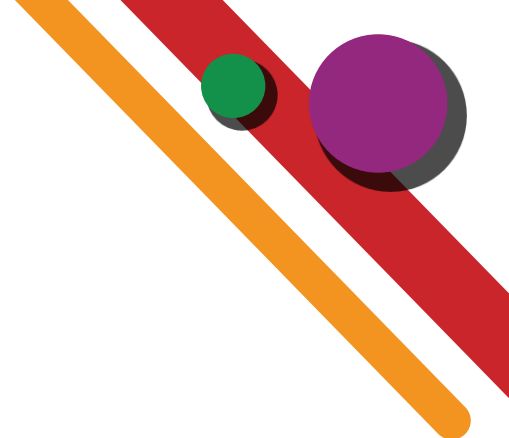




SENEDD!



Officers' Report Nate Pidcock

**Senedd
22/02/2021**



SENEDD!

President's Summary:

Well, hello hello hello and welcome to Senedd number 3 of 2020/2021! If you are taking the time to read this, I just want to thank you for being an active member of our union and being involved – it really means a lot to me! So below we have a list of updates from our brilliant officers who, have been cracking on for the past two months on a number of activities. Despite all working in different locations, we have managed some brilliant group projects together and I am extremely proud to be President of the Union this year, surrounded by such a proactive and enthusiastic team.

Back in December, I was on a panel of two (myself and deputy chair Ryan) recruiting a new trustee to our charity. I am delighted to announce Jon Allsop will be a great addition to our team and brings with him a lot of knowledge on Students Unions and challenges they may face. Another team activity you may have seen on campus was our Santa and Elf surprises to students all around our campus. The team dressed up and delivered sweets and treats to students on random occasions throughout the month which students loved, we even received a positive review on Aberfess! As part of our Christmas activities, I arranged a full calendar of events for students staying in Aber over the holiday which was received positively and students loved. In addition to this, we purchased, packed and delivered over 220 Christmas presents (worth around £20 each) to those students staying in Aber for the holidays which certainly had a very positive impact on those students.

Since January, we have had a number of challenges to deal with due to the return of students being postponed. I can 100% say that we have dealt with these brilliantly as a team, always putting students at the heart of everything we do. This has included some massive wins, such as accommodation refunds for students living in Uni accommodation, decisions on safety nets and lobbying private landlords to discount students rent. Also, myself and Connor have been involved in the student minds framework plan, ensuring our SU is a safe place for students, and that it adheres to specific benchmarks to provide a quality of mental health support. Towards the end of last year, I also received brilliant news that I secured £2500 funding to train a member of our staff in Mental health first Aid and to train the rest of our staff and possibly students. This is something we are in the process of at the minute and hope to have more news soon.

As I look at everything that myself and my team have achieved so far, I am extremely proud. I just wanted to take this moment to let people know that I will not be running for the role of President again, as I feel I have made positive changes within the SU and look forward to seeing how a new team will keep and improve upon this. I have had the best year so far, and hope my last 4 months in office are just as enjoyable and successful. But now, it is time for me to look towards my future.



Woj – Opportunities Update

This Opportunities Officer report consists of work done throughout late December 2020 and January 2021.

1. Opportunities Office has been working on developing an alternative solution to the delivery of events planned for the 2nd semester: Superteams, as well as Aber Challenge. We have created a new 'weekly' event, which will take place for the 6 consecutive weeks, starting on the 1st of February. This will include social media-based challenges (both sports and non-sports based), which can be taken up by any student of the Aberystwyth University. The name of the event is Aber Super Challenge.
2. Opportunities Officer has been working closely with a group of students, developing the first ever all-encompassing Arts Festival, which is planned to take place online on the first week of March 2021. The working group has developed ideas, put together an action plan, and employed some voluntary work from the Computer Science Department students, who will create a platform for this event.
3. Opportunities Office has recently received funding towards a variety of goals, as stated in the Grant Application forms, to student groups, to be used in the 2nd semester.
4. Opportunities Officer is working on creating workshops for the student groups to attend, which will aim to develop team management, leadership and organisation skills.
5. Opportunities Office has been actively admitting points (based on the Aber All Star Accreditation Scheme) towards the student groups, who presented improvement and implemented suggested changes. This will be visible on the Aber SU website in the upcoming weeks.
6. Opportunities Office has been in touch with Bangor SU representatives regarding the Varsity 2021 event, which will most likely be hosted virtually, and will hopefully involve challenges among the student groups from both universities.
7. Opportunities Officer has been a part of Coleg Cambria Partner Performance Evaluation group, which is producing a report regarding the audit.

Connor – Wellbeing Update

- Created a de-stress guide (can be found on health and wellbeing section).
- Created 'Stick With It' events (accommodation matching, community activities) with Academic Officer - events will be from 8th - 19th.
- Working closely with others in LGBTQ+ history month.
- Attended webinar on tackling loneliness - aim to create a campaign around issue.
- Finalised preparations for No Excuses.
- Working with Opportunities Officer to deliver No Excuses in clubs and socs.
- Attended various training programs e.g. assertiveness and confidence training.
- Updating policies weekly.

Moc – UMCA and Welsh Culture Update

- Continued to organise and provide free, high quality and peer-led Welsh Language Lessons for students.
- Arranged sessions with the Urdd to try and persuade more young people 16-23 to register to vote.
- Successfully lobbied the University into giving 100% refunds to students from University accommodation until Easter.



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- Organised inter-collegiate culture competition to replace key events in the social calendar (due to Covid restrictions). Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea have so far agreed to take part.
- Been a key part of Coleg Gwent and Aberystwyth University's Partner Performance Evaluation panel. Discussed 'Student Feedback' and 'Student Voice' with Coleg Gwent Management, teaching staff and students ensuring the same Standard is upheld in Coleg Gwent as is at the University.
- Created leaflet for 'St Dwynwen's Day' to try and educate people on the significance of the day and published a 'Welsh Love Song' playlist to try and promote Welsh music within the University.
- Discussed with numerous radio stations about the impact extending teaching online is going to have on students both mentally and financially.
- Completed a 'Confidence and Assertiveness' course for personal development.
- Advertising 'Welsh life in Aberystwyth' and 'Welsh Education' trying to attract students for September.
- Part of the Panel for Aberystwyth St David's Awards which award students who excel in the Welsh language.

Chloe – Academic Affairs Update

Since last Senedd, I have been focusing primarily on our student retention campaign 'Stick With It!', and working with the University to come to an agreement on a student safety-net policy. With the help of the wider team, I have also hosted meet and greets for postgraduate students and academic representatives.

- **Stick With It**

Before Christmas, a survey went out to all students exploring your interests and potential ways of creating opportunities to make friends. In January, we looked through every response to create a timetable of virtual activities designed to help students widen their community and meet others with similar interests to them. These events will be every day from 8th-19th of February. In January, we also ran a 'Stick With It!' event called 'First Mates', a virtual housemate matching event allowing students to meet others looking for shared accommodation next academic year. Feedback from this event was extremely positive and we will be looking to schedule another in the near future.

- **Student Safety Net**

In early January, the officer team met with the University Executive, where a safety net approach to assessment was raised. At this time, despite having union policy on the matter (p*ssed about p*ssed resits), the University Exec were reluctant to entertain the discussion further. Since then, I have had several meetings with key decisionmakers in L&T and Academic Registry to raise the issues faced by students and further emphasise the need for a student safety-net. In partnership with the SU, a new policy proposal has been drafted by Academic Registry for a student safety-net, which at the time of writing is to be debated, and hopefully passed, by University Senate later this week.