**President of Education AGM Report 2022**

*This report details the work of your full-time officer, Alex, in his role as President of Education, throughout the academic year.*

Manifesto

**Ready to Graduate Skills**

This manifesto point was all about helping students from any year group feel more prepared to leave life as a student and learn some life skills before having to tackle certain areas. Leading up to the week I was fortunate to learn a lot from other weeks throughout the year, ask students best times in their weekday to attend events and what they would, and would not like to see. In the week commencing 28th February, this week of learning was achieved. I organised 4 speakers for the week; an external speaker who provided a talk virtually on public speaking with some tips and tricks, a finance talk which looked at taxes, bills, rent, mortgages, student loan repayment and more, a session on CV building and job hunting and external speaker Lou Chou, speaking about the importance of resilience when navigating the career market, though she was unable to attend due to Covid isolation. There was also a photographer on campus twice that week, for students to get headshots for LinkedIn or their CV. The week was well received by those who attended, though we would have wished for more attendance. I am going into this summer with the intention of handing all I learnt and found to the Careers department and Student Life.

**More Sustainable Campus**

For this pledge, I have focussed my time on bringing opportunities to campus for students to purchase 2nd hand clothes from local vintage company, Messina Hembry, in September as part of Freshers’ Week and Fill-a-bag thrift sale during Re-freshers' in February. These were a success and I hope to bring more 2nd hand clothes to campus in the future. We are tackling single-use plastics by introducing an SU Travel mug that fits under coffee machines, which is also awarded free to student volunteers when they reach bronze on Suffolk Plus. I also submitted an idea for discussion at NUS (National Union of Students) National Conference to lobby their suppliers to reduce the number of single-use plastics, therefore reducing these at our ShopSU. As a director on the University Board of Directors, I was also able to question if our net zero carbon emissions are ambitious enough, which is a discussion the board intends to devote time to. Our Christmas Market we hosted also supported, sustainable, local and student businesses.

**More Mental Health Training for Personal Tutors**

Prior to starting my role as President of Education in July 2021, I was fortunate enough to be involved in some meetings with various members of university staff including a meeting with the Director for Learning and Teaching and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In these meets, I was able to propose my ideas of increasing the capacity on Mental Health First Aid course for staff and to provide more within the training sessions, such as mental health and signposting, that occurred for the transition from the former Personal Tutor model onto the current Personal Academic Coaches model. During a recent conversation in the meeting Student Experience Task Force, discussing the capacity of mental health services in the university, we suggested the university now look again into the possibility of introducing more spaces on the shorter half day courses, to enable staff to attend who may not have been able to dedicate time for a full 2 day course.

Other Projects

**Fresher’s Week**

We planned to hit back after the last 2 years of pandemic to have a bigger fresher’s than ever. It was the most successful fresher’s yet with a range of events for tastes and sizes to cater for different people. We attended many of the events to meet new students, which was amazing, and we have sent for and received lots of useful feedback.

**Course Rep Elections**

Part of planning Course Rep elections and promoting it, reps may have seen me or one of the team in one of their lectures.

**Graduation Planning**

I took part in the graduation planning group and contributed in ways to try and improve the sense of grandeur for graduates. Meg and I will look to attend this meeting for the next graduations!

**Parking**

During my time as a student at UOS there were numerous issues students were facing with each of the university car parks, about space availability, grace periods, permit issues, Fixed Penalty Notices, drop-off areas and disabled bays. Once I started my role, I have been able to develop a good working relationship with estates and director of estates, Nigel, to remedy some of these issues. We setup some initial meetings with Ipserv to speak about our concerns and adjust the fines bracket and other issues. We now all meet monthly to go through availability data, fines data, any issues we have heard and future development.

**Accessibility**

I’m passionate about the accessibility concerns on our campus after completing my dissertation on physical access. I have had meetings with director of estates to look at resolving some of these issues and speaking to students who experience hurdles directly to best improve these issues. The university will also be undertaking a full survey of the Ipswich campus’ accessibility. Actions now sit with estates, but we are happy to take more feedback and developments to them. I have recently reached out to estates to combat the inaccessible foot pedal sanitiser pumps which is now on their radar. They have combatted this in certain areas to also have hand pumps and want to remind students that sanitiser is available at the waterfront reception should they require some.

**Waterfront chairs/desks**

This has been raised with estates and actions now sit with them.

**ShopSU**

We continue to monitor the shop and note the positive impact it has on the student experience. It is crucial students use the shop otherwise it may not be financially viable. Every penny that goes into the shop goes back into the student experience. With the Health and Wellbeing renovations near completion, we hope this will increase footfall through the shop. We are continuing to raise to NUS that we would like plastic free stock.

**Block learning**

I have continued to feedback some issues experienced on block learning to the Director of Learning and Teaching, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Centre of Excellence Learning and Teaching, particularly around issues experienced by part-time students and students with disabilities. They ask that students reach out to their course leaders with any issues they are having and for any ideas that could improve the experience of students on block. Also, as ever, reach us if you need us.

**Partnerships**

In the last 4 years UOS has gone from 4000 students to around 17,000. We have been working in the SU to work out what support we can provide our partner institution students and what we will need to able to provide this.

**Recharge Week**

This was a vastly successful week of events in Block 2, Term 1. The SU supported some of the week and were able to learn a lot that we have been able to apply to our own events.

**Course Rep Forum**

I have chaired Course Rep Forum each month this year. I have tried to streamline these meetings so that reps get good use for the time they invest and volunteer as well as having guests from the university attend the start of the meeting so that students can directly impact things from Inductions to university policy.

**Strategic and democratic reviews**

The SU is starting to and soon will be concentrating more on reviewing our strategy and democracy. We have interviewed SU staff, former sabs and University staff and an independent company is collating themes for us to take forward and develop the future strategy of the SU. We have held our first governance review meeting by the time this paper goes out, which I Chair. We have taken some themes to provide context and reported these to the University board and Executive. We are awaiting the final paper for the strategic review and are soon to have an external provider on campus for our democratic review.

**Bids**

We submitted numerous bids to the giving fund to try and bring new initiatives to the student experience and complete a motion that previously came to council.

**Committee, Boards, Senate and Working Groups**

I continue to attend every committee, board, senate and working group I can, to best reflect the student perspective to ensure student experience remains at the forefront of decisions. These include Student Experience Task Force, Board of the University, Board of the Students’ Union, Senate, Quality Committee, Policies and Procedures Working Group, Ipserv and Estates Service Partner meetings, Embedding Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Task and Finish Group, Estates Project Review Group, Centre of Excellence Learning and Teaching group, Graduation Planning Group, Induction Planning Group, and Admin Management Steering Group as well as regular catchups with the Vice-Chancellor, occasional catchups with Deans of School and Heads of Directorates.

**Vice-Chancellor catchups**

We have setup regular catchups with the Vice-Chancellor to receive regular updates about the direction the university and schools are heading in and to feedback to her, the experience students are having at the University of Suffolk.

**Give It A GO**

We are trying to facilitate “Give It A Go” sessions. We went to Avid Climbing! This session was really great, good discount and good fun with a good size group of people. February, we gave indoor karting a go and are hosting free trampolining in May!

**Coffee Machine in Arts building**

We submitted a bid to the university giving fund to ask to fund a new coffee machine in the arts building after previous staff and student feedback. This was rejected. We have tried through other avenues, including through the Head of Estates. This now sits with estates where they are researching the whole offer of campus and are consulting different schools and departments about what might be best to get whether that be a crisps machine or a silver platter waiter! (Maybe not a silver platter waiter, but they are looking at many options)

**Re-Freshers Week**

Meg and I were heavily involved in the planning and facilitation of Re-freshers and we were happy with how it went but always want it to be bigger and better than ever which we will bring with us into future plans.

**Christmas Market**

A successful Christmas Market was held in the Waterfront Foyer, with student, local and sustainable businesses in attendance and positive student feedback.

**Extended library hours**

I have been in contact with library and learning services to look at trialling extended hours and have since met with Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching) and Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor). These conversations have gone well, and Ellen has evaluated costings. To provide extended opening from Monday 31st Jan to 26th June – and so cover resit weeks - on the basis of midnight 7 days a week with security working the additional 3 hours Monday – Friday and 7 hours Saturday and Sunday, and bank holidays 9-5 only, would cost £11,373 subject to any changes in rates. I took this bid to Student Experience Task Force and was successful.

**SOFIA**

I have been working with the SEEO to review how SOFIA works and provide insight to their team as they research the possibility of replacing the platform. We are about to undertake a pilot of a new software to give more options whilst also attempting to streamline the program and make it less clunky.

**Summer Ball**

We can finally tell you that we have been planning summer ball and have released the date and venue (13/05/2022 Trinity Park) with tickets OUT NOW (Go get your ticket the deadline to buy is in a few days!).

**Live QnA with Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

This QnA was great to be able to ask some student submitted questions to the DVC Live.

**Block grant**

The Block Grant is the main bloodline of the SU, it provides our budget for each year. In my time as a student this has always sat around £400k. I have been pushing a lot this year through conversations with the university board and executive as well as within the SU team and with SU CEO to increase this in order to increase our staff capacity to be able to do more for students and aim higher. This year we have significantly increased our grant bid, though due to confidentiality I cannot yet provide this number.

**NUS National Conference**

I really enjoyed Liverpool and the chance to network with other Student Unions though was left disappointed by the main bulk of conference. More information can be found in my delegate report.

**CEO Recruitment**

Myself, Meg and the SU Trustee Board are working on the recruitment process to replace our outgoing CEO to find the best fit to our growing, changing Union. This will be a large focus for us in the coming weeks and months is being part of the recruitment process for both Interim and full time SU CEO role and making sure to thank Sarah Tattersall for all the work and energy she has put into the SU in her time here. Sarah’s last day was 14/04/22 where we bid her an emotional farewell and thanked her for all she has achieved. By the time this report is sent out we will have interviewed for an interim CEO to work with us over Summer whilst Myself, Meg and Trustees work with Bill Yuksel from Peridot to recruit the perfect long-term CEO that fits our ever-growing, ever-changing university best. In the meantime, before we have an interim, staff have taken on additional duties. Mine and Meg’s include signing off payments, payroll, holiday and more.