

VP Education 2023-24 AGM Report

As VP Education the report will cover the events that I have done, the meetings that I have been part of which helped improve the academic and overall experience for the students at the university.

Southern SU Conference

One of the SU traditions, a conference for all the unions in the southern region, was held and organized by the Solent Students' Union. There were 20 unions with 150 members and 30 speakers present at the convention. The three days of networking and practice sharing with other officers with comparable responsibilities went well. We also had social events like Quiz night and Bowling which was well attended by all the sabbatical officers from other SU's.

Welcome Week

In September, we held a successful series of events to welcome the new and returning students such as *Meet Your SU* where the sabbatical officers introduced the Union to the incoming students and informed them of the variety of services we offer. Part of Welcome Week was one of our most popular events which was the *Petting Zoo* where we have farm animals in campus for students to pet and feed. Our annual Freshers' Fair was a massive success due to breaking last year's attendees' number – this year we had 4350 students attended compared to last year's 3000+, and we also ran NUS referendum which received over 400 voters.

Handbook for International Students

Alongside the two sabbatical officers (Union President and Vice President Wellbeing), we have created a handbook specifically for international students to support the new students once they arrive in the UK/City. It is currently up on our website, and we have physical copies printed as well.

Winter Ball

One of the big SU events, Winter ball happened on the 9th of December. It was a big success as we sold out (300) in a few weeks after the tickets went up on sale. We had a variety of events at the Winter Ball like Act by Magician, a Contortionist, Casino and DJ. The students had a free entry to an after party at Orange Rooms this year.

International Student's Day

Union President and I along with the international team at the university organised various events for the international students to celebrate. I was part of 6 panellist's that spoke about the culture shock you experience when you first arrive in the UK.

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Date: 02/03/2024
Signed: Mohandas Jeyakumar

International Student's University Fee

During the Welcome week, returning international students came up to me and spoke about how the scholarship/fee discount given by the university has not been reflected in their student account, when they had to pay the fees. This was mainly affecting the International Students who joined the university through QAHE. I resolved this by the end of Welcome week.

Library Remodeling

Union President and I had a meeting with the university on the library remodelling project, they explained in detail how they are planning to remodel the library in the coming years. Union President and I gave inputs on how best the spaces can be utilised and how it can be done to the best of improving the student experience.

BOG Panel for CMO Recruitment

I was part of a 4-member Board of Governors Stakeholder panel for CMO recruitment. The candidates that have applied for the position presented their plans and visions on how they will take forward the marketing and recruitment strategy for the university. We gathered our feedback as a panel and presented it to the interview panel on our thoughts about each candidate.

Deepavali

Sabbatical officers celebrated Deepavali with students by visiting the Vedic Society Hindu Temple on the 12th of November and followed it up by organising a sweet giving day on the 13th of November at the spark. Pooja Rajguru from Art Asia performed at the spark for the festive day.

Halal food

Sodexo is the external catering company that serves the university. When they were planning to introduce their new menu, they showed me the menu and asked for feedback. I got back to them saying we need to add Halal options in the menu which led to the creation of Halal menu in both the dock and east park deli.

Your Module Survey (YMS)

Education Office contacted me and consulted me on the new Mid Module Survey that they have developed for this year. I gave inputs on the difficulties I faced as a student when completing module surveys which were taken into consideration and was made more simple and as effective as possible. We have had Staff and Student feedback sessions now and those inputs would be added into making it more effective and simpler.

B5 Working Group

Assessment grade marking criteria Review – Union president and I have been part of the B5 working group which has been tasked with reviewing assessment grade and marking criteria at the university.

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Manifesto

Enhance the provision of the academic quality of the students.

- YMS – Your Module Survey will be implemented mid module for students to feedback on their current module. The feedback received mid module can then be addressed before the end of the module.
- DAC – DACs are integral in improving the academic quality of the students. I as VP education help the departments to plan their year ahead with keeping students' academic interest at best and how best can we implement the suggestion given my course representatives at the course committee meetings.
- B5 Working Group – Critical review of the way assessments is graded and on criteria are being met when marking of the assessments would be impactful in improving the academic quality of students.

Lobby the university for better library facilities.

- Timing – The timings of the library has been standardised throughout the academic year and summer holidays. This gives the student the flexibility to plan and study throughout the year. It has increased the student usage of the library by 30% in the evenings when compared to last year.
- Services – After I spoke to Sodexo, the old vending machines have been replaced with the new ones. New food items and drinks have been added to the vending machines.
- Praying room – During Ramadan, Lower floor in the library will have a temporary prayer room to accommodate prayers for students and working towards making it permanent for next year.

Improve the networking opportunities between the students and employer.

- I have been talking to Solent Futures to increase more networking opportunities between employers and students. The feedback I hear the most is to offer curated networking sessions to students. Working towards having more curated networking and job fairs.

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Develop better training for the academic representatives.

- I and Student Voice Co-ordinator Katie Angell has updated the training slides and are working on how to better the training for course representatives than the current one and this will be better for next year.

Improve the engagement between societies and increase the number of academic societies.

- I have been speaking to course representatives and students in general with every engagement I get, and I have been leading them with ways to create a society/academic society and what are the benefits that they could get out of it and how it might help them in their career prospects. I have been getting in touch with Head of Departments and conveying the importance of societies to them. We are in process of creation of societies in the coming months.

It has been an amazing time working as VP Education and be involved in numerous meetings and committee's and be the student voice representing you all and help make the academic experience better and to see the results of those voices/feedback given. It has been a pleasure representing you all this academic year.

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