

Union President, Report to Union Senate (16/05/22)

Student Experience, Community, and Safety

I have begun discussions with key stakeholders regarding the implementation of projects set out in the Student & Alumni Investment Paper, details of which were shared with senators in March. It has been encouraging to receive widespread positive feedback, and I enjoyed filming a promotional video to inform students of the good news [here](#). The Graduation Assistance Fund has financially supported hundreds of graduands already and will ensure that ceremonies in July will be fully inclusive. In coming weeks, I will begin handing over this work to our incoming president. It is key that senators, trustees, SUSU staff, sabbatical officers, and students work in harmony to ensure that this one-off investment is spent wisely and sustainably.

Separately, I continue to work closely with our acting chief executive to ensure that SUSU is funded generously by the University. This ensures that we can continue to deliver student-facing initiatives like Give it a Go and the Safety Bus, and that we have enough cash to continue our work over the next few years in a way that reflects the ever-changing needs of our student communities. We meet with the University's Executive Director of Student Experience & Campus Life and the Director of Student & Education Services on a near-weekly basis and are thus able to regularly ensure that our visions for student experience are aligned.

I have recently launched a 'Sabbs on Tour' programme, in which sabbatical officers visit our diverse UK campuses to hear from students who study and research primarily away from Highfield. Thus far, we have heard that students based at NOCS would appreciate a WSA-style shuttle bus, whilst WSA students shared a desire for SUSU to form partnerships with local venues to enhance nightlife opportunities. In the coming weeks, we will visit Boldrewood, Avenue, and we will hold an open forum with students studying at our Malaysia campus.

I am acutely aware that the rise in the cost of living is affecting students' ability to participate in Students' Union activity. I have been reassured by University colleagues that their [Student Support Fund](#) is promoted widely and has sufficient funds to support anyone impacted by recent rises in energy and fuel prices. Much of our work in equality, diversity, and inclusion, including the launch of a sports bursary pilot, will alleviate some of the concerns that students may be having regarding their participation in SUSU events and activities.

Leading the Students' Union

I have been heavily involved in the recruitment of a new chief executive for SUSU. When working with our recruitment partners, we have expressed a desire to find a candidate who excels in knowledge of social enterprise, governance, and stakeholder management. I hope to be able to update senators with detailed progress in due course, but no candidate has been appointed to date. I continue to work with SUSU's senior leadership team and trustees to ensure a rigorous process is followed.

I continue to partake in, and scrutinise, decisions made by the University through my membership of various key committees, including the University Executive Board and University Council. Key decisions being discussed in the past few weeks have included building projects across Highfield and WSA campuses,

and the size and shape of our University over the next five years, in conjunction with the vision set out in the new [University Strategy](#).

I have been working transparently, sharing my work with students through promoting my weekly highlights via social media, and we have recently launched a weekly email outlining the work of the sabbatical officers. I have also collaborated with the University of Portsmouth Students' Union to promote e-scooter safety, in line with my commitment to enhance regional partnerships.

Campus Sites, Halls of Residence, & Sustainability

I have asked the Director of Student Experience & Campus Life to investigate whether there is a link between students feeling 'a sense of belonging', as reported through the NSS, and their primary study or research campus and their halls of residence. This data is explored in the draft Student Experience Strategic Plan, due to be consulted on and launched later this calendar year.

I was directly involved in the planning and implementation of our Sustainability Fortnight, and I chaired a [Sustainability Forum](#), where I was joined by an exciting panel of speakers who spoke to our students about the immediacy of the climate crisis and sustainable campus and business initiatives. As senators know, part of the one-off investment from the University is ring-fenced for the delivery of work in the space of sustainability, and I look forward to this work accelerating in coming months as a result.

Covid-19 Response

SUSU hosted a pop-up vaccination clinic last month, and I worked with our VP Activities to produce a promotional video. In the coming weeks, work will begin, as part of Freshers' planning, to ensure that new and returning students know how to register with a local GP practice. Due to loss of government funding, the University saliva testing programme has come to an end, but we continue to encourage sensible hygiene practices, including the wearing of face coverings in crowded indoor spaces.