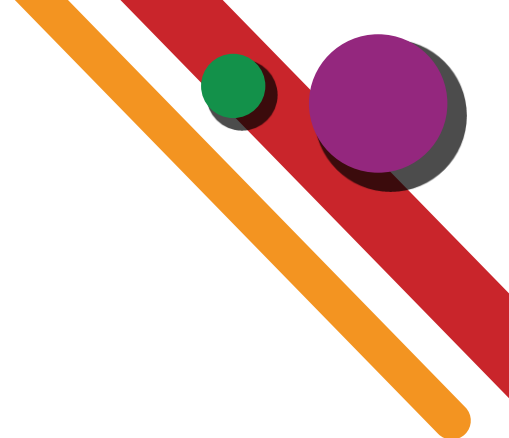




SENEDD!



**Officers Report
Ash Sturrock**

**Senedd
24/04/2022**



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Summary:

This is our last Senedd of the year which is sad to say but we are over the moon with the new Officer team coming in and feel we are leaving the Union in safe hands. It has been a long, hard but extremely fun year. All the Officers have gone through their priorities and are extremely happy with the work we have done on them. We have tried to bring different views and perspectives to the Students Union to try and develop it more and more throughout the year.



We have helped Transgender students feel more comfortable in their bodies by supporting them with Gender Affirming products during the cost of living. We have investigated student accessibility on field trips. We have started the development of diversifying the curriculum with the university and made sure student voices were heard in these larger meetings. We have set up a Welsh language learners club and held events for Welsh Language students. We have run our annual events like Arts Fest, Super teams, and Varsity. We have run our first sexual health campaign and have begun work on Green Impact to make our Union and University more environmentally Sustainable. We have helped students in their own campaigns, and all of this has been done to try and make the Aberystwyth student experience as good as it can possible be.

We have run a few campaigns this year in line with national ones. We organised events for Disability History Month such as a meet and greet, a panel with students, ex-students, student services and a spokesperson from Disability Wales as well as a talk from Cameron all about his experiences with Tourette's called the Cameron and Skittles show. We celebrated and remembered LGBT+ History month with a notice board celebrating the



theme for the year as well as a larger LGBT+ Celebration Event which had many student groups take part. We ran a Student Money Week, reflecting on the theme coping with cost of living where we had a competition where students guessed how much a shop was to win the bag of shopping, we had a money tree with money saving tips as well as giving out vouchers for students to use in the food hall. We celebrated International Women's Day with a cake and coffee event with poetry readings and a

talk from our CEO. We held a stall celebrating women at the bandstand in town and then had a reclaim the night protest in town. We also celebrated Welsh week where we had a St David's day stall giving our Welsh cakes and daffodils and promoting the Welsh language on our social media channels. We have also promoted one off national liberation days such as White Ribbon Day.

Alongside all of these, the Union have been doing all they can to support students in the Cost of Living and making sure students are thriving and not just surviving. We have



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been in contact with NUS Wales for support on this as well as working with the University to get the best measures in place for support. We have opened up both the Essentials Hub and the Community Kitchen. We have been working with the University on cheaper meals on campus and are looking into how we can support students at graduation.

Since our last Senedd meeting we also held out Spring Elections where we voted in our new Full-time and Volunteer Officers. We are pleased to announce the new Officers are:

Students Union President: Bayanda Vundamina

Opportunities Officer: Tiffany McWilliams

Welsh Culture and UMCA President: Elain Gwynedd

Wellbeing Officer: Helen Cooper

Academic Affairs Officer: Anna Simpkins

Our Volunteer officers are: LGBTQ+ Officer: Dax FitzMedrud and Elena Bloomquist, BAME Officer: Adetunji Aroloye, Disabled Students Officer: Xavier Powley, Environment & Sustainability Officer: Sully Ap Najeeb, Postgraduate Students Officer: Bamikole Akinsehinde, Welsh Language Officer: Dafydd Gwilym James, Union Chairperson: Joe Thomas, International Students Officer: Ren Feldbruegge (ze/zir, they/them)

It was also a great pleasure to receive three NUS Wales recognition awards this year at the NUS Wales Conference. We won an award for Super teams, our Cost-of-Living support, and for our SHAG Week campaign. It was such an honour to be rewarded for all the hard work we have put in this year and to see that NUS Wales recognises this.

For the rest of the year, we will be wrapping up our priorities and working on passing over to the incoming officers, writing reports for them so they can be as prepared as possible to start their roles in July.

It has been a pleasure being Officers this year and we will be sad to go. Thank you for all the support from all students and those on the Senedd for supporting the progress and policies put forward this year. You are all greatly appreciated.

Ash – President

The last few months have been a little hectic but I wouldn't have it any other way. It has been great fun and I have the opportunity to try so many new things and meet so many new people from different Unions, sharing stories and ideas on what we could do to make our Union better.

I attended the NUS National Conference as well as the NUS Wales Conference, both of which were very intriguing to know what other unions have been up to this year and what ideas other Unions had for the NUS to work on. During the NUS National Conference, it was nice to see that one of my suggestions about supporting Transgender students throughout the cost of living (based on the campaigns Cameron has been doing this year)





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was taken as an amendment and voted in which means NUS UK will look into working on this in the next year. At the NUS Wales conference I was delighted to receive an award of recognition on the sexual health campaign I ran this year. I also attended the Liberation Conference as a support delegate and not as a voting delegate but this was still very eye opening listening to what other delegates had to say.

I have also helped during Elections this year which was very interesting to see how things work from the other perspective. It was great to see how many people stood in the election and how many people voted.

Alongside attending University meetings, I also worked on the Reclaim the Night protest for International Women's day, I was a part of the filming process for Odd Arts (a company making an anti-hate and anti-racism video/project for Mid Wales) and attended the opening ceremony for the new solar panel farm behind Fferm Penglais. You may have seen a video of me getting soaked in the rain standing in front of it.

Outside of this, I have been finishing up and working hard on one of my priorities, completing Green Impact. The deadline for the submission on this is next month therefore I am spending whatever time I have working on this to complete it as best as we can.

Dafi – UMCA President and Welsh Culture Officer

Last term saw Welsh week happening, a week full of promoting Welsh culture and language and spreading Welshness! During the week, me and UMCA promoted the language by sharing information about learning Welsh and about the National Anthem, along with a sing along video. On St David's Day we had a stall giving out delicious Welsh Cakes and Bara Brith and beautiful Daffodils, and asked people for their favourite things in Wales, which included - community, nature and the dragon on the flag.

One of the main events for UMCA members during last term was the inter-collegiate Eisteddfod, which happened in the Trinity of Wales Uni on their Lampeter campus. After a competitive and entertaining day, Aber once again came second behind Bangor, however picking up many of the major first places such as the boys, girls and mixed choir, and the crown, awarded for the best short story.

UMCA organised a very successful RAG week on the last week of term. The events during the week included a charity auction, mystery trip, car wash, darts tournament and a special Swn event. We managed to raise £2160.46 which will be split between Bronlais Chemo Day Unit and Tir Dewi.

Rachel – Student Opportunities

Since the Big Meeting, Rachel has seen through the penultimate key event of the year – we took on Bangor for Varsity and SocsFest. We may not have come out on top but we still had a great day away, besides the weather, and we won the main event at Nantporth 0-1 so we ended on a high!



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One big win for Rachel's priorities has been re-opening the Faith Space and beginning discussions with the Islamic Society about the use of the Mosque. We hope that this is the start of very key discussions surrounding faith provision on campus.

Student groups have been absolutely smashing RAG Weeks this year – last time Rachel checked, the grand total raised was £9,381.80 and we know for a fact that it's increased since then. Also, BUCS Season has finished – well done to all of our teams who have competed throughout the year! She may not be in the role next year, but Rachel will still be a keen Tím Aber supporter.

Next up for Rachel is Aber7s and AberSU Celebrates. To prepare for the awards, two panels met, including two Senedd reps each, and the awards were distributed by judgement of nominations against our awards criteria – now, she just needs to write the speeches!

As this is her last report to Senedd, Rachel would also like to extend a thank you for all the support she has received as part of her two years as an officer. She has had a lovely time working with you all and she is incredibly excited to see what Tiff will get up to next year.

Elizabeth – Academic Affairs

Elizabeth has led on organising our annual Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Awards (formerly Staff & Students Awards) which will take place on Thursday May 4th.

Alongside this, Elizabeth has been collecting student feedback on curriculum diversity and utilising it for a Report to go to the University's Academic Board. She has also been preparing the Union's Annual Academic Quality Report for Academic Board: this Report assesses the key issues facing Aberystwyth students and provides suggestions to the University on what they could do to help.

Cameron – Wellbeing Officer

Since our last meeting, Cameron has launched his campaign to help improve the wellbeing of trans students. The campaign, Beyond the Binary, provides gender affirming products (e.g., binders) to students who need them and can't afford them especially due to the cost of living, for free with funding from DARO. He has also set up the Trans and Gender Non-conforming Network with Student Services which meets every Wednesday so that trans students have a space to meet likeminded people and feel safe and supported. Cameron has been in contact with Hidden Disability Sunflower charity, a charity which raises awareness of hidden disabilities, and Student Services about the SU and university providing them for students. 100 were purchased to see how the campaign would go. He's been working on a couple of blogs which will hopefully be posted soon, one about dyslexia and another for eating disorder awareness. During LGBTQ history month, the SU put on a pride celebration event where Cameron did a speech and a moment of silence for Brianna Ghey. He also attended a listening circle about Brianna Ghey with trans students. Cameron helped with another Dyfi Donkey day too to help improve student wellbeing, and, alongside all of this, has been putting together research about fieldwork accessibility and has been collecting student feedback on the topic.