

OFFICER REPORTS – STUDENT COUNCIL

Vice-President Welfare Officer Report

January 2020 Student Council

Katy Baker

Summary:

Since the last council, I have seen a lot of students struggling with their mental health. We recognise that January can be particularly difficult from coming back from after Christmas, the cold weather and getting back in to a routine. I have been able to support students by listening to them, offering some guidance as well as signposting to other services. I have also been working hard to get data for students at each halls of residence who are struggling with their mental health so we can see if there are any trends and either campaign or push for more support.

Key talking points:

Togetherness Tuesday

I have planned the next 4 months of Togetherness Tuesdays, listening to what students would like to do and organising different activities so students have something to do to support their wellbeing and something on campus away from their studies. I have also seen an increased attendance in the activities such as yoga and the pamper sessions as well as organising for Northamptonshire Young Carers and Northampton Sexual Health Outreach Team to provide students with information and signposting.

Organising a food bank

At the end of each month I am looking at having a food bank at the Engine Shed. This will be an opportunity for students to bring any non-perishable foods that they haven't used and swap it with another item that someone else has brought. At the end, we will take any left over items to a local food bank. These plans will be finalised once I have looked more in to the health and safety of it.

I am also looking at getting some Foundation Studies students in with the initiative because they study a food poverty module, this makes the project more student-led and student owned.

BSC Nursing students

I have joined a team of nursing students: adult, paediatric, learning disability and mental health nursing students and lecturers to join together and ensure that the wellbeing of these students are being looked at as sometimes they find that time management, self-care and overall wellbeing can get forgotten about due to long shifts at placement and not getting full involvement with the Students' Union throughout the year due to the different intakes.

I have helped students here to organise a wellbeing festival at the end of the academic year to promote self-care and to help other nursing students to recognise the importance of a good wellbeing. Myself along with nursing lecturers, Changemaker and members of the Wellbeing Steering Group have planned a term of wellbeing activities for nursing students to get involved with including yoga, a silent disco and meditation. This initiative has also been nominated for a Changemaker award.

Hedgehog bronze award

As per my last report, I have been involved with this project for a while, supporting a student with this initiative and making the campus both Hedgehog friendly and more environmentally friendly. We have now got the bronze award for this initiative and are looking forward in getting more students involved to help get the silver and gold as well as using students' skills e.g photography and environmental science. My role here has been promoting it to societies and work with the grounds team to get WorkBridge charity involved to help us build some hedgehog houses outside of the Engine Shed.

EHF

I have been issuing several Emergency Hardship Fund payments to students who are struggling financially. As well as giving out these payments, I have spent time listening to students and signposting to any other services where necessary e.g mental health services.

From this, I have seen mature students struggling in particular, especially those in placement and those going from full-time work in to full-time education. I am now working with the head of student services to provide mature students with more information and a better induction for when they come to University which outlines what to expect and some different support services available.

Manifesto points:

Hold mental health panels led by lecturers & charities and to train the residential life team in mental health first aid

Provide healthy recipes which are easy & cheap to make; create a food bank for students to swap perishable foods with other students

Support international students with adapting to the Uni and the town. Help them engage with the Students' Union & hold events for them

Meet regularly with the UoN Police team to make sure all students feel safe across all campus'

Have weekly drop-in sessions so students can come to me with any concerns e.g. housing, budgeting, mental health or welfare in sport.

Setting students up for the next step e.g. guidance on housing and mental health early intervention

Making sure every student is heard across all campus' and all demographics engage in the Students Union

Other activities:

Knife amnesty

I am currently planning to hold a knife amnesty day for students to come and give in any weapons. Due to the nature of this, I am working with the police team so we are all aware of what we need to consider however we aim to raise awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife.

Sexual health clinic, Engine Shed

A member of the Northampton General Hospital Sexual Health Outreach Team came in to the Engine Shed to offer free testing and information. We got good numbers so I have decided to make this more regular.