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| Sabbatical Officer Name: | Micaela Panes |
| Sabbatical Officer Role: | VP Postgraduate Students (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)* | |
| **December 2023**   * Attended the 50th Anniversary Event for NUS Wales in the Senedd. I primarily used this as an opportunity to lobby politicians for increased support for Postgraduate Students – explaining PG difficulties, International PGT foodbank usage, and need for increased PG specific support. * Spent several days at University of Manchester Students’ Union for the Russell Group Students’ Unions residential. During this time, I pushed for further points on Postgrad Research funding to be included in the student manifesto etc. * Had a team meeting with the University’s Estates team – explained that it is vital for more frequent meetings with Estates due to number of issues and misunderstandings. Monthly meetings planned to go forward. * Held the ‘Jingle Mingle’ event for students who had not left Cardiff for Christmas. It was an afternoon of boardgames and free snacks/drinks. Went well with a reasonable turnout throughout the day. * Postgrad Ice Skating trip sold out (25/25). Tickets were subsidised for students and the event went very well. All students with tickets attended. * Welsh Government released the draft budget for 2024/25. I began lobbying against the cuts to Postgraduate grants and bursaries – this included sending a letter to relevant Minsters and planning for post-Christmas action.   **January 2024**   * Much of this month was spent campaigning against the Postgraduate funding cuts announced in the Welsh Government’s budget for 2024/25. I send letters to all Senedd Members, met with MSs to gain support for the campaign, spoke to NUS Wales and other Students’ Unions in Wales about the importance of campaigning for this issue, worked to gain press coverage of the issue, and started a petition at the end of the month (against the cuts and for an increase in doctoral funding). * Attended the BMA demonstration with students outside the Senedd to support the junior doctor’s strike. * Worked with Neuroscience Society and Baking Society to plan a collaborative Postgrad Event for February. * Continued planning the ‘Thinking of a Masters/PhD?’ events for prospective postgraduate students. – Recruited volunteers and advertised tickets for participants. * Created PGR specific questions for Speak Week and worked to promote it. * Promoted nominations for Spring Elections and held Q&As for the VP Postgrad role. * Worked with University HR on updating Staff-Student Relationship Policy. * Called out the schools who had not provided their PGR tutors/demonstrators training to college deans and University HR.   **February 2024**   * Spoke to Students’ Unions in Wales at the NUS Wales networking event about supporting the campaign against the cuts to PG funding. * Attending the Student Leaders Conference and run a workshop on community organising with Angie, SU President. * Met with Citizens Cymru to discuss collective action and upcoming housing campaign. * Run a PG bullet journalling event. Event and supplies were free of charge to students. * Worked with UCU on creating a survey for phase two of the PGRs: Know your Rights campaign and rolled this out to PGR students. * Support Finnerty (Parents and Carers Officer) in planning a Family Day for March. * Met with students to discuss specific issues they were facing and how I may support in lobbying/campaigning. * Met with Time to Act to discuss updates on progress with AGM motion. * Gave an update on my work to the Heath Park and Societies and Volunteering Executive Committees. * Held ‘Thinking of Masters/PhD?’ events. * Worked on creating focus groups for PGR Extenuating Circumstances review. | |
| **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)* | |
| **Support for applying and transitioning from UG to PG study, involving creating PG mentors and honest information for applicants.** | * ‘Thinking of a Masters?’ and ‘Thinking of a PhD?’ events were held on 20th Feb. Each had a panel of volunteer PhD/Masters students who spoke and answered questions about their experiences on their courses. * PG mentors – spoken with Student Mentors Team and the Doctoral Academy about setting up mentors for PGRs – there is interest in setting this up and a future meeting is being arranged to discuss further. |
| **Make PG study more accessible, including lobbying for more funding and bursaries.** | * Campaigning against the Welsh Government’s cuts to Postgraduate funding. This has included writing to all Senedd Members, meeting with Senedd Members and their researchers, creating a petition, speaking with NUS Wales and other SU’s to support the campaign, gathering the experiences of students who have received the funding previously, and getting press publicity. * Still in conversation with the Uni regarding more PG bursaries. |
| **Extend Alumni Discount to PG Research degrees for self-funded students.** | * Received a response from PG Recruitment regarding extending the discount to self-funded PGR students. 2024 intake has already been confirmed so I have requested to be included in discussion regarding 2025. * College PG Deans onboard. |
| **Fair and clear contracts and rights for Postgrads who teach.** | * Phase 2 of the PGRs: Know your Rights campaign is live – worked with UCU to produce a second survey and I am currently collecting responses. * Lobbying University HR to ensure CHEMY students are put on contracts asap as they are currently trying to push implementation back again. * Requested data on what schools have not given PGR tutors/demonstrators training and I am using this to call out those schools and request monitoring. |
| **Improve and promote PG study-space and extend its opening hours.** | * Still working with Libraries to extend the hours of the PG Zone – this looks like it will go ahead before next exam season. |
| **PG community building, including greater PG inclusion in societies and sport.** | * Worked with more societies to recruit PG Officers to committees and put on collaborative PG events (PG Bake Off). * Meeting with Quench (before Christmas) was successful, Quench now has a PG rep and a permanent PG section of the publication! * Working with the Doctoral Academy on what SU/DA collaboration should look like to support the growth of a PG community. Including discussions on a PGR Celebration Week this year. * Planning more PG events for the Semester. |
| **‘The Big PG Unwind’ – Events for fighting imposter syndrome and looking after PG mental health.** | * Planning more events for PG wellbeing. * Working with Colleges to promote University support services to PG students. |
| **Demand tuition fee refunds for all lost contact/teaching hours due to strike action.** | * Completed – see last Accountability Session Report. |
| **Lobby for greater housing and cost-of-living support from the University and Welsh/National Governments.** | * Started work on a housing campaign which will launch in March which will target local authority, Welsh Gov., and University. * Met with Citizens Cymru to collaboration on action for the campaign. * Due to meet with Director of Enterprise to explore how internal letting agent can be improved. |
| **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)* | |
| 1. **Time to Act: Tackling Sexual Harassment on Campus (passed at AGM 2023)**   I have worked with University HR on a new staff-student relationship policy. This policy has been approved by UEB and will now be implemented. I have worked with the SU President to set up two internal working groups for tackling sexual violence/harassment within the SU and the University. I have also pushed the University to ensure that students are consulted and have a seat within a University Advisory Group – which I will also sit in.   1. **Measuring Student Parent Intake (passed at May Senate 2023)**   I have introduced the Parents and Carers Officer (Finnerty) to University Registry to discuss the importance of logging the numbers of student parents on campus. Waiting for University update.   1. **Family Day (passed at June Senate 2023)**   Currently working with the Parents and Carers Officer to plan and deliver a Student Family Day in March. Had an initial planning meeting, now looking at costs and bidding for funding. | |

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| Chair of the Accountability Session: | Serena Rattu & Darshan Sheth |
| Vice Chair of the Accountability Session: | N/A |
| Additional Members of the Accountability Session: | Sastivel Preetham B.R. |
| Date of the Accountability Session: | 22/02/2024 |

**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.* | |
| * Micaela has reacted quickly to the announcement of funding cuts for PGs, getting a petition out. * The introduction of the Thinking of a Masters/PhD sessions were a great idea, and it would be great to see these continue. * The committee is happy with how responsive and reactive Micaela has been generally with issues that have arisen. | |
| **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.* | |
| * It is important for future PG students to be considered in all current activity and decision-making. If not already the case, it would be important to consider the longevity of current work and start planning ahead. * It would be good to see the Thinking of a Masters/PhD events take place more often, and to continue in future years. * The committee would like some more communication on events and activity even if not being led by Micaela, so that they can get involved and contribute as a committee. | |
| **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.**  Is there an update on a possible PG ball? Will this be happening and is there anything the committee can do to support? | **A1.**   * There has been a request for a quote for such an event in the SU, which is still pending. * A full ball may be unlikely as it will be costly, but thinking of possible alternatives. This may include a different type of event that is more low-key, but that still encourages a PG community in a social setting. * It is likely this event would take place in May or June. |
| **Q2.**  Is there a journal (or similar) for PGT students at Cardiff to publish, as most publications are PGR-specific. If not, can one be introduced, or a trial introduced? | **A2.**   * Cardiff University Press holds online journals, but unsure if these are also for PGT students. * It may be difficult to introduce one as CU libraries are currently working on reducing their digital footprint and the amount of journals they hold. * Happy to support PGT students who want to publish by providing information and advice. * Any student can submit an item to the SU student media publications (such as Quench, Gair Rhydd). Quench is also currently looking for more PG contributors. * For those who want to publish in their subject areas, the advice would be to speak to a dissertation supervisor, or any supportive member of subject staff. There is also a wealth of information available online about different journals students can submit to. |
| **Q3.**  Is there any PG-specific campaign activity that is planned by the SU to support PG students on placement? | **A3.**   * There are currently no planned campaigns for non-HCARE students. * All students on placement can still access support from the SU, including the Student Advice service. * The VP Heath Park has led a campaign this year for those on healthcare-related placements, which has provided support and resources to students. * If the committee feel this is an important campaign to run, this can be added to the agenda for the next Postgraduate Executive Committee meeting. |
| **Q4.**  Is there any way the committee can support Holi, the Festival of Colour? Is this something that can be advertised to PGs? | **A4.**   * Will look at getting more information on this to be able to promote more widely. * If the committee have contacts from the involved societies who would be willing to provide some details and chat further, this would be beneficial. * It may be possible to get this included in the Whats On email that goes out to students regularly. |
| **Q5.**  Could you explain the PG mentoring programme? | **A5.**   * Cardiff University has a mentoring team, focused at 2nd and 3rd year UG students mentoring 1st year UG students. There is currently no PG mentoring schemes. * Have been in discussions with the Student Mentor Team and the Doctoral Academy about introducing one. This could be more easily implemented for PGRs than PGTs (who often only study for a year), but there are possibilities. * Trying to find a way this could be resourced and implemented. |
| **Q6.**  Have you started planning into the next stages of the petition against PG cuts (e.g. asking students for statements about their experiences)? | **A6.**   * This is already being worked on. In the event that the petition does not overturn the government’s plans, the aim is to show that there are students who will no longer stand for it. * There are various ideas in the works as to next steps. |

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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.* | 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.* | 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 |

**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 |
| 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 |
| If the answer to the above question is **yes** please provide additional details below. | |
| There is no concern about the performance of the VP Postgraduate. However, the committee are concerned about the implications of the current PG funding cuts from the government. This will have lasting impact beyond a Sabbatical Officer term, and the committee would like to note the importance of continued work on this in future years, by future Officers. | |

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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.* | 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.* | 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 |