Welfare and Communities Board

30.01.25, Hybrid- In person and online

Attendance

Present:

* Nabihah Ali, Vp Welfare, (NA)
* Hassam Naeem Vp Liberation, International and Postgrads, (HN)
* Arianne Bethany Jones and Lucy Lai, LGBT Rep BL, (ABJ) (LL)
* Adam Khan, Trans Rep, (AK)
* Venaya Bijay Binwani and Al Hassan Salama, International Rep BL, (VBB) (AHS)
* Hessa Ateeq Ali Obaid Alazzezi, International Rep HSS, (HAAOA)

Apologies:

* Rosie Nee, Disabled and SPLD Rep ME
* Ravleena Wasan, Welfare Rep BL

In attendance:

* Ruth Truscott, Welfare and Liberation Coordinator (RLT)

General Liberation Fund

* The meeting was not quorate therefore, the liberation fund applications could not be discussed.

PTOs

* VVB and AHS: Currently working on two main things. One: a booklet for international students, looking to do a welcome booklet for everyone who receives offers. It would give insight into life on campus/ picking accommodation. It would collate information for international students. Asked if there was anyone who knows who to get official photos for the university. Aiming to finish this booklet by March. Two: Hosting a check in for international students. However, last time had poor engagement so aiming to use £100 budget to add coffee and incentives to improve engagement. Planning to do this early March. Asked how to improve engagement, for example putting on website, aiming to ask people but also for other people to reach out and asked for suggestions from the Board.
* HM said this is a good idea, if you need help HM offered to share on VP LIP Instagram.
* AK: Has ran various trans check ins, on Mile End, Whitechapel and off-campus. One result is a campaign working for gender neutral changing facilities at Qmotion. This policy is going to be taken to Student Council. AK is also running Trans Awareness training to two cohorts. Organising Tower Hamlets Trans Pride sat 15th February in Mile End park. Event is looking to have good attendance
* LL: asked about is STI testing's AK is organising on Mile End for is being extended to Whitechapel.
* AK; said not at the moment but happy for LL to reach out.
* LL and ABJ updates: LGBTQ+ HM, organising HIV information board, going up tomorrow, staff x student meet for LGBTQ+ and allies. Organising shag packs, these were trialled during consent week in Barts. Have got funding for this project. Working with LGBT+ society committee for drag extravaganza. Sorted acts and venue. Worried about engagement with the event so asked if any strategies' to sort out engagement that would be helpful. Trying to get them putting them up for sale, spoke to VP London. RLT to send a chase up RAG help. Involved in LGBT Health modules.
* Updates from PTOS who could not attend:
* From Mile End Disabled and SPLD Rep: Finalised the buddy scheme programme with QMotion. Redeveloped the social media presence and directly interacted with students about where they can get help. Contacted the library/other staff (quite a few times) with no response regarding talking to someone about creating a quiet sensory space. Reached out to students for feedback on initiatives/areas they’d like to see improvements. I haven’t had too many responses but a common theme was wanting more inclusive social events that could be attended and help building relationships, so this semester I have planned and will hopefully be able to soon launch semi-frequent virtual hangouts and in-person socials on campus
* BL Welfare Rep Before Christmas, I put together Consent Week: - Drop-in sessions to Floyer and the Garrod handing out free contraception and pregnancy tests - Consent week panel with guests - Consent week board with myth busters in the foyer of the Garrod
* After Christmas: - Worked with IHSE to start a peer mentor programme within Barts for younger students to drop in and ask older students about essays, tests etc. The initiative has begun and we're currently seeing how much interest it gets and whether we should forward.
* VP Updates
* VP Welfare: Launched food pantry in Garrod building. Planning events for Climate Action week. Working on projects such as support for self-funded students, lobbying university to get rid of late fees. End of last year funning advisor focus groups, going through data and present to university boards.
* VP LIP: working on scholarship for international students especially for PGs. Changes include having criteria reduced, amount given to £5,000 and increased transparency on number of awards. Worked on bidet proposal, current have estimation of costs which is high, trying to achieve this. Two surveys launched 1. International Student survey with Russell Group Students’ Unions. Mainly focused on international student visa and permissions. Looking to gain insight into the general experience of international students in the UK. HM will share a link. Has asked reps to share this. Running survey for PGRs, discussions on stipend, stipend gov has decided is not suitable for London universities. Working with collaboration with UCU. Working on alumni project for Alumni's to get associate membership. Have a new page with Alumni focused information.

AOB

* RLT reminded students of elections, can recommend a Friend or nominate themselves until 12 February ar 12pm.
* Student Council on 4th February where democracy review will be discussed, please reach out to SU Rep email if not got access to the paper.