Officer Report

Name & Role: Sarah Pennington and Gigi Bruschi, Student with Disabilities Officers

# Progress on Manifesto Pledges:

## Work closely with students to make sure all voices are heard.

* We have been striving to engage with students through different means. We have been using our Facebook page/group to ask for input, and have been running and engaging with those who attend our forum.
* We have an exec that represent different areas of our remit and who we are able to go to for advice.
* We have created a Qualtrics survey that was advertised by the University Disability Services and which allows students to submit opinions, thoughts and accessibility struggles.

## Fight for all departments to provide audio recordings of lectures.

* We have attended multiple meetings around the issue, particularly meetings with the disability advisors of all the various departments to explain why this is an essential necessity. We have addressed concerns that lecturers have, such as suggesting that those who are not comfortable using Panopto use their own recording device.
* The collaboration with the (amazing) disability advisors has allowed for more departments to now record lectures, such as the Psychology department.
* We have also pushed for departments that do not want to provide all students with lecture recordings to at least provide them to those with ILSPs that include this as a necessity.

## Create better awareness about the various disabilities.

* We have run multiple social media campaigns to spread awareness about various types of disabilities. These have been well met, and received a good level of attention. These have included but are not limited to:
  + An informational mental health campaign on Mental Health Awareness Day.
  + Currently we are running an informational online campaign about women with disabilities for Women’s History Month.
* We have also planned an awareness day with activities for third term. We were originally meant to hold this in January but had to reschedule due to the cold and weather.
* We are currently in the process of organizing for an external speaker to come and do a talk surrounding disabilities.

# Make sure on-campus accommodation is provided with comprehensive lists of UK hotlines, and important university contacts.

* Unfortunately, we were unable to achieve this due to time constraints after we placed our order. However, we are putting this in place for the next academic year, and instead have made these leaflets available at re/fresher’s fair, in porter areas and in social areas for various departments.
* We also made a more comprehensive list available online.

# Work with the University to create better staff training on how to interact with students with disabilities. We also want reminders of the importance of ILSPs.

* While we have had initial meetings regarding the creation of training, this has been a slow process and we have achieved no substantial impact. We are continuing to work on it.

# Fight for more accessibility in lecture halls/on campus.

* We have been working with staff on the issue, and while the process has been slow we have managed to finally be put in contact with the project management team and will be soon having a meeting to be put on the PEX board that has influence on campus building.
* We worked with the library staff on making sure there will be a sensory-overload friendly space in the new library extension. We also ensured there will be an increase in accessibility, such as wheelchair friendly desks, desks you can stand at, and better chairs.
* We are working on getting lockers made available for people with disabilities that live off campus and who are unable to carry heavy items around all day. This is slow due to unsustainable student growth increasing strain on the limited available space, but we have continued working on this.
* We have further projects ongoing on the issue.

Liaison with vendors around campus to introduce two ‘quiet hours’ that happen on a designated day of the week.

* We have been unable to achieve this unfortunately as campus vendors have expressed logistical concerns and we cannot implement the hours as a rule, it has to be a mutual agreement.

Hold office hours both on and off campus, as well as making ourselves available online.

* We have not had scheduled office hours due to the high strain of this role on energy, and lack of interest from the students for these hours.
* We have instead made ourselves available on a case by case basis, and scheduled hours to help students based around requests and their schedules. This has included meetings at our desk, meetings in the SU advice rooms, or our presence in university meetings as support.
* We have made ourselves available and easy to contact on email or online.

Create an encyclopaedia-style document to highlight resources available to disabled students.

* We are proud to say that this is well in the process and will be made available to all students before the start of third term.
* We insured that the format is accessible, easy to understand and easy to navigate to allow all students to be clearly aware of the resources available.
* Once published, we will continue updating this if any new resources are made available.

Increase the awareness and promotion of SWD Forum.

* We have printed posters which were placed around campus advertising the forum.
* We have promoted the forum on social media, both on Facebook and Instagram.
* We have printed off business cards that we handed out at re/freshers fair and made available at the Student Union welcome desk.
* We are now advertised on the Disability Service’s moodle page and are continuing to request that they also promote us on their email list.

Create discreet stickers to be added to student’s ID cards, to inform other staff and students of their health issues, to aid with access around campus and its facilities.

* We have been unable to achieve this unfortunately due to time constraints but we have been working with the VP Union Development and Stagecoach and are in an initial discussion phase.
* We will continue working on this in third term.

# Other Projects I Have Been Working On:

International Men’s Day Campaign

* We ran a mental health campaign on International Men’s Day to fight the stigma around men’s mental health.
* We had a stall all day in Alex Square.
* We provided informational leaflets and cards on available support.
* We had a bake sale to raise money for CALM, a mental health charity that is fighting male suicide and which offers a free hotline service. We managed to raise £156.58.
* We also held an online campaign at the same time, which provided more information and statistic regarding man’s mental health. This also included advice, and available support.

SU Communication – Accessibility

* We have increased the accessibility of SU communications through the increase of use of means like picture descriptions, subtitles and transcripts.
  + We are continuing to work on this.
* We have attended meetings regarding the SU website and its current lack of accessibility. They are updating the site and, in these meetings, we managed to ensure that this update will be accessible and include an area where students can contact the SU about site accessibility directly in case anything was missed out.

Know Your Rights Campaign

* We have been working with the current Pres and VP education on a campaign to inform students of their rights while in university. This includes educational, political, housing, human, and financial rights.

University Mental Health Day Campaign

* We have held a campaign for University Mental Health Day where we handed out free self-care boxes. These contained:
  + A hand-written card, no two were the same.
  + Three cards on available support services. These were the SU advice team, Nightline and the SWD forum.
  + A squishy that can help with stress, anxiety or stimming if someone needs to fidget or do something with their hands.
  + A vegan and non-animal tested soap for delicate skin.
  + Touchable bubbles.
  + Many stickers of different varieties.
* We also had little colouring sessions to wind down and relax with people.
* We worked hard to keep this campaign as sustainable as possible, by using recycled material where available.

Updating the Bye-Laws

* We have been in discussions with the wonderful VP union development on changes and updates that we feel are important to make to the bye-laws.
* These include the addition of accessibility, as well as further changes.
* We will focus on this more intently in third term.

Lowering Impact of Strikes on Students

* While supporting staff strikes, we have also been trying to ensure that they university is able to mitigate the effect on students, especially those with disabilities.
* We have been acting as a voice for student concerns and been keeping the SU Education aware of issues brought to us, as well as potential solutions. She has then brought this up with the university so that they can take the specific effect on students with disabilities into consideration.
  + A special thank to our SU Education who has spent a lot of time on this and has been extremely supportive and available.

Forum

* We have continued running forum, and have run activities within it with the help of our exec (ie: a cookie decorating event).
  + In term one we ran forum every Thursday (tea and coffee) and every other Wednesday (a more official meeting). In term two we condensed these into a singular weekly tea and coffee evening on Wednesdays.
* We have supported our exec with any campaign they have wished to run. For example, they are going to be running a resilience workshop soon.
* We have added an officer role. This is Neurodiversity Officer and it ensures that all aspects of the community that make up the forum have an officer that can represent them.

# Projects for the Rest of the Year:

Mental Health Campaign – Part Two

* With the assistance of the wonderful SU advice team we will be able to run a second part to our mental health campaign where we will be able to provide even more students with free self-care kits – this time including stress balls!

Body Image Campaign

* Assist the Women’s+ Officer with her (amazing) campaign on body image, which is intersectional and focusing on issues that affect all minority groups.

Disability Services Registration

* Try to work with the university on making students who disclose their disability status while applying to university (ie: through UCAS) be automatically registered with the disability services, so that support and information can be provided even before arrival.
  + This will also be helpful in our plan to provide early access to the freshers/freebie fair to those with mobility issues - which would be our next step.

Update the Accessibility Map

* Assist the university with updating the information on the accessibility map that is available on the LU website.

Continuation

* Continue to work on things previously started that have not fully been completed.

# Officer Budget Report:

So far, we have spent £195.32 on campaigns. These specifically were for the University Mental Health Day campaign and International Mens Day campaign. £39.97 was spent on the Men’s Day bake-sale, and the rest was spent on the free self-care boxes.