President: Eleri Connick

Summary

Welcome back to another student council! October has been a busy month due to lots of meetings. It all kicked off with University Court, there’s been Students’ Association Trustee Board Subcommittees (People and Culture, Finance, Risk & Audit, and Governance). I have also been attending various University Estate Project boards from KB Nucleus and Teviot redevelopment. Have also been having lots of meetings with University staff from Edinburgh Global to look at support in place for International Students and students on their year abroad. However, here’s some more information on what I’ve been up to!

For meeting of 25/10/18

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. It has been super fantastic seeing the student stories’ come in, which we’ve been sharing on social media each Thursday. Please do keep the stories and pictures coming in!

Actions

- **Community Building:** There are number of key events, which take place within the University each year. Working with Senior Vice Principal to create a calendar of events which both the University and Students’ Association will do more to promote. For example promoting the Christmas lights switch on, University challenge, ECA degree show, Medics Reveal. We want to ensure as many students are able to support their fellow students, and create a community where we all support one another.

- **Cherishing Students:** Have been invited onto a ‘student experience’ communication action group. To look at how the
University should be communicating to students to ensure they feel cherished. This is part of the University’s efforts to have a change in culture.

Next Steps

- An email will be going out to all reps to invite them to start nominating classmates to be featured in the ‘We Are Edinburgh’ social media campaign. We are also keen to hear about any student projects. This email will be in your inbox soon!
- Work with reps to understand what type of communication they’d like to get from the University and how they would feel better connected.
- Continue to meet with students to understand how they think the Students’ Association, University and Schools can best create a sense of community for students.

Members

Summary

The Students’ Association exists for our members and in my time at Edinburgh University I’ve met so many people that are proud of studying here but it can sometimes be disjointed or difficult to engage or have the experience that everyone deserves. As President, I lead on overall representation of students and in the run up to our strategic review, it is essential that what members want, is at the heart of what we do.

Actions

- **Elections!** Welcome to all of our newly elected Post Graduate School reps! Last year, there were nine schools without students standing for a rep position and so it was great that this year all schools had a student running and that there were 94 students compared to 26 students running to be a post graduate school rep!
- **Question Time with the Principal:** I am delighted to invite you all to join the Students’ Association at McEwan Hall on
Tuesday November 6th for ‘Question Time with the Principal. This is your opportunity to ask the Principal about what the University is doing on anything! You can submit questions online or in person on the night! I look forward to seeing you there!

- **MAMMA MIA! An ABBA takeover of PROW:** Working with VP Activities and Services to put on an ABBA night at Potterow. This takeover will be happening on Wednesday November 14th. Should be a fun filled evening where you can singalong to Mamma Mia, listen to back to back ABBA tunes, and enjoy dressing up in your disco gear!

- **Easterbush Cycling:** VP Community and I had our first meeting with a member of the University Estates team to discuss the cycling routes out to Easterbush.

- **Casework:** This month I have spent a lot of time working on student casework. This ability to help students with issues they are facing, is a very important part of the role. So I would like to reemphasize to students that they can email anytime!

- **Alumni:** Attended a workshop on how the University should engage with alumni, and how they can best ensure alumni and alumni-to-be feel part of community beyond their time on campus.

**Next Steps**

- VP Community and I will be arranging to meet with our elected Vet Rep to discuss the Easterbush cycle routes and to understand any short-term solutions that can be put in place whilst plans for new cycle routes are discussed.

- Work with students to better understand what they would want from their University once they have graduated, and look into how many students have used the offer of an Edinburgh graduate as a mentor on Platform One.
Summary

I am committed to making sure that we can make changes to everyone’s experience here to make it fit for the digital age and provide students with a modern experience.

Actions

- **‘A Little Something Extra’**: Every student, regardless of circumstances or background, should be able to enjoy the full student experience at the University of Edinburgh. This is not just to reach the University’s strategic goal of an ‘outstanding student experience’, but to ensure that all students have the opportunity to experience the significant personal development opportunities associated with being a student at the University of Edinburgh. Begun research into what support students from widening participation background do not currently have, to begin writing a paper asking for support from the University.

- **Library Redevelopment**: Have been invited onto the project board to the redevelopment of the library. This is a great opportunity to ensure that what students want from a future library is heard, and that the development meets students’ needs.

- **Alumni links**: 10 cities have been chosen, once the emails go out to those initial cities, 99 students will have received an invitation to those alumni clubs. Hoping that the trial goes well, and that from September 2019, all students who are in the vicinity of alumni networks, whilst on their year abroad are invited to the club events.

Next Steps

- VP Community and I will be going to all campuses over the next few weeks to ensure that we are hearing from all students on what issues they face getting to their campus. Look forward

- Working with the Library Services to work out the best way to get feedback from students to ensure the library of the future is exactly what you, the students, want.
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 FB at ‘Eleri Pres Connick’.

We are more than just students – We Are Edinburgh xoxo

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

*For meeting of 25/10/2018*

**Summary**

This past month has been very busy. As the students are finally settling back in, it has been an exciting few weeks of officially meeting with all of our Representatives and also communicating with a lot of our societies. There have been some exciting events happening, as well as preparation for upcoming events. I have spent a lot of this month attending meetings that are helping towards the progress of achieving some of my bigger objectives. Overall, it has been another exciting month as a Sabbatical, and we have a lot of things coming up that I am looking forward to!

**Events**

| Summary | A massive part of the VPAS (Vice President Activities and Services) role is to insure that we have fun and exciting events for our students to enjoy. By providing successful events it gives our students the opportunity to not only socialise and meet new people, but to have fun and take their mind off of their studies. Our events create a welcoming and engaging atmosphere, and student-lead events also allow students to develop skills within planning and leadership, and so a lot of my role is to support this in any way possible. |
**Actions**

- We had our first Sports v Socs night, where over 2200 students attended and enjoyed the night. Pre-sale tickets sold out after extending the number of tickets available, and our night successfully reached full capacity. It was a fantastic night enjoyed by many and our competitions encouraged societies and sports teams to socialise with each other. I look forward to the next one on November 28th!

- Planning upcoming student nights such as our Abba takeover on November 14th and Halloween on the 31st October. Both of which are set to be fantastic nights and have great prizes available for our students and societies.

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Week (MHWW) Fair. I am organizing a fair for the final day of MHWW, Friday 16th November. The idea behind this event will be to provide a space full of uplifting, relaxing, and stress-busting activities for students to enjoy. Many of our societies will be taking part, and I hope to also see members of the Sports Union and ESCA (Edinburgh Students’ Charities Appeal) joining us. It will be an event for people to try something new, do something nice for someone else, or simply take a break away from their studies and have some ‘me time’. I am still seeking anyone who would like to be involved and volunteer to help, so feel free to contact me.

- I have helped and supported various societies with organizing venues and promoting their upcoming events.

**Next Steps**

- Ensure that our current nights such as Sports v Socs and CRUSH are continuing to be successful, gathering feedback from our students and continually improving in any way necessary.

- Follow up on competitions and create future competitions to encourage combining our societies and sports clubs to help towards improving the community feel at Sports v Socs.

- Work on spreading the word of CRUSH and assessing the turnout. Looking at future themes and working with the LGBT+
community to insure the night is meeting the expectations of our students.

- Make sure that our seasonal events are promoted and successfully planned so that all students can enjoy them.
- Continue to reach out to anybody who may be interested in helping out at MHWW Fair, and to make sure the event runs smoothly.
- Continue to help and support any student events that we have by promoting them where possible and providing any help or guidance when students need.
- Continue to plan events that cater to the needs of different student groups.

### Student Engagement

#### Summary

As Vice President Activities and Services, a massive part of my role is to engage with students and societies to make sure that their views are fully represented. We have a fantastic team of Activities Representatives this year, and there are some of which I am yet to meet as we are waiting for the election results. As we currently do have some of our team already elected, I have spent a lot of time this month engaging with them and planning out the best ways that we can all work together over the coming year.

#### Actions

- We have had various Activities Rep training to make sure that all of our Representatives know what their role entails. We have gone over their objectives for the year and worked out ways in which we can all support and work with each other. Many of our objectives overlap which is fantastic as it means we can focus on similar objectives and won’t need to take on big challenges alone. Contrary to this, each Rep has a unique remit for the year and so there are many aspects that will be covered due to our team having such diverse and bold objectives for the year. The training sessions have also been a...
great opportunity to bond with each other and for our reps to ask any questions they may have about the role. I look forward to organising one-to-ones with all of our Reps so that we can keep each other posted and track progress.

- We have been holding weekly Meet and Greets for our societies based on the category they fall into. Myself and the Activities Representatives specific to the category, have been hosting these sessions and they have been a fantastic opportunity for our societies to meet their Representative and ask any questions. The sessions have also been useful as a way to gain immediate feedback from our societies and find out about any major changes that they want to see this year. It is also a great way for our societies to begin collaborating with each other and to share any upcoming ideas or events, which is an objective of mine this year.

- We had our first Activities Executive meeting of the year. These are chaired monthly by myself and provide the opportunity for the Reps to feedback to each other on any projects, progress and issues that they may have faced throughout that specific month. It is a good way for me to hear any comments that our societies have made and to know which issues should be prioritised.

- We have had various lunches and meetings with all of our Student Representatives throughout the month, which has been really enjoyable. We have been able to hear all of the plans and ideas that they have for this year. Everyone is very passionate and motivated which is exciting.

- I have been in regular contact with both the Divinity and ECA (Edinburgh College of Art) Representatives as those are the two campuses that I will be working closely with this year. There are exciting plans already in place to look at the food options at ECA. I have also attended, and will continue to attend, the various SSLCs (Student Staff Liaison Committee) at ECA, which are a great way to hear feedback from the Course Reps and find out the specific needs of our ECA students. We
will be looking into improving the King’s Buildings shuttle bus times due to music students having to commute from both Alison House to KB in limited time, alongside the needs of our KB campus students.

Next Steps

- Continue to work closely with the Activities Reps and to meet them regularly to allow them to give any feedback, but to also ask for any help or guidance they may need.
- Meet with more of our societies and make them aware of the services we have available that may help them throughout the coming year.
- Keep up to date with both the students of Divinity and ECA, attending all meetings where possible and to ensure I am hearing the wants and needs of these students.
- I look forward to meeting our newly elected Representatives after our by-elections and providing the necessary training to the new Activities Reps.

Improving Student Services

Summary

Student services are a big part of my role and this title can cover a lot. I have been looking at improving student funding to make more opportunities possible for all students, I have also been looking at ways to improve student safety within our events and ways to encourage our students to be more sustainable.

Actions

- Myself, Eleri (President) and Paul (Sports Union President), alongside others, have assessed the applications for our Participation Grant, and these students will be hearing back about this shortly. We also reviewed the first ever International Participation Grant. Both of which will have a second round opening in second semester for students to apply.
• Georgie (Vice President Community) and I met with a student to discuss his dissertation thesis, which was on green purchasing and whether students tend to buy eco-friendly products, and why. This gave us the idea of creating a “Green Guide” – a resource for people to find out where in Edinburgh they can buy more eco-friendly food and products on a student-friendly budget.

• A big objective of mine this year was to look into funding for ECA students towards their materials for their degree shows. I have been attending various meetings about this and have started to build a case towards why this is a necessity.

• I have been communicating with Retail about vegetarian options across multiple venues to continue and improve the current selection.

• A ‘Hydration Station’ to be put in place for some of our club nights. This will be flavoured water available for free in our venues to ensure that students are drinking more water to improve student health and safety, and to make this happen in a more fun and accessible way.

**Next Steps**

• Continue to promote the fantastic Participation Grant and International Participation Grant (made available by our President, Eleri) for next semester to allow all students the chance to get involved with extra-curricular activities.

• Further the work on producing a ‘Green Guide’ and to continue researching ways in which both the Students’ Association and our students can be more sustainable.

• Continue to work towards ECA student funding and create a strong case to support this.

• Look into our current menus and meal deals to make sure that our options are satisfying the dietary requirements of all students.

• Ensure the Hydration Station is in place at our club nights and to assess the success of this and hopefully expand out to all of our big nights.
Other

- Anti-cyberbullying Campaign: I am continuing to work on this, although this past month has not allowed me to make as much progress as I had hoped. I am still looking for any individuals who have an interest in working with me on this or anyone that is comfortable to speak up about any personal experience they may have had. This will help towards the campaign and help to show why cyber safety is so crucial amongst our students.

VP Welfare: Kai O’Doherty

For meeting of 25/10/2018

Summary

The past month has been focused on launching & growing the #NoExcuse campaign, pushing for reforms to the complaints process, improving mental health support for different groups of students, educating on trans issues, and so much more – have a read! I order my report based on my three key objectives.

Improving Mental Health Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>A key priority for this year is improving support for students with mental ill health &amp; enhancing wellbeing initiatives in the University. This includes work around: counselling services, the University’s Mental Health Strategy, Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Week, year abroad support, special circumstances and mental health peer support.</th>
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| Actions | • **Year Abroad** support: under the University’s Service Excellence programme of improvement, the Go Abroad team and systems are undergoing massive change – but little is focused on student wellbeing, as this is the role of the PT in theory. I’ve been working and meeting to resolve this issue, and welfare is now back in scope of the project. |
Mental Health & Wellbeing Week (MHWB Week): planned for Nov 12-16th, and the event submission deadline has passed with so many events proposed! Our key focus areas are: campuses beyond George Square, men’s mental health, liberation, and change-making campaigns.

‘Support for Study’ / Interruption of Studies: the University is proposing to expand the ‘Support for Study’ policy to allow staff to force a student to take an interruption because of concerns about their health/wellbeing and that impact on others. We unequivocally oppose giving the University the power to interrupt a student based on chronic mental health issues, and have opposed this proposition for over three years. I’ve compiled research on where this has failed students elsewhere, and will continue to press our points.

Support in Private Halls: Met with ResLife and Andy Shanks (Director of Wellbeing Services) to discuss how to get relevant mental health information to our students in private halls. A forum of various private halls companies is to be convened, and Georgie (VPC) will take over.

Student Mental Health Strategy Refresh: Attending workshops to review the University’s MH Strategy, and set realistic but ambitious goals for the strategy.

Next Steps

- MHWB Week: this is always an intense project for the VP Welfare, so most of November will be spent running this week!
- Year Abroad support: meeting with key actors in Service Excellence to determine welfare support plans.
- ‘Support for Study’: continue to lobby to prevent this change in the policy.
- The University’s Mental Health Strategy: continuing to input on the review of this Strategy, along with Eileen (Disabled Students’ Officer).
- Special Circumstances: attending key meetings and workshops to push for the reform of this process.
Combatting Sexual Violence

Summary
Addressing sexual violence and harassment is a second key aim. This includes: growing the awareness raising campaign #NoExcuse, training for staff and students, and addressing the policy and procedures survivors/victims access.

Actions
- **#NoExcuse**, anti-sexual harassment campaign: after a successful Welcome Week launch, the campaign successfully supported a week of events by the Consent Collective (including a live panel show, which I participated in), and supported the training of 600 student leaders in Bystander Intervention Training. An open event to further the campaign saw 60+ students from across the University start planning further events, from theatre to panels and more. Also met with FemSoc, Sexpression and the Sports Union further on the campaign.

- **Sexual Violence Policy & Procedures**: have collated a report to lobby the University for better processes in supporting disclosures and investigations of sexual violence by students. Key asks are advocating for the University to hire Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) to support students through the process, to professionalize & train complaints investigators, and to invest in robust data & case study management systems. I met with Academic Services to see how we can amend the Code of Student Conduct accordingly, and met with key University stakeholders to see how non-Code elements of survivor support can be actioned.

- **PhD experiences at King’s Buildings**: I’ve met with the head of the Equality & Diversity Committee at the College of Science &
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Engineering, Niamh Shortt, to discuss how to tackle staff-student sexual harassment at KB, which is a common complaint from PhD students there. Have met with students who have experienced this as well.

Next Steps

- **#NoExcuse**: expand student and staff engagement with the campaign by facilitating student ideas from the open meeting; begin holding outreach stalls across campus.
- **Policy & Procedures**: meet with other members of the University’s Sexual Violence Taskforce to share our proposals, and get support. Work on the different elements through the Taskforce’s sub-groups, but push for quicker action.
- **Zero Tolerance**: should the motion pass, I’ll work to publicize our policy and give clear instructions in our venues on how people can get help if they’re feeling harassed.
- **Gender in the Contemporary World**: I will be on a panel during this non-honours course with other students, to talk about student organizing against sexual violence.
- **Conferences and trainings**: I’ll be attending a training in London called ‘Tackling Sexual Violence & Harassment in Higher Education’ in November, hearing from experts in the field; I’ll be attending Rape Crisis Scotland Training also.

Centering Anti-Oppression

Summary

Liberation is at the core of what the Students’ Association does, and another key objective this year is 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**: following the pronoun badge press frenzy, I was on a Sexpression panel on trans student experiences, which had 50+ students engage in-depth discussion. I’ve also conducted ‘Trans 101’ trainings
with Students’ Association staff and the University’s Student Systems team, who implement name/gender-changes. We have also responded to the Gender Recognition Act Consultation, based on students’ submissions.

- **Parents’ Space in Teviot**: a space for students who are parents is now available in the Teviot Study, with some facilities and child-friendly furniture.
- **Free Sanitary Products**: most bulk supplies spaces are up-and-running, although Moon Cups have yet to arrive.
- **International students**: met with the International Students’ Rep and the International Students’ Forum to discuss particular issues those reps will work on. In particular, I am working on educating students on avoiding scams, as there has been a recent bought of horrible scams. Also met with the Confucius Institute staff to discuss issues Chinese students face, and how to best support and connect with each other.
- **Changing Places**: discussions have gone positively following the motion, and space may be available at the Wellbeing Centre (7 Bristo Square), although this is not confirmed.
- **Met with the Mature Students’ Rep**
- **Met with a student and Gavin Douglas (Deputy Secretary)** to discuss the inadequacy of the complaints process to support students complaining about racism – a common issue.
- **Continuing regular meeting with the Director of the Student Disabilities Service in rethinking how to widen the service to more students, especially around mental health support without a diagnosis.**

**Next Steps**

- **Sanitary products**: to push for organic options to replace the current selection; installing emergency boxes of products outside of bathrooms in buildings across campus, for single products rather than bulk supply.
- **International students**: research other student unions’ anti-scam campaigns, and support the reps on their plans.
Continue to investigate better ways to engage with, and support, Chinese students.

- Changing Places: follow up with other aspects of the motion, and confirm location.
- Reporting process: many issues students find with reports of racism could also be addressed by changes suggested in cases of sexual violence, such as having Liaison Officers, trained investigators, and a supportive process. Will continue to investigate.
- Thematic Review on Support for BME Students: this will begin in Semester 2, but I will help shape who sits on the committee – aiming to expand membership to include the BME Officer.

Other

- This month involved a few all-day or lengthy meetings, including University Court, Senate and the Students’ Association Trustee Board.
- Vet School: Nirvana, their undergraduate school rep, and I are strategizing around her campaign to make University halls better suit vet students.
- Working on the Students’ Association’s next Strategic Plan in full-day workshops.
- The Students’ Association is undergoing a Digital Engagement revamp, and are investing significant funds in rethinking our website, app, and digital engagement. The Sabbs are working closely with the staff lead on this.
- Interviewing for a new International Engagement Coordinator at the Students’ Association.

Vice President Education: Diva Mukherji

For meeting of 25/10/18

Summary

The MOST exciting thing that’s happened is – all the reps have been elected!!! Shout out to all the school reps! We had our first school rep forum a few weeks ago, and it was so great to meet most of the reps and really hear what they want to work on. Not to be sentimental, but
Diversifying the Curriculum

**Summary**
Work around this is looking at how we can use the curriculum to represent a diverse group of voices and backgrounds.

**Actions**
- So far, we’re continuing conversations with academics in what diversifying the curriculum can look like, and it’s super interesting! The task group has been making some really great progress in working out how we convey these messages to staff.
- I’ve been working on speaking to various student groups to understand how we can create a framework where student voices are consistently a part of these discussions.
- Discussions with the resource list department to potentially develop a project where students can suggest materials directly to course organizers.

**Next Steps**
- Gathering more data, and working with academics to understand how to create frameworks for collaboration.
- Working on projects which relate to wider issues with diversity and representation on campus; a lack of representational figures can have an impact on students from marginalized backgrounds feeling alienated, and we need to address it!
- Collating reports on the relationship between curriculum content, representation on campus and the BME attainment gap.
- Understanding the University’s relationship with the Race Equality Charter, and looking at how to move the University to a place to be awarded it.
- Working on developing a campaign around the importance of decolonizing the curriculum, and what that means and looks like.
### Inclusive Learning Environments

**Summary**  
Conversations about how the PT system can be made more consistent and supportive are ongoing, and I’ve been gathering data on how similar systems work at various other institutions (and best practice from within the university) to see how that can shape what is eventually implemented. Similarly with the microaggression training, we’re still spreading it through to as many avenues as we can, including in training for PG supervisors along with professional services.

**Actions**

- We’re doing microaggression training for all the Resident Assistants! This is going to be super great and potentially so helpful and beneficial for so many students!
- Working with the Advice Place to create a document of the main issues students have had with their PT’s, so we can make sure the new system addresses as many of these grievances as possible. This includes looking at the systems where students can know of and easily access other support services.
- Working on the Special Circumstances review, and advocating for a more consistent system for students across the University at various committees.

**Next Steps**

- Staying looped into the conversations around PT system improvements, and ensuring we’re feeding in student concerns.

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### Alternative Approaches to Learning

**Summary**  
The Student Partnership Agreement applications are closed! Having heard some whispers of what some of the applications are, I’m so excited to see them come to fruition. And as we saw at the SPA event a few weeks ago which looked at some projects from last
year, there’s space for a lot of them to become something schools do every year!

**Actions**

- Working with the resource list department to ensure students have the simplest possible access to reading materials required, and looking at how students can also use it for a method of feedbacking thoughts on reading list content.
- Collating methods of best practice related to feedback! We’re looking at doing exercises with students so we can figure out exactly how to optimize the feedback students are getting.
- Helping shape elements of IAD programs which are offered to staff; this includes looking at student participation and engagement in education and around inclusive and diverse teaching.
- Submitted a sparqs proposal about how using co-curricula is an essential method to decolonize the curriculum!
- A discussion that is increasingly happening is around how to teach large classes, i.e. how to keep a class of 400 engaged. The most crucial part of this conversation is continuously raising the reason classes have become so large and understanding all the associated issues, but we’re thinking about how lecturers can ensure students are engaged.

**Next Steps**

- Assisting the SPA board and helping as many projects as we can come to life!
- Continuing to spread methods of co-curricula, and seeing how we can embed certain practices at school and college level.
- Getting opinions from student groups on the best feedback they’ve received.
- Understanding the most effective forms of engaging assessment and feedback, to see how we can embed them in schools.
Vice President Community: Georgie Harris

For meeting of 25/10/18

Summary

Seems like only yesterday it was the last Student Council! This has been a busy month of welcoming all our students back, and it’s been fab getting to meet loads more people over the past few weeks.

Community Engagement

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<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>I’ve continued to work on pushing automatic voter registration to the University, making the case as to why it would be so beneficial to implement.</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Automatic voter registration:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Liaising with relevant university staff over the implementation of automatic voter registration – as always, open to any thoughts from students about this, and why they would support it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Collecting information from other universities (Sheffield, Leeds and co – the big names in student satisfaction) to better make our case</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparing a paper to be presented to one of the university boards next month</td>
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Local community: |
| • Attending local community councils, including Southside Community Council, which is the largest in the area as well as the most populated by students. The Students’ Association automatically gets a place reserved on their committee, which gives me a good platform to build community links and represent students’ interests. If anyone is interested in coming along, they happen on the 2nd Monday of every month in Nelson Hall off Bernard Terrace |
Helping organise a pop-up event in the Meadows off Middle Meadow Walk happening on 25th October (so will already have happened by the time of Student Council!) along with other local community groups, Edinburgh Local and the University

Meeting with Tommy Sheppard MP to discuss student issues (as his constituency of Edinburgh East is home to our George Square campus and is where many students live) and his concerns about Brexit – watch this space for a drop-in surgery on campus with Tommy next semester to be able to ask him any questions

Meeting with the city’s Lord Provost (a role that exists in some Scottish cities acting as the city’s official figurehead) about the City of Edinburgh Council’s “Edinburgh 2050 City Vision” plan and facilitating an event to get students’ opinions on this campaign

Contributing to the University’s process of updating its Community Engagement Strategy

Next Steps

Will continue to update students about automatic voter registration and process being made with it

Setting up drop-in events (like MPs’ surgeries for students to drop in to and ask questions) with some local MPs to increase students’ awareness that a) they can approach their local MPs regarding a wide range of issues and b) who their local MP actually is

Housing

Summary

My main housing focus this month has been planning for our upcoming housing event – “Your housing questions – answered”. As well as this, I met with a couple of people from the LGBT+ Campaign to discuss starting researching LGBT+ accommodation for self-
defining students, as this was something the campaign group was keen to explore.

**Actions**

- Planning for our housing event on 1\textsuperscript{st} November in Potterrow Dome from 3 until 6pm
  - This will be a drop-in type event where people can come and speak to various people about any housing issues they’re having, questions they may have around student accommodation, complaints they may have
  - It’s an event for people to get answers, as well as learning more about their rights as tenants – there’s often a false dichotomy between students and local residents where students feel they can’t complain about their letting agent or landlord’s illegal behaviour, as they are more transient
  - There will be representatives for local MPs, some MSPs, councillors, the Living Rent campaign, our Advice Place, and the University rent guarantor scheme in attendance

- Exploring the concept of LGBT+ student first-year accommodation
  - Meeting with Natasha (the Students’ Association’s LGBT+ Officer) and Ruby (member of the LGBT+ Campaign committee) to hear their thoughts and ideas, and working on next steps for researching this
  - This is something that’s been implemented at the University of Sheffield after campaigning from their LGBT+ Campaign – it consists of a number of flats in one of their accommodation blocks being for students who identify as LGBT+ before coming to university, on providing their details and specifying they would rather be in LGBT+ specific accommodation – they aren’t marked out as “LGBT+ flats” on one corridor
Had a phonecall with the Welfare Officer at Sheffield University Students’ Union to hear about how it’s been going at Sheffield and how it was achieved

- Meeting with representatives from the Vet School about issues they have in terms of student accommodation due to their different semester dates
- Meeting with students about developing a “find a flatmate” type app
- Attending meetings about the potential new housing co-op

Next Steps

- Continuing to organise the housing surgery event
- Meeting the head of the City of Edinburgh Council regarding short term lets in Edinburgh and how this is affecting students’ housing situations
- Creating an easy explanation of the implications of the new housing legislation for students – emphasising knowing your rights and who to go to for advice
- Continuing getting feedback on the concept of LGBT+ accommodation and doing more researching into its implementation elsewhere

Sustainability

Summary

Following on from the success of the KeepCup giveaway last month, I’ve been exploring further ways to promote sustainability on campus, from more sustainable transport to replacing disposable materials.

Actions

- Evaluating the successes of the KeepCup giveaway campaign and how to replicate or improve this in the future
  - I also did a few interviews with The Student about promoting the scheme, and why we did it
- Meeting with various members of staff from the new city-wide cycle hire scheme
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**Next Steps**

- Organising a workshop with the Women’s Environmental Network
- Transport – Eleri and I will be going around different campuses (King’s Buildings, Little France, Easter Bush) to talk to students about their views around the transport available to their campuses
  - We hope to use all of this feedback to present to relevant people from the university about the need for short and long-term transport change (building on the

- Discussed promoting the scheme to students with the general manager
- Discussed the concept of student ambassadors for the scheme with the scheme’s marketing manager
- Will be trying to push the idea of a concessionary fare for the bikes’ annual rate (as a way of getting around the council not wanting the scheme to be too “student-centric”)

- Continuing looking into how to create a map for newly-installed water points
- Shenan (Vice President Activities and Services) and I met with a student to discuss his dissertation thesis, which was on green purchasing and whether students tend to buy eco-friendly products, and why. This gave us the idea of creating a “green guide” – a resource for people to find out where in Edinburgh they can buy more eco-friendly food and products on a student-friendly budget
  - This is still being developed, so let us know any suggestions!
- I’ll be attending the NUS Sustainability Summit in Manchester (the best city in the world) at the end of the month, to get more ideas and hear new initiatives around sustainability!
- Eleri and I attended an initial meeting with a member of the University Estates team to discuss improving cycling routes to Easter Bush
Other

- I helped to organise the Gordon Aikman Memorial Lecture on behalf of the Students’ Association
  - It was a really great event that hopefully did justice to the life of Gordon Aikman, former student, sabbatical officer and MND campaigner
- In an attempt to try and get the university to commit to being less George Square-centric, we’ve been trying to persuade them to call the campus something other than “central” – which makes George Square as the focal point of the university
  - We’ve started receiving emails referring to it as the “city centre area” instead of just central, which is a start!
- We’ve been promoting the Gender Recognition Act consultation and trying to encourage students to fill it in, to stand up for the rights of trans and non-binary students against rising transphobia
- I’ve been starting to plan an event for Mental Health and Wellbeing Week about mental health on years abroad
  - Meeting with Leah (Undergraduate School Rep for LLC) so we can put this together
- Liaising with other sabbatical officers from students’ associations in Scotland about the People’s Vote march on 20th October, so our students can have the option of going if they want to
  - Promoting the option to go down to the People’s Vote march in London, as a coach has been organised by a sabbatical officer from Stirling down to London