

Officer Report

Introduction

In December 2021, Postgraduate Research Officer Adetunji, being his second month in office and as a first-year PhD student at the university, continues to focus on meeting PGR students face-to-face and via social media platforms to understand their needs and how the PRO office can help. In addition, he attended several PGR centered events such as mixer, study sessions, festive events, coffee meet-ups etc.,

The feedbacks from PGR community.

Accommodation – I made a recommendation in the last report that the university should prioritize accommodation for students that are married/with children as it is difficult for married students and those with children to rent accommodation in Essex. Isabella reached out to me to inform me that provisions are being put in place and I am happy to hear that, kudos to the student parliament. I have put in place channels to see if this promise will be kept.

Funding – I raised the issue of funding in my previous report and I recommended in my previous report that the university should have a placement program, teaching roles and provisions of more GTAs for research students. I am happy that there has been progress on this front as the PGR students confirmed to me that they have been receiving several emails advertising placements and teaching roles. This is commendable.

However, most of the teaching roles required research students that hold a PhD degree or are about to finish their programs. I hereby recommend that the first and second-year research students should be accommodated and considered in future teaching and GTAs roles.

Courses – I submitted in the last report about a few students not being able to use the Matlab app via software hub for the course **BE368-7-AU FINANCE RESEARCH TECHNIQUES USING MATLAB**. This was still a problem that persisted throughout the course. The lecturer and the Business School tried their best to fix the issues and I commend them for these efforts.

Also, I stated in the November report about feedbacks from the integrated PhD students regarding **BE953-7-AU RESEARCH METHODS IN FINANCE: EMPIRICAL METHODS IN FINANCE**, many students complained that the course is one-way traffic and not very interactive. Also, the accent of the lecturer makes it difficult to understand the course. I can confirm that from the feedback received from the PGR community that there was an improvement from the lecturer that took over the second part of the course.

Emergency – I received feedback from one of the PGR students who are a resident in one of the university accommodations. He was unable to see the university GP in case of a health-related emergency. Specifically, when I met him, he mentioned to me that he has experienced severe chest pains and headaches. His friends called the GP and they couldn't attend to him because he doesn't have an appointment. He called 999 but no help was coming which I believe is due to the effort of the emergency line currently directly towards tackling rising covid-19 cases.

My advice to him was to change his GP to the Turner Road GP because of its proximity to Colchester Hospital, which has an Emergency Unit for such cases just in case it happened again. I raised this at one of the meetings organized by the Student Union, while my advice to this particular student was acknowledged to be a good one, it was further stated because students living in the university accommodation may not know their way around the university very well, it is better to call the university security number which is 222 and they will call 999 on one's behalf.

Events – December was a busy one for everyone academically (deadlines) and also very eventful. Numerous departmental festive events were organized of which I attended some, Specifically, the one organized by the Business School which has 2 parts; online meet-up, gists, games, quiz, musical playlist. Thereafter, we proceed to the school canteen for dinner and a few glasses of champagne. We had a few coffee meet-ups to exchange greetings, advice, ideas, academic supports and the likes. Also, we had a few study sessions among students in the PhD integrated programs to support each other.

Communication: I made this known is several of the meetings that communication about events are not reaching some of the PGR students which could be due to late registration on the part of the students or delay in travelling plans. Promise was made that there will be an improvement regarding this

Delay in CAS And Admission Letter: The current 1st year integrated PhD students and direct PhD students as well as many PGR students currently stuck in their home countries complained of delay in receiving their admission letters and CAS letters. They are frustrated which is understandable. I delivered this message in the last meeting that has few members of the faculty and they acknowledged this is due to the fact that the staffs are currently overwhelmed as well as delay in some agencies sending the applicants documents to the admission team. There is promise to improve on this.

Goals For This Semester

- To create more memorable events for members of the community.
- To help strengthen the bonds within the community.
- To gain constant feedback from the community at all times.
- To provide a proper explanation of what communities are to all students on the university social media pages.
- The Student Union is holding PG mixer (PG Taught, Integrated-PhD and direct PhD) on the 26th of January 2022. This will be an amazing event to reconnect with returning students and January intake students. I am looking forward to this.

What have I been up to?

- I have been actively promoting all events on the University of Essex social media page.
- I have been attending the SCO catch-up sessions with the VP Community and Engagement.
- I have attended meetings with the VP International and my coordinator.
- We have had a PGR centered events such as study session, festive events, coffee meet-ups etc.

What to expect next semester?

- To be able to provide more support for the PGR community.
- To create more fun events for members of the community.

Name: Adetunji Bolorunduro
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Month: December