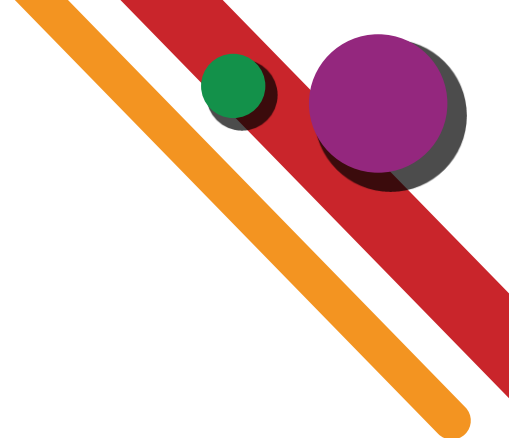




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# **Officer's Report**

## **Nate Pidcock**

**Senedd**

**02/11/2020**



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## President's Summary:

Well it certainly isn't the year that us five officers signed up for, that's for sure. Being elected back in March, a week before the national lockdown came into effect, we all had different visions for how we expected this year to go. Despite that, I think we've still come together as a team to do the best we possibly can for students in what can only be described as one of the strangest and most difficult years both students and sabbatical officers have faced so far. To prepare for this crazy year, we spent almost our entire first month in office engaging in different forms of training and team building; strengthening us as a team and giving us the skills needed to approach the year.

Over the past few months I have had a number of wins that I am very proud of. The first was working with our international department to deliver entertainment and welcome talks to our international students who had to self-isolate for two weeks upon their arrival to Aberystwyth. This led to a great working relationship with the department who subsequently gave the union funding to provide care packages to these students during their time in isolation – a massive bonus as the wellbeing of students is one of my main priorities. Alongside this, I have been working with the Cwtch Bar to reduce prices of their grab and go products which was received brilliantly by students with over 100 likes on the facebook post and one student commenting "This is the type of good news I like to see, well done Pres". This month I also successfully ran our old college fundraising day with the help of many clubs and socs –we raised £206 for the redevelopment of the building which will be a hub of Aberystwyth available to both students and the community. Finally, throughout the term I have represented student voice at a number of committees such as Council, Senate, Academic board and RPC to name a few. ensuring that students are always at the heart of every decision that is made within the university.





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During the past few weeks, we have seen an increasing number of students enter isolation and as a Union we decided we needed to take action. I have been shuttling van loads of essentials between supermarkets and campus ranging from toilet roll to pasta. As a team we have assembled these for our students and it is something we are very proud of.

## **'This Aber Girl Can' Week**

As part of our annual 'This girl can' week, we successfully ran a virtual campaign throughout the week with the help of many clubs and socs. This year's campaign featured virtual events, written articles, including player profiles, club workouts, an Environmenstrual workshop, and yoga sessions. All of which aimed to celebrate our Aber students who identify as women and female aligned people. We look forward to expanding the campaign into other areas of student life in future years, such as academia and community engagement.

## **Freshers week events**

Despite fresher's week having to be run virtually, we are super proud of the range of activities that took place throughout the week. Clubs and socs really took the lead and imagined some very creative ways to involve freshers such as Murder mystery nights over zoom. Before our suspension of in person activity, we also had some brilliant socials arranged – making use of the space that we have here in Aber. Societies arranged safe, socially distanced walks, hikes and beach bonfires that abided by the rules and provided a brilliant opportunity for new students to meet clubs and socs for the first time.

We also ran freshers chats which gave students an opportunity to meet like-minded people and make new friends in themed break out rooms on zoom. Alongside this I ran a virtual big freshers quiz that many students enjoyed as an ice breaker on their first night in Aber. In collaboration with the University, we had a big screen with live entertainment throughout the week and socially distanced seating for students to



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socialise as part of their households. There were also a wide variety of food trucks available, which provided an opportunity for many students to socialise with new friends in a safe way.

## **New staff**

Over the past few months we have filled many positions within the Union. The first of which being Alice, as our Campaigns and Democracy coordinator – a role that is vital to student life. She has jumped into the role brilliantly and works directly with full time and volunteer officers alike to provide support and ideas for campaigns. Personally, she has been a god send to me. Other roles we have filled are Media Sales and Events co-ordinator and Communications Coordinator both of which are a part of our communications department and will be a key asset to the union to help develop our online presence.

## **Womenspire award**

In October the Union was awarded the prestigious Womenspire Award for Gender Equality Champions. Lots of hard work went into this, including a to change recruitment processes such as anonymous applications and adopting an agile working process, it is something we are very proud of.

## **Strategy**

In September, the Union reviewed our 3-year strategy and made relevant changes based on student feedback and new ideas from our new officer team. We feel confident in our improved mission for Aber students to love student life and in our vision for Aber students to be happy, healthy and empowered, with lasting friendships and promising futures.

## **Wellbeing Update – Connor Hunter-Wem**

Connor has worked with me in becoming part of Student Minds SU's, which means we are part of a framework working with other universities to make our university better equipped to deal with mental health. He has kept in close contact with other SU wellbeing officers across the UK to create up to date and successful wellbeing/loneliness guides which he hopes will be available very soon. He has also completed various wellbeing training sessions including suicide prevention and hate crime awareness (he is currently working towards becoming hate crime awareness leader).



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Connor is also promoting various liberation campaigns, including Black History Month where he worked on social media posts about racism in sport and the Black Lives Matter Movement. He has recently worked with all other SU staff to create support packages for isolating students and is keeping in regular contact with Student Support to find ways to make the wellbeing system more supportive during these times. In terms of policies, he is focusing on passing the policy for healthcare for trans students speaking to the relevant staff within university.

## **Opportunities Update – Wojtek Salski**

Since his appointment Woj has been working on the adaptation of the Opportunities Office work to the Covid-19 environment. This included creating Online Committee Training, Video-based Student Group Activities and preparing Clubs and Societies for the Academic year. His policy 'Finance Module for Clubs and Societies' has been completed through effective communication with high level university staff. He also helped to run a successful Virtual Freshers Fair, organised weekly Society/Club Development meetings with SU staff and organised the player profiles for #ThisAberGirlCan Campaign Week. He is currently focusing on organising upcoming events including Aber Challenge, Superteams, Varsity and a new Arts Festival as per current policy.

## **Academic Affairs Update – Chloe Ann Wilkinson-Silk**

Chloe has worked with the university on a number of committees including coronaregs and L&T implementation WG. One of her biggest achievements so far was widening the criteria for the working from home procedure and implementing an appeals procedure. Other successful projects for Chloe include providing engaging training for academic and faculty reps, catching up with returning reps, and finalising exam arrangements considering last year's no detriment policy. Proactive discussions are now in place for what will happen to students this year. Finally, she has made significant changes to Turnitin including providing more information on similarity reports. Guidance is now available to help students interpreting these and all students are allowed multiple submissions.

## **UMCA – Moc Lewis**

Moc has restructured UMCA to be more inclusive by making new roles in the committee such as LGBTQ+, second language and living at home officer, while also re-creating the Pantycelyn committee who will feed back to me the happenings and issues within Pantycelyn. He has worked with the UMCA committee to create a new translating group within UMCA who will handle Welsh translations for clubs and societies, therefore taking pressure off the universities and the unions translators. Another big win has been his collaboration with other universities, particularly Bangor and Cardiff to set up a Welsh Language specific mental health support



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website ([myf.cymru](http://myf.cymru)). This uses specific students experiences to try and help other students, a student helping student support system.

