



The details in this report reflect progress made since the last meeting of Union Senate, which took place on _____

Minutes of previous meetings can be found on our website here: _____

Leading the Union	
<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>Improve communication both within the zone and across zones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Culture Festival: I have begun planning Culture Festival, the two week celebration of international culture which we hold every year. This year, we are branching out to showcase and celebrate all culture, including art, dance, music and drama etc. This has enabled me to reach out to societies outside of the Student Communities zone to be involved and prompt collaboration, particularly between SC Zone societies and CI Zone societies. For example, Sri Lankan society and live music society are looking host a collaborative event. ● MedSoc: Dialogue and work with MedSoc continues to be positive. The Sites Survey that I carried out before Christmas was put in their weekly MedSoc bulletin and subsequently students studying at SGH were the highest percentage of respondents, meaning we were able to gain very meaningful feedback from this group for the first time in a while. ● PG Newsletter: I have worked with our Marketing and Communications team to put together a monthly newsletter containing events and news relevant to Postgraduates which gets sent out every month.
<p>Progress: 2</p>	

<p>Goal 2:</p> <p>Lobby the University to put a consistent and clear policy concerning paying Postgraduate students for preparation time.</p>	<p>Having had meetings with the Quality Standards and Accreditation team at the University, we have worked to add some wording into the PGRs Who Teach policy which explicitly states that consideration of time spent preparing for demonstrations should be factored in when determining and agreeing the payment of PGRs for teaching time.</p> <p>I have also met with the University's Vice President Education to raise the issue. The University will be shortly undertaking a full review of PGR activities and they have subsequently agreed to incorporate research into prep time into that review.</p>
<p>Progress: 2</p>	<p>My next step will be to consult the Faculty Directors of the Graduate schools to see what their advice on how we can achieve parity between faculties.</p>
<p>Goal 3:</p> <p>Work with the University to better signpost support services and structures to Postgraduate students.</p>	<p>I am pleased to report that there has been a lot of progress with this.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having met with the University's Quality Standards and Accreditation team, I have got them to change the suspension letters to include details about support services available for students both at the University and the Union. 2. Having met with the University's Vice President Education, I raised the need for a formal back to work/ study process for PGRs who go on leave. He agreed and we are currently in the process of setting a high level principle to be set by the University. I will be meeting with the University's Enabling team to discuss how/ if they can facilitate these meetings as we believe they are the best people, as opposed to the supervisor or anyone in the academic field, to carry these out. As with PGR prep time, I will also be contacting the Faculty Directors of the Graduate Schools to ask how they feel it is best to integrate this policy into practice. 3. I have met with the University ambassadors, along with Sam VP Education, to train them about SUSU and in particular the support services that we offer so that this knowledge can be communicated to students as early as open days to try and increase awareness of available welfare support. 4. After a discussion with advisors from our Advice Centre, we will be delivering a PG specific Look After Your Mate training on 15th Feb. This is a very successful training which we run which teaches students to support their friends and peers while also looking out for their own wellbeing. This has been very popular and received 25 sign ups in three days so we will be running subsequent sessions. After further conversations with advisors, we will likely be additional training on how to deal with the PGR/ supervisor relationship which can often be very difficult, pending consultation with the PGs who attend the LAYM training.
<p>Progress: 2</p>	
<p>Additional Comments:</p>	

Pictures/links to blog posts relating to the work in this section:

1. Link to Student Communities Zone Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1764449350258555/>

New Ideas	
<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>Create an International Forum</p>	<p>We held the very first International Forum in December. Although there was not a huge turnout of numbers, a lengthy and substantial conversation was had with those who did come. It promoted a conversation with an Irish nursing student about support and orientation of Irish students, of which there is a high population in Nursing. I have since met with the University's International office to discuss what support they offer. Currently, it is very limited for Irish students, who are merely offered a welcome talk along with all other exchange and erasmus students. They have since agreed to hold a welcome drinks reception for these students. I have also worked with the Irish student who raised this issue to create a Facebook group for Irish students to meet and talk with the hope of fostering a community support network. Having these types of issues brought up during the International Forum shows that it is a worthwhile endeavor and we will be holding another one next month.</p>
<p>Progress: 3 (Completed)</p>	
<p>Goal 2:</p> <p>Create a dedicated social space for Postgraduates</p>	<p>I have been working alongside the Union President and our CEO to submit a position paper to the University Estates and Facilities team to secure funding for increasing Union presence at various sites other than Highfield. Part of this, includes a proposal to turn a disused University space at SGH into a dedicated Postgraduate social and study area. I have also been working with the faculty manager at Avenue to extend the Mature Student and Student Parent room at Avenue into a space that can also be used by Postgraduates. Following a final meeting next week, I hope to have this confirmed so we can then promote this to students.</p> <p>There is currently no further updates on this.</p>
<p>Progress: 1</p>	
<p>Goal 3:</p> <p>Create and roll out a Sites survey to students at all other campuses.</p>	<p>This survey went out to students before Christmas and we received just under 400 responses. I have since taken the data regarding transport to the University's transport manager and we have begun discussing the problems raised in the survey and how to combat them. This largely revolves around improving the frequency, reliability and prices of the Unilink bus service, in particular the U6 route. They are now looking at increasing the frequency of the U6 and adding extra buses on the weekend. However, it is unlikely that these changes can be implemented until the next timetable change which is in September. In the meantime, we are working to improve the facilities and accessibilities of bike storage and cycle paths.</p> <p>I have also shared the survey with the Southampton Common Forum, to discuss</p>
<p>Progress: 3 (Completed)</p>	

	<p>feedback related to the common and cycling, which is of interest to the transport sub-committee.</p> <p>Additionally, I have taken the data to the University Estates and Facilities team and I have been invited to present to their team at a meeting in a few weeks time.</p> <p>I have also sat down and identified 'quick wins', issues that were raised that are relatively quick and easy to fix and will be working through those. I have also isolated mailing lists from the respondents according to which site they are based at and will be emailing them to update them on progress according to each site. For example, to inform WSA students about the new WSA shuttle weekend service trial, the request for which came up several times in the survey.</p>
<p>Additional Comments:</p>	

Pictures/links to blog posts relating to the work in this section:

Building on the Union's Work	
<p>Goal 1:</p> <p>Introduce a Kids club at Union Films</p>	<p>This is very much now up and running. We had a very successful Christmas screening of Arthur Christmas. We will be holding the Valentine's Day screening on Feb 10th, this will be Gnomeo and Juliet.</p>
<p>Progress: 3 (Completed)</p>	
<p>Goal 2:</p> <p>Bunfights at Sites</p>	<p>I am pleased to report that these happened at Avenue and Boldrewood during Refreshers at the end of January and went very well. Avenue was very well attended, with 50% of people who responded on the Happy or Not feedback machines saying that they were very happy with the event. The only drawback was having to be inside in the cold weather! Next time I would look to do this inside or during warmer weather.</p>
<p>Progress: 3 (Completed)</p>	<p>Unfortunately at Boldrewood we had very little student engagement. I very much see this is a result of us never having done events or had a presence at this campus. Despite this, I hope this event will have laid the foundations which we can continue to build on to improve the engagement with students who study there.</p> <p>All societies who took part were very positive and the feedback from them and Union staff afterwards was that we should look to do Bunfights at sites during the Freshers period in September. I will also look into the feasibility of doing</p>

	these at NOC and SGH, although this proves more difficult as there is more limited space and the buildings are not solely owned by the University so we would need additional approval.
Goal 3:	Further to the work I am doing to increase representation and support for international students, I plan to work with Erasmus Network Society to expand their International buddy system to include ALL international students. I have not yet started this project as I have been focusing on other projects first, however I plan to help promote it so it is more well-known and increase student engagement with it. I also want to formalise the process so that we can keep track of everyone that takes part so that no one is forgotten about provide formal training to those who sign up to be buddies to ensure they are properly equipped to provide support. I have not yet begun work on this.
Expand the International Buddy System	
Progress: 0	
Additional Comments:	

Pictures/links to blog posts relating to the work in this section:

Developing the role	
Goal 1:	
Progress: 0/1/2/3	
Goal 2:	
Progress: 0/1/2/3	
Goal 3:	
Progress: 0/1/2/3	
Additional Comments: Due to recent events, the Sabbatical Team has been unable to meet and agree upon a set of common goals for the “Developing the Role” section. However, some areas of focus have already started to appear naturally (including the Union Review) and it is therefore our intention to have a full set of goals complete for scrutiny by the second meeting of Union Senate.	

Pictures/links to blog posts relating to the work in this section:

Conclusion/AOB

- **Deputy President:** Since the last trustee board Steve VP Sports of course became acting president and so I was elected by the team to become the new Deputy President. As part of this, I went to the University council away day a couple of weeks ago as the Union representative. This was a very interesting and productive couple of days discussing University strategy on things from international recruitment, to building plans and improving student experience.
- **WSA Shuttle Bus Weekend Service Trial:** For a long time students have been asking for an extension of the weekday WSA shuttle to include weekends. This feedback came up once again in the site survey, as well as via email from various students, and so I met with the University's Director of Student Experience to discuss the possibility of this. Following a discussion with the Professional Services team, my proposal was subsequently accepted and so the University agreed to fund a 15 week trial of a weekend service for the WSA shuttle. This began on the 12th January and will run until the 15th June, excluding the weekends in the University Easter Vacation period. So far this trial, using SUSU minibuses doing four return trips a day has been very successful, with numbers growing every weekend. In its second weekend it picked up 9 people, in its third weekend it picked up 28 and in its fourth weekend it picked up 39 people. This demonstrates that awareness of the trial is growing and is very much valued by students. I will be having regular meetings with the University to update on progress and to review whether this is continued as a permanent service year on year.
- **Diversity in the Curriculum Project:** Following the 'Our Curriculum: Is it Diverse?' debate event which I held as part of Black History Month, I met with the Associate Dean of Education at the University. He advised that the programme validation process which every programme run at the University has to go through to ensure it meets certain criteria, is up for review. This gives us ability to add in more criteria, such as a diversity checklist which would enable us to ensure that each programme meets certain equality and diversity standards. This is very exciting as the process comes up for review very infrequently and once something is put in, it is hard to take out which means this has the potential to make real impact on the University curriculum.

I have since set up a working group of students to inform what kind of criteria they want to be added onto that diversity checklist. Our first meeting happened this week and was very exciting. The aim to get a proposed checklist finished and ready to submit to the University board by April. If anyone else would like to join this group you are more than welcome- Just send an email to me on vpcommunities@susu.org and I will include you on our mailing list!

- **Union Presence at Avenue:** Building on the conversations had by the previous VP Student Communities with the faculty staff at Avenue about trying to create more of a community, I have been working this year to try and increase Union presence there. I am pleased to report that we now have control over the reception desk by the cafe and this week we began staffing it with regular support staff from 11-2pm every day. This is just a small amount of hours to begin with to see if there is enough demand/ engagement with it to justify full time hours. We will also shortly be putting up SUSU branding by the desk. It is currently being designed by our

marketing and communications team and hopefully will be fitted in the next few weeks.

We have also started running weekly Advice Centre drop ins at Avenue on a Friday 1-4pm. These have been very successful.