

Sabbatical Officer Name and Role:

Ryan Murphy, Co-President (Self-Identifying Male/Non-Binary)

Date of Report: 14/02/24

Updates

Manifesto

Title Update: Campus Equity

Update Category: Insight & Action

As Co-President of Beds SU, I'm excited to share our progress on the Campus Equity manifesto goal. This initiative is at the heart of our efforts to create an inclusive, accessible, and supportive environment for all University of Bedfordshire students. By focusing on practical solutions to everyday challenges and actively responding to student feedback, we've made significant strides towards enhancing the campus experience. Below are key updates and our strategic direction moving forward.

Affordable Catering Facilities

In response to student feedback, significant steps have been taken to enhance our catering facilities. We've successfully lobbied for additional microwaves at both the Aylesbury and Luton campuses to reduce wait times during peak lunch periods. The facilities and estates department has confirmed the order of an extra microwave for the Aylesbury campus and is reviewing the proposal for a self-service space near the Beds SU area in Luton's G block mezzanine. Furthermore, we've taken a proactive stance by registering our interest in the tender for catering services on the Luton and Bedford campuses. I am currently delving into the tender details to assess the feasibility of a Beds SU bid, which could offer substantial benefits to students.

Ongoing Lobbying for Better Student Accommodation

Our advocacy for improved student accommodation conditions has seen positive engagement from the university and its agents. Recognizing the urgency following issues like flooding, bed bugs, GDPR breaches, mould, and broken fire alarms reported before Christmas, we are pushing for a follow-up forum by the end of the month. This will provide students an opportunity to confirm resolution satisfaction or highlight ongoing or new concerns, ensuring their voices lead to tangible improvements.

Advocacy Against Parking Fees

The imposition of parking fees at the Bedford campus has sparked significant concern among the student body. I have engaged in discussions with the Chief

Finance and Resources Officer and the Deputy Director of Facilities and Estates, culminating in a student forum to directly address these concerns. Despite these conversations, we maintain that parking fees negatively impact student welfare and campus accessibility. My next steps involve escalating this issue within the university's administration, aiming to secure a resolution that aligns with student interests and enhances their overall experience.

Faculty (CATS)

Update Category: Insight

Since my last report, my objective has been to immerse myself more deeply into the dynamics and necessities of the academic societies within the CATS faculty. This deliberate engagement is aimed at forging stronger connections with students, thereby enhancing my ability to advocate for their academic and extracurricular interests effectively. Such interactions are pivotal for ensuring that our initiatives and reforms are closely aligned with student aspirations, thereby fostering a more inclusive, enriched, and equitable campus culture.

Despite these intentions, our progress faced challenges due to staff turnover, which momentarily hindered the momentum of our academic societies. This disruption in continuity has been a setback; however, with recent successful recruitments filling all our vacancies, there's a renewed opportunity to advance our agenda.

Moving forward, my focus will be on reinvigorating these societies, leveraging the fresh perspectives and energy of our new staff members. By doing so, I aim to rejuvenate the collaborative spirit between the SU and the academic societies, ensuring that we are responsive to and reflective of the diverse needs of our student body. This revitalization will not only enhance student engagement but will also play a crucial role in shaping a campus environment that truly resonates with the values and needs of our students within the CATS faculty.

Other

Update Category: Action & Insight

Our dedication to forging a deeper connection with the student body has been unwavering, especially through our consistent engagement with sports teams and the strategic planning of events that celebrate our student population's diversity.

Engagement with Sports Teams

Our interaction with sports team committee members has been a cornerstone of our approach, enabling a continuous exchange of ideas and feedback. This dialogue is instrumental in tailoring our Bedford events and initiatives to meet student interests effectively. A testament to this strategy's success was the organization and enthusiastic reception of the recent Super Bowl event, a direct response to student demand.

Success of World Teachers' Day Event

The positive feedback from hosting events on Fridays, particularly for our PGCE students, has been incredibly encouraging. It underscores our commitment to creating a welcoming and engaging space for our postgraduate community. Inspired by this success, we are keen to expand our Friday events, ensuring these gatherings offer a sense of belonging and engagement for our PGCE students and contribute to a more vibrant campus life.

Reviving the Sports Campaign in Luton

In a collaborative effort with UoB Sport, Beds SU has launched a pilot for social sports in Luton this semester. The selection includes football, basketball, badminton, and cricket, aiming to cater to a wide range of interests and promote physical wellbeing. This initiative is bolstered by partnerships with various university departments and proactive outreach to students, enhancing awareness and participation in the project.

These initiatives are pivotal components of our overarching strategy to provide a holistic university experience that encompasses academic achievement, social connectivity, and physical health. By maintaining our commitment to listening and responding to student feedback, we aim to cultivate a dynamic, inclusive, and engaging university community. This approach not only enhances the student experience on campus but also reinforces our mission to support every student's success and well-being at the University of Bedfordshire.