

Accountability

Report from Jess Husbands, Vice President (Societies & Activities)

Disability Review

Summary	<p>In April students called for the University to conduct a review into the support for disabled students on campus. This review has now concluded the interview-style sessions with a range of university students and staff, and the findings and recommendations were presented at University Senate on Weds 1st Feb. Will be presented to Principal mid-April.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Key points:○ Learning adjustments from the SDS will have 'mandatory' status, not 'recommended'.○ Relaunch of Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (AILP)○ IT work already underway to improve the capabilities of IT system – essentially so it won't all be done via email, and more complex things re data.○ Disabled GO, the leaders in this sector, have been commissioned to survey the estate re accessibility, and will create an app which will be ready by Welcome Week. Will be able to tell the user e.g. the location of the nearest accessible toilet. This survey work will also help the University to plan accessibility redevelopments in a more strategic manner.○ An annual audit will take place in schools to assess what proportion of adjustments are being implemented.● Final draft of the report is being written. Will be finished and presented to the Principal mid-April.● The review team is holding meetings in each college to present findings to staff there and give staff the opportunity to ask any questions. We've held the first one at little France, which was broadly positive and constructive.
Next steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Meetings with other heads of Colleges to discuss the report and get input.● My work here is pretty much done, and I'm vastly proud of the review and what it will achieve. The next VPW will have a big role in implementation of the recommendations, and before I leave I'd like to get a clearer idea of what the implementation plan is.

Mental Health

Summary	<p>A growing % of students are experiencing mental ill health. This is putting severe strain on the University Counselling Services, which is acting in a capacity it was never intended for as a result of the increased incidence and NHS cuts. Trying to look at preventative as well as reactive measures.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Am working with students who got involved in MHWBW to hold an event around eating disorder support, to see if it is feasible and there's sufficient

	<p>interest to warrant an eating disorders support group. This could be a trial for other mental health related support groups. Such initiatives probably wouldn't start until next semester, but we're looking to put on the eating disorders pilot event in the next couple weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am also looking at figures and feedback from Mental Health Week to look at how the Students' Association should take a lead on mental health issues in the future.
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next VPW will have a huge role to play in implementation of student mental health strategy. I'm prepping a great handover to ensure they're as briefed as possible on this.

Sexual Health etc.

Summary	Sexcetera is this week!
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexcetera is this week! Come to some events! Wahoo!
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse whether the week was well received, whether it should be put on in future, etc, etc. (sexetc!)

Sexual Harassment!

Summary	Sexual harassment sucks, obviously.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am liaising with Leeds and Sussex SUs who've been successful in encouraging local bars and clubs to give their staff sexual harassment training, as I'd like to see if this is something we could mimic here. I started this way back in October and contacted various organizations with no success, but I'm back to the drawing board and undeterred. • Relaunch of the No One Asks for It campaign. We're holding more active bystander training sessions (if you're interested please get in touch). The university have released a Webinar for staff on sexual harassment. • I'm encouraging the uni to publish figures around the number of cases they've had in the past year. Hopefully this will give a level of accountability.

Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with all the above!
--------------	--

Society Support

Summary	I'm VPSA, I love societies, I wanna support societies be great.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Reps have been elected. We're working on developing training for them. • Activities Awards! Huge success, congrats to everyone who was nominated for or won an award, and I hope everyone had a good night. • Linking up with ISC following last council's motion to find them a suitable alternative space. • Lobbying the uni for increased funding for the next round of the Widening Participation Fund. • Assessing how the future of the WP fund should be allocated: should we split it up into sports and societies? Is there a way the societies portion could be better managed to have more of an impact? • Am looking at barriers to PG involvement in societies by analyzing results from our annual survey.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act on PG barriers to involvement. • Continue to liaise with commercial on society involvement in our commercial outlets and events, e.g. like VegSoc involvement in meat free Mondays.

Other:

- Microwaves and Kettles:
 - Working on survey work I did earlier on in the year to do a GAP analysis of which study spaces have kitchen facilities and which don't. Will then either act on getting kitchen facilities, or pass this onto the next VP Welfare, depending on time constraints.
- Handover
 - Write some absolutely amazing (and inevitably really long sorry) handover documents for the next VPW and VPAS.
 - Prep training for them to ensure that they'll be a kick ass team.

You can always contact me with any queries on eusavpsa@ed.ac.uk or via facebook, where my name is Jess Husband Vpsa.

Report from Patrick Garratt, Vice President (Academic Affairs)

LiberatEd

Summary	Supporting students who are leading the LiberatEd campaign; hosting departmental meetings and ensuring that infrastructure and training is prepared for next academics year.
Current stages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have run departmental meetings for the Schools of SPS and HCA, meeting over 100 course organisers about both course content and delivery.• Hosted open meeting with staff about sharing best practice from individual course organisers, and discussing next steps.• New Learning and Teaching Strategy has now been officially launched. The Students' Association lobbied for the line: 'Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity.' There are internal drivers within the University which staff can be directed to as a means for supporting LiberatEd.• School of HCA now looking at revising documentation for course approval process, so that course organisers must explain how they will be attempting to embed inclusion, equality and diversity in the curriculum.• School of SPS now forming a specific 'SPS in Practice' course which will provide students with the opportunity to collaborate with staff by analysing the reading lists and course content of core, pre-Honours courses in SPS. This should serve as an example of best practice across CAHSS.• LiberatEd now has buy-in from staff at University level and amongst individual course organisers, and this will ultimately help those students in each School who will carry on pushing for curricula reform and changes made to teaching practice over the next few years. There are two general pathways within LiberatEd, one being policies and institutional procedures, and the other being constructive staff-student collaboration and co-curriculum. Both these strands are currently being addressed, but it will be the latter that will have the more significant effect in the long-term, where academics will start listening to their students, taking their ideas and criticisms onboard, and ultimately seeing students as partners in the pedagogical process.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Departmental meeting in LLC.• Preparing materials for next year's class rep training so that they are given support in being able to audit their curricula.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing key contact base amongst University staff and Students' Association staff, and ensuring that student reps next year are provided with clear frameworks for achieving change through LiberatEd.
--	---

Postgrad representation

Summary	Finalising new Code for Tutors and Demonstrators
Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion presented to Student Council regarding new roles passed overwhelmingly. The work that the Students' Association has done with UCUE and the University will be concluding over the next month. Although still unconfirmed, we are confident that we have won the arguments for removing the arbitrary six-hour cap that tutors & demonstrators are currently faced with. Our calls for specific postgraduate tutor mentor roles to be filled by academic staff members in each School - very similar to the model which currently operates in the School of Divinity – will hopefully be met over the next month. One of the major issues however will be the implementation of the new Code for Tutors & Demonstrators, which we will working to ensure that student reps next year will be able to monitor, and which we hope the next set of sabbatical officers will continue to support tutors & demonstrators on. Responsibility for determination of pay will lie with Schools. New tutor liaison committee now established in the School of LLC, and the first meeting will take place in late April. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will also be looking at how postgraduate representation within the Students' Association can be improved next year.

BME Attainment Gap

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the BME Liberation Group with report to highlight BME students' experience at the University of Edinburgh, particularly with regards to teaching practice and curriculum content
Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report will be finished in April, and will serve to steer discussions at University level.

Supporting year abroad students

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Big White Wall and more comprehensive education on culture shock for year abroad students
Update:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following on from last council, we are currently lobbying the University to increase the funding into Big White Wall licenses. • Successfully lobbied the University to establish group to look at how staff members are trained to advise students on culture shock once they leave to go to their host institution.

Special Circumstances

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing for greater frequency of Special Circumstances Boards within Schools.
Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Association has been highlighting the imperative for staff to consider the welfare of students when they wait to find out if their special circumstances request is approved, if they hand in a piece of coursework seven days after the initial deadline. For this reason, the University are now looking into how special circumstances requests can be conducted through electronic business, through more frequent special circs boards. • Working to clarify that for students with learning adjustments, seven days extension is provided on top of initial adjustment extension.

Discontinuation of PhD supervisions

Summary	<p>The University wants to establish a process whereby if the relationship breaks down between a PhD student and their supervisor, and is beyond the point of mediation, then a student can be 'excluded' from University. Like the approach we adopted in opposition to the Support for Study Policy, we have been contesting this approach, and will continue to do so, so that the burden of responsibility is not put upon the student for a breakdown in the supervisory relationship, and that procedures are in place to ensure that Schools exhaust all options to find alternative supervisors for students.</p>
---------	---

Student Partnership Agreement

Summary	<p>Established broad parameters for change which the Students' Association can work with the University on, but will delay releasing this SPA, so that the sabbaticals-elect can take ownership of the agreement, and adjust it to their priorities.</p>
---------	--

What else has been going on?

- Elections! The last week of elections in particular saw the sabbatical officers do a lot of outreach and candidate support.
- Attended NUS Scotland Conference.
- The policy for lecture recordings is currently being developed, and the Students' Association has important input into this process. Ideas around accessibility, supporting students for whom English is not their first language, facilitating flipped classrooms and blended learning, as well as moving away from the passivity of the banking model of education, will be arguments underpinning how the Students' Association interacts with and convinces staff about the need to support the policy on lecture recordings.
- Attended two Senate Committees, which were largely relevant in relation to PhD students, and to extension procedures for undergraduates.
- Helping form the University's new Widening Participation Strategy. I will be working with NUS Scotland on ensuring that greater weight is put on access for Scottish students through articulation.
- We will be ensuring that students vote in the Local Council elections, as well as lobbying candidates to commit to the demands voted on by Student Council in late 2016.
- Secured commitment from the University that review will place year looking at the support that student parents and carers currently receive – we are hopeful that this will achieve concrete change.
- Working with staff at Main Library to ensure space is available for students, particularly as the opening of the Lower Ground Floor has seen far more students using the library facilities.

Report from Jenna Kelly, Vice President (Services)

Summary of activities

Commercial services activity

Meat-Free Mondays with VegSoc, minimum card spend removed in Students Association outlets, return of the halloumi burger, comment cards introduced in Students Association spaces, KB deli queue reduced through additional point-of-sale provision, vegetarian meal deal for <£3, gluten-free burgers on Teviot menu, Big Cheese pre-sale ticket service, stocking Brewgooder beer on draught.

Social responsibility and sustainability activity

Funding for drinking water review project, ESSA (European Student Sustainability Auditing) project, 2 student seats on Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Options Review Group, SustainED festival 2017, observational seat on investment committee, allocation of £500 to 8 sustainable student projects and initiatives through the Sustainable Campus Fund.

Estates activity

Scottish Student Housing Summit, 80% increase in affordable housing for 17/18, final 25 placing in Santander bike hire scheme competition, 7 Bristo Square foyer renovations, consultation for KB estates projects.

Liberation activity

Women in homelessness initiative, #unapologeticallyme photography project.

Looking to the future

- Regular Farmers Market in Students Association spaces
- Social impact investment work with the university; looking at similar options for the Students Association
- Development of the university residential strategy, to look at opportunities for managing external providers, and develop a clear pricing model for rents
- Improved and expanded guarantor scheme
- City-wide, standardized solution to transport problems for ALL students (commuting and inter-site)
- A greater portfolio of local business and community partnerships to provide opportunities for students
- Sustainable food waste project, campus-wide.

If there's anything more you'd like to see in the realm of services, sustainability or estates before the end of term (29th May), please email eusavps@ed.ac.uk, Facebook message 'Jenna VPS Kelly', or pop into the Potterrow office to chat; will do my utmost to facilitate your ideas before June, or build their foundations during the handover period.

Many thanks to you all for coming along to student council this year and contributing to important decisions which will help shape students' experiences for the coming months and years. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with you all on developing and improving the Students Association, and leave you in the safe hands of Oliver Glick VP Community-elect, and Kai O'Doherty VP Activities and Services-elect to continue the great work.

[Good luck with coursework, dissertations and exams!]

Report from Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson, EUSA President

Summary

The following is a list of the 7 themes of achievements this year that need ongoing work as well as some of what I consider the most important developments in the past month. I have included a catch all for some of the other projects/focuses. Please feel free to get in touch with me if you would like to hear more developments/achievements and/or hear how the ones described here fit into the wider strategy.

Transportation

Summary	Bus 41 Subsidy and 9-Month Ridacard
---------	-------------------------------------

Achievements	This year we have successfully turned the University's attention to the problem of transportation and worked out several solutions for some of the issues. But this is just the beginning. The Uni now recognises that it needs to invest in transportation and fix many of the issues it has created.
Next steps:	The work in this area is far from over. This will be a key piece of work over the next few months and will be followed through by the VPC next year. Especially around postgrad and underprivileged student bursaries for travel in the Med and Vet School as well as shuttle buses to the Med school.

Changes to the Digital Experience

Summary	A summary of the number of different items that will be changing in the next year/years as a result of Student Association input
Achievements	<p>Timetabling on the phone is the latest of a number of upgrades in the student digital experience. Alongside online recorded lectures, the Student Association App, an upcoming revamp of MyEd and a potential Talks at Edinburgh (working on this one currently) this represents a fundamental change in the way that students will interact with the University.</p> <p>We are also working with the surveys unit and people in student systems to capture opinions about how to better design MyEd for next year. More work on this to follow in the coming months and will be passed on to the sabbatical team next year.</p> <p>A side note: Next year all new students will have a personalised email instead of an "s1234568" as their default!</p>
Next steps:	The work on the digital experience is also far from finished! The next few months and indeed the coming years will be focused on integrating all of the new services as much as possible onto as few platforms as possible in order to reduce some of the complexity and miscommunication.

Development and Alumni/Mentoring Program

Summary	Various strands of work done around increasing the engagement of students with alumni
Achievements	A plan is being designed to tap into the network of hundreds of thousands of alumni around the world. They could support students as they think about applying, as they look for and join jobs, as they transition to life after Uni in foreign cities etc.

	<p>Furthermore, a mentoring application is being designed to facilitate mentoring relationships between students and alumni during their time at Edinburgh.</p>
Next steps :	<p>Preliminary steps include linking cultural societies, the international office and the D&A department in order to begin fostering relationships. The mentoring program is holding consultations and steering group board meetings are ongoing. Launch date or timeline is still being decided.</p>

Participation Review/Grant

Summary	<p>£10,000 Participation Grant for students from lower-income backgrounds and a broader participation review</p>
Achievements	<p>In light of research that suggests that financial barriers are a significant impediment to student involvement in Sports and Societies, we have created a pilot fund for students from lower-income backgrounds to engage in sports and societies.</p> <p>We have also been looking at some of the associated issues for students in taking part in certain specific societies and how we can structure research and consultation into this.</p>
Next steps:	<p>Over the next few months and years we will try to secure repeat funding (ideally more funding) and will investigate new ways to allocate the money. We will also be conducting a broader investigation into some of the non-financial barriers to participation. This will be largely undertaken by the VPAS next year.</p>

Library Improvements

Summary	358 new library spaces/a new lower ground level for students to study and the 24 hour library
Achievements	<p>Following on from work from last year, we have been working with the library staff to secure 358 new spots in the library and a new Lower Ground area in which students can study.</p> <p>We have also worked with the uni to keep the library open 24 hours. This is in response to broad student demand and</p>
Next steps :	We are continuing to work with the University to find and create new spaces for students to study and work in the central area and at other campus locations. We, and the future sabbaticals, will be involved in consultations about further changes and developments to the library estate.

Social Enterprise Vision

Summary	Secured funding from the University for a £5,000 grant to help students start/grow social enterprise initiatives; increased our presence in the Uni and Edinburgh City ecosystem and
Achievements	<p>We launched the grant for capital funding for sustainable businesses with a specified social mission. This is in reaction to increased activity throughout the university and the difficulty in acquiring funding.</p> <p>We have also been involved in a number of forums and events to do with Social Enterprise and have reconfigured our offering to Social Enterprises in the Activities office and given responsibility of social enterprise to the new VPAS.</p>

Next steps :	Social Enterprise will be a huge part of what Scotland, the University and the Association over next few years as it is an extremely up and coming area. On May 11th we will have a social enterprise event to review the progress made by recipients of the grant and to secure future grant monies. Future sabbaticals and the whole association will continue to develop our offer to social enterprises, our participation in the Edinburgh SE Ecosystem and our vision for student involvement in social enterprise and business for purpose.
--------------	--

Council Elections

Summary	We are beginning to plan our approach and desired outcomes (policy not people) for the upcoming council elections
Achievements	We have drafted a plan with the external campaign organisers and will be reaching out to hear from class reps/school reps about what their major issues or concerns are. We have engaged with NUS and an external organisation to begin to align our efforts around voter turnout and influencing manifestos.
Next Steps	Continue to plan the approach and bring in additional, relevant stakeholders. Eventually we will advertise the elections to students in order to drive participation. I will continue to update as this progresses.

Catch All

Summary	Some of the other things that have been done this year that need to be followed up on, tied up, and furthered over the next few months and years
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International experiences – Make sure that the University makes good on its promise to offer EVERY student an international experience by 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £5K for Mindfulness Program – Continue with a focus on preventative mental wellbeing• Voter Registration – Follow up to make sure that the changes we have agreed are implemented• Best student employers – An award for the best student employers in Edinburgh• MyDevelopment Hub – Due to start next September. Make sure that our societies and activities are well represented• Estates – Continue to push for student spaces and the developments that we want for students at court and various committees.
Next Steps	Continue with the above and don't lose focus of the key themes for change in the next few months and years!

Thank you to you all for coming to Student Council and making your voice heard! Please be in touch with any questions. My email is eusapres@exseed.ed.ac.uk, my facebook name is "Alec EUSA Pres" or you can call me at 01316509405.