Student Council Report

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Position: Vice-President Education
Date of Council: 24/03/21

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 the start of this academic year, I have been doing research and raising my voice in front of the university officials on the issue of Personal Tutoring. Majority of the students have taken online classes due to the pandemic and it has somehow impacted their student experience. Therefore, proper implementation of personal tutoring can be considered as an asset to overcome most of their difficulties.

**Evidence:** I have met various university officials separately to discuss the importance of Personal Tutoring which includes Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience, Director and Deputy Director Learning & Teaching and some Associate Deans on an individual basis.

**Explanation:**

- After knowing that the current framework is under evaluation and will be reported back in May, I have asked Karen Barton on how students will be supported in terms of their academics and sign posting in remainder of this academic year. Additionally, this item was also put as an agenda at the PVC Advisory group so that School Community Organisers views can also be taken into consideration on Personal Tutoring.

**Outcome:**
This University officials are now aware that the current framework hasn’t served its purpose properly after listening to the voices of wider student body from various schools and Pro VC Mairi Watson has assured that she will approach the Deans of each school specifically and will ask them that the lecturers should do personal check-ins in this duration.

Being an Education Officer, I have considered the implementation of added academic support as one of my top priority so that student at Herts can receive a better academic experience in this challenging year.

2. COMMUNICATION & COURSE ORGANISATION:

In our last Student Council, International students from Hertfordshire Business School, Creative Arts, Health & Social Work and Physics, Engineering and Computer Science expressed their dissatisfaction on their student experience which was well noted by the Sabbatical team.
Additionally, I was made aware by our VP Community - Kayleigh that Creative Arts and Nursing students were unable to access specialist equipment and facilities which led to their dissatisfaction with the quality of work produced and not being competent due to lack of practical sessions.

**Evidence:** Knowing this situation, the sabbatical team set up an urgent meeting with the Pro VC Mairi Watson. Moreover, we arranged a separate forum for the International students to better understand their concerns and I personally met with SPECS AD to discuss these issues.

**Explanation:**

- In our urgent meeting with Pro VC Mairi Watson and Director Learning & Teaching Karen Barton, I raised the student feedback on assignment clustering and suggested the group to check through Guided Learner Journey program to avoid assignment clustering.

- I raised the student feedback that instead of blended learning, they are receiving online learning and emphasised on more synchronous sessions and requested a review of online teaching provision and student contact hours so that comparison can be made across the sector.

- Lastly, I discussed the student feedback on dissertation with the SPECS Associate Dean Stephen Kane and informed him that appropriate support isn’t provided by the supervisors to the Postgraduate students. Additionally, I’ll be meeting with the Creative Arts and Health & Social Work ADs next week to discuss how students will be supported after the announcement by the government on Covid guidelines.

I can totally 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, I have made sure to share these concerns which are of great importance for student satisfaction.

3. **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CONCERNS:**

This issue has been broadly highlighted during the start of semester B. Our Advice & Support team has dealt with around – cases which involves collusion, cheating and plagiarism.

**Evidence:** I have met with SPECS SCOs and Academic Quality Assurance AD Mariana Lilley, our Advice team and other Education officers to have a discussion on it and how students can be educated on this matter so that their intentional or unintentional involvement can be avoided.

**Explanation:**

- I have met with the SPECS AD Mariana alongside SCOs to raise this issue in terms of student issue and on communications and good academic practice.

**Outcome:**
I was informed about the student academic misconduct issues in the school. Identifying
the problem, I gave suggestions around communications related to academic misconduct at induction sessions which should be helpful to segregate this issue in the future.

- Met with Birmingham City SU Officer alongside our President - Karthik to better understand how this issue has impacted students and regarding the campaign which was led by BCSU to promote awareness on academic misconduct cases.

It is vital to understand the importance to educate students, especially first years and those from International background about plagiarism as this will reduce the amount of academic misconduct cases and mental health and well-being cases as well.

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

Thank you for reading!

Saad Raees
Vice-President Education