**Scrutiny Report – Vice President Sports Paul McCarthy**

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**Achievements**

Coming into his new position as VP Sports, Paul had five commitments:

1. To increase participation in LUSU organized College Sports events;
2. to increase communications between College and University Sports Executives;
3. to focus on mental health within sports teams;
4. to win an away Roses; and
5. to increase transparency in the SU.

As the reader can guess, this series of objectives was set before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made these goals hard to reach, if not unreachable. Given that his role is focused on activity - which was limited and cut short this year - Paul had a real challenge ahead; A challenge that he’s managed to plough through with his perseverance and strong passion for sports. While still trying to organize events, Paul turned his attention to the administration and organization side of the VP Sports position.

Paul fulfilled his commitment to focusing on mental health by pledging to make welfare representatives in sports teams mandatory. A lot of teams now have these, and training for these positions is being developed. In addition to welfare representatives, some sports teams now have a platform specifically dedicated to wellbeing.

He also made progress in increasing communications between sports executives across the university. His greatest achievement has been to set up a committee to settle disputes between rec sports teams. This means that rec sport leagues will be able to go ahead in the future.

Paul was also able to organize sports events. Before the lockdown circumstances changed, he turned Lonsdale bar into a pool bar in order to meet restrictions. More impressively, Virtual Roses took place and 150 people engaged with this! Finally, Paul helped set up activity challenges on social media, which he reported all went well.

**Challenges**

As previously implied, Paul’s biggest challenges were concerned with the pandemic. Paul had difficulties coming up with new ideas to keep current students engaged in sports – to keep it ‘fresh’. He also struggled to reach Freshers who had not joined any sports teams nor societies from the start. Similarly, on social media, it proved challenging to break the barrier of reaching students who don’t follow the SU’s pages.

**Approaches**

Paul’s approach to his tasks was influenced by the experience he previously had in Sports Teams and on the JCR, when he was confronted with problems. Thus, when he noticed the lack of student communication to LUSU, Paul tried to improve this by reaching out to representatives from Sports Teams.

However, in facing the COVID-19 restrictions, Paul thought the Student’s Union was too quick to cancel events. Instead, he would have waited to try and adapt to changing government guidelines. This reflection is something he will bring further in his role in the coming months.

**Targets for Lent & Summer Term**

Paul has several targets for the current Lent term and coming Summer term. He will start by doing a review of Sports at Lancaster University. This will include having more focus on College as well as Rec sports and getting more international students involved. Meetings on this topic will also address how union finances for sport aren’t sustainable currently.

Another target of Paul’s is to increase student engagement in sports during the National Lockdown, which will notably include a ‘Strava College Leaderboard’.

Then, Paul has the task of planning Roses, which will either be partly or completely online. Because there is so much uncertainty in current times, Paul will have to plan for different scenarios according to tiers, as well as create a timeline to prepare.

Overall, Paul will keep working on the administrative part of his role. He has said himself that the pandemic, as restricting as it is, is a great opportunity to completely change and improve the way sport is done at Lancaster University.

**Advice**

Overall, this year has been unique for all of us. As said by Paul, strength is the way we’ve got on as a team.

My suggestion for our Sports VP is to keep a patient, cautious and adaptive approach to all aspects of his work. This includes events such as Roses, but also ongoing online events. I believe Paul has the capability to face his greatest challenge, which is coming up with creative ideas against restrictions. Perhaps to make each activity even more unique, Paul could combine his thoughts with those of his peers.

This suggestion also includes welfare in sports. While I admire the idea of having a welfare rep in each team to care for mental health, Paul could alternatively have given training to the team captains themselves.

Finally, it also includes administration; such ideas can take time and difficulty to come to fruition. Paul may need to be more patient and adaptive than he realizes. It is possible that all his projects will not be finished by the end of his role, meaning he must make sure to pass them on to the next VP.

To conclude, it is brilliant how Paul is making the most of the current times by fixing issues from their root. It is keen to have noticed that improving welfare and communication from an organizational standpoint is needed. In these times, it is becoming more and more clear that change is necessary to go forward.