



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER REPORT

For the attention of:	Executive Committee	Taking place on:	04/05/16
Name:	Sophie May	Action:	To note

Summary: *This paper provides an update on the priority campaign(s) of the Executive Committee member*

Priority campaign(s) and objective(s)

Progress on priority campaign(s)

See full article <https://www.angliastudent.com/news/article/union/What-Ive-been-working-on-for-the-last-three-months/>

Democracy review

The whole officer team, along with some of our permanent members of staff and our Campaign Reps, have been working with our NUS contact in reviewing our democratic structures. Following a huge amount of research, we are looking at the Executive Officer roles, the running of student council, how we vote, and our rep system among other things, and how what we do matches with our students' expectations of us as a Union. You might have noticed that our Campaign Rep elections took place in March alongside our Executive Officer elections – this was a result of our review. We will be signing off the rest of the review this week so watch this space for all the democratic goodness coming this way.

A new SU

Another huge piece of research we have done has been looking at what our students think the Students' Union biggest priorities should be and what you want to see us doing. Over the last few months we have listened, understood, and responded and as a result will be launching the new SU in time for the next academic year. There's going to be a new three-year strategy, changes to the way we work, and a whole new rebrand. I'm very proud of this work and really excited to see how it all comes together. It's going to be awesome.

Women in Leadership

I attended the NUS Women in Leadership conference in Sheffield along with Sarah Haider, Grace Anderson, and Millie Smith – our Women's Rep for Cambridge. The conference was amazing and really inspiring. Anglia Ruskin Students' Union and our members (you!) are obviously not afraid of women in leadership – we are currently the only all-female SU Officer Team in the country. Listening to some of the other women's stories was tough and shows that there are many Universities and Unions across the country that aren't as supportive of women leaders. Our accessibility and empowerment of women at Anglia Ruskin Students' Union is something we should be hugely proud of and something we must continue. No institution is perfect so if you have encountered any issues you feel are related to your gender (or any other protected characteristic such as race, disability, sexuality, or anything else) please speak up – you can speak to your elected rep, one of the Officers or a member of our Advice Service.

Campaign Rep away day

We took our elected Campaign Reps for an away day at Shelford Rugby Club and spent an amazing day learning about the national higher education environment, discussing leadership and what kind of student leaders we want to be, and planning our campaigns. It was brilliant listening to all the great ideas our reps have for the campaigns they want to run and how they complimented each other. Students leading students is what we're all about.

Accommodation Fair for fair accommodation

I had a stand at the University's annual Accommodation Fair to promote our campaign Where My Rent Went. I met loads and loads of students looking for accommodation next year and provided them with information to make sure they are not being messed around or taken advantage of. This included checklists of things the property must have in place to ensure it's safe, legal and comfortable, and advice about taking your time. There is no reason to rush – please make sure you have thought about who you want to live with, what you are prepared to pay, and what your rights and responsibilities are as a tenant. If you missed out on these fliers and checklists and would like to get some, please feel free to contact me.

Open mic

Our Open Mic night in February organised by Sarah Haider was phenomenal. We had a huge variety of acts including everything from poetry to a play, and acoustic music to rap. Alongside this we had a group of art students painting on huge canvases, interpreting the performers in paint. I performed some stand up comedy and was hugely proud to be involved. We have some incredibly talented students here at ARU! #ILoveARU

Accommodation audit

Thanks to our Where My Rent Went campaign, I was invited to join Paul Harris, Residential Services Manager, as part of their accommodation audit. We inspected some randomly selected university-run properties to make sure they are up to standard. We found only one minor fault and this has since been corrected. If you are experiencing problems with your accommodation, our Advice Service can help. Book an appointment here

Creative Skills conference

Sarah Haider and I attended the Creative Skills conference to celebrate the great achievements of young people in the arts. There was a lot of discussion on improving diversity in the arts community and I learned that BBC journalists used to be a less diverse group than Cabinet Ministers or High Court judges. Luckily this isn't the case anymore and there is a real effort happening to widen participation in the arts. Sarah and I went to this because of the arts projects we're working on – Sarah is launching the Creative Minds project and I am working on the SU Media and Community Arts projects.

Trans* issues awareness training

I went to Trans* Issues Awareness training with Debbie Paradise, our Head of Student Advice and Academic Quality, and lots of members of staff from across the university. It was an informative session and I think everyone came away with a better understanding of the trans* community and how the University and the Union can support them. As a Union we have Trans* Reps (as well as LGBT+ Reps), we have a policy on gender neutral toilets and our Sports Club Rep has been working on improving trans* participation in sport, so we are always aiming to be accessible to all students, including our trans* community, but it never hurts to reminded of the issues.

Comedy Central

We hosted a brilliant comedy night with Comedy Central. We had three of their brilliant professional performers and the evening was genuinely hilarious. I performed a set myself and hope the audience enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed the rest of the night!

Cambridge Medical Centre

Armed with research collated by Grace, I attended a meeting with the managers of the Cambridge campus Medical Centre and Jane Murray from Student Services. Grace had received several messages of concern regarding the service provided by the Medical Centre and I raised them all. As an outcome of the meeting, the centre managers and I are each writing a list of expectations of both staff and patients at the centre. I have been working with Debbie Paradise on this and will be presenting our expectations to the centre managers soon. We will keep going until we and our students are confident in the service being provided.

Peterborough Freshers

I attended the freshers fair for the new nursing students at the Peterborough campus last week. Together with Sammi and Grace, I gave an introduction to the Students' Union and what we're here for. I spent the whole afternoon with the new freshers while they took part in a number of activities and had a really good day. The feedback we received for the day was really positive – everyone had a great day and is really enthusiastic about getting involved with the SU, whether it's through one of the new societies started up on the day, volunteering or being a rep. Georgia Elderkin, our Students' Union Co-ordinator for Peterborough, should be extremely proud of the day – she put a lot of hard work into it and it all paid off!

Filming

Joshua Agbo is a PhD student here at Anglia Ruskin and has recently had a play published. Annie, President of the SU TV society and I filmed an interview with him where he discussed the play, the important context of his writing, and what he's working on now. Watch this space for the video.

Tumblr

I have been running the SU tumblr page and am really excited with its progress. Lots of students, volunteers, and societies have written blogs for the page and they've all been great. Check it out (and follow us!) at ruskinsu.tumblr.com If you want to write a piece, share a video or film, exhibit your art or your music, let me know! Email me on s.may@angliastudent.com

Impact

I recently calculated how many students have accessed the content I have created since being Communications Officer and almost 12,000 of you have read my freshers guides, watched my videos, taken my quizzes, or read my articles. I hope you've enjoyed them. It's been a blast.

An update on engagement with coach and mentor/mentee(s)

Further support required from the Executive Committee/Students' Union