

IMPACT REPORT

(2018)



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VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Bucks Students' Union is an independent, dynamic and thriving membership organisation. Our primary purpose is to make life better for students at Bucks, and build on our success as one of the highest-performing students' unions in the UK.



A VISION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Where opportunity is never defeated by circumstance

Everything we do as an organisation will work towards achieving a vision for our members. An environment where all members, regardless of background, can come together to create new communities based on shared interests and ideas. Where members are inspired to embrace and explore a broad variety of educational and social opportunities to help discover and influence their own destiny. Where members both create and exploit opportunities for each other in equal measure. Where the collective strength of the membership is recognised, respected and valued for its unique contribution both internally and externally. Where members are provided with essential training and support to lead their communities effectively, helping to positively shape and enrich their university experience.



OUR MISSION

Making life better for students at Bucks

To achieve our vision, Bucks Students' Union is wholly committed to the ongoing support and development of our members. We will equip our organisation with the technology and tools it needs to perform effectively and provide our staff with the knowledge and skills to reach their full potential. We will diversify our income to provide a stable financial base for our operations. We will build and demonstrate our credibility with partners and other stakeholders in order to more effectively support our members. We will reach out to our diverse membership to encourage broader participation so that we can better understand and represent them. We will work hard to show members the value of deeper engagement with Bucks Students' Union through the scope of our activities and leadership opportunities. We will identify valuable new opportunities for all our members and provide a robust platform on which they can create more opportunities for each other. We will make life better for students at Bucks.



OUR CORE VALUES

These core values lie at the heart of our identity:

Dynamic

We are a fast-moving, progressive and flexible organisation which is agile in responding to and meeting our members' needs.

Inspiring

We inspire our members to actively participate in the broad range of Union services, including opportunities to help and motivate others, making their time at university a valuable experience which broadens their horizons.

Tenacious

The Union campaigns in a committed, determined and respected way to consistently deliver the best for our members.

2017-18 INVOLVEMENT AT BUCKS

8,000
VOLUNTEERING
HOURS LOGGED

484 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS HAVE VOLUNTEERED



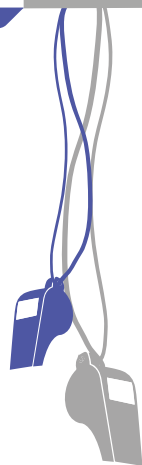
OVER £22,000
RAISED FOR CHARITY



OVER 65,000
ATTENDANCES
AT OUR EVENTS



610
MEMBERS
INVOLVED IN
REC SPORTS



OVER
25% OF MEMBERS
HAVE ENGAGED WITH A
SKILLS OR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY



3
LEAGUE
VICTORIES



OVER 230
STUDENT REPS



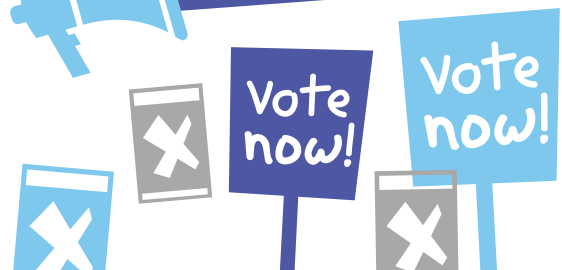
OVER 610
MEMBERS INVOLVED IN
SOCIETIES



OVER 452
STUDENTS
HAVE REPRESENTED BUCKS AT
COMPETITIVE SPORT



6,179 IN OUR
VOTES CAST ANNUAL
ELECTIONS



CEO SUMMARY

As we reach the final period of our three year strategic plan it is a particularly rewarding process to assess the positive impact our organisation has on the lives of our stakeholders, primarily, but not exclusively, our members, the students at Bucks.

One of the key objectives of the Union's flagship "Big Deal" programme is to support a growing and vibrant campus community, at least in part through attracting more students to Bucks. In a recent member survey 18% of the student population have stated their main reason for choosing Bucks New University is the Big Deal, meaning we have created a hugely influential initiative that not only helps support the student community but contributes significantly to the University's financial stability.

We also recognise that institutions like ours have much work to do in supporting student attainment and a large part

of that challenge can be met through encouraging retention and progression. It is known that a diverse, accessible and attractive extra-curricular offering including group activities, well supported societies and teams and social programmes, can create an environment that leads to students completing their university journey. When surveyed, a sample equivalent to over 30% of the student population who had seriously considered leaving the institution determined that engagement with the Big Deal was a factor in their decision to stay. Once again proving the positive impact the Union has not only had on lives of student as Bucks, but also on the financial performance of our primary funder.

Additionally, Bucks Students' Union has a strong track record in the National Student Survey. We are proud that, in the 2018 survey, Bucks Students' Union now ranks as

the highest performing University students' union in the UK for representing students' academic interests. It's extremely encouraging that since the introduction of a Students' Union question to the NSS in 2012 the Union has improved its performance in the survey and grown levels of satisfaction within our diverse membership.

The only year we suffered a reduction in our score was the year the SU related question changed and this reduction was seen more emphatically across the movement. We are conscious that this is only one measure but having consistently ranked in the Top 20 Union's since we are confident that this is testament to the impact we have not just in relation to students' academic interests but across all of our services and activities:

*Denotes a change in NSS SU related question

	Bucks SU	Sector Average	Difference
2012	69%	66%	3%
2013	78%	68%	10%
2014	79%	68%	11%
2015	82%	68%	14%
2016	84%	68%	16%
2017*	69.23%	56.79%	12.44%
2018*	75.49%	56.47%	19.02%



CEO SUMMARY

Furthermore, over the last couple of years the Union has put extra resource into ensuring our relevance to “hard to reach” student groups including mature students, students with disabilities and those identifying as part of the BAME community.

By creating and supporting specialist officer roles, breathing new life into appropriate societies, campaigning on relevant issues, tailoring our activities, developmental and social programmes and employing targeted communications we have grown satisfaction amongst these students as engagement and participation has grown.

This year we saw further improvements from 2017, 71.26% of students with a specific learning disability are satisfied with the Union compared to 56.23% nationally. 72.46% of students with other forms of disability are satisfied with us compared to 53.59% at other unions. Furthermore 74.95% of mature students are satisfied with the Union (56.68% nationally), up from 65.12% in 2017.

2018 also witnessed a demonstrable increase in Union satisfaction amongst Black (80.83% up from 65.05% in 2017) and Asian students (81.29% up from 71.69% in 2017) with our offer. These figures are set against satisfaction of 61.82% and 62.12% respectively across the rest of student movement:

	Bucks SU '18	Bucks SU '17	Improvement	Sector Average	Difference
Students with specific learning disabilities	71.26%	57.10%	14.16%	56.23%	15.03%
Students with disabilities	72.46%	53.05%	19.41%	53.49%	18.97%
Mature Students	74.85%	65.12%	9.73%	56.68%	18.17%
Black Students	80.83%	65.05%	15.78%	61.82%	19.01%
Asian Students	81.29%	71.69%	9.60%	62.12%	19.17%

We would like to see the Union recognised as a sector leader for satisfaction, relevance and levels of support for “hard to reach” student groups and will continue to improve our offer to ensure progress is maintained.”

Not only does this tell a tale of a constant drive for improvement that sees the Union consistently outperforming the sector but it is a real testament to the University’s support for our programmes, like the Big Deal, that break down barriers and promote inclusion through the quality, breadth and depth of our offer.

These statistics are just another mark that our work is having the desired outcomes. It’s been a challenging period for the organisation but we deliver increasingly impressive and inspiring results and with tenacity and dynamism we have built a strong base from which to grow our influence and reach.



Tristan Tipping
Chief Executive Officer



STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT SUMMARY

Bucks Students' Union had an extremely successful year and I was fortunate enough to be a part of it. A great success to me was witnessing the relationship between the Union and the institution strengthen. This came with great reward as working in partnership on campaigns and student voice enabled us to work quicker, producing greater outcomes for students. Some examples of these are new additions to terms of reference to important University meetings such as the BME Officer sitting on Education Committee. We are committed to working in partnership to tackle BME engagement and attainment with various working groups and trainings however the introduction of a new form of representation at such a high level is a great move forward. This role is relatively new, however suggestions made by the officer are already being explored by the University so I'm sure that in the near future we will be able to measure the impact it has for this specific demographic.

Last year we ran a number of successful campaigns in a range of areas from 'Sexual Harassment is #NeverOk' to the brand new 'It Starts With You' representation campaign. Both campaigns had a far reach with hundreds of students in both Uxbridge and High Wycombe. The ISWY campaign provided us with 415 feedback forms detailing what is working well and what could be improved on students' courses and their overall experience. The Sabbatical and Representation teams then took it upon themselves to work through the feedback finding solutions and actioned the University to make changes. The ISWY report displays all the feedback we were given along with multiple solutions to the larger problems felt across the student body. Students felt listened to after their suggestions were taken up, for example 58 feedback cards asked for more (and more efficient) microwaves across the campuses. We took this to the

University who responded by buying six brand new appliances and spreading them across the cafes which made huge difference to the experience of many.

An amazing national campaign we were able to support was NUS/USI's Home to Vote campaign. We financially supported ten Irish students in travelling home to have their say in the 8th amendment referendum. Students who were supported and others who saw the work we did provided us with really positive feedback about our involvement with the campaign: "Without the help of the Union I would have watched from afar in awe of our little country. However, being able to actually BE there for the whole process was something I'll never forget! Thanks so much to you and everyone who helped make our flights possible!"

I look forward to more opportunities in the future to get involved with national campaigns to ensure our members have the opportunity to have their voice heard not just within the institution but around the world.

These are just examples of some of the amazing work I was able to be a part of last year and without such a tenacious staff team, great partners within the University and externally and finally our inspiring and determined students it wouldn't have been possible. I'm extremely excited to see what the future holds for Bucks Students' Union.



Lauren O'Shea
President 2018-19



**Making life better
for students at Bucks**
Strategic Plan

BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

COMPLEMENT OUR MEMBERS' STUDIES

Enhance the employability of our membership and help prepare students to be ready to succeed in the world of work

STATUS: Much progress has been made and the Additional Skills programme, Personal Development opportunities and leadership roles have seen unprecedented levels of member engagement.

PROGRESS MADE AND TARGETS MET / ONGOING

Build strong and collaborative relationships with academic teams

STATUS: Following the shake-up of the University structure a concerted effort has been made to build relationships with the new teams which has borne healthy results already. We will continue to grow our contacts and pool reliable, well informed and enthusiastic colleagues.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Expand the range of volunteering opportunities offered to increase opportunities

STATUS: With changes in personnel and a re-structure in the Student Activities team we have moved forward with a fresh approach to volunteering which has yielded greater levels of member participation, however we continue to pursue a wider range of course related volunteering opportunities to augment the offer.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Provide academic support and advice, maximising our members' potential to succeed

STATUS: Always an important part of our service offer we find ourselves involved in evermore complex cases. We've made good strides, including the department gaining the AQS and will work on clarifying the links between our support and continued success for the services users.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

BE FIT FOR PURPOSE

Maintain strong governance

STATUS: The rolling review of our governance structure, policies and procedures continues to ensure we are effective and fit for purpose. We believe we currently have the appropriate levels of governance and a robust system in place.

PROGRESS MADE AND TARGETS MET / ONGOING

Manage our resources effectively for the best return on investment

STATUS: Ongoing checks and balances are in place to ensure financial efficiency and effective resource management are common place, however with even great pressure on our financial resource a series of market testing for best value amongst our key suppliers will begin in 2019.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Diversify our revenue streams and grow our income

STATUS: A range of initiatives have been experimented with and new trading opportunities have been seeded. There have been small pockets of success, primarily through Bucks Hire, however this has, to date, yielded marginal net gains, and we must work hard to develop this side of our business. We foresee this to be an area of our work that will always be a high priority and is an area requiring greater focus.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE / ONGOING

Develop, support and empower our staff team and members

STATUS: During the period of our existing plan we have scored well in the employee engagement survey and a number of new initiatives have been successful. The organisation now commits more energy in this area than at any point in our history, but in an ever more challenging environment we know more can and should be done. The interim people strategy demonstrates our strong commitment to this area.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Ensure the organisation remains relevant to our membership

STATUS: We maintain an active and diverse range of feedback mechanisms as well as competitor analysis, industry market intelligence and sector benchmarking to ensure we are relevant.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Support students as they begin their journey into higher education

STATUS: Our Buddying and Freshers' Helpers schemes continue to be well received by our members. We've improved our pre-arrival communication and introduced a new "onboarding" postcard campaign for prospective students. A range of new, specialist student group "mixers" have been introduced.

PROGRESS MADE AND TARGETS MET / ONGOING

Create an exciting and developmental extracurricular programme

STATUS: Our programmes from events to recreational activities to recreational sports and additional skills development are constantly reviewed and we pride ourselves on being responsive to the demands of the membership. Participation levels are high and we make good progress on engaging "hard to reach" groups.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Foster student pride and a sense of belonging through shared experiences

STATUS: We have showcased the work and success of our members and Bucks Alumni through a range of media but know there is more we can do in this area, including supporting the growth and vibrancy of University Alumni activity. The Bucks Proud campaign and student case studies will form a further part of our work in this area.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE / ONGOING

Support our members' wellbeing through advice, support and guidance

STATUS: The Students' Union Advice Centre consolidated its position as one of our most well thought of services, achieving the Advice Quality Standard. We continue to develop our offer and reach out to groups of students who aren't traditional service users.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Create opportunities to provide vibrant, accessible and diverse student communities

STATUS: There has been strong work done in creating and supporting societies and special interest groups, seeding activity and assisting individuals promote opportunities that lead to group or community building projects. Recognising new and growing groups and working with them directly (ie with Foundation year and international students) has been well received.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

MAKE POSITIVE CHANGE

Campaign and lobby for positive change for our membership

A new approach to adopting and supporting campaigns and a member led avenue for influencing activity have been the highlight of a year that has seen a vibrant and diverse calendar of campaigns develop. Our lobbying work has seen a number of big “student wins” that we have worked hard to communicate through a new scheme.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Build and support a network of fully-equipped student reps who have clearly defined roles to engage with institutional processes

STATUS: The introduction of a new training regime and materials, a new structure and the establishment of Rep Con has really strengthened this area of our work.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Protect and enhance our students’ learning experience responding to membership feedback and research

STATUS: In a challenging environment we work hard to be responsive to our members' demands and there is much evidence of our consistent work to drive quality throughout the institution.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Develop students’ leadership skills across the breadth of our membership

STATUS: Our additional skills programmes and training have been tailored to build leaders and we have restructured to create more, formally recognised leadership opportunities for our members which have been very well received, created extra capacity for the Union and enhanced our offer.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF OUR WORK

Communicate our goals and values in a clear and effective way

STATUS: Our values have been effectively embedded in all our processes and are widely shared. We've improved our communications channels through consultation with the membership and a more targeted approach has proved extremely positive.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Improve our visibility by sharing and celebrating our success and achievements

STATUS: This forms a large share of the content we promote.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Build relationships based on a shared understanding of our values and objectives

STATUS: We take every opportunity to formally and informally address our stakeholders and share our vision and progress, and elicit strong buy-in wherever possible.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

Ensure the University and local communities are aware of and recognise the valuable contribution and positive impact of our members

STATUS: We make a greater effort to communicate demonstrable impact and share with our stakeholders the value of our work, the redevelopment or annual comms output is geared to achieving this target, including a new approach to our Impact Report, Trustees report and Submission, external press coverage and our overall Communications Strategy.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS / ONGOING

KEY:

ONGOING

We foresee this to be an area of our work that will always be a high priority and will continue.

PROGRESS AND PARTIAL SUCCESS

A number of Key Performance Measures have been met and progress suggest we are nearing our targets.

PROGRESS MADE AND TARGETS MET

Key Performance Measures have been met and demonstrable progress has been made.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE

The Union recognises we aren't where we want to be in this area of our work and progress against KPMs is not satisfactory, our approach will be addressed again in the next planning cycle.

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF



• WYCOMBE HERITAGE MURAL •
PRESENTED BY BUCKS STUDENTS' UNION
CREATED BY ALUMNI -
PRODUCED BY JOE COLLINS
DESIGNED BY WILL DOVER
PAINTED BY DAN WILSON



10



CAMPAIGNS

Raising awareness over academic issues and health and wellbeing is an important area of work which is designed to help provide useful advice to our members. Campaigns led by the Advice Centre this year include:

- finding a doctor, at Uxbridge and High Wycombe fresher's fairs;
- rules and regulations awareness, at relevant points throughout the year, table toppers in cafes and bars and an article in The Bucks Student;
- sexual health, HIV national testing event on 21 November 2017 and monthly visits during term time from chlamydia screening group;
- housing fair, 6 February 2018; and
- money campaigns, at various points throughout the year with money information sheets going in the summer mail-out, money talks and the cost of renting calculator at the housing fair at High Wycombe and a pop-up stand at Uxbridge in February.

Other, officer led campaigns run across the entire institution include:

- NeverOk
- Black History Month
- It Starts With You
- Bucks Girls Can
- Housing Fair
- Marks Out of Tenancy
- Smile Campaign
- Love Lock Bucks
- Recycling Awareness Week
- Fairtrade Fortnight
- Bin Bouncers
- Irish Bursary
- Bucks Proud
- International Women's Day
- International Nursing Day
- Ban Straws
- Positive Project
- Peace of Mind: World Mental Health Day
- Males: I Would Use The Advice Centre

WIN No. 4

#BucksStudentWins

**STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY
ELECTED A DIVERSE
TRUSTEE BOARD**


BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

WIN No. 5

#BucksStudentWins

**URGED THE UNIVERSITY TO
COMPENSATE ERASMUS
STUDENTS FOR AN ERROR
IN COMMUNICATION**


BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

#STUDENTWINS

We launched a new initiative in 2018 called Bucks Student Wins. There have been times in the past when we make really important changes for students but have a habit of not communicating them widely to the student body. Bucks Student Wins allows us to shout about our successes, no matter how big or small and inform the student body of what we're up to behind the scenes. We've numbered the wins and want to see how many we can rack up throughout the year.

So far we're up to seven and they are as follows:

1. **Secured a BME student representative place on Education Committee**

The University has agreed that the elected BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Executive Officer will sit on the University's Education Committee. We want to ensure that BME students have formal representation within relevant University committees!

2. **Campaigned to the University for more microwaves on campus**

Last year we ran a representation campaign called It Starts With You to try and encourage more people to offer feedback about their experience. The feedback showed that students REALLY wanted more microwaves and after speaking to the University we returned after Christmas to find fancy new microwaves on campus!

3. **Financially supported Irish students travelling home to vote in referendum**

With support from NUS we were able to help pay towards travel costs for 10 Irish students travelling home to vote in the 8th amendment (abortion law) referendum.

4. **Students successfully elected a diverse trustee board**

Our successful student trustees are made up of students who define as women, mature, international and LGBTQ+ all of which can be seen as under-represented areas so we're thrilled to have such a diverse group!

5. **Urged the University to compensate Erasmus students for an error in communication**

Unfortunately Erasmus students (studying here for a term from overseas) paid hundreds to travel back to complete an assessment, which it turns out they didn't need to do. The University compensated these students and the misunderstanding was dealt with!

6. **Set up a trial for free evening and weekend parking permits for all students**

For the first term in 2018-19 the University allowed us to trial free parking permits for all students to prevent any barriers to accessing education in the evenings and at the weekend. We are awaiting a final decision from the University calling the trial a success and rolling it out permanently.

7. **Co-opted the first student member onto University Council**

University Governance agreed to the co-option of a student onto University Council. We worked tenaciously to draw up an application pack, shortlist and interview candidates, then co-opting the successful candidate within two weeks.



COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Events, entertainments and venues

The Union runs The Venue, a student-focused and inclusive social space, comprising of the intimate Lounge bar and larger Club/Live Main Room. The Venue is a 1,100-capacity event space and has an extremely good value bar in the centre of our High Wycombe Campus. With plasma screens and free internet access, it provides an excellent catering service by day and award winning entertainment by night.

In 2018 The Venue received the gold award in the national Best Bar None accreditation scheme which values a professionally run licensed premises with a strong leaning towards corporate social responsibility and customer safety. Alongside this we won the very top award for the on-site independent mystery shopper audit where Bucks Students' Union were the only venue in the entire country to score 100%.

In 2017-18 1,740 Burgers were sold and over 2,000 hot drinks consumed in our Lounge bar through our daytime operation (try our Rooster Booster Burger – it was the most popular!) and a total of 114,928 alcoholic and soft drinks over our night time events – 12,500 of which were pints of Snakebites!

Thanks to the unique offer at Bucks, attendances and student participation, despite the overall population shrinking, has stayed buoyant and our venues are still the social hub for Bucks students, offering their first choice destination for entertainment and delivering a safe, inclusive and responsibly run environment in which they can do so.

We have focused on some external events, driving the footfall from the public. Ramblin' Roots Revue is now a successful public-focused event that assists with our commercial income and supplies a different but great atmosphere for our student staff to experience.

We take pride in the diversity of our activity and work hard to represent the interests of our student groups. From high profile live music events to student-led talent shows, from a poetry slam to dance music club nights, from a pub quiz attended by 90 students to the end of year Festiball spanning three days and attracting nearly 4,000 guests. The events programme is still a 'wow factor' at open days, is something that generates more public facing positive comments from students than anything else we offer and provides countless opportunities for hands-on experience for students in organisational roles.

The events programme continues to stretch way beyond the traditional, and we are increasingly developing our range of cultural, alcohol free, daytime and early evening events which help our members build strong networks and plays a major part in retaining students. The Events team help facilitate activities delivered by all of our services and departments and continue to be invaluable in delivering support for teaching, external events, student-led activities and University events such as open days etc.

Our student team members receive highly sought-after training and development opportunities, meaning employment through the Students' Union is more than a part-time job, it becomes a valuable part of the university experience.

Business development

Throughout the year we have explored a number of new business opportunities and seeded various activities including community music festivals, training events and various equipment and service hire ventures. As projected, the trading company generated a small surplus to distribute to the parent organisation, as well a supporting activities that generated income for the venues.

External marketing sales

In line with national trends external marketing and advertising revenues are harder and harder to come by and we have seen a fall in our income which we expect to continue. However, we continue to work hard to create valuable opportunities for commercial entities and will explore new avenues to drive sales.

"we won the very top award for the on-site independent mystery shopper audit where Bucks Students' Union were the only venue in the entire country to score 100% "



COMPETITIVE SPORTS

This year saw 466 individuals take part in competitive sport and the University finish 110th in the British University College Sport (BUCS) league table. Pleasingly the overall win rate among our teams stood at 63% including cheer and dance the latter two being particularly successful. Clubs overall have done well with special mention to men's rugby, men's hockey, women's football, women's hockey, dance and cheer who all completed accreditation and got involved in nearly every aspect of the Students' Union.

As ever the clubs worked well together, supporting each other where possible by providing players where needed and helping where possible. American football tried to keep going this year but partly due to injuries and to the lack of players the coaches thought, for safety, it best to stop playing competitively. They have a very strong committee going into 2018-19 and have done a tremendous amount of work over the summer to give them the best possible start. Our AU members continued spending time volunteering, contributing over 5,000 hours, often getting other students involved. They were also heavily involved in RAG with dance contributing £1,500 to our final fundraising

total. There was an increase in average attendance at training which is now at 70.2% which compared to last year's 42% is a significant improvement.

2018 also saw the women's basketball team win their league and get to the final of the cup for the third year. Unfortunately, they lost in the final but still had an outstanding year and are now our highest placed team within BUCS in division 1. Women's badminton and women's hockey also secured promotions and women's football finished third. Of all the points secured in the BUCS leagues, the women's teams won 82% of them. Dance had another successful season claiming 35 trophies, but cheer excelled, out of the two competitions they entered they won four first placed trophies and two second placed trophies with Jazz remaining unbeaten.

Our annual Athletic Union Awards dinner was again a great success and enabled us to celebrate some of our members' outstanding achievements. This year saw us give Hall of Fame to a ladies basketball player that was consistently one of the best players and across the season, and statistically one of the top four players in the country.

Varsity

Now in its sixth year our annual varsity fixture against the University of Roehampton was held at home. It was an incredibly tight competition throughout the day, with only one point in it. The men's teams were outstanding on the day with men's football only losing one of their four games, having won their futsal fixture earlier in the week. Men's badminton put a tough year behind them and came from behind to win their point and men's volleyball won in three straight sets. Men's swimming won all their races bar one and men's basketball came down to the wire but managed to win in the dying seconds by one point.

It was all ours to win with Roehampton having to win men's rugby to get a draw, it was a tight game to begin with but unfortunately our guys ran out of steam towards the end and Roehampton walked away with the win meaning Varsity was tied for the first time. With many hundreds of students in attendance the day was a great success and a real spectacle of sport and again one of the best days in the University calendar.



SPORT FOR FUN

With funds left from the Sport England project, we were allowed to spend these on our recreational programme as long as we spent the money by the end of March 2018. We used this money to keep the recreational programme going and were able to offer quite a variety of sessions including horse riding and snow sports. We had another positive year, engaging 18.5% of the student body which included 398 new participants.

Our ambassador scheme saw six students get qualifications in their chosen sport, of which two then went on to coach for us. Netball4Rag, Volley4Rag and the Bucks Cup contributed over £500 towards RAG with the number of women's teams increasing for the Bucks Cup. 89% of the students who took part rated their experience at Sport for Fun sessions as good/excellent whilst everyone would recommend the sessions to others.

We have been part of Higher Education schemes for a number of NGB's including

Volleyball England, Basketball, British Fencing, the FA, England Netball and the RFU.

These schemes provide a variety of things including equipment and training for our ambassadors. We received funding from the following as part of these schemes: RFU, the FA, Volleyball England, totalling £2,150. We also submitted a bid to the County Sports Partnership for some Sportivate money, which was an additional £1,285 of funding which paid for Women only Zumba and Cricket. Unfortunately, the Sportivate scheme has now finished. Through our competitive and recreational sporting offer we have engaged a total of 23.22% of students, a big improvement on last year.

Funding and retained grants for this part of our highly regarded work runs out in 2019-20 so we will need find new ways of resourcing the valuable and diverse programme or be forced to withdraw it from the offer.

"We had another positive year, engaging 18.5% of the student body which included 398 new participants"



SOCIETIES

Student societies have had a good year with 621 students actively involved in as many as 34 different societies across the year. Snowsoc (snow sports society), psychology and mootung re-established themselves this year with strong committees in place, with mootung attending a couple of competitions. Our societies reflect the diverse breadth of the organisation and include musical theatre, ACS, RAG and Aviation. A number of societies went to Ryevue Manor to either deliver performances or run a session for the residents extending their work in the local community. Ballet worked really hard to get themselves out of debt, managing to raise over £350 leaving themselves in a secure position. There were eight societies who achieved outstanding with A Capella winning society of the year and performing at the start of our annual Union Awards.

Through the success of introducing new go green campaigns which looked at environmental and sustainability issues we worked with the University to achieve 'Very Good' in the NUS Green Impact Accreditation. One of our biggest successes was raising the awareness of single use plastic which resulted in over 200 students signing a petition to get rid of straws within the Union Bar. We also ran a scheme called 'Bin Bouncers' for one week where we had staff and student volunteers gave their time over a three-hour period in Beats cafe to raise awareness of which bin rubbish should be placed in.

*"we worked with the University
to achieve 'Very Good' in the NUS
Green Impact Accreditation"*



REC. ACTIVITIES AND ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Recreational activities

Over 500 individual members participated in our recreational activities benefitting from over 1,000 recreational opportunities provided this year. We engaged with more first year students than any other group and assisted them in building their social skills and networks in experiences they may not have ordinarily had the opportunity to participate in creating a positive start to their university experience. Sessions included trips to exhibitions and museums, singing lessons, self-protection workshops, cooking lessons and stress relief sessions at the more difficult times of the academic year.

Supporting the academic experience of all our members through the extracurricular activities we provide is essential. We encourage social interaction and understand that through providing opportunity to build strong student communities, we can positively contribute to more effective learning and retention. Our membership is diverse, with many of our members coming from widening participation backgrounds, and our wide ranging programme of activities provides something for all groups.

Additional skills

With an increased emphasis on employability across the institution and in particular through our development programme, this year saw the Union offer over 4,000 hours of additional skills training. By enhancing employability potential and building skills and experience for over 500 individual members we gave our members the chance to gain lifelong skills. The wide range of certificated courses and developmental sessions included personal licence training, first aid, public speaking workshops, mental health awareness, safeguarding and the opportunity to attend course or career specific conferences. 91% of participants of our developmental sessions believe the skills they learnt have enhanced their employability.

Over 900 individual members engaged with our recreational and training and development programmes – equivalent to 25% of the full time under graduate student population. When these students leave Bucks with their degree, we will have also provided them with other essential key social skills and access to opportunities that will enhance their employability prospects.

Job shop

With the introduction of the Job Shop this summer, we have provided access to our members to over 60 part-time, local opportunities. This has enabled students to earn whilst they study increasing their transferable skill sets but also relieving the financial stress of being a student. The roles have varied in hours and industry across retail, hospitality, entertainment and social care but all have offered flexible hours around studies and suitable pay.



REPRESENTATION

Throughout 2017-18 we continued to achieve strong representation coverage with 90% of our available positions being filled at our main sites. In addition to this, we also worked towards strengthening representation provision at our partner institutions with 30 reps recruited across three different colleges, helping support our members studying at these locations.

Particular highlights for the Representation department in 2017-18 included holding only our second ever Rep Conference in which we achieved a significant increase in its attendance. The event was a great success and played host to a wide variety of different sessions including a Q+A panel with the University's Deputy Vice Chancellor, Students' Union's Vice President Education and Welfare and CEO as well as the Vice President Union Development from NUS discussing the future of Higher Education. Preparations for next year's event are already well underway and next year our elected student reps will be responsible for deciding the overall theme of the conference via an electronic vote.

A number of changes have taken place across the University which has therefore had an impact on the way in which we operate here in the Representation team. This has

meant spending time making a number of changes to ensure that our processes now fall in line with the University's. Bucks has now moved away from its old faculty system and has instead changed to seven schools and so ahead of the new academic year we have replaced our Senior Reps and Faculty Officers with Seven School Officers. These changes will see our School Officers have closer working relationships with the Student Reps within their schools and in turn should see our processes executed more effectively.

Furthermore, the Representation team have introduced new feedback initiatives and meeting structures to better replicate those areas that are used in the National Student Survey and have received some particularly positive comments from academic staff in relation to these.

Finally, our new online student rep training platform has been finalised and will be rolled out from October 2018 to our returning reps and any new reps who miss the original in-person training. Having an online training platform also means we can ensure a greater number of our reps are fully equipped to be as knowledgeable and as successful as possible in their roles.

Elections

We had nearly 1,000 individual students turning out to vote in the 2017-18 annual elections which can be seen as a fair result. This did represent another year of declining voters but must be viewed in the context of continuing falling student numbers and therefore remains a healthy proportion of the overall student body. As an organisation we're really pleased to see that our students appear connected to our democratic structures, perhaps most evident in what are now consistently competitive elections across the whole of our available student leadership positions including for our Trustee Board which this year saw the most candidates stand for election in its history.

Union Council

Union Council, our most senior consultative meeting, also continues to operate as a strong platform for students to discuss and vote on a wide range of issues with an average regular attendance in excess of 30 students. Ahead of the 2018-19 academic year we've already begun planning to reinvigorate our Council to ensure each meeting has guest speakers and a number of opportunities to vote on key issues that will have a positive impact on the student experience, including ideas submitted by students through our student ideas platform which has also undergone a process of redesign.



VOLUNTEERING & CHARITY FUNDRAISING

This year over 11,168 volunteering hours were logged, which is 2,000 more than last year, these were logged by 523 individual volunteers, across several projects within the University and community. 22 students achieved the platinum award this year with three of those receiving double platinum.

At the start of this year we again worked closely with Wycombe District Council and Thames Valley Police to distribute our community guides in High Wycombe and Uxbridge. The guides provide students with essential information about the local area, promote civic engagement and support their move into higher education and independent living.

The Union's international volunteering grant, designed to support altruistic work overseas, was well received again this year with four

students going with East African Playgrounds and raising £4,526 purely for the charity. They all went to Uganda as their chosen project where they helped build a playground and taught children. The volunteering undertaken to fundraise and partake in these projects is again a great way of enhancing graduate employability prospects. We do have a few students who are signed up with Challenges Abroad who will be travelling to their locations in the summer 2019.

A student ballot determined our RAG charities for 2017-18. The chosen charities were Wycombe Rape Crisis and Wycombe Mind, both of whom benefited from a proportion of our members RAG fundraising activity, totalling £6,208 this year. Our overall fundraising donations for 2017-18 stands at £11,859.

"Our overall fundraising donations for 2017-18 stands at £11,859"



**173 MEMBERS GOT
INVOLVED WITH STUDENT
MEDIA IN 2017-18**

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications and Marketing team are a central resource to all internal departments and handle all levels of communications, primarily to our members. They are responsible for the overall Union brand and work closely alongside the Sabbatical team to devise effective ways to promote campaigns.

They are also responsible for all digital channels including our social media network and the Union website – maintaining the Unions CRM. The team are also responsible for Rusty's Radio and the Bucks Student newspaper. In the 2017-18 membership survey, 79% said that our communications are easy to understand with 73% saying that our communications are relevant, highlighting the importance of our work around tailored communications.

Digital channels

The website has continued to perform well and is widely used by both students and staff. Across the 2017-18 academic year, we had over 480,000 page views across the site with an average of just under 3 minutes spent browsing the site. Satisfaction with the website remained high with 100% of users saying that the website is 'good' or 'very good'. Our social media channels have shown steady growth and continue to be popular with our members and we are always looking at ways to utilise different channels such as Instagram and Snapchat.

The Bucks Student newspaper

We had a record number of students involved in the newspaper with a total of 89 students submitting articles for the seven editions we published across the year. We printed a total of 15,000 copies, including a pre-freshers' and election special. The publication is widely circulated around all campuses, including partner colleges, with a digital version promoted through our social media networks. Over 4,000 copies of the pre-freshers' edition were posted out to new and returning students – forming an important part of pre-arrival summer mailout.

Rusty's Radio station

Rusty's Radio had maintained a consistent level of involvement from students with 84 members helping out to run the station by presenting, producing, promotion and marketing. We have plans to continue the growth of involvement and listenership and are working closely with the team, who run and produce the station, to increase the station's visibility around all campuses and encourage students to get involved.

LAST YEAR WE HAD
480,045
PAGE VIEWS
ON OUR WEBSITE



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FRESHERS' HELPERS AND BUDDYING

The Union once again recruited 50 Freshers' Helpers to provide face-to-face support for new students during the first two weeks of term at the Uxbridge and High Wycombe Campuses. The team undertook a wide range of tasks including greeting students and parents at halls, helping them move in and orientate them around the University campus and local area. The helpers also conducted campus tours, accompanied students on class trips and encouraged interaction between groups of students. In addition, they supported academic staff, answered questions and offered information. The student satisfaction with Freshers' Helpers was 82%.

30 Buddies, slightly more than the previous year, volunteered to support 2,109 applicants and new students, by email, from the spring and through the first term at University. 100% of eligible students were assigned a Buddy. Students use this service most intensively prior to embarking on their course and are free to ask current students, from a similar course of study, questions they may not feel comfortable in approaching a tutor about, or would simply rather hear answers to from a student's perspective. We have a targeted approach, supporting particular groups of students with like-minded buddies, such as EU students, students from partner colleges, mature students

and students that are care leavers, as well as the more 'traditional' full-time, undergraduate cohort. Coincidentally the satisfaction rate for Buddying was also 82%.

We deliver an effective and relevant training program to equip the Freshers' Helpers to carry out their role. In many cases the training forms a general introduction to the Union that can be the catalyst for students to engage with the Union more fully in the future. For example, each year at least one of the Sabbatical Officers has been a Freshers' Helper, more often it is two and sometimes it has been all three.

Students who participate in the orientation projects are enabled to develop and practice skills such as: communication, problem solving, networking, teamwork, time management, leadership and delegation, citizenship, cultural awareness, organisation skills, marketing and promotion.

Buddies provide a discreet service to our students who can ask for advice or share their concerns on a one to one basis. Freshers' Helpers are a vibrant energetic team, yet kind and understanding. They are mindful of student issues, visible around campus and halls and on hand to help them find their feet. During the training process the Freshers' Helpers immediately become a team. This enables them to work together cohesively, have common goals and pull together when needed. Their team spirit is infectious and ricochets

across the student body. This in turn gives the students the opportunity and confidence to engage with the Union's activities and services. Some of these students are inspired to become Freshers' Helpers themselves in future years. Equally, students that have benefitted from having a Buddy often go on to be a Buddy.

The Buddies and Freshers' Helpers offer confidential support on a one to one basis, if required, either in person or via email which enables Buddies to provide helpful website links and information. They can share their own experiences for the benefit of the new students. They are knowledgeable and well-informed and therefore furnished to refer students on for further guidance and assistance within the Students' Union (eg the Advice Centre), University (eg the Counselling Service) and further afield (eg Samaritans). They are proactive in seeking information so they can respond to questions they are unsure of. They will often speak to course teams on behalf of students, or accompany them to meetings with University departments (eg the Accommodation Service). This interaction with a current student who is self-assured and comfortable in addressing concerns is often enough to provide the student with the tools and confidence to tackle their own issues in the future. If more help is needed, they are in safe hands with the support network across the whole institution.



ADVICE CENTRE

In July 2017 we were awarded the Advice Quality Standard after months of preparation and having our paperwork and practice assessed. The Standard shows our stakeholders that our service demonstrates “we are easily accessible, effectively managed and employ staff with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of our clients”. We will be re-assessed in the summer of 2019 and are working hard to maintain and improve the service we offer.

During the year we had over 3,400 enquiries in total, in person and by email and phone. Out of these we saw 546 students for more in depth case work for 684 issues, as some students have more than one problem area. Overall our figures are down by 14% from last year. This is due to a drop in the number of students on our campuses and we have a decrease in enquiries resolved in the reception at High Wycombe of 29%, as we lost our part-time Information Officer in July 2017 due to budgetary constraints.

Out of the 684 issues we saw students about, 49% were to do with course issues, with 33% of these requiring help with mitigating circumstances applications. 44% overall were to do with financial issues with 55% of these wanting to apply for hardship funds. Financial and course issues are by far the

biggest subject areas requiring help. The other categories are accommodation, international and EU student issues, legal and personal, but these only account for 7% of the subjects we help with.

This year we continued with our enhanced feedback procedure, asking every member if they could complete a short form after they had seen an Adviser. As with last year we have achieved a feedback response rate of 51%. From these responses 100% of members said that they would recommend us to a friend, 96% said that they found making an appointment easy or very easy, 97% said the Adviser was ‘understanding’ or ‘absolutely understanding’ of their issue and 96% said that the advice that they received was ‘very helpful’ or ‘helpful’. We are delighted with these results as it shows us we are providing a service that our members appreciate and find useful. Our aim is to keep working to these same high standards.

Here are some of the comments we have received on our feedback forms: “excellent, fast and supportive service”, “very knowledgeable and helpful”, “the staff were particularly helpful, very understanding and very reassuring” and “Thank you and I would 100% come here again for advice.”

*"100% of members
said that they
would recommend
us to a friend"*



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Bucks Students' Union is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role within the organisation and to develop their talents in any ways that fit with the organisation's development to meet its strategic objectives. Identifying future leaders of the organisation earlier on allows for retention of business critical skills and experience.

The performance management process involves teams reporting each year on their successes and areas for improvement which informs the departmental operational plans, in line with the strategic plan, for the coming academic year. The operational plans are then cascaded into individual objectives which are agreed at the performance agreement meeting between an employee and their line manager and then reviewed at the mid-year stage.

Changes have been made to the forms and guidelines used for the performance management agreement and review process. The changes include more of an emphasis around career aspiration discussions enabling managers to identify future leaders of the organisation and agree individual learning objectives to allow for this development.

This change also satisfies the feedback request from an employee survey carried out last year where staff stated their requirement for the process to be more based around personal development.

An additional discussion point at the mid-year review stage has been included to ensure both individuals and their line managers consider and reflect on the impact of any training delivered in the first half of the year.

The training plan is created each October with provision for development opportunities identified through the performance agreements as well as a standard structure of development which includes:

- Two Strategic Focus Review sessions allowing for the input of all staff in the strategic development of the Union
- NUS Lead and Change for the Sabbatical Officers
- Attendance at the Students' Union conference for officers and senior management.

The plan is reviewed and updated according to business demand and changes to individual objectives agreed at the mid-year review stage of the cycle. Ad hoc training requests are considered on a case by case basis.

In the 2017-18 academic year £13,500 was provided for staff development was split to the standard annual training activity, departmentally and ad hoc activity.

Our employees are also satisfied with 86% of them positively engaged – a considerable achievement when compared to other students' unions and the wider third sector as a whole. Our interim people strategy, currently in development, hopes to continue to drive and develop our team to the very best of its potential.



FINANCES

2017-18 was a challenging year financially for the Union, with our third successive year of University grant funding cuts. Despite the challenges this presented, the Union worked tirelessly to ensure that the required budget cuts were delivered to minimise the impact on our membership. During 2017-18 membership services valued by the student body were delivered to a high standard, which was reflected by the membership in voting Bucks Students' Union Number 1 in the country for taught students in the NSS league and Number 8 in the Whatuni Awards.

Financial performance

The impact of reduced funding from the University was compounded by decreased commercial sales due to reduced footfall on campus. The Union made the decision to utilise reserves built up from previous trading surpluses to ensure that the membership were not adversely effected by any cuts. As a result the July 2018 reserve position decreased from July 2017, however, the reported unrestricted reserves position of £83,879.69 is comfortably within the £60,000-£100,000 reserves level agreed by our Trustees.

Trading company performance

Our trading company, BSU Trading Limited, entered its second year of operations, turning a deficit position from 2016-17 into a surplus that both recovered the prior year deficit and provided a modest contribution to the Union.

Financial audit

After a 16 year relationship with our auditors Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP, the Union's Trustees indicated an inclination to change. The audit contract was tendered in 2017-18 resulting in the appointment of HW Fisher & Co in January 2018. In addition to making savings on the cost of the services, the new appointment resulted in the Finance team reviewing all policies, procedures and audit working papers with renewed purpose.

Financial Regulations were overhauled in 2016-17 and reviewed and updated for the 2017-18 audit. In 2017-18 the Finance team wrote a procedure controls guide for internal use, documenting internal controls around financial processes. Both documents were extensively reviewed by the auditors, and lead to detailed testing in September 2018 to confirm if the team in fact follow the recorded controls. The findings from HW Fishers stated "there were no significant weaknesses in systems and controls... our audit work confirmed that the Union has robust systems in place with adequate segregation of duties and oversight".

2018-19 financial expectations

The continued decline in University grant funding and footfall on campus means that 2018-19 is another challenging year in managing the Union's budgets. However, the Union have the same commitment to providing the best services to our members, and ensuring that we remain fit for purpose. This is echoed in the extensive work placed into working towards the QSU accreditation and investing in retaining our membership participation levels.



FINANCES

ABBREVIATED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2018

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Capital grant (£)	Total 2018 (£)	Total 2017 (£)
INCOME FROM					
Voluntary income	557,597	1,029,781	-	1,587,378	1,759,145
Other trading activities	38,577	-	-	38,577	51,931
Investment income	378	-	-	378	1,097
Charitable activities for students	407,776	66,198	-	473,974	576,658
Other income	4,013	-	-	4,013	3,988
Total income	1,008,341	1,095,979	-	2,104,320	2,392,819
EXPENDITURE FROM					
Commercial activities	27,987	-	-	27,987	34,312
Charitable activities for students	1,086,607	1,107,720	11,553	2,205,880	2,476,955
Total expenditure	1,114,594	1,107,720	11,553	2,233,867	2,511,267
Net (expenditure) for the year	(106,253)	(11,741)	(11,553)	(129,547)	(118,448)
Transfer between funds	34,405	(34,405)	-	-	-
Fund balances brought forward	198,993	142,726	13,206	354,925	473,373
Fund balances carried forward	127,145	96,580	1,653	225,378	354,925



TRUSTEES AND SENIOR STAFF

Officer trustees (Sabbatical team)

Ben Parmar

Jimi Adeyinka

Lauren O'Shea

Student trustees

Charlie Cotton

Jaylen Burrows

Emilee Platts

Emily Nurden

External trustees

Nigel Copperwheat

Brian Tranter

Linsey Taylor

Thomas Mitchell

Key management staff

Tristan Tipping, Chief Executive Officer

Matthew Kitching, Membership Services Manager

Simon McDowell, Communications and Marketing Manager

Jenny Child, Finance Manager

Sarah Jackson, Human Resources Manager

Principal office: Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 2JZ

Bucks Students' Union is an unincorporated association and a registered charity (number 1144820)

Bucks Students' Union

Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2JZ

Tel: **01494 601 600** Email: **union@bucks.ac.uk** Website: **bucksstudentsunion.org**

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