

Surfing the Wave

A Strategic Response to *A Wave of Change*:
The Future Landscape of the Student Movement



national union of students



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Foreword

What we do is amazing.

The social and economic impact of the student movement is considerable. Students' unions¹ are highly powerful vehicles within civil society that have a transformational impact on both the student population and the world around them.

We empower students to shape a better learning experience. We keep students on their course. We support students when they are at their most vulnerable and most exposed. We make sure students have a good time whilst studying. We connect students. We help students gain new skills and develop them. We positively impact on both student communities and the local community. We fight for students who are discriminated against. We generate active citizens. We develop the future leaders of society.

Great students' unions are relevant to their members. They are sustainable, legitimate and fit for purpose. They deeply understand the varying needs of their increasingly diverse membership and deliver those needs. They make an impact on the lives of all students. Building great individual students' unions will in turn build a great movement capable of exercising its collective strength.

We are ambitious and we believe we can achieve more. We believe we can build on the successes of the student movement in recent years to reach a new level – a level where our impact on students' lives and wider society is even greater, and where we can quantify and demonstrate that impact.

We are reasserting our confidence in who we are and what we do. New times require innovation and the effective dissemination of new ideas. Students' unions are dynamically responding to the challenges outlined in the original *Wave of Change* document and we highlight some of that pioneering work with case studies throughout this document.

From student officers, course reps and volunteers to senior managers, membership services, commercial services, central services and student staff – we all have a role to play in shaping an outstanding student movement; one that has a massive reach and impact, that is sustainable and that we are all proud to be associated with.

This document outlines how we might get to that next level. In summary it says:

- In spite of the challenges we face over the coming years, we are ambitious and optimistic about the role the student movement can play in transforming students' lives
- If we are to have a positive impact on students' lives we need to understand the needs of all students better – we need to be the experts on students' lives
- Our primary aim should be improving the educational and learning experience of all students
- We need to clearly demonstrate the positive impact we make on students' lives – to students, to institutions, to the Government and wider society
- Achieving this goal will require outstanding leadership at all levels, underpinned by excellent students' union officers and staff
- We need national organisations that empower students' unions to achieve the above.

This document has been produced following extensive consultation with students' unions and will shape our work over the next five years and beyond.

Wes Streeting, NUS President

Matt Hyde, NUS Chief Executive

¹ When we refer to student unions throughout the document we are also referring to student associations and student guilds.

Executive Summary

We have summarised what we feel are the key themes and recommendations in this document. This is a strategic summary, and the remainder of *Surfing the Wave* is a more detailed explanation of how we might implement such a strategy.

The Importance of the Student Voice

Student Representation is Vital

To ensure the future legitimacy of the student movement we need to be relevant to more than 10–35 per cent of the student population and this will require a step change in approach. It means supporting students' unions to ensure student representation survives and thrives, leading to tangible improvements in the student experience in the eyes of students. It means: students' unions focusing on educational outcomes rather than processes; creating responsive courses and teachers; driving up student satisfaction; raising retention levels; and helping students through adversity.

Students' Unions Must Become Standards Champions

Regardless of the extent to which students pay for their education (if at all) and the methodology for making such a contribution, students have the right to wider and better information about their university and programme of study, as well as guarantees about minimum standards and entitlements on key features of their educational experience. We should be relentless in our pursuit of securing educational change for students.

Our Representative Work Must be Evidence-led

We should become experts on all students' lives. Putting learners in charge of the commissioning, interpretation and promotion of research about the student experience is the most powerful combination possible if we are to promote, defend and extend students' rights.

A Hyper-diversity within the Student Body, the Education Sector and Students' Unions

Focus on Educational Discrimination

All students care about the quality of their educational experience, but student groups face different challenges depending on their circumstances. There is a need to focus on the educational discrimination that each of these groups face, recognising that institutions must change to meet the needs of all their students and the need for students' unions to work to achieve these changes, because that is what powerful educational representative bodies are for.

Outstanding Research and Data

If we are to respond effectively to the issue of hyper-diversity we need outstanding data, both nationally and locally, to understand the life journey and needs of all students. We need to understand that a service or approach undertaken by a students' union might open up opportunities for one part of the student body, but could simultaneously create barriers for other types of students.

Social Discrimination

During consultation you said we should recognise that the discrimination felt by many students is due to their background and identity. We should continue to confront this and recognise that the barriers impacting on students' learning experience are often wider than pure teaching and learning issues.

Changes in Students' Union Funding Sources

Preserving Existing Income Streams

The principal source of income for most students' unions is block grants and these are under serious threat as a result of major cuts in public expenditure. A series of recommendations is made to secure block grant income. Pricing changes are proposed for NUS Extra, with the creation of a recession fund at a national level to support students' unions affected by block grant cuts.

New Income Streams

Successful students' unions in the future will be able to expand into growth areas and work collaboratively to increase their income streams. We particularly think there will be growth in media sales, accommodation and jobs, alumni/graduates, corporate fundraising, energy suppliers and online purchasing.

Reducing Expenditure

Many students' unions have undertaken, or will need to undertake, severe reductions in expenditure and practical support may be needed on areas such as closing services. Students' unions are also exploring shared service provision where it is believed that this might provide cost efficiencies and improved service delivery (where cost savings are not achieved but where students see better outcomes). The 'pensions crisis' also needs serious consideration by every students' union, and clear strategic responses.

Students' Unions in Crisis

A failing students' union lets down its student body, its institution and the wider student movement. The current way in which we respond to students' union organisational failure at a national level is ad hoc and inappropriate. We propose to deliver a co-ordinated approach to support students' unions at 'crisis' point.

Ensuring Quality Students' Union Management and Governance

We believe that the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) should be the vehicle for defining, assessing and enhancing quality in students' unions. Our aim would be to develop SUEI, so that as well as the current two-year programme aimed at the largest students' unions, there is also a SUEI process for small, specialist and large FE students' unions. It is proposed that SUEI is split into an accrediting arm and a developmental arm. Recommendations are made on governance, supporting external trustees and developing trustee boards.

Demonstrating the Social and Economic Impact of Students' Unions

Students' unions must demonstrate their social and economic impact: to students, if they are to ensure their relevance and legitimacy; and to institutions, if they are to protect their funding levels over the forthcoming period. A set of proposals articulate how we might achieve this.

Changing Student Lifestyle and Participation

Need to Enhance Employability

There is an overwhelming focus on employability across government and within all educational institutions. You said you particularly wanted us to focus on the link between student activities and employability, supporting work that promotes student enterprise initiatives. We should ensure internships offered by employers are kitemarked to guarantee they are of a suitable quality.

Developing Student Activities

Student activities probably involve more students than any other aspect of a students' union, but national support to such activities has been lacking. During our consultation you said more national support should be given to enhance student activities. Proposals are made to accelerate this work.

Learner-centred Physical Space

A plethora of new learning environments has emerged on campuses over the past 10 years. We should catalyse innovative approaches to students' union physical and social space.

Student Debt

Debt is now a permanent feature of student life and we make recommendations for improving financial literacy amongst students, and challenging universities who restrict progression or graduation where there is outstanding accommodation debt.

Democratic Participation

We should raise the bar on democratic participation as an average turnout of 14 per cent across HE students' unions is unacceptably low, undermining perceptions of our legitimacy as representative organisations. Developmental support should be offered where there are exceptionally low election turnouts.

The rise of digital media

A Shared Platform

If all students' unions used the same systems, the benefits to the student movement as a whole would be huge. A shared platform, integrated nationally, and with effective support and guidance, will allow students' unions to collaborate with content, knowledge and best practice, increasing participation and benefiting fully from new income opportunities.

Membership Extranet

A new interactive Membership Extranet will be launched in Summer 2010, merging officeronline, nussl.co.uk and amsu.net and allowing good practice to be shared between SU officers and staff.

A Students' Union Web Offer and E-tools

An NUS-endorsed web offer for students' unions and a package of e-tools (including e-voting packages and applications) will be developed to assist students' unions to help increase participation and engagement, making communication with members easier. Our potential to raise revenue and improve retail, sponsorship and ticketing performance will all be vastly improved through a single system.

Towards Seven Million Voices

The student movement has over 7 million individuals in membership and its potential as a force for positive change is immense. Critical to our ability to utilise this potential is being able to contact all students at the touch of a button. In the accompanying document, *How the National Organisations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*, we outline proposals to accelerate the build of students' union databases that will create a campaigning force of 7 million voices.

A Wave of Change

In Spring 2009, NUS published a document called *A Wave of Change: The Future Landscape of the Student Movement*. It was agreed that if we are to establish a new and exciting strategic direction for the student movement – one that makes a real difference to students' lives – we need to understand the likely future landscape facing students and students' unions. We need to be clear on what our key *drivers* are – by which we mean the major forces or trends that could positively or negatively shape the future of the student movement.

A Wave of Change stated that we believe the key drivers impacting on the student movement are:²

- A hyper-diversity within the student body, the education sector and students' unions
- The importance of the student voice
- Changes in students' union funding sources
- Changing student lifestyle and participation
- The rise of digital media.

The document can be found at

http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/Wave_of_change_report1.pdf

Since *A Wave of Change* was written, some aspects of the analysis have changed but, by and large, the diagnostic holds true. We intend to update *A Wave of Change* annually for the benefit of our members as the landscape evolves.

This document, *Surfing the Wave*, is our response to *A Wave of Change*. It is an aspirational document with a long-term focus that says if we achieve the work outlined in this document we believe we will face down the challenges and exploit the opportunities of the next five years.

This report has been written following extensive consultation with students, officers and staff across the student movement during 2009 and early 2010.

We have sought to improve our understanding of the challenges facing students' unions and students, stating how the national organisations will support students' unions in particular to meet those challenges. Therefore, the intended audience for this document is student representatives and students' union staff.

This report outlines a response to each of the drivers detailed above based on the feedback we received about *A Wave of Change*. Many of these proposals are not quick fixes and will take time to realise, but this is a strategic document and therefore has a long-term time horizon.

Each section describes the issue highlighted under each driver (with the original text from *A Wave of Change* in italics), discusses possible responses and then proposes practical recommendations.

This report will be submitted to NUS Conference, NUS Services (NUSSL) Convention and the Association of Managers in Students' Unions (AMSU) AGM. The approved version will lead to a new five-year strategic plan for the student movement. We will outline short-, medium- and long-term priorities by July 2010.

A separate piece of work will be undertaken to help students' unions of all sizes (particularly smaller students' unions) to plan for and respond to the implications and recommendations outlined in this document. We will complete this work by July 2010.

Surfing the Wave is accompanied by a publication called *How the National Organisations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*, which outlines proposals for designing a national infrastructure that would support students' unions to achieve the ambitious agenda outlined here.

² We have re-ordered the drivers in this document because we thought this order would read better. We see all the drivers as equally important and inter-dependent.

Students Need a Strong Student Movement, Now, More Than Ever

There is great uncertainty about the future of further and higher education, shaped by the consequences of a savage global recession. We are about to experience huge public expenditure cuts. In England, a review of variable fees is taking place, with business interests at the fore. This could well set a prototype for other nations to follow. Students face the prospect of walking into a perfect storm of sweeping cuts in further and higher education, which will inevitably damage the student experience and probably lead to industrial disputes, at the very time when they are likely to be asked for more money to fund their education and when student support in both sectors is under threat. There are a million and a half fewer adult learners in education than there were three years ago. On top of this, over a million 18–24 year-olds are now unemployed and 30,000 people applied for university in 2009 but were unsuccessful. These statistics show no sign of abating. Indeed, university applicants in 2010 will be competing for places against those who didn't secure a place in 2009.

So if ever students needed a strong student movement – one that makes their lives demonstrably better – it is now.

At a national level, that may involve addressing the shambolic administration of the Student Loans Company, securing funding for students in hardship (as has happened in Scotland), engaging creatively to find solutions for applicants who couldn't get into university or by generating proposals to tackle the graduate jobs crisis.

At a students' union level, that might mean giving welfare support and advice to students anxious about their levels of debt. It might mean ensuring students' increasing expectations about their educational experience are met. Or it might mean developing students' employability skills at a time of increased competition for jobs, through participation in co-curricular activities such as clubs, societies or

community volunteering programmes. It might be about the academic advice a student gets that keeps them on their course; learning about democratic participation; or fostering a community of active citizens. It might mean enhancing the social side of university life that generates social capital, accelerates informal learning and engenders a sense of fun and well-being.

And it's not just students who need a strong student movement – wider society does too. Because students and graduates are not the only ones who suffer from cuts in education – families and communities also suffer. **We have a vital role in shaping a better education sector and a more prosperous society.**

Changing under pressure: the economic impact on the key drivers

Since *A Wave of Change* was published, the economic context for the five key drivers we identified has itself changed considerably, affecting those drivers in crucial ways.

The Importance of the Student Voice

The costs of studying have risen hugely in the last few years and will continue to rise. At the same time, the job market has become hugely competitive and pressurised. Students will become much more demanding and this will be felt by students' unions, for example through much higher casework loads or increased pressure to demonstrate impact on quality improvement. The student voice will be most influential where it is aligned with economic issues, such as the monetary 'return' on particular courses.

A Hyper-diversity within the Student Body, the Education Sector and Students' Unions

The trend towards differentiated 'missions' in education is likely to accelerate, as institutions place even greater importance on protecting revenue associated with their areas of strength. In further education, large and well-established colleges will become more dominant because of their relative financial security and base of assets. In higher education, the same will apply to research-intensive and specialised institutions. Students' unions will face increasing pressure to reflect their respective institutions' missions more explicitly.

Changes in Students' Union Funding Sources

Public spending on higher education has already been cut substantially for the next financial year and further cuts are anticipated. As a result, union block grants will be held at their present level for several years, or reduced in some cases. At the same time, pressure on the pockets of students themselves may

lead to a further reduction in the revenue from unions' commercial activities and could well affect participation in student activities.

Changing Student Lifestyle and Participation

Studying full-time may become the minority mode of study over a five-year period, because part-time study combined with work will become increasingly attractive, especially if the support regime is improved. There may also be more 'compressed' courses, such as two year honours degrees. There will be increased demand for 'bite-size' learning in multiple subject areas and across all educational levels, as people try to assemble distinctive mixtures of qualifications to succeed in the job market.

The Rise of Digital Media

Because students will have less disposable income than ever before, the online world will become an even more important means of social interaction and entertainment. Innovation in the digital sector (especially new web technology) is not driven by high-value investment or public spending, so this will continue to be a fast-moving and fast-growing sector. Web-based learning may be expanded as a means to drive up participation while controlling and reducing costs.

Future Students' Unions

Students' unions are already changing, but we need to do more. They are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of scope, scale and demographics, but we believe some core characteristics will become essential elements of all successful students' unions – from the smallest further education students' unions to the largest higher education students' unions and across the whole of the UK.

We believe successful students' unions in the future will:

- Excel at understanding the varying needs of their members:
 - be able to articulate these needs
 - back them up with evidence
 - and respond to those needs effectively
- Have a clear focus on academic representation, with specific goals that improve the educational experience of their members
- Possess the campaigning tools and skills needed to achieve such change
- Provide opportunities for friendship and fun, building communities and a sense of belonging amongst their members
- Facilitate students' academic and social development
- Be able to demonstrate the students' union has had a positive impact on students' lives
- Work efficiently and effectively and be a flexible, agile organisation that can quickly adapt to the changing needs of its members
- Have effective means of communicating with its members and have an ongoing dialogue with them, amplifying under-represented and marginalised voices
- Be student-led and demonstrate that it shares its members' values as part of everything it does

- Look to reduce operating costs and limit commercial risk
- Be able to expand into growth areas
- Work collaboratively with partners to leverage expertise.

Traditionally, students' unions have seen high levels of participation in activities as one of the key determinants of success. We believe that in the future there will still be significant numbers of students' unions, particularly in the Russell Group and the 1994 Group, successfully achieving high levels of participation in activities as diverse as sports clubs and societies, to RAG and union entertainments. Participation in such activities should be embraced, supported and enhanced at a national level. For many institutions these activities are the lifeblood of the student community and will remain critical aspects of the student experience, assisting university recruitment and retention, and critically transforming students' lives.

But we also believe a focus on improving students' educational experience affects *all* students, from part-time postgraduate student to full-time undergraduate, from distance learner to work-based learner. By focusing on – and demonstrably improving – students' educational experience, students' unions will preserve their legitimacy by demonstrating their impact to students and institutions. We believe a focus on representation and an enhanced educational experience is the best way to **make all students' lives better**.

How students' unions might improve students' educational experience



The Importance of the Student Voice

“Representation must never be seen, except in strategic and practical terms, as an end in itself. Too many see it as a question of communication and merely sitting on the appropriate committee. The purpose of representation is to secure educational and institutional change” *Student Politics and Higher Education*, Digby Jacks, 1975

The Context

There is significant interest at a national and local level on the importance of student engagement. We would identify this as the ultimate strategic challenge and priority for the student movement. Partly driven by the need to respond to the student ‘consumer voice’ in a differentiated fees system and in part due to a willingness to make learning a partnership of co-production between the student/learner and the academic, we are witnessing an unprecedented degree of interest in the importance of the student voice in shaping all aspects of the learning experience – whether that be about contact hours, the curriculum, the quality of teaching or the state of university accommodation.

As the Government, further and higher education institutions develop their own forms of direct engagement and research on student needs, often bypassing student-led organisations, the challenge to the student movement is how do we demonstrate the legitimacy and value of student-led organisations in truly representing the many voices of a diverse student body? It is the interpretation of the student voice which has been, and should remain, a point of differentiation compared to market research companies.

Some Evidence

The 2008 NUS/HSBC Student Experience Survey revealed that 92 per cent of students are given the opportunity to provide feedback about their course but only 51 per cent of these students believe that it is acted on. 23 per cent of students feel involved in shaping the content, curriculum or design of their course compared to 57 per cent that wanted to be (source: NUS/HSBC Student Experience Survey)

Leading the Debate and Changing the Culture in the Student Movement

Student representation is vital. This is because to ensure the future legitimacy of the student movement we need to be relevant to more than 10–35 per cent of the student population. But the challenge is steep. Unions are still often perceived as alcohol-driven buildings. Sabbatical roles still tend to be dominated by internal concerns. Representation is treated as a process and is often resourced poorly.

In all unions – at all levels and of all sizes – things have to change. If student representation is the ultimate strategic challenge and priority for the student movement, then NUS has a central role to play in championing its role and importance. This means more than generating model training materials or handbooks; it means stimulating debate, driving organisational change and challenging further and higher education institutions and national bodies. It means supporting students’ unions to ensure student representation survives and thrives, leading to tangible improvements in the student experience in the eyes of students. And it means students’ unions generating a significant number of learner advocates (where students support other students to achieve educational change): focusing on creating responsive courses and teachers; driving up National Student Survey (NSS) and Learner Views survey scores; raising retention levels and helping students through adversity.

Above all, what’s needed is confident, transformational leadership to envision a future where the central and defining role of a students’ union is to act as a powerful representational body. You told us that you

want significant help from the national bodies to catalyse the dramatic change needed.

In the consultation, you told us to be much more bold and challenging in the future:

Recommendation: Campaign for a national entitlement to student representation and consultation, as is present in other countries, to be applied inside all publicly-funded or accredited institutions.

Recommendation: Research and benchmark spend, services, outputs and impacts to enable comparisons to be made between unions in driving up representational activity.

Recommendation: Develop and promote new thinking on students' union organisational forms, student officer roles and management tools to support representation.

Recommendation: Research – and disseminate guidance on – the role, conduct, competencies and job satisfaction of sabbatical officers.

Recommendation: Establish a national academic journal of student representation, to lead debates and harvest radical practice in our field.

Recommendation: Produce a national online 'understanding education' module for student representatives and staff.

Becoming Standards Champions

Students have higher expectations in a fee-paying system and expect a quality, value-for-money learning experience. The uncertainty of future fees regimes and the potential for an unregulated fees system in England, and possibly across the UK, poses major challenges to the student movement.

There has been considerable debate about student consumerism since the publication of *A Wave of Change* in the run up to the announcement of the HE Framework and the England HE Fees Review. Some regard the model as problematic and damaging – but

regardless of the level to which students pay for their education and the methodology for making such a contribution, we believe that students have the right to wider and better information about their university and programme of study, as well as guarantees about minimum standards and entitlements on key features of their educational experience. Even in Scotland, where there are no fees for full-time undergraduates and where the Scottish sector, in rhetoric at least, does not view students as consumers, postgraduate, international and students in the college sector still pay towards their education. All these students whether fee-paying or not, have a right to expect minimum standards.

New models of student 'voice' and representation are emerging. Professor Frank Coffield develops the concept of a 'community of practice' in learning. In this approach, the learning process is not seen as delivery or production, but as *induction*. It is the journey learners take on their way to becoming active participants and practitioners in a particular trade, profession, discipline or discourse. The emphasis is on building relationships – not only between teachers and students, but between students at the same and differing levels of study.

We believe it is critical that we respond proactively to the inevitable rise of student consumerism, which may be better expressed as increased demands by students who view themselves, at least in part, as paying customers. That is not to suggest that we unthinkingly embrace this approach – the well-rehearsed critique of student consumerism regularly identifies that educational outcomes are co-produced.

But there is a need to accept that elements of the consumer model are important and, above all, neither NUS nor students' unions should be arrogant enough to suppose that we could dismiss our members' expectations on student rights. Crucially, NUS and students' unions have a role in securing and monitoring minimum standards in areas like access to tutors, student feedback, facilities and other key areas of expectation. We anticipate a rise in student complaints, and must plan for this accordingly.

In the English HE Framework, *Higher Ambitions*, the Government made clear that “All universities should publish a standard set of information setting out what students can expect in terms of the nature and quality of their programme”. The Conservatives have proposed similar measures. Regardless of the outcome of the fees review, we are now calling on the Government to establish a student rights and experience taskforce. Led by NUS, it would build on recommendations in *Higher Ambitions* to bring together the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and others to work with the sector and advise on how these goals should be achieved.

In the past, NUS has focused a lot on national representation to national decision makers. But the vast majority of decisions that affect students' lives are made locally. The future must involve reinventing collectivism so that national representation to national decision makers still happens, but much more focus is placed on empowering students' unions and student representatives to use materials, arguments and case studies to win arguments for students on the ground.

You've told us you want to see the following:

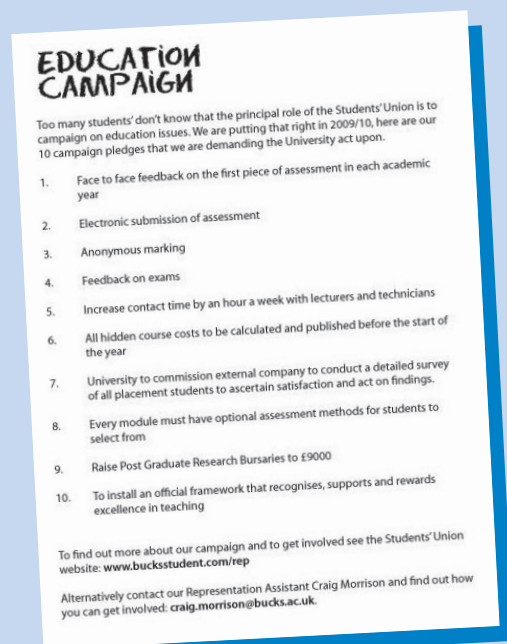
Recommendation: Campaign for the mandatory introduction of institutional/national student charters that make clear students' entitlements to different types of facilities, teaching, resources and support. Such standards and guarantees should become enforceable on an institution.

Recommendation: A range of 'bargaining support' materials on key issues for use by students' unions should be disseminated and uploaded on the new Membership Extranet, including a campaigns materials hub showcasing educational campaigning materials on areas like student feedback or library access.

Recommendation: Students' unions should be supported to ensure that robust complaint procedures are in place at every institution.

Recommendation: NUS should engage with sector bodies and government to explore how both students' unions and NUS might be better equipped to support students to enforce these rights, standards and minimum entitlements.

Case Study: Bucks Students' Union Education Campaign



Bucks Students' Union has been working hard to refocus around their core objectives, including the provision of academic representation, ensuring that they are campaigning effectively on behalf of their members (all students at Bucks) to ensure they receive a better deal on their education. In order to achieve this Bucks Students' Union has launched its Education Campaign for 2009–10, which has, at its heart, 10 key objectives. The union believes these objectives are essential if they are to provide the education that their students demand.

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to ensure the mandatory publication of the content of courses, learner expectations and on the value of specific qualifications in both academic and employment terms.

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to establish a duty on institutions to accurately calculate the 'total costs of study' to eradicate hidden course costs.

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to establish mandatory annual course responsiveness reports for all students inside programme specifications, making clear how student feedback has influenced the programme.

Recommendation: Students' unions should be supported to organise regular, open discussions and debates about institutional policy and strategy, in which both students and staff (academic and administrative) could participate.

Recommendation: NUS should seek funding to promote student-led awards in every institution that recognise and celebrate quality teaching and the wider contribution of academic staff (including more recognition of the important role played by personal tutors).

Being Evidence-led

Universities spend considerable time considering their National Student Survey (NSS) results, developing strategies in response to this data. This is reinforced by significant market research undertaken within FE and HE to monitor quality and to gather student feedback. The Government has established both the National Learner Panel (for FE) and the National Student Forum (for HE), as well as holding several student juries across the country 'to amplify the student voice'.

The days of a contribution made in a college or university meeting being 'self-evidently true' merely because the contributor is a student representative are over. The hyper-diversity of students, the complexity of education and the heightened demands of learners all mean that robust research and evidence is crucial to the effective representation of students. There has been

Case Study: Edinburgh University Students' Association Teaching Awards

Having come bottom in the UK for student feedback, Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) organised Teaching Awards to celebrate excellence in teaching. Expecting a few hundred nominations, they received 2,700 nominations for 621 members of staff from 60 courses and 50 departments. Similar teaching awards are taking place across the UK at different sizes of institution to champion and highlight teaching excellence.

a false debate over evidence in the past, with some suggesting robust research is the enemy of student advocacy, representation and democracy. It isn't. Putting learners in charge of the commissioning, interpretation and promotion of research about the student experience is the most powerful combination possible if we are to promote, defend and extend students' rights.

During the consultation on *Surfing the Wave*, you said one of the challenges to our legitimacy is when the make-up of student representatives is so narrowly composed, it allows our critics to question how truly representative we are. It is important that more work is done nationally and locally to ensure student representatives are genuinely diverse and not drawn from an increasingly traditional pool of students. A disproportionately high number of white, male, full-time undergraduates are student reps, underscoring the need for, and impact of liberation campaigns, with targeted equality and diversity work. For instance, 25 per cent of current union presidents are women, against an HE student population made up of 57 per cent women. Amongst UK-domiciled sabbatical student officers only 9.5 per cent are black, whereas 17.2 per

cent of total HE UK domiciled students are black. This work is particularly important when one considers how many students' union staff are former students' union officers, undermining the diversity of the student movement and our ability to effectively represent the full spectrum of our membership.

One of the disappointing developments in government policy in recent years has been the creation of large, expensive 'learner panel' projects in both FE and HE that have singularly failed to ensure that real evidence is seen by ministers and policy makers. Instead, two small focus groups (which NUS nevertheless participated in) have been invited to feedback on government policies and key issues, with the assumption that their views are representative or legitimate. We'd like to see a real change in emphasis towards robust research being debated and interpreted by student leaders.

You told us you want and need us to:

- Continue to commission and publish national studies on the student experience to drive policy change at a national level
- Bring together groups of students, students' unions and partners to commission and publish studies on particular issues of concern (eg nursing student non-completion, Million+ assessment methods, hidden course costs in London)
- Publish challenging research on important but ignored topics, or where assumptions dominate
- Ensure that national research can be locally replicated for maximum impact
- Work together with quality agencies to improve the quality of collective student submissions to institutional quality processes
- Propose to government that there should be robust, evidence-led alternatives to 'learner panels' in both FE and HE.

Recommendation: We should create an online educational policy research hub, acting as a signpost and showcase for research into the student experience.

Recommendation: There should be a co-ordinated and strategic approach to stimulating innovative and pioneering thinking towards research across the student movement.

Recommendation: A strategy will be developed with the NUS Liberation Campaigns to broaden the diversity of students' union representatives and students' union staff over the next five years – to be published by December 2010, following research.

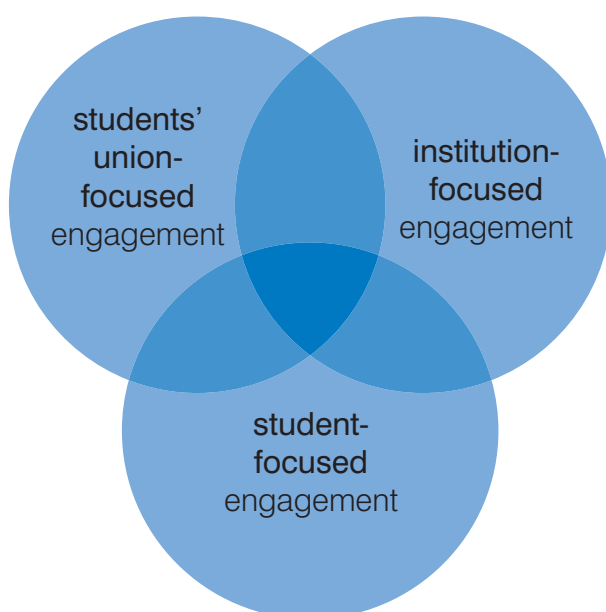
Student Engagement

At a national level, the Higher Education Academy has established student subject centres and the QAA are running a pilot project where students will sit as members of the audit panel for Institutional Audit in England and Wales (following Scotland's lead).

Student engagement is firmly on the agenda of HE policy makers and practitioners, but we might usefully separate out our understanding of different types of student engagement:

1. **Students' union-focused** engagement where students discuss the students' union as an organisation, encourage participation in the union, an aspect of the union (a specific campaign) and/or students' union governance (eg general meeting, elections, strategic planning, referendum etc)
2. **Institution-focused** engagement to encourage student participation in university quality assurance mechanism (eg attend committees, complete surveys, course representation)
3. **Student-focused** engagement which is about talking with all students about their lives and experiences and using that knowledge to (re)define the agenda for the students' union and institution around student life experiences. This is about shifting to a focus on outcomes rather than processes.

You told us that you want much more focus in the future on institution-focused engagement and student-focused engagement.



Institution-focused engagement – you said:

- We should develop a series of materials, such as guides, toolkits and benchmarking tools, for students' unions and institutions to improve how they engage students in shaping their learning experience. These materials will address representation structures, feedback mechanisms and how institutions engage students in shaping their curriculum as well as supporting their evaluation of how they are currently engaging students.
- Students' unions should facilitate students, student representatives and academics in subject areas to discuss teaching and learning issues to enhance the student learning experience.
- Publications on student engagement should be produced, looking at what student engagement is, why it is important, examples of effective practice and offering different perspectives from across the diversity of the sector.

Recommendation: There should be a national online network of course and faculty representatives, along with events and activities to encourage representatives to focus on securing educational change.

Student-focused engagement – you said:

- We should produce material that unions can use in campaigning and representation as part of a 'student lives and voices' approach, with case studies involving direct student quotes, student diaries or video clips
- Promote KPIs and standards around face-to-face contact with students ie canvassing canteen and kitchen meetings, focus groups etc.

Learner Voice in FE³

Within further education, we have seen legislative changes that place a duty on colleges to include student representation on governing bodies and the need to embed Learner Involvement strategies. In addition, the 2006 FE White Paper specifically refers to the potential for an agency to raise the quality of FE course representation, presenting opportunities.

Case Study: University of Salford Students' Union

In July 2009, the University of Salford Students' Union radically changed its representational and governance model. No longer do the sabbatical officers represent functions such as communications or activities. They now represent one of the four university faculties. This radical move was intended to: ensure representation is at the core of the union; create greater links, leadership and focus to the student rep system from the students; provide better access to the student voice; influence changes to the student experience with university management; and target 'hard to reach' groups. Whilst it is still early days to evaluate the effectiveness of this model, it shows an innovative approach to refocusing a students' union to achieving educational impact.

³ When we refer to FE we include the college sector in Scotland

All FE providers are rightly expected to have clear arrangements for learner involvement in place, and their inspectors and funders look for this too. NUS led the establishment of mandatory learner involvement strategies in all FEIs and this is already having a huge impact. Most achieve involvement in quality improvement and assurance processes via a student representative system. Whilst this has been successful in some colleges, there is huge variation in the quality and level of support available to colleges to support an effective system. In particular, training for representatives and the engagement of non-traditional learners have been highlighted as a problem in evaluative findings.

It is clear that at present, whilst materials abound, there is a lack of dedicated support on offer to those with responsibility for further education course representatives inside providers, leading to vast inconsistencies in training across the country. You told us you want to see a consistent approach taken to FE representative training, so all FE students are effectively represented, with consistent levels of support. In addition, you told us you want to see a step change in the involvement of non-traditional learners in quality and 'voice' processes, particularly for work-based learner settings and adult/ part-time/disabled learners.

You said you need the following.

Recommendation: NUS should produce 'How to Guides' on campaigning on local FE issues like course fees, costs of study and rights to representation.

Recommendation: NUS should seek funding for a national development project for 'class-level' student representation.

Recommendation: NUS should offer support to learner voice and quality professionals in providers, in partnership with others.

Recommendation: NUS should establish a legacy of materials, systems and professionals in each local authority area to renew and promote good practice.

Case Study: City College Norwich Students' Union

The students' union works in collaboration with the college senior management team when it comes to running City College Norwich. The college corporation has three student governors and a student affairs committee, which is unique among FE colleges. The corporation provides funding for two full-time, paid sabbatical positions within the students' union. These decision makers are supported by fully functional school councils at each site and a 36-strong student parliament, comprising the students' union executive committee and class representatives.

Nationally, you've told us that you want to see a replacement for the National Learner Panel (NLP) with an annual series of events that provide learners with an opportunity to set policy through a Learner Consultation Programme (LCP). The events would provide a far wider engagement with learners, especially with learners and representatives who are more knowledgeable about the policy landscape. It would provide a framework for policy makers to engage with the many voices amongst learners, and most critically it would allow this engagement to happen on learners' terms in an environment that fosters their engagement.

You told us to:

- Achieve this cost-effectively by utilising NUS networks
- Incorporate selected learner involvement projects currently being run by NUS and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)
- Engage learners, practitioners and policy makers in the design and delivery of these events.

The demise of the Learning and Skills Council, with the resulting transfer of funding to local authorities,

may afford opportunities for additional resources for FE students' unions, through local partnerships between providers, users and local councils.

The first of April 2010 promises to be a landmark date for colleges, local authorities and learners. The transfer of responsibilities for 14–19 from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities represents an exciting opportunity to ensure that the education and training on offer for young people is high quality and meets students' needs.

In recent years there has been huge focus on the 'learner voice', ensuring that learners at all levels are fully engaged in their courses and colleges. Each provider is required by law to have in place a Learner Involvement Strategy that sets out how it will consult with and involve learners in its governance and decision making. But whilst large parts of the student experience can be affected by the decisions a provider makes, from 1 April we know that local authorities will also have huge influence over the experiences that learners have. You told us you want to see a large emphasis on work with local authorities as a result.

You said we should do the following:

Recommendation: NUS should help students' unions secure a simple learner involvement strategy in each local authority having consulted with local learners about how it could work, ensuring local authorities liaise directly with existing local student governors and student leaders of students' unions, associations and councils in colleges and work-based learner providers.

Recommendation: NUS should ensure local authorities support, encourage and develop learner voice mechanisms inside providers, offering access to authority facilities where these could add value to learner voice efforts.

Retention and Individual Advocacy

Too many students still drop out of university with potentially disastrous, lifelong consequences. It's not good enough to say the UK fares better than other

countries when the impact of dropping out is so damaging – in personal, societal and economic terms – and certainly during a time of recession. The financial costs of dropping out to both students and institutions are significant. We believe individual advocacy, welfare support and advice centres all have a critical role here, as does peer-to-peer support. Many students prefer to go to a students' union for support and advice rather than an institution, as it is seen to be independent and one step removed. Students drop out for many different reasons including financial worries, life pressures, isolation or mental health reasons, though many students also choose to drop out for legitimate and understandable reasons. In addition, many 'drop-outs' are in fact non-traditional learners taking course breaks or switching institutions. A more flexible credit-based system would celebrate – rather than denigrate – these learners. You told us that there was a need to take a more strategic approach to helping reduce drop-out rates, and better supporting students who are considering such action.

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to ensure all advice providers (whether university or students' unions) are required to measure and report case work statistics to inform local and national strategies and policy, with such data used to inform evidence-based campaigning.

Recommendation: Students' unions could pilot student self-help networks, especially on issues that, university provision does not address well – such as family issues, loneliness, mental health issues and bullying.

Recommendation: NUS should seek government funding to develop an NUS-branded national website for students considering dropping out, that enables peer-to-peer support. We believe this would open up new routes for students to discuss concerns, delivering solutions in a way that is not currently available to them.

Recommendation: NUS should step up campaigning for a more flexible, credit-based HE system.

A Hyper-diversity within the Student Body, the Education Sector and Students' Unions

The Context

The phrase 'hyper-diversity' is used to describe how we are witnessing diversity at multiple levels – within the student body, across the education sectors, geographically, across institutions and students' unions. The student body has changed considerably in the past 15 years with mass expansion resulting in 2.38 million students studying in higher education (source: HESA 2006/07) and approximately 5 million studying in further education. This presents considerable challenges to a collectivist model as rarely, if ever, can the national organisations provide 'one-size-fits-all' support to students' unions.

In our discussions with students' union officers and staff, the challenges of hyper-diversity stood out as one of the most resonant issues facing the student movement. Neither universities and colleges, nor unions themselves, are seen as having properly reduced the move from "village to town" as participation in higher education has expanded so dramatically – most retain an arguably unrepresentative activist model whose key provisions are aimed at traditional undergraduates. And although some unions do run 'old campus' style models effectively, the danger is that even their comparatively high participation rates mask a skewed approach toward traditional undergraduates.

Our central analysis of the hyper-diversity driver is that too many attempts to better serve 'non-traditional' students have focused in the past on non-academic issues or on making non-traditional students more like traditional students. Most part-time students, for instance, will never want to join a sports club, however many barriers to involvement are removed, but timetabling issues may well be critical to them. The step change required is to focus locally and nationally on the educational discrimination that each group of students faces, recognising that institutions must change to meet the needs of their students and for students' unions to work to achieve these changes, because that is what powerful educational representative bodies are for.

Case Study: The Arts Group

A group of students' unions from arts-based institutions have been networking to explore common teaching and learning issues affecting their students and to share best practice. We anticipate more students' unions coming together on common issues such as these in the future and national support should be flexible enough to facilitate and enhance this work, ensuring it leads to outcomes that improve the educational experience.

Our models of representation have previously depended on participation, yet participation in student activities is not on the agenda of many types of student – either through choice, personal circumstance or lack of time. You told us that you want NUS to take a central role in debating and developing new models of activity, provision, participation and representation to ensure that no voices, however diverse, are left unheard. We are completing research on students' unions commitment to – and engagement with – widening participation which led to a separate strategy for widening participation published in April 2010.

You said to us you want to see:

- An increasing focus on flexible, issue-based networks of students and students' unions, with real support for making change on educational issues – rather than traditional, rigid 'conference, committee, campaign' structures
- An integrated partnership approach with external bodies to focus on groups of students affected by the challenges of hyper-diversity such as The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL), increasing the focus on educational discrimination.

Need for outstanding research

If we are to respond effectively to the issue of hyper-diversity we need outstanding data – both nationally and locally – to understand the life journey and needs of all students. We need to understand that a service or approach undertaken by a students' union might open up opportunities for one part of the student body, but also could simultaneously create barriers for other types of students.

You told us more assistance could be given to help students' unions better understand their students. We believe a better membership database could be of critical importance here (see accompanying document, *How the Organisations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*).

Recommendation: Templates such as the Teesside matrix (see below) should be further developed for use by all students' unions to better understand how they are impacting on their student body.

Recommendation: We should conduct national and local research, asking students what they want from their students' union in particular to understand how – and if – students' unions (and NUS) are serving the needs and wishes of different student groups.

Recommendation: We should identify a number of market research providers and negotiate discounts for students' unions to use.

Recommendation: We should up-skill staff and officers to better understand research methods, developing practical research skills such as facilitating focus groups.

Case Study: Teesside University Students' Union

Teesside University Students' Union undertook qualitative research to better understand the diverse needs of their student body in order to inform their decision making (see Appendix Two). This is a template others may wish to replicate.

Recommendation: A bespoke statistical digest will be produced annually for every students' union, which highlights trends and data for certain types of institutions (eg mission groups, small and specialist institutions etc.) including information on demographics, NSS scores etc. This would also include data on key students' union statistics to compare against others in the same mission group or institutional type.

We have already witnessed the emergence of mission groups as universities differentiate their offer which has been mirrored by students' union mission groups

Mission groups (see Appendix One) offer a way of making sense of the increasing diversification of higher education, and with it the varying needs of students' unions. Supporting mission groups and encouraging unions to network within them was an explicit objective of the NUS Governance Review. Whilst some groups and networks already exist, you have told us to step up interventions in this area. In addition to continuing to engage nationally with groups of universities/colleges you said we should:

Recommendation: Develop a mission groups strategy that ensures students' unions are able to make meaningful comparisons with similar unions and better understand the distinctive characteristics, demographics and common traits within each mission group.

Skills, Work-based Learners and Raising the Participation Age

There is a clear drive by the Government to meet the targets within the Leitch Review (2006) which aims to dramatically raise skill levels in the UK by making learning more flexible. This has influenced the decision to raise the educational leaving age to 18, the introduction of 14–19 diplomas and is likely to see an increase in part-time students, distance learners, a credit-based approach to learning, work-based learners, apprenticeships and people undertaking continuing personal development (CPD)... Students' unions will need to respond to this more flexible style of learning if they are to effectively represent these students.

Young people starting Year 7 in September 2010 will be the first cohort to stay on in education or training until the age of 18. It is predicted that by 2015 when the RPA (raising of the participation age) is enforced, there will be around 8 million 14–19 year-olds in further education. From the age of 14, young people will be given the opportunity to leave the classroom and thrive in an environment in which they are more able to learn and achieve.

We've known for a long time that engaging work-based learners is difficult. The policy landscape is complex, and many apprentices only spend one day a week at their training provider – some spend no time there at all. How, for instance, can these students attend a student council meeting on a Wednesday afternoon when they have such little time?

Independent training providers offer opportunities to thousands of young people outside of a college, meaning that there is no legal obligation for an autonomous democratic student body and these student voices could potentially be left unheard.

It is also looking increasingly likely that the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) will announce that colleges will be able to accept full-time enrolments for 14-year-olds as opposed to the 'day release' nature of most programmes today. The development of the 14–19 curriculum, specifically DCSF's flagship qualification, 'The Diploma', certainly suggests that young people deciding to take a vocational route full-time at 14 will have the opportunity to do so. This should be encouraged and supported.

You told us that, if we're serious about representing further education students at a national level, then we must start opening opportunities up for ourselves to win influence within the FE sector in the same way we do in the HE sector. We need to be serious about the capacity-building work we do with our current members in the FE sector if we are to be taken seriously by a new 'breed' of education provider that we have not engaged with before. We will not be taken seriously by private providers if we are unable to demonstrate the impact

and improvements we have made by engaging and campaigning on behalf of work-based learners.

You told us that you want to see much more joint work with these bodies, which range from accountancy qualification organisations through to the nursing and midwifery councils.

We know that apprentices want to be a part of the student movement and also want access to the benefits other learners get, such as access to NUS Extra cards. By opening up these new routes of direct engagement, we can ensure these learners get the support they need to positively shape their learning experience.

Recommendation: NUS should immediately seek to establish itself within the private training sector (where public funding exists) – taking the necessary actions to expand NUS Extra to these groups.

Recommendation: NUS should empower work-based learners to achieve change within their learning, investigating funding possibilities to deliver advice and support direct to these learners.

Case Study: Humber Apprentice Panel

A recent newsletter from the Humber Apprentice Panel stated that they considered themselves to be a students' union and are looking into ways in which they could become affiliated to NUS. Chris Robert, Chair of the HAP, stated "as apprentices we do consider ourselves as in learning even though we work over 37 hours per week and receive an apprenticeship wage. Why shouldn't apprentices be entitled to an NUS discount?" NUS Extra could be a route into communicating with these learners, empowering them to shape their learning experience.

Recommendation: Lobby national planning and funding bodies to place pressure on providers to ensure effective student engagement must continue.

Part-time Students

With 40 per cent of all HE students studying part-time this will be an increasingly important area of work for NUS. NUS will work closely with leading academic practitioners to develop our work on part-time students.

You said we should:

- Campaign to end the disparity in funding between full-time and part-time students
- Pull together existing research to define our work on part-time students
- Organise focus groups of part-time students to identify the specific issues they face, backed up by online research
- Produce an annual briefing for students' unions on the issues facing part-time students.

In addition we will:

Recommendation: Engage with the Part-Time Student FutureTrack research being undertaken by Professor Claire Callendar and disseminate key learnings.

International Students

Over the next five years we anticipate seeing an increase in international students with demand for approximately 325,000 places in 2010 growing to 511,000 in 2020 (source: Vision 2020, British Council).

Of all the areas of hyper-diversity, in which you told us you wanted support, international students was seen as a top priority. You told us you wanted to stop international students being seen as one large homogenous group and be clear that international students were from different nationalities, with different motivations and experiences. There is a need to humanise the approach to international students, from both an institutional and students' union perspective. In particular, you said we should focus on the specific

teaching and learning issues affecting international students, including ensuring better integration with the wider student body. You also said that internationalising education was different from responding to the needs of international students in the UK. You said NUS should support students' unions to engage with, and effectively represent, the increasing number of students studying abroad.

You said you wanted to see the following:

Recommendation: We should develop a charter for international students' rights that focuses on student experience and value-for-money issues.

Recommendation: A digest of existing research on international students should be developed for use by students' unions, alongside a programme of international student focus groups to examine the student life cycle and what it feels like to be an international student in FE and HE.

Recommendation: Following the work of the NUS Internationalising Students' Unions project, we should work closely with 40 HE students' unions to develop a discrete strategy for international students within two years, setting a public goal of getting every HE students' union to have a separate dedicated strategy for international students within five years.

Postgraduates

There has been a steady growth in the number of postgraduate students over the past 10 years and one could assume this trend will continue... Between 1996–97 and 2005–06 total postgraduate numbers increased by 66 per cent... The student movement has historically been weaker at representing postgraduate students and will need to build on existing good practice and look to new forms of engagement if we are to raise the quality and impact of postgraduate representation.

The demise of the National Postgraduate Committee (NPC) and the integration of this portfolio into NUS' core work has resulted in NUS making real, deep and lasting progress in recent months on postgraduate

representation, assisting students' unions to better involve postgraduate taught and research students. More and more of NUS' work needs to be about empowering 'bargaining support' for unions locally, rather than negotiating with ministers nationally.

Although progress has been made, you told us that you want us to go further, stepping up our work on the representation of postgraduate students.

Recommendation: NUS should respond to the Government's postgraduate review and develop tools to enable students' unions to achieve positive change, including developing a postgraduate charter to enable unions to campaign locally.

Recommendation: Update the NUS/NPC/UCU charter and work with UCU to undertake a survey of postgraduates that teach to understand and highlight key concerns.

Recommendation: Identify the key issues facing postgraduate research students relating to their supervision, with minimum standards and mandatory training for supervisors developed.

Recommendation: Work with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to develop the new PTES (*Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey*) and disseminate the results of PRES (*Postgraduate Research Experience Survey*) so that every students' union can understand and interpret this data and effectuate change at a local level.

Students and Faith

A growing number of students in the UK practice in a faith group. As such, they are an important section of the UK's population. Universities and colleges are not just places for academic learning – students develop new interests and build relationships with people, from many different backgrounds.

You have asked us to provide additional resources to proactively serve students and support students' unions around faith issues, promoting community

cohesion on university campuses (and through this tackle violent extremism).

Recommendation: We should champion and promote interfaith dialogue at a national level through a national interfaith student forum for both HE and FE students. At a local level, we should do this by supporting HE and FE students' unions to set up local interfaith student forums. We should produce online resources for staff and officers within students' unions, as well as for student faith societies, which will promote interfaith activity and links with the wider community.

Student Parents

NUS' *Meet the Parents* report, published in 2009, was the first ever UK-wide report into the experiences of students with children in further and higher education.

Government efforts to widen participation and undertake welfare reform have led to an increase in the number of students with children. But NUS research found that the practical measures and imaginative thinking required to respond to the needs of such students have not necessarily accompanied a rise in numbers. Student parents are trying to make the most of the opportunities available; they are an inspiring and hard-working group of learners, highly-motivated by their family responsibilities and passionate about learning. Their determination to succeed is, however, constantly tested by a combination of obstructive policies, inaccessible institutional practices, and cultural assumptions about who students are.

There are a range of detailed recommendations in the report, but amongst them are:

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to ensure the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Skills Funding Agency make it a requirement for universities and colleges to collect data on the parental status of a student. Institutions should use this data to embed a holistic, integrated system of support for student parents, to include detailed and timely information about services available and entitlements.

Recommendation: NUS should provide materials to unions to campaign for universities and colleges to carry out impact assessments of their teaching and learning practices for student parents, including evaluating how their modes of study, deadline schedules, timetable provision and styles of learning either positively or negatively impact student parents.

Recommendation: NUS should campaign to ensure the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Student Loans Company (SLC) and the Skills Funding Agency should work together to produce accurate, reliable information for students with children, covering both FE and HE. This should include dedicated staff, a centralised website and paper-based materials. Institutions should add to this to provide tailored information for prospective and current students with children.

Social Discrimination

During consultation on *Surfing the Wave*, you said we should recognise that discrimination felt by many students is due to their background and identity – whether that be students who self-define within liberation campaigns or students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We should continue to confront this and recognise that the barriers impacting on students' learning experience are often wider than pure 'teaching and learning' issues.

Examples of wider social discrimination include the fact that black students are more likely to be adversely affected by funding cuts in the next few years, especially given that the majority of black students study at institutions that are most vulnerable to funding cuts. One in seven women students experience serious physical sexual violence and 68 per cent of women students experience sexual harassment. Twenty per cent of LGBT students in Higher Education take time out of their course (higher than the national average), indicating a need for formal support for LGBT students. Only one in twenty disabled people are in FE or HE, compared to one in ten for the rest of the population,

and one-third of disabled people do not feel they can enter further or higher education because of their disability. Research shows students from all liberation backgrounds suffer from a lack of anonymous marking systems.

Liberation campaigns, both nationally and locally, articulate the needs of student groups who are discriminated against and, in particular, engage student activists beyond sabbatical officers. Working with our liberation campaigns, we need to build on this work and ensure we develop new forms of engagement to articulate the views of marginalised groups who find it difficult to engage with traditional student politics for reasons of time, capacity or accessibility.

The Single Equality Bill will place an additional responsibility on students' unions and institutions to be more inclusive. Targeted work should support students' unions to ensure they have plans in place to respond to the Single Equality Bill.

Recommendation: A strategy will be developed with the liberation campaigns to identify and eliminate the barriers to participation within the student movement for black, disabled, LGBT and women students.

Recommendation: Students' unions should be properly supported to effectively respond to the Single Equality Bill.

Case Study: Bradford College Students' Union

The Bradford College Students' Union work in engaging students with learning disabilities (SLDD) has included the creation of three new student societies which run specific activities for SLDD, such as drama workshops and residentials. Involvement in the Union Parliament and class representative training is assisted through support workers.

Changes in Students' Union Funding Sources

The Context

This driver focused on changes in students' union income streams, most notably the decline in the licensed trade and growth in students' union block grants. Since we wrote *A Wave of Change* we also have a better understanding of the scale of public expenditure cuts.

Protecting Existing Income Streams

HE students' unions could become increasingly dependent on funding from their university or college which could have a detrimental impact on students' unions' influence and independence... Cuts in institutional funding could be passed on to students' union block grants.

Undoubtedly the main source of unrestricted income for students' unions is block grants, which are under serious threat as a result of funding cuts. Universities are currently looking at cuts of up to 20 per cent per annum from 2010–14 and as one vice-chancellor remarked, “universities will be asking why should students' unions not feel some of this pain also?” Approximately £75 million of public money is currently spent on further and higher education students' union block grants. In the grand scheme of further and higher education funding this is a small amount. Indeed, we believe we have an excellent story to tell in delivering excellent social returns on investment, but we need to get better at telling it. Because of this, we believe we need to quantify and communicate the social and economic impact of students' unions to justify maintaining – and ultimately growing – this investment.

Recommendation: National studies should be published annually for students' unions, giving a comprehensive account of block grant amounts (total sum and per capita spend), a breakdown of different block grant methodologies and a ‘ready reckoner’ that helps students' unions determine which is the best block grant methodology for them to deploy in negotiations.

Recommendation: Students' unions could be supported to secure funding for specific projects from different parts of an institution, with good practice and funding bids shared via the Membership Extranet.

Recommendation: We heard students' union concerns about the impact of cuts on block grants and it is proposed that NUS offers a recession support fund (in addition to the hardship fund), providing financial support for those students' unions affected by block grant cuts in 2010–11.

We anticipate a continued and significant reduction in bar sales (which halved nationally from £120 million in 1998 to £60 million in 2008) dramatically changing the funding models of higher education students' unions. This in turn could result in membership of NUS Services declining to 50–80 unions trading viably (without subsidy).

Whilst we believe membership of NUS Services could decline to 50–80 HE students' unions over the next 5–10 years it is worth noting that 53 purchasing members make up 80 per cent of the total purchasing value, and this will therefore mitigate against the full impact of lost members on total purchasing volume and power.

During the consultation many of you said that a large number of students' unions rely on the profits generated from commercial services to fund core activity. You said we should be bolder and more optimistic about growing and developing traditional income streams. We accept that more should be done to grow volume and margin in commercial services. Specific plans on this area will feature in the 2010 NUS Services Company Plan.

Nevertheless, we do anticipate many more students' unions closing bars and the profile of trading altering in the future. The NUS Services purchasing strength has been seen as a key benefit of NUS membership historically, and it is clear that NUS should further add value to enhance its membership offer whilst supporting students' unions to both secure existing income streams and generate new ones.

NUS Extra is a good example of where this has happened in the past three years. Approximately £1.2 million (ex VAT) is being generated per annum for students' unions. FE students' union income (and resources) has increased by 20 per cent as a result of NUS Extra. We anticipate this amount growing substantially over the next five years. We believe that there is a need to enhance the offering of NUS Extra and review the price on an ongoing basis – both in terms of the core price and in terms of adding benefits to the card (such as ISIC).

Recommendation: An annual benefits statement should be produced jointly by NUS and NUS Services that demonstrates the true cost and value of membership of NUS.

Recommendation: In response to feedback about growing students' union income, plus NUS becoming less reliant on affiliation fees, it is proposed that we marginally increase the price of NUS Extra in 2010–11.

Retail is an area which has shown growth across the student movement for several years, and you said we should seek to sustain this growth. Branded clothing, for instance, has seen considerable growth and you said there should be a co-ordinated approach to the retailing of branded merchandising.

As part of the consultation, it was suggested that whilst smaller students' unions still value advice and support from NUS Services, there is increasing demand for outsourced solutions from larger, more commercially developed students' unions, and it was felt that this could be brokered nationally.

Recommendation: We should provide basic consultancy services nationally to students' unions but also have a list of recommended consultants with preferential rates, or a tailored approach, to provide support and advice for more commercially developed students' unions.

Recommendation: An online commercial excellence programme should be developed, including materials on key areas of commercial knowledge such as how

to develop a commercial strategic plan, business planning, investment appraisal etc as well as disseminating benchmarking information for students' unions on indicators such as performance ratios.

Most students' unions have reoriented their primary focus on to representation and membership services, away from commercial services. At least 15 unions across the UK have divested their commercial services in the last five years for a number of different reasons.

It is for individual students' unions to decide the best approach to delivering commercial services for their own student body. Although running commercial areas at a loss could raise questions about whether a students' union would meet a public benefit test, this needs to be offset against the social capital and sense of community generated by providing social space. Every students' union should nevertheless be looking to limit commercial risk. There are examples of students' unions who have undertaken ill-thought-through commercial ventures that have threatened to bring down the entire students' union operation.

A lack of liquidity will increasingly limit the ability of a students' union to fund capital projects (such as commercial refurbishments) and equally limits the level of risk one can take. This will likely mean that students' unions have to think laterally and work in partnership with their institutions to demonstrate the impact of such capital projects on the wider student experience if they are to source capital injections to refurbish and redevelop social space.

Recommendation: Students' unions could be supported to assess the viability of their trading operations with support and advice on how to shut outlets if applicable and necessary, including providing political support to student officers on how to consult with students on such issues.

Recommendation: You suggested that case studies should be produced and disseminated that show how business cases for new social spaces have been enhanced by working in partnership with universities to

demonstrate impact on the overall student experience, and improve informal learning.

For many HE students' unions ensuring a positive working relationship between the students' union and the university or college will become increasingly important for reasons of sustainability.

In 2009, NUS embarked on a HEFCE-funded research programme that is analysing what constitutes a healthy relationship (partnership) between a students' union and an institution. This project will conclude in 2011.

Recommendation: Implement the findings of the HEFCE project exploring the relationship between a students' union and institution. Identify a nationally agreed set of principles with Universities UK (UUK), the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) and the Association of Heads of University Administrators (AHUA) that enshrine students' unions' independence and autonomy, and develop a toolkit for students' unions to work towards a relationship of partnership with their institution.

Developing New Income Streams

There are, however, new trading and service opportunities on and off campus that should be investigated and exploited. Services that may have traditionally been run by universities could in the future be run by students' unions (eg job shops, coffee shops, lettings and possibly even accommodation) if students' unions can demonstrate they can add sufficient value to successfully deliver these services (with robust business cases), thus improving the student experience.

Successful students' unions in the future will be able to expand into growth areas and work collaboratively to increase their income streams. We believe income will be generated from the following sources in particular: students; corporate bodies (including recruiters); unrestricted government funding; alumni/graduates; universities; trade unions; third sector organisations; grant-making bodies; parents of students; the EU; and schools.

We particularly think there will be growth in:

- Media sales
- Accommodation and jobs
- Alumni/graduates
- Corporate fundraising
- Energy suppliers
- Online purchasing (see Rise of Digital Media section).

Media sales – you said you felt it was wrong that we have allowed third parties to dominate our market by selling advertising to private companies on behalf of students' unions. Because the student movement did not offer an alternative national proposition, understandably students' unions sought to increase their marketing and advertising income via companies such as BAM. This meant considerable sums of money leaked out of the student movement, and more critically our position as the 'gateway to the student market' was eroded. If a third party monopolises media sales in students' unions this makes them very powerful with suppliers and brand owners, potentially makes them a 'gate keeper' to the student movement and allows them to 'call the shots' with students' unions. We will be consulting further over the next six months to determine if we should develop an internal capacity to provide media sales support or to work with an external provider. We have a highly-sophisticated and externally-respected ethical screening programme within NUS Services that could give us competitive advantage, as well as opening up the possibility of selling advertising to universities.

Recommendation: We should undertake a feasibility study to explore the possibility of selling advertising to universities as an income generator for both the national organisations (using existing ethical screening machinery) and students' unions.

Accommodation and jobs – there are pioneering examples of innovation and entrepreneurialism in income generation from new income sources, such as

Case Study: Lancaster University Students' Union Housing Office

Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) operates a Housing Office dedicated to supporting the needs of its members who choose to live off campus. This year 730 students live in houses that LUSU rents from landlords, then leases onto its members through 'head tenancy' leases. The package offered includes utilities, broadband and contents insurance. Because of the economies of scale, and consequent negotiating power with suppliers, rents are very competitive (no deposits are held) and influences private landlords to keep prices down. Where issues arise with students that cannot be resolved, the LUSU Advice Centre will represent them if desired. The office fully generates net revenue to LUSU. Other unions undertake similar initiatives. Clearly all such undertakings require robust business cases and an assessment of risk to ensure there is no reputational damage to the union.

Cardiff University Students' Union who established their own letting agency, and others who have established successful job shops.

Recommendation: These beacons of excellence should be showcased on the new extranet site and work should go into exploring opportunities for developing these initiatives nationally. Where possible, business models and templates should be shared.

Recommendation: You said there was a need to stimulate innovation, and to this end it is suggested that a new business development fund be established at a national level to provide seed funding for new initiatives.

Alumni/graduates – many students' unions currently run their own alumni initiatives but research tells us

graduates would value a national product that would support them after they leave university. At the present time, when students are graduating with considerable debt and financial concerns, we believe we have a duty to offer commercial solutions that benefit and support this market. As well as supporting those affected by the graduate jobs crisis, and providing a new income stream to the student movement, we would retain communication and contact with graduates. This will be critical in enhancing our political reach and influence as we strive to become one of the most powerful campaigning movements in the country.

NUS is planning to establish a national graduate card with products relevant for the graduate market. Students' unions would receive a commission for all those who convert from NUS Extra to purchase a graduate card.

It is also proposed that we will develop the NUS alumni programme, Friends of NUS, to ensure that we build up a network of everyone whose lives have been touched, shaped or transformed by NUS and the student movement. We will explore whether we can make this a major fundraiser and this may lead to longer-term funding opportunities through legacies. The Friends of NUS network could be used to provide mentors to students' union officers and staff, a database of individuals who can provide political access and influence to all spheres of civil society, and a potential supply of external trustees for students' unions.

Corporate fundraising – you told us we should explore income generation in particular from graduate recruiters.

Recommendation: A research project will explore the possibilities of further income generation from corporate sponsors, and particularly large graduate recruiters.

Energy suppliers – you told us we should explore possible opportunities for a student deal with an energy supplier and we believe there is an opportunity to work with utility companies to provide a competitive deal for students for green electricity, generating income as a result (through commission sales).

Recommendation: To undertake a one-year pilot with an energy company who would offer green electricity.

The need for students' unions to register as charities will open up new funding opportunities from grant-making, trust-awarding and other funding bodies. It is likely however that there will need to be an up-skilling in fundraising capacity and capability if students' unions are to exploit these funding opportunities. Whilst there could be a tension between students' unions working collaboratively and competing against each other for fundraising opportunities, there are clear opportunities for regional or partnership bid submissions.

We should be realistic about the fact that whilst many students' unions will benefit from charity registration to generate external funding by having a Charity number, we are entering a period where there will be less public funding and, as a result, likely fewer fundraising opportunities.

Nevertheless, we believe there is still a need to up-skill staff to access block grant funding. Even though funding may be more scarce from 2011–2014, in the medium- to long-term you said you believed fundraising capacity and knowledge will be essential components of a successful, sustainable students' union. To this end, we should initiate a programme that develops students' unions fundraising ability – from those who have established fundraising expertise to those with no fundraising expertise.

Providing evidence of partnership and collaboration, and ensuring value for money are key aspects of successful bid-writing, and we therefore believe there is a national role in brokering local partnerships between students' unions to develop and submit bids.

One area we have never explored is that of direct fundraising, where people might be encouraged to fund a specific national campaign or local activity. This might work, for instance, by students being asked if they wish to contribute to a 'fighting fund' for a campaign against a rise in tuition fees.

Recommendation: An online toolkit should be produced for students' unions, to include: templates on full cost recovery and bid writing; signposting key contacts and fundraising specialists; brokered preferential deals with fundraising providers and courses; and a service to provide feedback on fundraising bids prepared by students' unions.

Recommendation: We will undertake research to explore direct fundraising in more depth and to understand the reactions of students to this method of fundraising.

Whilst there could be a tension between students' unions working collaboratively and competing against each other for fundraising opportunities, there are clear opportunities for regional or partnership bid submissions.

NUS and NUS Services have collectively had notable successes in drawing down funding for a range of ethical and environmental projects. In fact, the student movement is 'ahead of the curve' in this respect, as we have a market that the Government wishes to target (students and young people) and a demonstrable track record and knowledge base in environmental matters. Building on earlier work in 'greening' our supply chain through initiatives such as ethical screening, supplier accreditation and wins through constructive engagement, NUS Services has built the agenda to encompass greening unions, universities and communities through projects including the Sound Impact Awards and Carbon Academy. More recently, significant sums have been secured for environmental projects such as Degrees Cooler through Defra's Greener Living Fund Carbon Ambassadors, through BIS and the Scottish Funding Council. Both these projects return many benefits to participating unions, including new income.

We believe that we are uniquely placed to secure more funding for our environmental work and potentially to launch a range of 'green' products for the student market, due to our expert knowledge, track record, reach and audience.

Case study: Greener Living Fund

In May 2009 NUS was awarded £515,000 to deliver a flagship behaviour change project through Defra's Greener Living Fund. The two-year project is based at 20 universities in England. It comprises projects that focus on greening university departments, encouraging students in halls to save energy and developing student-led campaigns. The projects are managed by NUS and its bid partners, but delivered locally by a partnership between the students' union and the university.

Recommendation: We will develop a five-year ethical and environmental strategy that will be designed to draw down further project funding to deliver more ethical and environmental work both nationally and via students' unions. We will also explore how we can partner with companies to deliver a range of green products for the student market.

Controlling and Reducing Expenditure

Many students' unions are undertaking collaborative ventures to increase operational efficiencies whilst improving service delivery, as is the case with trade unions, the private and third sector.

You told us many students' unions had undertaken, or would need to undertake, severe reductions in expenditure and that practical support would be helpful on areas such as undertaking a programme of redundancies or closing services.

The national organisations are merging their back office functions to save money and improve service delivery for students and students' unions. This is explained in the accompanying document, *How the National Organisations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*. We believe

that in the future there will be opportunities to provide infrastructure support for students' unions and other youth/campaigning/student/education organisations either directly or via third parties. This may involve the provision of shared Human Resources, finance and other administrative services. It is clear that we should only do this if we can guarantee quality service provision and therefore whilst we do not believe this will happen in the short term, we should work towards this over the next five years.

Students' unions are also exploring shared service provision where it is believed that this might provide cost efficiencies and improved service delivery (where cost savings are not achieved but where students see better outcomes).

Recommendation: NUS will explore the feasibility of providing shared back office functions for students' unions and other student/campaigning organisations.

Recommendation: NUS will facilitate meetings between students' unions who wish to explore collaboration to share services with other students' unions, third sector organisations or even universities.

Like many organisations, students' unions are members of pension schemes carrying significant deficits, whether that be SUSS, USS or other schemes. This is a potential time bomb which needs a bold strategic approach to

Case study: University of the Arts/LSE Students' Union

A major collaborative venture has been undertaken by the University of the Arts Students' Union and LSE Students' Union. This whole project has focused on making the most impact on students and the overall student experience, by sharing back office functions, senior management expertise and saving overheads, whilst exploiting the talent that exists in each organisation.

ensure these deficits are being managed down and risk is mitigated.

Many of you said the pensions crisis is a major issue that all students' union trustee boards need to engage with, and unions must not bury their heads in the sand. During 2010, a major consultation exercise is taking place with all students' unions who are members of the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme (SUSS) to recommend changes to ensure the sustainability of the scheme. We believe all trustee boards/executive committees should seriously assess and analyse their pensions risk, making plans for the future that mitigate against that risk. This includes an assessment of the implications of personal accounts that could have a significant impact on students' union expenditure in 2012.

Ensuring Quality Students' Unions

We believe that the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) should be the vehicle for defining, assessing and enhancing quality in students' unions. Our aim is to develop SUEI, so that as well as the current two-year programme aimed at the largest students' unions, there is also a SUEI process for small and specialist and large FE students' unions, with guidance on improvement based on the SUEI model for even the smallest FE unions. We want every students' union to work towards a SUEI award that is appropriate to their size and resources, and that still challenges them to improve their standards and quality of work. To participate, students' unions would first need to meet a number of basic indicators.

Recommendation: SUEI should be adapted to deliver a quality tool to assess organisational performance and improvement for small, specialist and further education students' unions.

Recommendation: To ensure sustainability to constantly challenge and develop students' unions to improve, it is proposed that SUEI be split into an accreditation arm and a development arm. The accreditation arm will be separately assessed and

governed to ensure there is integrity and externality in the assessment of a SUEI award. The development arm will be integrated with NUS' wider officer and staff leadership programme, and will include a mixture of in-house training and externally-sourced consultants which students' unions can use at preferential rates.

Governance

Students' unions will have to continue to focus much time and energy on ensuring their organisations are well governed for reasons of compliance, long-term planning and sustainability. National support will be needed to support students' unions as they register with the Charity Commission (or the Charity Commission in Northern Ireland), and also for advice and support on matters such as board composition, trustee recruitment, training and appraisal.

A number of non-student 'external' trustees are now a part of the student movement. It is important that external trustees are both welcomed to the student movement and supported to understand our values, history and impact. All trustees should receive direct communication about matters of significance at a national level.

You told us that you would welcome assistance in recruiting external trustees, and senior managers requested help with working to – and supporting – high performing boards.

Recommendation: NUS will support Scottish students' associations (and Northern Ireland students' unions) to both meet the public benefit test and subsequently register as charities.

Recommendation: Best practice documents and 'how to' governance guides should be located on the extranet with links to materials on the NCVO, Charity Commission, OSCR (in Scotland) and Centre for Public Scrutiny websites.

Recommendation: Accredited courses should be run for returning officers, company secretaries and trustees. NUS does not necessarily need to run these

– it needs to signpost them, such as the trustee training run by De Montfort Students' Union, and take into account national variations (such as Scottish law).

Recommendation: On the back of the HEFCE project exploring relationships between students' unions and institutions we will produce a code of good governance for HE students' unions.

Recommendation: Online resources and face-to-face encounters should be available for external and student trustees. We should promote case studies of positive experiences that students' unions have had working with external trustees, to share best practice.

Recommendation: There should be a central, online advertising point for students' unions to recruit external trustees.

Recommendation: Senior managers should be trained on how to support trustee boards (on items like producing board papers, forward planning and cycles of business).

Supporting Unions in Crisis

Over the past two years NUS has experienced a marked increase in the number of students' unions contacting national officers or staff to support a students' union in what is probably best termed as 'crisis' situations, normally brought about by a financial crisis, attempted university takeover, departure of one or more senior managers or wider organisational failing.

During our consultations many people said that we are only as strong as our weakest member. When a students' union fails, collapses or gets taken over it has a negative impact on that student body and also diminishes campaigning and commercial strength. University and college senior managers can form a judgement of a students' union, whether good or bad, which they take with them when they move to a new institution and we believe that universities will be less tolerant of failure and underperforming students' unions in the future, which could lead to aggressive

Case Study: De Montfort Students' Union

De Montfort Students' Union has undertaken externally accredited trustee training for the past two years, training trustees from other students' unions.

takeovers or funding being curtailed or stopped. This is why failing or 'crisis' students' unions are a matter of great concern for the whole student movement.

The current way in which we respond to students' union organisational failure at a national level is ad hoc and inappropriate. We propose to deliver a co-ordinated approach to support students' unions at 'crisis point.'

You shared examples of where the relationship between the senior staff member of a students' union and the president had broken down and suggested an external intervention might have been helpful to facilitate a more positive working relationship.

Recommendation: A number of basic indicators will be developed, based on SUEI, to define what makes a functioning students' union. Where a students' union fails a number of these tests, an engagement would take place with the students' union to support their officers and senior staff to identify areas of weakness and develop action plans to improve the situation.

This might include:

- Mentoring/coaching of the senior staff member from another students' union or consultant
- Secondment of a senior manager from another students' union
- Outsourced interim management solution
- Facilitation of merged operations, collaboration or management with another students' union

- Guidance and peer support for students' union officers
- Signposting specialist HR and financial consultants.

Recommendation: We should be facilitating mediation services when the relationship between the general manager or chief executive and president or student officers breaks down.

Demonstrating Social and Economic Impact

With institutions as the primary funder, students' unions will increasingly need to demonstrate value to their higher education institution or further education college... Throughout the country, and particularly in HE students' unions, there are increased regulatory and legislative requirements which could absorb significant management time and will place an onus on students' unions to demonstrate their public benefit and impact.

Students' unions are witnessing a 3.1 per cent increase in their block grant funding in 2009–10. This follows years of successive students' union block grant increases well above the rate of inflation. That said, there are a handful of HE unions who have already seen significant cuts in their block grant as a result of the HE institutions passing on cuts across the board. This is likely to be more commonplace over the next five years.

Students' unions must demonstrate their social and economic impact: to students, if they are to ensure their relevance and legitimacy; and to institutions, if they are to protect their funding levels over the forthcoming period (particularly from 2010–2014).

You said we should explore different models to demonstrate and quantify this social and economic impact at a national and local level including Social Return on Investment (SROI) mechanisms.

Recommendation: A major study should be undertaken to quantify the social and economic impact of students' unions.

Recommendation: Knowledge exchange should take place between unions on how to produce an impact report, exploring ways of measuring impact and planning through impact.

Recommendation: A national publication should be produced and disseminated to key stakeholders with headline statistics on the student movement to include details about our impact on the student body and wider society (developed from the AMSU/NUS Survey).

In addition, if we are to recruit new talent to the student movement we will in part need to change public perceptions of students' unions to communicate their size, impact, complexity and values, presenting the student movement as a respected career option.

Recommendation: We will run a PR campaign to promote the value and impact of students' unions to the student body, media and wider public, targeted at encouraging students to get involved with their students' union (such as standing for election) and encouraging people to consider working in students' unions, emphasising the impact that the student movement makes on people's lives.

Changing Student Lifestyle and Participation

The Context

This driver focused on the changing nature of student lifestyle and how social and cultural changes were affecting the ways in which students were engaging with students' unions and their learning.

Employability

Research shows prospective students are most interested in a university's employability record, day-to-day support and cost (source: HEIST) and in a mass education system there is a need to demonstrate transferable skills to enhance employability and to differentiate oneself from other graduates. The Government... announced a Graduate Internship Scheme whereby graduates unable to find work would undertake an internship for three months.

There is an overwhelming focus on employability across government and within all educational institutions, as a result of the recession and a rise in unemployment. Accordingly, you said you particularly wanted us to focus on the link between student activities and students' employability to:

- Improve understanding amongst students, businesses and university personnel about how extra- and co-curricular activities can develop employability skills
- Raise business awareness of the kinds of activities which are going on, where they could support students directly.

We anticipate a further shortage of graduate job opportunities in 2010 and thus we see the launch of the graduate card (see section on changes in students' union funding sources) as a practical support to recent graduates who are unemployed or in low-paid jobs. It is also likely that the Government will extend the Graduate Talent Pool, providing internship opportunities for unemployed graduates.

Recommendation: With the CBI, funding should be sought to produce a report with recommended actions aiming to:

Case Study: Enterprise Week at the University of Bath Students' Union

The Enterprise Unit in the University of Bath Students' Union comprises their student development programme which co-ordinates all peer-to-peer work and leadership training as well as two enterprise groups, one a student society. As part of their Enterprise Week the students' union secured a shop unit free of charge from the local council. Eighteen student groups applied; nine were chosen and given £200 for stock. Each group was allocated a mentor, typically a local businessperson or entrepreneur. Judging was based on profit and the group's learning from the experience.

- Demonstrate to students and business the range and type of activities which are helping students develop their skills (and how involvement in a students' union gives a competitive advantage in employment terms)
- Develop a better understanding of which activities and roles (eg club captain/treasurer) develop different skills
- Help all sides build employment skills development into existing extra-/co-curricular activity
- Develop a better understanding of what students' unions and institutions are currently undertaking to support students in articulating the skills they have gained
- Building on proposals within Alan Milburn's report on *Fair Access to the Professions*, make recommendations for how participation in co-curricular activities can be increased for under-represented groups (particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds).

Recommendation: We should work with organisations like Unltd – an organisation which develops the role of social entrepreneurs in the UK – to catalyse enterprise work in students' unions.

Recommendation: Building on proposals within Alan Milburn's report on *Fair Access to the Professions*, and working with social enterprises like Internocracy, the TUC and NCVO, as well as with universities, we should ensure that internships offered by employers are kitemarked to guarantee they are of a suitable quality and standard.

Recommendation: NUS will continue to support and promote the Graduate Talent Pool (or its successor) site bringing it to the attention of final year students.

Seventy-five per cent of students do paid employment, 35 per cent during term-time with those students working on average 14 hours. Forty-six per cent of working students are reliant on paid employment to fund their basic living expenses. The more hours a student works during term-time the greater negative impact on their academic study (source: NUS/HSBC Student Experience Survey).

One of the impacts of the recession could be the rise of casualised labour as well as increased competition for part-time work. Whilst part-time working inevitably detrimentally impacts on a student's study, it is nevertheless a reality that students are seeking part-time employment to fund their education. You said the student movement had a role in ensuring part-time job opportunities were available, safe and as well-paid as possible, with students aware of their employment rights.

Recommendation: We should encourage universities to consider designing and promoting more job/study packages (guaranteed paid work placements) as part of the student experience, as happens in the US.

Recommendation: NUS should reissue advice to students on employment rights, in conjunction with the TUC.

Student Activities

Student activities are an essential part of both the student experience and students' union life for most HE students' unions [and] play a vital role in developing transferable skills, delivering the more 'rounded graduate' and enhancing employability prospects as well as fostering a sense of community, generating social capital and being fun.

Student activities (clubs, societies, community volunteering schemes and RAG) probably involve more students than any other aspect of a students' union, and national support to such activities has been lacking. During consultation at the Union Development Zone conferences, you said more national support should be given to enhance student activities at a local level. You said that sport was an important part of students' union life and that stronger links should be established between NUS and British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS). You also said co-ordinated national support should be given to promoting a well-being agenda for students.

You said we should be actively engaging with the London 2012 Olympics (and 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow) to ensure students were at the heart of the games and involved in the broad spectrum

Case Study: Exeter University Students' Guild and Developing Active Citizens

Exeter University Students' Guild have carried out research that demonstrates that those involved in the guild become more active citizens beyond their time at university, based on government indicators on participation rates in the UK population. The research (see Appendix Three) showed disproportionate levels of engagement compared with students not involved in the guild.

of opportunities including volunteering, the Cultural Olympiad and the Paralympics.

Recommendation: Via the new Membership Extranet, good practice should be shared about excellence taking place in clubs and societies, and the management of student activities.

Recommendation: We should annually capture national data on both the number (and nature) of clubs and societies and volunteering opportunities, as well as the numbers of individual club and society members and volunteers. This annual research should specify standardised calculations and measurements that allow students' unions to accurately benchmark against each other and explore demographic details, motivations and barriers for participation.

Recommendation: There should be regular bilateral meetings between NUS and BUCS.

Recommendation: NUS will ensure there is more face-to-face contact and support for student activities, officers and staff.

Case Study: University of Bristol Union

The University of Bristol Union, like many students' unions, has a long-established Student Community Action scheme. Over 1,000 students, racking up over 100,000 volunteering hours, are registered to help out on 36 volunteer projects. These volunteers work with: children (including taking young carers out, a playcentre for 0–5s); homeless people; refugees; people from drug/alcohol and addiction backgrounds; the elderly (help with shopping, annual dinner dance and daycentre); disabled people (young people and adults with learning difficulties, autistic children/adults, riding for the disabled, swimming with children who have special needs); and schools.

Case Study: Canterbury College Students' Union

The students' union runs a cultural trips programme, with over 110 separate events taking place since January 2008. The programme involves a wide variety of overseas trips, concerts, theatre, opera and sporting events. It relates directly to curriculum areas and is designed to raise the aspirations of students. The impact is noticeable through improvements in college retention, as students must have a good attendance record to initially access this programme.

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of national accreditation for these activities so that students are able to communicate the skills they have acquired through participation in them.

Recommendation: We should quantify the national impact of the tremendous work done through community volunteering and RAG.

Recommendation: Provide additional support for students' unions wishing to develop community strategies, community representation schemes or funding bids to enhance their community and volunteering portfolio.

Recommendation: We will run a Student Ambassador project with Podium, the Further and Higher Education Unit for the London 2012 Games, that seeks to maximise student engagement with the games. This will provide a network of students and students' unions with the tools to engage with all aspects of London 2012. Students' unions will be accredited through a kitemarking system if they show sustained commitment to the games, working with projects or events officially endorsed by London 2012 through the London 2012 Inspire Mark.

Faced with increasing choice and lifestyle pressures, for many students, time is at a premium. This presents real challenges for students' unions to drive up participation levels and ensure student involvement in activities, representation, democracy and governance.

You said there is a plethora of factors competing for students' time and therefore there was a need to:

- Engage with students more online
- Develop a number of programmes that students can dip in and out of, such as 'Give it a Go' schemes
- Consider technological solutions that make it easier for a student to engage
- Go to students on their terms rather than waiting for them to come to the union building (such as to halls of residence and catering outlets)
- Consider how to strip away barriers to participation in democratic involvement and students' union governance (such as the introduction of e-referenda).

Learner-centred Physical Space

The physical presence of the students' union building could in many instances play less of a role in the

Case Study: The Saltire Centre, Glasgow Caledonian

The Saltire Centre opened at Glasgow Caledonian on 30 January 2006, providing students and staff with a 21st century library that includes a 600 seat learning café designed to support conversational learning and a services mall that is a single point of access to all the services the university provides for students. It has a wide range of study environments, from the monastic to the highly interactive. It has subsequently been imitated by many other HE institutions.

importance of a successful union in the future. That said, for many students' unions physical space will still be important to facilitate activities and contribute to the student experience.

A plethora of new learning environments has emerged on education campuses over the past 10 years. These are flexible, technology-rich learning spaces designed to be more engaging, accessible and learner-centred, but they have also provided a threat to traditional students' union territory by incorporating trading areas such as cafes. Many students' unions are listening to students to make their physical and social space more learner-centred.

Recommendation: We should work with pioneers on designing new learning environments, including cutting-edge architects, to stimulate innovative approaches to students' union buildings and physical space.

Ethical Purchasing

Students are increasingly interested in ethical purchasing. Whilst price and convenience are the most important things that influence students' decisions to purchase certain products, at least a third of students are thinking more conscientiously about what they buy, and where they buy it from (source: NUS Services Student Lifestyle Report) The total 'ethical market' is up from £13.5bn in 1999 to £36 billion in 2008 (source: Co-operative Bank)

NUS Services upholds a rigorous eight-step supplier assessment and development process to ensure that all suppliers to the purchasing consortium meet the minimum ethical and environmental standards our members expect of them. NUS Services employs an Ethical Supply Chain Co-ordinator to ensure that suppliers are screened and assessed at least every three years, and to lead on constructive engagement where required. As a result of our continued leadership in this area, NUS Services has been invited to help steer a number of sector-wide projects including the HEFCE-funded Sustainable Procurement Centre of Excellence.

Recommendation: We will continue to assess, challenge and support our suppliers to reduce their negative ethical and environmental impacts, monitoring our progress through our ethical and environmental accreditation, setting targets based on their scores so we can measure our success. We will actively seek to reduce the negative impact of our suppliers, taking a leadership role through constructive engagement, and conducting more research into our commercial partners. We will continue to survey students on their views about supply chain ethics and amend our policies and processes accordingly.

Recommendation: We will communicate more clearly to students the significant work we do on ensuring an ethical supply chain, seeking to embed sustainable procurement as part of our behaviour change programmes, informing and influencing student consumers within our unions and beyond.

Debt

Debt remains a major issue for students. Two-fifths of students have a bank overdraft and a third of students have debts on their credit cards. On average, students have several forms of debt. By far the most common form of debt is the student loan (source: NUS Services Student Lifestyle Report). 34 per cent of students said they were more than somewhat concerned about their current levels of debt (source: NUS/HSBC Student Experience Survey).

Debt is now a permanent feature of student life. In recent years the increase in student loan support has meant that that levels of commercial debt amongst students has fallen. But once the review of student finance in England reports later in 2010, and notwithstanding the campaign work we will do, there is a possibility that cuts in student finance provision may see student commercial debt start to rise once more.

Some students may be particularly vulnerable. The recent debacle with Student Finance England saw a number of companies offering short-term loans to

Case Study: Money Doctors at Staffordshire Students' Union

As part of their personal financial capability work, the Financial Services Authority (FSA) co-ordinates the Money Doctors scheme, which seeks to provide resources and support to local finance education programmes, co-ordinated through universities and/or students' unions. One particularly successful scheme is at Staffordshire University Students' Union, which offers a range of activities, workshops and other tools to help students improve their money management. <http://www.staffsunion.com/advice/moneydoctors/>

those students who had difficulty making ends meet. These included 'micro-loans', set up by text message with steep interest charges. The student movement has an important role to play in both educating and advising students struggling with financial problems. We already do much work in this area, and it will continue to be vital in the years ahead.

Other work on debt includes the issue of universities using their unique position of landlord and academic authority to restrict progression or graduation where there is outstanding accommodation debt. NUS believes this to be illegal, but it is a practice that is increasingly widespread.

Recommendation: NUS will continue to work with the FSA on its programmes for young adults, in particular the Money Doctors scheme, and supports students' unions who wish to introduce or expand Money Doctors in their institutions. NUS should also work with the FSA to tailor Money Doctors for small and specialist institutions.

Recommendation: NUS will work to establish guidelines on commercial lending to students, to help inform and educate students considering commercial

debt for whatever reason. This could include work with individual lenders to improve the products they offer to the student market.

Recommendation: NUS will produce clear guidance on non-tuition fee debt recovery for students' unions to use in their local representation and campaign work, and will continue to seek a test case in order to establish a precedent in law once and for all.

Democratic Participation and Mutualism

Throughout civil society organisations and across all political parties we have seen a rise in interest in the principles of mutualism and the co-operative movement. These are core values of the student movement (ie being run by and for students) and there may be opportunities for the student movement to exploit this wider interest amongst civil society organisations about mutual ways of working.

In 2009 NUS published a pamphlet jointly with the Co-operative Party on developing a “mutual approach” for students' unions. It built on co-operative concepts and shows how co-operative ideas could be put into practice by students' unions, to benefit their members. You said you liked many of the ideas contained in the pamphlet and that the following could be explored further:

- Work with universities, local communities and private accommodation providers to establish joint boards of management for halls of residence and ‘student villages’; this would give more control to students over their living conditions and develop local responsibility and accountability for behaviour and good relations with the community
- Work with local colleges and schools to support adult and community education through voluntary action by union members; helping to develop ‘community learning co-operatives’ where some of the knowledge and skills possessed by students can be accessed by adults in the local community, to build their capability and also build good community relations
- With rising pressures on institutional budgets and on issues like contact time, there is a gap for new thinking on how to extend opportunities for learning and get better value for students. Students' unions could develop new subject-based societies which would be run by student volunteers but would have membership involvement across several institutions and include academic staff. This would help open out the curriculum, enable students to consider issues and knowledge beyond their own subject, and put student leadership at the heart of the learning experience.

The student movement will need to reinvent how we engage and connect with a diverse student body which faces significant time pressures and major barriers to participation.

Whilst a reliance on old forms of democratic governance will shut out some student groups and make us less well-equipped to represent such students, democracy remains, we believe, the only viable form of governance within students' unions if we are to secure our legitimacy and unique, student-led nature. It is a point of differentiation, and leads to better outcomes overall. You said that we should raise the bar on democratic participation, and that an average turnout of 14 per cent across higher education students' unions was unacceptably low and undermined perceptions of our legitimacy as representative organisations.

You said that:

- We should set annual targets for election turnouts
- NUS should develop strategies and share good practice which drive up election turnout, including the development of cultural models of democratic success which students' unions can benchmark against.

The Rise of Digital Media

The Context

NUS and students' unions must be prepared to embrace new media and new technologies in order to meet the various challenges outlined in this document. In doing so, they will be better placed to achieve their strategic aims and ensure the student movement continues to develop and thrive.

Effective use of technology will become increasingly important in the digital age, enabling the energy and enthusiasm of individual student actions to be harnessed, with ICT providing new opportunities for both individual and collective action. New ways of communicating and participating have the potential to transform an organisation (source: Voluntary Sector Strategic Analysis).

A Shared Platform for the Student Movement

Adopting a single system on a national level could revolutionise the student movement, allowing it to become one of the most effective campaigning movements in the UK, with the potential for unparalleled membership involvement.

There are examples of students' unions using membership system technologies to great effect with defined web platform and usage tactics. They are integrating information about their members' club and society participation, elections, entertainments and campaigns to develop an accurate picture of involvement. Both communications and strategy can be tailored based on this information, allowing students' unions to improve participation from their members and drive effectiveness and efficiencies in their operations.

Unfortunately, not all institutions have embraced this – which may be caused by a lack of knowledge, resources and perceived value resulting in a lack of drive in this area. Even those who are achieving this are doing so, in spite of, not because of, a cohesive national strategy. A disparate approach to systems is the result.

You said we should find a digital solution that ensures the movement can best achieve its strategic aims of being financially secure, fully representative and an acknowledged force for positive change.

In short, we must be able to demonstrate that we truly are the voice of students. If all students' unions used the same systems and if such systems could be integrated at the national level with appropriate support and guidance, then the benefits to the student movement as a whole (in effectively responding to the key drivers of change) would be huge.

Shared systems across the student movement would allow much easier take-up of national projects such as integration of mobile phone technology, cashless payment systems and collaboration with other national institutions.

If unions shared a common platform it would enable students' unions to collaborate in terms of staff, content, knowledge and best practice. Benchmarking across all aspects of membership activities would allow a much faster spread of best practice as information would be valid and up to date.

By a shared platform we mean a common ICT infrastructure and integrated back office technology at both a national and students' union level. This would enable us to use our collective strength by achieving economies of scale, giving students' unions the flexibility to control their own content and messaging, selecting what they need from a menu of functions. A shared platform could, for example, enable and enhance:

- Shared databasing as happens now with NUS Extra
- The provision of website templates for students' unions
- RSS feeds with national content for local students' union websites
- The provision of other useful technologies and applications to students' unions.

Recommendation: A shared platform, integrated at a national level with effective support and guidance, will allow students' unions to collaborate with content, knowledge, and best practice, increasing participation and benefiting fully from the new income opportunities. For this vision to be achieved we require a viable, cost-effective and capable system.

Membership Extranet

You said we should consider the delivery of a single platform extranet site that links all students' unions together and incorporates the NUS officeronline, NUS Services and AMSU membership websites.

A new interactive Membership Extranet will be launched in Summer 2010 merging those websites allowing good practice to be shared between students' union officers and staff.

A Students' Union Web Offer and E-tools

An NUS-endorsed web offer for students' unions and a package of e-tools should be available at a national level for unions to assist them in achieving their core strategic goals.

You said we should explore further the provision of a web solution that will enable students' unions to: communicate cost-effectively with the increasingly diverse student population; engage students in our campaigns, at both a local and national level; demonstrate to decision makers that we truly are the voice of students; encourage greater participation in elections; promote local activities from clubs, societies, social events and campaigns; and maximise benefit from new income opportunities.

The key benefits from a single NUS-endorsed system (and web offer) would be as follows:

National Research and Data Analysis

Listening to and understanding our members is critical to our operations and the credibility of our campaigning. The ability to carry out research and

analysis of the issues affecting our members would allow a truly accurate national picture of members' lifestyles, participation levels, opinions and requirements.

Sharing and Learning from Best Practice

Technology can play a much greater role in the student movement producing and signposting content and functionality for students' unions' websites and e-communication. Unions should be able to integrate these messages effortlessly into their communication channels and student media should have a platform for collaboration and sharing content.

New Business Development Opportunities

Our potential to raise revenue and improve the level of performance for retail, sponsorship and ticketing would all be vastly improved through a single system. One ticketing system for all students' union venues would allow collaboration on national events and tours. It would then become easier for members to attend events nationwide. Shared venue attendance and ticketing information would build a detailed picture of the student leisure market, allowing much better collaboration with national brands.

Improving Participation Across a Diverse Membership through Data-driven Social Networking

Identifying members from minority groups and having an easy way to contact them would allow local, national and regional groups to reach many more potential

Case Study: University of Essex Students' Union

The University of Essex Students' Union became the first students' union in the country to launch its own iPhone application in 2009. Amongst the many features of the app are interactive maps to find your way around the campus, twitter feeds, and information on clubs and societies, events and general contact information.

members. This would broaden the movement's appeal to a hyper-diverse membership through the development of these communities.

Working collaboratively means the development costs to an individual union are dramatically reduced and ideas such as union-focused applications for mobile phones become practical options.

During the consultation you suggested we should generate more video content, which could involve students' unions providing footage throughout the year to be shown on the NUS website and Membership Extranet.

Recommendation: NUS is currently in negotiations with a number of leading technology providers and aims to announce a strategic partnership later in 2010. A national package of e-tools will be developed to assist students' unions to make participation easier (including e-voting packages and apps).

Towards Seven Million Voices

Technology enables us access to 7 million students – can we anticipate the next change? The Internet is going mobile with 5.7 million using a mobile to access the net in January 2007 (Source: Telephia and comScore)

The Student Movement has over 7 million individual members and its potential as a force for positive change is immense. Critical to our ability to utilize this potential is our ability to be able to contact all students at the touch of a button. In the accompanying document, *How the National Organizations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*, proposals are outlined to accelerate the build of students' union databases that will create a campaigning force of 7 million voices.

Students are amongst the earliest adopters of the digital revolution and yet the student movement is inhibited from fully taking advantage of this because of its lack of a national database of members' details.

Championing E-learning

Technology has changed how students study, increasing collaboration between each other and academics. It has the potential to give students a greater voice in the way they learn. We have already seen the increase in use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and are now seeing technology used in innovative ways throughout learning, such as the delivery of podcasts used for feedback and the creation of personalised learning environments (source: JISC). NUS, funded by BECTA (the Government agency leading the national driver to ensure effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning) is undertaking a project to research and champion good examples of e-learning in further education.

You said we should explore the following:

- Further work to support colleges and providers to enable learners to access networks using personal devices, without compromising safety and security
- Supporting the development of digital literacy among learners

Case Study: University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute

UHI Millennium Institute Students' Association (UHISA) operates across 13 colleges and more than 50 learning centres. With no central campus for students to attend, creating a community atmosphere can be difficult. UHISA has sought to overcome this by engaging with local partner college students' associations and building a virtual network through use of video conferencing (VC). The Student Council meets regularly by VC, making representation accessible to those studying hundreds of miles apart.

- Promoting e-mentoring and benefits of peer support among learners to develop their own use of technology.

Recommendation: NUS has secured funding for a research project that will explore student perceptions, demand and training needs related to technology-enhanced learning, and will disseminate these lessons to students' unions and institutions.

The growth of the Internet has presented challenges to the national organisations of the student movement... However, successful organisations in the future will be able to act as a trusted source of information. Effective brand positioning will be critical in this respect.

In the new age of digital media, a trusted and respected brand is a valuable asset, and in 'NUS' our research tells us we have a brand which is trusted, respected and seen as ethical. It is the standout brand within the student movement. While the growth of the Internet has created new challenges for traditional assumptions of intellectual property, it remains the case that a respected brand still shines out. In fact in the ever-increasing mass of information available to people online, users rely on trusted sources and much as ever. In the accompanying document *How the National Organisations will Deliver Surfing the Wave*, we outlined how we propose to implement an NUS brand strategy.

A 'road map' giving more detail on our plans for the development of digital media for the student movement will be produced and circulated to students' unions by September 2010.

Appendix One: Jargon Buster

The student movement: students' unions and their various components (officers, volunteers, staff) and their national organisations (eg NUS, NUS Services Ltd, AMSU).

NUS: the National Union of Students UK, a confederation of 600 students' unions and the representative voice of over 7 million students.

NUS Services Ltd (NUSSL): Trading company for the student movement, creating, developing and sustaining competitive advantages for students' unions. Members have to be in NUS. NUS is a 25 per cent shareholder, students' unions owning the remaining 75 per cent.

AMSU: the Association of Managers in Students' Unions supports professionals in students' unions. Members (students' unions) do not have to be in NUS.

Drivers: the major forces or trends that could positively or negatively shape the future of the student movement.

Future landscape: an analysis of the key drivers an organisation or industry is facing and a diagnosis of their implications.

Purpose: a statement of what we are there to do.

Values: the core beliefs that make us unique.

Students' union funding models: the income streams that constitute how a students' union pays for its activities.

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR): the Government's main tool for allocating its spending priorities.

Leitch Review 2006: Review commissioned by the Government and undertaken by Sandy Leitch to review the UK's long-term skills needs.

Liberation Campaigns: campaign groups that represent students who face discrimination in education and who are also oppressed in wider society.

Mission groups: groups of universities who form strategic alliances around shared values and common purposes. Examples include the Russell Group (mirrored by students' unions in the Aldwych Group), the 1994 Group (mirrored by students' unions through Unions 94), Million+ and GuildHE.

Co-production: A reciprocal relationship between the traditional 'target' user of a service and those who produce it, whereby the users (in our case students) feed into and improve the services or products directed at them (source: *Voluntary Sector Strategic Analysis*)

NSS: the National Student Survey has been running annually since 2005. It is a survey of mostly final year undergraduates, with the main purpose to help inform the choices of prospective higher education students about where and what to study (source: Ipsos MORI).

Participative democracy: Form of democracy in which citizens actively participate in democracy (source: *Voluntary Sector Strategic Analysis*)

Give it a Go: student activities programmes/schemes run in students' unions which allow students to dip into or try out an activity, rather than having a sustained commitment as in the case of clubs or societies.

STADIA: a student activities network that provided support to students' union officers and staff.

Membership Extranet: The new interactive membership website (merging officeronline, amsu.net and nussl.co.uk) that will go live in Summer 2010.

Corporate governance: the legal vehicles that make up NUS.

National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO): An umbrella body that provides voice and capacity building for over 5,000 voluntary and community organisations.

Appendix Two: Teesside Case Study

Engagement with the Students' Union by student types and activity

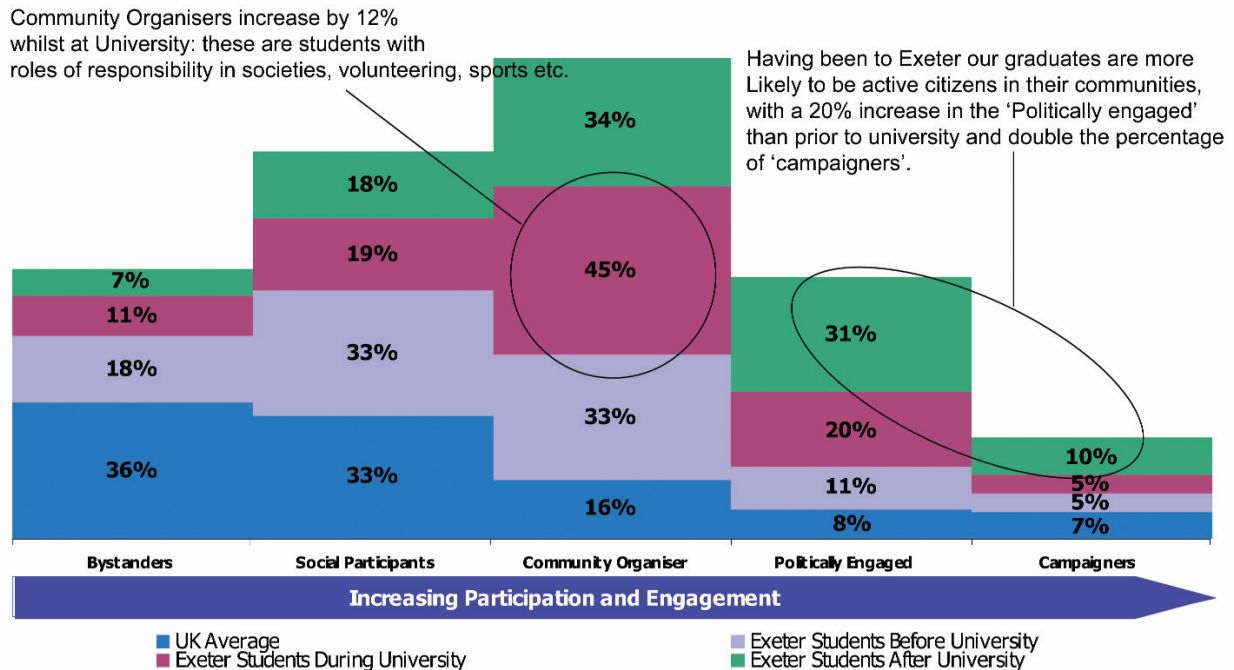
Activity	Type of Engagement	18-25 UK/EU under grad & taught post grad	18-25 local under grad & taught post grad	Mature	International (Non EU)	Students' Union Focus Areas				Distance Learners	14-19 Learners	Workplace Learners
						Part time	HEBP	Post Grad	Research			
Daytime safe social space	Enhancement	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Daytime food/drink provision	Enhancement	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Evening events/club nights	Enhancement	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Employment (student staff)	Enhancement	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Sporting opportunities	Enhancement	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Social groups (societies)	Enhancement	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Training	Enhancement	Low	Medium	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Democratic opportunities	Enhancement	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Volunteering opportunities	Enhancement	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Student Job Centre	Help and support	High	Medium	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Accommodation advice	Help and support	High	Low	High	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	N/A	?	
Money advice and advocacy	Help and support	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	N/A	?	
Immigration advice	Help and support	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	?	
Academic advice and advocacy	Help and support	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Course rep involvement	Help and support	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	N/A	?	
Overall impact		High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low		

Definitions (based on Students' Union criteria)

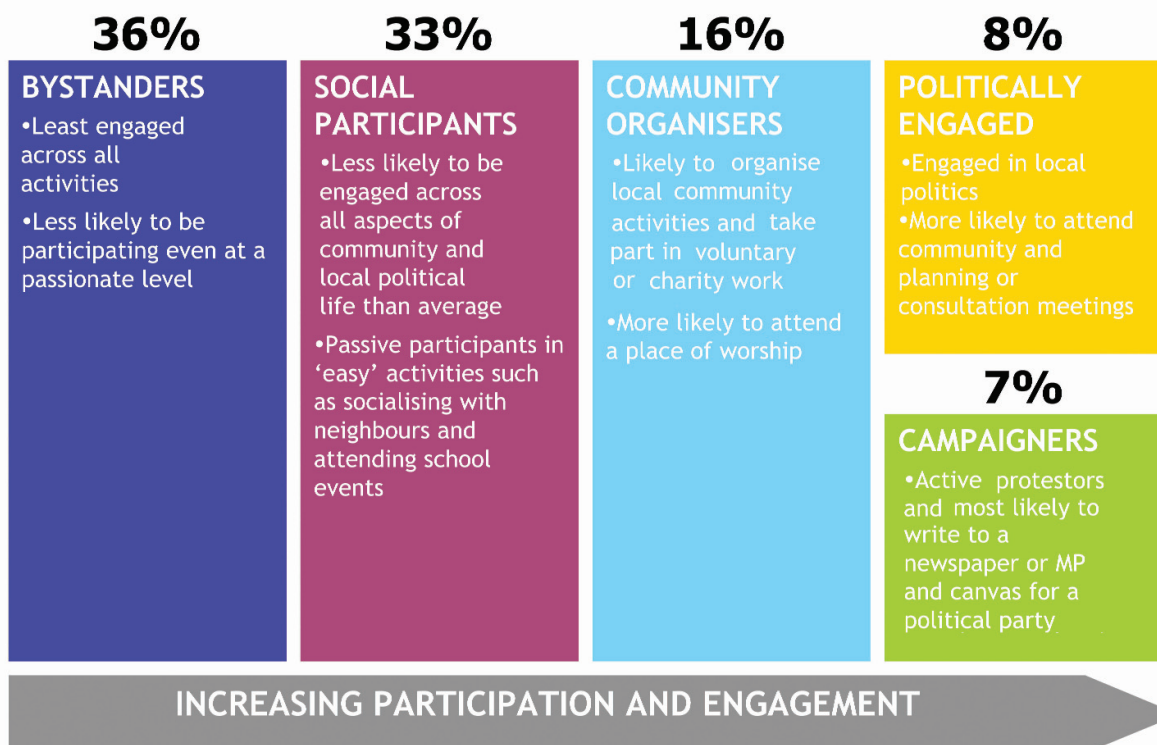
High	Regular service users, natural affinity with the Students' Union which is a major part of their lives - a significant enhancement to the student experience
Medium	Students familiar with the Students' Union services, though primarily are engaged for reasons of help and support rather than enhancement
Low	Students' Union mostly seen as not relevant through perception or accessibility. Proactively engaging group but there are diminishing returns
Enhancement	Activities providing social cohesion, mutual support and leisure outlets - make friends, get involved and have fun
Help and support	Provision of practical solutions to issues compromising students academic success, retention and succession

Appendix Three: Exeter case study

Exeter Engagement Segmentation



UK ENGAGEMENT SEGMENTATION







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