VP Activities & Services: Shenan Davis-Williams

Summary

February has been fun! We have had some big changes within our food outlets, I have been working on some steps towards improving our services available to societies, and some super fun spring/summer events.

Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>This month we have had some fun events on for our students and I have been working towards organizing some big and exciting events for this semester.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Sports v Socs</strong> — Sports v Socs has continued monthly, providing our student groups with kickback and the opportunity to win some exciting prizes.</td>
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<td>• <strong>New mascot</strong> — Dusty came along to the launch of Humpit and handed out some amazing hummus tote bags to everyone queuing!</td>
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<td>• <strong>Students’ Awards</strong> — nominations for The Students’ Awards have closed, we’ve been working on organizing entertainment and plans for the night.</td>
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<td>• <strong>2019 Sports Day planning</strong> — working with Trampoline Club and Sports Union Participation Officer on a fundraising sports day during RAG week.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Postgraduate events</strong> — Working with our entertainment and events team to ensure we have a number of post-grad events on this semester.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Wellbeing feedback session</strong> — organized a feedback session for students to discuss what the university is currently doing well in terms of mental health and wellbeing support, and to discuss areas for improvement.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Graduation Ball 2019</strong> — planning for grad ball is now underway!</td>
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<td>• <strong>St. Patrick’s Day</strong> — This year we are going to have a St. Patrick’s day that is bigger and better than it has ever been before, so keep your eyes peeled!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next Steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keep club nights busy with a variety of drinks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, available at an affordable price.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Dusty will be making appearances throughout the semester during campaigns, club nights and society events.
- Further planning and organising for our fun sports day.
- Continue work on Sports v Socs to ensure societies are earning extra funding in a fun and sociable way.

Student Engagement

Summary

Working with our societies to find out how we can improve their experience. I have also been working closely with particular student groups to make sure we are representing our students in all aspects.

Actions

- **Society meet and greets** – held our semester society meet and greet.
- **Activities Reps** – continuing to work and support reps on their projects, we will have our first Exec meeting of 2019 at the end of this month.
- **ECA** – continuing to meet with the ECA representative and further our work on the use of Albertina and the eating spaces available at ECA.
- **Society support** – We have worked on and improved the handover guide for our societies
  - Further discussion to progress with an online booking system.
  - Further work on implementing Microsoft Teams as a platform for our societies to share and swap skills, advice and events.
- **Gaelic Committee** – creating a strong plan based around implementing Gaelic into the future steps of the Students’ Association.
- **Anti-cyberbullying campaign** – Motion taken to student council to introduce new policy across various organisations to improve cyber-safety
  - Working with Anti Bullying Alliance to share materials to raise awareness
  - Working with ISG to organize talks on digital footprint and to have information available for societies
- **Strategic plan development** – lots of work on our strategic plan - running workshops and sub-committees to include as many people as possible.
• Islamophobia Awareness Day – working with Islamic Society to try and create an Islamophobia Awareness Day at the university and working on holding certain events during the day.

Next Steps

• Activities Reps – continuing support
• Maintain communication with ECA - support their needs and continue to look into a degree show grant.
• Divinity – work closer with Divinity Reps and support them where needed.
• Anti-cyberbullying campaign – continue work on policy implementation and begin to raise awareness on the issue.
• Continue to push support for our societies in the necessary services that we should be providing for them.
• Continue work with ISoc on an Islamophobia Awareness Day

Improving Student Services

Summary

Working on a very varied selection of our services.

Actions

• ‘Green Guide’ – Further research carried out for the content of the guide.
• Food – We launched our brand new Library Bar menu and our video has had more hits than any Student Association media in the past. We have now have more vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options.
• Humpit – We had a very successful launch and have officially opened Humpit in Potterrow and now have a hummus and pita vegan outlet.
• Digital Transformation - Looking at the future of the Students’ Association’s digital transformation - the ways we communicate to students and evaluating the current website.
• Library café – In discussion with the university about extending the library café operating hours during peak times plus more desk space allowing food.
• New water fountains – A new water fountain will be fitted into the Salisbury Block to cater to the needs of the societies using those spaces.
President: Eleri Connick

Summary

How crazy - semester two is just starting and we’ve only got two student councils left! Next time we meet we’ll have voted our new Sabbaticals, School Reps, Activities Reps, Liberation Officers and Sections Reps in! I really would encourage you all to join us for the Sabbatical Officer Candidates Question Time and vote in the elections (March 4th - March 7th). This is your opportunity to shape what your Students’ Association looks like in 2019/20.

Finally, a huge good luck to our final year Medical students taking their finals!!

We Are Edinburgh

Summary

The We Are Edinburgh activity is designed to start building a student community, where we are celebrating all of our achievements more!

Actions

- **Financial guidance**: email sent to all society and sports club treasurers letting them sign up for an hour of expert guidance ahead of budget deadlines. So far great interest, sessions will take place in March/April.

- **ECA Art Shop**: Sent a proposal to the University Secretary, met with the University Gift Shop manager and Deputy Director of Communications and Marketing. Aiming to have ECA students work on sale for graduations, so we are now working towards the logistics of this.

- **Jazz takeover**: organising an end of semester ‘jazz takeover of McEwan Hall’ on April 5th with the Uni, ahead of students heading off before exams!
• ‘We Are Edinburgh’ exhibition: At University Court on Monday 18th February for court members to see the wonderful things our students are doing!

Next Steps

• Member of the Uni’s Student Experience committee. Will keep you updated on this, excited to see how the ‘community and belonging’ work goes forward.

• Following the treasurer sessions, working with University Finance Department and the Sports Union to explore a full year mentoring scheme.

Members

Summary

The Students’ Association exists for our members, it is essential that what members want, is at the heart of what we do.

Actions

• Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free: We have seen more lectures, exams, tutorials and labs enforced on a Wednesday afternoon, causing a huge impact on students taking part in extracurricular activities. An open letter was sent from students to the Principal, Sports Union President, and myself. The Sports President and I will look at how we can work to keep Wednesday afternoons completely free.

• Graduate Discounts: Submitted a paper to Fee Strategy Group asking that they approve the request for the 10% Graduate Discount to apply to the entire tuition fee for all Edinburgh graduates from 2019, and to benchmark the University’s offer to graduates compared to other Scottish institutions including considering an enhanced discount, and wider eligibility.

• Transport: We’ve had several transport motions at Student Council! VP Community and I created a video on issues students face with inter-campus transport - this was presented to University Court in December. The University launched a consultation on transport, I have arranged for consultants to attend the Medical School Council to discuss transport to the BioQuarter, and to the Sports Union General Meeting to discussion provisions to Peffermill. Working to see if there is a rep lunch where consultants can attend.
• **Principal’s Question Time at King’s Buildings:** taking place on Thursday February 28th at 12 noon in Swann Building with refreshments. This is your opportunity to ask the Principal and Head of College for Science and Engineering your questions about KB!

• Working with the University’s Development and Alumni department to look at putting Student Award winners, and former Activities and Impact Award winners on student records, plus office bearers and reps. This will hopefully allow societies and other student groups to have more knowledge on the people who went before them in our incredible student-led activities.

• **Participation Grant:** We have allocated the £25k for Home Students and it was a great first year for the International Student Participation Grant with 80% allocated. We will produce an impact report shortly so we can ensure the long term sustainability of the grant!

• Working on video content for Post Offer Days 2019 with College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science.

Next Steps| Looking at the best way to get feedback from each school- several schools have their own school council, with issues fed into school reps and sabbatical officers if there are emerging problems. Beginning work to explore different structures in each school. Would love to hear from you on anything you think is amazing in your school and what you think other schools should be doing. Also let us know what can be improved!!

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Other

• Met with lots of super students **interested in running for sabbatical officer** positions in the elections - if you are keen do get in touch and we can grab a coffee!

• **Panels for the Student Awards** - so many incredible nominations - very tough deciding on shortlists and winners! Look forward to sharing the shortlist video with you all in March!! Get ready for what is going to be an incredible night! We are more than just students - We Are Edinburgh.

• Attended the NUS Presidents Round Table at Scottish Parliament with all Student Union Presidents from Scotland. Following VP Community’s work on housing I asked a question on when we will see PBSA enforced to have a percentage of beds as affordable.

• I attended the ‘Students with Refugees: A Duty to Spread Hope’ talk organised by two amazing Edinburgh students: Simon Hall and Violet Tinnian. The evening saw four
incredible women talking about their stories and what life is like as a refugee and asylum seeker in the UK. The event was sold out and a really wonderfully organised event.

- Attended Mixed Martial Arts Fundraiser Ceilidh for SAMH (Scottish Mental Health charity). A fantastic event - excited to see how much money was raised!!
- Sat on the editorial board for the EDIT magazine - the University’s alumni magazine which all graduating students will receive this summer. An exciting process containing some inspirational Edinburgh student stories.
- I’ve also had a lot of fun dressing up as Dusty (see picture for evidence)!!

Thank you to you all for coming to Student Council and making your voice heard! Have a super month!! Please do get in touch with any questions. My email is president@eusa.ed.ac.uk or you can call on 01316509405 or find me on Facebook as ‘Eleri Pres Connick’.

Vice President Community: Georgie Harris

Summary

This has been a busy month with the build-up to elections and lots going on, including LGBT+ History Month.

Community Engagement
Summary
I’ve been mainly working on the implementation of Automatic Voter Registration, preparing to mobilise students to register to vote in an upcoming election, and speaking about student engagement in the local community at a University alumni event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Automative voter registration:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ongoing, the University looking to implement AVR and will be consulting me over the next several months.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attending an online briefing about a new voter registration service for Higher Education institutions and how this might be beneficial in terms of encouraging student voter registration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I’m looking for support from political societies or students to help emphasise the student backing for the University to implement AVR</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Local community: |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                 | • Looking into organising a Great Get Together event (run by the Jo Cox Foundation) for early summer |
|                 | • Working with the University on their community engagement strategy |
|                 | • Speaking to the General Council (the University’s membership body for all alumni) about the importance of student and University engagement with the City of Edinburgh |

| People’s Vote campaign: |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                         | • Continued to publicise details of the People’s Vote campaign and how students can pressure their local MP |
|                         | • Liaising with local campaign groups on how to engage students |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Preparing to mobilise students to register to vote in an upcoming council election in Leith</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Publicising details of the election and who can vote</td>
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<td>• Organising voter registration stalls across campuses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Working with the University’s Student Services team on the implementation of AVR – hopefully for next academic year if they remain committed to delegate resources to this project (need for student backing!)</td>
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</table>
## Housing

### Summary
Speaking at the Cross-Party Group on Housing in the Scottish Parliament, representing students at the University of Edinburgh and presenting issues that often affect students, from rising rents to dodgy letting agents.

### Actions
- Cross-Party Group on Housing in the Scottish Parliament
- Student housing rights
  - [Shelter Scotland](#) – attending event to give information about new tenancy laws and how this will affect students
  - [Advice Place](#) – graphics to help students when flat-hunting
- Working on housing guidelines for student compensation
- Local politicians – will meet with the convener of the council’s housing, lobbying to change planning laws for student accommodation, making a % of it affordable
- LGBT+ student accommodation – will be continuing research into this later in this semester with Natasha and Ruby
- Student housing co-op - attending meetings about potential new development

### Next Steps
- Organising an event with Shelter Scotland to speak in Teviot about **students rights as tenants** since housing laws have changed
- Meeting the convener of the City of Edinburgh Council’s housing and economy committee to discuss **affordable student accommodation**
- Working with the Advice Place on improving students’ knowledge of their rights as tenants and getting info out about this
- Continuing research into LGBT+ student accommodation

## Sustainability

### Summary
Sustain.Ed went well, some great events on different campuses run by various student societies, and I hope it continues next year! I’m looking more into food waste on campus.

### Actions
- **Organised events for Sustain.Ed at the end of January**
- **Food waste** – discussing with various students and the University on improving policy on food waste, ensuring less waste is produced.
- **Eco-friendly period products** – met with students about how to improve our supply of sanitary products to include more organic/reusable options
  - Promoting pad-making workshops in collaboration with Edinburgh Remakery
- **Green Guide** – working on this with VP Activities and Services, creating a student guide to shopping and eating more sustainably

### Next Steps

- Meeting with various figures about food waste both in University and Students’ Association venues
- Working to complete our Green Guide – please do get in touch with Shay or I if you have anything to suggest!
- Looking into our range of sanitary products offered to students

### Other

- **Student Council Motion Progress**: working to promote the Post Study Work Visa Now campaign and contacted local MPs to try and get support for the campaign.
- Liaising with Edinburgh Global plan a Europe Week in the last week of March, highlighting the positive contributions our students and staff from different European countries make to our university community, particularly given the rise in xenophobia in the UK over the past couple of years. If you are keen to be involved, contact me.
- Shortlist nominations for the Student Awards on 4th April – it’s been amazing to see all of the great things students have been doing both on and off campus, and how much everyone deserves recognition.
- Chaired the Women and Non-Binary Students in Leadership panel at the beginning of the month, one of a series of leadership events organised by the Liberation Campaigns.

### Vice President Education: Diva Mukherji

### Summary
This month has been super busy, but also very wholesome because of all the incredible Student Award nominations! It’s so amazing to see the amount of work students are doing alongside their degree!

## Diversifying the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>We’re continuing to collect data on how students and staff understand ‘diversifying the curriculum’, and how to translate that as a concept to the wider University body.</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Actions | • Hosted the final workshop-panel with students on understanding ‘diversifying the curriculum’, and if there is a desire within the student body to work on it. Good news - there is! Spoken to a wide range of students, across different colleges and programs.  
• Met with the Head of College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences to discuss having a race and ethnicity-centered research database for the University. Liaising with Edinburgh Global and academic staff members to discuss feasibility and timeline for this project.  
• Met with Edinburgh Global to discuss the academic experiences of BME students. It seems there is interest in doing wider scoping work in understanding to what extent racism can be embedded in parts of courses, and the impact this has on BME students. |
| Next Steps | • Attending the final University task group on promoting a diverse curriculum, and finalizing how this information and guidance will be shared with staff members across the University.  
• Working with members of staff within the College of Science and Engineering to organize a staff-student open forum to talk about this issue, and get suggestions from attendees on what they want to see within the college.  
• Continue developing the race and ethnicity-based resource hub, and getting funding for some scoping work to be carried out! |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>This involves looking at how students from different backgrounds are being supported within University spaces, and making sure everyone’s needs are being met!</th>
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</table>
| Actions | - Developing a Decolonizing the Curriculum session with the Open Education Resources department, scheduled in March.  
- Reviewing the Widening Participation Implementation Plan, a 3-year University plan. Met the lead on this project, discussed Students’ Association projects over the coming years, and how to make some Uni-wide projects more specific and targeted.  
- Met the Wellbeing Officers at their networking session, discussed how many staff members are not using accessible equipment without providing explanations to their students. This is unacceptable, so we’ll be sharing the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy with students more widely so you know what you have the right to ask for!  
- Attended the Lecture Recording Programme Board, where they collected the statistics for how many lectures are being recorded by school. This made for some super interesting discussions, because there’s definitely quite a large disparity between some schools. We’re looking to share that information more widely with staff members, so they can learn from each other.  
- The University is about to pass an amendment to the Support for Study Policy, which would introduce a ‘Stage 3’ to the process, allowing members of the University to place a student on a mandatory interruption of studies, possibly against their will. VP Welfare and I have been lobbying the University against introducing this policy, but they’re not listening. We’re developing a campaign around this, because we need to ensure there’s student input into this decision being made, rather than these conversations only occurring in closed spaces. We’ll be doing a lot of information sharing, on the policy and what it entails, and a summary of the Students’ Association position on the policy, but some students have created a fantastic open letter which is addressed to members of the committee where the final decision will be made. PLEASE |
SIGN THIS LETTER, IT’S ESSENTIAL WE GET AS MANY STUDENTS TO SHOW THEY’RE AGAINST THIS POLICY CHANGE SO THE UNIVERSITY CAN’T IGNORE IT! We’ve done interviews with the Tab, the Student, and EUTV but we’re counting on you to share it with your networks too!

Next Steps

- The University hasn’t ‘responded’ to the open letter, or any of the media pieces produced around this, so we’re waiting to see how they respond. Depending on if they ignore it or agree to student consultation, we’ll plan accordingly! But we’ll be hosting an open campaign session around this in the next few weeks, to see what else we can do to stop this!
- Delivering the Decolonizing the Curriculum session to members of Information Services, and helping share practical ways to decolonize.
- Continuing to work on the Lecture Recording Benefits Realization project, which will bring staff and students together to talk about how to use lecture recordings. We’ll be sharing the information with the School and Program reps, so stay tuned!
- Developing the Students’ Association involvement in the Widening Participation strategy, and looking at where it can be strengthened.

Other

- Please help us campaign against Support for Study, it’s not acceptable that this can go through without proper student consultation!
- Literally that is it, the Students’ Association has been fighting this policy for 3-4 years, and now it seems they’re just ignoring our protests which isn’t okay. We know students care about this issue, the number of signatures on the open letter proves that, so please help us!!!!!!!

VP Welfare: Kai O’Doherty
Summary

Key areas of focus over the past month have been: fighting against the Support for Study amendment, engaging marginalized students in the upcoming elections, and advancing the creation of a Sexual Violence Policy.

Improving Mental Health Support

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<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>This includes work around: mental health support, University policies, year abroad help, and more.</th>
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<th>Actions</th>
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<td>• Opposition to Mandatory Interruptions in the ‘Support for Study’ Policy: The University wants to make mandatory interruptions of study possible through the policy, which we strongly oppose. Diva (VP Education) and I have launched a campaign to mobilize students to oppose the adoption of the amendment, which is voted on in March. An open letter on the topic has gathered hundreds of student signatures, and we’ll be continuing with this work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student Mental Health Strategy (SMHS) – Action Plan: last semester I worked with the University to review the 2017 SMHS, to reprioritize what actions should happen, and how these would be implemented. This month has been spent finalizing an action plan and workstreams, including staff mental health training, counselling service provision, prevention, and communicating resources to students.</td>
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<td>• Embedding Mental Health in the Student Experience Plan: The University has embarked on a massive project to create and execute a holistic plan to improve student experience. I’ve worked this month to embed the SMHS and other mental health needs in this plan. Options to student mental health trainings are included in this.</td>
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Next Steps

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<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Mandatory Interruptions: stay tuned!</th>
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EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

- SMHS Action Plan: this will be finalized over the next month or two, and I will continue to push for these actions to be based on students’ priorities for mental health needs on campus.
- Mental Health Training for Students: rather than a two-day first aid course, student groups are working with me to push for broad, shorter trainings all students could access in the future. This is similar to the Bystander Intervention training model.

## Combatting Sexual Violence

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>This includes: growing the awareness raising campaign #NoExcuse, training, and addressing the procedures survivors/victims access.</th>
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| Actions | • #NoExcuse, anti-sexual harassment campaign: launched a grant for societies & clubs to get funding to run events tied to the campaign (keep applying!). So far, this has included a Danns-Ed dance performance, a FilmSoc screening, and a new BME reading group.  
• Sexual Violence Policy: as part of the University’s Taskforce on Sexual Violence, I have been advocating for a stand-alone policy for sexual violence which is supportive and clear. We now have a skeleton policy, on work on other areas (education, procedures, case management etc) continues. |
| Next Steps | • #NoExcuse: continue to spread word about the fund for students/student groups; continue stalls across campuses; launch a second round of posters.  
• Sexual Violence Policy: meet with relevant University committees/colleagues to agree the policy in principle, and flesh out the specifics. |
## Centering Anti-Oppression

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<tr>
<th><strong>Summary</strong></th>
<th>This includes: to support the Liberation Officers’ work, improve support for trans students, and enhance support for international students, parents, carers and mature students.</th>
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</table>
| **Actions** | • **Redefining Leadership Panels:** We held four panels on being marginalized and being a leader, one for each of our liberation campaigns (BME, Women, Disabled & LGBT+). Each had a great turnout, with dozens of students engaging who hadn’t been involved with Liberation Campaigns before! Hopefully they’ll all run for positions in the upcoming elections!  
• **Thematic Review of Support for BME Students:** Isabella, our BME Officer, and I have worked with the University to plan student consultations. These will gather feedback of BME students’ experiences of support, and lead to recommendations on how the University can improve.  
• **Disabled Students’ Forum:** Eileen, our Disabled Students’ Officer, organized a brilliant forum. Students gave rich feedback on improving disabled students’ experiences of the Disability Service, Estates, and mental health support.  
• **Gender-Neutral Toilets Map:** I’m creating a map with the University to put on the Uni website to help people find existing gender-neutral toilets, and/or submit ideas of where single-stall loos could be converted to gender-neutral.  
• **Liberation Officer Catch-Ups:** All four of our Liberation Officers are doing incredible work this semester – too much to list here – but talk to them at Student Council, and follow the ‘Edinburgh University Students’ Association Liberation Campaigns’ page to find out more! |
Next Steps

- **BME Thematic Review**: conducting the bulk of the student consultations over the next 4-6 weeks.
- **Gender-Neutral Toilet Map**: finalizing the text and format of the site; waiting on Estates data.

Other

- Election nominations closed today! Voting is open Mar 4th – 7th – and a lot of work will go into spreading the word on the elections!
- Working on the Students’ Association’s next Strategic Plan in full-day workshops.
- Attended University Court.
- Student Awards: have been on various award panels to shortlist and decide winners.
- NUS reform: contributed to our submission to the NUS structural reforms.
- Durham Students’ Union’s VP Welfare visited, and we shared best practice and ideas.