**Full Time Officer Report 2019-2020: Annual General Meeting**

Name & Role: George Nuttall, President of Lancaster University Students’ Union

**Progress on Manifesto Pledges:**

Communication and Transparency

I have taken the lead on the Unions new Communication group. The Focus of this group is to look at how Students’, Staff, and the wider community feels the Union communicates with them. This is both internal communication, such as emails or training, and external communication, such as social media and when events are. The group decided that we should see how different groups communicate with the Union which will enable to see where best practice lay with regards to different student groups. It was decided that the first group that should be engaged were the college JCRs. Consequently I went to every JCR in Michaelmas term to collate feedback on what they felt of the Unions communications. I have also carried this on this term by visiting almost half of the JCRs so far to receive their thoughts on the matter. The feedback from first term has been collated and presented to the work stream and we are now looking at areas where it can be improved. We are now also considering which other groups to engage in the process and where else communication within the organisation can be improved.

The Vice President Activities and I have also started doing ‘Student Group of the Week’ where we have chosen a different student group of the week to celebrate the fantastic things our groups do. Overall our ‘Student Group of the Week’ campaign on the Officers Facebook page have reached over 7,000 people.

As of this year all Officers now have individual Instagram accounts, with half also having work Facebook accounts, where we have been posting about what we are doing in the role. This has increased our visibility as a team and allowed us to share on social media what we have done more frequently than previously. We have also made extensive use of the both the Officer Facebook page and the discussion board this to engage students.

Welfare

At the start of the year I helped the University refine their welfare review into the counselling services on their campus which include improving the provisions within departments. I have also been pressuring throughout the year for the University to expand their counselling provisions especially as they continue to grow student numbers. Unfortunately I have been unable to introduce a dedicate welfare liaison in each department as I originally wanted. Yet I have been consistently lobbying for all University staff to get a degree of welfare training so that they will be able to effectively signpost students to the correct areas for help. Hopefully, we shall see this be implemented soon and rolled out across the entire university.

I have also introduced drug testing kits into the Students Union so that students can take drugs in a safe manner. This has involved working with the University on the re-draft of their drugs policy and removing the zero tolerance standard they had previously. We are planning to evaluate which kits are taken most frequently and how popular they are. If there is significant demand for these kits in the Union there is the potential to introduce the most in demand kits on a permeant basis to the Union.

Education

This year I have been pushing the University to decrease their Black Attainment Gap. I am currently engaging our BME Officer to do a piece of work on the attainment gap both across the sector and at Lancaster specifically. One of the problems with the Attainment Gap here is the University doesn’t publish the figures due to having such a low number of UK BAME students. The Vice President Education and I have been instrumental in the University introducing contextual admissions for undergraduate students. This will thus allow the University to recruit a more diverse range of students as it will create ‘a level playing field’ for applicants. In turn, this will mean we can get a more diverse student population in Lancaster. By recruiting a more diverse student population we can thus remove this barrier to tackling the Attainment Gap on our campus.

College Sport

One of my key priorities for the year was an improvement to the College Sports services this year. To that end working with our sports team staff I have managed to introduce promotion and relegation for college sport leagues this year. This was done with the aim of making college sport more competitive as now that we enter the end of the season teams that might not otherwise be competing a particular position are now vying to avoid relegation. We also differentiated the cup competition by introducing other levels such as the ‘plate’ this was designed so that teams who were knocked out in the first round will be able still compete in a knock out competition throughout the year.

Union Reform

We now have a Vice President Sports and a Vice President Societies and Media due to changes passed by the Executive. Vice President Societies and Media was the most contested position in the officer elections this year with five candidates running for it. Vice President Sports was the second most heavily contested position with four candidates running for the positions.

I have been to the PG Board to speak about their issues and what we can do better to support them. Consequently I have been to some of their events to try and increase my visibility with both the board and post grad students. I have also been working with the Chair to set up a Students’ Union Post Graduate Student News Letter which will aim news specifically at Post Graduates to help improve engagement with the Union.

I have also supported our Post Grad members who are also members of UCU by standing with them on the picket line to fight against the increasing casualisation of work, against the increasing workload, and against the worsening conditions they face.

Extra Work

Nationally I have been active by cooperating with other Union Presidents and officers. Recently I have signed two open letters alongside other officers, one to the ‘All Party Parliamentary Group on Students’ on the current student loan system. As, a consequence of this they recently held a meeting on the matter of this which Hannah represented our Union at. The second one was to Michelle Donelan the Minister of State for Universities, Mark E. Smith the Chair of the University and College Employers Association Board, Sir David Eastwood the Chair of the USS Pension Board, and Alistair Jarvis the Chief Executive of Universities UK. This called for them to re-enter negotiations with UCU over the ongoing strike action. We are still waiting for a response from this letter.

With regards to the climate emergency we all face I have been very vocal in pressuring the University to declare that there is a climate emergency as both the Union and the city council have done. Vice President Welfare and Community and I have been pushing for the introduction of a Zero Waste section in Central. This will dramatically cut down on the amount of plastic waste that Central produces. Furthermore, I managed to secure additional funds from the University to invest in making Roses ‘greener’ and more environmentally sustainable. Finally, I have been working with a group of students to try and pressure the University to adopt the search engine ‘Ecosia’ as their default.

I have also been involved in a number of recruitment processes both within the University and the Union. Within the University I was involved in recruiting the incoming Vice Chancellor. I helped to organise a series of meetings between the prospective candidates and student’s then presenting that student feedback to the search committee. I am also involved currently in the Unions search for a new Chief Executive Officer and two external trustees of the Students’ Union.