**Student Council Report**

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Position: President  
Date of Council: 27/01/20

Please find below a summary of the 4 main projects I have been working on since the last meeting of Student Council.

1. **SPEED MEET – THE ICEBREAKER**

   Speed Meet, brings the students together on a social video-calling platform to spend some time together and increase the sense of belonging in the University.

   **Explanation:**

   Pandemic affected the living and well-being of every individual in the entire world. Due to lockdown, social distancing and several measures taken to curb the spread of COVID-19, loneliness has become the new normal which is subjecting individuals to other health issues. To satisfy the need for connection and sense of belonging, Speed Meet- The Icebreaker project brings everyone together on a social platform to get to know about each other and make acquaintances with those who have similar likes and dislikes. This is one of the ways to combat loneliness and the challenge the distance pandemic has created between us all.

   **Current status** – Combating the distance has become a great challenge these days with repeated lock-down and restrictions by the government to limit the spread of COVID-19 Pandemic. We launched the SPEED - MEET project to let the students experience the lost connectedness. I proudly announce that we held the Speed-Meet session on 02-12-2020, A large number of students have attended the session. We received positive response from the students who participated. Upon several requests received from students, we plan to take it further from here. With an aim to create a benchmark on promoting mental well-being of the students during pandemic, we are planning to conduct second Speed-Meet session on 04-02-2021. Thereafter, we are planning to organise Speed-Meet sessions in respective individual schools of the University of Hertfordshire.

2. **SAFEGUARDING STUDENT RIGHTS**

   International students are entitled to work for part-time during the term and full-time during vacation. Most of the students miss the opportunity to work full-time due to certain requirements.

   **Evidence:** The requirement to aid the students in their part-time and full-time employability is brought to the notice of Quintin Mckellar, Vice-Chancellor, UH, Julie Kelly and Karen Omisore, from the Department of Academic Registry, UH.
International students are missing the opportunity to utilise their permit issued by UKVI to work full time during holidays, as they are required to present a letter from the University confirming the enrolment of the student and the university term calendar. Based on the feedback I received from the students, many queries requesting such letters were not answered or delayed. Outcome of which was lost opportunities despite the rights. I explained the Vice-Chancellor regarding the situation, and I was supported in this regard. I received a disappointing response from the Department of Academic Registry, UH, as they stated that this is not a standard practice across the sector. During another meeting session with Academic Registry, UH, I, humbly explained the intricate details of not having such letters on time and its impact on students. I, then received positive response from the Academic Registry team.

Current status – I proudly announce that the University of Hertfordshire will, from now on, provide the letters confirming the enrolment of the students with an access to the link to the academic calendar in the letter provided. This will serve the said purpose for the students hassle-free experience.

Representing the voice of the students, I prioritise growth and development of the students. Student Union, UH, values the feedback and works above and beyond for the welfare of its students.

And below are some updates on 2 of the projects I mentioned at the last meeting of Student Council – please refer to my previous report(s) for background information on each one:

3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Financial Support during Crisis:
- It is unfortunate that the circumstances are unpredictable day after day. The period of uncertainty is escalating the panic among students. The crisis remains and it is worsening. We are currently living through Lockdown - 3.0. It is unknown as to when the restrictive measures to limit the spread will be lifted. The queries regarding how the university could help students during such unprecedented times are increasing in number. From the last student council, I continued lobbying this issue with Quintin Mckellar, the Vice-Chancellor of the UH. I am proud to confirm that the University is doing its best to supports its students. Very soon, the information regarding the financial support offered to those who are going through extreme crisis will be announced.

Improvising Language skills with Language workshops:
- With regards to Language Workshops project, I continued my efforts to lobby this concern to Quintin Mckellar, the Vice-Chancellor, UH, who with much interest raised the issue in one of the CEG meetings. There is progress regarding the Language Workshops. Academic programme leaders from one of the schools have taken the initiative to build up an online resource with short videos and interactive tasks to support students.
- As an update from the last student council meeting, I am glad to report that the new content is created, in the form of sequence of online email writing workshops and will be
made available to students in semester B. We are also collating existing content into a meaningful series of stages of support for students, including how to tackle assignments and how to write effectively from sources (i.e., how not to plagiarise). There will be continued support from the SU to the Centre for Academic English to promote language and skills workshops, writing consultation and online support tutorials.

**Convenient Payment Plans:**

- It is known that the University provided support to those students who had 25% debt by providing convenient payment plans. The university continued its support going above and beyond to offer support to those who approached the university.
- Currently I am focusing on lobbying for the new intake students as the current scenario with the lockdown persists and future is unpredictable. Providing continued support to make the student’s experience better in every aspect will be the priority for the University. Relentless efforts to convey every concern with regards to students will be the priority of the SU.

4. OFF-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE

Quintin Mckellar, Vice-Chancellor, UH, forwarded the concern to the local MP, in the light of benefit for the students. There is no response from the local MP. I continued lobbying for off-campus assistance as there is increased burden on students due to uncertain situations taking toll due to repeated lockdowns to limit the spread. The Vice-Chancellor, to support the university students in the best way possible have stated that initiative to discuss the situation with the local council in this regard will be taken. Awaiting positive response in the best interests of the students.

Further information about the work I do can be found here: [https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/electedofficers/president/](https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/electedofficers/president/)

And further information on Student Council can be found here: [https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/student-council/](https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/student-council/)

Thank you for reading!

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President