**Ideas**

**Senedd**

**01/11/2021**

**Stopping spiking and supporting survivors**

A motion centred around helping to prevent spiking in Aber and also supporting those who have been.

**Officer Responsible:** Union President

**Submitted by:** Jasneet Kaur Samrai

**Details:**

We note that there has been a substantial increase in spiking cases in Aberystwyth, with many of our students having experienced it. This has been confirmed by both the University and the police. Due to the dangers of spiking, and the number of incidents that have occurred, we believe that it is important that we take any measures we can to both avoid such incidents from happening and support those who fall victim to such incidents.

The first section of this idea is around avoidance, with the Student’s Union (SU) buying test strips that can detect common ingredients that are used to spike drinks. This will enable students to test their drinks on a night out if they are worried- meaning that they are able to stay safer and potentially reduce the chances of them consuming a spiked product. Additionally, test strips also provide a quick way to determine whether a drink was spiked if a person thinks they may have been, which will enable a person who’s been spiked to seek medical help immediately and earlier on. Whilst these strips will not pick up every potential substance that could be used to spike someone, it at least increases the protection level that students have on a night out.

To ensure that students can access these products, they should be available at the SU for collection- with them also being advertised on the SU website, by email and via digital channels. Moreover, these could be funded via grants from external organisations like the police or other alcohol awareness and sexual assault charities. If a funding source cannot be found, the meantime should be spent working with local bars, pubs, and club to try and get them to stock the strips. This will ensure that students are still safe no matter where they go out in town.

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The second section of this idea is to ensure that when in town students are safe and can easily get help. A major part of this is making sure that students are aware of where to go if a spiking incident occurs. Therefore, the SU should also contact local bars, pubs and clubs and publish details of where to go and what to do in each of these venues on their website. This will make sure that students have somewhere that is able to easily reference if anything occurs, and that they are also able to read these before a night out so that they know what to do if something does happen. Moreover, the SU could also work with different venues and share good practises, with these hopefully improving the level of safety across Aberystwyth as a whole.

The last section of this idea concerns the support that victims of spiking receive. Under current academic procedures, in some departments, students who are a victim of spiking may be penalised academically if they miss a class due to the incident. This is due to attendance being a contributing factor in some modules towards the total module grade. Therefore, we believe that the SU should work with the University to change these procedures and ensure that students are not ever given an unauthorised absence if they are spiked. This should be the case even without any proof, such as a police report, with this policy recognising that not all victims of spiking feel comfortable reporting an incident to the police or even anybody at all.

**Improve Welsh Language Provision in Modules**

Improve the provision of Welsh language and translation services in Welsh language modules.

**Officer Responsible:** Welsh Culture and UMCA President

**Submitted by:** Mared Edwards

**Details:**

As UMCA President and Wellbeing Officer one of my priorities for the year is to improve Welsh Language provision in Modules. However, I don't feel like this is something that can be resolved in a year alone therefor I think it's worth making this a policy so that future UMCA Presidents can proceed with this work once I've left. The aim is to create and promote an online reporting system for Welsh medium courses which have untranslated English only lectures and materials. Actively contact Welsh language students to identify Welsh medium courses which have untranslated English only lectures and materials. Develop strong working relationship with Welsh Academic Representatives and promote the purpose of their role to Welsh language students. Also organise meetings with relevant university staff to explain the difficulties for students having to translate lectures in modules advertised as Welsh medium courses.

**Introduce a No Confidence Vote for Academic Representatives and Sports and Society Committee members.**

A no confidence vote for reps and societies/clubs to remove a rep/committee member if students don't feel represented.

**Officer Responsible:** Academic Affiars Officer

**Submitted by:** Elizabeth Manners

**Details:**

There is not currently a mechanism in place to remove Academic Representatives or Sports and Society Committee members from their role if students do not feel adequately represented. I propose we use the same system currently in place for Full-Time and Volunteer Officers and create an option for a vote of No Confidence. This would allow for removal of a rep or committee member. A student would have to gain support from 5% of their club or society committee members / relevant course members to call a vote of no confidence and reach a quorum of 10% of their club or society committee members / relevant course members for the vote to be valid.

I think this will improve accountability for these roles and give students more power when choosing who they are represented by.

**Remove RON (Re-Open Nominations) from Academic Representative and Sports and Society Committee members.**

In place of RON, we think that having a No Confidence mechanism would provide a system for students to remove an Academic Rep or Committee member they do not feel represented by.

**Officer Responsible:** Student Opportunities

**Submitted by:** Rachel Barwise

**Details:**

Currently, when a student stands to be an Academic Representative or Sports and Society Committee member there is an option to vote for RON (Re-Open Nominations). However, we think this creates an additional barrier for some students wanting to stand in the role. If a student wants to put themselves forward and no one else expresses interest in the role we believe they should have the opportunity to grow their skills and experiences. We have also had general advice from electoral reform organisations and NUS that Unions across the UK are beginning to remove RON from certain elections considering these benefits for students. RON should remain for Student Trustees, Volunteer Officers, Full-Time Officers and NUS Delegates.

**Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism**

Have a standard by which to judge future possible Semitic incidents associated with the SU.

**Officer Responsible:** President

**Submitted by:** Sam Hall

**Details:**

Anti-Semitism is on the rise across UK campuses, reaching a record high of 1,652 incidents in 2018 according to the Community Security Trust. This includes sports clubs and societies going on nights out with Semitic slogans on them, and 200 students voting against the formation of a Jewish society on campus at the University of Essex. This has lead to some Jewish societies being asked to pay up to £2000 for security at events. Aberystwyth University does not have a significant Jewish population- hopefully by adopting this motion we can change this. Campus life is enriched by different groups but right now Aberystwyth University is lacking a major Jewish voice on campus.

In practise, this definition is not legally binding, nor would it stop freedom of speech, because under the definition, it is possible to criticise the policies of Israel just as we criticise the policies of Britain- but the line is crossed when people start conflating Israeli policy with all Jews for example. Clubs, Societies, and their events would be held to this standard so as not to bring the SU into disrepute if an incident occurs in the future but there is no agreed definition to judge the actions by.

The SU can adopt this definition as part of committee training and emphasize that this will be the standard that clubs and societies will be held to in addition to discrimination against all other groups.

Aber SU currently does not have a definition of anti-Semitism (to the best of my knowledge). Having one pre-empts any bad judgement by SU-affiliated groups that brings the SU into disrepute whilst it flounders over whether the incident crossed the line or not.

**Dragon Mc-what now??**

Our loveable dragon pal needs a new name!

**Officer Responsible:** Student Opportunities

**Submitted by:** Rachel Barwise

**Details:**

Our beloved mascot is an integral part of Tim Aber culture and should be celebrated and shown off to all who come near. However, since their naming, they have put themselves in hiding in their Aber cave and all their other Dragon friends make fun of them. They never let poor Dragon McDragonface join in any of their Dragon games. But then one rainy Aber eve an Opps Officer came to say "we've got to get your name changed!" As much as we want to reminisce over an iconic 2016 meme, it's time for a new era.

\*cut to after the name change\*

Then all the Dragons and Tim Aber loved him, and they shouted out with glee "[insert new name of mascot here], you'll go down in history!"