

Student Council Report

Society Engagement:

My continued work in administering the Society program was recently presented at my societies conference. In line with previous years attendance was substantially lower than that of the initial conference during the first term, however the actual proceedings were conducted with more effectiveness.

I took from my predecessor Olivia's book and conducted a 'Stop, Start, Keep' survey, though used a hand out to allow anonymity. From my perspective, this is a highly beneficial exercise which I will keep consistent in my next conference and thoroughly encourage my successor to continue. This allows the Presidents and Opportunities Department to conduct a comparative analysis on how Committee members need to be supported each year.

The findings from the survey were very telling, and in a lot of ways reflected my own sentiments while running my own society. In regards to the feedback, there were three main themes. Making finances easier to access, advertising societies more, and more effective communication.

Making finances easier to access:

This suggestion was also submitted through a student idea and had to be reviewed at the board of trustees, as it regards how we conduct Union finances as whole. The idea was ultimately rejected, as it was decided society finances were completely transparent and the grievance was in the method of communicating this information.

From the responses, societies appear to wish to be able to see society account balances online- similar to an online banking application or sent entire breakdowns via email. It is not feasible to maintain or administer this kind of constant access at our current capacity. Instead I will make clear that society budget summaries can be sent over, and an in depth analysis can be broken down following meeting the respective society coordinator. I am in support of this method of communication, as it facilitates treasurers to be in direct contact with their coordinator- who does all of the coding and general financial administration. This generally circumvents a lot of confusion and discord that would come with sending over MSL Union financial spreadsheets at regular intervals.

Though this is my own opinion, the methods of access must be reviewed considering the levels of concern in this particular area. My powers are limited as this has been reviewed by the Board, but I am working towards providing access to these reports on all campus sites in order to decentralise our society finances from Frenchay. I am also looking into how often committee members meet with Union staff. Considering how committee members need to bring in signed payment vouchers with evidence to make purchases, ideally they can be given a quick break down whenever they are in the building to ensure they are consistently up to date. I will continue to look at this area, and work to ensure treasurers do not feel themselves to be limited in the access to their societies financial records.

Advertise Societies More:

This is something which I have outlined in my manifesto and have been working on since taking position. Though equally advertising nearly 100 societies over the academic year on our organizations official channels is not quite feasible, providing them with their own exclusive platform

for this purpose is. The introduction of the Societies Events and News page was intended for this purpose. In order to make the most of it however, a mechanism to communicate information from this page to the wider student body needs to be introduced. I am currently looking into this, along with whether or not this group will actually fulfil its purpose- however it is to be noted that a lot of UWE Facebook groups acquire their membership during the Freshers and September period. If advertisement of this group were to dramatically increase in the beginning of next year, it may give societies the advertising platform they desperately require.

I have also introduced a system where societies can purchase HUB Media membership through their society accounts via journal transfer. In theory, removing this barrier to access for committees will allow them to record, discuss and communicate their activities to the wider student body, and the effectiveness of this method will grow in congruence to the overall HUB Media brand.

The Society Sponsored Event competition is also an address to this current concern. Unfortunately there were no sponsored event to be seen in the first term, which can be avoided in the future with more rules and regulation being attached to the initiative. This will ideally be balanced out by seeing two sponsored events in the second term, one of them being the ISOC Feed the Homeless campaign. I am currently in the process of working out marketing logistics and following this we will be seeing the Union endorse these upcoming society events in a major way.

There is more work to do, but the societies bloc will have a larger presence in student culture henceforth. I cannot emphasize enough the importance to give presence to these initiatives during the Freshers' fair and September period. The program will be able to use these additions to establish a much stronger foundation compared to what it acquired this year, and only then will the real significance of these moderations to the program be seen in its entirety. Until then I will continue to support societies ensuring they operate at maximum efficiency and generate as much interest as possible from the Student body until the end of the year.

Better Communication:

It is with good authority that I state Society Coordinators are effective and prompt with their communications. Though we are not running a 24 hour consultation service, committee members are replied to consistently. In regards to my own personal correspondence, it has recently come to my attention that a lot of Societies and Staff have been emailing a Bahkai.wynter address instead of my vpsocsandcomms one- a UWE Staff mailbox which I have not had access to. This problem has been fixed and hopefully will improve general comms on my part.

I am also looking into how we can get Union representation at more society events. Though I try to attend as many as possible, I cannot attend nearly as much as I would like due to my own capacity and level of responsibility. At the Union Exec meeting, I have brought up the suggestion of all officers being made aware of all upcoming society and sports events to general increase Union levels of attendance at student group events and activities.

I am also going to introduce more regular email correspondence with all Society Committee members, as well as increase executive presence at development meetings. It has been brought to my attention that in our development meetings lack much address of VP activities, resulting in them potentially missing out on participating in new things I introduce. I have invited Society Committees to my society executive meetings to include them in all decision making processes and the opportunities department is also in the process of improving their overall development meeting process to improve its effectiveness and support levels.

Concluding Statement:

The above only addressed a portion of the feedback I have received, however these were the most prevalent themes. I have also been working on things outside of managing these issues, such as Society Merchandise, giving HUB Media TV broadcasting capabilities by the end of the year and The Societies Ball: Embers. I am open to discuss any of these things upon request either face to face or via email. Overall I feel positive about where the program is headed, and I strongly believe through our societies we can improve our overall representation levels and engagement levels from all demographics which attend this University.