

Accountability

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

Summary

Summary of 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 is now underway, focusing mainly on physical access, mainstreamed learning adjustments, learning profiles and interruption of studies. It is looking to be concluded by February 2017.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have consistently stressed the need for student involvement, as such Leah Morgan and I are on the panel and the last panel had 2 consultation sessions with a total of 20+ student users. The next consultation day will also have student users, and I've created an online form for those students who want to feed into the next session on Learning Profiles but cannot attend: http://bit.ly/2ehzZsw Also gave student feedback from the first session in this blogpost: http://bit.ly/2doEr6O.• Committed to ensuring that the review doesn't merely end up making a load of recommendations at the end. Therefore the plan is to make recommendations after each session and also oversee the implementation of said recommendations, to reflect the fact that in many areas the policy already exists, it's the implementation that is lacking.
Next steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to stress the need for student voices to be involved in the process• Ensure that implementation is measured as well as recommendations being made• Support Leah Morgan and the Disability and Mental Wellbeing Group in their aims, to raise awareness of the experiences of disabled students on campus and therefore ensure that the Disability Review remains under user scrutiny.

Mental Health

Summary	<p>Last year's sabbatical team set up a £10,000 fund for mental health initiatives, and started Mental Health and Wellbeing Week. I want to continue this fantastic work and take advantage of the fact that mental health issues are more and more in the spotlight, to establish improved support and a more positive environment.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have plan for mental health and wellbeing week which has been fed into by liberation reps, president of Wellsoc, director of counselling service, and Deputy Secretary Student Experience. It will take place on w/b Jan 30th, probably continuing the award winning #letstalk campaign and with an overarching theme of how to help friends.• Sit on student mental health strategy group and am very keen to constantly stress that a strategy is great but it's all about implementation on an individual-school level.• For this reason, I've also reached out to school reps to come up with one change they want to make in their school to improve students' mental health.
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put together working group to oversee the planning of the week.• Reach out to societies with the opportunity of putting on dedicated mental health-related events during the week, especially collaborative ones.• Once school reps have replied with ideas of things to change, help them getting these things done with the self-imposed deadline of Metal Health and Wellbeing Week.

Sexual Harassment

Summary	<p>The No One Asks For It campaign was largely prepared by the outgoing sabb team. When we came in, we were really keen to ensure that the campaign had concrete changes in the background to change the situation around sexual harassment on campus.</p>
---------	--

Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've all promoted the campaign and done outreach on all campuses. • I've linked up with Sexpression, who will be feeding into the training. • I contacted the 1752 Group, a lobbying and consulting group committed to eradicating staff-to-student sexual harassment in Higher Education, and discussed how best to approach the problem. As a consequence I'm now pressing the University for policy change – liaising with Alec and Chris Belous on what we want this to look like. • I've looked into the system put in place at Leeds whereby the Union linked up with the local Pubwatch scheme and the police to get staff in local pubs and clubs trained in dealing with reports of sexual harassment in their venues. Those venues then get an accreditation mark. I'm investigating how we might go about implementing something like that here.
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep pressing university re policy • Contact police about mimicking Leeds' scheme. • Review the Good Night Out training to update it in line with the No One Asks For It campaign, and gauge the feasibility of it being changed to video training (as with the society office bearer training) or including a video component so that staff joining the EUSA team at any time of year can be trained immediately

Kitchen Facilities in Study Spaces

Summary	<p>Installing kitchen facilities in the main library was something on my manifesto, and I'd like to just get as many students as possible able to make a cup of tea or heat up their lunch.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am liaising with Information Services about the possibility of getting kitchen facilities in the Main Library.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have reached out to School Reps to get information about what facilities are available in which schools
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue liaising with Main Library. • Once school reps have replied, act on information supplied to see where would be most useful for new facilities to be put in place. • Contact staff members in small schools that already have easily accessible kitchen facilities for staff and enquire about possibility of opening these up to students on a pilot basis as staff/student collaborative spaces

Housing – Private Rental Sector

Summary	<p>Again, my manifesto talked about joining the national fight towards rent caps and working to impose minimum standards on letting agents. I'm really keen that any campaigning done around this be sustainable time-wise, as this is clearly not an issue that is going to be outright solved by the end of my sabbatical term: Hence the need for anything of this sort to be concretely student-led.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learnt a hell of a lot more about Scottish private rental sector regulations and recent housing legislation! • I went along to Kezia Dugdale's surgery at Holyrood to chat about housing legislation, next steps for parliament and areas students could push on. • Joined Living Rent, went along to AGM in Glasgow and am on the policy working group, reviewing the landlord registration policy. • Been in contact with Shelter about Private Housing (Tenancies) Bill • Contacted Andy Wightman and [insert name here] about future plans for housing. Andy Wightman is Green MSP for Lothian and the only Lothian MSP who sits on the Local Government and Communities Committee, the one which deals with housing. [insert name here] is an SNP MSP who is the convenor of the committee. I'm waiting for a response from both.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am arranging housing event for interested students in which there'll be a series of speakers to explain the current legislation around the Scottish private rental sector and tenants' rights, as well as the impact of the upcoming Private Tenancies Bill, and potential areas for campaigning. There will then be, at this event, a sort of workshop based activity giving students the opportunity to share experiences and chat about the best areas to campaign on that would have a real impact in students' renting experience. In the interests of creating an ongoing campaign that is student-led, attendees can put themselves forward to take a leading role in this campaign. • Promoting movem as a landlord/letting agent review service
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put on event! • Help with development of campaign – ensure that a dedicated group o students take the lead and support them in this • Keep interacting with relevant parties, including reaching out to ReAct and other organizations in the affordable housing/renters' rights sector • I'll also be looking to do some work, probably in tandem with The Advice Place, around making students more aware of all of their rights as tenants. This will be prepared over the next couple of months ready to launch in the new year as students start to look for properties around February

Society Support

Summary	I'm VPSA, I love societies, I wanna support societies be great.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased membership of Societies Council! • Took informal feedback from the event for society presidents and am working on implementing that feedback, e.g. investigating how rooms get put on the University room booking system (in the hope that more can be made available), improving communications about allocation through the block

	<p>booking system, differentiating between all-student emails and office bearer emails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on plans for 'Featured Society of the Week' and 'Society Achievement of the Month' (working titles!). Based on suggestions from soc council, looks like the former will be to highlight an upcoming event and the latter will be to recognize an achievement, which is then an automatic nomination to Activities Awards. • Encouraging collaboration between ESCA/RAG and societies, in an attempt to make more societies aware that ESCA can provide fundraising assistance, and to increase the presence of RAG week on campus • Have reached out to the staff members taking a lead on organizing the Festival of Creative Learning (the festival formerly known as Innovative Learning Week(/Ski Week)) in each school and enquired how much student involvement they'd like in their school's week, in the hope of fostering society involvement and consequently a long-lasting society-department collaboration
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with all the above

Students' Association By-elections

Summary	<p>October saw the by-elections taking place, which we worked really hard to promote and push voter turnout.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through encouraging more people to stand as candidates and in more positions (particularly among PG reps), as well as doing lots of VOTE outreach, we literally went from having ~700 voters in the by-elections 2015 to nearly 2000 in 2016. Go team.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help everyone in their role! • Take feedback from the by-elections to planning for the March elections to ensure that in them as well we have high candidate turnout and increased voter turnout

--	--

Liberation Group Support

Summary	Equality falls under my remit, and as such I'm the main sabbatical touchpoint for the liberation reps (BME, Disability and Mental Wellbeing, Women's, LGBT+).
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with all reps and advised on how to achieve their various manifesto points. • Got BME Ambassadors (a scheme first implemented at Birmingham University by now-NUS President Malia Bouattia, that focuses on getting BME students in contact with academic staff to give feedback on course content and help liberate the curriculum) included the University's Race Equality Charter Mark Application, so that Esme can take this forward as she wishes. • Reached out to school reps to hear about the provision of gender neutral toilets in each school, and identify any single-stall bathrooms that could be easily changed.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet up with the new LGBT+ Group Convenor (newly elected) to chat about manifesto points and how to achieve them • Continue to help the other reps with their upcoming projects, e.g. Unapologetically Me, Disability History Month

Student Group Support

Summary	Provide support for the convenors of the Student Parents and Carers Group, the International Student Group, the Part Time and Mature Student Group, and the Postgraduate Student Group, in order that they can achieve their manifesto points
---------	---

Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised on how to achieve manifesto points • Set up meetings between reps and staff members • Pushed for a change to library policy re children of students (ongoing) • Am investigating if it would be possible to partner up with local nurseries • Have pushed University to follow in UCAS' steps and start collecting data not only on student carers, but also student parents and potentially other areas. Am waiting to hear back from Information Services about this.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet up with Postgraduate Student Group Convenor and Part Time and Mature Student Group Convenor (newly elected in the by-elections) and discuss manifesto points • Continue necessary lobbying for data and relevant policy change (e.g. library entry) around student parents

Report from Patrick Garratt, Vice President (Academic Affairs)

Mid-semester feedback

Summary	Mid-semester feedback
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Semester 1, all Honours students in every School will be given the opportunity by tutors in their seminars, workshops or labs to provide feedback to them regarding what they would like to see changed, or kept the same, about the <i>teaching</i> in their groups. • In the following week, staff will then have to articulate to students the suggestions and comments given to the rest of the class, explaining what can and what cannot be changed for sound pedagogical reasons, or due to the limitations of particular course objectives and outcomes. • The platforms for this feedback will vary from use of the TopHat system, to the use of postcards and sheets of paper – in all cases, these platforms for feedback will veer away from surveys, and will be more personalised and bespoke. • Sessions have been ran with academics by myself and staff from the Institute of Academic Development (IAD) to explain pedagogical benefits of mid-semester feedback.

Next steps	<p>I will be speaking to class reps across all Schools between Weeks 6-8 to determine how widely established this process becomes, and more importantly, how staff engage with students on a more personal and direct level to discuss their teaching.</p> <p>I will be running more sessions for academics across all Schools about the need to give students more agency in the learning process, and will be linking this to the platforms for mid-semester feedback.</p>
------------	--

Lecture recordings

Summary	Lecture recordings
Achievements	<p>Following the lobbying of various sabbatical officers over the past three years, the University has finally accepted a business case for recording effectively all lectures from the 2017/18 academic year.</p>
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating to senior staff members in all Schools about the pedagogical and accessibility case to be made for lecture recordings, and to ensure that academics feel that the Students' Association is working with them. • Work with School Conveners and Vice-Conveners to ensure that all Schools are on the same wavelength about the proposals. • Working on a Lecture Recording Procurement Board which will finish by the end of spring 2017. • Work with Information Services to use lecture recordings as a platform that promotes interdisciplinary across all Schools.

Enhancing support for postgraduate and post doctorate tutors

Summary	Ensuring greater support for postgraduate and post doctorate tutors
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped establish, particularly with the work that postgrad and postdoc tutors in CAHSS did over the last academic year, to form a review of the Code of Tutors and Demonstrators. Although the Code was initially going to be refined and slightly amended, we have now ensured that it will be rewritten – this is a significant step to giving the necessary support for postgrad and postdoc tutors. • Now a sabbatical representative (me) on the Senate Research and Experience Committee, which is the group responsible for postgrad matters. • Meetings with CAHSS over its medium-term plan for meeting the requests that were included in last academic year's open letter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing talks and discussion groups for new postgrad and postdoc tutors to explore what is best teaching practice for pre-Honours students.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards ensuring that postgrad/postdoc tutors are paid for meeting students out with their tutorials and seminars (this is predominantly a Humanities and Social Sciences issue). Work towards ensuring that postgrad/postdoc tutors are provided <i>programme and discipline specific training</i> if they want it. Ensure that tutors, if needed, are able to be employed for more than six hours a week, provided that the University still fulfills its duty of care towards its tutors, and particularly when we know many tutors are forced to take up part-time work to afford their PhDs.

Liberating the curriculum

Summary	<p>Following on the work from the previous sabbatical officer Imogen Wilson, the Students' Association has been discussing with each individual School about the need to liberate the curriculum. The Students' Association is working with Vice Principal for People and Culture, Jane Norman, by promoting the need for liberation of the curriculum across all disciplines.</p>
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions with every Head of School and Head of Undergraduate Teaching across the University over summer, and introducing liberation as one the major strategic priorities on the University's Senate Committees. This means that there will soon be a greater imperative for academics to consider ways in which the pedagogical process promotes liberation, equality and diversity, both in terms of content (CAHSS), and assessment and teaching (CSE). Facilitating projects in the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Linguistic Science (PPLS), and the School of Literature, Languages and Culture (LLC), whereby post doctorate researchers will find high quality texts by scholars from under-represented and marginalised backgrounds, which can be used in particular areas of Philosophy and English Literature.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the Institute of Academic Services find post doctorate researchers, either internal or external, to help projects in PPLS and LLC. Help students form student-led workshops in LLC and the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA), with the BME Liberation Group, to encourage staff members to adopt a system similar to the School of Divinity, whereby for courses to be established, the reading list must satisfy a criteria within which the range of scholars from under-represented backgrounds is taken into account. Embed liberation within the Student Partnership Agreement I will be drafting with members of staff in the University over the next few months.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work with the Institute of Academic Development about assessment and teaching practice, and how this relates to the liberation of the curriculum • Work with the Medical School Convener to explore how the LGBT Health Awareness teaching embedded into a first year medical ethics course can be expanded to other courses.
--	---

Teaching Excellence Framework

Summary	<p>Working to ensure that the University of Edinburgh avoids engagement with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The University has raised fees for prospective rUK and overseas students following the Scottish Government's decision to allow universities to do so. The Association has pushed to ensure bursaries increase in line with the rise. However, the Students' Association condemns the decision to raise fees. To oppose the fee rise will depend on collaboration with other students' unions and associations, and NUS UK and Scotland. We are now working to rally against changing how quality is measured.</p>
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked on responses to the Government's consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework in summer. • Using the results from the Teaching Awards Report, and working with other education officers in Scotland, to find ways in which the Scottish Higher Education sector can retain its own distinct way of assessing the 'quality' of education without engaging with the TEF. • Spoken with academics across all Schools about opposition to changes, and have been establishing much closer links with the University and College Union (UCU) branch on campus.
Next steps :	<p>I will continue to work with other education sabbatical officers in Scotland to maintain a united front against the TEF, and keep tabs on how the University of Edinburgh plans (or not) to adhere to the Conservative Government's proposals.</p>

Supporting year abroad students

Summary	Supporting year abroad students
---------	---------------------------------

Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing 'transition workshops' with the Institute of Academic Development, which have been created to help bridge the gap between Honours and pre-Honours study – the output of these workshops will hopefully be relayed to year abroad coordinators. • The code for Personal Tutors has been amended and sent out to all tutors, so that they are aware of the need to respond to emails from those students who are on their year abroad, and who may be away from Edinburgh on placement. • The International Office will be working to ensure the feedback they get from students on their year abroad is fed through the appropriate channels at School level, so that changes are actually put into place annually through cyclical reviews.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the International Office to establish digital platforms for direct contact between individual second year and fourth year students from the next academic year, so that year abroad experiences are more likely to be shared. • Explore how departments in the School of Literature, Languages and Culture can embed education about mental health into the curriculum, as the Japanese department currently does, so that second year students are better prepared for issues they may face on their year abroad. • Working with the Counselling Service to see how online Skype sessions can be better utilised by students.
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of working with the International Office, most of their staff are still unsure about the future of year abroad arrangements from the next academic year due to Brexit, therefore with this uncertainty, only so many amendments can be made to the current Year Abroad schemes. • Moreover, staff who would usually be able to commit more time to gathering research from partner institutions abroad are thus less likely to commit their time to certain projects.

Postgraduate taught outreach

Summary	The Students' Association is broadening its outreach to the postgraduate taught community.
Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and helping establish specific postgraduate-liason committees in each School (ultimately the postgrad equivalent of Staff-Student Liaison Committees). • Did a lot of outreach for the by-elections to get postgraduates involved. • Spoken at plenty of postgraduate introductory sessions.

Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots more to do, but most of this work will start now, seeing as we now have newly elected Postgraduate Vice-Conveners for each School. • Will be working with members of CAHSS staff to explore ‘peeragogy’, and how postgraduates can establish more cooperative approaches to learning which give them more agency in the learning process.
------------	---

Post-study work visa

Summary	<p>Following a cross-party working group report on the reintroduction of the post-study work visa in early 2016, the Students’ Association has been exploring if any concessions could be made for Scottish HE institutions, considering that immigration policy is not devolved.</p>
Update:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not going well, ultimately due to the intransigence of the Westminster Government, Brexit and Theresa May’s ideological opposition to international students studying in the UK. • The Students’ Association has met with Tommy Shephard MP to see what support the SNP can offer. The SNP are willing to put their weight behind any campaign that is launched, however, there is a slightly possibility that the University could try and provide some funding to sponsor and fund Tier-5 visas. These are however limited in scope. They can only be held by students from certain countries, and require significant buy-in from a host institution, such as the University of Edinburgh, as the University would have to effectively to co-sponsor each individual student in a specific field of employment. If the University were able to do this, they would most likely be sponsoring overseas students who try and find work for firms that specifically recruit STEM students. • We continue to keep updated with NUS Scotland, MPs, and the International Office about any significant developments, although we are not particularly hopeful at the moment.
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with the Alumni Office and Careers Service to explore how overseas students can access databases that offer jobs specifically to overseas students, and most likely, to those who graduate from STEM disciplines. • Keep talking to MSPs, including those in the Scottish Conservatives, whose approach differs from the Westminster Conservative Government’s unacceptable attack on international students.

Continuing work to end the physical hand-in

Summary	<p>Sitting on the project board to ensure that all Schools follow through with Imogen’s work to end the physical hand-in, and giving talks to staff about it.</p>
---------	---

Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much to report on, as this is more or less is happening as it should.
--------------	---

Lord Apetsi Talk

Summary	The Students' Association hosted a talk on the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants by Lord Apetsi, with People & Planet, and University of Edinburgh Amnesty International.
---------	---

Class rep training and School Convener priorities

Summary	Class rep training, and meeting with various School Conveners to establish and facilitate priorities for this academic year.
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class rep training has successfully been rolled out online this year, so most of the past few weeks has involved meeting with reps and clearing up issues, as well as running a multitude of workshops and lunchtime programmes about best practice for class reps. • Raising awareness of learning adjustments through the class rep system, so that in line with the Disability Review Working Group that Jess sits on, we will be able to establish which academics are not abiding by the IAD's criteria for Learning Adjustments. • The first School Convener Forum was a success, and we're hoping that this year's group will keep each other in the loop and work together closely, particularly for those in CSE!
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will be attending a variety of Staff-Student Liaison Committees over the next few months to establish best practice amongst School Conveners and class reps.

Conferences/National Outreach

Summary	Conferences/national outreach
Institution/location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended NUS conferences in Lincoln and Liverpool over summer. • Attended NUS Scotland Gathering in Stirling. • Attended several Enhancement Led Institutional Review meetings in Glasgow.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended SPAQRS outreach sessions and workshops, and I am now working closely with them on Student Partnership agreements.
Next steps	I will be contributing to NUS UK's and NUS Scotland's strategic approaches to Higher Education changes in the zone conferences, responding to both Westminster and Holyrood drivers.

Report from Jenna Kelly, Vice President (Services)

Summary

Summary of activities since office taken on 06/06/16

Meat-Free Mondays

Summary	Catering to vegetarian/vegan requirements in Students Association
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat-Free Monday launched 10th October • Teviot New Amphion hotplate • 3-4 menu options every week • Reduced promotional price of £4
Next steps:	This will continue in the New Amphion indefinitely. Conversations have begun with the university to explore similar offerings/reductions on price of vegetarian options in their catering outlets.

Meal Deal for less than £3

Summary	Meal deal price to match those available in stores outwith campus outlets
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new vegetarian meal deal was launched in week 1 • The meal deal costs £2.90
Next steps :	An extension of the range of fruit provided in the shops will be explored to make the meal deal even better value for money. We are additionally exploring the option of reducing the minimum spend on card in the shops to eliminate the concerns that a £2.90 meal deal raises in this context.

Investment Committee

Summary	To retain a seat at the university's investment committee
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An observational role has been agreed for the next committee meeting• This will occur on the morning of 22nd November• The convener has made clear the window for some student input into what the committee should be discussing• Post-November meeting, a meeting will be held with the convener and secretary to discuss the meeting
Next steps :	Consider other ways in which we can ensure the university is investing ethically such as encouraging the creation of a social impact investment working group.

Affordability in university accommodation

Summary	Developing a model for affordability in affordable student housing, in order to ensure that affordability is a core element of the university's residential strategy
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of existing accommodation offering, resulting in 3 proposed models for the residential strategy in a long-term sense• Affordable in the 1st model (the ideal model) is defined as total lease cost of £4000 or less for UG accommodation and £5000 or less for PG accommodation• Proposal to Fee Strategy Group of an increase in affordable UG accommodation from ~9% to ~16%.
Next steps :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring PG accommodation is considered equally• Exploring avenues for methods by which to reduce rents both in the short term and in the long term• Pushing for 25% affordable student housing as a strategic aim

Edinburgh Student Housing Co-op

Summary	Working with the co-op to obtain university assistance in acquiring a new building for expansion
---------	--

Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings arranged with university secretary, director of finance, director of strategic planning, vice principal student experience and director of accommodation services • Deal tentatively arranged
Next steps	To sign the lease agreement and ensure all clauses and details within the agreement are aligned with the co-ops objectives and ensure their sustainability in the long term

Other

- Collating research regarding the desire for a salad bar on campus
- Fortnightly work with StreetChange – local social enterprise – to help shape VP Communities role
- A new commercial director and festival manager have been recruited and begun working with the Students Association
- Hard launch of the safe taxi scheme
- Work ongoing for a green festival in February 2017
- Close collaboration with the vegetarian society for planned collection of their input to menu options and recipes
- Wheels in motion for a student housing event with other students unions in Scotland; provisionally in the new year

Report from Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson, EUSA President

Summary

Dear Student Council,

It has been a busy few months. The team and I have worked tirelessly in putting forth new initiatives, overseeing changes and acting to continue the ongoing work at the Association. All of our reports are but a snapshot of what has been accomplished. There is far more to say and we are all more than happy to elaborate if you wish to hear it. We spend a very large amount of time in committees and University meetings directing projects and representing the student perspective on structural and policy changes. Many of these changes cannot be reflected in these reports for the sake of brevity and context but they shape the future for students at this University.

It has been a challenging four months on both a local and a macro level. Brexit, poor NSS scores and fundamental changes to the HE sector shape our daily action and long-term strategy. It is a time of change and incredible opportunity for this University and this Association. We have seized that opportunity and, as our reports highlight, the result has been an incredibly productive four months for the Edinburgh University Students’ Association.

I sincerely hope that our dedication shows in our actions and in our successes. Please believe me when I say that the 40-hour workweek does not exist for us four sabbaticals. The “workday” does not exist. We blend our duties into our lives seamlessly and we put extraordinary amounts of time and effort into our roles.

What follows are 5 of what I consider the most important developments out of all that have been achieved during the past few months. 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.

Lastly, while I recognise that it is fairly early in the year, I would ask that you all begin to consider standing as sabbatical officers or as other elected positions. It is extremely rewarding work. There is honestly never a day when you don't feel challenged, humbled and inspired. This Students' Association really needs you.

All my best,

Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson

£10,000 Participation Grant

Summary	£10,000 Participation Grant for students from lower-income backgrounds
Achievements	<p>In response to 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>Eligible applicants can bid for up to £100 for expenses like membership, kit, tournament related costs, transportation etc. Applications will close on October, 30th.</p>
Next steps:	This is a pilot program and if we are expecting to expand and develop it in the future if there is sufficient interest. We will also be conducting a broader participation review to identify other barriers to engagement in sports and societies beyond those that are financial in nature.

Fee Protection and Bursary Increase

Summary	Fee status protection for current students and bursaries increase in line with rises for future students
Achievements	We lobbied heavily to ensure that the University's plans to increase rUK fees did not apply for current students. As a result the University have not joined a number of Russell Group peer institutions in raising fees for current students and will be applying the fee rise to incoming students in 2017/18 only.

	Furthermore, we successfully lobbied the University to ensure that bursaries at all levels would increase so that students who are financially disadvantaged will not have to bear the increased cost of fees.
Next steps :	We recognise that the fee rises are indicative of changes in the sector as a whole, and we will be bring a motion to SC to join thousands of students and staff from across the UK to a National Demonstration at Westminster on Nov. 19 th .

9-Month Ridacard

Summary	Lothian Buses 9-Month student Ridacard available this Sept. and Oct. (2016)
Achievements	<p>We worked with members of University estates to push Lothian Buses to introduce a 9 Month Student Ridacard. This ridacard is <i>significantly</i> more affordable than the 12-month version and is in line with the academic calendar of thousands students.</p> <p>This is in response to an understanding of the numerous problems with transportation across all of the University campuses. These problems include both transport to/between satellite campuses and transport to central campus from outside of the city.</p>
Next steps :	We will continue to pressure the University for a more cohesive transportation strategy that addresses the issues that many students face on a daily basis, and continue to push for changes within Lothian Buses. This is a huge first step that will affect thousands of students, but it is still very much a first step.

New Library Spaces

Summary	358 new library spaces and a new lower ground level for students to study
Achievements	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. On October 17 th the library opened the Lower Ground floor area to students and it has been met with overwhelmingly positive reviews. We understand the need for student study spaces in a campus that is chronically under-resourced.

Next steps :	We are continuing to work with the University to repurpose existing and to create new spaces for students to study and work in the central area and at other campus locations.
--------------	--

Nearly 2x the By-Election Results

Summary	Total votes in the by-election more than doubled YoY (2015-2016)
Achievements	<p>After several weeks of hard work by all staff members of the organisation, dozens of lecture shout-outs and encouraging people to both stand and vote, total number of votes more than doubled from the by-election 2015. Additionally, the number of people standing in the elections increased significantly, particularly for the role of NUS Scotland delegate.</p> <p>This incredibly increase in votes is a strong indication of engagement and interaction with the Students' Association. It is also a great sign for student representation and empowerment.</p>
Next Steps	This is just the beginning. We need to continue to engage students with an eye to radically increasing the number of students voting in the March election (though perhaps not as radically as doubling!)

Other/Quick Mention

I said I would keep this report to the 5 largest developments, but I will put 10 extra here to pique interest. Please get in touch if you would like to learn more.

- We launched the EUSA App in order to help societies/volunteering groups and to keep people up to date with events and memberships. Available on Google Play and Apple's App Store
- The Service Excellence Program is ongoing and will produce tangible changes to students' digital and physical interaction with the University.
- We are working to implement the remaining changes to the democracy review and referendum from last year.
- We are working with the careers service to create a Development Hub for developing student skills.
- Go Abroad opportunities are being developed alongside the International Office. A plan for capturing and supporting more of the current activity go abroad activity is also being developed.
- We are piloting the use of the UoE events app to capture the talks, workshops and general events. You can download the UoE Events App to access talks from the schools that are currently participating (Business School, LLC and Economics)

- I am meeting with academics across the university to develop a strategy for increasing a sense of community on campus and in individual schools. This strategy will be brought to court in the coming months.
- A robust participation review is being planned and executed to analyse barriers for students from a range of different backgrounds.
- We are joining careers service, SIE, the entrepreneurship society, launch.ed and E-Club to host a social innovation Hackathon and Enterprise Week in mid-November.
- We have given the student perspective in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy group and plans for a more holistic mental health strategy are being drafted

Thank you to you all for coming out to Student Council and making your voice heard and as always 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.