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| Sabbatical Officer Name: | Alex Meers |
| Sabbatical Officer Role: | VP Heath Park Campus (Education & Welfare) |

**Section 1: Sabbatical Officer Report**

*This section is to be completed by the Sabbatical Officer prior to the accountability session.*

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| **General Report**  *(Written by the Sabbatical Officer this report is aimed at providing insight into their work/activity since the last accountability session or the start of their term in office)* | |
| Shwmae! I’ve used this section to write up the big themes of my work – while it won’t cover everything, these are the major issues I’m responding to and projects I’m involved in. You’ll notice a theme in this document that I’m doing a lot (I think) but it doesn’t necessarily align with my manifesto. This is because things have come up, including issues and projects I wasn’t entirely aware of when running that take priority. I’ve tried to add context to explain why I’m doing what I am, but as always if you’d like more clarity on a specific point or issue, feel free to reach out!  **NHS Bursary**  Many students in the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Healthcare sciences are funded in part by the Welsh Government, often with a commitment to work in Wales for a few years following their professional registration. Historically the amount students can claim has been quite low, resulting in a high rate of student poverty.  In light of the cost-of-living crisis, I raised with the National Union of Students (NUS) that this was a priority area and students funded in this route needed a higher entitlement. This resulted in them lobbying the Welsh Government for a change to the bursary scheme through questions in the Senedd. Less than a month later the health minister made a positive change, allowing students funded through the bursary to claim a full student loan on top.  Unfortunately, this comes with the caveat that this is only possibly for students who normally live in Wales (a minority in most programmes). Extending this to students who normally live in England would require a change from the UK government, and I’m looking into raising this - again through Senedd as UK ministers are more difficult to influence.  **Healthcare Relocation Project**  Some students in the School of Healthcare Sciences (HCARE), mainly midwifery students and some postgraduate researchers, are currently based in Eastgate house - separate from the Heath Park campus. The University recently purchased, and has been developing, some property (Heath Park West) off the side of the Heath Park campus with the aim of relocating these students. I think this is a step forward for students but have had some concerns regarding on-site catering options and safe means of travel to the site.  Catering has been a historic issue for dental students, with the dental hospital too far from the main site for most students to get food on their lunch break. With Heath Park West even further from the main hospital, I have been concerned at the lack of a permanent catering plan and have been lobbying for one to be produced to provide for students based in both Heath Park West and the dental hospital. The safety of the main footpath has also been a concern, as it is dark and out of the way.  I have been pushing for progress on both issues, with the project steering board taking on my feedback and returning some positive results. Temporary caterers will be present at the site as soon as it opens for teaching, and footfall will be tracked to make a business case for a permanent café. As for the footpath, alternative options have been considered and a safer entryway has been proposed and accepted by the Health Board – work has begun to make this happen.  Finally, I’ve been working to make sure any future issues that arise with the project can be dealt with. Student voice mechanisms are being implemented to make sure the Students’ Union hears feedback about the site, and I have secured a seat on the project steering board to raise any issues or concerns students may have.  **Clinical Placement Experience**  For a long time, medical students have been frustrated with the travel arrangements provided by the School of Medicine (MEDIC) for clinical placements – to such an extent that it has been raised by a series of sabbatical officers and MedSoc committees over the past ten years. I have been working with MedSoc to conduct a survey and review the policy that governs this, producing a set of recommendations to the school as to how it can be improved. This has been picked up by the Dean of Medical Education, who will be supporting us in making the changes (through the Welsh Government and School of Medicine).  With clinical placements forming a core part of the education journey for Heath Park students, I am aware of wider issues such as difficulty accessing support services, conduct complaints, loss of teaching due to NHS staff shortages, and more. As such, I am hoping to gather data on these issues as part of the Students’ Union’s annual Speak Week event, with the aim of compiling this into a “Student View on Clinical Placements” document that would be considered by the University’s governing body.  On top of this, I have been working with some Student Academic Reps from HCARE to produce information resources to empower students in taking action on placements – from low level concerns to major complaints and making change for the future. This has developed into a full placement support campaign, supported by regulator funding, which we are aiming to launch in January.  **ODP Teach-Out**  HCARE have been in the process of discontinuing the Operating Department Practice (ODP) programme. The current year 3 are the last remaining year, but the discontinuation process has caused some issues. There have been a number of concerns around students who may need internal resits, with Interruption of Study and other factors in play.  The school have been running Town Hall meetings with ODP students to answer questions, but it is clear from our end that there is no blanket policy, and they are, in practice, attempting to deal with issues behind closed doors when they arise. I met with the regulator HEIW (Health Education and Improvement Wales) who will be meeting with students and the school to handle the issue.  **Building a Presence**  Students often raise concerns about our presence as a Students’ Union at the Heath Park Campus. This is something my Executive Committee have raised, as well as students in conversation. This year I’m trying to be more present and visible on the campus – I’ve done a lot to achieve this in the short term, including returner talks with medical students and moving my default workplace to the campus (now the blue room in Neuadd Meirionnydd).  I’ve also been raising issues with our physical spaces at the Heath, asking for repairs where necessary and to bring them in line with our rebrand from two years ago. To ensure more concrete change in the long term, I’ll be conducting a survey on healthcare students’ satisfaction with the Union and making a set of recommendations to the Board of Trustees for improvement.  **Activities and Opportunities**  One of the cornerstones of the Union’s calendar is Freshers, and I did a lot over the period for healthcare students. This included a welcome mixer for incoming medics, campus tours and a photo competition to help get students used to the Heath, induction talks for all programmes, supporting the Heath Park Fair, and helping VP Postgraduate Students with her “Meet and Mingle” event.  I’ve also been working on Medics’ Varsity recently. This has proven difficult and taken up a lot of my time – while we aren’t the hosts this time around, the organisers are the equivalent of our MedSoc and have needed a lot of support. I’ve been helping them where possible, while trying to manage conflicts between operational constraints and what our clubs would like to see from the event. Nonetheless, I expect the event to be really positive, and I managed to expand it to include our Medics’ Basketball Club for the first time!  My Executive Committee raised in its first meeting that they would like to see me supporting student-led activity at the Heath, including through (as a suggestion) a summer ball for students in the School of Healthcare Sciences. I’ve met with committee members from a range of societies to discuss this summer ball and a cross-campus “Summer Fun Day” suggested by MedSoc – I’m optimistic that both will be successful and help shape a community on the campus.  **Democracy and Elections**  I’ve been working hard to make sure healthcare students’ voices are heard through our democratic procedures and committees. In practice this has meant physical outreach to encourage students to run in the autumn elections, communications to encourage students to attend AGM or nominate a proxy if unavailable and supporting a motion in Student Senate to mandate the Union to include online attendance as an option for AGM. I’ll continue to encourage engagement where possible (e.g. I was unable to do outreach for autumn election voting because I was also a candidate).  I’m also starting to plan for a motion to the NUS Liberation Conference regarding Health Inequity and a campaign to oppose it through inclusive healthcare education. This includes queer issues (as mentioned in the LGBTQ+ Officer’s election manifesto) and working against institutional racism to improve outcomes for BAME patients.  **Committees and Influence**  Alongside these projects, I sit on a number of committees in the University, Union, and further afield. I sit in Union committees as a Trustee, where I have a legal obligation to be well-informed act in the best interest of the organisation. The rest I sit in to provide a student perspective and a platform for student voice where decisions are made. This takes up a significant proportion of my time, so just thought it was worth noting. | |
| **Manifesto Update**  *(Written by the Sabbatical Officer this section is aimed at tracking their progress against manifesto commitments made by them during their successful officer election)*  **Note from the Sabbatical Officer**  *I’ve added a “status” below each commitment to let you know how I would personally judge each commitment to be in terms of achieved/not achieved. This is purely so you can see how I perceive my work on the point, and if I need to be nudged to do any more.* | |
| **Open student forums to collect feedback**  ***(Achieved Elsewhere)*** | I’ll put my hands up and say I haven’t got round to this. The idea came from something similar I did last year as an SSP chair, but I’ve gone off the idea a little with how tough it can be to get Heath Park students in the room.  That doesn’t mean I’ve gone off accountability though. The aim behind this was to be transparent and make time available for students to engage with me – what I’ve done instead is bring in a monthly all student email, post often with progress updates on social media, and make my calendar bookable through my linktree so students can book a 30m chat whenever they want/need to.  Happy to take your steer on this. I feel like what I’m doing instead does the job, but if you’d like me to progress with this I’ll definitely give it a go. |
| **Specialised rep training**  ***(On Hold)*** | Rep training was sorted quite early in the year, and with everything going on with my training/induction I didn’t manage to get to this in time for 2023/24 training. What I’m hoping to do is use feedback from current reps to work on next year’s training before the end of the year. Something for next semester in my opinion. |
| **More campaigns at the Heath**  ***(In Progress)*** | This is a tough one, as campaigns are a bit of a team priority. Of all the campaigns so far, I’ve been reminding other officers to make sure elements are replicated at the Heath. This has included Pink Week, Harm Reduction, Winter Wellbeing and Carers’ Rights Week so far. I’ve also encouraged the team to come up as much as possible and get used to the site – a few have done so, with VP Postgrad and the International Students’ Officer already having run events here.  I’ll be launching my own “mega-campaign” in January that’s taken up a lot of my time. That will of course be exclusively at the Heath too. |
| **Bring back the Heath exec to hear from all courses**  ***(Completed)*** | You’re here and that’s a pretty good sign! I put this in my manifesto before the Democracy Review made sure it would happen anyway, so I can’t really take credit for that (though I did vote for it in senate).  My contribution was in doing outreach, encouraging candidates to run for the committee – I’d say that was pretty successful, as many of you ran after that outreach and this exec was one of the most popular categories in the autumn elections. |
| **More welfare events and therapy dog visits**  ***(In Progress)*** | Therapy dogs were handed over to Deio this year by VP Welfare – it’s best to have one sabbatical officer on it as it’s through an external company. I’ve asked for this to be brought to the Heath, but the dogs’ availability is sparse currently. |
| **Continue Heath Park on Tour**  **(*In Progress)*** | We planned a Heath Park on Tour but this was cancelled due to low interest (I think we had a total of 2 signups, which is a shame). We still bought them tickets, etc but I didn’t go up myself. This was an operational decision rather than mine.  We’ll have to do a rethink about how we can make the event successful – important it happens, but we need enough interest to make it worthwhile to those attending. |
| **Student Advice drop-ins**  ***(Not Begun)*** | I haven’t pushed this too hard as the advice team are quite short-staffed at the moment and currently aren’t able to offer drop-ins at Cathays either. |
| **Establish a joint welfare exec with other officers**  ***(Not Begun)*** | I asked the other “Education and Welfare” Vice Presidents if we could progress with this, but there wasn’t interest. There’s no point in me running it alone – thankfully the Advice Exec exists which should achieve the desired result, and of course the Heath Exec covers both in practice anyway. |
| **Free scrubs and stethoscopes for all who need them**  ***(Not Begun)*** | My relationship with the School of Medicine is getting quite tense and I’m not sure if it’s a good idea to progress with this as it could detract from my work on placement travel costs (see below).  Happy to take your steer on this though, if you disagree. |
| **Reimbursed travel costs for placements**  ***(In Progress – Priority)*** | Covered this in the general report, but I’m doing a lot on this. |
| **Cheaper food options**  ***(Not Begun)*** | I have no idea where I could take this, or even if it’s achievable. |
| **Discounted travel between Cathays/Heath**  ***(Not Begun)*** | I have no idea where I could take this, or even if it’s achievable. |
| **Healthcare work opportunities through JobShop**  ***(Not Begun)*** | I haven’t got round to this conversation yet, and I’m not sure how it could be implemented – it would be an interesting conversation with CAVUHB. |
| **Easier room bookings**  ***(In Progress)*** | Room bookings at the Heath are a perpetual nightmare. Previously it’s all been done through me, because I have a suspicious amount of access to the system and nobody’s told me off for booking stuff (yet).  I’ve managed to get my access given to the societies team by the university’s registry team with some strict conditions for use. This means I’m not wasting time booking rooms personally and we comply a little better with their rules on the issue.  As for the Students’ Union rooms, that’s been a little more complicated. There’s a long process to get this onto the system, and we’re going through it. Both should hopefully be bookable to students soon (though we have an issue with hospital staff using one of them as a break room…) |
| **Expand Medics’ Varsity**  ***(Completed)*** | Medics’ Varsity has successfully been expanded to include the Medics’ Basketball Club for the first time. I’m writing this 2 days before the event itself, and I’m going to guess it was a great success with the shield back on my desk. This might need a verbal update during the meeting. |
| **Hold a Medics’ showcase to spotlight talent on campus**  ***(Not Begun)*** | The societies showcases were planned completely separately from me and I didn’t have chance to raise the idea before they were set in stone. Happy to try something unofficial if the committee would like me to, but doing so without support would be difficult. |
| **Policy Update**  *(Written by the Sabbatical Officer this section report is aimed at tracking their progress against any relevant policy passed by Student Senate or AGM)* | |
| There isn’t any active policy to mandate the VP Heath Park specifically, but I have been chipping away at a couple of other policies. This section notes that work – you can find the list of active policy at <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/policy/>, and if there’s any in particular you’d like me working on just let me know!  **A Better & More Inclusive University**  This motion from AGM 2023 resolves (among other things):  *Cardiff Students’ Union should lobby Cardiff University to ensure that all University buildings have dedicated multifaith prayer rooms with private ablution facilities included. With particular attention needed at the Heath Park Campus.*  In the most recent meeting of University Senate (a senior committee in its governance structure) we heard their response to “The Student View on Estates and Facilities”, submitted by last year’s elected officer team.  I felt like their response wasn’t strong enough, particularly on the prayer room issue. They promised to introduce another in the Michael Griffiths Education Centre, but I feel like that isn’t enough – particularly for dental students and those based out of the new Heath Park West site. I’ve asked them to complete an audit of availability (across both campuses) and increase all provision near teaching spaces where there isn’t enough (including on the other side of the Heath site).  They’ll be coming to the CUULT (Cardiff Union and University Leadership Team) meeting to talk about this further the week of Exec, so I should hopefully be able to give a further update verbally.  **Measuring Student Parent Intake**  This motion from Senate 2022/23 resolves:   1. *For the Students Union to consult with Cardiff University to begin measuring intake of student parents and to produce statistics around student parents and their learning experience.* 2. *To ensure there are ways for current students to declare parental responsibility after enrolment, i.e. if their circumstances change.* 3. *For the Students Union to ensure they will be able to reach out to students with parental responsibilities to make them aware of the services and support available to them.*   I spoke to the University’s registry department about this motion - they have agreed in principle to change SIMS such that students can declare parent status after enrolment, and to begin sharing this information with the Students' Union. Once approved by their Data Protection Officer this will be shared and we can begin tailoring communications to these students. | |

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| Chair of the Accountability Session: | N/A |
| Vice Chair of the Accountability Session: | N/A |
| Additional Members of the Accountability Session: | Lauwrensia Tuder Ranjith  Vira Pansare  Carmel Royston  Maeve Foley  Em Campbell  Daniel Mc cormack  Georgina Edwards  David Jackson |
| Date of the Accountability Session: | 08/12/2023 |

**Section 2: Accountability Session**

*This section is to be completed by the accountability session members prior to speaking to the Sabbatical Officer. This section should then be used to aid discussion with the Sabbatical Officer and information added where relevant.*

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| **Areas Working Well**  *(Written by the accountability session members this section should detail areas the members think is working well and what they believe the Sabbatical Officer should keep doing)*  *Note for the accountability session members: Don’t forget to ask the Sabbatical Officer their opinion on what is working well.* | |
| * Placement campaign – Alex recognises that there are lots of issues for nurses. Approached Alex at the start of the term and he is acting on it * Lobbying for changes to NHS bursary * Lobbying the university for changes to placement funding. Alex has been really supportive. He is excited by the opportunity to work on this, and was very front and centre when it was brought to him from a nursing perspective that it would be opened to all healthcare students. Very pleased with Alex’s support * Medics Varsity – Alex promoted the event well and increased visibility * Really onboard with healthcare events * Alex is open and approachable, listens to ideas and pitches in whenever he can * Has a good presence in sharing and keeping students up to date with what he’s been up to, always keen to find out what students’ needs are * Alex has changed his direction a little since his campaign, but that is for the better * Good listener and is keen to meet the needs of students * Really pleased with having an office at Heath Park – Alex is visible on campus * Aware of some of the challenges and discourse around the SU’s presence in general, or lack thereof on campus. It feels like he is the only representative * Good at engaging in hot topics with students   Note from Alex   * Feels he is engaging well with the student voice – engaging in hot topics with students, ability to respond | |
| **Areas For Improvement**  *(Written by the accountability session members this section should detail areas the members think could do with additional focus).*  *Note for the accountability session members: Don’t forget to ask the Sabbatical Officer their opinion on what could be improved.* | |
| * Work on increasing visibility for less engaged students e.g. people who aren’t Reps, are not in societies, etc. * Sign for office at the Heath   Cost of Living:   * Help for students on campus, not just on placement * Lots of students are not on the bursary, e.g. international students * Commuting between Cathays and the Heath * Affordable food options – Feed your Flat at the Heath, £2 lunches – Such campaigns are often Cathays centric – Would like them at the Heath * Healthcare opportunities through Jobshop – manifesto point not started, would benefit a lot of students if it could be done. * More funding for Heath Park Freshers’ Fairs – stalls more tailored to Heath students * Training over the summer * More SU engagement with Heath students * May be worthwhile promoting the NHS staff bank to MEDIC students - a lot of healthcare courses offer the same All Wales training required to work on the bank e.g. manual handling so it would be useful if students were made aware of this, particularly with the Cost of Living crisis | |
| **Accountability Session Questions**  *(Written by the accountability session members this section should outline the key questions the session have for the Sabbatical Officer, a notes of the answers should then be provided in the next box).* | |
| **Q1.** Any follow up from the placement transport meeting? | **A1.** Trail has gone cold to an extent – not as bad a sign as it may seem – positive conversation with School of Medicine – discussion with Welsh Government arranged for January – expanding to School of Healthcare on the agenda |
| **Q2.** Medics’ Showcase – what work is being done? | **A2.** Dates for showcases decided before could get round to it – will push for it |
| **Q3.** Lowering Cost of Living – Feed your Flat, £2 lunches | **A3.** Cost of Living and cheaper food – on back burner due to strained relationships with staff. Staff now looking at this – positive movement there.  Cheaper food – agreed that it is needed, can push up agenda and look into who is best to talk to  Feed your Flat –going to try and make sure the next one is at the Heath  £2 lunches – will speak with relevant staff, not optimistic but will try |
| **Q4.** Healthcare work opportunities through Jobshop | **A4.** Healthcare work opportunities – not sure who is best to have conversation with - will look into who is best to speak to  Employers at Heath – more corporate side of SU – don’t have direct hand in but will pass onto appropriate team |
| **Q5.** Visibility outside of Reps, committee members, etc. Where is office? | **A5.** Sabbs all employed at Cathays - expected to be there by line manager for important things e.g. board meetings – when not required, at the Heath – but sometimes limits to how much can do  Looking into proper sign for office |
| **Q6.** You have given a lot of time to organise events at Heath Park e.g. Freshers’ Fair, which you have done so well in doing! But it has taken up a lot of your time which has divided attention to your campaigns. Can you work with the other Sabb Officers to organise future SU events at Heath? | **A6.** Not done any big campaigns yet – big one coming in January – when other Sabbs run campaigns, always push for them to be at the Heath |

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| **Does the accountability session wish to consider any of the following notices?**  *If Yes, please provide details of the reasons for such motion or notice in the box provided.* | |
| **Motion of Censure**  *Motions of Censure shall be considered when the committee believes the elected officer has committed a serious offence against their office or democratic responsibilities as outlined in the bye-law appendices. Note: When motions of Censure are considered the elected officer shall be provided with at least 48 hours-notice in order to be able to provide a fair and accurate response to the reasons for the censure.* | Yes / No |
| **Notice of Requires Improvement**  *Notices of Requires Improvement shall be considered when the committee is dissatisfied in an elected officers work or conduct in relation to their role, responsibilities and manifesto commitments. Note: When notices of Requires Improvement are considered the elected officer shall be provided with at least 48 hours-notice in order to be able to provide a fair and accurate response to the reasons for the notice.* | Yes / No |
| **Notice of Satisfaction**  *Notices of Satisfaction shall be considered when the committee wishes to formally recognise an elected officer for outstanding work in relation to their role, responsibilities and manifesto committee. Note: Prior warning for a Notice of Satisfaction is not required.* | Yes / No   * Increased presence and visibility not seen before – been a great accessible presence for students to raise concerns * Actively listens to students * Working on improvement of placement experience * Eagerness to engage in issues directly relating to Cost of Living * Made great progress on each and every campaign he’s contributed to |

**Section 3: Accountability Session Outcomes**

*This section is to be completed by the accountability session members following their meeting*

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| Is the session satisfied with the discussion held with the Sabbatical Officer? | Yes / No |
| If the answer to the above question is **no** please provide additional details below. | |
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| Is there anything the session wishes to make Student Senate aware of as a result of the meeting? | Yes / No |
| If the answer to the above question is **yes** please provide additional details below. | |
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| **Following consideration did the accountability session apply any of the following motions or notices?**  *If Yes, please provide details of the reasons for such motion or notice in the box provided.* | |
| **Motion of Censure**  *Motions of Censure shall be considered when the committee believes the elected officer has committed a serious offence against their office or democratic responsibilities as outlined in the bye-law appendices.* | Yes / No |
| **Notice of Requires Improvement**  *Notices of Requires Improvement shall be considered when the committee is dissatisfied in an elected officers work or conduct in relation to their role, responsibilities and manifesto commitments.* | Yes / No |
| **Notice of Satisfaction**  *Notices of Satisfaction shall be considered when the committee wishes to formally recognise an elected officer for outstanding work in relation to their role, responsibilities and manifesto committee.* | Yes / No |