STRATEGIC PLAN

The UNION

2018 - 2021
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Higher Education is an ever changing and complex landscape. It’s for this reason that we’ve decided to breakaway from the traditional Students’ Union model, to ensure that we’re positioned to support our students now and in the future, no matter what challenges arise.

We are an essential pillar to the University of Portsmouth student experience but rightly exist separately to the University of Portsmouth and carry a responsibility to all students to advance their education. In doing this we work to deliver three charitable objectives which are at the core of everything we do: representation, development and welfare.

The University of Portsmouth Students’ Union is dedicated to the development and care of Portsmouth students, empowering them to become inspiring young individuals and to make a positive contribution to society.

BREAKING AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL STUDENTS’ UNION MODEL
ANNA CLODFELTER

It was one of our new core values that, I feel, unknowingly ignited the process of building a Future Union. It’s something all of our staff seem to naturally carry and has been a part of our ethos without us even noticing, it’s our pioneering approach to everything we do.

Following by example from those who lead us, our students, we knew we want to be the best that we can be and working from a traditional model over 25 years old wasn’t helping us to achieve this.

Between 2015 and 2018 we stripped back and reviewed everything we do, consulted with thousands of students and remodelled the organisation into what we believe is a pioneering way in our sector to ensure both equity of voice and equity of benefit across the global student population here at the University of Portsmouth.

In entering this strategy in 2018, we can proudly say that:

• We are award winning in the work that we do
• Over two thirds of Portsmouth students say they feel represented by us.
• Participation in student groups has risen by over 30 per cent.
• Our Advice Service supports more than double the amount of students than in 2015.
• Our trading company has grown in both financial and social contribution.

Our vision, however, is to have a positive impact with every Portsmouth student. So while the above is good, it is still not good enough. This strategy sets out our plan to listen to, and act for, all University of Portsmouth students at pace and in an agile way that responds to the rights, needs and wants of our members.

Anna Clodfelter
UPSU Chief Executive
BEING ESSENTIAL AND EQUITABLE FOR STUDENTS

VIOLET KARAPASEVA

The press and media may often portray students in a negative light but I believe this couldn't be any further from the truth. Current students are boldly facing some of the toughest financial and economic challenges in history; our career pathways and consumer choices are paramount to how we choose to live. We're more vocal about our rights, needs and wants than ever before thanks to our global connectivity.

It's absolutely right therefore, that the Students' Union should be modelled to reflect the diverse and rapidly evolving student community rather than living in the past under a model that cannot truly represent and service our growing community of members.

I'm proud to be able to present a strategy that will, by 2021, allow the Students' Union to be positioned to effectively and equitably listen to all students voices and deploy the appropriate resources to act for students. We will inspire them to be more than they imagined they could be, and continue to be relevant for our changing student cohort.

The Students' Union will not be a place for a few loud voices, seen purely as a bar, or focussed primarily on the 18-21 campus based student. We will continue our progression towards being a vibrant membership organisation that is at the heart of the student experience. We'll deliver outstanding academic representation, be bubbling with weird and wonderful student groups that inspire and create future leaders, and deliver programmes that annually reflect our global community of students.

V. Karapaseva

Violet Karapaseva
UPSU President
OUR VISION
To have a positive impact with every Portsmouth student.

OUR VALUES

**ENRICHING**
- EQUITABLE
- STUDENT FOCUSSED
- FOR ALL STUDENTS

**INCLUSIVE**
- INSPIRING
- FUN
- ADDING VALUE

**PIONEERING**
- INNOVATIVE
- INFLUENTIAL
- FUTURE FOCUSSED

THINGS WE WILL ALWAYS STAND BY

- STUDENTS DEMOCRATICALLY GUIDE US
- EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS
- OUR INDEPENDENT STATUS IS PARAMOUNT
- PARTNERSHIPS STRENGTHEN OUR WORK
- RELEVANT AND RESILIENT FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS
In 2014 the Students’ Union launched its first member-led strategy through three key themes that students identified the Union could improve for them. Over the last three years we have made some dramatic changes to the way the Union looks and feels today.

**EMPOWERING THE STUDENT VOICE**

In 2014, students told us that they wanted the Union to empower their voices within the University. In our 2017 annual survey two thirds of students said that they believe they are represented by the Students’ Union. This was predominantly driven by our partnerships with the University and focus on engagement with our Course Representatives, which resulted in doubling the number of recruited and trained individuals.

JUST UNDER 70% OF STUDENTS AGREE IN 2017 WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

- "The Union listens, consults and acts on the student voice"
- "The Union is a mouthpiece for all students"
- "The Union representatives are making a difference"

**LIFE CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES**

Our numbers of students participating in student groups has risen by over 30 per cent since 2014, driven by a programme to improve the inclusivity in sport. Activities included a ‘This Girl Can’ campaign and a programme to break down the perceptions around alcohol and sport, which received national acclaim through British Universities and Colleges Sport and the National Union of Students. In addition we launched a new online training platform which engaged over 500 students in its first year of activity.

74% OF STUDENTS IN 2017 AGREED THAT:

- "The Union is always developing fun and engaging Opportunities"

WHilst ONLY 50% OF STUDENTS IN 2017 AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

- "The Union helps students exceed their expectations"
- "The Union is the go to place for life outside their course"
MAKING LIVES EASIER

Through raising the profile of our Advice Service we have provided twice as much support to students as in 2014. We also overhauled our communications channels and changed many of our policies and processes to reduce the barriers that stopped students from engaging with us. Evidence from our 2017 annual survey suggests that 80 per cent of students believe that we communicate well, provide visible support and are easy to access.

OVER 80% OF STUDENTS IN 2017 AGREED WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS, WITH ONLY 5% OR UNDER DISAGREEING:

| “The Union communicates effectively with helpful information” | “The Union provides visible and independent support for students” | “The Union has simple processes and is easy to access” |

TRADING

To support the aims of the Charity, our trading company has survived a recession and continued its growth in both financial and social contribution towards the charity’s aims. For two consecutive years students involved in running the trading company received national awards. We terminated arrangements with companies that didn’t fit with the strategic direction and ethos of the Union, and we continued to grow our sustainable income streams, delivering our highest profits to date. The challenge for trading is to continue this growth, providing vital funds needed by the charity in an unstable economy. The trading company’s 2018-21 strategic plan sets out how this will be achieved.

“The University is immensely proud of the work of our Students’ Union, which plays a central role in developing our excellent student experience. Their portfolio of services and activities inspires, supports and represents Portsmouth students, constantly influencing positive change. They make a vital contribution by preparing our students for their future careers with social and professional opportunities that broaden horizons and raise aspirations.”

Professor Graham Galbraith, Vice Chancellor
BUILDING THE FUTURE UNION

The Union model to 2018 was over 25 years old, and while the Union had delivered some incredible things for our students, research and external audits of the Union revealed that the organisation had become slow to react to the needs of our students.

In 2016, the Union, with active participation from staff, sabbatical officers and trustees, undertook a business review workshop with an external consultant to identify how the Union can move forwards to be the best it can possibly be for University of Portsmouth students.

The review outlined some key strengths but also some key challenges, which included the lack of clear direction, a potential drift from our charitable aims, and a limited (although still valuable) impact of the services the Union delivers.

Ultimately, the review identified the need to shake up the Union to deliver our vision of a positive impact with every Portsmouth student; the organisation needs to stop doing some things, start doing others and revolutionise many of the current activities.

Our change programme - Project 25 - was officially launched in summer 2016 with the backing of students, the University, our trustee board and our staff. A project team was created and extensive research undertaken with students and external bodies to reveal the future of education and student needs.

Our staff, sabbatical officers and students audited everything the Union does and this information created a new model to move us forwards. The model details everything the Future Union will be doing to build a Students’ Union fit and flexible enough for the next 25 years.

This strategy marks the start of building a Students’ Union that fits with this new model.
STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS RECORD

SABBATICAL OFFICER TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- 24 hour Library opening
- Introduction of Student Mediation service
- Freedom to remotely access Wednesday afternoon lectures
- Introduction of online submissions - removing student printing costs
- Challenged the stigma relating to mental health amongst the University community
- Introduction of Welcome Ambassador networks at the University
- Launched Women in Leadership annual conference event

KEY STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>5,362</td>
<td>5,255</td>
<td>4,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Reps Trained</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Members</td>
<td>7,861</td>
<td>10,268</td>
<td>10,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice Cases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money spent on students</td>
<td>2,024,209</td>
<td>2,249,801</td>
<td>2,048,029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“A really, really, great opportunity to work with people at the University to change things for students across the University both locally, nationally and internationally”

Grant Clarke, 2015 Sabbatical Officer
THE FUTURE STARTS HERE

OUR STRENGTHS

We are outstanding and award winning in the Students’ Union sector at many of the things we do, particularly for those who are actively involved in the Students’ Union services and activities. Our strategy from 2014 to 17 strengthened our work further and positioned the Union with:

- 7,000+ students actively engaged in UPSU activities
- 89% NSS score regarding positive impact (2016)
- Productive and influential relationship with the University
- Growth in trading subsidiary operating profit

THE CHALLENGE

As of 2017-18 our records showed that the University of Portsmouth was home to a large and diverse student community of 29,498 distinct students. Of those,

- Just 24% of the student population are engaged in a student group.
- 76% of the student population do not engage with us.
- 86% of our active members are aged 18-21
- 71% of our active members are campus based
- Per-head-cost for activities is £6.46 vs £1.45 for representation

Our student community is brimming with culture and differences and we need to be an organisation that reflects this. Our statistics show an inequity of impact across the student community and it’s vital that we change this for our members. We believe every Portsmouth student should be empowered to access the incredible benefits that we know we can provide, and we are dedicated to making that happen.

“From a student perspective - being able to have a say in how the Union operates and the power to shape the way for future students and give them the best possible university experience is great.”

Gemma Firth, 2017 Graduate
THE SOLUTION

INSIGHTS
We will know about the entirety of our student community - including all those students outside of the 18-21 campus based demographic - and discover what they need and want from their university experience.

PARTNERSHIPS
We will retain and develop further our working partnerships across the global community that we connect with to enable us to positively impact our students.

ACTIONS
We will act on the information from our insight gathering activities. Providing opportunities for our student community to engage with projects, events, campaigns and services that are relevant to them.

FLEXIBILITY
We will be an agile Union that can be responsive to current cohort needs - thus becoming truly representative, developmental and supportive.

"It develops you as a person; it gives you all those fantastic key skills that employers are looking for and gives you real world experience."

Carla Watton, 2016 Sabbatical Officer
Our Commitments: The Difference We Want to Make by 2025

Impact by 2021
We will be working towards having a positive impact with every University of Portsmouth Student. By 2021 there will be:

- Progress towards capturing the rights, needs and wants of every Portsmouth student.
- An agreed path to bridge any gaps in the equity of benefit for every Portsmouth student to fulfill their rights, needs and wants.
- Resources in place to achieve our 2025 aims and progress towards our sustainable future.

Impact by 2025
We will have a positive impact with every University of Portsmouth Student. By 2025 we will be:

- Listening: Having meaningful conversations that capture the rights, needs and wants of every Portsmouth student.
- Acting: Providing equity of benefit for every Portsmouth student to fulfill their rights, needs and wants.
- Ensuring the resources are in place to sustain our impacts for the future.

“During my studies I volunteered as a Course Rep for 4 years, moving up to Course Rep Exec Chair in my final year. The experience completely transformed my education, it changed my entire understanding of my experience of HE. Now I find myself working in the Higher Education sector with a particular passion for facilitating the transformational experiences of both staff and students. If I had not volunteered in my first year as a Course Rep it is very unlikely that I would have actually walked out of University and into full time employment and into a role that I actually enjoy.”

Maddy Worsley, 2015 Graduate
## OBJECTIVE MEASURE 2018 2021 TARGET 2025 TARGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2021 TARGET</th>
<th>2025 TARGET</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td><strong>NSS Score</strong> - As the standardised HEFCE measure for SUrepresentation</td>
<td>61% - just in 2nd Quartile</td>
<td>Upper Quartile</td>
<td>Maintain Upper Quartile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td><strong>University non-continuation rates</strong> - Declining figures suggest that University of Portsmouth students have a better wellbeing and experience</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td><strong>Internal Benchmark</strong> - Measured against responses to “How would you rate your overall wellbeing during your time as a student?”</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Maintain above 80%</td>
<td>Maintain above 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td><strong>HESA Benchmark</strong> - UPSU will support the University of Portsmouth to be above their benchmark for graduates in employment in any given year*</td>
<td>88% UoP benchmark</td>
<td>92% UoP benchmark</td>
<td>95% Assumed growth as UoP aims cease at 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td><strong>Internal Benchmark</strong> - Measured against responses to a ranking of “Opportunities outside of my course have had a positive impact on my development whilst at University”</td>
<td>Baseline to be set in 2018</td>
<td>Tbc from baseline</td>
<td>Tbc from baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td><strong>Net Promoter Score</strong> - Standardised measure of organisational perception amongst customer base</td>
<td>'14 Big Conversation: -1.95%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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"I got to have so much hands-on experience that I now get to put to use in my day-to-day job."

Alex Watson, 2017 Graduate
OUR 3 YEAR PLAN
LISTEN

Working towards: Equity of voice across the student community

Our work to 2021:
- Develop and embed an effective Insights function
- Partnership workstreams with the University
- Increase data from non-engaged students and maintain with engaged students
- Provide analysed actionable data and trends
- Be moving towards acting as a single source of truth

ACT

Working towards: Equity of benefit across the student community

Our agile work to 2021:
- Develop and embed an effective agile activity function
- Have key partnerships in place
- Be able to respond to all the actions from the transfer mechanism from Insights, in the form of campaigns, events, projects and training
- Include activity that considers the big picture change (for the things students don't know they need - like TEF and fees)

Our stable work to 2021:
- Implement the new models of the stable functions
- Be moving towards an equity of benefit across the student community
- Be informed by agile activities
- Have key partnerships in place

“Getting involved with the Union was probably one of the best things I did at university. It gave me a different experience outside of lectures and ‘uni’ stuff and it’s where I made some of my closest friends. In fact I would never have met and gone travelling with my best friend Molly if it weren't for the Galleon, so just from a social perspective it’s a priceless experience in my eyes.”

Danielle Butler, 2015 Graduate
ENSURING OUR RESILIENCE

To ensure we are both resilient and relevant in a turbulent higher education landscape we will deliver:

**A membership relations programme**
- Implement new models for proactively building relationships with members
- Engaging with not just engaged members
- Understand and be able to tell the story of our brand

**A technology programme**
- Ensure our use of technology meets the expectations of current students
- Explore new technologies to exceed the expectations of current students
- Invest in the skills and expertise the Union requires to make it happen

**A people programme**
- Maintain right staff with right skills in right places to deliver Union aims
- Maintain a culture that lives our values

**A finance programme**
- Have a financial plan in place to deliver 2025 aims
- Have progressed a future sustainable financial plan; including progress on alternative funding sources
- Finances are allocated fairly for students

**A spaces programme**
- Progressing agreed student centre build
- Maintain innovative and interactive spaces
- Progressing towards equity of access to digital and physical space

**A business development programme**
- Broadening the depth and/or breadth of offer to scale our current core services
- Invested in planning, trialling and delivering appropriate additional businesses
- Have the resources in place to achieve the 2025 ambitions