Scrutiny Committee – Officer Report Template 2023/24

**Your name and role: Jack McDonald – Activities Officer**

Please fill in your report as best as you can. It will be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee within a week of submission and it will be returned with some questions. After you receive them, you will record a short video answering these so students can be informed about your report.

**Note:** Not everything you work on will be part of your manifesto so please mark whether it is or not. This includes if they idea was changed or updated after you were elected.

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| Work title:  (This could be a campaign, project, or another thing you are working on) | SMART Goal: | Is this related to your remit or manifesto? | Update (250 max): | Wins or challenges: | Traffic light status\*: | Next steps: |
| Welcome | **Co-ordinate Freshers and be the main contact for University on Welcome.** | Y | From March, I had been coordinating the Students’ Union approach to September 23 Freshers’ and Welcome while working with our managers and University staff.  Big changes this year:   * Student Group showcases. * New open space next to the SU square. * More events run by the SU itself. * A new support and volunteering fair alongside the vintage sale. * University closely monitored all communications for incoming students. * Highlighting international student welcome.   Freshers was delivered from September 25th onwards where our Activities, Voice, Support, Marketing and Business Development Teams all took part and organised a number of events with the support of the Senior leadership. It was a huge success numbers wise on almost all fronts, but has highlighted some areas for improvement for next time.  I also was able to rewrite the scripts for the Matriculations in order to better communicate what we as a Students’ Union do for first year students. Highlighting opportunities and ways to get involved. | Wins:  This was one of our biggest Freshers’ events. Around 6000 attendees for main fairs. 50% very satisfied.  Much bigger attendance for Support and Volunteering Fair as it was tied to the vintage sale.  Encouraged the University to put a bigger focus on international student welcome and reviewing their comms to incoming students. They did a great job. |  | Following many debriefs, putting things into place for next Septembers’ Welcome and handing it over to next officer when they start.  Some changes:   * Splitting up fairs on different days to help with crowd management. * More accessibility, better promo of accessibility accommodations, sensory hours and virtual events.   Planning January Welcome and Refreshers. |
| Challenges:  Highlighted major concerns with accessibility.  Marquee unavailable, concerns with amount of stall space without the Marquee in future.  Massive vacancies within the SU during the summer in most teams. Some planned activities could not take place.  Queues are seen as a positive part of Freshers’, but they were a bit too long this year.  Distance learners not accommodated University wide. |
| Volunteering Hub relaunch. | **Work to relaunch and develop the Volunteering Hub as well as supporting students and student groups on all things volunteering.** | Y | The Volunteering Hub was relaunched just prior to Freshers thanks to Kris in our Activities Team after months of coordination.  I worked with the Volunteering Team and our Union staff members over the summer to create a joint proposal for funding from the University for a new Volunteering Co-ordinator within the Students’ Union to develop our Volunteering Hub. This was successful and we are currently in the recruitment process for this role.  Over the summer, we also went into our reserves for additional funding for certain additional things this year. One of these was another new staff member in the activities team who would be the student group support lead on Volunteering among other things. They are also being recruited. | Wins:  The Hub has been relaunched.  The proposal for funding a new staff member was approved.  Another new Activities Team staff member who supports student leaders on volunteering in a different way was also funded via the Students’ Union reserves. |  | Test out the Hub and see how it goes for the year.  This Hub will be developed over time, potentially to be expanded to include staff. |
| Challenges:  No major challenges, it took longer than we anticipated.  Recruitment for the new roles has also taken a while.  The coordinator is a fixed 12-month role, so budget will need to be found for if the role is seen as necessary beyond that. |
| Developing the Student Group Pathway | **Ensuring that the journey for students when creating, running and handing over student groups is as smooth as it possibly can be.** |  | I tend to view this project in 3 parts:   * Creation and training. * Support and Development * Offboarding and Handover   Progress has largely been slow but steady on different parts of this project, with a focus on the Creation & training part.  Over the summer we changed up the affiliation documents to include a new Handover document as part of the reaffiliation process for student groups.  20 videos were filmed and edited to support committee training by providing a different and potentially more accessible form of training. The implementation of these videos remains uncertain.  The training as a whole was updated to remove Oppia in favour of Microsoft Sway, which is formatted better and easier to refer back to, as well as a quiz to test the knowledge of committee members and encourage them to consider referring back to the training documents.  The New Student Group Application form was updated to be on Microsoft Forms as well, while also requiring the constitution upfront to reduce the amount of paperwork after approval. This was done by Megan, our Opportunities Manager.  The timeline for results of applications has been made transparent and now works on a weekly alternating rotation of reviewing applications and then responding to them.  The Association Scheme, which allows groups to come together to create a larger, umbrella group, was launched, with some interest from many different groups. However, the scheme has not been widely promoted as of yet.  Societies Council has been changed to make the reviewing of applications optional to reduce delays and too much paperwork. It is not optional for Officers. | Wins –  The committee training was successfully revamped and the training videos were completely recorded and edited. This leaves us in a great place to change things up even more for next year.  Societies Council has been recruited and will meet shortly. |  | Prioritise this project more when the Activities Team is at full staff capacity.  Engage with the Careers and Employability team to support our committee members in their offboarding from committee roles.  Constantly review elements like the handover or training processes to see how we can improve for next time. |
| Challenges –  The staff lead on Societies Council and these processes only started their role at the end of July and the role was vacant from November 2022. This means that progress has been painfully slow overall.  Other areas have taken priority this year, so less time than I would have liked has been put towards this project. |
| Sustainability Student Engagement | **Work on promoting**  **Sustainability within the**  **university and**  **exploring how to**  **embed it within activities at Leicester**  **University.** | Y | Working closely with the Sustainability Team, we have developed how Sustainability looks for students at the University. This includes:   * Reviewing our approach to Green Bubble, the student Sustainability group.   + I chair all of the Green Bubble meetings in the year. * Starting a Sustainability Representative Scheme where students will be invited to university meetings to give more direct feedback and ideas. * Creation of the new Sustainability Hub on the Community Tab on the website. * A new Green Bubble leadership committee to empower them to work on more Sustainability based projects rather than just feeding back. * Involving more of the permanent SU staff in the activities of the Sustainability Team, so they can work on individual projects within their roles. | Wins:  The Sustainability Team are incredibly supportive and champion student voice and engagement.  The Green Bubble committee has been mostly recruited and will meet shortly.  Sustainability Representatives have been found and will be contacted with information and provided with training shortly.  The Sustainability Hub is live on the website. |  | It’s a year long project, we’ll see how it goes.  Constant checking and reviewing along the way. We’ll be consulting the Green Bubble committee for their feedback and ideas. |
| Challenges:  No current major challenges, progress has been slow on recruitment of leadership and representatives because of Welcome. |
| Sustainability in the Students’ Union and University. | **Developing a Local Environmental Action Plan and Sustainability Strategy for the Students’ Union.** | Y | I have become the SU Environmental Action Coordinator and have created a Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) for ensuring that our staff and students take climate into account in their activities and lives. It has been ‘signed-off’ and many of the actions relate to reviewing current practices, further training for student leaders and developing current projects.  Progress on the Sustainability Strategy which would be a commitment from the Students’ Union to annual goals that would have to be completed with a final goal in mind.  I am involved in the shaping of the University’s Environmental Sustainability Master Plan and how that looks. | Wins:  The LEAP is ‘signed off’ and will be supported by a permanent staff member when they are recruited.  The development of a Sustainability Strategy was signed off at the August 30th Trustee Board. |  | This is an on-going process. The LEAP will continue to grow over time as the conversation develops and more staff are brought into the conversation.  Work on the Sustainability Strategy will likely begin in the 2nd Semester. |
| Challenges:  No specific challenges. |
| Arts & Performance Engagement | **Prioritise Arts & Performance for students at the University to ensure that facilities and opportunities are available and easily accessible.** | Y | Developed the Creative Council leadership committee which has now been recruited and will be meeting soon to work on projects related to Arts and Performance on campus.  Arts have been highlighted as an important element of University life and an audit of performance spaces and how students can access them was conducted.  Students have also been highlighted as a priority for the future of the Attenborough Arts Centre. In my role on the Advisory Board, I have championed student interests.  I was also fortunate enough to be involved in the Music Scholarship system this year, with an emphasis on diversity of instruments and music and not traditional music.  A shared desire from the University and SU is for there to be student engagement roles within the Attenborough Arts Centre, either via graduate roles or through expansions of current staff roles. A business case is being developed. | Wins:  The University is fully on board with engaging students in the arts more.  The Creative Council has now been recruited and will meet shortly. |  | Ensure the arts are prioritised within the Students’ Union itself as well.  Promote the accessibility of performance spaces on campus.  Continue to grow the student arts community.  Create a business proposal for potential Attenborough Arts Centre student engagement roles.  Bring Attenborough Arts Centre into more conversations in the wider University around culture and cultural events. |
| Challenges:  The original idea for the Creative Council was an open forum for creative students, but as there was such little engagement, the approach has changed to be more project focused.  Student Engagement with the Attenborough Arts Centre and arts as a whole is challenging despite clear interest and talent around the University. |
| Movember | **Deliver a successful Movember campaign that raises more money than the previous one.** | Y | We have co-ordinated the Movember initiative with the involvement of multiple different Student Union and University departments, as well as Rockstar.  We aim to raise more than £10,000 which was raised last year and offer more recognition and involvement in the closing ceremony.  The events consist of:   * A launch event with free shaving. * A Men’s Health talk. * A Movember sports tournament (Organised by Joe). * Wellbeing “Mo-ment” encouraging conversations about mens health. * Movember themed Lets-disko * Closing Ceremony & Awards.   This has been planned for several months. | Wins:  We allocated a shared £1000 pot towards this initiative to cover a number of events and freebies.  The engagement from so many different groups including Sport and Active Life, Student Support Services, Standing Together, Marketing, Staff Health & Wellbeing, EDI, Alumni Outreach, Rockstar & the Students’ Union is an incredible achievement. |  | A dedicated SU staff member will be involved with the process from start to finish in future.  A more rigid action log and tangible commitments should be brought forwards.  Marketing and promotion will be divided more amongst the teams.  Ensuring that the main goal, raising awareness of Men’s’ Health, isn’t lost along the way. |
| Challenges:  A number of university departments were quite engaged in the conversation, but were unable to commit to any action or events often due to their own staff capacity. |
| General Fundraising | **Ensure that students and student groups can fundraise effectively.** | Y | Plans for the Big Sleep, likely taking place in March 2024, have also begun and are in early stages.  The idea of a ‘RAG Week’ in February were dropped in favour of Community Action endeavours such as “Go Green Week” over fundraising. Initiatives. | Wins:  Relevant student groups are already engaged and keen. |  | The Fundraising Hub will be updated when the new staff member in Activities starts and is able to update. Work can go into further supporting students on Fundraising initiatives.  The Big Sleep will take place and there will be a lot of support for community action initiatives in the new year. |
| Challenges:  The cost-of-living crisis makes too much fundraising uncertain and morally ambiguous. How do we approach mass fundraising in a sensitive way while students struggle financially? |
| Sticky Campus | **Work to improve the student experience outside of academia to keep students on campus.** | N | An initiative that was started last year by Rhiannon continues this year with myself designated as the lead Officer. The work is generally done by the new Student Experience Project Manager, Hannah Congrave.  It is a much wider project than the remit of Activities as it includes elements of Sports, Liberation, Wellbeing among many other things and the projects include most Officers in some form. For full transparency, my involvement is not so direct and is more oversight.  We are taking steps into the new phase of Sticky Campus, potentially called Campus Life.  The main impacts of Sticky Campus include:  Launch of the new Level-up Lounge.  The relaunch of the Free Breakfast scheme.  A new Events Coordinator for cultural events.  New Campus Life ambassadors to support students.  LeicsCook, cooking competition (led by Archie).  Festival of Culture (led by Jade and Archie).  More international student focused events. | Wins –  The staff lead on this project is incredible and means that I don’t need to engage much. |  |  |
| Challenges –  This is a fairly hands off project. No major challenges at this stage. |
| Miscellaneous Wellbeing Projects |  | N | I am involved in a number of other Wellbeing projects due to the absence of the lead officer. These include:  Food Rescue Project –  LSP, the external University catering organisation have put in a scheme to reduce their waste and make the most of the community kitchen.  Food Bank Project –  A separate project led by the University’s Staff Health & Wellbeing Team about working with local supermarkets and food providers to offer Food Banks on campus.  Student Belonging –  Advance HE are running a national campaign on how we can improve Student Belonging on campus. This includes many factors such as academic engagement, inclusivity training, better mental health support etc. | Wins:  These are really positive campaigns that didn’t need student encouragement to be started. |  | I will seek to either delegate or plan how to more effectively engage with these campaigns beyond light touchpoints and feedback. |
| Challenges:  I struggle for time for these projects as they do not easily align with my main projects and remit. |
| Academic Student Groups | **Find the gaps of where courses, schools and colleges don’t have affiliated student groups and work with academics to best support their students on these in order to facilitate bigger academic communities on campus.** | N | I have been able to identify the gaps in schools and colleges where there aren’t active subject affiliated student groups.  Working with the Law School and Standing Together, we have been able to offer some training with our Law Societies on what support is available and who they can come to for what issues.  The final goal is for senior academics to further understand how student groups work, respect their autonomy and offer their support as much as possible. There’s a lot of potential.  This is a fairly light touch project that I jump into in my “free” time that builds from academic student group work from last year. | Wins –  Senior academics are really on-board with the idea and want to help in any way they can. |  | I plan to work more closely with academics to observe best practice when supporting academic student groups.  I will present my findings to senior University staff.  Consider promoting the Associations scheme for student groups to build better communities. |
| Challenges –  No particular challenges.  I have anecdotally seen an instance of students feeling that they had to create an academic student group, which is entirely not the desired outcome. I will have to work to prevent this. |
| Employability | **Improve the employability offering for students and student leaders at the University by further embedding it into our processes and making services more accessible.** | Y | There are many disconnected but similar conversations around employability for students and student leaders.  SU Employability Award -  This project aims to develop and deliver a comprehensive employability support package for SU student leaders.  Civic Pathway Project –  This aimed to map out the pathway for the students that engage with the Students’ Union at different points in their lifecycle.  Embedding Careers Support into Student Group Events –  An increased demand for careers support in student group events has indicated a need for a more formalised approach to this. | Wins –  The Careers & Employability Team are very on top of these projects and have a clear steer and interest. |  | Continue to work with the Careers & Employability Teams to build upon what is already being worked on. |
| Challenges –  No current major barriers for this area.  This is an area with so much potential for projects, such as the availability of part time job opportunities, the skills log, Leicester gold award etc. There is unfortunately not enough time in the day to take advantage. |
| Botanic Gardens | **Ensuring that students can** | Y | I am a part of the Botanic Gardens Board and have been involved in the development of a Government Funding bid to invest in the Botanic Gardens.  I put forwards a recommendation for dedicated staffing resources for student opportunities such as part-time employment, volunteering, society space etc. | Wins:  Students are not going to be forgotten with the investments into the Gardens as a wider community focused venue and are a part of its future. |  | I will be engaging further to help with student ‘market’ insight by working with my councils to gauge interest and feedback. |
| Challenges –  Student engagement with gardens and gardening is dwindling.  The Plants and Gardening Society disaffiliated over the summer. |

\*Refers to the RAG system of red (not started), amber (in progress), and green (complete).