Student Council Report

Name: Kayleigh Malone
Position: Vice-President Community
Date of Council: 27/01/21

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

1. ADVOCATING FOR STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT

One of the main areas that I am focusing on this academic year is ensuring there is adequate support for students going on placements throughout out the year.

Evidence: Towards the end of the last academic year the students’ union gained feedback from students across the university that highlighted that students from the school of Health & Social Work, the school of Life and Medical science, the school of education and the school of creative arts were adversely affected by the pandemic and the place that was affected the most was their placements.

Explanation:

Since my last report, I successfully lobbied with the university to get the dates extended to the end of term so that clinical and education placement student could have the opportunity to return home for winter break safely. We are hosting placement student forum next week to gain a greater understanding of the placement student experience, allowing them to air issues and concerns so that as a union we can actively represent them in the best way and make change where possible.

Working closely with student’s and SCO’s will give them the opportunity to ensure that their issues are being represented at all levels of the university.

2. PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

With the rapid changing circumstance of the pandemic, we are aware that students have had a challenging time, are strapped for cash and are paying for private accommodation that they not able to access due to the national lockdown.

Evidence: During winter break while the union and university were closed, the country went into yet another national lockdown. It was advised that most of students withing higher education were asked to remain at home and not travel back to university. This has resulted in thousands of students across the country to having to pay for private accommodation that they are not able to access.

Explanation:
Sense my return from winter break, I met with several students’ unions sabbatical officers and Chief executive officers to talk to about this issue. I was tasked to write templates for a joint campaign to lobby MP’s for rent freezes, withdrawal from tenancy agreement and stop evictions due to financial hardship. While asking for a relief fund to support landlords. These templates have been created and the wider campaign is currently being designed and will launched in the coming weeks.

Trying to get money back into students’ pockets, easing some financial burden on them during this difficult time.

3. STUDENT WELLBEING

A priority of mine this year is student wellbeing and mental health, for this I am creating a tool kit for students that gives them the power to sign post themselves to the most appropriate service while ensuring that is student friendly and interactive.

Evidence: Over the past 6 months it has been prevalent that everyone’s mental health has been affected, this has been highlighted through research done by your student’s union and from national statistics. Following on from this we have met with partners across the university and within the union to start coming up with content and a creative way to pull all the resources together. Ensuring that the vital service have had a say and we are making the most appropriate resources for students.

Explanation:

Sense return from winter break, we have submitted the activities and a plan promote it. Getting it to students through as many media platforms & staff over next few weeks. With the launch being on time to talk day on the 4th of February.

The creation of these tool kits will give the power to students to proactively look after their own mental health and to give staff the confidence to have these sensitive conversations.

4. STUDY / COMMUNAL SPACES

A key point for me this year has been the ability for students to come together spaces to socialise and study together.

Evidence: I have had to approach this very carefully this year in line with government guidance. With this I have lobbied that university to ensure that study spaces have been open available for students and ensured that group study areas are still available but in a social distanced way.

Explanation:
Sense the last student council these spaces are in place. However, they were put up and they were empty! I lobbied estates to improve them for students, ensuring that they had seating, lighting and tables to be put in. While ensuring that they are widely promoted to students when the changes have been made and that there is information about them out side the Yurts.

Having these spaces give students an alternative place student to go to study and socialise within government guidance, while also give students the opportunity to leave the house get some fresh air.

Further information about the work I do can be found here: https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/electedofficers/vice-president-community/

And my previous reports to Student Council can be found here: https://hertfordshire.su/your-say/student-council/

Thank you for reading!

Kayleigh Malone
Vice-President Community