

VP Education 2024-25 AGM Report

Introduction

As the Vice President (VP) Education, my role has been to represent and advocate for students on all academic matters, ensuring their voices are heard at various university and SU committees. Over the past year, I have worked tirelessly to enhance the student experience, resolve key issues, and implement impactful initiatives in collaboration with university stakeholders, student representatives, and my fellow Sabbatical Officers. Below is a detailed report of my tenure, highlighting key achievements, challenges addressed, and ongoing projects.

Campaigns

Induction:

At the beginning of my tenure, I attended a three-day Sabbatical Induction Training in Brighton. This training provided an opportunity to understand the key contacts within our university, engage with stakeholders, and build relationships with fellow Sabbatical Officers and internal SU staff. The induction included team-building activities that fostered collaboration and prepared us for our responsibilities.

Welcome Week and Freshers' Fair:

As part of the new student induction, I delivered presentations introducing the Students' Union (SU), outlining our role, key contacts, events, and support services. During Freshers' Week, I participated in various events such as mini-golf, arts and crafts, and Boom Battle Bar. Additionally, I played an active role in the two-day Freshers' Fair, which saw over 3,500 students engaging with businesses, university societies, and support services. This provided new students with opportunities to find their communities, explore accommodation options, and learn about employment prospects in Southampton.

Committees and University Representation:

Throughout my tenure, I have represented students across multiple university and SU committees, ensuring their concerns are addressed at every level:

University Committees:

- **Education Committee:** Provided input on academic policies, course representative engagement, and educational campaigns while reviewing university initiatives.
- **Academic and Curriculum Committee:** Like the Education Committee, focusing on curriculum changes and academic regulations.

Name: Sanidhya Shetty

Date: 2/04/25

Signed: Sanidhya Shetty



- Board of Governors: Acted as a Student Governor, contributing to confidential university decisions alongside the Vice-Chancellor's Group.
- People and Culture Committee: Addressed workplace behaviour, HR policies, and the overall well-being of university staff and students.
- Joint Executive Committee: Discussed student experiences with both SU and university representatives, covering issues like assessments, timetables, and faculty concerns.

SU Committees:

- People and Culture Committee: Focused on internal SU policies and workplace culture.
- Board of Trustees and Directors: Participated in decision-making on bylaw amendments, budget approvals, and other significant SU matters.
- Student Council: As VP Education, I regularly presented reports on my activities, provided updates on motions and manifesto commitments, and engaged in discussions with student representatives.

Key Issues Resolved:

During my tenure, I have actively worked on addressing several critical issues affecting students:

- L6 QAHE Student Discounts: Advocated for the reinstatement of student discounts that were removed without prior communication, successfully ensuring their return.
- L4 and L5 Student Discounts: Addressed miscommunication between university agents and students regarding eligibility for discounts, raising concerns about the lack of transparency in communication.
- Adobe Software Removal: When the university decided to remove Adobe software from campus, I engaged with relevant stakeholders to negotiate the return of licenses for creative arts students, ensuring continued accessibility for academic projects.

Key Initiatives and Projects:

Student Space Survey

In collaboration with the VP Communities and Wellbeing, I launched the Student Space Survey Campaign on March 17, continuing until the end of April. This initiative aims to lobby the university for a student social lounge, providing a safe and cost-effective space for students and societies. Many female-identifying students supported this initiative, highlighting concerns about safety during off-campus society events. We have collected 138 responses so far.

Name: Sanidhya Shetty
Date: 2/04/25
Signed: Sanidhya Shetty



Course Representative Engagement:

I have significantly improved course representative engagement, attending nearly 20 course committee meetings and implementing:

- Monthly course rep meetups with coffee catchups
- Incentives such as lanyards and “Course Rep of the Month/Year” awards

As a result, the number of course reps increased from 146 last year to 263 this year.

Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) Scheme:

I am currently developing a proposal for the Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) Scheme, where experienced students mentor their peers to enhance academic success and engagement. I have been researching its implementation in other universities and have discussed feasibility with the head librarian.

AI Policy Advocacy:

Leading an AI policy campaign, I am working with the Head of Education and Head Librarian to establish clearer AI guidelines for students. This initiative aims to provide ethical and effective AI usage guidance, reducing AI-related misconduct cases and supporting academic integrity.

Conferences and External Engagements:

- **SU Conference at Surrey University:** Attended a three-day conference, networking with other Southern Unions and discussing work culture, course rep networking, and higher education policies with WonkHe.
- **Recruitment Panels:** Participated in interview panels for the selection of a new Student Voice Coordinator, CEO, and Lay/Student Trustees.
- **International Women’s Day Guest Speaker:** Invited by Southampton Councillor Lorena Fielker on 26th March to speak about female leadership at Southampton City Council.
- **Graduation Speeches:** Represented the SU as a speaker at two graduation ceremonies.

Re-election as VP Communities and Wellbeing:

In the recent SU elections, I successfully re-ran and was re-elected as VP Communities and Wellbeing in a competitive race against three other candidates. My tenure has now been extended until 2026.

Name: Sanidhya Shetty
Date: 2/04/25
Signed: Sanidhya Shetty



[Sanidhya Shetty VP Education]
2024-25 AGM Report

Supporting Students with Period Products:

A student council motion called for sanitary products to be available in disabled toilets due to accessibility concerns. In response, the VP Communities and Wellbeing and I allocated part of our budget to ensure the availability of free sanitary products, improving student welfare.

Conclusion

This past year as VP Education has been both challenging and rewarding. From resolving critical student issues to launching impactful campaigns, I have dedicated my efforts to enhancing the student experience. As I transition into my next role as VP Communities and Wellbeing, I look forward to continuing my advocacy, fostering student engagement, and implementing new initiatives that support our diverse student body.

Name: Sanidhya Shetty
Date: 2/04/25
Signed: Sanidhya Shetty

