

## **Jose Gonzalez – VPSL Candidate Platform**

If I were to be elected as VPSL, I would strive for my platform to focus on a couple key points I would like to see improved in UPEI. I would also love to continue and elaborate on the work and achievements from past VPSLs:

### **Begin Student Engagement During the Spring and Summer Sessions**

Having lived the past three summers in PEI, plus, my engagement with the English Language Exchange Program and International Buddy Program has made me realize the untapped potential this island has to positively engage students with exciting activities unique to the season. While my main focus would still be on providing an engaging student experience during the Fall and Winter, as those are the times where all students would be around, I still believe it would be worth tackling the idea of the VPSL reaching out to students during this time period. They do not have to be anything too big, however, off the top of my head: a beach trip, picnic days with recreational games, movies projections during some evenings, and maybe even a smaller pub event. Winter Blast, anyone?

The number of students who decide to stay behind in PEI during the Spring and Summer sessions do so usually to A) take summer courses or B) work full-time to pay tuition during Fall and Winter. Either way, both of those things can be highly stressful. Providing outlets for social interaction to students would be a great way for them to know that the UPEISU is here because of and for them. Additionally, I believe that since the number of students would be less, I feel this could be a more personalized experience for them. Not only that, but it is important to consider that some students begin their studies at UPEI during the spring and summer sessions. With no NSO or ISO for them, it is important for them to feel welcomed to the UPEI family. Finally, I would like to point out that this motion would serve to make students realize that the UPEISU is working hard for them all summer long, instead of the UPEISU involvement with students being almost nonexistent during these sessions.

## **Increase Cooperation Between Groups at UPEI in Charge of Social Events**

As someone who has worked with various of the different departments on-campus in charge of enhancing UPEI's social experience, I think it is important to prioritize building a solid network between the different groups and leaders on campus. Currently, the VPSL meets with staff and club presidents; I want to revamp this idea and reach out to other groups on campus. Some that I have considered include: Language Exchange Program Coordinators, International Buddy Program Coordinator, EAP Office Event Coordinators, Chaplaincy Center, Lead Campus Life Advisors, and Senior Residence Life Advisors.

Even if it is not an official committee, I feel having regular meetings (this could be bi-weekly or monthly) would be greatly beneficial for all of us. By being aware of what else is going on on-campus, we can avoid doing repeats of the same events. Based on our collective knowledge of different demographics, we can better brainstorm for ideas who cater towards students of different interests. Finally, by helping each other advertise for events; we can maximize student engagement and awareness. There have been way too many times when students tell me they didn't know x, y, or z was going on.

## **Revamping Some of the Less Successful Initiative and Services Pertaining to Student Life and Working Hard on Bettering Existing Ones**

Social media and the UPEISU Newsletter are good ways in which the UPEISU tries to keep students in the loop of information. I would work closely with the Director of Communications to make sure these resources are put to use successfully on-campus. Alternatively, I believe that a good idea to keep students posted and updated, without a barrage of emails and notifications, would be to give them access to an UPEI Event Google Calendar.

The way this Event Calendar would work are the following: 1) Myself and all other event organizers would be allowed to edit the calendar by: adding events, putting descriptions for their events (type of event, scheduled time, price if any, estimated attendance, etc...) , and updating as necessarily, like for example, if rescheduled.. 2) Students would have access to this Google Calendar, however, no editor privileges for them. 3) In order to ensure students are using the calendar, we could remind them about it in the UPEISU Newsletter and through social media.

My intent with this idea is the following: provide engaged and interested students with a service that would allow them to remain updated throughout the semester, students would better be able to have a “full picture” of what events they can assist between their other responsibilities, the event calendar would be ecologically friendly compared to having to print multiple posters (though we would probably still print a couple, I love posters), and it offers students choice on how they wish to review information about events. Additionally, the event calendar would allow different event organizers to have a better idea of when to do their events without them clashing with another person’s, or, their events being a repeat of something that already occurred recently. In general, there are a bunch of reasons why I feel this communal Google Event Calendar could be a game changer. Let’s take advantage of the technology we have available to us!

Additionally, after discussing this with both current VPSL Tessa Rogers and President Emma Drake, something must be done about our campaigns. I am referring to: Environmental Week, Safety Week, Love and Sex Week, Diversity Week, and others. While some of them tend to do great, such as Love and Sex Week, others tend to not excite or attract students as much. A potential solution could be changing these campaigns from “weeks” to “days” (at least, on the less successful ones). By having these campaigns be shorter, students who are truly interested and committed to particular topics would be able to just devote a set day of their busy calendars to fully engage with these topics. Another great thing about making them “days”, is that it would open up the possibility for different topics to be tackled. If memory serves right, it has been the same topics for the past three years I have been at UPEI. Regardless, I am open to change, fresh ideas, and contributions from students who might want to do something. Campaigns have an important educational purpose, however, if less resources and time are allocated to these topics; it opens up the venue for new and exciting campaign days which do not have to remain exclusively education. Burger Day, to name a random example. An additional idea that was brought up to me, was the possibility of making small pub events as wrap-ups to campaigns. Without a doubt, students at UPEI love pub nights; so, what if we had, for example, a Pink Party at the end of Love and Sex week.

Sarah MacEachern had Mental Health Mondays, and Tessa Rogers had Music Mondays; both were great ideas; however, I ask myself: “why stick to a particular topic?” It might seem like I do not want to set for anything right away in this platform, however, I believe that a more “open approach” could benefit student engagement and appreciation. I have no specific name for this Mondays but off the top of my head: Fun Mondays or RAD Mondays (R = Random, A = Activity, D = Day) could be a potential name.

By hosting a variety of different events on Mondays, I would be able to increase the accessibility and diversity of the entertainment provided by the UPEISU. As a previous Campus Life Advisor and Buddy Program Coordinator, I am in no shortage of ideas of how each Monday could be a different activity: Mario Kart Tournament Monday, Drawing and Coloring Monday, Study Monday, Coffee with a Stranger Monday, Board Game Monday, Fashion Show Monday and the list goes on and on. For this specific idea, I would like to implement some sort of suggestion box or “survey monkey” type of thing so I can get a better idea of what students would like me to organize for them. It seems much more doable for me to organize small events for a particular group of students, than for me to plan big pub nights around a multiplicity of suggestions. If anything, I will do what I can to keep Karaoke Fridays a thing, as I think it’s an idea with lots of potential and thank Tessa Rogers for implementing it.

In order to simplify the logistics of this task, and provide some sort of structure like we have had in the past. I have been thinking the best way to tackle the idea above is to come up with three consistent themes for week 1, 2, and 3 of each month. Which themes will they be, that remains to be established and I will rely on student input for it as well as my own experience organizing events. It could be as simple as Arts and Crafts, Video Games, and Study Mondays. As I said before, I will see. For week 4, however, I would love to open the floor for students to come to me so we can work together on an event of their own that I would support to the best of my ability. Currently, I imagine it could be something like: Latino Night, a pub event hosted by the Caribbean Society, or letting the Bangladeshi or Japanese society use the space for something. I would like it to be different culturally-theme nights, but we will see.

## **Putting the Clubs Hub to Use and Rewarding Leaders for their Volunteer Work**

The Clubs Hub, much like the Panther Patrol, is a result of the previous UPEISU executives hard work. I would like to increase use of this space by the existing clubs on campus. To do this, I would have two clubs meet me a week on separate days to discuss things such as: what are the needs and wants of each club, inform the clubs about UPEISU services so they can extend the information by word of mouth as leaders on campus, and finally; I would like to do celebratory meetings at the end of each semester to reward the executive members of each club for their hard at organizing each club and society.

On that same train of thought, I personally think that if anything, something I would really like to implement as VPSL is rewarding all of the amazing leaders we have on campus with a little “get-together” or “potluck event. This event would include all the people in the “event organizers” committee I explained above, plus the president of each club and society. It does not have to be anything big or super extravagant, but just something so they know that the UPEISU appreciates the individual work they all put in for students.