**Officer Report: Vice President Welfare and Community**

**Sexual Misconduct**

One of key parts of my manifesto was to launch a strong campaign against Sexual Misconduct. As there had been very little to no substantial work conducted in this area, I have been very much laying the foundations and doing the legwork. I have conducted ample amounts of research through the year to gain a better understanding of the different sexual misconduct polices, different union campaigns, national research and statistics, strategic policies, Lancaster University statistics, and external charities which the SU can work with. I have been mapping all this research to formulate a solid groundwork for future work in this area.

Through this, I have launched the Lancaster Supports Sexual Respect campaign. I have worked with the All In Coordinator to embed sexual respect training as a part of All In’s mandatory requirement. I am currently working on structuring the sexual respect training.

I have had a great deal of input in the University’s new and revised Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy. I have pushed the University to ensure student consultation was carried out throughout policy development. I have also help create and deliver the bystander talks this year during welcome week. The concept of respectful behaviours within this year’s bystander talks was a good concept however; they are not inclusive and brush over the issue of misconduct. There is still a significant amount of work that needs to be done regarding the bystander talks and I have already started these conversations with the relevant individuals within the University.

I have been working on the Office for Students’ Consultation of Harassment and Sexual Misconduct in Higher Education and have produced a Students’ Union response on what Universities should be doing, along with an open letter on how Lancaster needs to be preventative in their methods. This will be published on the SU website soon. Following from that I am currently in the planning stages to start empowering and bringing students into this discussion to make sexual misconduct a grassroots and long-standing campaign. My aim by the end of my time in office is to produce a report from the research that I have done through the year and student consultation; to establish the ‘Lancaster’ experience as there are very limited statistics for the University, where the SU stands on this issue, what the SU is going to about it and what the University should be doing about it.

**Sexual Health**

The work, which I have done on sexual health, has been a successful win. Through my campaign, The Sex Project I have worked with an external charity called Renaissance to promote positive sexual health and healthy relations. I launched the campaign in welcome week and created a chart to identify all the accessible sexual health clinics in Lancaster for students. I also held an event on International Men’s Day to promote men’s health. By working with the charity, I have now set up monthly drop in sessions in the SU where students can get confidential, non- judgemental and independent advice, free contraception and sanitary products, and free sexual health testing.

Earlier in summer, I made the decision that JCR’s had to pay for their own contraception and sanitary products for their individual colleges and this would no longer be funded by the SU. The reason for this decision was as it was not long term sustainable for this to be funded from the Advice and Guidance budget. JCR’s already have a large budget which at times, for example welcome week, is in a surplus. Furthermore, due to the different college’s sizes and student engagement with the JCR’s in colleges, contraception and sanitary products were stocked and not used for their purpose. Therefore, it made more sense for JCR’s to buy their own contraception and sanitary products from their own budget and at quantities that they needed. I have worked with JCR Welfare Officers and provided them with companies that sell contraception and sanitary products for cheap and are sustainable.

**Sustainability**

I supported and took part in the Climate Strike back in September. I have politically supported the Students’ Union declaring a Climate Emergency and have launched a Climate Emergency Working Group to ensure the SU delivers its promises and has a proactive approach when it comes to sustainability. It was very important to have student involvement within the working group therefore; with the help of our comms team, I have put a call out for student volunteers who wish to be part of this group.

I was involved in hiring the Green Lancaster intern to advance the Union’s sustainability agenda. I have helped and worked with the Green Lancaster Sustainability Team in the early stages on their Food Sustainability project. This has helped me significantly in developing my own knowledge of sustainability. I have also taken the Carbon Literacy workshop and Sustainability Ideas Conference to further broaden my understanding. The President and I have been working with Green Lancaster and Central management to push for a zero waste section in Central; we are currently in process of taking a paper to Trustee Board for approval.

I have worked with Commercial Services within the University in their ‘Conferences and Food Sustainability Action Plan’ and inputted the student voice in the Facilities Sustainability workshop. I also sit on the Sustainable Management Transport Group where I have pushed for cheaper bus prices and high restrictions for staff parking permits.

I have also been working with the PVC Simon Guy to create a Sustainability Q and A event, similar to the all staff Big Conversation to give students an opportunity to question and hold the University accountable on their sustainability plans. I am also judging the 9 Colleges Sustainability Challenge.

**JCR Welfare Officers**

I have worked with JCR officers to develop the Welfare Assemblies into a Welfare Committee. I have changed the format of the way these meetings were ran to make sure it is efficient. The purpose of the Welfare Committee is for me to hear what the big issues facing students are and for the JCR Officers to get skills to apply to their individual roles and activities. Each Welfare Committee is themed, so far they have been; Communication and Professionalism, Community and Internationalisation, and FTO Welfare Candidate Question Time.

I have also been involved in creating, and delivering the JCR Welfare Officer Training session. The training session however, was only 90 minutes long which I felt was not enough time and this was only available to those who attended. This is why I developed the Welfare Committee as skills sessions for JCR Officers to ensure JCR Officers and those who are co-opted in, are getting training and development throughout their time in office. I have also developed the JCR referral guide which is an in depth signposting system for Officers to use.

One of my objectives for JCR Officers was to attend as many of their events as possible. I have been unable to complete this objective due to timing. After long hours in the office, I have found it difficult to make time for the events. I do want to formally congratulate all the JCR Officers on their events and hard work.

**Part Time Officers**

One of my key manifesto objectives was to work closely with Part Time Officers to give them aid and support their projects. I have not been able to fulfil this objective completely due to barriers and miscommunications. At the start of the year, I tried setting up ‘office hours’ for Part Time Officers where they could come and have a 1-2-1 catch up to see what support they needed and how their projects were coming along. I tried the 1-2-1 model, as the group catch up model did not work due to a lack of engagement. The office hours were a failure, as the Part Time Officers did not want this and there was a vocal backlash regarding this. On reflection, I wish I tried harder and found different ways to continue working with Part Time Officer and not give up after four barriers.

I have pushed for Part Time Officers to be invited to the by weekly Inclusive Learning Network and the Disability Learning Network within the University and have been successful in ensuring their voices are heard. I facilitated a consultation evening with University to ensure Part Time Officer voices and opinions were acknowledged in the development of the new Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

As your political lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), I have been working with the Dean for EDI and the University EDI team to create a subgroup to ensure student issues are being taken to EDI Committee, as the committee currently is very staff heavy. I have pushed the EDI team to prioritise the Trans Working Group and work on better racial equality. I have also been involved in the University’s Bronze Athena Swan submission have challenged the University significantly on their implementation plans and budget requirements. I have been involved in the Inclusive Learning Network and have strengthen relationships with University EDI reps and the SU.

**Microaggressions**

I have engaged students to promote inclusivity through my microaggressions campaign ‘Did I Just Say That?’ I interviewed students on their experiences of microaggressions and videoed 7 different topics which will be released in third term;

* Microaggressions towards Gay Men
* Microaggressions towards those who are Bisexual
* Microaggressions towards those who are Lesbian
* Microaggressions towards of a LGBTQ+ Community
* Microaggressions towards those with physical disabilities
* Microaggressions towards those with mental disabilities
* Microaggressions towards the Jewish Community

**Black History Month**

I have been involved in facilitating the events for Black History Month. I launched Black History Month in the SU and created a pledge that committed the Students’ Union to continue the celebration not just for this year but also for the years going forward. All the Full Time Officers and the BME Part Time Officer signed this pledge. During the month, I attended and supported majority of the events that were led by the students. The month was a very successful month with high student engagement. I also helped facilitate the Black History Month wrap up and evaluation session and celebrated the students on all their hard work.

**Housing**

I have worked with the SU Advice Team during the Housing Fair where we promoted ‘Marks out of Tenancy’ tool for students and encourage them to have their housing contracts reviewed by the Advice Team before signing them. We also encouraged students, especially first year students, to think hard about who they would like to live with and not rush their decisions and sing contracts so early on. I wanted to work with the SU Advice Team to create a housing ‘myth busting’ campaign to promote issues outlined however; this was not feasible this year due to staff capacity and other projects.

I am currently working with the SU Policy Coordinator and the President in gaining student consultation for the new HMO proposals to formulate a SU response.

**General Welfare and Community**

I am currently working with University’s HR team to promote period dignity and implement free sanitary products within library toilets and departmental toilets.

For Alcohol Awareness Week, I breathalysed over 40 students on Thursday morning in November and handed out lots of awareness cards to help students rethink their drinking habits and encourage them to not binge drink.

I have worked with the Advice Team in re-decorating the Advice pods to make them more student friendly and welcoming.

One of my manifesto objectives was to accommodate a permanent worship space for Hindu students. I have been working with the PVC for Engagement and Peter Ballard in the Chaplaincy space review to ensure all faith groups on campus are provided with adequate space.

The previous VP Welfare and Community Emily Delaney secured £3,000 every year for 5 years from University Commercial Service, Circuit Laundry Commercial Contract. When I took up office the University argued that this was incorrect and refused to release this money for students. I have spent months lobbying the University and having regular meeting with the Head of Commercial Services and the Procurement department to release the funds. Finally, on the 18th Feb, the Head of Commercial Services agreed to release the money for this year and that in future years a conversation needed to take place between the University and future VP Welfare and Community.