**University of Worcester Students’ Union Students’ Council**

WSU Women’s Officer Report – 18/11/14

By Chantal Vinyard

**Priorities**

**Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment on Campus**

It seemed sensible to wait for the election of the new officers before forming the working party who have been tasked to create an inclusive zero tolerance charter and policy that is written in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. This working party has now been formed and will start the drafting process. I have had a meeting with Dr Holly Taylor who is the assistant of Ruth Jones OBE, Principal Lecturer and Director of The National Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Abuse (NCSPVA). She has agreed to review the draft policy and offer her expertise and experience in this area.

I have been in touch with, and I am waiting to hear back from, the organisers of the Good Night Out Campaign which is an independent campaign working with clubs, bars, pubs and venues around the UK and Ireland to end harassment on nights out. They provide training for university and union staff on creating a safe environment free from sexual harassment. The Good Night Out Campaign has been included as a key plank of the NUS Lad Culture strategy. They offer an accreditation for completing the training and process. I believe undertaking this training would make a massive difference to our ability to support staff in implanting the zero tolerance policy and help to tackle lad culture on campus.

**Inclusion, representation and welfare**

I am pleased that all three of the part-time officer roles in the recent by-elections were filled, and particularly happy that two are women. This is bucking the national trend for under representation of women in officer positions within SU’s. I hope this will lead to more women becoming involved in all levels within WSU.

After the motion passed at student council to ask the University to review its Harassment policy contact was made with Julian Bancroft-Martin, senior project manager for corporate policies. It transpired that he was already in the process of reviewing the policy and asked Georgie Bull, Welfare Officer, and myself to be involved in the reviewing process. I had the opportunity to read the revised policy and attend a meeting with a number of key people who were working on this from the University. A number of issues were discussed including the process of reporting harassment. This was very informative, and I believe the new policy is a massive improvement. The University are also adopting a Domestic Violence policy, I was asked by Dr Taylor from NCSPVA to look at the new policy from a student’s perspective and give feedback, which I did.

The 25th November 2014 marks the start of the international campaign ‘16 days of activism against gender violence’. The University are running a series of events on 25th November, and I hope to be able to raise the profile of this fantastic campaign as well.

**Training and events**

Minority Ethnic Students' Officer - Christina Harris, LGBT Officer - Jess Cashin and Myself will be attending the NUS Women in Leadership conference on 5th Dec. I was lucky enough to attend last year and found it incredibly informative and inspirational. I am hoping to bring back lots of ideas and I am planning on running our own Women in Leadership event next year which will include workshops and guest speakers.

As one of the Universities chosen for the I Heart Consent pilot scheme, there will be a series of events during the third Worcester Week. I will be looking to recruit people to help with the organisation, promotion and running of the events. If you are interested in getting involved please let me know.

Dr Holly Taylor has informed me that the NCSPVA are planning on running the Intervention Initiative at the University but are awaiting approval. The Intervention Initiative is an evidence-based educational programme for the prevention of sexual coercion and domestic abuse in university settings, through empowering students to act as prosocial citizens. It consists of a programme of eight facilitated sessions, each lasting for 60 minutes (minimum) to 90 minutes. Dr Taylor is very keen to involve students and therefore I made a number of recommendation on encouraging student participation including being able to log volunteering hours for attendance, attendees to receive a certificate of completion, and bringing the sabbatical officers on board with the project. I look forward to hearing more about this project and will keep everyone updated.

**Student engagement**

I am starting to recruit a Women’s Campaign Team who will support, promote and help deliver campaign activities and events. If you or anyone you know is interested please get in touch.

**Plans before next meeting**

I would like to have a draft policy from the working party for the Zero Tolerance Policy.

I intend to confirm plans for I Heart Consent activities during the third Worcester Week.

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.