



Student Council

Thursday 26 September 2019, 6 – 8 pm, Teviot Debating Hall

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Accountability
 Paper A

 ----- Accessibility Break -----
3. Mock Motion
4. Any Other Business (AOB)
 Shout Outs



Paper A: Sabbatical Officer Accountability Reports

Report from Andrew Wilson, President

Throughout my year, I will be focusing on three key areas of work that I believe will make the most tangible difference and allow me to structure my time, these are:

Getting In and Getting On

- Started to scope out ideas for a 'Money Matters' campaign to address the rising cost of living in Edinburgh. This campaign will hopefully consist of a University wide survey to all students about your experiences with cost of living in Edinburgh. It will also highlight smart ways to use your money in Edinburgh and raise awareness of additional funds available to you.
- Contributed to the University's Residential Strategy and echoed the importance of affordability and the choice available to students, as well as considering where students actually get their money from.
- Met with the University's Widening Participation Team to scope out areas to focus and understanding the barriers that these students face.
- Raised concerns around the University's Guarantor Scheme at all levels of the University – hoping that outcomes will follow on this!

A Relevant Students' Association

- Launching a pilot scheme of Drug Testing Kits in the immediate future with hope of a further roll out across the University.
- Scoping the feasibility of a partnership with Marks Out Of Tenancy, a website where students are able to name and shame bad landlords.
- Planning a Sexual Health Awareness Week in order to reduce the stigma around talking about safe sex and sexual health.
- Consistently inputting into the strategic and everyday direction of the Students' Association by attending (and chairing) the Association Executive and Trustee Board meetings where decisions on the operations and strategy of the Students' Association are discussed.

Students as Changemakers

- Working closely with For Our Future's Sake, the youth and student movement for a People's Vote, to encourage students to take part in the conversations around Brexit – this has included social media campaigns and organising a People's Vote Rally in Welcome Week.
- Prioritising promoting Voter Registration amongst students and planning a campaign around this topic .
- Raising the profile of Sabbatical Officers, your full-time paid student representatives, in order to increase engagement with us and to facilitate conversations on the issues that matter most to students.

Throughout this year, I will always make the time to sit down and listen with students about the work they are doing at the University and I hope I can help where I can. Similarly, it is important that I maintain regular contact with students to ensure that I am effectively representing them – please do get in contact with me!



Report from Beth Fellows, Vice President Activities and Services

Since the beginning of June I have been working on my three objectives for the year. These are increasing participation and communication in all areas of university life, improving the services that we provide and celebrating students.

Increase Participation and Communication

- I designed a wellbeing incentive called #TakeTen to encourage students to take ten minutes to think about their wellbeing and signpost students to the support services that are available to them. This will be launched in Mental Health and Wellbeing Week, I worked with Oona on how this campaign can fit into the wider plan for the week. I'm also working with the Counselling Service and Library and Museum Services to share the campaign wider.
- I am working in collaboration with the Sports Union to expand and promote Intramural Sport. I met with them frequently and we are currently discussing with all 21 schools what Intramural Sport is and how they, as a school, can get involved. Our vision is to for every school to have a few intramural sports competing in an Intramural League and the school can then win the prize at the end of the year. The benefits would be the inclusive element where you need not be of any particular standard of sport but also helps build a sense of community within the schools. For this coming year we are also organising an event for January/February for students and staff from all schools to get involved in.
- I am currently in conversation and drafting a survey to ask students whether Wednesday afternoons should be free to all students for participating in extra-curricular activities or just to have a time set aside in the middle of the week to catch up of life administration or look after their wellbeing. These have included meetings with members of University staff and the University's Surveys Team.

Improving Services

- I have been working with Rosheen and the Commercial team at the Student Association on the instalment Zero Waste Corner in the David Hume Tower shop to align with the University's aim of being single use plastic free by 2030. This is still an ongoing project that will be launched soon, so keep your eyes peeled for the opening and we would love all of you to come along and check it out.
- I have continued to work with the Sports Union provide a free yoga service in the Main Library and Wee Red Bar in ECA. I have also expanded this service to King's Buildings House. It now runs at the library on Mondays, Tuesdays at King's Buildings and ECA on Thursday.

Celebrating Students

- I have organised a year plan for the return of the #WeAreEdinburgh profiles. This includes monthly themes such as Black History Month for October where I hope to include students such as the African Caribbean Society. I have begun filming short clips to make this social media campaign be more engaging. In addition I am asking every participant "What makes you a part of Edinburgh?" with the idea of making a big montage video at the end of the year.



Report from Rosheen Wallace, Vice President Community

Pushing for affordable accommodation for students

- I attended various University meetings where plans for future student accommodation are discussed, including the Accommodation Programme Board and Estates Committee. At every opportunity I have been highlighting the critical need for affordable beds for students.
- I also visited Edinburgh Student Housing co-op to understand the benefits for students, and I have had some informal discussions with University staff to discuss how the University might have a role in helping to establish another student housing co-op.
- *Next Steps:* arrange future meetings with University staff and build relationships in order to have greater influence on policy decisions around student housing.

Eliminating single-use plastic on campus

- Myself and Beth are working on setting up a zero-waste corner of the shop in David Hume Tower which will sell food in bulk and other items that are minimal waste. Plans are well underway and we are looking forward to launching in the next couple of weeks!
- *Next steps:* Ensuring as many people as possible know about the shop!

Empowering students as tenants

- A key objective for me this year is to improve the University Guarantor scheme. Currently a number of restrictions mean many students who wish to use the scheme cannot access it. I had a productive initial discussion with the Student administration team who are committed to improving the scheme and have identified key areas to understand in how the scheme runs currently.
- *Next steps:* Arrange a follow up meeting with the Student Administration team to review progress.

Encouraging green living

- Something else coming up in the near future is Sustain.Ed festival, which will be held on Tuesday 22nd October and is a day-long event based on the theme 'Plastic is not Fantastic'. There will be lots going on around campus on the day including society-led activities.
- *Next Steps:* in the coming weeks are to ensure that everything is planned out for it to run smoothly, and that the message gets out!

Other

- I've attended numerous committees such as the Community Engagement Programme Board, the Good Food Strategy Group, KB Nucleus Project user group, and University Transport Meetings among others, where I get the chance to ensure student perspectives are heard on wide-ranging issues.
- I'll be attending Southside Community Council in the coming months, as this is a great opportunity to keep in touch with issues affecting the local community (P.s anyone who is interested in attending their own community council pls drop me an email!)
- Thanks for reading – ask me any questions! ☺ ☺ ☺



Report from Stephanie Vallancey, Vice President Education

Quality and constructive feedback

- I'm working on encouraging and helping create open channels of communication between staff and students using the existing mechanisms for feedback – Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC), Mid-Course Feedback, Course Enhancement Questionnaires.
- Have just passed guidance in SQAC (Senate Quality Assurance) for SSLCs which will help improve structure, consistency, as well as keeping these meetings constructive.
- *Next Steps:* I will be working with schools on marking criteria and assessment feedback to make sure it's understandable and transparent, as well as looking at the current marking schemes and promoting consistency within these.

Course Costs

- My biggest priority here is looking at what course costs there are, and how to best address and communicate these. The end goal is to make sure that any additional costs (from textbooks, placements, fieldtrips, materials) are fully communicated and transparent to students from the moment they apply for a programme.
- Currently doing some work regarding the university prospectuses and how fees are described there and ensuring they are specific, accurate, and consistent.
- *Next Steps:* I will be looking at individual schools, working with them and school reps to further communicate and, if possible, mitigate some of these costs.

Student Support/PT Review

- In March the University began their review of the entire Student Support ecosystem, which is including the role of the Personal Tutor. Myself and Oona (VP Welfare) are both sitting on this design group.
- The upcoming weeks we will be helping deliver workshops with both students and staff making sure everyone has the chance to feed in on what the new model(s) should look like.
- *Next Steps:* Keep an eye out for upcoming emails about workshops, and you can also feed in to the process online!

Other

- The Lecture Recording Project has been finishing up- with now over 300 spaces fitted with the technology! Further work will be going into addressing the benefits coming from this project.
- I am also doing lots of work with our school reps, and enhancing their role and making sure they have all the support and resources they need both from us and within their school. This includes linking our reps up with each other, and helping support enhancement projects and engaging in additional University projects.
- Through August I have been meeting every Head of School/Deanery, and discussing my objectives as well as the schools and finding where we can work together over the coming year.



Report from Oona Miller, Vice President Welfare

Committing to campus accessibility

- Attended *Disability Access and Egress* Board (Estates), which has control of £15m funding for improvements between 2018 and 2023 –started discussions on the use of digital accessibility solutions, e.g. the performance of platforms like AccessAble.
- Confirmation of Changing Places toilet for new Health and Wellbeing Centre to open in February 2020 (Eek! Exciting because I started this last year through a SC motion).
- Making access people-focused by growing the Disabled Students' Forum to run twice this year (once with a specific focus on supporting PG students).
- *Next Steps*: researching other Universities' disability policies to develop a case for a policy at Edinburgh; working with Disabled Students' Officer Ellen and Estates to improve disabled students' engagement in building developments.

Fostering a compassionate University community

- Attended various University committees working on areas such as: special circumstances system, student engagement and attendance monitoring policy, mental health action plan and training for staff who provide student support.
- Worked with Steph (VP Education) to make the *Review of Student Support and Personal Tutoring* as easy as possible for students to get involved in – please take part in the consultation!
- Created and released a video signposting students to key wellbeing services with Andy Shanks (Director of Student Wellbeing), Harriet Harris (University Chaplain) and Eileen Xu (Disabled Students' Officer 2018-19) which is being played in key 1st year lectures.
- *Next Steps*: launching #LetsTalkMensMentalHealth; developing work on sexual violence in the Students' Association and the University Taskforce; engaging with medical students as the Sabb responsible for liaising with medics this year; scoping out how compassion can be embedded in the University community.

Tackling elitism and building inclusivity

- Building a community of students who are working class, low-income background, 1st generation of their family to attend university, care-experienced or estranged – signups are already strong and event scheduled for 2nd October!
- Met with Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University Executive lead on equality and diversity (E&D), to discuss E&D, working together, and how Liberation Officers can feed in directly.
- Next steps: publication of University *Thematic Review of Support for BME Students* – working with BME Officer Meyra to implement recommendations.

Other

- This year's Mental Health and Wellbeing Week will focus on: putting students in contact with political decision-makers, having a transparent dialogue about University mental health developments, and how society affects our understandings of mental health – particularly for men and international students.