

Student Council 2020 Final Report

Since the establishment of the inaugural Student Council in September 2020, in line with our Terms of Reference, the Council has focused our efforts on the following areas in 2020:

- Raising the profile of the Student Association, ensuring all students have the opportunity to voice their views and opinions and contribute meaningfully to Holmesglen.
- Building a partnership with the Institute to ensure student voice reaches decision-makers and becomes part of Holmesglen's culture.
- Promoting Holmesglen's Online Community as a platform for students to connect with their representatives, one another and the Institute.

Since then, the Council has:

- Established the structure of the Council and finalised a Terms of Reference.
- Created the Student Council Vision, Mission and Values.
- Organised a series of Student Council Events to meet with students at Holmesglen (albeit virtually!).
- Conduct student surveys and communicated student feedbacks and concerns to the Institute.
- Represented Holmesglen at the Council of International Student Australia (CISA) Victorian Roundtable Discussion.
- Increased Holmesglen's Online Community traffic - since forming the Council in September 2020, we have seen an increase of 376 new accounts created.

Through our communication with the student body, we found that:

- Students require more learning support, especially older students, when it comes to online learning.
- More communication is needed from teachers to students with regard to remote learning.
- Some teachers still need training if remote learning continues into the future.
- Some students find remote learning challenging due to technological issues and lack of access to appropriate IT equipment.
- Students also communicated their preference for a mixed learning approach (face to face and online learning) and flexible arrangement from the Institute. It is also highly recommended for all face-to-face classes to be recorded to allow students to access this post lecture.
- Students are more likely to participate in activities that are host by students (peer influences); also, teachers have positive impacts on promoting events and encourage students to be more active.
- Discussions from CISA meeting include increasing student's wellbeing, employment/ internships opportunities and resolve their financial difficulties etc.
- International students need support in terms of fees, especially during covid-19 and post covid-19. Need more time to pay fees for the following semester and lack of knowledge of the financial services provided to help them.

- The Online Community is a starting point for creating accessible channels for students to connect with the Council but more needs to be done to find better avenues for students to reach out.
- The Online Community is barely known by Holmesglen students and further communication with regards to the community is required. Furthermore, the community should be made more user-friendly for ease of use by students.

As such, we make the following recommendations to the Institute:

- Increase IT training available on how to use Brightspace and navigate through various systems available at Holmesglen. IT staff should also be available to assist students via webex team through screen sharing to assist students with navigating through any problems that arise.
- Teachers allocating additional time during lectures and classes to assist students with any IT issues that arise
- Provide structured training for teachers to ensure that all teachers are up to speed with their IT knowledge. This also includes training on how to deliver classes online to ensure efficient delivery of teaching content.
- Provide students with scholarships/ financial support/grants to support students with financial hardship to access required IT equipment for remote learning.
- Allocate budget to purchase a pool of computers, headphones available for loan to students in need.
- Regular checkups on students during covid-19 and post covid-19 pandemic. Holmesglen has done an excellent job contacting international students, but this should be extended to local students.
- Continue with wellbeing enhancing and particular attention and care for those in need
- Regular checkups on students – academic and mental
- Provide leadership training for the council members during the semester break. (this can also be available for anyone who are interested to upskill during the break). The training could include leadership training, public speaking training and communication training.
- Closer partnerships between students, teachers and the Institute. Eliminating the bureaucracy and allowing for easier channels for students to express their concerns through the Council.

Our advise to the next Council includes:

- Work closely with students – listen to their concerns and needs
- Set timeline and various sub-committee for division of tasks. Big tasks may require more committee and longer time. While small task may be easily done by 1-2 person. Don't hesitate to seek help/ collaboration from other faculties, departments.
- Value diversity of voices and support each other's ideas. (positive mindset)
- Good to be active during council discussion but not forget to listen to other members views too (values teamwork and team discussion)
- Start early, with events or projects, start early in planning and execution to make the most of the student council term.

- Assign sub-committees to tasks to ensure it gets done, and a handful of people share the responsibility.
- Create ways to be accessible to students, brainstorm new ideas.
- Be active on the OC and encourage your peers to do so as well
- Encourage teachers, lecturers and all Holmesglen staff to advocate and promote the use on The Online Community.

Key projects recommended for continuation in the next Council includes:

- Further review of how the Institute promoted the online community is required. At present, this message is not reaching students and this needs to be resolved to ensure all students are aware of this important networking and communication platform.
- Further investigation for the need for student internships is required. Adhoc feedback revealed students are seeking these opportunities, however the Council has not received statistics and data to support this theory.