Scrutiny Session Report

Name: Nduka Emmanuel Akubuo
Position: Vice President (Communities)
Date: November 2026

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Objectives Update

Finance Objective	Key result	Progress	Status Completed Working on it Not started
Students have equitable access to resources to succeed at university	25% increase in students accessing financial advice, the community pantry and the clothing swap	• Working to make the Community Pantry more accessible to students by expanding the service beyond its current location at the Kedleston Road Info Point. Plans are underway to introduce Community Pantry provision at One Friar Gate Square and Chesterfield, ensuring that students studying at different campuses can access essential food support closer to where they learn. This will help remove barriers to accessing support and provide practical assistance to students experiencing financial hardship OR food insecurity. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required • Working on introducing a Medical Uniform Cloth Swap scheme to support Nursing, Midwifery and other medical students. The initiative will allow students to exchange uniforms that no longer fit due to changes in size, weight, height or other circumstances, reducing the need to purchase replacement uniforms during their studies. The Medical Uniform Cloth Swap is being developed alongside the **existing Clothing Swap programme**, allowing students to access both schemes through a similar process. This will provide a practical way of reducing study-related costs while promoting sustainability and reducing waste. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	
	70% of students tell us “Finance is not a barrier to	• Officers are actively contributing to the NUS "Don't Freeze Our Future" campaign and working alongside	

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	my student experience"	student leaders across the country to advocate for a fairer student finance system. We recently attended a campaign event in Westminster, where officers joined students from across the country in campaigning and protesting to draw policymakers' attention to the growing student debt crisis and the increasing financial pressures facing students. Through rallies, conversations, and direct engagement, we helped amplify student voices and call for meaningful action on student finance. To continue raising awareness on campus, we also welcomed NUS UK to the Artium at Kedleston Road, where they displayed the National Student Loan Debt Board. Students were able to learn more about the impact of student debt, share their experiences, and support the campaign by signing the petition calling for change. This work supports long-term improvements to student finance and repayment arrangements. Kaeda (President) is leading on further conversations, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	
	Implement 3 initiatives aimed at reducing the financial burden of study	• Development of a Medical Uniform Swap scheme for Nursing, Midwifery and other medical students. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required • Exploration of commuter support measures, including emergency accommodation options for students affected by transport disruption. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required • Creation of opportunities for Art students to showcase and sell their work, helping them generate additional income whilst studying.	

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		Kaeda (President) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	
	There is a 10% increase in students from other campuses* accessing financial advice, the community pantry and the clothing swap	• focused on expanding existing support services and introducing new support initiatives across campuses beyond Kedleston Road. By extending the Community Pantry and Clothing Swap programmes to One Friar Gate Square and Chesterfield, more students will be able to access support locally without needing to travel to Kedleston Road. Alongside this, we will be raising awareness of the financial advice support services available through the Union of Students' during interactive sessions which will be held across different campuses. These sessions will provide an opportunity to inform students about the support available to them, encourage early access to financial guidance, and ensure students know where to seek help when facing financial difficulties. This work aims to improve both awareness and accessibility of financial support services for students across all University sites.	

*= Excluding Kedleston Road

Mental Health & Stress Objective	Key result	Progress	Status Completed Working on it Not started
Students have equitable	25% increase in students accessing	• successfully created a wellbeing support QR code and implemented a monitoring system	

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access to mental health and wellbeing support no matter where they study	wellbeing signposting or support from the University	that allows us to track engagement and assess how many students access support through the QR code. This provides valuable insight into the reach and effectiveness of our signposting activities. During Officers interactive sessions across different campuses, students will be encouraged to scan the QR code to access mental health and wellbeing resources, support services, and guidance provided by the University. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	
	Access to mental health & wellbeing signposting or support from the Union and University is proportionate to students' campus of study within 5%	• promoting collaboration between student communities to deliver wellbeing-focused activities such as mindfulness sessions, craft workshops, wellbeing walks, and de-stress events across different campuses. Particular focus will be placed on underrepresented campuses to ensure students have equitable access to wellbeing opportunities, social connections, and peer support, helping to promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the student community. • Also planning to introduce the Community Passport Challenge, which is due to launch soon. Through this initiative, students will be able to enter a raffle draw to win exciting prizes by participating in organised activities and events. The scheme will encourage students to engage with different communities and attend activities across campuses, helping to strengthen students' sense of belonging, increase awareness of available support services, and promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	
	600 students engage in	• Currently planning a **Mental Health Festival Week,** taking place	

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	Union-organised mental health and wellbeing initiatives	from **8 March 2027 to 12 March 2027,** which will consist of a range of activities designed to support student wellbeing, reduce the impact of stress, and increase awareness of available mental health services. Already in discussions with the Student Services to explore opportunities for collaboration and to deliver sessions focused on mental health and wellbeing. Also working alongside Kymani, Student Organiser for Nationalities and Cultures, who is also very keen to develop an engaging and inclusive programme of activities. The week will include wellbeing sessions delivered by external organisations, peer-led activities, de-stress events, and an International Festival Day aimed at bringing students together, strengthening belonging, and celebrating cultural diversity. Alongside these activities, students will be signposted to the mental health and wellbeing support services available in the University. Through this festival week, we aim to engage a significant number of students, increase awareness of support services, and contribute towards the target of 600 students engaging in Union-organised mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required	

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Presence Objective	Key result	Progress	Status Completed Working on it Not started
Ensuring all students have access to the Union no matter their location	Community memberships of students from other campuses* increase by 5%	• Working on introducing the **Community Passport Challenge**, which is due to launch soon. Through this initiative, students will be able to enter a raffle draw to win exciting prizes by participating in organised activities and events across different campuses. The scheme will encourage students to explore and join communities, engage with students from different campus locations, and attend a wider range of activities. By creating incentives for participation and cross-campus engagement, we aim to increase awareness of the diverse communities available to students, strengthen students' sense of belonging, and drive growth in community memberships among students studying across different campuses. This initiative will support our objective of increasing community engagement and participation beyond students' primary campus of study. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required.	
	Once a month officers run an interactive session at MS, BM, CAV, OFG, Chesterfield, and online	Plans have been developed to introduce monthly interactive Officer sessions across university campuses and online. Following the completion of Freshers' activities, delivery will begin in November, creating regular opportunities for students to engage directly with their elected Officers while also increasing the Union's visibility and presence across different campuses. As part of this initiative, I will be organising dedicated interactive sessions for students at Britannia Mill and Cavendish, with planning already	

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		underway. This will bring engagement activities directly to students across different campuses, helping to ensure they feel connected to the Union regardless of their location of study. Nduka (VP Communities) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required.	
	70% of online students feel connected & part of a community	Monthly online session to engage our online students and get their concerns and issues. Lucy (VP Education) is leading this work, with support from the wider Officer Team where required.	

*= Excluding Kedleston Road

Additional Meetings/Priorities

Other	Progress Update
	- Attended the "Don't Freeze Our Future" student loan debt campaign event at Westminster, engaging with policymakers, and sector representatives to raise awareness of the impact of student debt and advocate for a fairer student finance system. - **Transport**: I have been engaging with community leaders to encourage them to deliver activities and events across the different Union spaces available at various campuses, rather than hosting activities in one location especially hosting more events in One Friar Gate Square social space. This approach will help bring opportunities closer to students, reduce travel barriers, and make it easier for students from different sites to take part in communities, events and wider student life. By increasing activity across campuses, I hope to improve engagement and ensure that students feel connected to the Union regardless of where they study. This will help in reducing students who report commuting as a barrier in engaging with student life.

Meetings you have attended and outcomes for membership

- Academic Board Meeting – Presented Union of Students papers and advocated for the development of stronger academic communities across the university to enhance student engagement, belonging and overall student experience.
- Pastoral Services Committee - Presented the Student Officers' priorities that were voted for by students and engaged committee members in discussions to secure support, collaboration, and contributions towards delivering these priorities throughout the year.
- Professional Conduct & Suitability Stage 2 Meeting - Participated as a student representative in reviewing cases fairly and ensuring student voices were considered within the decision-making process.

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- Sports Assembly - Co-organised the first Sports Assembly with sports councillors, which successfully engaged student representatives, including proposals relating to the iLoveTour 2027 Sports Tours programme.
- Had meeting to discuss potential dates for the Sports Team Photos. Consideration is also being given to extending the opportunity to non-sport student communities that may wish to participate.
- Met with the Nationalities and Cultures Student Organiser to plan activities and coordinate arrangements for Mental Health Festival Week
- Attended a briefing on Turnitin, AI, and data privacy, providing updates on student data protection and future developments in assessment and feedback systems.
- Attended the Mighty Midlands Managers and Officers Autumn Meet-Up, where representatives discussed the NUS turnaround strategy, sector challenges, and opportunities to strengthen student representation and engagement across students' unions.
- Participated in four separate recruitment panels, supporting the selection and appointment process.
- Completed a six-week induction programme, attending a range of trainings and development sessions to enhance knowledge, strengthen leadership skills, and develop an understanding of effective student representation.
- Met with the Office for Students (OfS) to learn about its role, current priorities, and ongoing work within the higher education sector. During the meeting, I shared insights from my experience as a student at the University of Derby and discussed the issues that matter most to students. The conversation also focused on understanding the needs and experiences of students from different backgrounds, campuses, and modes of study to help ensure their voices are reflected in future policy and decision-making.
- Student Voice Committee
- Honorary Award Committee
- Trustee Board (Union)

Events you have attended and outcomes for membership

- Freshers Event **(40 + Events)** - Engaged with new students across a range of welcome activities, promoted Union services and opportunities, gathered student feedback, and supported students in settling into university life and building connections.
- Mid-Autumn Festival - Supported and celebrated cultural diversity within the Chinese student community, encouraged intercultural engagement, and strengthened students' sense of belonging.
- University Open Days - Represented the Union of Students to prospective students and their families, providing information on student life and opportunities available at the University.
- Welcome Weekends - Welcomed and supported new students during their transition to university, helping them access information, build confidence, and engage with university, union and communities.
- Black History Month (Derbyshire Constabulary) - Represented student interests and developed relationships with external partners. Made positive progress in discussions around student safety initiatives and opportunities for part-time employment, helping to strengthen support and opportunities available to students.

Key Results Update

Current standing of key results compared to the goal (To be completed by HOM/SLT in conjunction with Executive Officer)

Key Result	Current / Goal
25% increase in students accessing financial advice, the community pantry and the clothing swap	15%/25%

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70% of students tell us “Finance is not a barrier to my student experience"	25%/70%
Implement 3 initiatives aimed at reducing the financial burden of study	3/3
There is a 10% increase in students from other campuses* accessing financial advice, the community pantry and the clothing swap	5%/10%
25% increase in students accessing wellbeing signposting or support from the University	12%/25%
Access to mental health & wellbeing signposting or support from the Union and University is proportionate to students' campus of study within 5%	2%/5%
600 students engage in Union-organised mental health and wellbeing initiatives	/600
Community memberships of students from other campuses* increase by 5%	2%/5%
Once a month officers run an interactive session at MS, BM, CAV, OFG, Chesterfield, and online	Ready to launch November

Performance Review

Work ethic related to Officers’ Job Description (to be completed by Officers’ link mentor):

A link mentor is a member of Union staff who is supporting the Executive Officer within their role. The link mentor will be someone who works closely in the same area of representation e.g., the link mentor for VP Welfare would be the manager of the Advice Team and the link mentor for the Union President would be the Union CEO.

Link mentors can grade each area as:

1. Unsatisfactory.
2. Area for development.
3. Meets expectations.

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4. Exceeds expectations.

Area	Grade
Has demonstrated living the Union's values of 'better together', 'caring for each other', 'sharing success', 'positive'.	3
Has worked within relevant legislation as well as structures, policies and procedures.	3
Has worked co-operatively with other Union staff and Officers, as well as relevant external organisations.	3
Has adhered to the highest standards, especially in the delivery of service and safety.	3
Has sought to continually develop and improve Union facilities and services.	3
Has kept up to date with sector developments, local competition and student's views/needs, where necessary undertaking market research to generate such information.	2
Has undertaken necessary training and attended all meetings as requested.	3
Has promoted a positive and professional image of the Union of Students to its members, customers, stakeholders and other external people.	3
Has positively contributed to the organisations ethical & environmental ethos.	3
Has performed any other additional reasonable duties as deemed appropriate.	3

Any additional comments from Officers' link mentor:

Nduka has made a positive start to his role, getting involved in a wide range of activities and representing students within the Union and University. His involvement in Freshers and Sports Assembly, alongside his work with Student Organisers, has provided opportunities to hear from students and support their engagement.

It is encouraging to see his focus on making support and community activities more accessible across campuses, particularly through the proposed expansion of the Community Pantry and Medical Uniform Swap. The next step is to prioritise these plans, agree realistic timescales and capture student feedback and participation so we can understand the difference they are making. I will continue to support Nduka with this through our link mentor meetings.

Any additional comments from Officer on their work ethic:

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