VP Community: Georgie Harris

Summary

November was a busy month, from events about housing to workshops about sustainable period products. Looking forward to a nice winter break and to seeing everyone again in January for Semester 2 (already!!)

Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The University isn’t currently prioritising automatic voter registration so I’m exploring other ways of pushing it. I’ve attended Community Council meetings to find out about local issues affecting students, and working on endorsing a People’s Vote on Brexit. | **Automatic voter registration:**  
  - Creating a paper outlining benefits for students and the University.  
  - Securing written backing from Lothian Valuation Joint Board (electoral registration office) through a letter of support to the University.  
  - Discussing it at the Student Admin & Support Board  
**Local community:**  
- Attending Community Councils (Southside, Old Town, Tollcross) to address issues affecting students, and represent UoE students  
  - Discussing the Street Assist scheme – if you have comments/experiences with them get in touch.  
- **People’s Vote campaign:**  
  - Spoke at the Scotland for a People’s Vote launch.  
  - Shared details of People’s Vote related events hosted by our student societies.  
  - Publicised how to contact your local MP and find out who your constituency MP is. |

Edinburgh University Students’ Association is a charity (SC015800) and a company limited by guarantee (SC429897) registered in Scotland. Registered Office: Potterrow, 5/2 Bristo Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9AL
Next Steps

- Planning different approaches to ensuring full University commitment to AVR.
- Drop-in events for next semester with local MPs – all students are constituents and can ask their MP for help/ advice (or lobby them!)

Housing

Summary

Organised a housing event, attended by local councilors from the City Centre wards and surrounding areas (like Marchmont and Leith Walk); Members of Scottish Parliament; representatives from two of our local MPs’ offices; the Living Campaign; our Advice Place.

Actions

- Ran a successful housing event.
- Spoken to local MPs - will meet with the convener of the council’s housing committee and discuss strategies to include student accommodation in planning laws, making a certain % of it affordable.
- Future of housing in Scotland - attending a roundtable at the beginning of December representing students.
- LGBT+ student accommodation - Continuing research (get in touch!)
- Part Time Student Rep - Met about issues faced in university owned student accommodation.
- International Students Rep - working on how to inform international students about their housing rights in an easily accessible form.
- Student housing co-op - Attending meetings about potential new development.

Next Steps

- Meeting the convener of the City of Edinburgh Council’s housing and economy committee to discuss affordable student accommodation.
- Working on improving students’ knowledge of their rights as tenants.
- Continuing research into LGBT+ student accommodation at other universities.

Sustainability

Summary

Attended the NUS Sustainability Summit at Manchester Metropolitan Students’ Union, came away excited with lots of new thoughts and ideas!

Actions

- **NUS Sustainability Summit and Student Eats conference** – Attended to hear from other SUs about sustainability initiatives going on around the country.
“Environmenstrual” Workshop - Organised with Women’s Environmental Network, for students to learn more about sustainable period products available and the pros and cons of these.
   - Discussed periods being taboo and ways of getting around that.
   - Explained more about plastic waste caused by so many period products.
   - If anyone wants to organise similar workshops - let me know!

Eco-friendly period products - focusing on this generally, and how to get these included in our sanitary product distribution.
   - Lilypads - Meeting to discuss the work they do around this area.

Sustain.Ed event - planning for our upcoming event to raise awareness around the theme of reuse.
   - Asking societies and groups to get - feel free to get in touch

VP Activities and Services, Shay, and I are planning our “Green Guide” to provide eco-friendly but affordable shopping alternatives.
   - Meeting with people from Veg and Vegan Soc about providing cheap student recipes avoiding meat or dairy.

Ecosia – exploring it as a default search engine instead of Google.
   - Met with the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Department this week to discuss.
   - Speaking to Sabbatical Officers from universities that have switched to see how they achieved this

Meeting with the marketing manager of the Edinburgh wide cycle hire scheme to discuss student offers and how to increase student to use of the bike scheme (as well as good areas to have docking stations).

Planning events and panels for Sustain.Ed.

Other

- I’ve had lots of meetings around Bedlam Theatre and potential future development it might need, attending the monthly Bedlam Forum with reps from Bedlam and the Students’ Association
- Transport! Me and Eleri (President) have been going around campuses to film students talking about their views on transport to and from their campus. We’ve
created a video to present to members of University Court making a case for the urgent need to implement short term ways of improving our transport situation.

- I ran and spoke at an event for Mental Health and Wellbeing Week on mental health and well-being for students on their year abroad, alongside Leah who is the Undergrad School Rep for LLC
  - This was a really successful week organised by Kai (VP Welfare) and it was great to play a part in it and chat to students at our stall in the main library.

**VP Education: Diva Mukherji**

**Summary**

This month has been spent doing a load of workshops with some great groups of students, and it’s been so great hearing the diversity of experiences across the university!

**Diversifying the Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversifying the Curriculum</strong> is looking at how we can use the curriculum as a space to represent people from different backgrounds, and understand the various power dynamics which exist in University spaces. This work broadly looks at students and staff working together to understand what “diversifying” looks like, and how that can work in different subject areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Workshops with various groups of students</strong>: so far, we’ve done workshops on diversifying the curriculum (and curriculum development more broadly) with some programme reps, members of liberation campaigns and a wider decolonizing the university workshop with PALS leaders. We’ve had attendance from students belonging to all three colleges, and have gauged how students want to proceed. Along with diversification of curriculum, we’re going to look at diversity within academia and University more broadly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Symposium on teaching about race and ethnicity</strong>: Attended a meeting with the BME Officer, Isabella, with academics across the University about how it teaches about race, and how it can be developed. The</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
focus was on the new interdisciplinary course about race, which is in the process of being developed, but became much wider.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We’re having follow up meetings with various academics about how we can develop opportunities for students to work on these projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuing to have workshops with student groups, and develop a resource bank students can access with information about diversifying and decolonizing the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diverse Role Models project! (Big up WellComm for their work on this!!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inclusive Learning Environments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’ve been working on ensuring students have appropriate academic and pastoral support from various sources, and that students are feeling comfortable in classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Microaggression Training:</strong> All the RA’s have been trained! We’re integrating it into other training for student leaders, such as program reps, so we’re spreading the awareness as much as we can. I hosted a Microaggressions and Mental Health workshop for Mental Health and Wellbeing Week which generated super interesting conversations! We’re looking at integrating it into existing supervisor training in some schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Personal Tutor System:</strong> Working on a paper which summarizes what forms of academic and pastoral support students require, and how the University can accommodate that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Lecture Recording Policy:</strong> Recorded a Teaching Matters podcast about lecture recordings, and how helpful they can be for different student groups!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Special Circumstances:</strong> Continuing to push for a more consistent and accessible system for students, advocating for it in various College/University committees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Resource Lists:** Working with VP Activities and Services, Shay, on the resource lists policy framework, and looking to ensure students have access to their necessary materials at the lowest personal cost possible.

**Next Steps**

• Integrating Microaggression training into the various forms of Unconscious Bias training which already exists.
• Continuing to develop the resource list policy, and push for transparency in necessary course costs (and evaluating if they’re actually totally necessary and make sure students don’t have to spend loads of money on stuff).

**Other**

• **Library Collections/Edinburgh University Students’ Association internship collaboration:** We’re developing some super cool internship opportunities with the Special Collections department, which will look at the history of different student groups at the University! It’s super exciting, so will keep you updated on when they’re open for applications!
• **Common Marking Scheme evaluation:** Looking at ways for students to understand marking schemes better, and crucially, how to use feedback best. Each school seems to do something different, with feedback/marking/rubrics (huge surprise there), so the School Reps have given us some really helpful information to work with!

**VP Welfare: Kai O’Doherty**

**Summary**

The past month has been focused on planning and running Mental Health & Wellbeing Week, which was a great success! I order my report based on my three key objectives.

**Improving Mental Health Support**
### Summary

This includes: counselling services, the University’s Mental Health Strategy, Mental Health & Wellbeing Week, year abroad support, special circumstances and mental health peer support.

### Actions

- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Week (Nov 12-16):** 60+ events across all campuses ranging from feel good/wellbeing initiatives, to events on men’s mental health, BME experiences, self-harm, eating disorders, and experiences in STEM. Hundreds of staff and students were involved.

- **University Student Mental Health Strategy Refresh:** The current strategy has yielded few measurable results. I’ve spent multiple day-long review sessions to reprioritize the approach, and demand concrete next steps in the strategy. We need to keep an eye on this.

- **Special Circumstances:** A contested proposal to reform the Special Circs process was approved at the first stage, awaiting final approval. This restructure will standardize and anonymize the process, addressing key student issues.

- **Opt-In Policy:** consulted school and programme reps on a proposed policy for students to ‘opt-in’ for the University to inform emergency contacts if they’re worried about your mental health or whereabouts.

### Next Steps

- Mandatory Interruption ‘Support for Study’: continue to lobby to prevent this change in the policy.

- Suicide Prevention: creating a holistic suicide prevention strategy and awareness campaign for Semester 2, along with the President.

- Mental Health 1st Aid: continuing to pursue options to open up this training to more students, if financed by the University.

### Combatting Sexual Violence

#### Summary

This includes: growing the awareness raising campaign #NoExcuse, training, and addressing the procedures survivors/victims access.

#### Actions

- **#NoExcuse,** anti-sexual harassment campaign: interested students are now self-organizing events with our support. Presented the campaign to
1st/2nd year students at the Gender in the Contemporary World lecture. Discussed using the campaign with other SAs in Edinburgh.

- **Sexual Violence Procedures**: the University SV Taskforce met, with plans to roll out Rape Crisis Scotland training to staff. Soon to meet on improving reporting, procedures, and awareness strategies. I attended a conference in London on Sexual Violence in Higher Education, and Rape Crisis training.

- **Code of Student Conduct**: up for review, I successfully lobbied for improvements to the COSC which will address issues survivors have faced with that part of the process.

**Next Steps**

- **#NoExcuse**: a new round of phrases/text will be printed/distributed, based on student submissions. Student-led initiatives will also be supported.

- **Policy & Procedures**: University SV Taskforce sub-groups soon meet to action particular areas. I continue to lobby for a separate Sexual Violence Policy, with particularized support mechanisms.

- **Zero Tolerance**: after last Council’s motion, I am working to finalize a Policy, and improve our processes & training.

**Centering Anti-Oppression**

**Summary**

This includes: to support the Liberation Officers’ work, improve support for trans students, and enhance support for international students, parents, carers and mature students.

**Actions**

- **Trans and non-binary student advocacy**: continuing to fight for a Trans & Non-Binary Liberation Rep, and to do what is possible about the transphobic materials found on campus.

- **Free Moon Cups & Organic Products**: Moon cups arrived! And then ran out (after less than 12 hours)! More are on the way, along with organic tampons and pads. Finalizing plans for ‘emergency’ supplies near bathrooms, too.
• **Benefits Advice**: Universal Credit, the new benefits system predicted to disadvantage thousands of people, is about to begin. Held event advising students on how to access existing benefits before UC is imposed.

• **Thematic Review of Support for BME Students**: met University staff about this review in Semester 2, which will hopefully be useful in the fight to battle institutionalized racism at UoE.

• Met with the Parents’ Rep, with plans for child-friendly meet ups for the students she represents.

**Next Steps**

• University Equality & Diversity Committee: there is no University-level committee tasked with addressing inequality and diversity, besides one on student disabilities and another on Athena Swann (staff- and women-specific). I’m working to change this.

• Finalize plans for the Thematic Review, along with the BME Liberation Officer.

• Childcare/Creche Facilities: a longer-term struggle, continuing to push for the University to provide affordable childcare for student parents, following the Thematic Review of Parents, Carers & Mature Students.

**Other**

• **Vet School**: Nirvana, their undergraduate school rep, and I are strategizing around her campaign to make University halls better suit vet students. I attend their Council.

• Working on the Students’ Association’s next **Strategic Plan** in full-day workshops.

• The Sabb team attend the **University’s Away Day**, with discussions on expansion of student numbers, capital projects, and student experience strategies.

**VP Activities & Services: Shenan Davis-Williams**

**Summary**

Great month with a lot of time planning specific events and meeting with societies and Activities Reps. We had Mental Health and Wellbeing Week, which was possibly one of my favourite weeks in the job so far, and we have also had lots of exciting club nights.
## Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>November was busy with both day and evening events, plus a lot of preparation for future events.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Actions | • **Halloween takeover** - very successful; three locations full of fun activities - a great night with something available for everyone.  
• **ABBA takeover** - great turnout and we are looking into having more takeover nights in future- suggestions welcome!  
• **Reviewing Big Cheese** - managed to lower the price of VKs plus new and improved drinks promotions.  
• **Hydration Station** - available at our club nights keeping students hydrated and providing a more interesting, free alternative to alcohol.  
• **Christmas Calendar** - December will be a month full of exciting club nights, outdoor movie screenings and lots of festive markets.  
• **Sports v Socs** - with £500 of cash prizes, alongside kickback for every member through the door.  
• **New mascot** - present at our club nights, raising awareness for campaigns, elections, fundraisers, activities weeks and events.  
• **Students’ Awards** - combining Activities Awards and Impact Awards into one big celebration.  
• **2019 Sports Day planning** - combining ESCA, the Sports Union and Edinburgh University Students’ Association for a day of fundraising and fun themed activities.  
• **Wellbeing Festival** – Key part of Mental Health and Wellbeing Week. Great day with presence from many societies and external companies, along with lots of fun freebies, massages, painting walls, games and puppies!  
• **Postgraduate events** – looking to increase what we offer – if you are a postgraduate student with ideas/opinions then let me know! |
| Next Steps | • Ensure Christmas events run smoothly with something for all students.  
• Keep club nights busy with a variety of drinks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, available at an affordable price.  
• Continue to promote Dusty the mascot.
• Continue planning Sports Day.
• Reach out to Postgraduate reps for ideas or feedback on events, and organise more events focused towards our postgrad students.

Student Engagement

Summary
Met a lot with societies and Activities Representatives. Each Sabbatical Officer has taken on a campus, mine are ECA and Divinity. This month I have spent a lot of time communicating with ECA.

Actions
• **Society meet and greets** – now finished and went fantastically.
• **Activities Reps** – held one-to-ones with them, helping prioritise objectives and making clear plans to help them achieve goals.
• **ECA SSLCs (Student Staff Liaison Committees)** – Attended, meeting the students and listening to problems, helping where I can.
• **Use of Albertina at ECA** – discussing to see ways we can improve the space with a better heat and eat station better environment.

Next Steps
• **Society meet and greets** – preparing for next semester.
• **Activities Reps** – Continuing support.
• **Maintain communication with ECA** - support their needs.
• **Divinity** - set up a meeting with both the undergraduate and postgraduate reps to see what their objectives are for the year and how I can support them with these.

Improving Student Services

Summary
Working on a very varied selection of our services.

Actions
• **‘Green Guide’** – Working with VP Community, met with Vegetarian and Vegan Society, alongside potential involvement from our Student Voice for Animal Rights society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Menus</strong> - Reviewed some menus - the new Library Bar menu will include more vegetarian and vegan options, alongside a cheap breakfast menu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Room bookings system</strong> - Further discussion taken place, working to see if a new system can be in place at some point next semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Catering</strong> - worked with our Activities Rep for the Faith, Belief Systems and Spiritual Development societies. Ensured catering forms for society events are reworded and more accessible for students to bring in their own catering to fit their dietary requirements the Students’ Association cannot cater for them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Anti-cyberbullying Campaign</strong>: Met with key staff about this campaign. Next steps are to contact people about current campaigns, see how they can help, and speak to the University to tie our work in together, and find case studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>ECA grant</strong>: Various meetings and decided the grant is best focused at students in their final years trying to pay for materials for degree shows. Next steps are to build a strong case study and explore potential funding. Any ECA students or friends of ECA students with ideas that may help, whether it be financial difficulties or information and examples of the impact that good materials can have on your work, please get in touch!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**President: Eleri Connick**

**Summary**

It’s the last report for Semester One – wow wow wow – time has flown by!!

Super super **good luck** for all the exams and essay deadlines coming up – will be thinking of you all and have a wonderful Christmas break!

**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
- **Community:** Have given three presentations on the concept of 'We Are Edinburgh' and how the University must 'show you care' and 'show you are proud' to various University leadership forums. Using these presentations to help with writing the plan for moving forward on student experience.

### Going Forward
- Representing Students at two further University gatherings and have the first meeting for the new action group on student experience.

### 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
- **Finance:** Received lots of feedback from International Students on the **tone of voice** used by University Finance Department. Met with members of the University Finance Team and Edinburgh Global who are going to improve these communications.
- Also agreed that the **regional deans** will look out for any currency devaluation or natural disasters that occur across the globe, so that the University can make sure it contacts any students impacted.
- **Interviews:** On the interview panel for a new Information Services Group Communication position which will be extremely important for students so that students know how to access services easier.
- **Yoga:** Yoga went super well this semester so it’ll be back in the main library in January!
- **Alumni:** Last month at Student Council, a question was asked on the University’s ‘Alumni Discount’. I have now arranged a meeting with the bursaries team to look into this discount and to discuss what other Scottish Unis do for their alumni if they stay on for further studies.
- **Transport:** after working with VP Community on outreach I’m heading to **University Court** next week, presenting your amazing feedback from Easter Bush, KB, Little France and Peffermill about the current transport provision.
Next Steps

- Work with University Finance to reshape the communications going out to students.

Other

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

We are more than just students – **We Are Edinburgh** xoxo