HERTS SU

<u>Student Council Officer Updates – 24th October</u>

<u>A Freshers' Success and What's Next: Officer Priorities for the Year</u>

Last month's Freshers' events were a hit! Our elected officers took full advantage of the opportunity to connect with students, introduce themselves, and raise awareness about the SU and its services. They also collected valuable feedback, which will help shape their work going forward.

One of the proudest achievements of our officers at the start of term month has been the success of social media outreach. Collaborations with departments like Finance, Careers and Employment, UH Well-being, schools like HBS & SPECS, societies, Aramark, and UH Sustainability have boosted engagement significantly. The numbers speak for themselves: we've had 127,485 views in the past 30 days, with the officer introduction reel in collaboration with Herts SU being on the top. We've reached 15,769 accounts —a massive reach compared to our 2,200 followers!

<u>Officer Action Plans</u>

Please see below an overview of what our officer team will be working on over the next Semester and beyond.

Rohit – President

Rohit will be exploring how AI is used in relation to coursework. He wants to find out, what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to using AI at university? Additionally, Rohit will lobby for further guidance around the use of AI which should be reflected in an accessible policy. He will gather feedback to best understand attitudes toward AI to guide this work, which we are already starting to receive through the work of our Insights Team Herts' Unfiltered project.

Additionally, another key part of Rohit's action plan will be to gather insight from different departments at UH and their varying methods of communication (particularly in relation to Academic Registry/Ask Herts) to see where miscommunication of key messages occurs. He wants to make key recommendations based on student feedback to ensure that clear, student friendly messaging is at the core of all communications.

Furthermore, Rohit will be offering additional support to the Commuting Students' and Campus Based Students' Officer with responding to issues related to Uno Buses as well as catering on campus respectively. He will also be lobbying the local MP to improve the private renter rights of students in the local area in response to the Renters' Right Bill.

Finally, Rohit is working hard to represent the student voice in the upcoming recruitment of the incoming Vice Chancellor of the university.

Krishna – Campus Based Students' Officer

Krisha aims to establish a productive working relationship with Aramark, lobbying for food on campus to be affordable, accessible, and reflective of the diverse student population. Krishna will go out and talk to students to gather comprehensive student feedback, using this data to advocate for specific improvements in campus facilities including the installation of more microwaves and comfortable eating spaces.

Additionally, he will review feedback from the Herts' Unfiltered project around feelings of safety on campus within the School of Law and Education as scores are particularly low. Krishna aims to work with relevant teams to develop a careful communication strategy to handle discussions around security and feelings of safety. Based on feedback, Krishna will lobby for necessary improvements and collaborate with stakeholders to explore changes, such as encouraging further security patrols around the Schools of Law and Education to increase feelings of safety on campus.

Santosh – International Students Officer

Santosh aims to gather feedback from international students regarding their experiences receiving communications from the University by going out to talk to students. This initiative will involve supporting the Herts' Unfiltered project, and he will ensure international student perspectives are captured. Santosh's goal is to compile actionable recommendations for the incoming International Students' Officer, making sure that improvements are planned before the January intake of students to enhance their start of term experience.

Using feedback from start of term around expectations of academic support services, which show that expectations were not met, particularly for international students, Santosh will lobby to ensure a standard approach across schools that increase the accessibility of academic support services for international students. Santosh will investigate what academic support services are available in each school, identifying key gaps where international students may struggle to access these services.

Santosh will use further feedback from the Herts' Unfiltered research project around a lack of awareness of financial support available to students, specifically in students of Black or Asian background, and can work with incoming Black Student' officer to ensure that UH financial support services available are clear to students.

Kesar Dave – Women's Students Officer

Kesar will work on feedback from the previous Women's Officer regarding hygiene maintenance of women's washrooms on campus and ensure well-stocked period products across these restrooms. She will liaise with the Estates team to understand how

the utilisation of period products is tracked, submitting evidence of any deficiencies in current facilities.

Furthermore, Kesar wants to work with the SU's Community Events Team to run a women's networking Sip and Paint event focused on community building, collaborating with academic societies such as the Women's Engineering Society. Kesar aims to achieve maximum outreach with positive feedback on community building, improving the overall extra-curricular experience of women students. A key reason for hosting these events is to hold conversations about important women's issues on campus.

Furthermore, Kesar will collaborate with the university looking at the implementation of a mandatory consent training programme for all students. This initiative will involve working closely with relevant staff to inform an inclusive consent training curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives and unique needs of the student body at Herts. In working on this action point, Kesar wants to actively promote a culture of consent across the university, and address concerns related to sexual harassment and misconduct.

Zhora – LGBTQ+ Students Officer

Zhora will gather feedback via the LGBTQ+ society, and more widely across student populations, by going out to talk to students about experiences using toilets of campus. She will lobby for sanitary products and bins to be more easily accessible to transgender students within toilets across both campuses. Zhora will also lobby for better signage to guide students to unisex bathrooms where we have these on campus.

Additionally, they will be lobbying for the University and SU to take a harm-reductionist approach to drug policy, as harms related to drug use disproportionally impacts the LGBTQ+ community. Zhora will gather feedback from Herts students, and other universities, to take key recommendations to staff at Herts.

Additionally, Zhora will collaborate with the LGBTQ+ Society and wider Herts SU staff to design and implement events that cater to the preferences of the students she is representing. Using feedback, she will look to organise tailored events which will be more welcoming for the Herts LGBTQ+ community.

Muhammad Anas – Mature Students Officer

Muhammad Anas wants to assess the existing baby changing and breastfeeding facilities across both university campuses by evaluating their accessibility, location, and signage. This assessment will be based on data gathered through reviewing spaces on campus and via feedback from student parents. Following this evaluation, he will lobby for the installation of additional facilities in under-served areas.

Muhammad Anas also wants to assess the academic support available for mature students, particularly those above 40, across all schools by collecting feedback in collaboration with SCOs and the SU's Advice and Insight Team. This will focus on identifying gaps in academic support services which address challenges faced by those "learning to learn again", including technology, academic skills, and adapting to university life. Based on the findings, he will collaborate with different schools to implement tailored programmes aimed at addressing these challenges.

Ameer – Placement Students Officer

Ameer would like to implement a school-based mental health and wellbeing awareness campaign in partnership with relevant University teams by running tailored workshops in the Schools of Health and Social Care and Life and Medical Sciences. Ameer will ensure that available mental health services run at UH are well signposted to placement students.

He will also be working to collect feedback from placement students across all schools, using surveys and focus groups in collaboration with SCO's to understand the differences in placement support services and the satisfaction levels of students. Analysing the data to identify gaps Ameer will lobby each school to improve placement support services and facilities, aiming for a more consistent and positive placement experience for students across the university.

As part of feedback collection, Ameer will aim to understand placement students financial and personal challenges. Where challenges are identified, Ameer will lobby to reduce unpaid student placements, with the aim to increase paid placement opportunities. He wants to work with the UH Careers service to enhance partnerships with paid placement providers.