

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT I

VP SOCIETIES & COMMUNICATION

Black History Month

The Global Majority Campaign was the Students' Unions acknowledgement of Black History Month. I was part of the small steering group, which created the outline for all of the events that happened over the month. Following this we gathered NFI society presidents, committees and University members of staff to discuss their contribution would be and what events they plan to lead. The result of this was a month filled with multi-cultural events, which evolved the narrative beyond the usual message of Afro-Caribbean history and culture. An event of this nature and scale in celebration of Black History Month has never been done in the past. This is something I intend to carry forward and increase in scale next year and all subsequent years.

Communication with the university was not in want; however their compliance in the promotion and acknowledgement of our agenda is something which has been highlighted to key stakeholders in various meeting with the university. I feel very assured that in our efforts for Black History Month this year, we have set a standard which will translate into the coming years. Please find my reflective blog on The Students' Union website

Student Media

Before entering this position, I had no plans whatsoever to make amendments to the structure of the student media program. Following research and acquiring a full understanding of what my jurisdiction over this platform includes, I made steps towards giving the program a complete overhaul. I renamed the entire platform under the HUB brand, as any successful multimedia platform needs to have one brand to lessen confusion and make it easier to access. I have also invested into a multimedia website, which will include elements from all platforms, including the Radio, Voice and Broadcast. From within this, students and students groups will be able to contribute and blog their activities in a way they would not be able to do in any existing online SU platforms.

In regards to the radio station, it was operating at approximately 50% capacity over the last year. I have worked with the IT department to bring the capacity up to 100% and I am now focusing on how to increase listening levels. This will likely manifest itself through the encouraging of more podcasts for online uploads. I also envisage this to come from an increased amount of visual radio (video broadcasting) which is where HUB Broadcast will acquire responsibility.

HUB Broadcast is not something I have been able to execute in full as of yet as the other two existing branches of HUB Media required a lot of attention, however I have created the channel where videos will be uploaded to, and have collected a list of film volunteers. What I plan to do is acquire access to the newsroom in Bower Ashton, a room that has the capabilities to create high production value news broadcasts. I am waiting on responses from leading members of ACE faculty to provide training to enable the use of this facility currently.

HUB Voice, formerly the Western Eye is a brand new magazine publication, which has replaced the tabloid one. This is more in line with what students of our generation are inclined to read, as we can now put a lot of emphasis on graphic and image based content, while previously the focus was almost entirely on producing the text. The magazine was designed as a result of contributions made by the journalists, editors, photography society and graphic design students, and is also the first of its kind.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT I

VP SOCIETIES & COMMUNICATION

Following the full establishment of all branches of HUB Media, I plan to create a media executive committee, which will discuss all things which HUB Media will address and cover as a unit. Once this is established, student media will acquire a much stronger presence and sphere of influence in the union as well as with the university.

Society Engagement

Within the first few weeks, I created the Society Events and News group as I promised in my manifesto. I decided a group was better than a page, as this allowed all committee members to post freely. I am working towards increasing the amount of students that buy into it over this year, however I believe that this is something which will truly take off following Freshers over subsequent years. Considering how Freshers is more or less planned and promoted by the time newly elected officers enter their roles, I was not able to utilise existing promotional activity in ensuring new students join in the page.

The strongest element of the page which I used in my election rhetoric, is that it remains unchanged. This means that eventually this page will have a significant buy in, as long as the page remains consistent in existence and promotion. It is regularly pinned to the top of the Freshers pages, and I am currently seeing 10-15 new joined members per week. I expect there to be at least 250 students at an absolute minimum by the end of this academic year, and I also expect this number to skyrocket after Freshers next year.

Furthermore, I have introduced new society t-shirts which I allowed all societies to purchase to receive in time for the Freshers Fair. I opted for a collective brand as opposed to one which incorporated personalised logos, this to save on costs and make the t-shirts affordable to students. One my aims this year is to facilitate a stronger sense of homogeneity in the society program, and to this aim a single line of merchandise for all societies is a practical solution. I have worked with the shops department in order to expand this range, and there is already a line of clothing including a short sleeve tee, a long sleeve one, a pull over and zipped hoodie which all students and societies will be able to purchase as soon as January.

In regards to the £1.50 society fee which was introduced this year, this was introduced at last year's final societies conference by Olivia as the most financially viable means of ensuring all society members are insured following the cost of insurance increasing. This is opposed to the Operations department of the Union setting aside an amount of money based on pure speculation as to how many members the society program will take on every year. Over budgeting this money will result in potential funds for sports and societies being withheld. Under budgeting will result in money being taken from the sports and societies pot arbitrarily. I understand this motion is not the most popular, however I entirely support this means of insurance as the alternatives are attached to a significant amount of financial risk. This attitude of financial feasibility is also why I aim to significantly contract the amount of catering provided in society conferences. This money comes directly out of potential society allocation money, which I believe is better spent being put directly into their activities. I would also like to highlight that society membership has actually increased this year compared to last year, as it has for the last three years. Therefore there is no evidence that this fee has had a detrimental effect on the program.

The society sponsored event competition was also met with large amount of engagement. I have ascertained that this scheme is likely the only way we can provide marketing to societies in a

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT I

VP SOCIETIES & COMMUNICATION

practical manner, and believe this idea has the potential of expansion to an event per month once it is more properly established. Marketing assistance is something all societies crave, so I aim to better execute this process for coming conferences. The use of this competition actually exceeded my expectation, as I was able to learn about various events being held by societies, which I was not previously made aware of. I used this opportunity to hold meetings with the societies that did not win, and still offered help in organising and supporting their event ideas.

Conclusion

Overall, we have a huge amount of potential with societies provided we continue facilitate their expansion and development. I aim to keep pace with the level of cohesiveness the sports program currently has, through the execution of my various initiatives and ideas. The difference is that from within sports, the culture and spaces to interact collaboratively already exist with things like Varsity, BUCS and sporting nights on Wednesday. This same established culture is what I am to put in place and create over this year, which will allow for the full implementation from the beginning of next year. The rest of the team are doing their utmost to engage students from within the capacity of their own remits, and collectively we are seeing increased levels of student engagement and activism compared to previous years through things like Facebook Live, surgeries, door knocking, campaigns and social events. The year is off to a positive start, and we are moving forward in the spirit of increasing ambition in ensuring we facilitate as many positive student experiences as possible.