**Scrutiny Panel Meeting 1**

**Feedback & Questions for Officers**

General Feedback

The Panel would like to commend every Officer for their work during these tricky COVID times. We can see just how hard they are each working, despite the struggles that the pandemic has brought. We have also seen a lot of collaboration between Officers which we commend as it is necessary now more than ever.

President

* Panel is impressed with the work that has been undertaken in this time
* The President has shown adaptability while sticking to key manifesto points of equality
* It is good to note that there is a good relationship overall between the Guild and the University with the ultimate aim of supporting students
* On a whole, there is a very positive environment between Guild Officers and there is nice delegation
* Still, we would like to hear in future meetings about relationships between the Guild and the University especially on talks with the Vice Chancellor about Climate Emergency
* We feel that transparency in the Guild is a very positive and important thing to focus on at the moment- both to encourage support for the brilliant work the Officers are doing, and to promote the Guild as a separate entity from the University as a whole with its own concrete set of values and policies to benefit the student body.
* We do see the need for collaboration with the President and other officers to ensure that the University is respectful of all Guild Officers. Additionally, it would be good to lend support to part time officers who might not have as strong contacts with the University. See particularly the promotion of 100% accurate captions for lecture recordings.
* We would encourage the President to make sure part-time officers are being fully supported given that we know the Disabled Student Officer is facing pushback from the University and we haven’t heard from the Women’s Officer.

Activities & Employability Officer

* Excited about the work in moving documents online
* Good stats for virtual societies fair, we are highly impressed
* There needs to be better engagement especially with trying to implement Employability Week
* Need to improve overall reach through various platforms
* Guild Officers on a whole may want to discuss how to cope with engagement exhaustion particularly as everything is online now
* Might be helpful especially for Employability Week or its future implementation to make it more specific and advertise potentially through University departments or societies

Education Officer

* The confusion between my.bham and My UoB App
* There needs to be a series of improvements to the My Uob App as we do enjoy that it culminates various services but many people have found it so hard to use due to technical issues and even as many Schools have not taken it on
* We are impressed with the use of the Library as a study space but this has affected the use of the library to borrow books
* We suggest the creation of a request system for books which are not all out on loan in the Quick Transactions area to enable multiple use of the library
* In terms of strike action, it is a bold manifesto plan. We appreciate that this is difficult to achieve but we would like to get more updates

Postgraduate Officer

* Post-Graduate speak week is an amazing idea to specifically target their interests and opinions. Our only concern is that the Officer takes into consideration how to greatly engage PGs with the surveys
* Standardising PG inductions is a good idea
* Appreciate that Brum with a Brew started off to engage PGs but that has also fallen off as PG engagement is a really big issue as many of them are outside Birmingham or even the UK
* Consider more collaboration with other Officers for making multiple existing events PG friendly

International Officer

* UoB Exchange Society and the Facebook page has been such a lifeline for incoming and outgoing students so please keep that up
* However, might want to create a better communication system directly in the University through exchange, personal tutors and Study Abroad for outgoing students (this is already in progress)
* We are concerned about the lapse in communication and information about second and third year international students so we would love to hear updates about this
* Overall, we love that the Officer is fostering an idea of support; with the Guild as support for international students or even spotlighting cultural societies. This will help with transparency of the Guild
* We would like to hear updates about the University Guarantor Scheme to reduce international students deposits as well as on the language buddy scheme.

Sports Officer

* Commend the collaboration with UoB Sports and Fitness and resolving issues of gym timetabling
* The focus on nutrition and meal plan is good and we would like further updates on having better nutrition and options for meal plan
* We think Sport Support is a valuable option for student athletes and are excited to hear more about the conversation.We are however a bit concerned how this would be taken on by the University
* We think that the Officer’s attitude to restarting sport ASAP after lockdown is lifted is a very positive outlook to take at the moment, and that he should be commended for this.

Welfare & Community Officer

* Don’t Rush to Rent is a fantastic campaign idea especially with pushing guidance for renting till January
* On crime, we believe that the idea of getting students to report crimes no matter how small for the police to have more data would be really helpful. We would like this pushed probably with a campaign
* We would like further updates on what Support month is
* For alcohol free accommodation, we  do want to hear about statistics and are happy to see that the University is taking this on board
* The Not On Campaign has been good albeit there is room for more promotion, but in terms of that we would like more information on what the University’s Sexual Harassment policy is
* More communication on what the University is doing in relation to crime especially in terms of University extended jurisdiction
* Be able to convey the support available at the Guild for students in line with transparency and engagement

Campaigns Officer

* We are looking forward to seeing more although we do appreciate that not a lot can be done at the time
* We do also appreciate that weekly meetings were on going  but also appreciate that the Officer is listening to feedback about potentially having less frequent meetings to prevent disillusionment

Ethical & Environmental Officer

* The panel commends all the work put in
* We like the idea of the Milk Float but are a bit concerned about the scale to which he can get it to
* On the Climate Emergency, we are excited about the plan.The collaboration between the Officer, President and even getting societies to work together is impressive’
* We recognise that the Climate Emergency may not be accepted by the Vice Chancellor, yet we are happy to see that there is a wider plan in really education the University of Birmingham community
* We would like more information on what the Guild is currently doing in line with the Climate Emergency particularly when it was declared by the Guild last year and how any points mentioned are being achieved.

LGBTQ+ Students Officer

* This work is such an important part of the university and creating inclusivity and we appreciate the impact you are having within LGBTQ+ association
* The collaboration with LGBTQ+ society on anti-racism is good and would be a good area for collaboration with the Ethnic Minorities Officer
* Next meeting we would like feedback about how training student mentors went and how it may be expanded to other sectors of the university
* We also commend the push to make the University incorporate LGBTQ+ students in Mental Health services

Ethnic Minority Students Officer

* Commend all the work done especially with working remotely
* We also really appreciate the collaboration between the Officer and other Officers
* We would like more information on the Black Voices Campaign and progress that has been made in the next meeting
* We would like further updates on the Pathways to Careers programme in collaboration with Careers Network as we believe this is a great idea that really needs to be pushed

Disabled Students Officer

* Commend the Officer’s positivity, drive and all that has been achieved so far for disabled students e.g. with the promotion of hidden disabilities through the sunflower lanyard
* The greatest challenge right now in terms of creating accuracy for Panopto subtitles. This has been met with a lot of pushback from the University, and we’re concerned with the levels of disrespect shown by staff towards the Officer, including completely ignoring her emails.
* In light of this issue we do think that the Officer should try to galvanise students (and departmental staff) so they are aware of the actions the Officer is putting in place. Through collaboration with departmental societies, engage the student rep system to bring this up as an issue in meetings
* We encourage the Officer to collaborate with the President on this issue, as they may be able to assist in facilitating more positive and productive conversation between the Guild and the University.
* Potentially the university could look to employ students to write the captions/transcripts, which would open up more employability options too.

Womens’ Officer

* The Scrutiny Panel did not receive a report in time for the meeting, but we welcome any updates as they come.
* Based on reading the manifesto, we have a few key questions:
  + It would be interesting to hear more about the proposed self-defence classes. How could these be adapted to life during the pandemic e.g. with online classes? Could this also lead to a collaboration with the Women’s Fitness and Wellbeing society or the MMA society?
  + Could we hear more about the bi-monthly safe space? It is interesting to hear the concept of this being a mix between networking, raising concerns and campaign ideas.
  + How do you propose to challenge the taboo of sexual harassment, abuse and intimidation?
  + Were the flyers on how to report concerns released in the Fresher’s welcome packs?
  + Is there any potential for collaboration between different women’s societies?

Trans Students Officers

* We have read the Officers report but have not had a meeting
* Our key questions
  + We have not seen any timeline on pronoun badges?
  + Why not get people involved to raise awareness and create a positive environment  such as a badge design competition- could involve art societies in this as well?
  + Could plans be adapted to be available to students online?  i.e. pronouns on zoom/email sign offs so that whilst lockdown is in place these initiatives are still being taken.
* Below are some questions based on the report
* When do you aim to have the pronoun badges in guild reception?
* Will the badges be designed by Officers or will this be a collaborative student effort? Potentially this is a good idea to involve the whole student body while raising awareness.
* Seeing as COVID might make the distribution of the badges difficult for the time being, is there anything that could be done in the meantime? I’ve noticed some lecturers have chosen to include their pronouns on their Zoom username or as part of their email signature for example- could these be explored as potential options to extend to students as a way to make their pronouns known while the badges are still in progress? In addition to this you can change your pronouns on Canvas - could anything be done to promote this as another way of normalising pronouns and making sure they are correct?
* Also not all of the officers have their pronouns in their social media bios - would this be something simple to solve whilst a lot of communication from officers is happening online?
* How is the campaign for gender neutral bathrooms progressing?
* How will trans awareness week function?
* In terms of inclusivity of trans people of colour, is simple visibility enough to solve this issue? Has there been any discussion with the trans POC students about what they want from the Guild and potentially why they are not interacting with and are not visible within the guild?
* Given you were the trans officers last year as well, can you reflect on what the issues were within LGBTQ+ association and what methods are you using to make the LGBTQ+ association a more inclusive space?
* Who is involved with the inclusive language guide? Do you feel you have a broad range of voices making sure that the guide is diverse? Also who are the relevant parties who will be able to distribute this?
* How has covid impacted the needs of trans students and what are you doing to support that?