



Sabbatical Officer Accountability Reports March 2019

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VP Community: Georgie Harris

Summary

Elections month! The most exciting time of the academic year! It's been really great having the privilege to work in this role this year; I've enjoyed my time and learnt so much, as well as being able to work on things that both I and lots of students care deeply about. I'll be in the post until Friday 7th June, so please do contact me on vpcommunity@eusa.ed.ac.uk with any questions or concerns in the absence of Student Council until then! Looking forward to welcoming our new VP Community, Rosheen into the role!!

Community Engagement

Summary	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.
Actions	<p>Automatic voter registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with University Student Services about how to progress this • Liaising with the Lothian Valuation Joint Board about what data would be needed for automatic voter registration – linking up key partners <p>Local community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising the University's Community Grants Scheme – community groups in Edinburgh can apply for up to £5000 funding - ask for further details! • Looking into organising a Great Get Together event (run by the Jo Cox Foundation) for May or June • Signposting students to register to vote in the upcoming council election on Thursday 11th April in Leith Walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stalls in George Square library and social media posting to encourage students to register to vote • Contributed to updating the University's Community Engagement Strategy • At University Estates Committee we raised the need for the University to consider the impact new student halls have on the local community <p>People's Vote campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicised details of the March and how students can access travel to attend



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped the European Movement in Scotland campaign group get a stall in Potterrow to talk to students • Continued to liaise with Our Future Our Choice, For Our Future's Sake and EMiS (all local pro-People's Vote campaign groups)
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing working with the University's Student Services team to implement AVR – hope this is successful and 2019/20 students will benefit from automatic voter registration! • Work with People's Vote campaign groups around next steps for campaigning and update students, as (on writing this) it looks like we won't be leaving the EU on 29th March • Push voter registration, particularly around the upcoming Leith Walk council by-election in April

Housing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke at the Cross-Party Group on Housing in Scottish Parliament on student housing issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Along with Living Rent and NUS Scotland, we pushed the need for fair conditions for tenants both in Edinburgh and across Scotland ○ Presented a paper on our recommendations for student accommodation in Edinburgh, arguing at least 25% of new student halls developments must be affordable, in line with current planning laws for other developments ○ Found from research into this paper that both student halls and private rented accommodation have risen in cost at an extortionate rate • Meeting with the Chair of Edinburgh Council's Housing Committee to talk about our proposals for the affordability of purpose-built student accommodation • Student housing rights – liaising with Shelter Scotland and sharing their content to inform students about how new type of tenancies affect you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with the Advice Place to make flat-hunting as easy as possible ○ Speaking to Daniel Johnson, MSP for Edinburgh Southern, about how students will be affected by new tenancy laws and how I can help communicate this • Working on housing guidelines for student compensation



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for more uni-owned accommodation to be built (including increasing flats for returning students) instead of private companies building more halls • Updating the University's residential strategy around student accommodation
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper research into the cost of rent in Edinburgh and our recommendations – will liaise with Living Rent, the Advice Place and NUS Scotland • Project board for potential new student accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuously pushing for 20% cheapest beds in all student accommodation ○ Ensuring further away accommodation is cheaper to allow for students who might have to pay more for travelling into university ○ Continuing research into LGBT+ student accommodation at other universities

Sustainability

Summary	<p>I have really enjoyed doing work on this and learning more about it. The highlight of the year was our massive KeepCup giveaway in September. I am in discussions about the possibility of something similar for next year!</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable materials – discussing with multiple departments to get an update on use of reusable cups and how we can keep improving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of disposable coffee cups has gone down by about 40% across the University and Students' Association since the "latte levy" this year! ○ Considering next steps to drive down disposable cup usage even more • Green Guide – working to complete this with Shay, Vice President Activities and Services. Had submissions from Veg & Vegan Society • Food waste – looking into how to reduce this across the university • Eco-friendly period products – looking into improving our current stock <p>Social Responsibility & Sustainability Committee approved funding to Hey Girls, who try to tackle period poverty and produce organic sanitary products</p>
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting at the University's Sustainability Awards on 28th March • Looking into food waste practices across our campuses – lots of people have been getting in touch about this! • Working to complete our Green Guide to be added to the Students' Association's website as a section on sustainability – there currently isn't anything about this topic on our website!



- Liaising with Hey Girls about their organic sanitary products range and benefits for students

Other

- Working with the Students' Association's International Engagement Coordinator and Edinburgh Global to create and organise the first Europe Week, highlighting positive contributions our students and staff from different European countries make
- Continuing to support the Post Study Work Visa Now campaign
- Spoke on a panel about Mental and Physical Health on Year Abroad organised by Leah, the Undergrad School Rep for LLC
- Supporting the Women's Liberation Campaign in the fantastic work they are doing for their Fight for the Night march on 2nd April & fundraising evening on 1st April
- I'll be attending NUS Scotland (21st-22nd March) and NUS UK (9-11th April) conferences as a delegate for the University of Edinburgh – I'll post updates from this on my social media.
- Contact me at vpcommunity@eusa.ed.ac.uk with any questions!

VP Education: Diva Mukherji

Summary

Well I've mostly spent the past month crying because it's the last student council and I'm going to miss this so much!! Not necessarily public speaking (lol) but this forum of engaged students who really care about their and their peers' experience!

Decolonising the Curriculum

Summary	We love a curriculum which is representative of marginalized people's experiences and critiques the unequal power distribution in society!
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource hub for race and ethnicity related research: Working with Edinburgh Global and the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences and academics across the University to create this. We've secured funding for a research project to do scoping work for this, so working on next steps.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sparqs conference: presented to over 50 people from across Scotland on the relationship between co-curricula and decolonizing the curriculum. • Decolonizing Old College's art collection: Participated in a workshop. The Collections team is looking to get students in all disciplines engaged in this project in the future so keep a look out for more information! • Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum Task Group: had its final meeting, and produced a series of recommendations. They are quite expansive and detailed, we're now working out how to establish it as a priority with staff members and workshopping some cool ideas, so stay tuned! • Open Education Resources department: Hosted a workshop on the importance of decolonizing the curriculum. • Attended and chaired a session at the Equality Practitioners Dialogue on Intersectionality, which brought together representatives from organizations across Scotland.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop the resource hubs and look at how we can have sustained student engagement into the development of them.

Inclusive Learning Environments

Summary	<p>This work involves looking at how we create learning and teaching environments which are supportive and inclusive of people from different backgrounds.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Study: Kai, your VP Welfare, and I have delayed the final passing of the policy to the end of May! We hosted a great open forum with students to work through the current policy and the implications of the amendment change. We thought of various tactics we could use to have a better dialogue between students and the University stakeholders. We met one of the main Uni stakeholders as well, and are working closely on getting particular elements of Stage 1 and Stage 2 concrete, and the parts of Stage 3 that haven't been fleshed out yet. We'll bring the most updated version of the policy to students as soon as we have it, so we can continue to incorporate your ideas. • I've been working with some BME students and the MasterCard Foundation programme on how to better support BME Mental Health, both within the institution and local groups. We've developed some proposals on possible projects, so will have some exciting things coming up!



- Supporting the **Lecture Recording Benefits workshops!** So far there has been one with Maths and Physics.
- Working with the **Widening Participation team** to create a more structured relationship between the WP strategy and Students' Association departments (particularly Peer Learning and Support and Activities). We're looking at possibly developing WP/Peer Support schemes, and better supporting the Participation Grant.
- Facilitated the **BME Focus Groups**, part of the Thematic Review, with students on KB and George Square campuses, understanding how to support BME students better.
- We're looking at how to incorporate work around **decolonizing the curriculum** into the **Thematic Review**, as it's a theme that's consistently brought up.
- Working on a task group looking at **Degree Transfers**, and how to best make that process transparent and accessible to students.
- Continuing the work Kai, VP Welfare, has done on the area, looking at **how Equality and Diversity issues are represented and spoken about at University level**. Currently there isn't a committee that focuses on student E&D issues, so there's a big review on Senate committees, and ensuring E&D is appropriately represented will be a focus.

Next Steps

- Hosting a forum with students who have been **on Interruption of Studies** to understand what should be included in Stage 1 and 2 of the process.
- Continue to lobby the University to rework the mandatory element of Stage 3 of Support for Study.
- Host more sessions with students interested in learning about Support for Study and the implications of the amendment change.
- Hopefully some cool **BME Mental Health projects** will be coming up, so taking the ideas to students and having their input on it!
- Lobbying for **better committee structures** (and accountability) for University level discussions around Equality and Diversity.

Other

- Working with a group on Course Enhancement Questionnaires, and making them as effective as possible.
- Participated on a great panel hosted by Girl Up on the relationship between women students and austerity, and the impacts it has.



- Thank you to all of you!!!!!!! You've made our time as sabbatical officers so so special, and this job can be hard sometimes but it's been your energy which has kept us going!!!
- The Student Awards is on the 4th of April!!!! It'll be super fun and celebrating some super cool achievements by students, and guarantee a very fun evening! Tickets are £15, and on sale on our website!
- Woohoo you're the best (also thank you for reading on to the end of this whole report)

President: Eleri Connick

Summary

THANK YOU - I can't believe our sabbatical tenure is nearly over and it's the last Student Council of the year. Thank you so so much for taking a chance and voting me in as your 2018/19 Students' Association President – it's been such a privilege and I feel incredibly lucky to have had this experience. It truly has been an absolute whirlwind. Huge congratulations to our fantastic new Sabbatical Officers who take up office on Monday June 10th - I already know they are going to achieve incredible things! Finally, super good luck to everyone with dissertations, final essays and assignments, and exams - you're awesome!!

We Are Edinburgh

Summary	The We Are Edinburgh activity is designed to start building a student community, where we celebrate our achievements more!
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasurer Mentoring Sessions: Liaising with the University Finance team to plan trial sessions taking place in late March/early April ahead of a full roll out from September. • Incredibly excited to invite everyone to We Are Edinburgh: End of Semester Takeover of McEwan Hall on Friday 5 April - the first staff and student end of semester social. We'll be played into the evening by the Edinburgh University Jazz Orchestra and our Big Cheese DJs. Buy your £3 tickets (proceeds going to Motor Neurone Disease Research) on the Students' Association website – see you on the dance floor! • ECA Art On Sale: Work of the graduating class of Edinburgh College of Art will be on sale in the University gift shop ahead of summer graduations with a long term aim of having a permanent unit in the Edinburgh Futures Institute, to be discussed at the May Estates board.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gearing Up Event: Introduced the We Are Edinburgh concept to the Induction Team at the University, to make sure we demonstrate that we care about the students and our proud of their amazing achievements in Welcome Week.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring: Identifying other members of University Professional Services who could offer mentoring to students, such as Events and Protocol who could offer expertise on event planning. • Boat Race: Organising buses to Glasgow for the annual Scottish Boat Race on Saturday 25 May. More information about the Boat Race will be sent out at the start of April.

Members

Summary	<p>The Students' Association exists for our members, it is essential that what members want, is at the heart of what we do.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Discount: My paper to Fee Strategy Group got approved so graduating Edinburgh students will get the full 10% discount on their PG study courses. Work is beginning with the University's Student Recruitment and Admissions team to look at an enhanced package and what should be offered to Edinburgh students staying on for further study. • It's Okay Not To Be Okay video: published week commencing March 29th! Incredibly thankful to the wonderful students who took part and shared their stories. A really impactful video and excited to share it with you all. • Wellbeing Slides motion: Working with Andy Shanks (Director of Student Wellbeing) on this. Started discussions with University staff in all colleges. • International Students' participation grant: We had a small amount of funding left so we're working with the Sports Union to produce guides on 'How to join a club/society' in different languages for Welcome Week 2019. • University Transport Consultants: attended a Medical School Council meeting and Sports Union General Meeting to get feedback on the issues impacting these campuses and training sessions. Waiting for a strategy to go to University Executive over the summer. • Principal's Question Time at King's Buildings went well and look forward to next year's sabbatical team growing these next year.



Next Steps

- **Edinburgh College of Art:** Working with staff in to see whether old pianos can be repurposed to be put on different campuses for students to jump on and play throughout the day.

Other

- Went to the official **opening of 'Shirley Hall' at Little France**. Lecture Theatre B was renamed after Dame Steve Shirley - an incredible philanthropist who dedicates her life to supporting Autism research including at the University of Edinburgh. Delighted to attend with Medical Students and members of the Medical Student Council.
- Check out our **shortlist for the Student Awards**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOPpFi-xgk0>
- Attended **Edinburgh University Boxing Club's first 'Homecoming' event** in 15 years - an incredible night in Potterrow where the Edinburgh students were absolutely incredible and brought many medals home. An incredible student organised event - excited to see it grow and grow.
- Spoke at the **HUMANE conference** on February 21st giving a presentation on Generation Z and the impact on higher education.
- Invited to speak at the **Edinburgh Award Celebration Reception** - very excited for this and to see all of the amazing students receive their award for their hard work and commitment!
- Preparing for **handover week 2019!**

Vice President Activities and Services: Shenan Davis-Williams

Summary

I am sad it's my final Student Council as a Sabb, but also excited to see what next year's team have in store for us! This report is an update and will cover my work in my remaining months.

Events

Summary	We've had exciting events going on this month and I have been a part of planning future events too which has been very exciting!
Actions	• Sports v Socs –FINAL SvS of the year, a Massaoke theme, on the 27 th March!



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' Awards – Lots of work and preparation for the Student Awards. We have our shortlists and cannot wait to celebrate with you all on the 4th April! • 2019 Sports Day – We had to cancel the Sports Day due to having limited time to work on it. • Social Enterprise Student Showcase – Showcased the amazing work Student Enterprise groups are doing, we hope to have another one at some point! • Graduation Ball 2019 – planning for this year's grad ball! Date confirmed and working closely with the team so the night is amazing and affordable! • St. Patrick's Day – Huge weekend packed with rugby and St. Patrick's Day. We had promotions on our food and drink plus fun activities and competitions! • Welcome Week – Involved in Welcome Week planning for 2019 and hope to make this year bigger and better than ever before! • Queen Night – Big Queen club night this month which I am sure you all saw the promotion for! • Promotional Video – helping with the promotional side of things, from briefing videos to being in them! • Summer Sessions – with the nice weather finally arriving we have a new night launching in Teviot so keep your eyes peeled!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work on affordable drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) • Dusty will make appearances throughout the semester. • Sports Day – handover fully so hopefully it can go ahead next year. • Sports v Socs – reflect on SvS this year and explore improvements.

Student Engagement

Summary	This month has been full of student engagement! This is truly going to be the part of the job that I am going to miss most.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections! – The week was incredible. Lots of lecture shout-outs and activity across campuses. I look forward to welcoming the new team!



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Reps – supporting reps on their projects and organising meetings. We have our final Exec meeting, which is going to be sad, as I have been blessed with an amazing team this year! A shout-out to all of you! • ECA – provided Albertina with new furniture - hope to continue improving the space. • Society support – Worked on and improved the societies handover guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further discussion to progress with an online booking system. - Implementing Microsoft Teams for societies to share and swap skills, advice and events. - Creating a package of fun deals for societies with external companies so our societies have more access to exciting events and activities. • Gaelic Committee – creating a strong plan based around implementing Gaelic into the future steps of the Students' Association. • Anti-cyberbullying – New clause added to our societies' constitution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with Anti Bullying Alliance to share awareness materials - ISG have confirmed spaces for students in talks on Digital Footprint. - Working with ISG to explain the impacts of online harassment. - Working to implement this into the Student Code of Conduct. • Strategic plan development – lots of work on our strategic plan - running workshops and sub-committees. • Islamophobia Awareness Day – Working with the Islamic Society to ensure the Students' Association and Uni support and organize events for this day.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Reps – Continuing support and saying goodbyes! • ECA - support their needs and ensure a proper handover is given including info about the degree show grant so this work can be continued. • Anti-cyberbullying– continue work on policy implementation and raise awareness on the issue. • Continue to push support for our societies in the services we provide. • Continue work with ISoc on an Islamophobia Awareness Day.

Improving Student Services



Summary	Working on a very varied selection of our services.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Green Guide' – Hope to have this wrapped up so we can promote it soon. • Humpit – Continues to flourish! Lots of fun and exciting surprises to come! • Digital Transformation - Looking at ways we communicate to students and evaluating the current website. • Library café – discussion about extending operating hours during peak times plus more desk space allowing food. • Edinburgh Collective – Working with a group of students who are pushing to make the University and the Students' Association more sustainable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New drinks menu – brand new mocktail menu, want to have more non-alcoholic options. Plus launching a cocktail menu for the summer weather!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Green Guide' –to have this out on our website by the end of April. • Library café – push for changes before next exam period. • Edinburgh Collective – To continue to support this project and see what we can do to make our outlets more sustainable.

Other

- **My final couple of months:** The next couple of months will be spent rounding up current projects and creating a strong handover for the incoming VPAS. I will focus on expanding awareness around online harassment, completing the Green guide and making sure we have an incredible list of upcoming events including Grad Ball and Welcome Week. I will also dedicate my time towards supporting projects run by students, and towards making final touches to our drink and food menus, making them as accessible and varied as they can be!
- **Thank you:** I would just like to say a quick thank you to all of you for making this year so enjoyable and for electing me into position in the first place. It has truly been the best year and has allowed me to make some incredible changes. Thank you for all of your support, I am going to miss it more than anything!



VP Welfare: Kai O'Doherty

Summary

Key areas of focus over the past month have been: elections outreach (congrats to Oona, my successor!), further student engagement over the Support for Study amendment, creating a proposal for consent training in Residences for 800+ students, and BME Thematic Review work. **It's been a blast working for you all for two years, thanks for your help and support <3**

Improving Mental Health Support

Summary	This includes work around: mental health support, University policies, year abroad help, and more.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition to Mandatory Interruptions in the 'Support for Study' Policy: VPE & I held a meeting with students to explain policy proposals and gather feedback; we met with Gavin Douglas (Deputy Secretary), particularly needing clarity on who the policy applies to, University commitments to students on Interruption of Studies, and further student consultation. • Year Abroad Mental Health Survey Launched: Worked with Edinburgh Global to write and spread a survey to gather feedback. Will be fed in to future support work. • Men's Mental Health Campaign: Following last month's motion, I'm working with the Uni and interested students to re-form our suicide prevention campaign to centre men's mental health. This campaign would launch in Sept 2019. • Student Mental Health Training: have developed a proposal with the Uni to coordinate mental health training for students. Will depend on whether the Uni funds the project, but if approved it would begin in Sept 2019.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Interruptions: focus group sessions with students; awaiting a skeleton document of Interruption of Studies support the Uni would promise; investigating alternatives.



- **Men's Mental Health Campaign:** researching best practice; feedback options to men students for review; design the new visual campaign.

Combatting Sexual Violence

Summary	This includes: growing the awareness raising campaign #NoExcuse, training, and addressing the procedures survivors/victims access.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Res Life Consent Training Pilot for September: have work with Rape Crisis Scotland, Res Life, Sexpression and the Uni Taskforce to create a promising pilot for peer-led consent training in University residences! A pet project of mine for years, I'm so excited this might happen! • Sexual Violence Policy: have been tasked with making a draft for a stand-alone policy/process, to ease students' access to understanding the process for disclosure, reporting and support. • Support: our push for the Uni to hire Sexual Violence Liaison Officers has been successful, and there's a bid for funding up to four SVLOs for next year! We will find out in April if this is successful. • Disclosing or Reporting Structures: reviewing the mechanisms for students to disclose (and get support), to anonymously record their experience, and to report. • #NoExcuse: launched a new set of posters and digital materials, with new phrases based on suggestions from students. We will also soon have banners in Potterrow and KB Library! The student fund is being used, but there's still more!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Violence Policy: drafting a policy for the next meeting of this committee. • Res Life Training: connecting Rape Crisis Scotland and Res Life to nail down the details and potential scale of the pilot. Aiming for Sept/Oct 2019 launch.

Centering Anti-Oppression



Summary	<p>This includes: to support the Liberation Officers' work, improve support for trans students, and enhance support for international students, parents, carers and mature students.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Review of Support for BME Students: Isabella, our BME Officer, VPE and I have held focus groups for the review. These will be collated, a survey will be sent, and the Thematic Review Panel will collate recommendations for the University. • Women of Colour Mural: met with Uni Estates on potential locations, which is trickier than expected but will continue work on this. The mural can be created in the meantime! • Fight for the Night: the Women's Campaign is holding the annual demo on April 2nd – check it out! • Edinburgh Students Support Trans People: A Collab Video: all Students' Association Sabbs in Edinburgh have agreed to collab in a video about how we all stand up for trans rights, in a climate of transphobia. Stay tuned! • Elected our first Trans & Non-Binary Officer: congrats to Elliot for being elected!
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BME Thematic Review: finalizing student feedback methods; the Panel will interview Uni services on their provision; recommendations will be published in the summer/first semester, which have to be enacted. • Mural: finalize a location with Isabella!

Other

- Elections were a great success, and so excited to see what next year's team can do!!
- I know that missing Student Council is unacceptable in holding me to account, but I'm on compassionate leave for two weeks. Do email me with any questions, though!