



# Staffordshire University Students' Union Strategic Plan 2012-17

## Our promise to the membership...

- To represent your views, concerns and aspirations
- To campaign, educate and advise on the issues that matter to you
- To ensure you have access to quality space, opportunities and services
- To enable and encourage you to interact through cultural, recreational and sporting activities
- To support the development of your skills, knowledge and experience through involvement with your Union

## Strategic Review Update – January 2013.

The Trustees and Senior managers of Staffordshire University Students' Union convened to review the progress and operating environment forecast for the remaining 4 years of the Strategic Plan. As a result there were 6 identified areas of focus, that have led to reprioritisation or extension of the existing plan. These areas are updated in the plan in **blue**.

### Contextual Changes

Specific Changes that were identified as part of the review were:

#### **Staffordshire University Alumni and New Student Recruitment:**

An area of uncertainty identified in the Initial Strategic review concerned the impact of the changing fee regime, emergence of differentiated higher and further education institutions and the impact of competitiveness, and government policy on student numbers

Our strategic plan considers “students” throughout, but there is a recognition of the increasing role Alumni have to play both as a resource and as continues recipients of Union services. This is particularly the cast with “lifelong learning” and students returning to membership of the Union with secondary study. This further developed a recognition of the student journey, from prospective/potential student, through to enrolled (and intermitting) student, and on to former student.

The Union’s strategy for engaging, understanding and taking pride in potential and former students has therefore been extended.

## Our Vision & Values

*Every student will be proud  
to be part of Staffs*

### putting students first

Our students are the focus of our work. We are passionate about them, led by them and represent and advocate for them at every opportunity. They are our first consideration in everything we do.

### being inclusive

Our membership is constantly changing and reflects a broad range of backgrounds, cultures, ages and lifestyles. Our approach is to find ways to listen to, connect and welcome in those individuals to unite as a community.

### enabling

We recognise our role is to support students through their time at University and what underpins our approach is a focus on giving our members and staff the ability and confidence to undertake things for themselves, rather than always serving up a solution.

### harnessing creativity

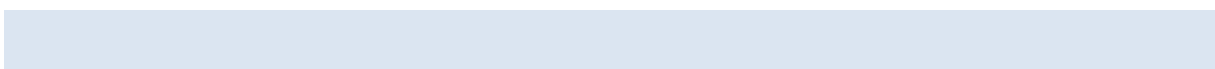
We believe we can make things happen, and seek out ways to challenge ourselves and find new approaches or solutions to achieve results. However we don't believe solutions only come from within and are comfortable in building from the efforts of others. We don't feel constrained by convention and are willing to revisit and re-engineer our work if it gets better results.

### friendly

To us this is more than just being approachable and smiley. It is about the qualities of a good friend, someone you know you can turn to and will be there to listen and be supportive without judging. But equally a friend who will tell you what you need to know and be honest about giving you the right information even if it isn't always what you want to hear.

### acting responsibly

We recognise the responsibilities we have as an organisation towards our members, our staff, the University and the wider communities we are part of. We ensure that we understand the impact of our actions and actively seek ways of eliminating or mitigating any negative impacts or consequences.



## Growing and applying our knowledge

## “knowing you better”

### We will be the experts on Staffordshire Students

- By building our capacity to survey the views and lifestyles of at least 25% of our membership annually, and sharing this insight appropriately
- By taking a proactive role in all research that focuses on the Staffordshire Student Voice, and working with our partners to drive positive change
- By developing meaningful segmentation of the membership and surveying them appropriately
- By undertaking syndicated/collaborative research with "like" organisations

### We will enable students to share their insight into student life

- Enabling potential students to understand and inform their choices about learning at Staffs
- Enabling students to assist each other, providing feedback on placements, teaching, accommodation and student life
- Enabling our members to effectively inform their Union about their needs and expectations and what our priorities should be

### The University will always seek out and act upon the insight & perspective the Union is able to provide

- By helping the University interpret and act upon all research and student feedback effectively
- By actively presenting our understanding to the University and helping them to take positive action

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Develop and deliver an annual research programme that builds upon the National Student Survey and Student Viewfinder Survey to understand changes in student lifestyles, attitudes and needs	
2. Work with the University to develop a meaningful segmentation map of students based on their demographics, lifestyle and attitudes.	
3. Develop an “alternative prospectus” and harness social media to provide an honest and rounded student perspective on the Staffordshire student experience to enable prospective students to make an informed choice	
4. Develop and promote a means for students to safely rate and feedback to other students their recommendations and experiences of services and suppliers.	
5. Produce an annual “Blueprint for Change” document for the University that identifies the priority areas for change for students, from available research	
6. Establish a working group to monitor the progress of the University Plan and its delivery on its objectives for students	
7. Assign staff support responsibility for each Board & Committee to assist with the preparation, submissions and feedback of results for students from the meetings.	
8. Increase the support, contact and monitoring of results of Student Academic Representatives in the new faculty structure, with an Executive Officer taking responsibility for each area.	
9. Increase the student participation levels in NSS and SVS surveys to 65%+ by ensuring students see the benefits of completion, through knowing the actions & improvements made as a result	

### What will this look like?

Representation of informed student issues at senior and strategic level through full-time officers attendance and contribution at 95%+ University Boards and Committees.

Recruitment Training and Development of 24+ Student Academic Reviewers to inform institutional audit work in every faculty.

Recruitment, training & development and co-ordination of student elected academic representatives on 95% of all levels of all taught programmes, who are active in feeding back student perspectives, issues and improvements through faculty liaison committees and Union structures.

95% of students aware of who their STARs representative is

80% of students identifying positive impact/changes from the work of STARs

## Building Engagement

## “involving you”

### We will ensure what we do is well informed and made relevant to all our membership

- By identifying the most appropriate methods to inform our members about the work of their Union
- By ensuring our services are customised & developed to reflect the specific needs of all sections of our membership including; Students from overseas, Distance Learners, Commuters, workers who study, Second-time studiers

### We will consult and involve our members in the development and delivery of their Union

- By ensuring the membership are aware of the breadth of work of the Union and what we achieve
- By finding new ways to motivate students to feedback and direct the Union’s work

### We will enable students to influence and change the University to improve the student experience

- By ensuring there are effective representation networks across the membership and a responsive and accountable University approach
- By working with the University on new models for decision making and governance by involving student auditors, juries and panels

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Utilise segmentation maps and opt-ins to customise the communications with the breadth of student membership and monitor the effect of these changes	
2. Develop impact audits and service plans for all services that consider and respond to the specific needs of all sections of our members	
3. Develop a communication plan to address our various stakeholder and membership segments needs that raises their awareness of the breadth of work of the Union, the benefits of membership and the impact it achieves, with measured results	
4. Develop a democratic engagement plan that builds student influence and involvement through the year and ensures at least 25% of students contributing to consultations, polls and/or elections each year becomes the norm	
5. Promote and hold at least 10 student forums (physical and/or virtual) each year to identify and feedback on issues relevant to students	
6. Develop an annual Campaign plan (I am the Change) that addresses student raised issues and involves students in its design and delivery to their peers and wider stakeholders	
7. Work with the University to create student panels to bring student ownership to issues of student behaviour and conduct, and develop this model to have wider influence over University & Union decision making	
8. Build upon our student academic representative structures, by aligning officer and staff resources around the new faculty structures to create constructive and effective relationships and change for students	
9. Implement a tracking system that collects every issue or concern raised by any student or representative and the response and actions, in order to measure the tangible outcomes	
10. Introducing an International Student Forum to address the induction, and inclusion of international students, bridging the differential in expectations of home and international students to mix, and raising overall living satisfaction to 90%+	

### What will this look like?

- Focused forums established and run to identify and feedback issues identified by distinct segments of the membership (distance learners, SURF based, workers who study, International, mature)
- Established segmentation and appropriate communication with all students opting into communication with the Union (90%+ of all enrolled students).
- A co-ordinated induction programme that ensures students make an effective transition to Staffordshire University
- Students engaged in the delivery of an annual educational and awareness campaigns programme focused on their welfare and active citizenship
- Effective systems for the feedback, response and action of all students’ suggestions and complaints by both the Students’ Union and the University’s services and faculties

## Quality services “ensuring you are well served”

### We will be confident that all services to students are relevant, valued and effective

- By auditing and reviewing all our services for relevance, value, and effectiveness
- By helping the University to review all their student services for relevance, value and effectiveness
- By identifying and developing partnerships and new ways of delivering services, where it improves the student experience

### We will be accessible to our membership where and when they most need us

- Developing partnerships to deliver a 24/7/365 support service
- By improving our physical and virtual presence and processes

### We will develop services in response to students’ needs, in collaboration with our members and other partners

- Addressing students’ needs for finding better accommodation, more easily.
- Providing quality communal student space across campuses

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Expand upon the Student viewfinder survey to measure the reach and students perceptions of the value of our services, as well as the annual satisfaction and “delight” levels	
2. Work with the University to undertake equivalent testing with its student services, particularly library, accommodation, employment and placement services	
3. Produce an annual promotion & event calendar and ensure all services have an innovative and effective marketing plan for the academic year that re-enforces the value of the Union.	
4. Upgrade the performance and social space for students across both campuses, in collaboration with the University, to improve their flexibility, efficiency and ability to deliver a quality student experience?	
5. Explore new models of partnership with the University that minimise competition over catering, whilst delivering positive employment and service efficiencies and improvements for students.	
6. Work with Information Services to develop a 24/7 physical and virtual contact point for students to provide “out of office” hours support.	
7. Develop a “Contact Plan” for our Beaconside campus that ensures our members feel equally well served and engaged as Stoke-based students	
8. Develop Union partnership agreements with SURF colleges to ensure off-campus students are supported with appropriate representation structures.	
9. Research and develop an accommodation solution that improves the ability for students to find quality accommodation and have more influence over the accommodation they rent.	
10. Continue to work with the University to improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of common space available for students use	

### What will this look like?

- Establishment of constructive relationships across University faculties and services to help inform and ensure students are at the heart of University delivery, focusing on delighting students and raising reported “very satisfied” ratings by 10%+ (from 2011 SVS position)
- A broad range of quality, convenient and good-value retail and social and lifestyle services across the University campus throughout the week and campus opening times that exceed 95% satisfaction and 35% delight in the SVS.
- Delivery of an accessible (appointment, drop-in, workshop, phone, email and “virtual chat”) advice service to all registered students to meet their needs for independent financial, accommodation and academic advice that exceeds 96% satisfaction and 35% delight in the SVS.

## Opportunities for Development

## “your development”

### We will double the number of students meaningfully employed by the Union and University.

- By continuing to review our employment practices to identify opportunities to harness student talent across the membership
- By working with the University to secure student positions to deliver services to students
- By improving the employability and career services to students
- By recognising the Unions' role as a social enterprise and supporting new programmes & initiatives

### All staff and volunteers will be able to effectively transfer their experience and learning when they leave the Union

- By extending the “give it a go” programme to incorporate life skills development
- By working in partnership with the University to build the Staffordshire Graduate 3E's of Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, ensuring a positive placement experience.

### We will nurture and harness the talent and innovation of our membership to develop new opportunities and activities

- By ensuring we have the capacity to seed and pilot new ideas from our membership
- By seeking out and supporting students to take on projects and programmes
- By connecting current students with our alumni to develop their ideas and skills

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Champion the benefits of student employment across the University and Union, ensuring all vacancies are reviewed for the opportunity to employ students, and monitoring the changes.	
2. Work in collaboration with the Careers Service to build an effective, student focused employment agency to increase the quality and quantity of student employment in the area.	
3. Develop the Give it a Go Programme, to provide opportunities for vocational and “life skill” development, and support this with the development of students as accredited coaches and trainers.	
4. Refocus our “InVOLved” programme to triple the number of students registered and taking up volunteering activities, with improved tracking of the volume and quality of experiences we enable for our members	
5. Conduct an audit of all our activities to identify their tangible contribution to the employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship of our members, and communicate this to all stakeholders.	
6. Introduce an “employability programme” that equips all our employees & volunteers with the ability to use their employment experience effectively to promote themselves that links into the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) programme	
7. Develop a “student event strategy” to harness & support the creativity of our membership to develop student-led event programmes that deliver positive experiences for organisers and participants, meet the needs of the diversity of our membership, have managed financial risks and drive footfall into the Union buildings	
8. We will grow the Student academic Partnership Programme to deliver 50 projects per year with at least 10 projects per annum leading to tangible institutional improvements	
9. Introduce a Social Enterprise fund and support programme to encourage our members to start new projects and businesses that will benefit other students and the wider community	

### What will this look like?

- The development and recording/interpretation of skills gained through involvement in Union Activities of 800+ students.
- Volunteer Involved Programme co-ordinating 1000+ community volunteering opportunities and placing 20,000+ volunteer hours into the community.
- Quality recruitment and employment experiences for 300+ core and student staff members within the Union and 420+ students within the University.
- Training & Personal Development Programme, with accreditation to ILM level 1 or equivalent for 60% of student employees per annum.
- Extension of entrepreneur programme for 50+ self-employed designers, developers, researchers, coaches and event managers/promoters

## Building Pride in Staffs

## “your successes”

### We will celebrate the success of Staffs students,

- Seeking out opportunities to attend or host annual awards & recognition events
- Enabling students to single out best practice and practitioners in the delivery of all parts of the student experience

### We will celebrate the success of the Union

- By being a "top quality" Union, by achieving the highest standards in appropriate quality measures {Students Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI), Investors in People, Green Impact and Best Bar None}.

### We will celebrate the success of the University

- The student experience at Staffordshire University will be amongst the best in the country by helping and ensuring the university cultivate a university community that succeeds through partnership and mutual understanding and respect for all members
- By identifying and recognising examples of best practice and encouraging its implementation throughout the University.

### We will create success in partnership with our community

- By ensuring we build meaningful relationships and engagement between our membership and the local community they form part of.
- By championing the results we achieve together.

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Introduce a Union Awards Night to celebrate the achievement of our team (students, volunteers, representatives & staff)	
2. Build the Student Led Teaching Awards so that being nominated is an aspiration for University staff, that has a high student awareness and level and standard of contribution by 600+ students and that recognises & promotes best practice,	
3. Continue to achieve the Gold Standard for Green Impact, and assist the University to improve its rating in the Green League to top 20 standing	
4. Have achieved Silver standard for Students Union Evaluation Initiative	
5. Progress through the Silver Standard to Gold for Best Bar None	
6. Have examples of innovation, enterprise, representation and engagement at Staffs recognised nationally as best practice	
7. Deliver on the Staffs Sports Strategy, to deliver a quality sporting experience, build upon the Team Staffs ethos and “do our students proud” in the annual varsity competition	
8. Develop our Community Strategy to broaden how we work with Council, residents and voluntary groups and agencies in achieving positive, measurable change across Staffs	

### What will this look like?

- To raise the pride of students in being part of Staffs  
- measurable improvement year on year from 2012 baseline ( – requires measuring).
- 80%+ of all students surveyed identifying positive impact from the work of the Union
- Satisfaction & “delight” with the Students Union services recorded 5% above institutional average (using SVS and NSS)



## Enabling Factors

*To achieve the goals outlined in the strategic plan, we have identified a set of supporting goals that are required to assist us in delivering the core goals and themes.*

### The skills, competencies, attitudes and behaviour of our people will accelerate our vision

- All our staff will be well informed and passionate ambassadors for the Students Union and University experience
- By ensuring all our staff fully understand and engage with the breadth of the Union's aims
- By developing a staff team that harnesses the talents of our members and are passionate about their work

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Develop and embed an attitude and behaviours model in support of our values, so all staff know how to contribute to the tone of the Union	
2. Introduce a "Going the Extra Mile", programme to encourage and recognise desirable customer care behaviour.	
3. Develop a staff competency framework introduced for all positions, including awareness of Union operation and role as a knowledge competency, for all staff.	
4. Extend training & Personal Development Programme, with accreditation to ILM level 1 or equivalent for 60% of student employees per annum	
5. Extend 360 degree feedback to contribute to the development of staff and officers	
6. Develop cross area core & student staff teams to drive our development projects.	

- **We will develop appropriate IT resources and capacity to meet our goals**

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Integrate our "identity management" with the University to achieve single sign-on to the Union website (CRM system)	
2. Speed up our services by implementing tap and go technology, including migrating our door entry and access control to employ the University RFID card system	
3. Replace all required PC systems that are below IS recommended support specifications	
4. Rationalise the number of discrete software solutions employed to support our work, to create a more unified and integrated approach and improved and consistent management information	

- **We will seek surety about future funding & improve our ability to access wider resources**

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Develop our Memorandum of Co-operation to be clear about the support from the University each year, and monitor changes in the student numbers and the University Plan to anticipate changes to the University financial circumstances	
2. Produce a rolling 3 year financial forecast that anticipates future changes, and assists with resource planning.	
3. Increase overall commercial surpluses by at least 10% in each year of the plan, by consistently offering value for money, great customer services and generating loyalty and repeat business by meeting the needs of our members and delighting them by exceeding their expectations.	
4. Identify ways to grow our commercial partnership revenue through developing innovative advertising and sponsorship opportunities, and adopting strategies to grow our conference and event trade.	
5. Proactively identify and bid for third sector funding that supports our current strategy	

- **We will establish effective partnerships and relationships**

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Undertake an annual relationship mapping exercise to ensure we target and maintain the networks required to influence and effect change within the University and local community	
2. Through our Memorandum of Co-operation with the University, we will be live to the opportunities to take on or divest services, where it yields improved outcomes for members and efficiencies for both organisations	
3. Actively seek out opportunities to share services and costs with other Students Union's and similar organisations, where it enables outcomes to be improved, or better utilisation of resources	

- **Our organisational governance will ensure we meet our goals & we will ensure we have membership buy-in to the strategy now and going forward**

To achieve this we will:

Key actions	milestones
1. Communicate the objectives, plans and milestones at the start of each academic year, and report on them termly to the membership.	
2. Provide the membership with a clear statement of impact and progress as part of the AGM and Annual Student Forum.	
3. Undertake a review of current strategy and progress in January each year with the trustees, in the context of changes and impacts experienced.	