Student Council Report

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Position: Vice-President Education
Date of Council: 26/11/20

Please find below a summary of the 3 main projects I have been working on since the last meeting of Student Council:

1. PERSONAL TUTORING – PRIORITY CAMPAIGN

Since our first Student Council, I have been involved in gaining information and insights on how our student community can be supported during the Second lockdown period. I have felt that added academic support provided to our students can have a better impact on their studies and wellbeing and it can be achieved by emphasising on Personal Tutoring.

Evidence: Met with Pro Vice Chancellor Education & Student Experience and Deputy Director Learning & Teaching and specifically asked them about the Personal Tutoring Framework highlighting the positive impact it can have on our students community.

Explanation:
- Met with Deputy VC Matthew Weait once and Pro Vice Chancellor twice in separate meetings and asked them how schools are making sure they are guiding their departments and personal tutors to use the framework properly?
  Outcome: It has been assured by both separately that they will directly ask the Deans to get personal tutors to check-in with students at least once over the lockdown.
- On the contrary, I am also working on taking post lockdown feedback from students through pulse survey on whether they felt satisfied and supported during the lockdown so that I can take this as a feedback to the university officials in my future meetings.
  Outcome: For this purpose, I met with our Research coordinator and discussed with her coming up with one specific question around meeting with personal tutor around lockdown. Moreover, had a conversation with Marketing team as well requesting them to create a pulse survey in the form of animated story.

I can understand and realise that adapting to constant changes isn’t an easy task for any student. Moreover, accessing learning materials online can sometimes cause difficulties leading to well-being issues as well. Therefore, checking in students in this lockdown period will help this cause.

2. BUILDING A POSTGRADUATE NETWORK

We have around 6,000 Postgraduate students at Herts. We want them to represent themselves
through a network. Networks are run by students for students. Additionally, this network is for both Taught and Research students.

**Evidence:** I have met with several personal to whom this idea has been shared which includes our university staff and students, especially with the Students’ Union staff in brainstorming ideas for it.

**Explanation:**

- I had a meeting with our Campaign Policy Advisor regarding a detailed plan based around an ideal launch for the Postgraduate Network, it was quite effective and she informed me about the branding work done behind the scenes and I got some concrete suggestions from her.
  
  **Outcome:**
  The option of joining this network is available on the Herts SU website, Postgraduate students can become part of this network by filling up a form.

- Met with UH Doctoral College Head Dr Susan and shared this idea with her in hope of getting Research students on board.
  
  **Outcome:**
  I was invited at the first research student rep meeting where I spread this word. I’m hoping some representation from this cohort – fingers crossed.

I am hopeful that by the next Student Council, we will be having Network Representatives to run this Network who might involve themselves in discussion around issues faced by the Postgraduate community at Herts.

3. COURSE ORGANISATION & COMMUNICATION

Being a member of our official SCO and student rep group helps me in getting informed on any massive issue troubling specific cohort.

**Evidence:** Paired with SPECS (School of Physics, Engineering & Computer Science), I do attend monthly meetings with the School Community Organisers to get feedback and to hear what they are up to. Moreover, I have met some Programme leaders as well within the school and have directly asked and shared student concerns with them.

**Explanation:**

As already stated, being linked to SPECS, I have attended multiple meetings involving SCO’s and reps. Not limited to them, I have kept myself in touch with other Sabbaticals as well to know if there’s any issues raised by the SCO’s linked with them. Moreover, I have also engaged myself in answering student queries through Representation polls on Herts Instagram account.

**Outcome:**
Being part of the SCO’s group chat, I have always tried to share targeted announcements and
updated policies which are relevant to academics. Moreover, I have attended SCO Forums as well to get first-hand knowledge on the issues across all schools through different SCO’s.

Although, it’s quite difficult to approach students in these uncertain times but working with SCO’s and reps helps in identifying where changes needs to be done. Their support helps us as a Union in collecting feedback even in these unprecedented times.

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

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

Thank you for reading!

Saad Raees
Vice-President Education