

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT FEBRUARY 2025

VP COMMUNITY AND WELFARE REPORT

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Highlights since last Student Council:

1. International Student Advisory Committee

As a member of the International Student Committee, I would like to share the latest update. We have decided to transition the initiative into an advisory role and move the committee out of the Partnership Board, shifting it to an SU forum/agenda in collaboration with the Global Office. As we work on planning its operations, we've agreed that any student concerns raised during meetings will be addressed by the Presidents and discussed when necessary. We are also considering hosting an open discussion for our first meeting to brainstorm how the process will evolve moving forward.

2. Reasonable Adjustments Task and Finish Group

I'm currently part of the **Task and Finish Group** that is working on improving the process for **Reasonable Adjustments**. This initiative is focused on ensuring that students with specific needs are supported fairly and effectively. We are reviewing the RA to Deadline window, the application process, and the overall support provided to students requiring reasonable adjustments. Concerns were raised by me around RA to deadline being critical for our disabled students, and that many of our international students face financial challenges when needing to return home in emergencies and therefore missing resit deadlines.

3. We Won and Are Still Working For More (NATIONAL LOBBY DAY, 23RD OCTOBER)

Last October, UWE Students' Union Presidents, along with other SU representatives and NUS members from across the UK, had the opportunity to meet with MPs in their local areas. For us, this involved meetings with MPs Karin Smyth, Carla Denyer, and Claire Hazelgrove in Westminster during NUS National Lobby Day. This was a fantastic opportunity to advocate for crucial changes aimed at improving student welfare.

We also supported Alex Sobel MP's amendment to the Renters' Rights Bill, which seeks to provide better protection and stability for renters. With rising rent costs and limited student housing options, this amendment is essential to ensuring that students are protected when navigating the rental market.

I am excited to share that, thanks to the collective efforts of NUS, we achieved one of our biggest wins – the Renters' Rights Bill now prevents landlords from demanding multiple months of rent upfront. Furthermore, our work helped secure an amendment that prevents students from being locked into rental contracts more than six months in advance. This provides greater flexibility and reduces the stress of planning for the next year.

In conclusion, NUS National Lobby Day was a significant moment for us to engage directly with policymakers and advocate for changes that will benefit students now and in the future. It was incredibly empowering to see how our collective efforts brought us closer to creating a fairer, more supportive, and inclusive environment for all students.

4. Careers Workshop

The President Team meets regularly with UWE's Careers and Enterprise Department. I am working with the team to develop a workshop for students which aims to have inclusive practice and include employer and student voice. It will detail how employers can be more diverse and inclusive in their recruitment. We will work with students and staff at UWE to ensure that its co-creation represents the diversity of the student

body at UWE. I look forward to catching up and progressing with this workshop upon my return.

Key Focus Areas for the Spring Term (Manifesto Updates):

- **Diversity Week**

We are celebrating **Diversity Day** started on Monday February 24th. The President Team worked hard to plan a series of workshops related to our diverse student community on topics such as deaf awareness and inclusive beauty. As part of this week, we hosted a 'Taste of Culture' event in Union 2, Frenchay Campus. This gave our star performers from societies and clubs a chance to get together and showcase their culture through art and dance! Alongside student performances, we will also be providing students with an opportunity to cook and share a taste their culture through food. This week focused on inclusivity and celebrating the diverse backgrounds and cultures within our student body.

- **De-Stress Week**

De-Stress Week is another key initiative we are working on to support student wellbeing. It ran from 27th January to the 31st January, a key time for student studying for assessments and exams. We know how difficult this can be for most students, and we wanted to give back to our student community by organising spaces around the campuses. We created 'de-stress zones' designed to give you a space to relax, enjoy some free mindfulness activities and learn more about what support is available across the university. The **Study Buddy Notice Board** was set up to help students connect with others for academic support. In addition, we offered free fruits, tea, and coffee across all campuses throughout the week to create a relaxed environment for students to de-stress and recharge.

- **Refreshers Fair**

On the 30th January, the President Team participated in the Refresher's Fair, welcoming new and returning students back to campus after the Christmas break. Students had the opportunity to speak to our Sports Clubs and Societies whilst enjoying a free hotdog from Rollover! The atmosphere was electric, with so many eager faces, both familiar and new, ready to begin their journey at UWE. The event provided an excellent opportunity for everyone to explore the variety of clubs, societies, and resources available at UWE, allowing them to kick off their university experience in the best possible way.

- **Anti-Sexual Violence Awareness Week**

The Students' Union, UWE Bristol's Anti-Sexual Violence Awareness Service and the Bridge (SARC) have been running stalls and activities across the campus sites to raise awareness and facilitate discussions regarding sexual violence and abuse. Students are signposted to UWE's Anti-Sexual Violence Service as well as other support services. This is to mark Anti-Sexual Violence Awareness Week and forms part of our yearly campaign on Anti-Sexual Violence across the university.

- **Credit Control and Fee-Related Issues**

As part of the discussions surrounding **Credit Control**, I've been able to resolve a significant number of student fee-related issues. This has involved liaising with the relevant departments to ensure that student concerns are addressed and resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

Document submitted to Jo Midgley and further conversations to be had, hopefully we will give you an update in our next student council meeting.

- **Student Experience Awards**

I have been working alongside VP Education to plan the annual **Student Experience Awards** taking place in the Mount Without on Tuesday 6th May. This event aims to celebrate the contributions and achievements of students within our community with awards honoring students and staff who excel in improving learning and teaching, community involvement, wellbeing, and more. Please celebrate others by nominating a colleague

here <https://forms.office.com/e/quwP3GLcRk> by March 13th, we invite you all to attend this special evening, more information on the [webpage](#).

- **Welfare Committee**

After some successful initial meetings, the students on the Welfare Committee are collaborating to run a campaign focused on promoting healthy eating habits. This campaign aims to raise awareness among students about the importance of balanced nutrition and how it can positively impact their overall well-being. In addition to the campaign, the committee is planning a day of Destress Action Activities. These activities will provide students with a variety of ways to unwind and relieve stress, culminating in a social gathering in the evening. This event will be open to all students who want to connect with others, relax, and enjoy some downtime together. To further engage students, I am also working on organizing a Cooking Competition. This event will offer students a fun and interactive opportunity to showcase their culinary talents, fostering creativity and community spirit while encouraging healthier meal options.