**Officer’s Report**

**Sabina O’Donoghue**

**Senedd**

**06/12/2021**

**President’s Summary:**

As the term comes to an end we’re all very excited to have some very well deserved time off this winter break after a very busy first term in the Union. All of us officers are already starting to think about next term and what we can do for all our students as they approach exam season.

**Winter Activities**

For the students staying in Aber for the winter, we have a range of things planed for over the break including a Winter meet and greet, a festive stall, goody bags and another bus trip planned. This bus trip is going to Birmingham Christmas market after the great success of our trip to Cardiff winter wonderland which I was happy to chaperone. All tickets and information for these activities can be found on our website.

**Therapy Donkeys – Dyfi Donkeys**

We were lucky to have Dyfi Donkeys come join us at the start of the month. We sold out all the slots for students to come and meet the donkeys and spend some time with them. We’re hoping to see Muffin and Spot back on campus in January for our exam de-stress activities.

**Alcohol Awareness Week**

During Alcohol Awareness week, I was lucky enough to run two events with the help of the cocktail society. We ran a cocktail/mocktail making demo where Sarah showed how to make three cocktails including a non-alcoholic and a low alcohol cocktail. We also ran a Mixer where we had games and music. DDAS had a stall outside the event giving our free information and resources around alcohol and drugs (including anti-spiking tools). We are hoping to have them back at some point in the new year.

Some other things the SU staff have been up to over the past months include Alice who ran a Trans meet and greet for Transgender remembrance week. We’ve been continuing with our spiking campaign which included having and running two stalls at night time in town giving out advice and drinks and snacks. I’m currently trying to get a campaign up and running towards heating and layering up and keeping it turned down over the colder months. Huge congratulations to Tom and Rachel for running AberChallenge and well done on its huge success. Big well done to our disabled students officers Charlie and Mitch who both collected money for Children in Need this month as well.

**Elizabeth – Academic Affairs**

Elizabeth has fully established the Postgraduate network now, with over 110 members signed up. As a part of this network, coffee mornings are held for postgrads to come and study and socialise. These have run for two weeks now and have already doubled in numbers. Elizabeth is also organising a festive event for the Postgraduate network, following the success of the postgraduate meet & greet at the start of the semester. As a result of feedback from a Teams feedback session she held with PG students where they mentioned they would like to see more in-person chances to meet like-minded students. Elizabeth also held a rep meet and greet a few weeks ago which was very successful and saw lots of reps from the same faculties and departments coming together to meet each other and learn more about the role. A rep quiz is also being organised for the beginning of December. Elizabeth has also launched the Decolonise campaign with a bilingual feedback form available on the website for students to fill out.

**Rachel - Opportunities Officer**

Working alongside clubs and societies, Rachel has just completed organising and running the first in-person Arts Festival since becoming policy in 2019. The planning of the festival occurred through a working group of representatives of different clubs and societies and they ended up with a rather packed schedule! The week was full of events to celebrate creativity including an interactive gallery, workshops and a variety of showcases which brought people back together in-person after a difficult two years. This was also an opportunity to contribute to the RAG charity, the SU Wellbeing Fund, as there was a donation station at every event.

Another key event was Aber Challenge. The team had over 100 students take part in a jam-packed weekend of friendly (but got quite dramatic) tournaments ranging from Giant Jenga to Mario Kart to a Beach Clean and Scavenger Hunt around Aberystwyth. This concluded on the Sunday night with a pizza party with an added lip-sync contest to gain leftover pizza! Overall, the event was incredible fun and it was another great example of getting students back involved and engaged with Tîm Aber. Rachel and Hannah are continuing to collaborate on redeveloping No Excuses Workshops to deliver to committee members in the second semester, which contributes to their priorities regarding student inclusion and safety. Rachel has also begun developing a Liberation Focus Group with Volunteer Officers to contribute to her Accessibility and Inclusion Review of student groups and activities.

For networking, Rachel and the Opps Team spent the day in Cardiff as part of a roundtable with other Student Unions from across Wales and slightly beyond. They discussed topics such as post lockdown working, use of facilities and storage for groups and volunteering opportunities. Rachel found this really interesting to see how other SU’s function and in particular how different unions tackle their Give It A Go program, giving her more ideas ready for Refreshers. Looking forward, Rachel is excited to get the ball rolling and be a part of the next set of key events in the Tîm Aber calendar; Superteams, Varsity, Socs Fest, This Girl Can and Aber 7’s.

**Hannah – Wellbeing Officer**

Currently, Hannah’s main priority has been re-developing the ‘No Excuses’ Training that will commence at the start of next semester. Training will take place 2 times a week for clubs, societies, and individual students to take part in. It is with hope that this will also be something that University Staff and Lectures will also take part in. The ‘No Excuses’ training sessions will be led by both Hannah and Rachel (The Opportunities Officer), and they aim to train 20 clubs and societies by the end of the academic year. Hannah is still in the process of appointing a lead contact at the Hywel Dda Univeristy Health Board for trans students.

She is also still in the process of getting the ‘Trans Implementation Group’ up and running again, so ensure that all trans students have the help and support they need through the University. In recent weeks, The SU advice service has had some students approach them with struggles surrounding loneliness and social isolation. To help try and combat this, Hannah is planning a speed dating style event to help these students who are struggling with loneliness and social isolation. This event is planned to take place in January.

Hannah is also currently working alongside Molly, the SU Student Advisor to plan events for ‘De-Stress Week’ at the beginning of exams. Hannah is also currently planning an event for ‘Time to Talk Day’ (4th February) to open the conversation surrounding Mental Health with the possibility of a running a charity men’s football tournament, with proceeds going to Mind Aberystwyth and/or Nightline (the student run listening service). At the beginning of November Hannah spent 3 days with Dyfed-Powys Police to map out safter router in Town with student volunteers. This also included business engagement with local NTE venues in Town such as Harry’s, Kane’s, Harleys, Cambrian, Scholars surrounding the topic of spiking. The police also spent the Afternoon with Hannah in the SU to engage with different student groups and gain feedback about how safe they feel in Town.

**Mared – UMCA President and Welsh Culture**

UMCA have been extremely busy over the previous months with organising for the weekend of the Inter-College Dance (y Ddawns Rhyngol). The weekend was a great success with everyone having enjoyed the gig up in the Union on the Saturday Night. It was great after the covid-19 restrictions to be able to hold such an event once again. It has also been great to organise two successful nights of ‘Sŵn’ with the themes of Halloween and Decades for UMCA members. Seeing the relationship strengthen between first, second and third year as we return to normality has been amazing, especially given that re-building the structure of that relationship is an important part of my priorities this year.

With regards to my other priorities, I’m currently working in consultation with Anwen Jones for a strategy of new Welsh language academic provision. We will be meeting with different student committees and societies to get their opinion on the structure of the new strategy. Also, in the recent Senedd, a policy on improving Welsh language provision in modules was passed with plans to set up some kind of process that students can report about the quality of Welsh language provision in their modules.

I’m very keen to help Welsh speaking students become more aware of the help services that are available with the University / the Union. I intend on arranging a meeting with Molly from the Union’s student advice department to see what we can do to help promote those services. Mental Health is very important to me and I’m aware that of the very apparent stigma surrounding the subject amongst UMCA members. I am currently in discussion with the DPJ Foundation in the hope of being able to organise mental health and well-being sessions for UMCA members / anyone is interested in getting the conversation about mental health started and the importance of discussing how you feel.

As the first semester comes to an end, I’m really excited to see what’s next in store for the second semester!