



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction and Background	7
Methodology	15
Summary Consultation Findings	18
Benchmarking	36
Governance Analysis	47
Conclusions and Recommendations	54



Executive Summary

Introduction

The University of Ulster's Students Union (UUSU) is currently taking part in the Student Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) which is aimed at making the Students' Union more efficient and relevant to their memberships. SUEI has been a central driving force behind the completion of the Governance Review along with the UUSU's desire to offer students the best service and level of support possible.

Background to the UUSU

The UUSU was formed in 1984 and is an integral part of the University. It plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life that most Students' expect whilst at University.

The Union is founded on the keystone of providing its members, the students, with the facilitation to pass through the academic process supported by representation, association and service. All University of Ulster students are automatically a Student Union member and can accordingly avail of all the associated privileges. The UUSU currently has a diverse membership of 26,000 students across its four campuses at Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee.

The Students' Union has become a large semiautonomous part of the University of Ulster. The Union receives a block grant from the University and its' remit is to look after the interests of all students who attend the University.

The Methodology

The UUSU issued a Terms of Reference for the completion of an external review of its current structures with a view to increasing the membership involvement in all aspects of the Union. As outlined by the Terms of Reference the scope of the consultation included a review of the following areas:

- **Governance Structure:** Are the structures, policies and procedures of the Union effective in achieving its mission and aims and delivering its services and activities efficiently?;
- **Role of Elected Representatives:** Are the current roles and responsibilities of the Elected Representatives clearly defined and are they delivering effective outcomes for the membership?;
- **Connection with the Membership:** Is the Union involving and communicating effectively with the membership?;



- Relationship with the University: Does the Union have a positive relationship with the university which helps shape their policies for the benefits of the membership?; and
- The Student Unions Strategic Planning Process.

The Methodology designed directly met the aims outlined for the assignment by the UUSU. A six-stage approach was undertaken to specifically address each of the key areas set out in the Terms of Reference. The six stages undertaken were:

1. Stage 1: Assignment Planning and Initiation;
2. Stage 2: Context and Desk Research;
3. Stage 3: Benchmarking;
4. Stage 4: Consultation;
5. Stage 5: Analysis; and
6. Stage 6: Presentation and Reporting.

Benchmarking

Two benchmarking exercises were undertaken to assess the UUSU against other Student Unions, namely Leeds University Union (LUU) and University for the Arts Student Union (SUARTS). The exercise found that a higher proportion of staff were allocated to direct student support / academic representation than currently in the UUSU. Staff were also based more in teams i.e. one person did not make up a Department. The number of Sabbatical Officers was lower than in the UUSU and again their focus was on student support and academic representation.

Generally the LUU and SUARTS facilities were more modern and up to date, matching private sector facilities and had a high level of usage.

More emphasis has also been placed on communication with each of the Unions have a marketing and communications team which appears to enhance their ability to communicate with students and promote their services. The exercise also found that the UUSU should take into account the following factors:

- The importance of getting student views and delivering services and activities which meet them;
- Ensure that the Trustees, Sabbatical Officers and staff involved have the same clear vision of and what the end goal is;
- Having staff focused on student engagement and representation;
- The importance of having a highly motivated and trained staff team;



- To offer increased volunteering opportunities to bring students into the Union;
- To invest in the Union and Commercial activities otherwise you don't provide students with the level of quality that they expect;
- To identify the marketing tools which most effectively market the Union and implement them and have a strong communications team;
- Communicate/Communicate/Communicate with all stakeholders and don't underestimate the time this will take; and
- Understand that much of this work involves a journey for those involved and no one model of will fit all circumstances.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Governance Review has highlighted that the UUSU has much to offer their membership base and in the support of the priorities of other stakeholders such as the University of Ulster.

Students clearly want and value the support available from the UUSU. However the level of usage is impacted upon by the level / method of communication as many students are unaware of the UUSU and its services, by the out of date physical environment and lack of activities.

The current Sabbatical Officer Team is strong and dedicated to the work of the UUSU and there is recognition across the majority of stakeholders that this is the case. The wider staff team have also been identified as very good in their support to students and in the running of the organisation.

When reviewing the UUSU against the critical areas for Student Union success as identified in the NUS report, *Surfing the Wave*, the UUSU fares well. As part of this review and from other in-house consultation work carried out it has a sound understanding of the needs of its members, backed up by evidence. The UUSU does however need to allocate additional resources to develop further in areas such as campaigning and academic representation.

One of the biggest issues for the UUSU centres on student engagement. To address this, the UUSU must invest time and resources into providing a Union which is relevant to the needs of students and by providing a vibrant social hub. This however needs to be coupled with strong communication. The Review recognises however that the UUSU has limited resources and significant refurbishment may not be possible within its current budget.

The UUSU has been proactive in addressing under performance in its commercial activities as demand decreases however the lack of investment impacts negatively on the level of usage by students consulted. In addition the commercial services require additional development, including the development of business and marketing plans.



There is a high level of management within the UUSU through its strong policies and procedures and its high level of financial control. The constitution is robust in terms of legislative requirements, a strategic plan is in place and an overarching marketing plan has been developed. New staff management procedures have been put in place i.e. appraisals and staff meetings but work still needs to be undertaken to boost staff morale.

The UUSU has developed strong partnerships with the University and other stakeholders but these could be developed further for example in areas such as volunteering and provision of work experience.

The Governance Review has identified a number of recommendations which could impact positively on the level of engagement of students in UUSU activities, its accountability and efficiency, however they will require a resource input (time and financially). The recommendations of the Governance Review are as summarised below:

1. Revise the management structure of the UUSU to increase accountability and enhance management through introduction of a Trustee Board;
2. Review and update the Constitution to take account of the new management structure and increase its accessibility;
3. Redevelop the Strategic Plan taking account of new consultation and Review findings. This should also include the development of a Performance Monitoring System to allow the UUSU to more effectively baseline its activities and promote the work it undertakes in supporting students;
4. Reduce the number of Sabbatical Officers to 6 and revise their role to focus on the delivery of the UUSU Strategic Plan and its objectives, this will enable a more consistent approach to the development of the UUSU and its activities;
5. Develop the academic representation focus of the UUSU to enhance students' time at University. As part of this service a review of the Class Representative System should be undertaken to address areas of inconsistency;
6. Develop a Volunteering / Work Skills Programme to support students to enhance their employability and to become more involved in the UUSU;
7. Increase level of Staff to allow the UUSU to more effectively meet the needs of students, support Sabbatical Officers and enable a greater level of engagement with students;
8. Develop a new overarching marketing plan segmented to all customers with sub plans for each commercial unit and UUSU service to increase the level of knowledge about the UUSU and its services;
9. Enhance staff relationships and management structures to address low morale;



10. Increase the level of internal communication and proactively ensure regular meetings are taking place;
11. Lobby / secure additional resources to enhance the general environment of the UUSU and bring it up to standard with modern facilities / student expectations;
12. Assess the feasibility of re-developing commercial services to bring a selection of them up to date with private sector bars, restaurants and shops with a prioritised Action Plan; and
13. Enhance the financial viability of the UUSU to implement Review findings by accessing additional funding.



Introduction & Background

Introduction to the University of Ulster Students' Union (UUSU)

The UUSU was formed in 1984 and is an integral part of the University. It plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life that most Students' expect whilst at University.

The Union is founded on the keystone of providing its members, the students, with the facilitation to pass through the academic process supported by representation, association and service. All University of Ulster students are automatically a Student Union member and can accordingly avail of all the associated privileges. The UUSU currently has a diverse membership of 26,000 students across its four campuses at Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee.

The Students' Union has become a large semiautonomous part of the University of Ulster. The Union receives a block grant from the University and its' remit is to look after the interests of all students who attend the University.

The current Vision Statement for the UUSU is "To be a sustainable, recognised and respected Students' Union that proactively engages the student body, university and wider community."

Its current Mission Statement is to be a: "student led and inclusive Students' Union providing high quality representation, membership and commercial services to enhance the student experience at the University of Ulster."

The UUSU operates to a set of core values as follows:

Values	What They Mean to the UUSU
Student Led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and facilitate student involvement/ownership in all Student Union activities.
Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continually review performance of Students' Union with the aim to improve service provision.
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a safe and respectful environment where all students can freely express their views.
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable access to all facilities for all students; and Promote equal opportunities and ensure students do not suffer discrimination or prejudice.



UUSU has both a representative and a commercial function. Officers represent their members at all University committees, as well as to external stakeholders (especially within local communities). Commercially UUSU runs four Club bars, three shops and three catering outlets. It employs sixty full and part time staff and is led by the General Manager and Overall President.

Representational Role

The Union is run by 9 full-time elected officers who have varied responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Union. These Sabbatical Officers are elected annually by the Student body and take a year out from their studies to work for the Union. Student representation consists of working at a local and national level. On a local level Sabbatical Officers are involved in numerous Students' Union and University committees. On a national level it is affiliated to two National Unions under the Bi-lateral agreement. The National Union of Students UK and the Union of Students in Ireland. The Students' Union is a democratic organisation and every student has a role to play in ensuring that the Union meets the needs of the students.

Commercial Role

The Students' Union also has a wide range of commercial operations that are set up to ensure students can avail of student friendly services at subsidised prices. The student environment is constantly changing and it is the responsibility of the Union to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of the members. The Commercial activities are expected to contribute to the overall running of the Union.

UUSU Governance

The UUSU's Constitution states that the "governance of the Union shall be based upon the democratic principle that every Ordinary Full member shall have the fullest opportunity to participate in controlling the affairs of the Union."

The structure of UUSU reflects this; currently it is the remit of Campus Union General Meetings, which are open to all students, to set campus policy and hold the full time Officers to account (1.5% of the membership at the campus must attend these meetings). Members are also elected onto a General Council which sets overall policy and constitutionally is the supreme governing body.

The Overall Executive consists of nine elected full time Officers. They can hold office for up to three years (two in one position, and a further one as Overall President). These Officers are the trustees of the Union finances. The positions are:

- Overall President;
- Sports President;
- Site Vice Presidents x 4 (One at each site);
- Vice President Education and Welfare x 3 (Jordanstown Officer also has responsibility for Belfast).



The Overall President and the four Site Vice Presidents sit on the Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee.

National Union of Students (NUS)

NUS (National Union of Students) is a voluntary membership organisation which aims to make a real difference to the lives of students and its member students' unions. NUS has a confederation of 600 students' unions, amounting to more than 95 per cent of all higher and further education unions in the UK. Through its' member students' unions, it represents the interests of more than seven million students.

Its mission is *to: promote, defend and extend the rights of students and to develop and champion strong students' unions.*

The vision of the NUS is *to be a pioneering, innovative and powerful campaigning organisation: the national voice of students. It will fight barriers to education, empower students to shape both a quality learning experience and the world around them, supporting influential, democratic and well-resourced students' unions.*

That diversity of members is a strength of the NUS. Collectively, students through their students' unions invest in a national movement, able to assist individual students and students' unions in taking control of their educational lives, campaigning to defend and improve their rights nationally.

In addition, NUS provides an infrastructure that helps the UUSU to undertake their own work supported by the research it carries out, the training, advice and information it offers, the materials it produces and the documents it publishes.

Affiliation to NUS

The UUSU is affiliated to the NUS which enables it and its students to enjoy a wide range of benefits. The NUS offers the following services:

- NUS promotes, defends and extends the rights of students. From free education to free prescriptions, from the rights of disabled students to those who rent property while studying, student interests are at the heart of NUS activities and campaigns for change;
- Support students' unions to be as strong and vigorous as possible, building skills, supporting individual officers and engaging on a national level to protect their status and independence;
- Provision of research, training student officers and access to materials and documents produced. This means each Union gets access to an additional team of over 50 staff and 25 elected officers;
- NUS provides a direct service to individual students via its website, nus.org.uk, in the form of information and resources relevant to every student. This includes advice on housing, student finance, settling in and Freshers' week, diversity, and many other topics;



- Offering students money off through NUS Extra cards. The NUS Extra card consists of over 80 national discounts available online or on the high street, and is estimated to have saved the average student as much as £189 over the year; and
- NUS Services, the commercial purchasing arm of NUS, buys collectively to achieve lower prices and attract higher promotional spends from major companies to benefit students' union bars, catering/coffee outlets and shops. The savings made from NUS Services national deals on purchasing areas such as brewed products, wines and spirits can equal – or even exceed – the amount of the NUS affiliation fee, making being a part of NUS effectively free.

NUS-USI

The National Union of Students-Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) was established in 1972 under a unique arrangement where both the British and Irish national student unions, National Union of Students (NUS) and Union of Students in Ireland (USI) respectively, jointly organised in Northern Ireland to promote student unity across the sectarian divide.

NUS-USI Student Movement represents the interests of over 200,000 students in Northern Ireland and campaigns on their behalf in many different fields such as student hardship, health, prejudice and accommodation.

The NUS-USI provides an infrastructure that helps individual Students' Unions in Northern Ireland to develop their own work through its research, training and development functions.

The vision of NUS-USI is to *promote social justice and reduce educational inequality where everyone has the right to participate in a society, which respects diversity and human rights. Every student will play an active part in and be a respected member of a society that values learning, participating with their students' union locally, and nationally through NUS-USI, which will continue to be the recognised voice of students in Northern Ireland.*

The organisation's sense of purpose and goal (its mission) can be summarised as: *NUS-USI will improve the lives and experiences of students in Northern Ireland by representing and fostering strong students unions & providing clear, effective and democratic leadership.*

Student Union Evaluation Initiative

The Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) was developed to make a positive difference to the lives of students at University, by improving the outcomes from their Students' Unions. It is a partnership between the NUS and supported by the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Scottish Government.

It is a unique quality assessment model that assists in improving the services and activities delivered to members of Students' Unions by indicating areas for continuous improvement. The initiative has helped a number of Unions to achieve better results through its framework.



Results being achieved by using the SUEI model have been put down to the fact that it:

- Is member focussed and concentrates on outcomes;
- Measures how well the Union make connections with its members;
- Measures the impact on students, the University and the local community;
- Measures the democratic and value driven aspects of the Students' Union;
- Recognises the dynamic changing membership of Students' Unions; and
- Is flexible to accommodate the individual differences between Unions and the needs of their members.

The Union's current position is assessed and where the Union would like to move against the key lines of enquiry (KLE). The areas for the key lines of enquiry are outlined in the diagram below:



The SUEI follows a number of central themes as follows:

- Identify the current situation of the Union;
- Identity the outcomes required;
- Formulate Action Plans to achieve the outcomes;
- Post on the SUEI website; and
- Review progress (both internal and external).



After working on their SUEI action plans to deliver outcomes for students over about two years, Unions are audited according to a pre-determined scheme of scoring and weightings based on the SUEI Themes and Principals. The auditors' reports are then submitted, along with a recommendation regarding an award, to an Advisory Panel. The Panel is responsible for ensuring that the final audit principle have been adhered to, for overseeing consistency, quality and quantity of evidence, and it confers the award and the level of award.

The UUSU currently sits in Cohort Four having started its process in January 2008. Participating Unions have the potential to be awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze status.

The UUSU has begun its evaluation of its current position by undertaking comprehensive market research into student ratings of the Students' Union facilities and services in February and March 2009. Six hundred and thirty three face-to-face interviews were conducted with students across the four campuses. This has allowed the Students' Union to assess how it is meeting the needs of the students and how it can improve its services.

University of Ulster

The Corporate Plan sets out the University's overall Vision, Core Strategic Aims, Crosscutting Aims and key supporting objectives for the five-year period from 2006/07 to 2010/11. It was produced following extensive engagement with staff in faculties and departments and reflected the shared vision for the University.

The Corporate Plan sets a path for the future that has at its centre inclusiveness, transparency and cohesiveness. It defines 'what the University is about' and sets a vision and core strategic aims that reflect its distinctive mission, recognises its campus strengths while supporting a unitary approach, and reflects a common purpose.

The University's focus will be on providing excellent learning opportunities; excellence in selected areas of research; promoting its leading role in widening access to higher education; promoting creativity and innovation; and conducting its activities in accordance with its core values and to the highest standards of corporate governance. In all of these activities sustainability is a common theme. Its strategic aims are:

- Provide excellent learning opportunities which are student centred and client focused;
- Undertake excellent research in selected areas of activity;
- Maintain the University's position as a sector leader in widening access to higher education;
- Establish the University as a sector leader in promoting creativity and innovation; and
- Conduct business in line with the University's core values and to the highest standards of corporate governance.



The UUSU has a clear role to play in assisting the University to implement its aims especially to 'provide excellent learning opportunities which are student centred and client focused' aim. An increased academic representation role for the UUSU would directly support the University it achieving its aim.

A Wave of Change: The Future Landscape of the Student Movement

The NUS publication, A Wave of Change highlights that the student movement faces uncertain times – presenting challenges to address and opportunities to be seized. It highlights that for Student Unions to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities, they must understand the likely future landscape for students and students' unions. The NUS highlighted that the key drivers impacting on the student movement are:

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

The NUS highlights that Student Unions must prepare and plan now to effectively respond to this changing landscape. It will require new solutions to new challenges, whilst retaining the core values that make us what we are. The UUSU are now in the process of research and planning to ensure its future development.

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

The Surfing the Wave publication outlines that 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 'bitesize' 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.

Surfing the Wave, highlights that Unions must take account of changing student lifestyle and participation needs as follows:

- Enhancing employability. There is an overwhelming focus on employability across Government and within all educational institutions;



- Developing Student Activities. Student activities probably involve more students than any other aspect of a students' union and national support to such activities has been lacking;
- Learner-centred Physical Space. A plethora of new learning environments have emerged on campuses over the past ten years. There is a need to catalyse on innovative approaches to students union physical and social space;
- Student Debt. Debt is now a permanent feature of student life and there is a need for increasing financial literacy amongst students and challenging universities who restrict progression or graduation where there is outstanding accommodation debt; and
- Democratic Participation. Raising the bar on democratic participation.

It also highlights that successful Student Unions should:

- Excel at understanding the varying needs of their members and be able to articulate these needs, backed up with evidence;
- 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;
- Be able to demonstrate the students' union has had a positive impact on students' lives;
- Facilitate students' academic and social development;
- Deliver a positive impact on support provision for students;
- Look to reduce operating costs and limit commercial risk;
- Be able to expand in to growth areas; and
- Work collaboratively with partners to leverage expertise.



Methodology

Introduction

The UUSU is currently participating in the Student Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) which is aimed at making the Students' Union more efficient and relevant to their memberships. This along with the desire to offer students a high level of support and service was the driving force behind the governance review. The UUSU made a decision to review its current structures by recruiting an external consultancy firm to undertake a Governance Review. WJR Consulting secured the assignment.

Objectives of the Assignment

The UUSU issued a Terms of Reference for the completion of an external review of its current structures with a view to increasing the membership involvement in all aspects of the Union.

Constitutionally the UUSU is member led, however the UUSU stated in its Terms of Reference that "in reality campus meetings do not achieve high enough levels of attendance to pass effective policy and the General Council has also not been effective in leading the direction of the Union nor scrutinising its' procedures." In recognising this fact the UUSU decided to undertake detailed research with students into their needs, complete a Governance Review and develop a series of Action Plans to address this issue. The scope of the consultation included:

- Governance Structure: Are the structures, policies and procedures of the Union effective in achieving its mission and aims and delivering its services and activities efficiently?;
- Role of Elected Representatives: Are the current roles and responsibilities of the Elected Representatives clearly defined and are they delivering effective outcomes for the membership?;
- Connection with the Membership: Is the Union involving and communicating effectively with the membership?;
- Relationship with the University: Does the Union have a positive relationship with the university which helps shape their policies for the benefits of the membership?; and
- The Student Unions Strategic Planning Process.



Methodology

The Methodology designed by WJR Consulting directly met the aims outlined for the assignment by the UUSU. A six-stage approach was undertaken to specifically address each of the key areas set out in the Terms of Reference. The approach was founded on:

- **Robustness:** recognition of the importance of ensuring that all qualitative and quantitative information gathered throughout the assignments (through desk research, consultation and benchmarking) process is collated, documented and validated. This means the UUSU can draw on a robust evidence base and provides a firm foundation for emerging findings, recommendations and the future direction for the UUSU;
- Based on best practice knowledge and experience of governance reviews and other student union approaches; and
- **Client Focused:** developed in partnership with the UUSU to ensure full buy in into the recommendations of the Governance Review.

The six stages undertaken were:

- Stage 1: Assignment Planning and Initiation;
- Stage 2: Context and Desk Research;
- Stage 3: Benchmarking;
- Stage 4: Consultation;
- Stage 5: Analysis; and
- Stage 6: Presentation and Reporting.

Format of Report

The report is set out as follows:

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| Section 1: | Executive Summary; |
| Section 2: | Introduction and Background; |
| Section 3: | Methodology; |
| Section 4: | Consultation Feedback; |
| Section 5: | Best Practice from Other Areas; |



University of Ulster Students' Union Governance Review



- Section 6: Governance Review Findings; and
- Section 7: Conclusion and Recommendations.



Summary Consultation Findings

Introduction

A range of consultation methods were undertaken to enable the effective review of the UUSU's governance structures. The comprehensive consultation involved a range of stakeholders as outlined below:

Stakeholder	Purpose	Analysis	Approach
UUSU Officers	Review role of elected representatives through a Focus Group with elected representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of roles; • Clarity of job descriptions; • Effectiveness in meeting outputs; and • Benefits and perceived benefits to members. 	2 x Focus Group 9 Officers
UUSU Senior Management Team (SMT)	Review of views from SMT on UUSU function and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of roles; • Clarity of job descriptions; • Effectiveness in meeting outputs; and • Identify the degree to which the SMT relate to the aims and objectives of the Union. 	4 x One to One Interviews 4 SMT
UUSU Staff	Review of views from staff on UUSU function and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of roles; • Clarity of job descriptions; and • Identify the degree to which the staff relate to the aims and objectives of the Union. 	3 x Focus Groups Online Survey 24 Staff (Across 4 Campuses)



Stakeholder	Purpose	Analysis	Approach
Students	<p>Survey of membership using a sample of 100 members surveyed at each campus.</p> <p>A focus group was held in each campus to refine and analyse feedback further.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the degree to which the members relate to the aims and objectives of the Union; Assess the quality of communication and the effectiveness of it; and Identify areas for improvement in the way that union involves and communicates with members. 	<p>100 x One to One Interviews</p> <p>4 x Focus Groups</p> <p>166 Students (Across 4 Campuses)</p>
Senior University Personnel	To assess senior University staff views on the function and management of the UUSU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the relationship with the UUSU; Assess the degree to which the University shapes the policies of the Union and vice versa; and Evaluate the degree to which the University/Union partnership benefits members. 	<p>Up to 7 Online Surveys / Interviews</p> <p>7 Senior University Personnel</p>
Other Stakeholders i.e. NUS, community groups etc	To assess the wider strategic context in which the UUSU sits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the relationship with the UUSU; and Assess the degree to which stakeholders shapes the policies of the Union and vice versa. 	<p>Up to 4 Online Surveys / Interviews</p> <p>4 Stakeholders</p>



Summary of Findings

The following section provides a summary of the findings from the Consultation per grouping. Further details can be found in a separate Consultation Feedback Report.

Student Survey

As part of the Governance Review a survey was undertaken with 100 Students, 25 from each campus. Students were asked a series of questions about their awareness of the UUSU, its effectiveness at meeting their needs and what support would they like the UUSU to offer them whilst at University.

In terms of the mode of transport used by students surveyed overall, 38% use their own car and a further 10% travel in a friend's car, therefore nearly half of all students' surveyed travel to University via car (48%). Twenty-four percent travel by bus and 13% walk. Eleven percent used a mixture of transport modes, only 4% used the train and 1% attended University via taxi.

When taking each Campus separately, the most popular mode of transport in Belfast is by bus (52%), in Coleraine it is by own car (72%), in Jordanstown it is by own car (48%) and in Magee it is by walking (36%).

Of the 48 students who travel to University by car, 44% indicated that they do not use any UUSU services / activities compared to only 30% of the students who travel by bus, train or walk (41 Students).

Of the Students surveyed who actually indicated they used UUSU services and who travel to University by car, 29% were less likely to use the SU Bars, 20% were less likely to use Welfare support, 13% were less likely to use the Entertainment, 11% were less likely to use financial advice and 10% were less likely to use Uforia than those who travel by bus, train or walk.

A slightly higher percentage of students who travel by car and who use the UUSU services used the SU Catering (+2%) and Shops (+6%) than those who travel by bus, train or walk.

Students were next asked to identify the biggest issues for them currently. The biggest issues for students included:

- Financial issues (72%) i.e. the cost of living, transport costs (fuel, busses etc), not having enough money, needing to work;
- Paying University and tuition fees (18%);
- Academic issues (13%) i.e. general problems, amount of work, timetable;
- Job opportunities when finished study (10%); and



- Dealing with the stress and pressure (10%) i.e. of their course, cost of living and life / work balance when holding part time jobs and trying to study.

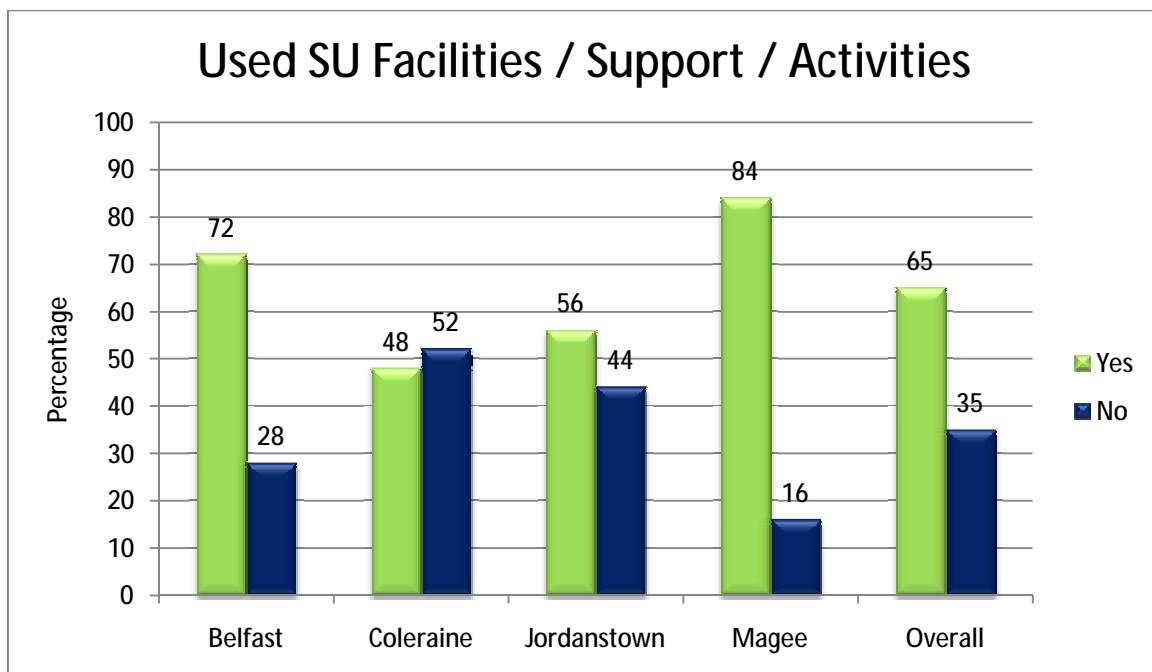
When students were asked if they knew who their Sabbatical Officers were, only 20% stated that they did. Nearly half of participating students (48%) said they did not know who their Officers were and a further 32% said they were unsure who they were.

On a campus basis participating students at Magee were more aware of their Officers (48%) than other campuses. Twenty percent of Jordanstown students and 12% of Belfast students were aware of their Officers. No participating students in Coleraine indicated that they knew who their Sabbatical Officers were.

In terms of knowledge of the Sabbatical Officers, for those students travelling 31 miles or over, 90% indicated that they did not know the Officers compared to 78% of students who travel 30 miles or under. Interestingly, a high percentage of those students travelling 10 miles or less still indicated that they did not know the Officers (76%).

Of those students who knew who their Sabbatical Officers were (20 out of 100) all had a high degree of satisfaction with them, 100% gave a rating of very satisfied / satisfied.

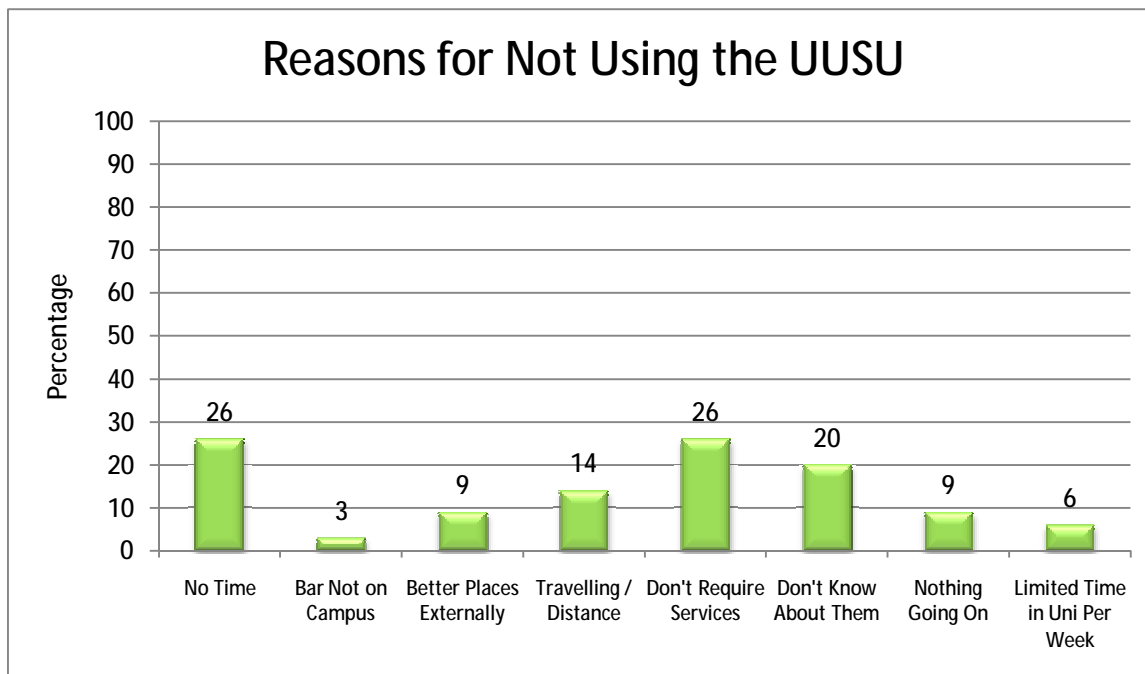
Sixty five percent of all students surveyed indicated that they had used at least one or more UUSU service / activity whilst 35% had not.



The highest level of usage was found in Magee (84%), followed by Belfast (72%) and Jordanstown at 56%. Usage at Coleraine by participating students was the lowest at 48%.



As outlined in the following graph the reasons given by students who had not used at least one UUSU service centres on the fact that: they do not have time (26%) i.e. they have part time jobs; do not need the services offered by the UUSU (26%); and that they did not know about them (20%).



Overall those services / activities with the highest number of users include: SU Bars (56%), Entertainment (53%), SU Catering (50%), Website (49%), SU Shops (47%), Societies (42%) and Finance Advice (40%).

The website received the highest level of satisfaction with 76% of users rating it as good to excellent. However 16% did rate it as average and 8% as poor.

SU Catering also had a high level of satisfaction overall with 74% of users rating it as excellent to very good. Eighteen percent felt it was average and 6% very poor.

SU shops received a satisfaction rating of good to excellent by 72% of users. Thirteen percent did rate them as average and 15% as very poor to poor.

Overall 57% of users rated the SU Bars as good to excellent, however 32% rated them as average and 11% rated them as poor to very poor.

Societies received a satisfaction rating of excellent to good from 55% of users, however 36% rated them as average and 12% as poor to very poor.

Financial advice received a rating of good to excellent from 52% of users, 30% rated it as average and 21% as poor to very poor.

Forty two percent of users rated Entertainment as good to excellent but 25% rated it as average and 34% as poor to very poor.



Services and activities with smaller user numbers include the Sports Union with 35% usage by those surveyed, Class Representation with 33% usage and Welfare Advice with 27% usage.

Uforia, the student magazine received the least level of usage with only 20% of participants indicating that they used it. Although these areas had a smaller number of users, they were rated fairly highly.

Seventy seven percent of users rated the Sports Union as excellent to very good, 14% rated it as average and 9% as poor to very poor.

Sixty nine percent of users of the Class Representation system rated it as good to excellent, whilst 30% rated it as average.

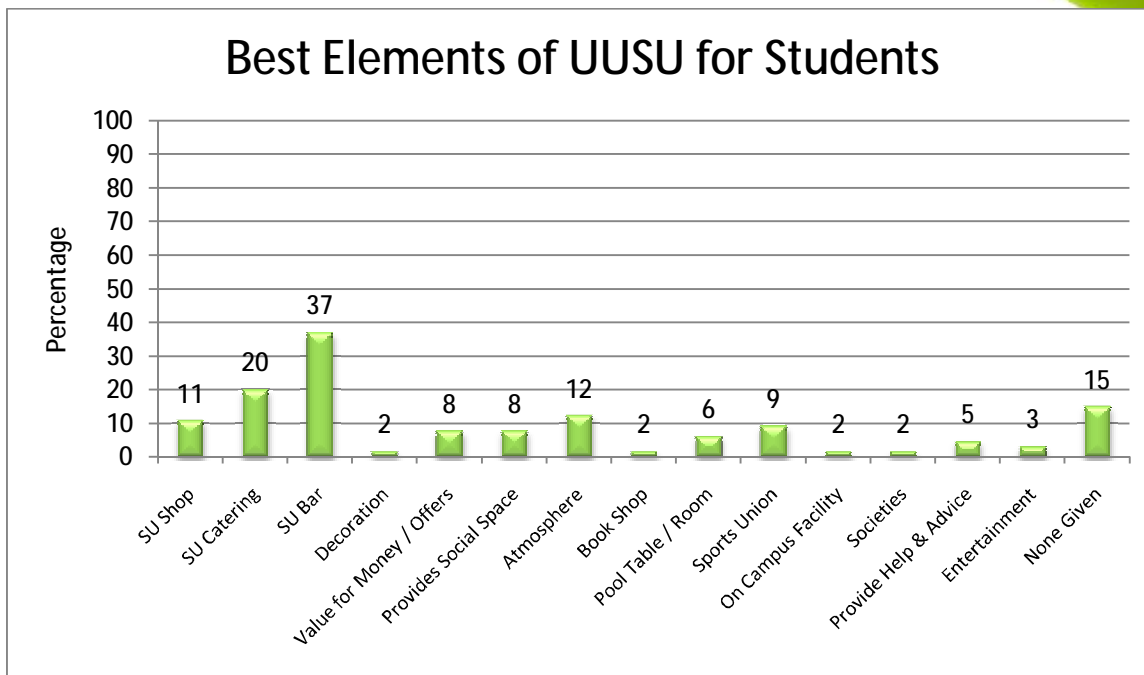
Sixty three percent of users rated Welfare Advice as excellent to good, whilst 33% rated it as average and 4% as poor.

Although Uforia was the least used / known UUSU element (20% of users out of 100 students surveyed) it received a satisfaction rating of good from 65% of students. Thirty percent rated it as average and 5% as poor.

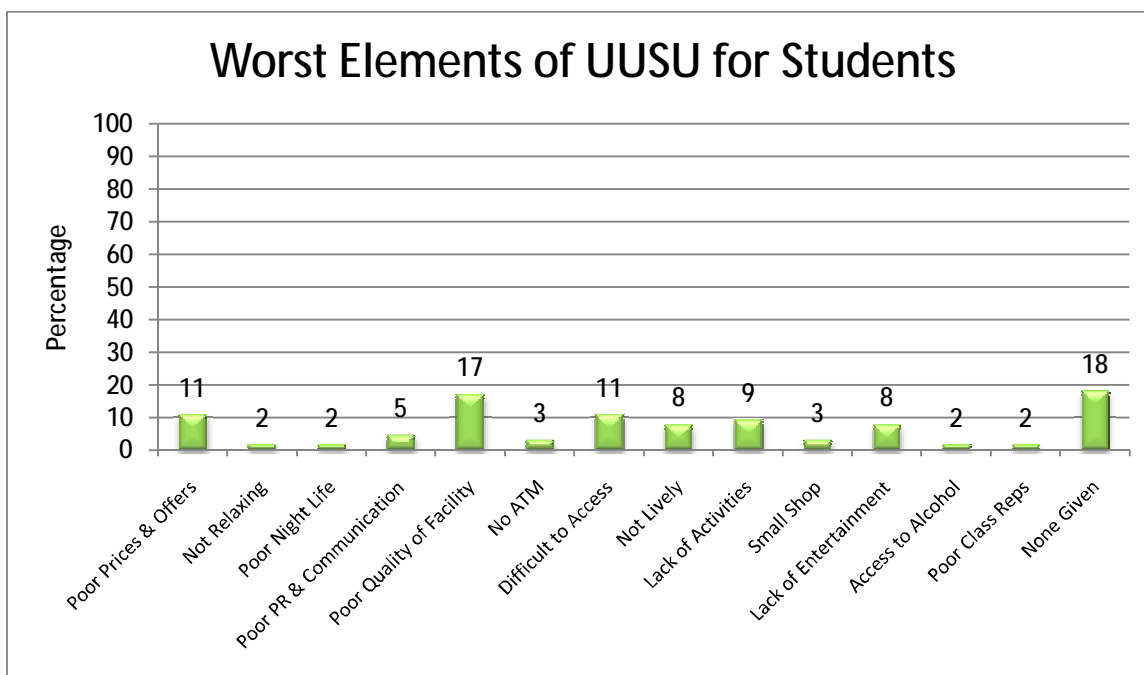
There is scope for the UUSU to improve their services and activities for students overall and at each of the campuses. Suggestions were made by 23% of students about how they could be improved. These were:

- Better promotion and communication of UUSU & all its services (39%);
- More activities and entertainment (30%);
- Improve the quality of UUSU facilities (17%);
- Making it more student friendly (13%);
- Improved catering (9%);
- Wider range of clubs (4%);
- Improved Class Rep system (4%);
- Better carparking (4%);
- More drinks promotions (4%); and
- Developing a UUSU close to student population centres (4%).

Those students who had used at least one UUSU service / activity were asked what the best elements of the UUSU were for them. Students indicated that the SU Bar (37%) was the best, followed by SU Catering (20%), the atmosphere (12%); the SU Shop (11%) and the Sports Union (9%). Fifteen percent of students did not give an answer to this question but did however provide an answer for the worst element (please note an additional 3% did not provide an answer for either question and have not been included graphically).



When asked to identify the worst elements of the UUSU 17% of students identified the poor quality of the UUSU facilities as the highest i.e. not modern or in keeping with external commercial facilities. A further 11% highlighted that prices were more expensive than in other external commercial facilities and that there were limited offers, this was especially the case in relation to the SU Bar and Catering. Eleven percent of students also indicated that the UUSU was difficult to access because facilities are located away from student population centres. Students also highlighted that the UUSU lacked regular activities (9%), entertainment (8%) and was not 'lively' (8%).





Eighteen percent of students did not give an answer to this question (please note an additional 3% did not provide an answer for either question and have not been included graphically).

When asked what were the top priorities for development of the UUSU for them, 68% of students identified the need for an increased level on activities and entertainment within the UUSU spread throughout the day and evenings.

Thirty eight percent of students identified that they would like better bar promotions and more competitive pricing in line with external commercial bars and clubs.

Twenty five percent of students would like to see the UUSU environment and facilities updated and modernised, again in line with the standards and quality they access externally.

Twenty one percent of students would like the UUSU to provide a wider range of food services and be more competitively priced, offering meal deals etc.

Twenty percent of students would also like an increased level of general discounts and offers specifically for students.

Twenty percent of students would like additional financial support from the UUSU, access to financial advice and more classes on financial management.

Nineteen percent would also like increased student and academic support being provided to them by the UUSU.

Eighteen percent of students would like to see improved PR and communication about the UUSU services, range of facilities and better advertising of events and entertainment.

UUSU Sabbatical Officers

The UUSU Sabbatical Officers felt the UUSU had a number of strengths in that they set out to represent the needs of students, are a dedicated and hard working team that they were committed to supporting students. The continuous turnover of Sabbatical Officers also encourages new ideas and an insight to the changing needs of students. Sabbatical Officers also highlighted that the financial support provided by the University of Ulster was good and that their relationship with the University of Ulster was positive.

The UUSU Sabbatical Officers also identified a number of areas for improvement. There was an acknowledgement that the UUSU had poor facilities and general environment. The multi campus locations were also identified as causing difficulties in management and development of the UUSU and that a different strategy was required for each campus to reflect the nature of the University setting and the students attending.

Further issues highlighted by Sabbatical Officers were their accountability (and reporting structures) due to the low level of student engagement and that the effectiveness of the Sabbatical Officer team was impacted upon by the commitment and skills of who is elected on each year.



Officers highlighted that roles and responsibilities are not always clear, as it is dependent on the handover from the previous Officer. The new training offered by the UUSU was identified as very good and greatly assisted new Sabbatical Officers in their posts. Sabbatical Officers felt that their Job Descriptions needed to be reviewed and that a tighter work plan was required.

The Strategic Priorities that Sabbatical Officers identified for the future development of the UUSU include:

- Review of the Management Structure of the UUSU to enhance accountability;
- Modernisation of facilities and maintaining the relevance of the UUSU to students;
- Developing and implementing a student engagement strategy;
- Development of the academic representation role of the Sabbatical Officers and UUSU;
- Increasing the community development role;
- Putting a strategy in place of diverse activities / PR across the 4 campuses; and
- Increasing the sustainability of the UUSU.

UUSU Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) identified the core strengths of the UUSU as the Sabbatical Officers as they represent the student population, have a clear idea of what students need and that their yearly turnover brings new ideas and innovation. The UUSU staff were also highlighted as a vital asset to the organisation.

The SMT also highlighted that the UUSU had good rules and procedures in place which enhanced its governance. The SMT also felt that the UUSU had good credibility within the wider University.

A number of improvements were also identified that would enhance the performance of the UUSU. Again the accountability of Sabbatical Officers was highlighted and that there is a requirement for clearly defined work plans and general planning with the UUSU.

The physical infrastructure of the UUSU was also highlighted as having a negative impact on the engagement of students within the UUSU and that the existing space is not used efficiently to maximise student involvement. However coupled with the need for refurbishment is the declining financial performance of some commercial outlets and the requirement for the UUSU to subsidise them.

Staff morale was also highlighted as an issue to be addressed, as it impacts on the performance of the organisation. The lack of resources has also lead to limited creativity within the UUSU as many new ideas coming forward cannot be implemented due to lack of funding.



The Strategic Priorities for the SMT in the future development of the UUSU include:

- Investment in the physical infrastructure of the UUSU;
- Ensuring new developments include the UUSU as a central focal point for students;
- Review of the Management Structure of the UUSU to enhance accountability;
- Implementing a performance management system within the UUSU to allow for effective data collection and monitoring and evaluation;
- Assessing long term viability and where appropriate, investing in commercial services to enhance their viability;
- Developing and implementing a student engagement strategy;
- Addressing staff morale issues and developing a UUSU team ethos;
- Increasing UUSU resources (staffing and financially);
- Development of the academic representation role of UUSU and providing increased resources; and
- Developing and implementing a Volunteer strategy.

UUSU Staff

The UUSU staff identified that the experience and loyalty of staff were important to the effective performance of the organisation and that this is reflected in the high level of customer satisfaction. Again the staff also highlighted that the UUSU had good rules and procedures in place which enhanced its governance.

Generally staff morale was low across all campuses, with staff feeling isolated, not valued and fearful for their jobs. A number of issues were identified by staff as contributing factors and include the lack of investment in the physical resources of the UUSU, that their ideas are not listened to or progressed, that their contribution is not recognised and no proper plans (business and marketing) are put in place to develop commercial services.

Another issue for staff centred on communication, with staff highlighting that it is not timely, information is not always sent in advance of meetings, there is not always an Agenda and that there is no timescale for the completion of actions. They also highlighted that there is a lack of consultation on things happening in the UUSU and they felt proper management processes and procedures have not been put in place. However a staff management process has been recently implemented and it is recognised that it will take time to embed into the workings of the UUSU.



Staff also highlighted the accountability of Sabbatical Officers in their roles and the line management responsibilities of Sabbatical Officers (newly in post and with a lack of business experience) for staff and the level of decision-making they have.

Staff also highlighted that there are issues around the SMT not proactively challenging the University in decisions it makes about the UUSU. Staff highlighted that a number of issues currently impact on student accessibility to the UUSU (such as doors locked by Porters), cleanliness and access to University resources.

The Strategic Priorities for Staff in the future development of the UUSU include:

- Development of the academic representation role of UUSU;
- Developing and implementing a student engagement strategy;
- Ensuring proactive involvement and lobbying of the University in all decisions related to the UUSU;
- Increasing UUSU resources (staffing and financially);
- Review of the Management Structure of the UUSU to enhance accountability;
- Modernisation of facilities and maintaining the relevance of the UUSU to students;
- Increased partnership working between the UUSU and the University;
- Better and more effective internal communication and management processes;
- Enhanced job security;
- Development of a full Advice Service;
- Better promotion and marketing of the UUSU; and
- Managing commercial services in a more businesslike manner i.e. commercial manager, business plans and marketing plans.

Students

In terms of the strengths of the UUSU in the eyes of students, they again highlighted very good staff and good Sabbatical Officers. Generally students felt that the UUSU provided good support to students and was an organisation which focused on the needs of students. It allows students access to facilities, networking opportunities, access to advice outside of the University structures and provides a chill out / extra study space. Value for money was also highlighted as another student benefit.



Students however identified a range of areas for improvement. The Class Representative system was identified as a good concept but students felt that it was not working effectively or consistently with many not aware of who their Class Rep was. Students also felt that the UUSU needed to be more vocal in lobbying to address student issues. Students also felt that the UUSU needed to play a stronger role in academic representation, with students wanting access to quality teaching and degrees.

There was a general consensus that the UUSU physical infrastructure and facilities were out of date and did not meet the expectations of students and therefore limited their usage. The range of activities was also seen as poor, students felt there was a lack of entertainment and the UUSU opening hours were poor. Some students also felt that there should be more outreach activities in the areas in which they live i.e. Belfast Vs Jordanstown.

Again communication and promotion about the range of UUSU services was highlighted as a weakness and that many students were unaware of key personnel within the UUSU and what their roles were.

The Strategic Priorities for Students in the future development of the UUSU include:

- Modernisation of and improvement of existing facilities;
- Developing a vibrant and buzzing community within the UUSU with a wide range of events and activities;
- Development of the academic representation role of UUSU;
- Offer new services such as shuttle busses to take Students to Union events;
- Increase the number of clubs and societies (and funding to them);
- Ensuring proactive involvement and lobbying of the University for issues facing students i.e. fees, parking, access;
- Better promotion and marketing of the UUSU (use new technologies);
- Increase student volunteering opportunities (experience for CVs);
- Develop a Job Shop / job signposting service / more UUSU work experience opportunities;
- Be representative of full student body (i.e. mature, part time, international); and
- More outreach work (in areas where students live).

Senior University Personnel

Senior University Personnel identified a number of strengths of the UUSU. These included its leadership and vision, the social support / community environment it provides to students, that it



provides an effective interface between the University and students and provides a 'face' for the student body. Senior University Personnel also highlighted that the UUSU engaged with students, provided them with a range of advice services, and access to services. The management of the commercial services was also seen as a strength and Senior University Personnel also felt that there was fairly good relationships between the University and the UUSU.

Weaknesses of the UUSU as identified by Senior University Personnel included the level of student engagement, it was perceived that the UUSU did not fully represent the wider student body and that the overall vision and function of the Union was unclear. Senior University Personnel also highlighted the UUSU premises were unattractive, that it projected an out of date image, that there are inconsistencies in approach across the four campuses and that the level and timing of social activities were poor.

Other areas for improvement included the need for the UUSU to more fully contribute at University Committees and that it needed to address the perceived image of being run by cliques and / or was not a representative body for the full make up of students across the University i.e. religion, gender, age, international etc.

The Strategic Priorities for Senior University Personnel in the future development of the UUSU include:

- Developing and publicising a clear vision and role for the UUSU;
- Development of the academic representation role of UUSU;
- Developing more meaningful and measurable engagement with students;
- Developing volunteering and job opportunities for students;
- Developing a communications strategy for the whole Union / representative of the full student body;
- Developing the leadership capacity of the Sabbatical Officers and staff;
- Promoting a student identity with the University;
- Contributing to the strategic development of the University overall i.e. Belfast Campus; and
- Increase sustainability financially and environmentally as well as staying within budget during the current difficult times.

Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders included the NUS-USI, Council members and community representatives. Other stakeholders felt the UUSU had strong leadership and that it was good at representing the views of students. Other stakeholders also indicated they felt staff were good, the UUSU had good people



skills and that their planning and involvement in new University plans was strong. It was also felt that the UUSU had a good community liaison focus and that it was accountable.

Areas for improvement centred on the fact that Officers only sat for one year in post and this turnover in Sabbatical Officers means a lack of consistency and loss of relationships developed each year. Other stakeholders identified that the UUSU was understaffed for the role they are required to fulfil and that the UUSU facilities were too distant from the student population and / or lacked accessibility for students. A final area for improvement centred on the requirement to have effective discipline procedures for students who became involved in anti social behaviour within the wider community.

The Strategic Priorities for Other Stakeholders in the future development of the UUSU include:

- Restructuring and redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of the UUSU;
- Proactive involvement in all major University initiatives;
- Increased level of contribution within Council;
- More effective governance / implementation of SUEI recommendations;
- Developing and implementing a student engagement strategy;
- Development of the academic representation role of UUSU;
- Achieving the SUEI Silver Award; and
- Active community involvement and consultation.

Conclusions

The UUSU was recognised as having a number of strengths for example the Sabbatical Officers, loyal and experienced staff, facilities, good management, good financial procedures and being the face of the student body.

However the consultation phase highlighted a number of issues and priorities that the UUSU must address to allow it to be a truly accountable and a representative organisation for its members. The consultations highlighted a number of themes that the final recommendations of the Governance Review must take account of. The central themes arising as a result of the research and consultation phase included:



Central Theme	Summary
Planning (Strategic and Operational)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UUSU has a solid Strategic Plan in place but the consultations found that there is a lack of understanding of what its roles and responsibilities are, what its measurable objectives are and how these transcend into clear work plans for SMT, Staff and Officers. • In addition the consultation highlighted that the work plans of SMT, Staff and Officers appear not to link back to the three year Strategic Plan which in turn affects the consistency of development of the UUSU.
Accountability of Sabbatical Officers / UUSU Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a high degree of satisfaction with the current Sabbatical Officer team. • There was a general consensus that the Sabbatical Officers and staff were not being held accountable for poor performance and that the current Management Structure needed to be revised to allow for greater consistency. • Given the lack of student involvement and the acknowledgement of students that they were not aware of their Officers, Class Representatives etc there is a clear issue in relation to communication and the resources required to implement key responsibilities of the UUSU. • The consultations also highlighted that accountability was an issue because of the lack of adherence to a three-year strategic plan with Officers having pre-defined work plans to implement once elected.
Student Voice / Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was again a general consensus that this is what students want and what stakeholders expect the UUSU to provide. This is an opportunity to grow the representational role of the UUSU in this area but resources must be increased to enable it to be effective.



Central Theme	Summary
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who use the UUSU are clear that it is an important support body to them and / or has the potential to support their needs. • Students however are not engaging effectively with the UUSU for a number of reasons. Students say that they are not aware of what is going on therefore highlighting communication as a central issue. The UUSU physically is not appealing to them, that there is a lack of activities being run, activities are not being run where they live and that the UUSU is not providing students with the quality of facilities that they require and expect. • Again consultations highlighted that there is a focus on undergraduate students for the UUSU and that the changing profile of students is not being fully addressed i.e. part time, mature, international etc. • Students would like access to more volunteering and work placements within the UUSU, an area which could lead to greater student engagement.
Physical Infrastructure / Level of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultations have outlined that all groups see the UUSU physical infrastructure as out of date. This is not what students expect nor want from a UUSU. Not only does the UUSU require redevelopment / updated but the range and timing of activities needs to increase to create a vibrant student community hub.
Communications and Profile of the UUSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant effort is put into the marketing of the UUSU but the message appears to be getting lost. Given the level of effort put into marketing it is clear that a new marketing and communications strategy needs to be developed segmented for the full student population and four campuses. The effectiveness of current communication methods must also be assessed and new means of communication trialled.



Central Theme	Summary
Management / Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line management structures could be more clearly defined within the UUSU, for example the introduction of a Trustee Board who has line management responsibilities for staff and for Sabbatical Officers. Sabbatical Officers could focus more on the implementation of the strategic plan / academic representation as opposed to staff line management. Leadership within the UUSU must continue to be strong and the UUSU must be proactively campaigning for change, 'selling' itself to the University and to its student members.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high level of satisfaction with UUSU staff and a committed staff team. However, staff morale is low and a number of staff issues must be addressed. Communication and line management processes must be re-assessed and implemented consistently throughout the UUSU. Staff should also be invested in i.e. a management development programme could enhance staff performance and boost morale.
Fundraising and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure continued funding from the University the UUSU must be able to demonstrate that it has a clear strategy, that it is reflective of the wider student population and that it is the voice of students. This must be clearly evidenced through the numbers of students involved. Changing to charitable status will also enable the UUSU to potentially access funding from other sources.



Central Theme**Summary**

Commercial Services

- Of the students consulted the highest level of engagement within the UUSU was mainly through commercial services which suggests that they do form an important factor in linking to the student body. However students clearly identified that the facilities were outdated and required modernisation.
- The performance of some commercial services also requires a review to identify how they can become more profitable.
- The commercial service also requires more management input and an increased businesslike approach, for example a Commercial Manager to concentrate on the development of the services.

University Relationships

- University relationships are fairly strong and must be maintained and built upon. The UUSU must ensure it remains a vocal voice in University Committees and in key University developments.
 - Issues surrounding access to UUSU facilities must be addressed and solutions found in partnership with the University.
-



Benchmarking

This section outlines sets out information on other Student Unions who have gone through SUEI. As the focus of SUEI is making the Students' Union more efficient and relevant to their memberships, these examples will outline areas of best practice which the UUSU could build upon and learn from their experiences.

Leeds University Union (LUU)

Leeds University Union (LUU) is the students' union of the University of Leeds. LUU states that it is a students' union which exists to provide a place completely dedicated to students. LUU exists to support, advise, represent, add value and, most importantly, add fun to student's University experience. The LUU also states that it is a strong campaigning organisation.

The LUU has a number of achievements. In June 2009 LUU was awarded 'Best Higher Education Students' Union' by the NUS. In 2008 it became one of the first students' unions to gain 'Students' Union Evaluation Initiative' recognition, and was awarded Gold Status. Clearly the UUSU can gain valuable insight into best practice in student union management and student engagement.

Quality Achievements

In addition to achieving SUEI the LUU holds a number of other quality awards including Investors in People, Investors in Volunteers and Investors in Diversity. It also holds a Community Legal Service Quality Mark for its Student Advice Centre. Its commercial services also have achieved a number of awards including 'Best Bar None' Award for 3 of its Bars and Regional Awards for Terrace and Stylus;

Governance

Leeds University Union is a registered Charity and has a Board of Trustees to oversee key decision making which relates to the future of LUU. The Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that LUU is not threatened by poor financial decisions, breaks the law and that the work that is being done is for the benefit for its members – the students.

The Trustees are not involved in the representative side of LUU, which is handled by Union Council and the Referendum process.

The Board of Trustees is made up of 14 individuals. Many of these Trustees also sit on the subcommittees. The Board of Trustees is supported by three sub-committees which focus on certain key aspects of LUU which are:

- **Audit & Risk Committee:** Audit & Risk Committee has the responsibility of monitoring LUU's finances, risk profile and other aspects which could impact on LUU's future health. They



scrutinise the annual accounts, ask questions when commercial operations aren't performing as they should be and make sure that LUU is complying with laws and regulations;

- Human Resources & Remuneration Committee: The HR Committee examine issues relating to LUU staff; staff survey results, pay changes, training and development and staff policies are all discussed at this meeting; and
- Appointments Committee: The Appointments Committee is responsible for ensuring that new Trustees are recruited and inducted and developed properly. They also have overall responsibility for recruiting the Chief Executive of LUU.

Clearly this has been a successful structure for the Union and showcases a high level of good governance. It also allows for greater accountability of Sabbatical Officers and strong management processes.

The Student Executive Officers

The LUU has a smaller number of Sabbatical Officers than the UUSU and given the single site location, their roles are more focused on student support and do not directly focus on any commercial elements. The 6 Student Executive Officers are elected each spring, by members, and are the key representatives for LUU in addition to being Trustees. Their roles are:

- Equality and Diversity Officer;
- Activities Officers;
- Welfare Officer;
- Education Officer;
- Communications and Internal Affairs Officer; and
- Community Officer.

Staff and Senior Management Team

LUU has a significantly larger workforce than the UUSU with approximately 100 full time staff supported by a further 250 casual and part time staff. Senior Management and staff have good working relationships (based on their staff survey results) with 94% indicating that they enjoy their job; 93% are proud to work for the LUU; 90% feel that communication is good within their group; 88% feel that the LUU think that it's important to develop their staff; 74% feel recognised for their achievements; and 88% fell that they are managed effectively.

Senior Management plans are openly shared with staff. Objectives are set for the Senior Leadership Team and are communicated to staff. Central job post centres on the following areas:



- Bars (13 people);
- CDS (2 people);
- Chief executive and Directors (3 people);
- Facilities Management (5 people);
- Finance (7 people);
- HR and Admin (4 people);
- IT (1 person);
- Joblink (2 people);
- Marketing (7 people);
- Reception (2 people)
- Retail (29 people);
- Student Activities (10 people);
- Student Advice (8 people); and
- Venues (15 people).

Apart from the commercial staff the LUU has a high staff focus on student activities and advice. There is a much larger team concentrating on this area which is obviously impacting positively on student engagement. In addition there is a bigger emphasis on marketing with a team of 7 people, again ensuring a high level of communication with students.

There is also a greater focus on the management of its facilities with a larger staff team than the UUSU focusing on these areas.

Constitution

The LUU has a detailed Constitution totalling 28 pages and supported by and LUU Bye Laws which detail the working arrangements and legal requirements of it. Again this is a more focused constitution that is easily accessible and easily understood by UUSU staff, Sabbatical Officers and students.

Union Strategies

LUU has a number of strategies aimed at supporting its students. These include:





- Strategic Plan: The LUU has outlined a clear Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010 and have aided accessibility by producing it as a one page overview as follows:
- Community Strategy 2009 to 2011: The Community Strategy addresses six broad themes which have been identified as priority issues for students in Leeds, namely Housing, Safety, Students as Tenants, Students in Halls, Volunteering, and Students as Employees. This strategy enhances LUU's ability to build meaningful and progressive relationships within the community, fully support its members in areas that affect them, and make positive impacts where possible in the Leeds and West Yorkshire region.
- Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy 2007 to 2009: A strategy which ensures LUU balances concern for the environmental and social impacts of what it does against the delivery of high quality and efficient services for its members.
- Annual Report / Impact Reports: The report shows how Leeds University Union makes a positive contribution to the lives of students and local communities in Leeds. It celebrates what has been achieved with its members and outlines some of the major challenges that the LUU has faced and how they have been overcome.

Financial Performance

Funding of the LUU comes from two main sources: the University and LUU's commercial operations. Without the direct support both financially and non-financially from the University the LUU could not deliver a positive experience for students. In 2008-09, the block grant provided by the University rose by 2.5% to 1,918,000 (2008, £1,871,000) and was clearly critical to the LUU strategy. Self-generated income decreased by 12.6% to £882,000 (2008, £1,010,000). The Union's overall turnover from commercial operations remained at similar levels to 2008 with surpluses decreasing by an overall £123,000 (13.6%).

2008-09 was a year of challenge and change at LUU. The opening of the O2 Academy in Leeds affected sales at the Refectory venue. Only three concerts were held compared to the anticipated 16, revenue for the year was £334,000 (91%) down on 2007-08. Through strategies put in place such as hosting more live music in their Stylus venue some losses were recovered.

Financial performance was strong in the bars and other venues with an overall increase of £357,000 (16%) on last year i.e. the Terrace Bar (+29%), the Old Bar (+16%), and Stylus (+14%). In terms of retail performance, Gear – the clothing, gift and souvenir shop selling University of Leeds branded goods – also had an excellent year with a turnover of £230,000 (+15%).

The LUU reduced capital expenditure in 2008/2009 but recognise that such a low level of investment in physical assets is not sustainable in the long-term if they are to provide the facilities students expect. The Union building is evolving and the LUU recognise that they will need to make improvements based on the emerging priorities.



What's On Offer to Students

The LUU outlines that 'it always listens to its members' which was showcased in its recent review of student needs. Over 4,000 students completed the online review and 300 took part in focus groups, making the 2009 LUU Review highly participative. Eighty percent of students indicated that the LUU makes a positive contribution to their student life. The research also found that 92% of members rated the Union as good or very good.

The LUU offers students a vibrant community hub. A wider diversity of services and activities are made available to students in the LUU compared to in the UUSU i.e. volunteering, job centre. The services and activities include:

- Representation: providing student representation on issues of relevance to students;
- Student Advice Centre: providing advice on housing, money and academic problems and which is independent from the University;
- Job Centre: offering on-campus and online job centre, advertising positions that are suitable for students in Leeds. All the employers who advertise with Joblink have to meet the LUU code of standards. The service is provided free. To fund the job centre LUU supply temporary staff to University Departments and external companies at highly competitive rates and all monies are recycled back into LUU to run Joblink and other student services;
- Joblink's Course-Related Vacancies: offered in partnership with The Careers Centre, providing a service for students to help them find part-time work related to their academic studies;
- Clubs and Societies: a wide range of clubs and societies are on offer – over 200;
- Shops: offering Union Books, essential items, card and gift shop, clothes, University of Leeds clothing, accessories, hairdressers, food etc;
- Bars and Clubs: Terrace, Old Bar, Wicked Café, Stylus, Pulse and Mine, other spaces to relax and opportunities to book out spaces;
- Volunteering: Wide range of volunteering opportunities; and
- Campaigns: Current campaigns include: increasing government funding for educations, student safety and security etc.

Marketing

An extensive and successful range of marketing and events which promote the Union are undertaken. More extensive resources are allocated to marketing than in the UUSU and ensure the LUU has a high level of communication with its students. Marketing materials include:

- Guides: Your Guide to the Student Union and Map of the Union;



- Website: boasts an average of three quarters of a million hits and an average of nearly 20,000 unique users per month;
- Plasma screens;
- Promotions;
- Posters;
- Student Media groups;
- Leeds Student TV, which collected the award for Best Student TV Station at their national conference;
- The Gist, A5 monthly publication full of Union news, information and 'what's on' events listings. This publication is the Student Union's source of entertainments and events information, and is available to pick up from dedicated racks all around the Union building and various locations on campus;
- Leeds Student Newspaper:
- The paper is distributed every Friday of term time, free of charge, for the students to pick up;
- Freshers' Fair;
- Societies and sports teams;
- Summer Ball;
- Varsity;
- Celebrate Week;
- Colours Dinner;
- Christie Championship; and
- Sports Ball.

University For the Arts Student Union (SUARTS)

SUARTS is the student representative body for the 20,000 students spread across all 6 colleges of the University of the Arts London. Elected student officers and a dedicated staff team provide students with advice, support and representation during their time of study. The Students' Union (SUARTS) provide a multitude of opportunities for students, including entertainment, activities, multi-media, jobs, democracy, advice, support, volunteering, bars, a cafe and more.



Governance

The governance of SUARTS is split into two key areas, firstly the representative voice of students; ensuring the members' voice is heard within the University, locally and nationally and secondly organisational management; the part that provides services, employs the staff and runs the offices, bars & galleries.

Like LUU, SUARTS has a Trustee Board which oversees the organisational management of the facility; they have ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction and financial well-being of the Union, ensuring that it is solvent, well governed and delivering on the objectives for which it exists. Trustees do not get involved in the day-to-day running of SUARTS which is left to managers and staff.

The Trustee Board only gets involved in the representative side of the Union if something were to threaten the reputation, finances or legal standing of the organisation. The representative voice of SUARTS is guided by the Student Executive and Referenda.

The role and powers of the Trustee Board is set out in the Constitution. The Trustee Board aims to be transparent and, in order that students know what is discussed, the meeting reports are available online after each meeting. The Trustee Board also makes an Annual presentation to the Union's Annual General Meeting on its work.

Student Executive

Again a smaller number of Sabbatical Officers are elected each year than in the UUSU. The 4 Student Executive Officers act as the key representatives for SUARTS in addition to being Trustees. Their roles are:

- President;
- Activities & Volunteering Officer;
- Culture & Diversity Officer; and
- Campaigns & Communications Officer.

College Vice Presidents represent students at their College, ensuring student views are heard and acted on at a local level. They work with other Student Reps in their College to push for change on issues that their fellow students care about. As members of the Student Executive, Vice Presidents are a key link between what's going on at College level and the Union's Sabbatical Officers.

Student Reps

Student Reps are elected on an annual basis and make up part of the recognised means by which students can comment on their course and University. Through these Reps students are able to voice their opinions about their student experience and have their opinions heard. There are 3 types of reps:



- Course Reps (representing students on their course);
- School Reps (representing students at their school); and
- Site Reps (representing students based at their site).

The Reps undertake a range of activities, both formal and informal and provide a valuable link between the student group and both academic and non-academic staff at the University and in the Students' Union. Student Reps are a valued part of the institution's quality assurance and enhancement processes.

Union Policy on representational and educational matters is decided by Referendum; a vote in which all students can be involved, meaning it should truly reflect students' views. Once passed, policy lasts for three years unless it is updated or a contradicting policy is passed.

Staff

There are 23 core staff supported by an extensive pool of part time and casual staff. Roles include:

- Student Representation Development Coordinator;
- Democracy Co-ordinator;
- Communications Researcher;
- Student Engagement Manager;
- Web Development Co-ordinator;
- Communications Assistant;
- Campaigns Advisor;
- Student Activities Team;
- Projects Team;
- Student Training Co-ordinator;
- Membership Services Manager;
- Events Team;
- Commercial Team;
- Sports & Societies Development Co-ordinator;
- Buddying Coordinator; and



- Advice Worker.

Again similar to the LUU a much higher focus is placed on staff roles which do direct work with students. Likewise a greater emphasis is placed on communication and marketing, again promoting the Union and its activities.

Union Strategies

The Student Executive meet regularly to discuss potential problems and improvements to life at University. They can then take these forward to lobby the University locally or organisations nationally. Issues raised by Student Reps and at student forums get fed into the work of the Student Executive. The Union is a democratic organisation, and so all the representatives are elected by relevant students.

Its mission is to “provide effective representation and a range of high quality student focused services that enhance the student experience and build the student community at University of the Arts London”.

Its vision is “by 2014 we will be recognised as a key player in the UAL community and have a meaningful impact on every student’s experience at this university. Our representation and activities will be truly student led and meet the needs of our diverse membership. Innovation and creativity will shape everything that we do and our successes as a specialist arts union will be recognised nationally”.

SUARTS’s core values are: Creativity. Democracy. Diversity. Equality. Fun. Responsibility.

What’s On Offer to Students

SUARTS provides students with unique opportunities to shape their lives as students. Offering a diverse range of student run activities and development opportunities as well as being the bedrock of student social life on campus. A diverse range of services and activities are made available to students, these include:

- Supporting students through democracy. Students elect representatives on a University, College and Course level, by working with student reps and engaging in democracy at SUARTS individual students are able to help shape the educational and social experience of students at UAL;
- Organising Students to Effectively Represent their Peers. Students are able to elect their own representatives on their course and which students represent them on college committees. These reps gain training and support from Officers and Staff at SUARTS;
- A wide range of sports and societies;
- Buddying to allow new students to settle in;
- Volunteer opportunities, a wide range of volunteer opportunities are offered;



- Advice and Support, support for students is offered in many different ways. Support, advice and help is given on issues that may affect student academic performance or other problems such as complaints about housing services, plagiarism issues, or guidance on university procedures;
- SUARTS offer a selection of bars and catering facilities spread across various sites of the University of Arts, London. All bars offer a wide selection of food and drink;
- Freshers Festival;
- Free Gallery space;
- Less Common More Sense, student led creative magazine; and
- Creative Team, provides an opportunity for students to get involved in real creative projects gaining experience, exposure and to make money.

Marketing

A wide range of targeted marketing materials are also used and include:

- A website with a virtual receptionist;
- Social networking tools;
- Plasma screens;
- Promotions;
- Posters;
- Freshers' Fair;
- Graduation Ball;
- Ongoing events;
- Societies and sports teams.

Summary

Two benchmarking exercises were undertaken to assess the UUSU against other Student Unions, namely Leeds University Union (LUU) and University for the Arts Student Union (SUARTS). The exercise found that a higher proportion of staff were allocated to direct student support / academic representation than currently in the UUSU. Staff were also based more in teams i.e. one person did not make up a Department. The number of Sabbatical Officers was lower than in the UUSU and again their focus was on student support and academic representation.



Generally the LUU and SUARTS facilities were more modern and up to date, matching private sector facilities and had a high level of usage.

More emphasis has also been placed on communication with each of the Unions have a marketing and communications team which appears to enhance their ability to communicate with students and promote their services. The exercise also found that the UUSU should take into account the following factors:

- The importance of getting student views and delivering services and activities which meet them;
- Ensure that the Trustees, Sabbatical Officers and staff involved have the same clear vision of and what the end goal is;
- Having staff focused on student engagement and representation;
- The importance of having a highly motivated and trained staff team;
- To offer increased volunteering opportunities to bring students into the Union;
- To invest in the Union and Commercial activities otherwise you don't provide students with the level of quality that they expect;
- To identify the marketing tools which most effectively market the Union and implement them and have a strong communications team;
- Communicate/Communicate/Communicate with all stakeholders and don't underestimate the time this will take; and
- Understand that much of this work involves a journey for those involved and no one model of will fit all circumstances.



Governance Analysis

Governance Structures

The Governance Review sought to assess the effectiveness of the structures, policies and procedures of the UUSU in achieving its mission, aims and delivering its services and activities.

Firstly the UUSU Constitution was assessed, given that it provides the main guiding principles for the UUSU and outlines the legal responsibilities of the organisation. The Constitutional Review addressed the strengths and weaknesses and has made a number of suggestions for amendment.

The Constitution of the UUSU was found to be a robust document in terms of legislative requirements. The Constitution was reviewed and ratified in February 2009 and is up to date and relevant. It is very comprehensive and addresses most of the key areas relating to risk. The roles and responsibilities are clearly set out and the broad aims and vision for the Union are also clearly set out. However a number of areas for concern must be addressed, these include:

- The Constitution and supporting schedules includes almost 2000 rules, policies and guidelines. It is unlikely that many people will read them but more importantly understand all of them. The full Constitution is of vital importance legally but it creates a lack of accessibility for UUSU Sabbatical Officers, staff and students from fully understanding it and its implications;
- There is too much authority, control and responsibility vested in the President. Although a rationale has been provided for this, it is not good practice to change the Constitution because of an issue of student engagement as opposed to addressing the actual issue itself;
- The Bars which arguably carry the highest level of risk are not adequately covered within the Constitution. The relationship between the Union, the Licence holders and the University is not adequately covered. Although the Bars are separately constituted and have their own Bar Committees, these committees are either not operational or effective and liability remains with the Overall President and Site President who sit by default on each bar Committee;
- Insurance arrangements have not been adequately outlined within the Constitution. The responsibility for securing adequate cover rests with the Union but levels and processes are not addressed; Supporting documentation has been provided for this and Insurance cover is more than adequate however the responsibility for ensuring adequate cover is not clear in the Constitution;
- There is inadequate focus given to the need for a three to five year Strategic Plan which is reviewed annually and which should be implemented by the Sabbatical Officers and used as a basis for measuring and reporting performance; and



- The relationship between Staff and representatives is not adequately addressed. It is unclear what the working and management responsibilities between Staff and Representatives are.

The degree to which the UUSU adheres to the Constitution in the way that it operates at Executive level is variable, given the size and understanding of different Officers on their roles and responsibilities. During consultations it was highlighted that Sabbatical Officers may not fully realise and / or fully understand the level of responsibility that they have taken on. In addition too much power, responsibility and liability has been placed with the Overall President, a role which externally company CEO's would need at least 5-8 years experience and be placed on salaries in excess of £50,000 plus.

Generally amongst staff there are no clearly defined boundaries as to whom they are line managed by i.e. SMT or the Sabbatical Officers. There is a need for clearer line management structures and clear communication to staff.

Health and Safety policies appear to be sound as long as they are regularly updated, fully implemented and all staff and Sabbatical Officers are regularly trained in them.

The UUSU has a clear policy of equality training which is delivered by the Human Resources Officer. This is being implemented effectively within the UUSU however the makeup of the Sabbatical Officer team could be called into question if it does not reflect the wider make up of the student body i.e. gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, religious belief or political opinion, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller), disability, sexual orientation, age. This entails close monitoring of election campaigns and if required marketing to underrepresented groups to ensure a Sabbatical Officer team which is truly reflective of the wider student population.

Clear employment practices are outlined with the UUSU Human Resource Strategy however a range of HR policies and procedures are only being introduced i.e. appraisals, staff meeting etc so therefore a full assessment of their impact cannot be undertaken. A potential target for the year-end could be that every staff member has a Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Staff morale however is low (at the point of this review) and further work is required with staff to boost morale, to make them feel valued as employees and that their ideas for organisational reform will be listened to and implemented. There is currently a clear gap between the SMT and staff and a staff engagement programme needs to be undertaken to address the current situation.

A Senior Manager Code of Conduct does exist based on the AMSU Code of Professional Conduct for Senior Managers of UK Students' Unions, this reflects good operating standard but should be built upon further to become the UUSU Senior Management Team Code of Practice developed in consultation with staff.

The UUSU operate to University of Ulster procurement policies and procedures and has sound processes in place. Procurement is also linked to the NUS and its commercial purchasing arm, which



buys collectively to achieve lower prices and attract higher promotional spends from major companies to benefit students' union bars, catering/coffee outlets and shops.

The consultation phase however highlighted that centralised purchasing is not being undertaken across all the business areas therefore this could impact on it achieving best value for money and in being competitive against other private sector companies.

Communication and marketing was then assessed and it was found that there are a number of strengths in relation to communication and marketing given that there is a dedicated experienced Marketing Manager supported by an in-house Graphic Designer. A current Marketing Strategy exists and is being utilised in the promotion of UUSU services, which includes a self-updating website, a presence on Facebook / twitter and permanent Sabbatical Officer presence on each campus.

However, although a high level of quality marketing materials is being generated the message is getting lost for students, stakeholders and staff. Issues to be addressed include:

- There is only one Marketing Manager who is managing a diverse range of communications for UUSU as a whole, 4 campus UUSUs and their associated businesses / services. No wider team is available;
- There is a lack of focused on-campus PR and a communication and marketing function for the Campus based personnel;
- Communication and marketing activities appear to follow similar patterns yearly and without assessment as to their rate of success;
- PR and Marketing objectives do not form part of Sabbatical Officer remits even though they are partaking in communications activity;
- There is a lack of targeted, time lined communications strategy overall; and
- There is a lack of targeted, time lined communications plan for each of the campus's and UUSU business and service areas.

Financial monitoring and control. The financial reporting, systems and procedures necessary for compliance of the UUSU were assessed. The review found that overall the financial monitoring and control was of a high standard as follow:

- Separate statutory accounts are prepared - as required - for each of the four bars and for the Students' Union itself;
- The external auditors, PwC, have made no qualification in relation to any of the accounts reviewed. Internal audit results have not been seen but are said to have identified only a small number of minor issues;



- UUSU's agreement with the University requires UUSU (at section 1, paragraph 5c) to produce audited financial statements by 31 October each year for a 31 July accounting year end;
- The agreement also requires UUSU (at section 2, paragraph 4) to create "sufficient reserves to deal with any particular liability claim arising under law";
- The financial operation of UUSU is subject to internal audit, currently by KPMG for the University Council, and to external audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers;
- Finance office staff are all long serving and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. According to the team they understand and operate the procedures diligently and efficiently;
- Financial Procedures Manual dates from March 2007. A proposed update is due in June 2010. There remains currently the possibility that the instructions do not reflect changes in practice (e.g. reference to Deputy President, an office which no longer exists). The Manual is, however, detailed and comprehensive and that procedures are in most cases strictly and routinely followed;
- Financial records are kept using Sage Line 50. Sports Union records are now also on Sage;
- Paper processes appear to be time-consuming and are perceived to be unnecessarily complex, with outlet-specific forms printed locally (itself an expensive task in terms of resource cost);
- This is a particular issue for the Sports Union given the number of individual clubs and low-level of transactions, but this is viewed as a necessary responsibility given the importance of encouraging the operation of these clubs;
- It is generally true that there is a high volume of small transactions, and that the number does not reduce significantly with falls in turnover;
- A VAT review has recently been carried out by HMRC. According to the Finance Manager no problems were identified;
- Close control is kept of the UUSU Credit Cards and travel/accommodation costs strictly monitored as a result;
- The Finance and General Purposes Committee is required to approve all single item purchases over £1,500 at monthly meetings. Although the Committee meets less frequently in practice this presents no practical difficulty as such purchases are both exceptional and infrequent;
- Student officers are not required to have any financial qualifications or specific knowledge. They do, however, have statutory fiscal responsibility for UUSU; and
- There seems little actual student participation or interest, especially from the student body as a whole, in the financial operation of UUSU and its clubs and commercial operations.



A review of the financial performance of the UUSU was also undertaken. This found that:

- The collapse in deposit interest rates has had a significant impact on financial performance since 2006. There was an overall surplus in 2006 and 2007 with average interest receivable of around £20,000, whereas the interest received in 2009 was only £7,977 against an operating deficit of £47,497;
- In the medium term UK bank interest rates are expected to remain low and so there is a cycle of reserves falling as they are used to cover annual deficits, with consequent falls in amounts on deposit and interest receivable;
- Wages have been subject to a 3 year agreement for a 5% "cost of living" increase (although this was staged with 3% followed by 2% in the third year);
- There is a flexible number of casual staff used at the sites, so the different average staff numbers (ranging from 212 in 2007 to 72 in 2009) is not unusual. The use of casual staff does allow for more flexibility in staffing and consequent costs to respond to expansion or contraction of business in each site;
- Changes in permanent staff are managed through natural wastage and it is perceived that changing existing contracts is problematic. There is therefore an inflexible core cost attached to each of the 10 commercial outlets and to other UUSU staff;
- Efficiencies have been made when possible through not replacing leavers and through the centralisation of payroll operations in Jordanstown;
- The Manager of each commercial outlet (shops, catering and bars – 10 in total) is incentivised through a 5% bonus of net profit. In practice this has proved to be a very limited amount where due and is perceived to be of little real value as a motivator; and
- There is some uncertainty surrounding the ability to pass on NUS discounts on purchases. Due to a combination of aggressive price-cutting in other licensed premises and a determination by UUSU to promote responsible drinking.
- The accounts show clear evidence of affirmative action in recent years to reverse isolated underperformance in commercial outlets, such as the running down of stock levels to reflect lower turnover and the sharp cut in the Jordanstown Club wages costs (40% lower in 2009 than in 2006) which contributed to a profit in 2009. However the lack of investment in commercial services may be a contributing factor to the low number of students using the UUSU.

Strategic Planning Process

The UUSU currently operates to its Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 and has a Risk Register in operation. The strategic planning process could have been more rigorous and more effectively integrated consultation findings from a range of stakeholders into the development of its Priorities. The current



vision, mission and values lack clarity evidenced in that students and other stakeholders are not aware of the focus and role of the UUSU. Likewise the current Strategic Plan has not been widely promoted (although it is accessible on the UUSU website) and has not been designed and presented in a way that sells the organisation and what it does.

The objectives within the Strategic Plan should also be SMART(er) therefore measuring their effectiveness from a validated baseline may not always be possible. However the corresponding Action Plan has more quantifiable measures but there appears not to be a critical assessment of how effectively the UUSU has implemented them.

There also does not appear to be a clear link between the objectives set in the Strategic Plan and their transition into tangible work plans for Sabbatical Officers and staff. This however is being addressed.

Performance against the Strategic Plan has not been discussed and monitored at formal quarterly meetings with Sabbatical Officers and staff and a yearly review has not been evidenced.

Role of Elected Representatives

The Governance Review sought to assess the current roles and responsibilities of the Elected Representatives in relation to the clarity of their roles and their effectiveness in delivering outcomes for the UUSU membership. From the consultation it clear that there is a lack of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of Sabbatical Officers and how accountable each Officer is in delivering their work plans. Sabbatical Officers have outlined (as have other stakeholders) that each Officer requires a clear tangible work plan linked back to the overall Strategic Plan and that this should be pre-defined to a certain extent on election and should transcend the timescale of the Sabbatical Officers role.

The current role of Sabbatical Officers has been divided between commercial services, staff management and their representational role. One clear focus for the Sabbatical Officer roles i.e. representation would allow Officers more clarity and time to focus on student engagement.

The current team of Sabbatical Officers are seen as highly effective aided by the fact that the current Overall President has served three years with the UUSU. This has enabled a clear consistently of approach and strong management of the Sabbatical Officer team. The current team do recognise (as validated by other stakeholders) that the success of the Sabbatical Officer team is dependent on who is elected. It is clear from the desk research and consultations that the current structure of the UUSU does not fully lend itself to the effective management of the UUSU i.e. holding it accountable for poor performance and its role in representing the voice of students.

Next the effectiveness and management of sub committees and the degree to which the Executive and sub committees work together was assessed. This found that meetings are not taking place regularly and that their needs to be a greater emphasis on planning all meetings in advance with clear agendas and with action orientated minutes.



Connection with Membership

The Governance Review sought to assess if the UUSU was involving and communicating effectively with the membership. The overall connection with membership on a wider University scale is limited and hindered by the current Role of Sabbatical Officers and in communication strategies (covered previously). The low level of student engagement is evidence of the lack of connection with the student membership.

Surveys and consultations have highlighted that the student population have a lack of awareness of the UUSU, its Sabbatical Officers and the range of services it offers. Students clearly identified there is a need for the UUSU but that it must offer them the services they currently require, increase communication and offer them the standard of facilities that they expect.

A key element of supporting student representation is the Class Rep system however the findings of the survey and consultations found that students felt the standard of Class Rep varied and that in many classes they did not know who their Class Rep was. However there is major scope to develop this element further, if additional resources are allocated to it.

A new initiative Student Shout has been introduced but the level of success has been low initially. However with a change in focus of Sabbatical Officer roles and more time dedicated to the initiative it has a high degree of potential in identifying the needs of students. This in part relates back to the lack of clearly defined work plans based on an overarching UUSU Strategic Plan, the level of work undertaken the Sabbatical Officers i.e. attendance at meetings, the hindrance of out of date facilities and a lack of communication and marketing personnel.

Relationship with the University

The Governance Review sought to assess how positive a relationship the UUSU has with the University and how this helps shape their policies for the benefits of the membership. The increasing representative role being played by the UUSU is in line with University policy and is assisting the University to meet its Student Charter.

From the stakeholder consultations it is clear that the relationship between the University and the UUSU is good but that it could be stronger i.e. not all stakeholders were aware of who the senior management were. In addition a stronger partnership needs to be developed with the University in terms of access to resources and that University and UUSU staff work together to ensure that the UUSU facilities are accessible to students.

There is scope to work more in partnership with different University Departments dependent on the UUSU outlining a clear strategy and focus for its work. The University sees a clear role for the UUSU in linking students and the University together, how it can represent their views and how it could support the University in completing its National Student Survey. However these partnerships will only develop if the UUSU can showcase that it is representative of the full student body and that it is demonstrably meeting the needs of students.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The Governance Review has highlighted that the UUSU has much to offer their membership base and in the support of the priorities of other stakeholders such as the University of Ulster.

Students clearly want and value the support available from the UUSU. However the level of usage is impacted upon by the level / method of communication as many students are unaware of the UUSU and its services, by the out of date physical environment and lack of activities.

The current Sabbatical Officer Team is strong and dedicated to the work of the UUSU and there is recognition across the majority of stakeholders that this is the case. The wider staff team have also been identified as very good in their support to students and in the running of the organisation.

When reviewing the UUSU against the critical areas for Student Union success as identified in the NUS report, *Surfing the Wave*, the UUSU fares well. As part of this review and from other in-house consultation work carried out it has a sound understanding of the needs of its members, backed up by evidence. The UUSU does however need to allocate additional resources to develop further in areas such as campaigning and academic representation.

One of the biggest issues for the UUSU centres on student engagement. To address this, the UUSU must invest time and resources into providing a Union which is relevant to the needs of students and by providing a vibrant social hub. This however needs to be coupled with strong communication. The Review recognises however that the UUSU has limited resources and significant refurbishment may not be possible within its current budget.

The UUSU has been proactive in addressing under performance in its commercial activities as demand decreases however the lack of investment impacts negatively on the level of usage by students consulted. In addition the commercial services require additional development, including the development of business and marketing plans.

There is a high level of management within the UUSU through its strong policies and procedures and its high level of financial control. The constitution is robust in terms of legislative requirements, a strategic plan is in place and an overarching marketing plan has been developed. New staff management procedures have been put in place i.e. appraisals and staff meetings but work still needs to be undertaken to boost staff morale.

The UUSU has developed strong partnerships with the University and other stakeholders but these could be developed further for example in areas such as volunteering and provision of work experience.

The Governance Review has identified a number of recommendations which could impact positively on the level of engagement of students in UUSU activities, its accountability and efficiency, however



they will require a resource input (time and financially). The recommendations of the Governance Review are as summarised below:

Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
<p>1. Revise the management structure of the UUSU to increase accountability and enhance management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a Board of Trustees to enhance the governance and accountability of the UUSU. This would consist of students, ex-officers and business representation. The Board positions should be publically advertised for external members. • Devise and take Trustees through a Board Development Programme. • Register the UUSU as a charity. • Register the commercial services as a social enterprise.
<p>2. Review and update the Constitution to take account of the new management structure and increase its accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the current Constitution as the governing document with a review taking place every 5 years to ensure that it is up to date and still relevant. • Remove the emphasis on the Overall President within the Constitution and their responsibility / liability and move to the Board of Trustees. • Develop a shortened version of the Constitution to enhance its accessibility and ease of understanding for Sabbatical Officers, staff and students.



Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
<p>3. Redevelop the Strategic Plan taking account of new consultation and Review findings. This should also include the development of a Performance Monitoring System to allow the UUSU to more effectively baseline its activities and promote the work it undertakes in supporting students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop the Strategic Plan defining a clear focus for the UUSU and hold quarterly Strategic Review meetings. The Strategic Plan should be updated annually and redeveloped every three years. • Develop a one page Strategy Map to promote the Strategic Plan. • Develop work plans for Sabbatical Officers and staff linked directly back to the Strategic Plan with SMART targets and key performance indicators. • Implement a performance monitoring system to track tangible process to the achievement of the strategic plan. • Formally report to the Board of Trustees quarterly on progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan. • Prepare and publish an Annual Report outlining the successes of the UUSU for the given year.



Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
<p>4. Reduce the number of Sabbatical Officers and revise their role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of Sabbatical Officers to 6 i.e. President, 4 Campus Vice Presidents and Sports President. • To ensure consistency of support to students and development of the UUSU the Sabbatical Officer work plans should focus on delivering the objectives and actions within the UUSU Strategic Plan i.e. 60-70% of their work plan should focus in this area. • The role of the Sabbatical Officers should be Faculty based (in line with the University ethos and input to Faculty Committees) supported by UUSU staff. • Train a selection of campus based Office staff to support the new Sabbatical focus i.e. make appointments / sign post • The Sabbatical Officer role should focus on student representation and engagement in line with consultation findings. Staff management and involvement in commercial services should be minimised. • Sabbatical Officers should reflect the wider student population. Sabbatical Officers make up should be accessed yearly and underrepresented groups proactively targeted.
<p>5. Develop the academic representation focus of the UUSU to enhance students' time at University. As part of this service a review of the Class Representative System should be undertaken to address areas of inconsistency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly promote the increased focus of the UUSU on academic representation to students and the University through reference to it in the UUSU Strategic Plan and by marketing the role. • Consult further with students and Class Reps to identify reasons for inconsistency of approach and put an action plan in place to address them. • Continue to offer training in the role of Class Rep. • Implement a recognition and rewards scheme which encourages active Class Representation. • Allocate more staff (see recommendation 8) and Sabbatical Officer time to the development of the academic representation role and the Class Representative system.



Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
-------------------------	---------------------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6. Develop a Volunteering / Work Skills Programme to support students to enhance their employability and to become involved in the UUSU.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Volunteer Policy, Strategy and programme of Volunteer opportunities. • Implement a recognition and rewards scheme which encourages volunteering. • Develop a Job Shop / Volunteer Shop. • Maximise the use of graduate schemes and student placement opportunities and secure additional support for the UUSU. • Achieve the Investors in Volunteering award within two years of establishing the programme. |
| <p>7. Increase level of Staff to allow the UUSU to more effectively meet the needs of students, support Sabbatical Officers and enable a greater level of engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recruit 6 new staff posts to support the new structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Engagement Officer; ○ Campaigns & Research Officer; ○ Volunteer Development Officer; ○ Welfare Officer; ○ Marketing & Communications Officer; and ○ Commercial Manager. • Access up to 15 additional placements through Graduate Employment Schemes and Volunteering opportunities to support the work of the UUSU. |



Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
<p>8. Develop a new overarching marketing plan segmented to all customers with sub plans for each commercial unit and UUSU service to increase the level of knowledge about the UUSU and its services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an overriding strategy with SMART objectives and key messages for the SU as a whole. • Incorporate separate strategies, plans and targets for the 4 campuses and the 4 areas of the SU's work - Representation; Commercial Services; Entertainments; and Education & Welfare. • Review and update the website. • Review and update social networking sites. • Be more creative and use new technologies in marketing to students i.e. trial promotional text messaging. • Review all the current printed collateral to assess how useful they are and if they fulfill their objectives. • Focus the new Marketing Strategy on communicating with new students and consistently communicating throughout the year.
<p>9. Enhance staff relationships and management structures to address low morale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a staff engagement process i.e. assessment of how they wish to be communicated with, support structures they would like in place etc • Offer staff the opportunity to increase their management skills through a Management Development Programmes. • Deliver a Leadership Programme to the Senior Management Team and Sabbatical Officers. • Increase the level of on-site management of each campus (outside of Jordanstown). • Develop and issue a Staff Newsletter quarterly. • Review the recognition and rewards scheme for staff. • Achieve an Investors in People award by 2014.



Area of Recommendations

Suggested Summary Actions

10. Increase the level of internal communication and proactively ensure regular meetings are taking place.

- Ensure that weekly campus meetings of Sabbatical Officers and Senior Management Team take place consistently (telephone or Skype conference calls to liaise on delivery of activities).
- Consistently host monthly Sabbatical Officer / Senior Management Team meetings.
- Ensure a formalised Agenda is drawn up and minutes recorded with clear Action Plan of who has to do what and by when.
- Maintain and build upon campus and service staff meetings.
- Implement an online diary system for all staff and Sabbatical Officers to improve communication.
- Ensure proactive participation in all University developments.

11. Lobby / secure additional resources to enhance the general environment of the UUSU and bring it up to standard with modern facilities / student expectations.

- Secure / allocate funding to re-develop the UUSU across all campuses with the aim of making them more attractive, vibrant, user friendly and in line with student expectations. This could be carried out in a phased approach.
- To develop and implement a regular and consistent programme of entertainment and activities across all campuses i.e. creating the vibrant hub.



Area of Recommendations	Suggested Summary Actions
<p>12. Assess the feasibility of re-developing commercial services to bring a selection of them up to date with private bars, restaurants and shops with a prioritised Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a robust Business Plan for each of the commercial service to assist in their development. • Develop individual marketing plans for each of the commercial services. • To review the level of investment in commercial services and assess the feasibility of revitalising them i.e. furnishing, equipment, making the bar and catering as one etc. • Proactively recruit the Bar Committees and ensure they are fully operational. • Ensure that all staff (full and part time) undertake regular training and development i.e. SIA. • Assess the option of leasing out the bar and catering elements.
<p>13. Enhance the financial viability of the UUSU to implement Review findings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and increase current levels of University grant by showcasing that the UUSU is the face and voice of the wider student body. • Access wider funding opportunities (once Charitable Status has been obtained). • Build a reserve balance of up to 4 months running costs. • Where a specific commercial activity or location is consistently producing a deficit, an evaluation should be undertaken to identify why and if there is justification for it to continue. • Increases in wages and salaries should be more closely tied to performance improvements, where possible.