

# STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT III

## VP SOCIETIES & COMMUNICATION

### Funding:

#### *Insurance Coverage*

For societies, the insurance cost to cover members has increased to £1.50 per person. The fee was incurred after budgets were submitted for 2016/17 so these costs have been covered this year via Union reserves. I took three proposals to Societies Conference, to ask for student feedback about how it would be best for us to proceed:

- 1) Societies can increase their membership fee by £1.50 universally.
- 2) Creating a 'Society Passport' – paying £5 to be a member of any society you would like to get involved in.
- 3) A one off 'society fee' of £1.50 before joining a society.

Students inherently disagreed with the 'Society Passport' proposal, but seemed to favour a 'society fee', similar to the sports model. We have agreed to implement this next academic year.

#### *Security Cost*

Prior to February, societies used to be charged to use the Engagement Space in Union 1 when it was out of hours or for ticketed events. However, I have worked to eliminate this additional cost and any fee for security will be directed into a centralised budget to prevent this acting as a barrier for societies in the future.

### Awards Nights:

Ticket sales for Societies Ball are on track, with Early Bird tickets selling well as expected. We have had a variety of nominations for all of these awards, but nominations will close on 7<sup>th</sup> April. We are working on making the event a massive success, organising an awards night panel to decide on long and shortlists and planning the after party.

### Academic Societies & Student Representatives:

After successfully organising a pilot to develop the relationship between academic societies and student representatives, the University directorate encouraged Jamie and I to look into retention rates. The University wanted to understand if academic societies played a significant role in creating a community for students that may find it difficult to settle in at UWE. In collaboration with Business Intelligence, we found a positive correlation between students in academic societies and lower drop-out rates. This project will be explored and developed further next year; however, it will be the responsibility of my successor to ensure its success.

### Elections:

In regards to elections, student engagement has improved significantly, with a 20% increase in voting statistics. Similar to last year we ran a Shutdown day, where computers in each Union, at each campus, became voting terminals. The team encouraged students to vote in exchange for a crème egg and half price food. This method worked particularly well, sparking several insightful conversations regarding the Union and improving the understanding about what we do for our students.