

Report to the GU – Welfare and Rights Officer

General

My primary duties this year have been to train new college welfare officers, provide an ongoing point of contact for them, manage the sexual health scheme, work within the Advice Service and represent the student body on committees and elsewhere. My priorities outside of these core duties have been education, facilitating student activism, and supporting student communities – I have worked especially closely with members of the LGBT+ and Disabled Students' Committee. I have also been involved in projects that involved the whole sabb team, such as running the CUSU/GU elections and registering students to vote in the general election.

Individual achievements

My work with the LGBT+ and Disabled Students' Campaigns included, amongst others, the following things: attending the NUS Disabled Students' Caucus on behalf of members of that campaign as most of the committee either had exams or didn't want to make the journey, writing a report on that conference for them to refer to in the coming year when considering using NUS resources, liaising with the CUSU LGBT+ trans rep to improve the HR diversity training University staff are given, helping the CUSU LGBT+ welfare officer plan events, and attending meetings with committee members from the Disabled Students' Campaign. On committees I've repeatedly reported on and discussed the work campaigns have been doing around sexual harassment and violence policies, which have been reviewed across the University this year. Representing the student perspective in these discussions has been really important as staff are often unsure what support students actually need when they're faced with difficulties in this area. I've also been involved in discussions concerning the report our incoming CUSU President wrote on the experience of BME students in the University, trying to steer towards there being a person designated to handle racial harassment complaints who is actually BME themselves.

Term breakdown

Michaelmas term was a busy term, with a lot of new welfare officers needing training and many students using the Advice Service. The influx of freshers and running the Societies Fair took up a lot of energy, but all the CUSU sabbs were also involved in taking a contingent to a march in London in November, which involved producing a bundle of resources for those attending and organising for the transport and safety of any students involved. In the run-up to the holiday period I organised and ran something for people with nothing else to do on Christmas. Throughout the term people's issues adjusting to arriving at University or coming back took up a lot of time, as advice and advocacy was a constant need.

Lent term was similarly busy with a huge push to register students to vote in the UK general elections, and this took up a huge chunk of sabb time. We had Mental Health Week, and I'm still hearing students, grad and undergrad, tell me that some of the workshops I ran during that week are useful to them. CUSU-GU sabbs also took part in Learning and Teaching reviews, and the CUSU sabbs ran CUSU conference, which was open to all students. There was constant ongoing work in terms of supporting College-level welfare networks and attending to individual students.

This term so far has been less energetic, but I'm still meeting with University staff on a regular basis (including work towards extending the consent workshops that were such a success at the start of

this year), presenting the student perspective on committees that form policy, and supporting individual students. One thing that has taken up a huge amount of time over the last few months has been managing the elections and vast administrative tasks that followed them. I and other sabbs, from both CUSU and the GU, have met with University staff and elections candidates in order to make sure the democratic process runs smoothly and fairly. I'm already planning handover to the next Welfare and Rights officer so hopefully they'll have a good foundation for any projects they want to work on. Before I leave, I hope to finalise expansions of the Sexual Health Scheme.