

Thank you to all student leaders who attended and contributed to the discussions in the most recent Student Council meeting on the 26th of January! For those of you who were unable to attend or wish to refer back, please find a summary of the meeting below.

Updates for Student Trustees

Student Trustee, Katie Morton, reports no new updates as no further trustee meetings have been attended since the previous student council.

Updates for the SU

CEO Rebecca Hobbes gave two important updates on behalf of the Students Union.

The Student Leadership Development Programme is now live, offered as virtual personal development sessions to student leaders (Student Representatives, School Community Officers, BAME Advocates, Network and Committee Members and Student Staff. For more information and how to sign up to sessions, please check out the website: [Student Leaders Development Programme \(hertfordshire.su\)](https://www.hertfordshire.su/student-leaders-development-programme)

Election time is nearly here! From the 31st of January to the 14th of February nominations are open for next year's sabbatical officers [Elections \(hertfordshire.su\)](https://www.hertfordshire.su/elections). These are year-long, full time positions including Students Union President, Vice-President Activities, Vice-President Community and Vice-President Education. If you are passionate about representing the views of students, think about putting yourself forward for one of these positions!

Officer Updates

Zara Haram Syeda (VP Education) spoke on her manifesto updates (timetabling, BAME awarding gap, personal tutoring, international students' professional development, students' rights) since the last meeting on the 1st of December 2021.

Semester B timetables were released on the 10th of January, followed by mainly positive student feedback. Zara wishes to take further action on issues concerning on timetabling, focusing on lobbying for further flexibility by introducing a 'student choice timetabling system', which funding has been approved for and can hopefully be implemented in the future. In the next academic year, schools will seek to exchange best practices with those who are manually incorporating student choice into their timetabling to increase flexibility.

To further support international students, staff from various teams across the university associated with the international student experience have come together to determine adequate support for international students. In addition, a guide has been created by the international office to aid international students in their induction period, and the university moving forward will commit to having student ambassadors available to give tours and assistance to international students throughout the whole of September. These are the beginning of some great changes, however Zara is lobbying for the university to continue offering airport pickup services, to further improve upon the international student guide, and to open up a dedicated staff position who oversees the international student experience.

Zara has also been working to establish an academic staff reply standard to manage student expectations, as currently staff reply times vary greatly across schools. Moving forward, it will be assessed as to whether a policy should be implemented university wide, or vary between schools.

Further updates about academic improvements include Zara reviewing the necessity of group work for level 6 students, hoping to reduce the amount it is offered as an assessment type for final year undergraduates.

Finally, Zara is reviewing the SAC process to ensure it is clear and easy to undertake, as feedback suggest students across the university find the process confusing.

On behalf of **Prosasti Ganguly (VP Community)**, Junaid Ahmed next updated about her priorities (sustainability, safety on campus, help us to help you, period poverty).

Prosasti has been working with the sustainability department to increase student knowledge on sustainability, and sustainable products, particularly through monthly Instagram collaboration posts. Moving forward, she will continue to work with the sustainability department and Ulving to run a survey across the university concerning recycling, to give the departments a good idea as to what students know about recycling.

Working on improving Uno bus services for university students, Uno buses have now started accepting digital IDs. However, Prosasti wishes to make further positive changes regarding student feedback about negative experiences with bus drivers, in which Uno buses are working on implementing driver name badges to increase drivers' actions accountability in instances of misconduct.

Herts Empowerment went live in December, meaning that students can now post their feedback of their student experiences online anonymously to be taken on board by the Students Union. Prosasti wants to work on advertising this more widely to university students, encouraging its use as a feedback platform.

Next, Junaid Ahmed (VP Activities) presented on his updates (reducing student loneliness, more sports for disabled and abled students, helping societies progress and win).

Focusing on collating student feedback, Junaid has been prioritising interacting with students to get a better idea as to what activities they like and which they do not. Very recently, he hosted a language café, with the aim to bring together a diverse group of students to get to know each other which gained positive feedback from those who attended. Therefore, Junaid hopes to host more events to reduce student loneliness.

Following student feedback, efforts have been directed at improving the process of booking rooms and filling out risk assessments to make it easier for society members. Junaid hopes that this will increase the number of events societies can host this semester. Moving forward, it is hoped that society engagement will increase!

Herts squad events have begun for Semester B! Junaid continues to work on establishing a strong relationship with the Herts Squad team, and has made progress in offering more sporting events for able-bodied and disabled students. He hopes to keep encouraging students to attend these events to improve their mental health and wishes to make some adjustments to the timetable to accommodate all students, such as commuters.

Finally, Rhiannon Ellis (President) recalled the work she has done since the last meeting, based on her manifesto points (preventing harassment and discrimination on campus, improving the disabled experience, improving the mental health and wellbeing of international experience).

Working on preventing harassment and discrimination on campus, Rhiannon has added the #16pledges campaign to the already established #NeverOk commitments. In addition, she has been

working alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Students Union on the safer streets campaign, and hopes to implement active bystander training to student leaders. Keep an eye out over the next few months for more information. Rhiannon will continue to lobby for the addition of sexual harassment/misconduct to night club venues licensing policy, holding the venue accountable for their actions when dealing with misconduct.

Following up on student feedback concerning Study Needs Agreements, Rhiannon has fed back directly to the Deans and Deputy Vice Chancellor asking that students who apply for Study Needs Agreements are contacted and updated during this process, and address any negative student experiences. Rhiannon has also been working with Emma Diston from the disability team to get a better idea as to all the services offered, and come up with ideas of how to bring more attention them. Additionally, she has joined an accessibility working group to get more ideas on how to improve accessibility of campus, and this is a priority moving forward. The next steps include pushing the university to do an accessibility audit of the campus, and work alongside Zara to launch the Students Rights campaign in March.

To improve the mental health and wellbeing of students, Rhiannon has worked alongside the Students Union Campaign Coordinator on the 'Break and Breathe' campaign, in which they have already ran a yoga session and handed out cereal bars in the LRC to help those studying. It is hoped that many more events can run to aid this campaign for the rest of the year!

Finally, Rhiannon has been working closely with final year international students who have been struggling to apply for their PSW visa's who were waiting for the release of their final grades. Students whose grades predicted they were likely to pass have been reported to the Home Office so that students were eligible to apply for their PSW visa. This an issue that Rhiannon is dedicated to work on, ensuring that it will not continue.

Student Council Wrap Up

Thank you to everyone who attended! This was another great and productive student council meeting. We hope to see you all at the next meeting, which is scheduled for the 23rd of March.