**AFTERNOON ALL**

**Here is your weekly digest of the pertinent issues in HE that may impact Students’ Unions. If you’ve read anything of interest that’s not here, please share it with us! These will be released every week and provide an overview of HE Policy, research and other interesting factoids. If you have any questions, pop me an email.**

## Post-18 Review – Potential changes to tuition fees?

Wonkhe

Suggestions included in the post 18 review include a £6,500 base price for degrees, with STEM subjects up to £13,500
 - this means that although some courses will be cheaper, others will be more expensive. It is projected that those on higher fee courses may have higher projected earnings
- this would require substantial support from Treasury funds to ensure Universities remain adequately funded
- this reduction of tuition fees is forecast only to benefit the highest graduate earners

## Freedom of Speech in Universities and Students’ Unions

Wonkhe

Sam Gyimah responded to a written query that asked for information regarding the number of speakers/events blocked by Students’ Unions, the number of books removed from libraries, and changes to curricula with regards to equalities guidance. Although the government does not hold this information centrally, Gyimah commented that he was committed to defending free speech on campus and avoiding censorship. Guidance regarding freedom of speech on Universities campuses will be published by the end of the year.

## Impact of family relationships on student support

University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam

1701 students were surveyed and it was shown that those who had good family relationships felt that family were the most important source of support whilst at University, whereas those who had distant relationships/did not have a family network found that the distance of going to University was beneficial and helped them concentrate on University. LGBT+ students almost twice as likely to cite they had a distant relationship with their family.

## Part-time Undergraduate fee waivers for Welsh students

HEFCW

The Welsh government is introducing a fee-wavier scheme for Welsh students if they are in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, Universal credit, or other forms of government financial support. The scheme is to help promote social justice by assisting more people to obtain higher level qualifications, who would not be able to study under the current guidelines due to financial pressures

## What to do if you run out of money at Uni

The Guardian

78% of students experience financial stress (National Student Money Survey). The Guardian has written an article with guidance that may help some students budget, courtesy of Save the Student.

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/nov/08/ive-run-out-of-money-at-university-what-can-i-do

## University Accommodation Survey

Which?

41% of first year undergraduate students began searching for second year accommodation before the end of their first term at University. 39% felt pressured to start looking for accommodation and to find somewhere quickly. In smaller towns and cities, this pressure was higher.

## UK Universities drop in Global Employability rankings

The Independent, Times Higher Education

See number of Universities below from each country who have made the top 150 with regards to employability:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country/region** | **Number of universities included in 2018 ranking** | **Number of universities included in 2011 ranking** |
| USA | 34 | 55 |
| Germany | 13 | 6 |
| France | 10 | 12 |
| UK | 10 | 15 |
| China | 7 | 4 |
| Switzerland | 7 | 6 |
| Canada | 6 | 7 |
| Netherlands | 6 | 4 |
| South Korea | 6 | 1 |
| Australia | 5 | 5 |

## Impact of ‘rising expectations’ of students on Personal Support

Times Higher Education

More students are asking for help outside office hours, and expecting prompt replies, stoked by the ‘students as consumers’ rhetoric and high tuition fees. 74 per cent of the 152 respondents feel that universities expect academics to do more to support their students than they did 10 years ago, while 80 per cent report that students also expect more support than they did a decade ago.

Although it is imperative that we ensure our students are supported, we also have a responsibility to hold the University accountable to assure that tutors feel well equipped, have the time to support students fully, and know the support available to them.