

End-of-term Round-up

To try and break it down I'll try and highlight the **challenges I've made**, the things I've accomplished and *the things I've worked on*.

* Week 0 *

- *Open Days*: worked the Weekend prior to talk about the Student Union's on our stall. The five of us spoke to thousands of prospective students about everything that SU's are, everything they do and giving the student perspective of York as an institution, a campus and a City.
- Did a *Facebook Live Q&A* with Millie to promote all that's going on in Freshers Week, all the opportunities that generally exist, throw in some tips & must dos for students and answer any questions future students had.
 - First time we used the feature to engage with students. While we had some bumps, we thought it was really effective and decided to try to use it more in the future.
#Pioneer
- *Designed & delivered Head STYC training* – one of the best training sessions I've ever run, had the joy of having a really engaged bunch to spend the day with.
- Was using Social Media to promote all the Fresher's Week events.
- Shared the announcement of £500k being invested into mental health support over the next three years.
 - *Was asked for information on detail of what that £500k entailed and arranged a meeting to find out the deets.*
 - **Emphasised that I'll still be holding the University to account on all of the recommendations outlined in the Mental Ill-Health Taskforce Report.**
- MOVE-IN WEEKEND! FRESHERS FINALLY ARRIVING! WOOOO!
 - Saturday: spent helping Constantine & Goodricke move-in. Met all the peeps - spoke to new students, parents and STYCs. Went on URY. Partied w/ Goodricke & Constantine (it was one of my favourite nights because it was just a mega-Marmite) and met even more peeps.
 - Sunday: helped with Alcuin move-ins. Bar crawled to Revs with Vanbrugh & Derwent. Met a fresher who's from Lewisham and doing Philosophy (just like me). Small world.
 - *Used Social Media to share photos, spread positive vibes & welcome messages, offer encouragement to committees & STYCs and post all the GIFs in the world.*

* Week 1 – FRESHERS WEEK *

- Went out every night to go to college events & meet people – generally ask about what they're looking forward to and worried about and have a good vogue w/ them. Met so so many people, hugged so so many people and took hundreds of selfies. I had so many conversations with all sorts of cool peeps – have seen some again and it's been nice to be reunited but to all the peeps I spoke to: do come say hello, I wanna know how you've been getting on!

- Delivered the YUSU welcome talks (4 times, although each was different thanks to the joy of audience participation). Established myself as the 'condom guy', 'the blond sabb', 'the funny/sassy/gay one' and 'the bachelor sabb'. Hopefully we were successful in outlining everything YUSU is, does and offers amidst humiliating ourselves.
- Sat through all of the safety talks and had the joy & privilege of introducing the Women's Officers and Dani from Survive to do a short talk on consent that was gender-neutral covering personal safety, sexual health and what services one can go to for support, if it's needed.
 - Then had an entire day dedicated to doing PR as news of a 'mass walkout' made headlines. ***I wrote a blog*** (<http://www.yusu.org/blogs/view/2002/consent-talks>) to challenge this and to establish why they occurred and why they're important.
 - In meetings following the talks I have **challenged the University them on why they u-turned to have the consent elements of the talk non-compulsory**. They have taken the criticism on board and are hopefully committed to keeping them a compulsory element of Freshers' welcome!
- Spent Freshers' Fair mostly in James Dining Hall helping & promoting all of the liberation networks as well as Nightline & Nightsafe
- *Was promoting all of the Liberation Networks & other Part-time Officer's groups/networks on Social Media all week.*

* Week 2 *

- Had the first Liberation & Welfare meeting of term where we did a run-down of how Freshers went, how the consent talks went, campaigns for the rest of term and how LibWelf can be improved.
- Had media training with the Universities office.
 - **Asked them whether their external reputation or the experience of students was more important to them.** Got the honest answer of it being their job to be primarily concerned with their reputation externally, but obviously students' experience shapes that (so if you're not happy about something, if you make enough noise – you can change it!)
- As YUSU is a charity, it has trustees – and as Sabbatical Officers we make up 5 of the 11. I had my first meeting as a trustee, with the HR & Audit subcommittee meeting. Spoke about organisational harmony, approved a paper on seeking accreditation as an organisation and other HR-y things.
- Was invited to do an extensive piece with the Daily Touch to talk about Nightline (locally and nationally) for World Mental Health Day: <http://www.thedailytouch.com/charlie-benson/it-has-been-a-privilege-to-listen-we-asked-a-nightline-volunteer-about-the-importance-of-discussing-mental-health/>
- *Used Social Media to promote Nightline recruitment & Course Rep nominations (noting all that one can achieve as a rep using my own experience in Philosophy)*

* Week 3 *

- Organised & facilitated student involvement in a consultation session on student health needs in York as part of the work I'm doing with the Student Health Needs Assessment Steering Group.
 - **They were challenge on the lack of mental health support since the close of Bootham, lack of transparency about support related to drug use and sexual health and support for trans students in particular.**
- Organised & facilitated a meeting with Nightline & Samaritans to see if there's room for the organisations to better work together.
 - Also caught up with Nightline and was asked to organise a meeting with campus security.
- Went on URY to talk about the launch of the #WeAreYork campaign.
- Met with Jackie Roberts (from the Royal Life Saving Society)
- Meeting of the Student First Initiative (which has now been renamed to Student Life Operation's Group #SLOG) which is where we talk about the operational & service side of the student experience (laundry and stuff).
 - **The University was challenged on the quality of laundry services and it was mentioned this challenge has been occurring for years – a working group was actioned to be set-up**
 - **It was brought to the Universities attention that there were a considerable amount of welfare issues that came up in Fresher's Week and support wasn't sufficient for STYCS – a working group was actioned to be set-up (which I'll sit on)**
- Had a 1-1 with Kate Dodd – the Academic Registrar (so head of all student & academic services).
 - **Asked her view on the consent talks & following media storm – have support for them being a compulsory element in future.**
 - Spoke about a new post being created – an assistant registrar for Community Cohesion & Respect
- **Spoke to the Chair of the York Student Think Tank to ask them to do work looking into:**
 - Social Media & bullying
 - Perceptions & experiences of a post-brexite York
 - Housing in York and on campus
- *Used Social Media to promote World Mental Health Day, National Coming Out Day, the Spotlight on Volunteering event, the launch of the YUSU Democracy & Policy review*

* Week 4 *

- Wrote a report for the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee on everything YUSU has achieved & been working on relating to E&D since the last meeting.
- Met with the ISA to talk about their work into campus rent prices
- Met a student to talk about lighting & safety
- Met someone from the Council to talk about campaigns to get people registered to vote
- **Met with the media department in the University to ask for details of what the £500k investment into mental health is going on.**

- Can report that it's towards Open Door Staff, campaigns & supporting projects, training for staff (including academics) and developing better links with local services & providers to ensure the consistent & quality of provision for students
- Meeting w/ Campus security, police and other security people.
 - Arranged a meeting with Nightline
 - **Asked their practice on cycle safety & when they move from stopping people to educate and start persecuting.**
 - They will fine you now if you're doing something wrong (on the pavements, have no lights, etc.)
- Had a couple of 1-1s with Part-time Officers and College Vice Chairs for Well-being to catch-up, offer support, etc.
- *Used Social Media to promote the First Impression survey, the Democracy & Policy review survey, events & campaigns of the liberation groups and RAG Week coming up!*

* Week 5 – NUS Zones Conference Week *

- *Had the monthly meeting with the Student Health Needs Assessment Steering Group (who I've been working with since I started and will be until they hopefully report on their findings in June). Was planning focus group sessions and how to promote the survey. More info on what they do and the survey can be found in this blog:*
<http://www.yusu.org/blogs/2016/november/mental-health-what-you-can-do-about-it>
 - Got them to agree to do two focus groups and a drop-in on Vanbrugh stalls so students had plenty of opportunity to voice their feedback
- Met with the Chair of ISoc to talk about prayer space on campus.
 - Have since agreed to arrange a meeting with the head of Equality & Diversity
- Meeting Karen Bloor, the Universities Research Champion for Health & Well-being to talk about how we can better link up researchers and academics to those interested in doing campaigns & events.
- Attended a consultation session with the rest of the Liberation & Welfare committee for YUSU's democracy & policy review.
 - **Challenged the lack of clarity, awareness and understanding of the policy process**
- Attended NUS Zone's Conference
 - *Ran for a place on the Society & Citizenship Zone Committee (didn't win tho ☹)*
 - **Submitted questions to the Vice Presidents for Welfare, for Soc & Cit, for Union Development and to Malia the NUS President on mental health, Brexit and democracy reform**
 - **Partook in their democracy reform consultation – challenged the facilitation of filibustering and supported a proposal to have pre-conference voting for motions to prioritise motions and pass those that are uncontentious so there'd be more room for debate on the contentious policies.**
- *Used Social Media to promote Asexual Awareness Week, RAG Week happening next week, College nominations opening next week and some campaigns going on with the NUS for people to get involved in.*

* Week 6 – RAG Week (and the week with all the big important meetings) *

- RAG Tings:

- Got covered in maple syrup & glitter in the freezing cold for charity. Almost died but raised ~£100~ and the video we did got ~4k views~ so hopefully helped promote RAG Week!
 - Co-hosted Take Me Out which was a hilarious evening.
- Met with some students who were thinking of running for well-being positions on their college committees to give advice and information on the role & how to campaign.
- Meeting of the Student Community Partnership at the council. Mostly spoke about council tax, waste and Good Landlord Awards
- Had an Alcohol, Violence and Night-Time Economy (AVANTE) meeting.
 - Reported on the success of Freshers (in terms of safety) and on the positive work and contribution of Nightsafe.
- Student Life Committee meeting (one of the more important committees I sit on - discusses all things outside of the academic experience of students and reports to the University Executive Board)
 - Gave a lengthy an extensive verbal report to the committee on all things YUSU
 - **Gave feedback on the Student Partnership Agreement**
 - **Challenged the University to take the UUK Report on Student Misconduct's (harassment & hate crime inc.) recommendations on board**
 - A working group is to be set-up once the new post 'Assistant Registrar promoting Community Cohesion and Respect' is filled.
 - Have secured a place on the working group and hopefully will have the Women's Officer's joining me
 - *Will be writing a blog over the holidays on all the work and efforts I'm doing around Hate Crime, Harassment and Reporting as it's become quite a large part of what I've been working on ever since this report came out (I'll explain the report & its recommendations in the blog)*
 - **Fed into their mental health policy and suggested updates in order to keep it up-to-date**
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting (probably the most important committee I sit on as I'm the only representative from YUSU – discusses all things equality, diversity and inclusion and again reports to the University Executive Board)
 - *Submitted a report on everything YUSU has done in relation to Equality & Diversity*
 - **Challenged the University to ensure consent talks are compulsory**
 - This was agreed to be discussed at the next meeting
 - Noted the work being done to make campus more accessible
 - Noted the work being done with Athena Swan and argued in favour of being keen to taken on Quality Mark assessments (e.g. Stonewall accreditation).
 - **Argued in favour of celebrating International Women's Day**
- VACC meeting (Volunteering and Community Committee)
 - Discussed all things volunteering & community.
- College Working Group meeting (A collection of College student reps, College staff and YUSU staff)
 - Discussed all things Colleges.
- Caught up with Anne Haversham (Head of Open Door & Disability)
- *Used Social Media to promote RAG Week, College nominations and YUSU's democracy & policy reform consultation*

* Week 7 – the shortest week of term (was off ill Monday, in interviews all day Thurs and on leave Friday)*

- Interviewed for a new Open Door Practice Manager
- Facilitated the meeting with Nightline & Security
- Spoke at a Housing Talk to share my experience and give some advice
- Had a full trustee board meeting
- *Used Social Media to promote the NUS' Democracy Reform consultation, College Voting and a lot of surveys.*

* Week 8 – Nightline Awareness Week *

- Housing Fair planning meeting
- College committee training meeting
- Hosted a Pub Quiz for Nightline
- *Put together the training for College Committee training (it included *a lot* of GIFs)*
- Attended another Housing Talk to give wisdom
- Hosted the Sexposé Pub Quiz – one of the best events & evenings of term thus far. I got ~300~ sexts. Shout-out to all the organisers. Keep an eye out for Sexposé next term!
- Had a meeting with the head of Equality & Diversity and our Advice & Support Centre to talk about Hate Crime, Reporting and Reporting.
 - Everything seems to be resting on the working group and getting a good person into the new Assistant Registrar role
- Attended College Committee training and met all the amazing new folks!
 - Delivered training to all the well-being and liberation reps
- *Used Social Media to promote the NUS' Democracy Reform consultation, Nightline Awareness Week, Nightsafe volunteering opportunities and a lot of surveys.*

* Week 9 *

- Another meeting of the Student Health Needs Assessment. Concern over little response and the impact that would have on the data (i.e. it wouldn't be reliable)
 - I then wrote a blog to promote and explain all the groups I've been working and the surveys I've been sharing; available here:
<http://www.yusu.org/blogs/2016/november/mental-health-what-you-can-do-about-it>
- Organised & facilitated a meeting between the Women's Officers and David Duncan (Registrar & Secretary)
 - **Spoke about the need for centralised reporting in order to understand the scope and scale of hate crime, harassment, sexual violence.**
 - Again, it all seems to rest on the new Assistant Registrar and the Working Group
 - **I will be sitting on the interview panel for the post and will be sure they have a focus on bringing people together and shaping policy.**
 - **I will be working with campus media and student officers to set an agenda for the new post to focus on**
- Sabb team met with the Vice Chancellor
 - **Spoke about the TEF, rising fees and talk of an NSS boycott**

- Set-up the Liberation & Welfare FB Group
- Had the working group talking about support for STYCs and Fresher's Week welfare provision
 - **Escalation processes wasn't clear & Not enough people knew about the Referral Centre so it couldn't be utilised result**
 - Next meeting to outline the escalation process so it's ready for training next year
 - **Some STYCs & Committee weren't aware things they reported were being dealt with and didn't receive support themselves**
 - Jonny offered good practice that everyone agreed was suitable
- Had the joy & privilege of being able to go to an AMOSSHE event. I got a lot of insight from how other Universities were planning to respond to it and how they were addressing – found a lot of value in hearing the Durham Academic Registrar, Sam Dale, talk about how they were planning to address the challenges of having a collegiate system (a similarly devolved system to what we have).

* Week 10 *

- A week full of going out and meeting students, catching up with everyone and reviewing how all of the college reps found their terms.
 - Gave out chocolate all week in the library which was great fun!
- *Used Social Media to promote World Aids Day, my blog and offer encouragement to everyone doing assessments*

* Things to look out for next term *

- Keep Your Cool
- YUSU ELECTIONS!
- Give It A Go Week
- Refreshers
- How To Be An Activist Week
- Volunteering Week
- One Planet Week
- Holocaust Memorial Week
- Chinese New Year
- SEXPOSÉ
- Jailbreak

Congratulations if you actually got through all of that! If you've just skimmed or scrolled straight to the bottom – I promise I don't blame you and wouldn't judge.