningful presence at other campuses

INNOVATION

<p>Summary</p>	<p>It seems incredible that for 2018 some aspects of studying in Edinburgh can feel really dated - I am committed to making sure that we can make changes to everyone's experience here to make it fit for the digital age and provide students with a modern experience.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Cards on Phone: Funding won for the University's Information Services Group to begin work on looking into the feasibility of student cards on phone. Council will be kept updated on the progress of this. • Year Abroad Links: Work has begun to look into a soft launch to allow students on their year abroad to be linked up with alumni networks in the area. Beginning to look into which cities could work for the soft launch. • Transport: Recognising that this is an ongoing challenge for members I have been meeting with various students to develop an understanding of what transport solution is needed to ensure that students can get to their placements, campuses and extra-curricular activities across the city. This



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	<p>will be a big focus of the year and look forward to more consultation with students, the University and external bodies.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the university to explore feasibility studies for analysis and discussing the modernisation strategy. • Researching the transport needs of students so that we can create a comprehensive campaign to lobby for the changes that we know we need to see. I will take student views to help shape arguments for current and future students.

Other

- Widening opportunities in University for WP students. Beginning to investigate what should be in place to ensure that students can 'get in, get on, and get out' – taking a holistic approach to what students need throughout their entire time at University.
- Suicide Awareness. Working with VP Welfare on a Suicide Awareness Campaign.
- I had a fantastic opportunity to visit the Euan MacDonald Centre for MND Research and the Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic at Little France. It is truly fantastic that a motion to Student Council last year has meant that George Square Lecture Theatre has now been renamed to the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre – in memory of Gordon Aikman a former Students' Association sabbatical who, before sadly passing away last year, raised over £500,000 for research into motor neurone disease research as well as achieving government policy changes to support those with MND and their families.
- Finally, amazing to meet students who went on the Global Insights and Local Insights programmes during the summer of 2018.

VP Activities & Services: Shenan Davis-Williams

For meeting of 27/09/2018



Summary

It is an exciting time as this is our first Student Council report of the year! It has been an extremely busy summer of learning about our new roles, training, meeting and getting to know everyone, and then the Fringe Festival followed by Welcome Week. I am so excited to finally have the students back! I have dedicated a lot of time over summer towards planning our new Sports v Socs club night so that this could launch in first semester. I have also had various meetings towards getting some of my objectives on the go. We have each attended many conferences specific to our roles and these have allowed us to engage with Sabbatical Officers from other universities and to share ideas.

Personal Development and Network Building

<p>Summary</p>	<p>Summer was full of various conferences and meetings that filled up a lot of our time. Engaging with other Sabbaticals allowed us to expand our ideas and work with other universities on particular projects. The National Union of Students (NUS) held many conferences that provided a lot of useful information, especially as I am new to the role.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential: We went away as a team at the beginning of our term to learn about each other, this role, and to focus on our objectives. It was a great way to get to know the team! • Lead and Change: Georgie (VPC) and I attended NUS Lead and Change conference in Birmingham where I got to spend a lot of time working and discussing objectives with other Activities Officers. • RAG Conference: Part of my manifesto was to work closely with our smaller societies and societies that do a lot of volunteer and charity work and so I attended the RAG conference with two of our RAG committee members. It was a great insight to all of the hard work they do and gave a lot of good ideas on things we can do this year and ways that I can help.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NUS Gathering: Diva (VPE) and I went to the NUS Gathering in Glasgow and it was a great chance to see what other Scottish University Associations and Unions were up to. There was a lot of discussion on issues that were affecting specific liberation groups. Diva gave some incredible workshops as well and I felt very proud to have her in the Sabbatical team this year. • Think Positive Launch Event: The Vice President of the Sports Union and myself attended the Think Positive Launch event this month. There was a lot of information on mental health and linking it with sports, which is something that both the Sports Union and I will be working on together this year. There was also a lot of information on campaign running and the impact that smoking can have on mental health.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to stay in touch with other university Sabbatical Officers and find out about their progress. • Continue to work with other Students' Associations and Unions to share best practice and expand projects • Use the information learnt from the conferences to produce effective and strong campaigns and change this year.

Student Engagement

Summary	<p>A big part of my manifesto was to encourage student engagement within our societies but also with all of the events and activities that we constantly have on within the university. I also aim to focus a lot on getting our societies to work together more and to form a strong bond with the Sports Union.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports v Socs: I'm excited to be launching a mid-week night happening monthly for all students, whether or not they are a



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member of a club or society. It is a great way to encourage clubs and societies to socialize more and it offers £1 towards your club or society for every member attending, which will help towards club/society funding. This was organized through working closely with the Ents and Events Team and Marketing to insure that the night is accessible and appealing to all students. The first one is set to launch on 3rd of October. Each event will have running competitions for societies and clubs.

- CRUSH: We have rebranded our LGBTQ+ night; CRUSH. I have been working closely with marketing and we now have a student-staff member who focusses solely on CRUSH. We have been working closely to insure that the night is approachable and eye-catching and have been discussing various ways to improve and promote it. We want this night to be accessible and welcoming for all students within the LGBTQ+ community, and particularly to new students, and so we have been focusing on various ways to do this.
- Welcome Week: Welcome week was full of over 400+ events, and every day we had events on that catered to a variety of students. From the Mature Cheese, to coffee crawls, to UV paint parties, we insured that there was a variety of events for all.
- Student Skill-Swap Platform: I have attended various meetings about different platforms we can use to encourage societies to work together more and share skills, advice and events with each other.

Next Steps

- Continue to evaluate Sports v Socs night – seeking feedback from students - and work on anything that can be improved.
- Follow up on competitions and create future competitions to encourage combining our societies and sports clubs to help towards creating the community feel.
- Continue to promote all student nights.
- Work on spreading the word of CRUSH and assessing the turnout. Looking at future themes and working with the



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LGBTQ+ community to insure the night is meeting the expectations of our students.

- Make a decision on the best platform for skill-swap and look into test running it.
- Continue to plan events that cater to the needs of different student groups, for example postgraduate events.

Improving Services

Summary	Looking at various ways to improve the sustainability in our cafes and bars. I have also been looking at the various food options and pricing, however there is a lot more that I will be doing on this.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Cups: Georgie (VPC) and myself continued the work from last year's Sabbs and secured 3800 Keep Cups that will be available for students, free of charge! • Food: We now have a brunch deal in Teviot which includes brunch, from a new menu, and a drink for only £6. • Drinks: Iced coffee is now available in our cafes! Woohoo! • Baristo: We had a refurbishment of Baristo, which has made the place a lot more appealing and provided a spacious and modern hub for students. The food available has been upgraded to healthier and more varied options.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the menus across all of our cafes and bars and insuring we have more options that cater to all dietary requirements. • Looking at current meal deals available in our shops and finding out how we can improve these options. • Looking into increasing our sustainability within the cafes and bars.



Other

Anti-cyberbullying Campaign: Although not originally on my manifesto, I have decided to work on launching an anti-cyberbullying campaign this year. With new students now being Generation Z, more and more is happening digitally, and sadly, this includes abuse. It is an issue that is hard to find support and advice on, and is a lot more common than people think. Through this campaign, I hope to not only promote services that provide support and help, but to also make people aware of unacceptable behavior. I am looking for anyone who is interested in being a part of this campaign, or anyone who is happy to speak up about any personal experience they may have had with cyberbullying.

VP Welfare: Kai O'Doherty

For meeting of 27/09/2018

Summary

This report covers the over three months of my term in office, so apologies for the length! The summer was spent in various trainings, distilling my key objectives/plans for the year, and putting in the groundwork for the year's campaigns. My three key objectives this year are around mental health support, combatting sexual violence, and centering liberation work – although I work on many other projects as well! Get in touch to collaborate or input into anything below.

Improving Mental Health Support

Summary	<p>A key priority for this year is improving support for students with mental ill health & enhancing wellbeing initiatives in the University. This includes work around: counselling services, the University's Mental Health Strategy, Mental Health & Wellbeing Week, year abroad support, special circumstances and mental health peer support.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Peer Support: a pilot scheme is launching through our Peer Support and PALS schemes, where a Wellbeing Officer will be appointed and trained in mental



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health support. This means schools will have upskilled schemes to provide peer support, helped by Counselling Services.

- I attended a Mental Health First Aid Training with Sabbatical Officers across Edinburgh.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Week** (MWHB Week): planned for Nov 12-16th, plans are underway, with students and staff able to pitch event ideas for funding now. Our key focus areas are: campuses beyond George Square, men's mental health, liberation, and change-making campaigns.
- **Year Abroad support**: have had meetings with key University staff on existing provisions, and plans for improvement.
- **Special Circumstances**: as the student representative on the Student Administration & Support University review, we're focusing on Special Circs right now. Plans to centralize and standardize the process, and improve the communications & experience of students, are underway pending School approval.
- **Interruption of Studies**: meeting with Gavin Douglas (Assistant Secretary for Student Experience) on support for those on interruption and when returning to studies. Opposing proposals to make mandatory interruptions of study possible.

Next Steps

- MHWB Week: planning for this will be a key focus this semester, pending staff/student initiative submissions and broader awareness-raising plans.
- Year Abroad support: meeting with Edinburgh Global key contacts and Andy Shanks (Director of Wellbeing Services) to push for more comprehensive support.
- **The University's Mental Health Strategy**: continuing to input on the review of this Strategy, along with Eileen (Disabled Students' Officer).
- **Men's Mental Health & Suicide**: Eleri (President) and I are planning campaigns around awareness raising on this with the University.



- Special Circumstances: attending key meetings and workshops to push for the reform of this process.

Combatting Sexual Violence

<p>Summary</p>	<p>Addressing sexual violence and harassment is a second key aim. This includes: growing the awareness raising campaign #NoExcuse, training for staff and students, and addressing the policy and procedures survivors/victims access.</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #NoExcuse – in Welcome Week we launched a new anti-sexual harassment campaign made by and for students, in collaboration with the University, Sports Union & societies. This includes posters, videos, student group sign-ups, event support & more. Go to eusa.ed.ac.uk/noexcuse to find many ways to engage! • Bystander Training: almost 300 student leaders have signed up for bystander intervention training with an external trainer, helping better equip societies with the skills to intervene. • The Consent Collective events: Oct 1 – 5th will see a group of performers, activists and experts run various interactive events on sex, consent and relationships. I've worked with them to shape the events/participants and promote the activities. Come along! • Staff-Student Relationship Policy: worked with the University to create and pass this policy, which strongly discourages relationships between University staff and students, and mandates disclosure. This could go a long way in supporting students, especially postgraduates, for whom this can often be a big issue. • Sexual Violence Policy & Procedures: have collated a report to lobby the University for better processes in supporting disclosures and investigations of sexual violence by students.



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	<p>This paper is based on research on other Universities' policies, best practice/guidance in the sector, and years of Advice Place experience of how the current process fails many students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University's Taskforce on Sexual Violence: the first meeting of the Taskforce was in August, and I will continue to advocate for students' needs in this committee.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #NoExcuse: expand student and staff engagement with the campaign, and encourage more events like The Consent Collective to engage different groups of students. • Policy & Procedures: this will be the heftiest piece of work, advocating for the University to hire Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) to support students through the process, to professionalize & train complaints investigators, and to invest in robust data & case study management systems. This might sound dry, but is critical to improving the experience of students going through the process. • Rez Life: working to improve the training of RAs on issues of sexual harassment & violence.

Centering Anti-Oppression

Summary	<p>Liberation is at the core of what the Students' Association does, and another key objective this year is to support the Liberation Officers' work, improve support for trans students, and enhance support for international students, parents, carers and mature students.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Review of Parents, Carers & Mature Students: the University gathered recommendations from parents, carers & mature students on how to improve their experience. To be published soon, key recommendations include: childcare/crèche provision, academic flexibility, data



Representation & Democracy

collection, open library access with children, and better disclosure mechanisms.

- **Free Sanitary Products:** the Scottish Government has funded free sanitary products to Higher & Further Education institutions. I've worked with the University ensuring access across campuses, and to push for more sustainable options in the medium-term.
- **Pronoun badges:** designed and purchases *optional* pronoun pins, available from Welcome Week. Despite mounting transphobic media coverage from outwith the student population, many students have expressed how positive this initiative has been – and we ran out within days! (More to come).
- **CRUSH – Teviot's LGBT+ club night:** we've hired a coordinator to organize and run this performance and club night, and it was a key event in Welcome Week.
- **Liberation Officers:** have met with our four Liberation Officers (Esme, Women's Officer; Natasha, LGBT+ Officer; Eileen, Disabled Students' Officer; Isabella, BME Officer) to plan support for their campaigns.
- **International students:** recent changes in the University's Global department have left international students with even less welfare support than before, which is why we opposed the change. Meeting with relevant staff to understand the new plans, and fight for more welfare support.
- **Parents' Space:** a space for parents and their children has been made in the Teviot Study Room, including facilities and toys to make our Student Union building child-friendly.
- **Trans students:** I've been meeting with Student Records and Card Services to improve the system by which trans/non-binary students might change their name and/or gender.
- **Changing Places:** as discussed in today's motion, there are no Changing Places for those who have additional needs than provided by accessible toilets. I've worked with Oona to explore where we could push the University to have some.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teviot Redevelopment/Student Centre: feeding into the late-stage plans for the Student Centre, especially around physical accessibility, given this is a core reason that the redevelopment is taking place. • Edinburgh Scholarship: amendments made to the criteria such that it no longer excludes students with disabilities who cannot study full time.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Review on BME students: the new review will be looking at the experience of BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) students, and recommendations to address issues. This will take place over the next year, as supported by VP Education and myself. • Liberation Officers: continue to work with the officers on their distinct projects, and those which overlap with mine (e.g. #NoExcuse with Esme, mental health & accessibility work with Eileen) • Trans students: work towards creating a Trans Liberation Officer position, as is now best practice across the UK, especially given the recent rise in transphobia in the country and on campus. • Gender Recognition Act UK Consultation: encourage students to feed into the consultation, which affects the processes by which people legally change their name and gender. • Gender-neutral toilets: a map has been made of locations of gender-neutral toilets created through last year's campaign. I will make this accessible to students, and continue to push for more gender-neutral toilets.

Other

- Met with the Joint Union Liaison Committee, made up of Labour unions on campus, to discuss points of collaboration and difference.



- NUS Scotland: as their LGBT+ Officer for the year, I am working with other Students' Associations and colleagues on priority campaigns this year.
- Vet School: as the non-George Square campus I will be collaborating most with this year, I will be working with their Student Council and School Reps to see where we can support each other.
- Harm Reduction regarding drugs and alcohol: discussions on how to reduce harm for students using drugs and alcohol in our venues.

Vice President Education: Diva Mukherji

For meeting of 27/09/2018

Summary

So the past few months have been quite interesting! It's been a really useful to time to figure out (or attempt to) how the University works; this is a particularly interesting challenge at a university this big, because every school has adapted a policy to make it work for them. This is really great in a lot of ways, because schools need to have that autonomy, but also poses some complex issues. I've been working on highlighting my three main agenda points and understanding how they can be implemented across different schools and departments, and it's been really exciting hearing how well-received so much of it has been! But my main plan for this year is focusing on exactly what students want, and seeing how I can use my role to facilitate productive conversation between students and staff. So please! Talk to me!

Diversifying the Curriculum

Summary	A big focus this year is on moving our curriculum towards one which is representative of people from marginalized backgrounds. What we're emphasizing is the positive effects a diverse curriculum can have for the student body, and how important it is that we understand the importance of a representative curriculum and overall academic experience.
Actions/ Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented about LiberatEd at the University's first Learning and Teaching Conference in June 2018. • Attended the first meeting of the Learning and Teaching Task Group entitled Promoting a Diverse Curriculum; this has entailed drafting a list



	<p>of principles which the University would adhere to, and details what a diverse curriculum would entail, and how that would be created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to and endorsing (now successful) project bids through the Library which relate to representation in academia. • Working with the Resource Lists and Open Education Resources team to consider ideas of collaboration with students over the upcoming year.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing workshops with students in various schools (focusing on schools within the College of Science and Engineering and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine) to discuss what students understand as a diverse and representative curriculum (if this is you – please get in touch!) • Working to create guideline policies which emphasize that a diverse curriculum should be an institutional significant policy.

Creating inclusive teaching environments

<p>Summary</p>	<p>This agenda point really highlights the support students are receiving throughout their university experience, specifically in terms of academic and pastoral support. A large portion of this is dedicated to understanding and revising the Personal Tutor system. As indicated by recent NSS and PTES scores, and years of anecdotal/feedback from students, the PT system is one which is inconsistent across 22 schools, with some working fantastically, and some not so well. Along with the undergraduate PT system, this work has also been highlighting the issues with the postgraduate PT system.</p> <p>This also includes the development of microaggression workshops. Microaggressions are those comments which may be said in an off-hand way, or without any malicious intent, by someone from a socially dominant group, which has the potential to negatively impact someone from a socially marginalized group. This can often lead to feelings of alienation or exclusion for those in the latter group, which is why it's so important we try and minimize them occurring in learning spaces!</p>
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I'm also continuing work on examining the Special Circumstances procedure and working to move it to a more consistent and efficient system. This has involved workshops with Professional Services, academics and the Advice Place, to understand the main issues the system currently has, and how to alleviate those.

Finally, I'm reviewing the data on the BME attainment gap, to understand how the educational attainment journey for BME students during their time here. This year, the University's Thematic Review will be looking at Support for BME Students, so it's essential we understand the holistic experience BME students have, to create significant change.

Actions/
Updates

- Reviewing how the system is operating in each school, understanding how the system has been adapted to fit each school.
- Benchmarking what comparable systems other institutions have in place
- Creating a framework for what the PT system could be updated to look like, highlighting and platforming the role of additional pastoral support and assistance for more procedural actions (such as the Student Support Offices and Teaching Office's)
- Planning online forms of support which can be University-wide, but school-specific (in addition to other support mechanisms).
- Platforming the concept of microaggressions at most meetings that I've attended, growing visibility of them as a concept. This has led to several schools specifically asking for input into their forms of tutor or supervisor training.
- Working on developing a workshop with the Institute for Academic Development aimed at equipping staff with the tools necessary to identify a microaggression when it occurs, and how to minimize its impact.
- Reviewing the BME attainment gap data and benchmarking how it compares to other institutions.



Next Steps

- Continuing to research possible ways of developing the PT system (all thoughts are appreciated) and ensuring that a model which includes both academic and pastoral support is in place.
- Clarifying to students and staff what the PT relationship entails – instead of your PT only enrolling you into courses, having your PT be someone who is key in your academic development.
- Benchmarking initiatives that have been taken to reduce the attainment gap at other institutions, and consider what can be used here.

Developing alternative approaches to learning

Summary

As students, it's essential that we are centered in our learning objectives, course creation and evaluation. As we've seen, so many students are eager to get involved in opportunities that create pedagogical changes, and we need to support and create as many of those initiatives that we can. A core method of this is by enhancing staff-student collaboration; this is essential in creating an academic environment which promotes...

Actions

- We've been sharing the models of co-curricula we're aware of across different schools and have been helping schools adapt it to their specific subject area.
- Working with the SLICCs team, to understand how extracurricular activity can count towards academic credit more significantly.
- Revising and updating the Student Partnership Agreement! This is its second year, and while the themes are the same, we're really keen on getting applications that pertain to a certain few areas. (I'll be sharing links and more information about that soon, so please if you're interested let me know!)
- Developing ideas for how feedback can be enhanced, and assessment rubrics made clearer to students, through methods of co-curricula



Next Steps

- Discussing with School Reps and other students to understand what the most effective forms of feedback they've found, and feeding that back.
- Spreading the Student Partnership Agreement! Do it! It'll be super fun! Share your wildest ideas!
- Spreading forms of best practice relating to co-curricula across different schools

Other:

- So many fun conferences!! So far, I've been to NUS Student Unions, Lead and Change, NUS Scotland's The Gathering (I've collected a lot of lanyards)! They've been such great spaces to learn about what other sabbatical officers are doing across the UK, and get some inspiration! It's been super cool, but also great to conclusively say that University of Edinburgh students are the best (don't tell them that).
- This is more of a sabb-centric one, but we did it! We made it through the first few months! Having never done a full-time job before, it took a while to get used to not being able to nap during the afternoon (because apparently "" meetings"" are more important), but am very happy to say I'm only mildly annoyed by that fact every afternoon when I remember.

Vice President Community: Georgie Harris

For meeting of 27/09/18

Summary

It has been a super busy few months first getting used to my new role, then getting to grips with it, and finally getting to enjoy a hectic Welcome Week as all the students came back! This report is summing up my main areas of focus in terms of what I've been working on over summer, and will continue to push over the upcoming year.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Summary

I've been trying to push the issue of automatic voter registration, which is something I'm really passionate about – I love democracy! That's an ongoing process, as is trying to promote the positive contributions students make in the wider Edinburgh community.

Actions

Automatic voter registration:

- Researching how automatic voter registration has been implemented in other universities; liaising with sabbatical officers and appropriate members of staff from Sheffield and Leeds about their experiences and collating data about the success of this policy at their universities
- Making pals with the Engagement Manager at Lothian Valuation Joint Board (the electoral registration office in Edinburgh)
- Secured them a stall at the Freshers' Expo where they registered at least 80 students to vote and had loads of positive conversations – raising awareness that students can register to vote at home and at their uni address
- Set up a meeting with us and the head of Residence Life at Pollock Halls to chat about how to get 1st years registered to vote
- Got a commitment for his office providing support if the uni agreed to implement automatic voter registration
- Discussing with relevant university staff about the logistics of implementing automatic voter registration at Edinburgh – making my case why it's important and providing them with my research

Local community:

- Attending the monthly Community Engagement Programme Board
- Attending the Uni Community Grants Panel which awards funds to several local community groups or projects – each panel member has their say on how to allocate funding
- Pushing the “community engagement” agenda on the university – encouraging the need for a solid community engagement strategy in terms of how the university deals with the local community
- Creating neighbour postcards for returning students to give out to neighbours if they want, as part of a wider objective for students to

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	<p>be more a part of the wider Edinburgh community and to dispel this myth of students as being just nuisances to local residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending community council meetings • Meeting with councillors and members of the local police department to discuss student safety in the Meadows
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing a stall by the JMCC in Pollock Halls hopefully next month with the Engagement Manager from LVJB about student voter registration • Following up on automatic voter registration with the staff I've been in conversation with • Distributing neighbour postcards

HOUSING

Summary	<p>Housing is one of the key issues facing Edinburgh students and it's been something I've been keen to reinforce to the university – it's getting more expensive each year, and the quality isn't getting any better.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching various housing acts both UK wide and Scotland specific – in particular the London Plan (the NUS lobbied for purpose-built student accommodation to be included in local authorities building targets, qualified what counts as affordable accommodation, and called for 35% of all new PBSA rooms to be affordable) that is being adopted by the Mayor of London, and legislation around rent pressure zones • Meeting with various local MPs, MSPs and councillors to discuss student housing and the issues facing students • Organising a “housing surgery” event to be held in November where people will be able to meet their local reps (MPs, MSPs, councillors) to ask questions or lodge complaints about their housing situations,



Representation & Democracy

	<p>and also find out more about their rights as tenants in terms of dodgy landlords and letting agents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with reps from the Living Rent campaign to find out about services they can offer students and to discuss rent pressure zones • Researching options for a “rate your landlord” type website • Attending uni Estates Committee and overseeing the approval of the residential accommodation strategy, ensuring firm commitment to the aim of 20% band 1 beds in all uni student accommodation • Researching issues around short-term letting in Edinburgh (rise in AirBnB putting prices up) – supporting the cross-party campaign for the Scottish Government to give more powers to local councils to ensure they can regulate the number of short-term lets • Attending meetings about the potential new housing co-op • Pushing for better options for cheaper rooms in uni student accommodation, particularly for WP students – those in cheapest rooms shouldn’t have worse quality living situations
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Tommy Sheppard (MP for Edinburgh East aka the area Bristo Square / George Square / the Royal Mile is in) next month – feel free to let me know if anyone has anything they want me to bring up! • Planning the housing surgery event • Setting up meeting with the head of the City of Edinburgh Council • Creating an easy explanation of the implications of the new housing legislation for students – emphasising knowing your rights and who to go to for advice

SUSTAINABILITY

<p>Summary</p>	<p>I’ve been continuing work passed onto me from previous sabbatical officers in terms of sustainability schemes, while trying to explore what more to be done to promote sustainability on our campuses!</p>
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Actions

- KeepCups! Kai (in their role as VPAS last year) and Ollie (my predecessor as VP Community) had lobbied the university for funding for a load of KeepCups to be given away, and I came into the role during the organisational stage of the scheme, so was discussing logistics, ordering 1000s of KeepCups, liaising with the university catering department in terms of delivery and storage of the KeepCups, and promoting the giveaway campaign
- This is part of the wider “We ♥ Reuse” campaign to promote the use of reusable materials, instead of disposable cups or non-recyclable packaging
- Promoting the “latte levy” in our cafes – an additional charge for disposable cups as opposed to a discount for reusable cups when students buy hot drinks
- Organising this year’s Sustain.Ed event to be held in November, themed around reuse & recycling
- This is an annual event based around sustainability – this academic year there will be one in Semester 1 and another in Semester 2
- Exploring sustainability practices (or lack thereof) used during the Fringe Festival
- Investigating how to promote the newly installed water points around the university, as well as considering how to distribute and promote the use of reusable water bottles
- There’s a new partnership with Doppet water bottles, which are on sale in uni outlets for £8 in various nice pastel colours
- Learning more about the new city-wide cycle hire scheme and how to promote this to students

Next Steps

- Meeting with the general manager of the cycle hire scheme next week to discuss student benefits
- Creating a fun video about the We ♥ Reuse campaign and continuing this throughout the year



- Planning events and panels for Sustain.Ed – if anyone wants to contribute, please let me know!

Other

- Securing firm commitment that the KB shuttle bus will be staying for the next academic year
- The £1 bus fare after 6.30pm on the 41 from KB will also be staying for the next academic year
- Pushing for a transport strategy in terms of future student accommodation development – if students are having to live further out, transport links must be considered and accounted for in the price of the accommodation
- The sabbatical officers have been working on not being so George Square-centric, so have each assigned ourselves a campus – I've been getting to know King's Buildings better (from humanities student to the sciences!)
- Helping to organise an event on 10th October with the university to officially commemorate the name change of the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre, celebrating the life of former Edinburgh student and sabbatical officer Gordon Aikman, who passed away in 2017 after being diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. He raised over half a million pounds in fundraising for research into MND treatment and I'm so excited that we're recognising his life and achievements in this way (thanks to students in 2016 who got this name change passed as a Student Council motion)