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| Sabbatical Officer Name: | Noah Russell |
| Sabbatical Officer Role: | VP Undergraduate 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)* | |
| As a returning sabbatical officer I spent a large part of my first month supporting the new team’s integration and training. I’m incredibly proud of how they’ve developed and the team cohesion we’ve created. A large portion of my daily activity is spent in meetings, going from the lowest level of the University up to University Senate, one of the highest. A few projects I’ve been working on in particular are:   * The progression to a new version of Blackboard which you’ll see when viewing your modules, ensuring that there was a student perspective on its delivery and the features we now have access to. * Lobbying for a reassessment of how the university views housing and accommodation considering the cost of living and housing crises. While we aren’t satisfied with the progress made by the university, our work with Cardiff council has led to some promising commitments from Cathays councillors when it comes to the state of student housing. We will continue to lobby the university, with their contract with the infamous Circuit Laundry being up for review next year, and their lack of commitment to change how they’re dealing with student recruitment in relation to available accommodation. * The completion of a project looking at redesigning how we view assessments at Cardiff University, moving away from fixed word limits, re-examining the future of in person written exams and much more. I sit on this project board and provide a student voice and point of view, steering the direction into one in the student interest, rather than that of the university. * Aiding general case work that students bring to me and Student Advice, I am currently investigating a case where a large aspect of a French and Law course was dropped without proper consultation, this is possible due to my attendance of so many meetings at varying levels, which allows me a good understanding of proper process and how to tackle these issues.   On top of this meeting work I deal with social media, helping other officers in campaigns and much more tied to my manifesto points and ongoing SU policies, which I’ll talk about below.  Diolch and big love,  Noah x | |
| **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)* | |
| **Testing your gear for free at the SU** | Testing kits are now available in the SU, this means students can anonymously source testing kits for free, no questions asked. This is only a first step in a wider harm reduction program. |
| **Making Cardiff a greener University** | While I personally don’t sit on the University’s environmental board I do work with Madison, our SU representative there, to ensure that my manifesto points are going forward. Fossil Free Careers was a big focus of mine over the past year and I am continuing lobbying this year to ensure a cleaner and greener look for our university, and a higher place on People & Planet’s sustainability league table. |
| **Free STI kits on campus** | This has seen some unexpected hurdles, with many teams who previously assisted us pre-COVID with free STI kits on campus no longer having the capacity due to poor funding to the NHS. I will be focusing on carrying this through in the new year once the drug testing kits are in a stable position logistically. |
| **A new blended learning framework** | As previously mentioned I’ve been working with the University on the implementation on Blackboard Ultra in the past couple of months, which should majorly improve both the working conditions for PGRs and full time staff, as well as the learning conditions of students. On top of this I’m happy to say we’ve solidified a maximum 5 day window before lecture recordings are released, meaning students can access a lecture before the next weeks one comes around, reducing the cycle of falling behind.  This is only a start, and I’m lobbying for the reintroduction of online written assessments, streamed lectures and much more which I hope to share soon. |
| **Mental health and wellbeing support** | Mental health support is a topic close to my heart, and I believe in looking at the issue holistically. As well as the harm reduction campaign I previously mentioned being largely focused on student physical and mental health, dealing with issues like overuse of substances and dependence on drugs and alcohol, I also am focussed on bringing mental health and wellbeing concerns into every meeting I have a seat on. Education is just as tied to mental health and wellbeing as any other aspect of our work, and overworking and mistreating students will only exacerbate any ongoing issues. |
| **Lower international student fees** | The SU has a clear line that the University’s treatment of international students as cash-cows to be used and abused for profit is unethical and against the charitable objectives of the University. I continue to lobby Cardiff University on a personal level to lower these fees and re-assess how they tackle student marketisation going forward, but this isn’t just a Cardiff issue. We also work with NUS Wales to lobby the Senedd and NUS UK to lobby Westminster in the hope that soon students won’t be limited by what they can afford when it comes to higher education. |
| **10% of salary to Cardiff Foodbank in light of the Cost of Living Crisis** | I continue to donate 10% of my take-home pay to Cardiff Food Bank in light of the Cost-Of-Living crisis. This totals £165 PCM |
| **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)* | |
| I’ve been focused on a few policies so far this year, the largest of which being the Gender Identity Fund which was proposed last year. I’ve spent a huge amount of time researching how this fund could function and what it would look like operationally. The gist is a sum of money easily accessible to trans students without having to go through the lengthy processes required for regular financial aid. This money is to be used for the smaller items this demographic need, from packers and binders to travel to clinic appointments. Small things like this can make a major impact when tackling issues like gender dysphoria during the cost-of-living crisis. While this fund isn’t yet in place I have bidded for £2000 worth of funding from a University pot to construct this fund and run it for our students. I will update you on any progress I make.  I’ve also already made progress on the ‘Ceasefire Now’ motion, writing up a statement from the SU on the topic which is awaiting board approval.  The ‘Cops Off Campus’ motion which I pushed hard for has largely been completed through my efforts in the past year, with our non-essential engagements with the police being almost entirely cut. This is a positive step in ensuring we are hearing our students and ensuring their safety.  The final one I’ve been focussed on personally this year has been the ‘Fossil Free Careers’ motion calling for the university to cease advertisement of careers in fossil fuels. I touched on this earlier but while progress has been slow due to regressive views by senior university staff, we are still seeing wider support in the student movement which is positive. | |

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| Chair of the Accountability Session: | Marc Perez Piquer |
| Vice Chair of the Accountability Session: | Joshua Tandy |
| Additional Members of the Accountability Session: | Aditya Dilip |
| Date of the Accountability Session: | 06/12/2023 |

**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.* | |
| * Drug testing kits – Good outreach * Five-day window of lecture recordings * Manifesto points in general – delivering mostly everything by now * Mindful of more areas he can work on * Progression is very good   Note from Noah   * Successful meetings with University & New Vice-Chancellor | |
| **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.* | |
| * International students tuition fees – Haven’t achieved yet – Recognises that it is difficult * Could do more to help international students – More initiatives e.g. socials, improve the community sense of international undergraduates * More sessions for exec committee * Training needed for Blackboard Ultra   Notes from Noah   * International students - Focused on long-term project – Short-term, recognises that there is more the Union can do for international students – Things for all students e.g. Feed your Flat – Something to help students, not necessarily international students – Will look into ways to look after them * Will bring up training for Blackboard Ultra – Asked for specifics – Will feed that back to Blackboard Ultra team * Happy with progress of work doing – Issue showing it – Not so front facing – More regular posts on social media detailing what’s going on – Will improve on transparency – Hopes to run more exec committee meetings | |
| **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.** Could you expand on what you’re doing to make Cardiff a greener university?  **Follow up question – How are University net zero targets going?** | **A1.** In the future, I would like to more literal green space stuff. For example, in park place there could be wildflower patches. Making Cardiff a greener space for students which would help students.  University net zero targets not going well, commitments made haven’t been stuck to. University in difficult position with money. Focused on staying afloat at the moment, forgetting about real issue with Climate Crisis. Progress not as fast as would hope – Madison sitting on Environmental Board. |
| **Q2.** Could you expand on the project looking at redesigning how assessments are run at Cardiff University? | **A2.** I'm on the rethinking assessment project group, which looks out how we look at assessments and how we should look at them. Much of this has been driven by developments in AI. It's important that we change the way we look and treat assessments. It is also progressive for us to explore ways to change assessment outside of the standard exam style of assessment. We are also looking at group work and the way in which group work is assessed/marked. The group is also exploring how word counts are treated. There are lots of different areas which is tailored and different for each school. |
| **Q3.** What can be done to ensure student housing is looked after? | **A3.** Cardiff is in a housing crisis, we bring on more students than there are places. We are in an absolute mess as a student city. All universities in Cardiff have also increased their student numbers which have added to the crisis. Especially for international students who cannot access guarantors. There is no easy overnight fix to the housing crisis. We are trying to push the university to build more accommodation. We are working with the city council. On top of that we need to work with all the universities in the city to ensure recruitment is in-line with the number of bedrooms available in the city. Pushing for that change is really important, otherwise we will just end up with students unable to stay in Cardiff. |

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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  Helped other Sabbs settle in, met a lot of targets in first semester. Recognise good job he is doing. Always going to be areas for improvement, difficult areas e.g. housing, international students. Generally doing well |

**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 |