

## Final Student Council Report: Bahkai

I am using my remaining time as VP Societies and Communications to conclude any ongoing projects and plans in time for the handover to the next team. The bulk of my time is being spent organising the Embers Awards, finalising the transition into HUB Media, organising black History Month, and dealing with operational enquiries that come my way.

### **Embers**

I am happy that the standard in which we conduct the above has improved and will continue to improve due to the work being done by various members of staff and students over the past academic year. In regards to Embers, we have had an unprecedented level of nominations at the current stage and as I went on Holiday right after nominations the operations team have worked through the shortlist we compiled with diligence.

The actual operational side of the planning including the after party, performers and dinner itself is being directly managed by me. Currently I have projected a decrease in expenditure from my budget compared to last year, while still keeping ticket prices the same, and offering more for the event itself (note: this projection is on the assumption we sell the same amount of tickets as last year at least) We are making the event itself as inclusive as possible, lessening alcohol at the dinner and hosting an afterparty, catering for those honouring Ramadan, and changing our veggie option as per various requests. As per the shortlist being released, we will begin enhancing our marketing activities in earnest, and have already seen an increase in ticket sales.

### **HUB Media**

HUB Media has had its second issue come out, which has been met with positive feedback from both students and staff. From various conversations I have had it appears the editing team, and various other students consider this second edition an improvement on the first. I feel positive that what has been established will be built on accordingly, however due to the level of the transition period, focus was split between organising the actual magazine itself and getting new writers. This has resulted in a much more presentable publication, yet the problem of repeat contributors and editor-writers still persists. I believe this will naturally improve from the next academic year, though a concerted marketing/advertising strategy must be worked out prior to the next academic year. This is what I am currently putting together and this strategy will and must be fully backed by the Union. It is also useful for next year, actually having physical copies of the magazine to actually distribute in order to gain interest.

I am also working closely on the website. As the current one was almost entirely designed by myself, I lack the expertise to bring it up to the professional standard required. Following a meeting with my successor, the SU marketing manager and the CEO I will be taking steps to compile a list of amendments and additions that the Union and myself will follow up on either through SU staffing or an external company.

### **Campaigns**

Black History Month planning is already underway and I am pleased to find the de facto BME student network which operates in and around UWE growing into a legitimate committee. I along with the National Faith and Identity Societies Coordinator are currently meeting with students and the VP Comm Welfare elect among a few other student stakeholders to plan how Black History Month will

look in the next academic year. We are currently trying to compile funding together to produce a special magazine with community groups to commemorate the month and compile contributions of BME Student Excellence. Following this we are holding preliminary meetings to establish what kind of events do students wish to see.

### **Extras**

Some of the other operation things I have been working on have including helping societies such as the VGS with their society sponsored event. I was able to successfully acquire the ECC to meet the capacity of their event, a major step in how we interact with the University as it is uncommon for students to be granted hire access in this way. I am currently working on an agreement where we can have more students exclusively host large scale events similar to this one on behalf of their societies, and will likely attach it to the overall society sponsored event scheme.

I am also currently working on collecting student feedback for the daytime events in Freshers' week next academic year. It is typical for the night time events to acquire more interest and attendance, however I think we have yet to meet the potential of our daytime events. This can be done through having targeted audience of students when hosting these types of events, as opposed to more general events most students might find very easy to opt out of. The nature of these exact events or activities can be decided through student feedback via survey, and I would personally like to see students taking a more active role in the organizational process.

### **Reflection:**

Over this past year, I have found the potential for the Union to be far beyond what I or what most students actually imagine. The single most important key to the success of the Union and its engagement is that we *invest in the capacity to inspire*. What I have aimed to do with my additions this year is not improve my own personal profile or even the Union profile, but put in place structures in which students can take ownership of and thereby facilitate engagement in the name of a cohesive UWE community.

Our societies and sports programs are our largest cohort of students affiliated with the Union and should be provided for accordingly. I am proud at the quality of society presidents we have had this year, which has resulted in society events being on a scale seldom seen before- especially with special interest societies. I have made myself the spearhead of the joint partnership approach between the marketing department and the presidential team, to which I will at least partially credit our improved efficiency in communications and unprecedented levels of endorsement with student run events. The team this year have worked very well together, and I look forward to seeing what the new team will come up with next year!