

Presidents' Update

Friday 26 June 2020

Dear Students,

This is the final instalment from us as your Students' Union Presidents. It has been a crazy year and certainly hasn't ended as we imagined! We wanted to use this week's Presidents' Letter to give you our goodbye messages and introduce our successors. We wish all the luck to the new Presidents for the coming year. It'll be a difficult one, but we know they're up to the challenge.

President Welfare and Inclusivity

I began my term as President Welfare and Inclusivity with some clear goals in mind and I'm so proud to say that I have achieved a number of those. They include developing a joint hate crime reporting tool between the two universities, introducing animal therapy, getting StudentPad website updated and paired with Cornwall Council's Good Landlord Scheme, making sure the Union prioritises liberation and international events, and creating a Wellbeing Resources Guide for staff and a Student Accessibility Guide. It is fair to say that so many more challenges and opportunities have presented themselves as well though. I've experienced so much during this year, but my favourite memories are still those that are pinned around being involved with the students, such as attending Voices launches, hosting the Presidents' Big Quiz, stroking lamas, and setting up the Accessibility Forum.

Charlotte Agnew will be taking over from me and I have so much faith that she will make some amazing, positive changes during her time. There are so many challenges facing the welfare and inclusivity of students in the coming year in relations to the Black Lives Matter movement, and the ongoing situation faced by all of us because of Covid-19, but I can't think of a better person than Charlotte to be taking on these issues as your representative in the coming year.

President Falmouth

Firstly, I want to start by thanking you all for the opportunity that you have blessed me with to be your President Falmouth for two years. This is a role that has been so unique and I am sure unlike any other I will have in the future. It has been an interesting two years of representing students but, for the most part, my focus has been on the Union and trying to develop it to better support our students in the long term. This has been from looking at how we invest in and support campaigns, to the structure of our representation system, so we can better listen and respond to your voices. I want to give a huge thank you to all of the student Reps and Department Chairs over my past years for the amazing work that they have done in also making positive change for students. They have been my eyes and ears and helped keep me in the loop on the things that matter most to you, and I couldn't have done my job without them.

And lastly, I want to especially thank all the students who have made this role the fun that it is. I will always treasure the events I have been able to host, from Take Me Out to the Big Quizzes at Freshers (even the dodgy one in 2018 with the over the top tech and crowd barriers).

There is so much I have handed over to Lizzy that still needs doing; I feel I have only managed to scratch the surface in making the changes I wanted to and there are still many pressing issues which need pushing on. I have done my best to hand over as much information as I could to Lizzie to best prepare her to represent you all and I am so excited for her plans for you guys; she's gonna smash it.

President Exeter

This has been an incredible year with so many amazing things to look back on, but firstly I want to thank all the students and staff who have made this year so enjoyable, fun, and exciting. I will miss all the Subject Chairs and Reps who provided me with the essential feedback I needed to represent the student body. I set out with a number of ambitions a year ago and I can happily say I have achieved most of them. Truro students are receiving a kitchen unit and an upgraded common room space, a sport strategy is being created which will provide Penryn with two grass pitches and a 3G pitch within walking distance from campus, Fika (an emotional wellbeing app) was released to all Cornwall Exeter students, University of Exeter divested from fossil fuels, and I have endeavoured at all times to close the feedback loop. It has been a true pleasure to represent students this year.

There have been so many highs, from hosting Take Me Out and quiz nights, to Freshers events, then came dealing with strikes and a global pandemic, which brought new challenges, but I would not change any of it!

Cara and the team will be entering a very new and different world where the student voice needs to be at the heart of the university. I have no doubt that Cara will do an amazing job of representing the interests of students and keep pushing Exeter to get better and better.

President Student Experience

It's also important we give Sarah Redman (your President Student Experience) a shout out. She achieved so many great things over the year and half she represented you for, including her huge passions in pushing sustainability to be the forefront of the thinking of the universities, to her other passions of developing sports, better events on campus, and extra-curricular activities developments as well.

In Sarah's absence, the other Presidents have been managing Amelia's handover. We know that Amelia is incredibly passionate and driven in this role and will go on to do some amazing things over the next year. If even half of the effort and passion that went into her roles on society committees/Subject Chair is applied to this role, we know she is going to achieve a lot for you all.

Final Goodbyes

We want to thank you all, as the students we represent, for the engagement and voices that have spoken up over this academic year; we could not have done our jobs without you all. Now is a time more than ever that, as a Union, we listen to our students and that you speak up, including making sure that our BAME students are heard and supported in their educational journeys, to utilising Reps in ensuring that the inevitable changes to your courses due to COVID-19 protect your rights to a high-standard education. We want to leave on a note that using your voice is all the more important in these times, and to remind you that the Presidents will always be here to listen and represent.

We wholeheartedly believe in the incoming team and their ability to represent you all well, and wish them luck in these crazy times!

All the best and stay safe,

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