**University of Worcester Students’ Union Student Council Report 23/09/14**

**President’s Report**

**By Wesley Hudson**

Hello everyone, for those of you that don’t know my name is Wesley Hudson and I am your new President of the Students Union. A lot has been going on here over the summer months in preparation for the return of the students and the new intake of 1st years last week. However I will get to that shortly.

During the summer I helped in the campaign to stop the cuts to the Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA), I wrote numerous emails to our MP Robyn Walker, who then invited me to meet him in his office. This meeting seemed to be successful, as did the work of many other sabbatical officers up and down the country as the cuts were postponed for another year.

During August I went to 4 different conferences to prepare me for the start of the year, the first being Trustee Training at DMU, followed by Leadership and Change in Oxford, then a conference regarding our Energize Worcester Project at the university of Roehampton and finally a R.A.G conference in York. This was a good experience for me to meet other sabbatical officers, swap ideas and adopt a few of theirs whilst learning how to operate a sustainable union.

Last week saw the rush of new and returning students filling the union with an extra buzz compared to the quiet summer. We put on numerous successful events and activities for the students welcoming them with open arms. All 3 sabbatical officers gave numerous induction talks to new students informing them on what the SU does and how they can get involved.

I just wanted to let you know what my aims are for this year and how far I have gotten with them;

* I still aim to set up a nightline here at Worcester as I feel it is an important scheme that most universities have, I am further along the line of setting of Nightline at Worcester, I have had various meetings with students and university staff. A requirement in the process is to visit another Nightline at another University so two weeks ago I visited Birmingham’s to see how they operate and were set up. The next steps to this process are….
* I am taking a keen interest in R.A.G this year and hope to aid jack in raising as much money for our chosen charities as possible as well as encouraging students to join the new R.A.G committee, R.A.G’s first event is a River Cruise which will take place on the 28th of this month with all profits going to charity and £1 of every ticket.
* I am also taking a huge stance on improving housing this year, currently I am writing up numerous documents regarding private housing for students, this will be converted into a print booklet so we can educate the students in finding a safe and substantial home.
* Tom and I will meet with the university soon to discuss the progress of free printer credits for students.

If you have any more questions on what I’ve been up to or you need help with please contact me on w.hudson@worc.ac.uk

**Vice President Education’s Report**

**By Tom Clarke**

Turnitin- The university is looking to bring in the programme Turnitin across all courses. At the moment it is used sporadically and up until recently no university wide policy existed. For the coming academic year it will be highly recommended to all university staff that all assignments that are able to be submitted through Turnitin are. Then for the following academic year 2015-16 the policy will change slightly so that all assignments that can be submitted through Turnitin are done that way. This will obviously due to the online nature of the programme mean that this will see a vast improvement in the number of assignments that are submitted electronically.

Printer Credit- Last year I began the process of looking into gaining free printer credit for all students, with the University eventually deciding against the idea. However I was assured that this was something that could certainly be revisited this year due to the nature of the University's Financial planning. The initial emails regarding this have been sent out to the relevant members of University staff.

StARs- At the time of this report being written there were over 80 StARs uploaded onto the University SOLE page. However we still rely heavily on staff uploading their courses StARs onto this or we have no idea who they are. In a positive development though regarding this, Course Leaders used to be the only people who could do this. However now Academic Support staff also have the power to do this.

Myself and the membership services manager at the Students Union have met in recent weeks with the some of the StAR co-ordinators to discuss the upcoming plans for training and the overall year ahead.

The main focus of the year ahead will be to engage and improve the quality of the StARs we have. We quite comfortably get 500 students taking up the role however the percentage of these that fully engage with the system is significantly lower than that. We will be encouraging as many StARs as possible to see the extra benefits they receive from engaging with the system, such as the accreditation scheme and the volunteering hours that they can record. Also as another incentive I have managed to secure funding off the University to provide each StAR with a hoody with the StARs logo printed on the back so there fellow students know who there StARs are. To receive a hoody all the student has to do is register as a StAR on our online volunteering system.

StARs Training- This years training will take place during the University's first Worcester Week. With myself running the generic 'how to be a StAR' session aimed at first year StARs (however returning StARs are still able to attend if they wish). This year we will also run extra sessions for returning StARs with the aim of focusing on the Quality of StARs.

Also we have been in discussion with each of the Institutes to encourage them to run training sessions of there own to train up there own StARs. As each Institute works in different ways and as a Students Union we are not always aware of the differences.

Institute Reps- Due to not filing all of the positions for Institute Reps we are currently looking for students to come forward to fill these positions (they must have been a StAR last year). There are the following current vacancies-

- 1 for Science and the Environment

- 2 for Humanities and Creative Arts

- 3 for Health and Society

- 4 for Education

Sport and Exercise Science and Business have already filled the positions.

The deadline for applicants is midday on the 1st October.

**Vice President Student Activities Report**

**By Abi Clarke**

What have I done so far?

During the summer months (June to September), focus was mainly on the preparation for induction week. A brief handover period was soon followed by a number of months of planning and organising for Freshers’. We have worked with Tramps to lay on the majority of evening entertainment, whilst still providing options for those who do not wish to drink or go into town, such as the Ghost Walk, Big Quiz and Bandeoke. We also put on a number of events in the day; Freshers’ fair, Market Fair and Sports and Activities Fair. We also worked on the presentation that is used to give an introduction of the Students’ Union to the new intake.

Over the summer, I have also managed to secure the reduction of membership fees for our sports and societies by persuading the University to subsidise the insurance payment (previous £5 for societies and £10 for sports), this is a saving of over £20,000 for our student body.

Plans for the year

My main aims for this year are to;

• Increase the amount of recreational opportunities for all students. Meaning societies and sports are more accessible to those who cannot commit to yearlong memberships. The reduction of the insurance payment means that this is even more possible this year.

• Increase the support for ALL societies and sports, not merely a chosen few. Also, to increase the visibility of our societies and their events and our sports clubs fixtures and results. I have been speaking to the University to try and use the screens around both campuses in order to do this.

• Lobby BUCS to promote disability sport. Last year we held the national championships for Wheelchair basketball, BUCS refused to acknowledge this event. They believe that in order to gain BUCS accreditation a disability sport needs to have the same amount of competing teams as the able bodied sport, I believe this is discriminatory to our disabled athletes and I will be taking this campaign forward throughout the year.

• Introduction of intramural games – competitions (sporting and non-sporting) between Halls of residence, societies and sports teams.

• To improve and build upon the collective identity of our students (in and out of the #TeamWorc brand). To Increase knowledge and presence of the SU across both campuses (working with both Wesley and Tom).

**R.A.G Officer Report**

**By Jack Buczynski**

- Excited for this year to raise a substantial amount of money for the partner charities – for us to be proud of.

- Looking forward to meeting enthusiastic people who want to be part of RAG.

- This year I’m looking to spread the word of RAG more across the University; through holding as many events as possible such as from bake sales, car washes, formal nights (raffles, auctions) etc to the bigger events such as being part of a jailbreak, treks, marathons, bar crawl and potentially doing a few more boat parties if successful.

- Very keen to include RAG raids this year – maybe to bigger cities.

**Non-UK students’ Officer Report**

**By Savannah Ju**

My name savannah and I am a second year student, I come from China. My job title is Non-UK student officer which is one of the executive officers of student council.

My main aims for this year are:

1. Inviting more international students to take part in the university activities.

2. Culture exchange

3. Trying to mix UK and international students.

4. Improving the lift experience of international student at university.

I may have some English problems, if there is anything that may confuse you, please do let me know. Sorry about that.

Savannah

**Mature Students’ Officer Report**

**By Helen Manners**

Over the summer I have been working to help create the Mature Students Society and Mature Students Network which was promoted to students at the sports and societies fair. I also organised and ran a meet and greet session for mature students in Fresher’s week where they could meet fellow mature students as well as SU staff and collect relevant literature. This was well received and hopefully something that will be considered when next years fresher’s week is being planned. I was also involved with a number of induction talks for new students during welcome week. I have also been in contact with Gemma Thomas who is a graduate ambassador for the Uni and who is talking to mature students regarding attending Worcester University. My plans for the year include working to widen the participation of mature students within the SU and the Uni and helping to address any concerns that mature students may have.

**Women’s Officer Report**

**By Chantal Vinyard**

**Priorities**
Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment on Campus

I have researched the University of Worcester’s Harassment Policy (as written by the Equality & Diversity Committee) and procedures. To my knowledge Worcester Students’ Union has no specific harassment policy of its own, and currently does not include online harassment. I have compared this to other Universities leading the way with zero tolerance policies, and have found that significant improvements can be made to UoW’s policy and by WSU passing a charter and policy stating its zero tolerance.

I have been in contact with a number of Women’s Officers at other institutions, this has proved very informative. Manchester’s Women’s Officer has been particularly helpful (MSU’s ‘We Get It’ zero tolerance campaign came runner up at the NUS Campaign of the Year 2014) supplying an information pack etc.

I plan to put forward a motion to the Council for a zero tolerance charter that can be followed on and off campus, and help inform the adoption of a zero tolerance policy.

Work also needs to be done in order to make reporting an incident of harassment easier and the process more transparent.

**Inclusion, representation and welfare**

I have spoken at length with potential women candidates for the part-time officer roles, and feel that there will be several strong candidates. I have also been able to support women students in the formation of new societies.

Having spoken with fellow women students who have identified as being parents and careers, I am happy to see a new society being formed to create a support network for these students and will make myself fully available to them.

**Training and events**

During Worcester Week 2 I am organising some I Heart Consent events and workshops. I Heart Consent aims to educate people about ‘enthusiastic’ consent. NUS women's campaign and Sexpression UK have come together to create a consent educational programme which aims to facilitate positive, informed and inclusive conversations and campaigns about consent in universities and colleges across the UK. I have applied to the NUS to become one of twenty Universities that are being chosen to undertake the I Heart Consent pilot scheme which will be supported by a Sexpression UK ambassador in order to launch the campaign on campuses.

I am also looking in to running Women in Leadership events later in the year, possibly Worcester Week 3.

**Student engagement**

I have taken over the Admin for the Women’s Network Facebook page. I am actively recruiting women to join the page, the group currently has over ninety members. I have spoken at ten WSU induction talks to Freshers.

In order to improve on this year I feel that it would be worthwhile having a Women’s Stall at next year’s Freshers Fair, as well as including printed information in a welcome pack for women students and leaving information sheets in the halls/accommodation. Hopefully there will be a more established Women’s Team who will help to promote and run events (see below).

**Plans before next meeting**

I would like to form a working committee to involve relevant stakeholders in evolving the WSU’s Zero Tolerance Policy and look at conducting research on the issues.

I intend to firm up plans for women’s activities during the three Worcester Weeks.

I aim to continue building the Women’s Network, and start recruiting a team who may be able to help deliver events and promote campaigns.

I will continue to keep abreast of the latest developments within the national women’s campaign and bring best practice to WSU.

I continue to will make links with appropriate organisations, locally and nationally.