Student Council Report

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Position: Vice-President Education
Date of Council: 27/01/21

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

1. COMMUNICATION & COURSE ORGANISATION

After analysing Students’ Academic Satisfaction Survey feedback on cost comments, I came to know that students have expressed their concerns on their course hidden cost issues. I understand that transparency should have to be a key priority around the costs of study so that students should be aware prior to enrolling themselves in different courses.

Evidence: Met with our Campaign Policy Advisor and had a discussion on this topic. Following that discussion, met with our Research Coordinator to get cost comments spreadsheet. Analysed and read all the comments and came to know Creative Arts (CTA) students were more concerned. Moreover, licensed software unavailability was a common issue among different schools.

Explanation:

- Met with CTA School Community Organisers (SCOs) and discussed this issue with them and asked for their assistance in finding out those courses which did require art supplies and licensed software for the completion of their studies.

Outcome:
I have received the needed list from CTA SCOs and matching these courses with their course fact files which will help me in finding out whether there’s hidden cost element involved or not.

Hidden costs are additional to the advertised costs of study such as inclusion of field trips, or the mandatory use of expensive material in assessments. Students should have access to support funds to be able cover these costs, so they can take part and reach their full potential.

2. PERSONAL TUTORING – PRIORITY CAMPAIGN

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

Evidence: During the second lockdown, I took a pulse survey on social media on whether students felt supported in the lockdown or not. The result showed that majority of the students were not satisfied with the support being provided to them. Furthermore, coming back after Christmas
break, I have already received an influx of student concerns following on from the latest government announcement.

**Explanation:**

- I have raised this issue with the Pro Vice Chancellor and Director Learning & Teaching and have asked them that personal check-ins should be done by the lecturers on their students at least once in these couple of weeks. Additionally, provided them with the update through the survey regarding the non-execution of the framework.

**Outcome:**
Pro VC has already met with all the Associate Deans in the previous week where she has raised this concern and the current framework is already under evaluation and will be reported back on a committee meeting in May.

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 wellbeing issues as well. Therefore, checking in students in this lockdown period will help this cause.

### 3. DIGITAL POVERTY

Implementation of lockdown and moving of studies to online has caused issues to many students as some of them are unable to learn online due to digital divide. Staff in universities have worked tirelessly to support their students throughout this pandemic but it is equally important that there should have to be sufficient digital equipment available, so students are not disadvantaged.

**Evidence:** According to the research by the Office for Students, across the UK in the first term 18% of students had their ability to study affected by the lack of internet and digital equipment. A figure which is higher for students with disabilities and students of colour. These groups are well represented at Herts.

**Explanation:**
- Firstly, I have met with the Library and Computing Services team and have asked them about the number of availability of Chromebooks and long-term loan PCs which are currently present on both LRCs. As this is an initial phase, I am finding out how they are being utilised by our students as well. Additionally, I am also planning to meet the Widening Access and Student Success team to get an insight as the long-term loan PCs are approved by them.

These are quite unexpected times and some students often require additional support to ensure retention and success and most importantly their engagement with the studies.

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

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Vice-President Education