The Student Experience
Project 2013
CONTENTS

4 - 5 | Introduction
6 - 7 | Executive summary
8 - 9 | Method
10 - 13 | Education
14 - 19 | Welcoming students
20 - 27 | Activities
28 - 37 | Employability
38 - 47 | Welfare
48 - 55 | Student living
56 - 65 | Campus
66 - 79 | The student body
          • International students
          • Postgraduate students
80 - 82 | Recommendations
In our ‘How Can We Help’ survey launched in September 2011, over 4,000 students answered a variety of questions relating to issues that the Students’ Union would work on in the coming academic year. Issues such as personal safety, finance, housing and library resources were all touched upon. Students were also asked, in light of the £9,000 fee issues, which of the following they thought should be the SU response.

Students stated that the SU should concentrate on improving the student experience at Nottingham - 60% of students selected this option overall. This response choice only fell below 50% in a handful of instances when we further investigated the data by range of demographic factors.

Even in the above groups, the message that SU resources should be focused on improving the Nottingham experience was still the most popular of the three propositions. Only Diploma students (voting 31% for improving Nottingham) chose another option more often, with 47% stating they wished for the SU to focus on opposing the fees at a national level. However, due to the small number of diploma students completing the survey, in real numbers this was the opinion of 23 out of a total 49 students.

Therefore, if improving the student experience is the priority of our students regardless of fees paid (as this survey was run before the fee increase so was not completed by anyone paying at the higher level) we felt it necessary to undertake our largest project to date. The Student Experience Project aims to uncover what the student experience at the University of Nottingham is all about; looking at students outside of the classroom and assessments to see what else defines their time here.

We want to understand what is important, what works and what needs to be improved so that regardless of age, campus, nationality or fee level, our students are being provided with the options and support to enable them to have the comprehensive student experience they need, want and deserve.

This isn’t about whether students think certain provisions should be free if they are already paying £9,000 in tuition fees, or making them into consumers with satisfaction ratings - it’s about uncovering what it is that matters to students and how we play a part in ensuring that the University of Nottingham student experience is the best it can be.

Even in the above groups, the message that SU resources should be focused on improving the Nottingham experience was still the most popular of the three propositions.
Executive SUMMARY

WELCOME
Around 9,000 students join the University of Nottingham each year. 67% of students scored their Week One experience at 4 or 5 out of 5. We have recently overhauled our Welcome materials to positive feedback from undergraduate students. However students in Halls run by third party providers or on Sutton Bonington campus have told us that our welcome booklet ‘The Guide’ is not always reaching them. We need to commit to making sure that all student beds, regardless of hall provider, have a copy of ‘The Guide’ on them when students move into their rooms. We have so far not conducted specific feedback on the Welcome period for Postgraduate or International students. We need to begin this process in order to ensure their experience and activities are reviewed and improved where necessary.

ACTIVITIES
Students can participate in a range of activities – we have over 200 societies and student groups and over 70 sports clubs. In a recent survey, 72% stated they had been involved with a club or society, with 85% of students saying their involvement had increased their social networks, 49% saying it had increased their ability to lead others and 82% saying it had increased the quality of their overall university experience. The University’s aim is for UoN Sports to rise from a top 10 position in the British University and College Sports (BUCS) league to top 5, yet there is no clear and universal policy to support students representing the University in BUCS competitions. Wednesday afternoons are not as ‘free’ as they are supposed to be – students have to do supported group work, compulsory meetings, and labs taking place in this time period and have stated that when competing in ‘away’ fixtures they need to leave Nottingham in the morning requiring the whole day to be ‘free’.

EMPLOYABILITY
We have around 3,000 students registered with the Student Volunteer Centre (SVC) however of the 435 of students telling us they had done some voluntary work during their current studies, more students had done this directly through a charity organisation than through SVC. The majority of student volunteers were doing so before starting university. Many students are volunteering in course-related roles with 53% saying their degree knowledge has increased as a result of their volunteering. 69% of students said their volunteering had increased their skillset. Some of our most proactive students who are busy building their employability skills through taking on positions of responsibilities through activities, attending networking events and securing internships said it was difficult to access careers events and workshops due to so few a places. 61% of students stated they were worried about securing paid, graduate level work after finishing their course. 62% of students who are currently working said they were not being paid at or above the Living Wage.

WELFARE
One of the major issues highlighted regarding Welfare is the prevalence of ‘Lad Culture’ and the lack of respect for female students ranging from bad taste humour on social media to actual cases of sexual harassment. 26% of all the stories we received from a survey on harassment had a sexist component. There is no current plan for dealing with such behaviour leading to calls for a Zero Tolerance policy within the Union. Alcohol, Drug use and Sex also create welfare problems amongst Nottingham students; 78% of all students who answered our How Can We Help survey said they drank alcohol, 47% of students have walked home along drunk at least a couple of times and 88% of students think they are less likely to use a condom if they are under the influence of alcohol. The student experience of welfare problems and how they are dealt with by the current support systems show that we need to have a new approach to “problem solving” for students; University’s Counselling Service’s Annual Report states the average waiting time for an initial appointment was 5.4 days, and 50% of students were offered an on-going appointment within 4 weeks. This is not perceived as good enough by students.

STUDENT LIVING
Last year our housing survey showed that the word students most associated with the house hunting experience was ‘stressful’. Only 23% of students completing this survey told us they’d had their contract checked at the free service run through the Union’s Student Advice Centre. Students living in the areas close to University Park campus are being discriminated against through council strategies that include parking permits for student but not other local residents and plans to limit the amount of rented affordable accommodation close to campus with a plan to divert students into purpose built accommodation in other areas. However, on our How Can We Help survey, 83% of our students told us that they don’t think its right for the Council to decide where and what type of property they can live in.

CAMPUS
We face challenges as a multi-campus university with regards to integration and service provision to all of its students. There is currently a disparity in engagement: 72% of students are/have been involved in clubs/societies through the SU. Broken down by campus this represents 80% at University Park but a drop to only 47% at Jubilee and 57% at Queens Medical Centre. Regarding voting in SU elections, 63% of UP students voted, 66% at Sutton Bonington but only 49% at DMC and 45% at Jubilee. Students appreciate the practical challenges to service provision on all campuses, in a survey at Jubilee, 78.9% of students were in total agreement and 27.6% strongly agreed that travelling/rotating services was sufficient and a permanent service/s were not necessary. In order to ‘Be Where Students Are’ there needs to be better integration of the satellite campuses.

OUR STUDENTS
We have over 30,000 students across various campuses and healthcare sites in the East Midlands. This includes approximately 9,000 International students and 8,000 Postgraduate students. Levels of participation through clubs, societies, voting or taking on elected positions is lower than with Undergraduate or Home students. When asked whether they feel part of the university community, postgraduates said no more often than undergraduates (28% Doctorate level, 22% Masters level compared to 18% undergraduates) and International students are currently represented by an elected International Officer who is without a committee due to the collapse of the International Students Bureau.
Method

The student experience project has been completed through a review of past data

In total we’ve listened to the student voice over topics as diverse as house-hunting, participation in student groups, employment and mental health. We’ve revisited data from existing surveys, run new surveys, created online submission forms, conducted focus groups and interviews.

We also trialled the method of consultations for the first time so as to gather student input into the project in their own words rather than just rely on the more fixed or prescriptive nature of surveys and focus groups. We took the project out to 9 locations across 4 campuses so we could try to live our intention of ‘being where students are’. Each session encompassed staff and officers providing an open call to students to talk to us about the good, the bad and the dreams for the student experience at the University of Nottingham. We told students we’d be holding 2 or 3 hour drop-in sessions whereby they could talk to us, offer a detailed or an anonymous comment on iPads or attach their own comment in label form to a series of themed stands. By taking the project to where students were, whether that was a hall of residence, hospital medical school or faculty atrium, we aimed to reach as many students as possible and perhaps most importantly, different students – the students who don’t visit us in our main location, who don’t follow us or interact with us on social media and those who perhaps don’t feel connected to our messages and usual feedback activities.

As a result, today we present a picture of the key important messages we’ve heard from students from those sessions, as well as a broad range of recent feedback research projects undertaken within the Union, and make a set of recommendations of how we can act upon what we know now and how we can continue to gather the information we need to further understand the needs of the University of Nottingham student population.

We publicised these events through the usual mediums of e-newsletters and our website. We also used Facebook and Twitter both to encourage students to attend upcoming events, but supplemented these with live Tweeting and Facebook posts from the events promoting interesting opinions and photos of the events as they happened so students could see exactly what was going on in order to encourage them to attend right now or in the future. We also engaged key contacts for each event and targeted our publicity so that when we visited our site in Derby we got our Communities Coordinator for Healthcare sites to rally the course reps based there and got a student involved to publicise and help on the day. For our Hall session we got our Communities Coordinator (JCR) to spread the word through the JCR committee and on the night of the event the JCR treasurer, Tom Wood, took on the challenge to lead the iPad submissions so as to provide the students with a known face and a voice they already listen to, which made a huge contribution to the data collected. We offered a prize draw for students who wanted to attach their ID to their comments and also provided free pizza – something that proved extremely well in getting a huge amount of our medical students down the stairs to our event after a 3-hour 9.00am lecture on dissection practice!
To build on from the data we received with regards to the additional course costs our students are facing, an in-depth survey was distributed through the Course Rep Network. After initial analysis focus groups were held to dig into the issues in more detail. The Education Network is now focusing on:

**Course Costs**

In a survey of around 1,500 students in March 2012, we asked how much money students had spent that year already on books and printing. Over 25% said they had spent more than £30 on printing so far that year and just over half of students said they had spent more than £60 on books. We also asked what other costs they’d encountered and we had an overwhelming response of diverse and large expenditures that students felt was necessary to continue their studies:

- "We had to spend £44 on a CRB check, ... Also £25 on a fee to use the dissection room, which is mandatory for our course."
- Vet students have to do 12 weeks animal handling placement and 26 weeks clinical placement all of which are unpaid over the 5 years in the holidays which means we cannot get a job in the holidays and have to pay for transport to farms, accommodation to stay at veterinary practices, pay for the correct protective equipment for placements, pay for textbooks and compulsory equipment for practicals such as dissection kits.
- The fact that we needed fancy pens for graphic drawing, costing £50, was sprung on us with no warning, and we only used them for one 10-credit module.
- Printing course notes - essential for some lectures/lecturers. £5 credit just isn’t enough to cover the year. It would really help if they either put more money on the student cards or encouraged more lecturers to provide handouts to be annotated in lectures.
- Field course worth 80% of a module, don’t go = fail the year. Costs a cool £180 on top of tuition fees, no upfront info on this in the first semester or before starting the course!
- English students do not receive extra funding for text books which are a fundamental part of the course.
- Cost of software required to do a first year module. also makes it pretty necessary to have a home computer.
- As part of an NHS course we are entitled to claim placement expenses. However, we have to pay for everything initially which can be very expensive and it can take up to 7 months to have your money reimbursed.
- PhD travel expenses, although we can claim them back we sometimes have to pay out over £100 or more before we can claim, on a budget that’s hard to find
- Not only are students facing costs to carry out their studies but the extras that will help them to become not just educated but employable, are simply out of reach of those students on a budget:
- A lot of trips, internships, years, semesters and summer trips cost money I don’t have. A lot of the time the things I want to do to further my career I can’t actually afford."

Funding of the study abroad period in the Department of Russian & Slavonic studies

Funding of placements & equipment costs in the School of Veterinary Medicine & Science

Promotion of the Access to Learning Fund & other funding opportunities

Printing costs

We know that discussions are on-going as to the amount of printer credit students receive now and potential future changes, as well as difference in departments but there is certainly scope for students to be sufficiently advised on what they do and don’t need to print and a transparent breakdown of how the figures of expected amounts of printing (and therefore cost) are determined in order to further guide them on what is a necessity.

It should also be said that printing generally is an issue with students. The Students’ Unions new system for encouraging students to raise their own issues and spark their own agenda for change “Change It” has identified that Highfield graduate centre does not have a printer and that there is a desire for the ability to top up printer credits online.

Education related technology featured in the first ‘Change It’ All Student Vote in May 2013. Of the four student-submitted changes pushed through to vote, the ability to pay library fines online and the facility to register for SMS Text messages for lecture cancellations were voted through with 96% and 84% respectively of over 2000 voters.
Earlier in the year, a ‘60 second’ exam feedback survey, again distributed through the Course Reps network, was run and the Education Network produced a paper for Teaching and Learning Board, and the principle approved. Since then the issue was raised on Change It! and during the first All Student Vote it was voted by 93% of the 2237 votes.

During the survey, when asked what they wanted from exam feedback, students were fairly keen on the idea of written cover sheets (40%) and one-to-one meetings with a member of academic staff (31%), they were not at all in favour of a drop-in style ‘feedback day’ (6%).

Students ‘mystery shopped’ a number of staff in 11 Schools and Departments in order to determine whether staff were available during their advertised office hours.

Feedback was positive, and students stated a preference for advertised office hours in which they can make an appointment (32%) or turn up (26%) as opposed to technology focused live chats on Moodle or Skype video conferences (10% and 2% respectively). However that’s not to say technology can’t be employed – students stated that office hours should be advertised in multiple locations, for example on the office door as well as online course related channels such as Moodle.

In our ‘How Can We Help’ survey run in October 2012 and completed by almost 6000 students, there was strong support for the idea of core texts to be provided in eBook format with over ¾ of students saying they would be likely to use them. The issue of e-Books has been raised independently by students during the student consultation events for this project as well as on ‘Change It’, and could present an opportunity to save students money on costly core textbooks. We also received a student suggestion to create departmental book stores where students could easily buy and sell (or trade) their second hand textbooks direct to one another.

Our current Education Officer met with the International Office to discuss the issues surrounding study abroad and it has been agreed by them that they will explore the possibility of creating a bespoke website for study abroad which will contain all of the information students need in one place. We need to ensure that this happens and given the recent trend over a variety of feedback issues that students want to hear from other students rather than departments, we need to ensure that student consultation and feedback is used to facilitate this.
Each year around 9,000 students join the university and, as we a Union, strive to welcome them as well as we can. We run annual feedback on the Week One program with students via surveys and focus groups in order to understand what students think of our events beyond simply concluding that ticket sales mean ‘good’. This year we also ran focus groups with our Week One reps (students who have volunteered to help freshers settle in, find out about and support events) in order to further understand what the welcome program is like ‘on the ground’ from a support viewpoint.

The ‘Gap’. Students outside of the main campus, University Park, and Halls feel they miss out or that events aren’t accessible for them. Support for reps in external third party halls is not as comprehensive and students who have opted not to live in any kind of halls fall through the cracks and don’t feel included or have the confidence to turn up to events without the support of hundreds of hall mates. We also hear of the clubbing/alcohol focus of the week despite the provision of so called ‘alternative’ events and the lack of relevance or appeal of alternative events or more generally, the lack of provision for students who perhaps are not interested in the big events that include fancy dress or the big city-centre nightclubs.

Whilst the majority of students filling out the feedback survey on Week One in 2011/12 ranked their experience as 4 or 5 out of 5 (87%), that’s still nearly a third of students rating their welcome experience as either ‘OK’ or worse. Making friends and finding their way around were the biggest concerns for students, way ahead of registration. The activities on offer, or the amount of information provided beforehand, indicated that if the focus is on getting to know each other and the area students now find themselves in, students will be less anxious and enjoy their experience more.

In May 2012, we held a two focus group discussion with that year’s ‘Freshers’ to look back on their welcome experience. We focused largely on the email sent out to students before arrival and ‘The Guide’, a booklet left on student beds for the day they move into Halls as well as touching on the other communications and opportunities that they believed were crucial to the first year experience. The report for this activity was fed through to a design agency hired to rebrand the Union and the communications were changed both in terms of look and feel, as well as content. Reviews of these communications at this year’s Week One review focus groups in November 2012 proved extremely positive with little comment for improvement. Instead the focus groups focused on the actual events such as the welcome address, Freshers Fair and the Week One program.

Students did however state that outside of University Park they did not receive their Guide on beds when they arrived. Some were simply dumped in piles at the third party halls, or handed out during registration at Sutton Bonington (SB) campus meaning students missed out on seeing the material straightaway or at all. These students were also keen to have more campus specific content in the Guide, though they are also provided with an alternate SB version by students acting as Guild officers and JCR members on site. It is fair to say that this does look and feel substantially different to the ‘official’ Students’ Union Guide, however this has been discussed recently with regards to unifying design and brand.

It is fair to say that the theme of ‘other’ students and relevance to all, was reflected through feelings about, or attendance, of events. Students from SB, as well as students from Jubilee, students living outside of Halls and students who do not drink alcohol all commented within the focus groups that they felt they had missed out in some way. Students from SB complained that whilst happy to feel included in the welcome address by being transported over to University Park, they felt that the logistics of getting everyone ready, travelling over, finding a seat etc. was a lot of time and effort for a very short presentation in comparison and suggested that other events should be running concurrently or afterwards on campus to make it seem more worthwhile.

They also complained of feeling lost during Freshers Fair as they did not know the campus and when they couldn’t find their own reps and instead spoke to University Park reps they found they couldn’t provide them with information on where their return bus may be, and when speaking to some University Park based students they found that some weren’t even aware of the SB campus Students living outside of Halls discussed how they didn’t receive information and that the Regional Students Association (RSA) which is supposed to act as their own Week One Rep wasn’t particularly well organised or felt the ‘same’. These students said they felt excluded and unconfident to simply join a large event or walk into a smaller alternative event. Students who did not drink also discussed the difference in their experience of the week – largely these students were not wanting to be segregated from events and have specific ‘non-alcoholic’ events for them but suggested that the big events in nightclubs weren’t for them. They suggested that more be made of bar or pub based events as they weren’t interested in drinking and wanted to chat and socialise in nice places and get to know the city without the full-on alcohol focus of nightclubs.

This theme was echoed by the Week One Reps during their separate focus group
who felt it represented a good option for students who wanted to perhaps conserve money, were a bit older and postgraduate students as well as students who do not drink alcohol.

It would seem from feedback about the importance of making friends through both structured stats based questions as well as open comments that the last thing students want at this stage is to be marked out as ‘boring’ or ‘unsociable’ and that they want to get to know as many people as possible. Therefore the inclusion of more events that aren’t marketed as a lacklustre alternative, don’t cost a lot of money or require students to be out all night could be more of a focus for the program.

Even students who did go out every night to club events said they felt the week was tiring and expensive and suggested ‘nights off’ with pizza and movies in Halls as a good alternative and a way to really make friends.

International students also have their own International Welcome Week prior to Week One which is steered by the University and International Office. Though they are also entitled to attend the Week One program the following week when home students arrive, due to their segregation into group Halls with other International students, making friends in that group and attending several socials in International Welcome Week, the levels of integration and attendance during the following week is low.

This has been commented upon by International students themselves and at other Unions there has been work done to try to discover whether the separation of these welcomes makes International students feel as if the following week isn’t for them and is harmful to student integration as a whole. Even if not, there is certainly a need for greater Students’ Union input, focus and collaboration within the current International Welcome Week and there needs to be greater work done to drive home the message that International students can, and should, get involved with the following weeks events.

In addition, we have students starting throughout the year, for example, Nursing and Midwifery cohorts begin in January, February and March, and Erasmus exchange students arrive outside of the standard September Week One. For those students joining in larger groups, such as nursing students, we do provide information and some beginning welcome sessions, as well as January starters tying into the general ReFreshers Fair, but for smaller groups, such as the Midwifery cohorts, in February and March there is perhaps only 1 event and a reliance on their own associations to encourage attendance and introduce the other activities on offer that would typically be presented at Freshers Fair or the Welcome Speech. For Erasmus students there is no Students’ Union specific program or welcome.

One of the key events during the welcome program is Freshers Fair whereby students can sign up to clubs, groups and societies. This is repeated on a smaller scale during the end of exams in January as ReFreshers Fair. Due to high participation levels in these kinds of activities, the diverse and large number of groups and what students tell us about how they improve their social networks and general student experience, it is incredibly important that students are able to access these. However, there has been confusion from students as to whether they can join at any time of the year or how they might do so outside of the sign up system of approaching stalls during these events. We have also received feedback that some students find the process of approaching busy desks intimidating or that they have so many other things going on at this time that they’d like time to think about it. We need to ensure that the message to students is conveyed that they can sign up for an activity at any time of the year, make this a straightforward process that is easy to find.
Put in place a system to make sure that every student in a Hall, regardless of campus or management, has a copy of The Guide on the bed upon arrival.

Overhaul the Regional Students Association (RSA) so as to make sure that students living outside of Halls are sufficiently welcomed, informed and confident to attend events during Week One.

Commit to a separate review of the Postgraduate Welcome program and debrief the Postgraduate Week One Reps to discover how this has worked in its first year of operation.

Ensure a Students’ Union presence within the International Welcome Week to introduce our International students to the organisation and drive the message that their welcome does not end there – they can and should attend events during the following Week One. This should be followed with a specific review of the International welcome program and their engagement with the subsequent Week One program by the Students’ Union and further investigation into the themes of integration/segregation fostered through the welcome experience.

Work harder to understand what other student groups start outside of the standard Week One program and what they might need or want during their Welcome period and commit to being ready to run events, send information or support specific student associations to deliver the relevant messages or activities as appropriate.

Drive home the message to all students that signing up for activities such as societies, sports and volunteering is a constant process not restricted to Freshers or ReFreshers Fair.
University is the ideal time for students to get involved in an extra curricular activity. Activities provide opportunities to meet new people in a fun setting where they can develop new skills and take a break from the pressures of studies. Such activities are a crucial part of the student experience at Nottingham; there are around 300 societies and sports teams as well as student groups providing opportunities to contribute to a student run magazine, radio station and a peer listening service amongst others.

We recently surveyed presidents or heads of these student groups over a variety of areas. We asked them to rate how important their student group membership/participation was to their overall student experience on a scale of 1 (Totally Unimportant) to 10 (Critically Important):

![Image]

None of the respondents rated less than 5, showing student activities to be a crucial part of student life at Nottingham. Understanding the student experience of activities requires an investigation into not only the types of groups and clubs on offer, but the types of students who are participating in them. In 2012 we conducted a survey into student participation that covered sports and societies. They were asked to indicate if they had been involved in any of the following activities while studying for their current qualification and where these activities have taken place.

- Overall the most popular activity was sports with 2836 students being involved, in a roughly 90:50 split between SU and Non-SU. Outdoor activities were the second most popular with 1915 students, with a 67% majority for SU and Non-SU.
- Conversely Academic activities were mainly SU with a 75% majority.
- Whilst studying for their current qualification, 72% of students are/have been involved in clubs/socs through the SU. Broken down by campus this represents 80% at UP but a drop to only 47% at Jubilee and 57% at QMC.
- For QMC at least, this may be explained by the demanding nature of the course and subsequent ‘medics’ teams and societies to accommodate them.
- 35% of students found out about their activity through SU, 39% found out through the University and 14% through a friend. With social media, Fresher’s Fair and other reaching less than 10% each.
- 46% of Social Science students found out through the SU suggesting they are perhaps the most engaged group/ the group the SU is reaching.
- Social Sciences typically are based on University Park and have less course contact time and requirements that for example, medicine or health science students
- 77% of students who get involved with a sport or society do so in their first year of University.
- 10% prior to University and 5% whilst studying for a previous qualification. Minimal numbers get involved after their first year indicating that first year is the time to reach students and facilitate participation.
- The majority of students (56%) are involved in 2 or 3 clubs or societies
- At Jubilee a 40% majority of students were involved in 4 clubs or societies.

Despite these figures showing participation to be generally high over all, there are several issues that are creating obstacles for student’s involvement, or their enjoyment of their activity membership.

One of the main themes from all the feedback we have received from group presidents is regarding space and storage. In a survey put out to members of student groups in Spring 2013, we received the following feedback:

"I think that the storage room needs a lot of improvement. It is anarchic and some societies just throw items on the floor. As a consequence, it is quite hard to reach the Society’s properties. They are not up to standard. The storage room on the bottom floor of Portland is extremely badly organised, with us having to rummage through other Societies equipment to access our own. The access to this room is awful too, with only one key to be used by all student groups in the evenings, which often goes missing, and has caused us to have to cancel our sessions in the past. There needs to be a better system, activating our university cards to use swipe card system is one idea. With regards to space, we do not have a room big enough to hold our sessions in. This greatly limits the growth of the society as we can only have about 10 people at any one session."

"The den has an image problem. People don’t want to use it/ go to events in it simply due to reputation. Current provisions seemingly are not adequately meeting the needs of student groups. Security and organisation are major problems resulting in the damage and loss of equipment and these issues are costing student groups money."
**ACTIVITIES | 23**

We also received feedback on coaching and training for sports teams. Currently, if a club wants to recruit a coach to train their members, it is up to the club committee to go out and source a coach. The committee are responsible for getting the coach to sign the correct paperwork. Coaches are key to training and development according to students:

“We would like to get more instructors visiting the club and running one off sessions”

Having a coach enables clubs to progress more significantly with regards to their performance. Coaches bring new skills and enthusiasm to clubs through new approaches to training. In order to understand the importance of coaching and how it might be developed along with new approaches to training across all societies 4 focus groups were held March 2013, with students involved in sport from Intra-Mural participants to 1st team players. Students were contacted via the SU email system and this issue was discussed in further detail.

The feedback from students revealed that clubs would benefit from more support from the AU to source coaches. Some students have found it “stressful” to source a coach when the previous left at short notice and believed that attitude towards training would significantly change if professionals were taking the sessions.

It has also been suggested that teams with a professional coach for only one team should have a mentoring system whereby this coach mentors and teaches other coaches who administer training to lower teams, one student suggested:

“We work really well using our experienced members to coach novices, and I think it would be a good idea if we could formalise this by allowing members to take formal coaching courses”.

This would ensure training continuity and a similar style of play and would bridge the gap between the standard/style of play between clubs that have a number of teams such as Hockey or Ladies Football.

Another major issue that crops up time and again is that students are having problems with getting Wednesday afternoons off for sport. In theory Wednesdays are lecture free, however in Spring 2013 we conducted a survey around balancing sports participation with academic commitments which asked students to tell us of any issues they faced with accessing sports programs:

“I strongly believe that Wednesday afternoons should be enforced as allowances for non-academic pursuits. I am involved in the Nottingham Advantage Award, BUCS sports teams and I attend many guest lectures. Almost always these clash with academic lectures and it strongly interferes with my other university commitments. I am constantly being told about how we should be getting involved in more activities and developing other skills at uni but it seems that my department have other ideas and really make it very difficult!”

“Wednesday afternoons are taken up by supposedly mandatory research seminars and masterclasses (attendance is not currently enforced but could be) preventing any post-graduates from attending sports on this afternoon. It’s not a great situation where students feel as though they are sneaking off... I definitely think teaching/learning time should be reduced on a Wednesday to allow for more sports participation, as sometimes lectures go on until 1 pm, and this often doesn’t allow you to play in matches that are earlier. One of the main reasons for having a Wednesday afternoon off is to enable participation, so it is frustrating when you are still unable to participate due to lectures/practicals. If teaching time cannot be reduced on a Wednesday then I think people who participate in sport should be allowed more flexibility, and are able to miss lectures, whilst still getting the support they need when catching up on missed work.”

“In term two, I had a lecture at 11 am on a Wednesday, which while I had no issues with for home matches, meant that for some away matches, the coach would leave before the lecture so I would have to choose between the two. Generally I’d miss the lecture and then catch up on the notes online and get a coursemate to record the lecture on a Dictaphone.”

Whilst in theory lectures are not meant to be scheduled on Wednesday afternoons, it also appeared that there was a loose definition of what constituted as ‘afternoon’ that students had to attend compulsory meetings (Year Abroad meetings featured several times) or group work sessions.

It would seem that there is a disparity between departments over what Wednesday afternoons can be used for and students are taking it into their own hands to decide what they will or won’t attend and how they manage that rather than firm guidelines and support being in place. The university is encouraging students to participate in co-curricular activities to better themselves but also to improve the Universities sporting reputation and reach its target of being in the top 5 of BUCS but there is not a clear, universal and adhered to policy regarding the accommodation of students competing for the University of Nottingham. From the current experiences of students it would seem the relationship between student and tutor is a determining factor in whether there is leniency in academic commitments to play sports.

During focus groups on sports participation in Spring 2012, before the model of sports was changed from Students’ Union to Students’ Union and University partnership, students
explained that they chose Nottingham because of their degree course but that the quality of a student's specific sport, or the range of sports on offer was the 'deal breaker' when looking at other university courses which were similar. Many students said they chose Nottingham because they wanted an 'all round quality experience'.

In a recent open call for student experience of harassment which was focused on determining issues for welfare campaigns, we found this surprising story:

"I have felt harassed on occasion by the AU department regarding fielding teams. There are complex rules surrounding BUdS and it is understandable that a lot of money goes into fielding BUdS teams but sometimes I fear that there is a lack of understanding that my team and I will always put our academic development first. We play sport to enhance our University experience, not to advertise the University by how well we do. We play because we enjoy it and of course strive to do as well as we can, but will not do this at the expense of our degree. I feel as though certain members of staff in the AU are harassing and forcing individuals such as myself and others in my team into giving up more time than we are comfortable with to play higher level sport just to fit with the ambition of the University to be in the top 5 BUdS unis in the UK... Our team has been threatened with closure and match cancellations if we do not play for the first team rather than the team we train with when they struggle to field a team. I understand that this is a BUdS rule, ... Harassment is a strong word but in the last year I have often felt as though my hand has been forced. I haven't enjoyed my role of responsibility in this club as I should have."

If students are being placed under this kind of pressure to play sport but are not being supported by their departments it is inevitable that one of the two commitments is going to suffer. Lecturers should realise that students are representing the University and contributing to BUdS points – something that not all are aware of or accept, equally, the academic focus of the students experience should not be forgotten, students chose Nottingham for its academic achievements so should be allowed to excel without interruption. It is for the University to pass the message and guidelines through departments so as to work on creating the correct balance for its students in this area.

An issue for all students, not just those who are member of a sports team, is the Gym membership. Currently there is a system of Gold, Silver and Bronze membership. Several suggestions have appeared on 'Change it!' with regards to changing the way gym fees are applied. Many students who just want to use the Gym at the fitness centre are being forced to pay Gold membership for access to all facilities. Students have suggested a cheaper priced 'Gym only membership' would meet more student needs. A second issue is that the gym fees have to be paid annually when students would prefer it on a termly basis allowing them to manage their finances. Student feedback from the Consultation events supported these arguments; These issues have been recognised by the Union and put forward to All Student Vote with one all-encompassing question:

"Should the university conduct a far-reaching review of its sports membership scheme?"

Should students vote yes to this, as is expected, the University and Union need to work together on such a review that will address how they arrived at the current membership model and what it’s initial advantages were when it was introduced. There would also need to be a consideration of whether cheaper/different membership would increase numbers of students wanting to use the sports centre and whether this would this actually be a problem regarding usage/capacity levels. Some of the feedback we received from the Consultation data was that students felt that the gym was already overcrowded, particularly at Jubilee. Lowering the price may result in the need for a review of the gym and sports facilities available to students. Whatever the issues, students are unhappy, it is proving an issue that is widely and deeply felt and one that is not going away.
Activities are a huge part of the student experience; by reviewing the current issues and developing strategies to ensure issues are managed we can ensure student participation is not only high but those students are having the best time possible.

A review of space and storage for societies. The current provisions are not adequate, by providing more suitable storage space students are likely to take better care of their equipment, in the current economic climate it is wasteful to keep on allowing damage to occur and spending money replacing items when a solution has been identified that will manage the problem.

Review of gym membership encompassing student feedback so as to properly ensure their voice is heard, their finances taken into account and the possible potential new style of membership explored by those who will use them.

From the data we have received it would seem such a review has been long awaited. All of the student issues with the gym can be addressed in a far reaching review that will bring improvements that are further reaching and long lasting than addressing each problem on a case by case basis.

A clearer strategy and crucially the message passed down by the University in order to support students in sports in line with the objective of reaching BUCS top 5 status.

Investigation into areas of poor participation, across demographic data and types of activity could make the connection between this information and the social reasons why certain groups/areas are lacking in participation and offer guidance to the Union and University on how to address these matters.

Connect the feedback received through the focus groups prior to University and Students' Union partnership for sport was introduced and the situation now to establish where we are with regards to coach appraisal and sourcing. It was previously suggested that students have access to a ‘Network’ of coaches should be set up that would include details of students and staff who are qualified coaches and referees due to shortages.

Some further comments from the consultation events include:

- **MORE SPACE FOR SOCIETIES & STUDENTS GROUPS** (office space, storage space and meeting space)
- **INTERACTIVE GYM BOOKING** for sports facilities (and be able to see how busy the gym is)
- **Gym membership**
- **MORE ACTIVITIES**
- **MIDWIVES & NURSES**
  - Don’t feel part of the Uni
  - and would like more time to join in society events
- **I DON’T FEEL LIKE I CAN PARTICIPATE**
  - in sports as I’m not competitive I just wanted to keep fit
- **I tried 2 SOCIETIES**
  - but I couldn’t find mature/graduate students so I stopped participating
- **Main campus societies should come to SB as often as SB societies go there**
- **No support for extra curricular activities** which ended up taking the fun out of it
- **At Derby most societies are run brilliantly**
  - but are short of numbers due to location
- **FREEZABLE GYM**
- **MORE TO DO ON JUBILEE CAMPUS**
- **DO I DON’T FEEL LIKE IN SPORTS as I’m not competitive I just wanted to keep fit**
- **I CAN PARTICIPATE**
- **At Derby most societies are run brilliantly**
  - but are short of numbers due to location
- **Online interactive for sports facilities** (and be able to see how busy the gym is)
- **MAIN CAMPUS SOCIETIES SHOULD COME TO SB**
- **Extra curricular activities** which ended up taking the fun out of it
- **On-line**
- **I DON’T FEEL LIKE in sports as I’m not competitive I just wanted to keep fit**
- **I CAN PARTICIPATE**
- **At Derby most societies are run brilliantly**
  - but are short of numbers due to location
- **Online interactive for sports facilities** (and be able to see how busy the gym is)
- **MAIN CAMPUS SOCIETIES SHOULD COME TO SB**
- **Extra curricular activities** which ended up taking the fun out of it
- **On-line**
It is now widely accepted that a degree alone is not indicative of a well-rounded graduate, it is because of this that students, institutions and employers have turned their attention to the concept of Employability. Employability in the context of this report can be defined as how the skills, experience and personal attributes that a student develops during their time at university make them more attractive to future employers.

These personal qualities are generally thought to be developed through activities students engage in outside of the curriculum, such as participation in activities, roles of responsibilities, volunteering or even part-time employment to accompany their studies. The most employable graduates are those who are able to identify and articulate the transferrable skills they attained through their extracurricular participation and propagate them in their search for a graduate job. It is therefore essential that students are equipped during their time at university with every opportunity to get involved and have an experience that will not only be enjoyable but will provide them with the necessary capabilities to achieve their potential in prospective workforce. As one employer stated in a recent NUS Scotland report on employment.

"It is during these activities, graduates will learn the real skills needed to be successful in today's workplace. Creative thinking, teamwork, decision making interpersonal skills" This competitive advantage of student participation and engagement can really be understood when looking at just such employer perceptions. In the same report it was revealed that 40% of employers questioned claimed that job applicants with experience of co-curricular activities had, to some extent an increased chance of employment, with another 40% claimed it significantly influenced a candidates success'. Perhaps even more notable from this report is the evidence that suggests it is not only whether a student has participated in activities outside of their studies but actually to what extent they participated. When looking at graduates who had experience in a representative role within their given club or society 58% of employers recognised the transferable skills to some extent, 14% significantly so and 19% definitely, suggesting the more heavily involved the student, the more employable they are attaining through their extracurricular participation and propagate them in their search for a graduate job.

In order for students to meet these employer demands they must get involved in activities outside of their degree. For the Universities and Union who facilitate these opportunities, be it sports, societies, part-time work, entrepreneurial schemes or volunteering, perhaps the most important aspect is that they show that these activities are complimentary to their studies - co-curricular not extra-curricular.

With all these extra activities for students to get involved in, there is the reminder that employability is about a rounded individual, one who is able to balance their academic study with their own interests, work and activities. It is noted by the Committee of Inquiry into the skills, experience and personal attributes that a student develops during their time at university make them more attractive to future employers.

The Nottingham Advantage Award, as stated on the university website, is an employability scheme designed to improve personal and professional development. The university works with employers and academics to bring the very best knowledge, guidance and experiences which will help students to make the most out of their time at the University.

To achieve the award students are required to complete 3 ‘modules’ (completing no more than 2 in one year) aimed to develop skills by getting involved in the variety of activities on offer over the course of their time at Nottingham. The award modules feature on the degree transcript, demonstrating to future employers that the graduate as a prospective employee has been proactive and willing to partake in activities beyond those which are required for their degree. Students are actively encouraged to prioritise their academic studies and allow The Award to complement these, without detracting from the quality or punctuality of coursework or allowing academic sessions to be missed. Again, the focus is not only on doing more to increase employability but getting the right balance.

Over 3,000 students signed up to volunteer through the University’s Student Volunteer Centre (SVC) in Nottingham in 2012/13. It is widely accepted that volunteering enhances the University experience as well as boosting the CV. Students are able to step out of their ‘bubble’, meet new people and learn new skills—all increasing their employability. SVC offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities in and around Nottingham, these range from one-off volunteering such as helping brighten local parks, to on-going projects such as teaching elderly people basic computer skills. According to a survey of participation in Nottingham in 2012, 38% of students participating in volunteering found out about it through the Students’ Union.

In the recent participation survey, we asked approximately how many hours a month, in the current academic year students spent on volunteering activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Spent Volunteering</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 hours</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 hours</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 hours</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 hours</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013 with their own interests, work and activities. It is noted by the Committee of Inquiry into the skills, experience and personal attributes that a student develops during their time at university make them more attractive to future employers.

It is now widely accepted that a degree alone is not indicative of a well-rounded graduate, it is because of this that students, institutions and employers have turned their attention to the concept of Employability. Employability in the context of this report can be defined as how the skills, experience and personal attributes that a student develops during their time at university make them more attractive to future employers.

These personal qualities are generally thought to be developed through activities students engage in outside of the curriculum, such as participation in activities, roles of responsibilities, volunteering or even part-time employment to accompany their studies. The most employable graduates are those who are able to identify and articulate the transferrable skills they attained through their extracurricular participation and propagate them in their search for a graduate job. It is therefore essential that students are equipped during their time at university with every opportunity to get involved and have an experience that will not only be enjoyable but will provide them with the necessary capabilities to achieve their potential in prospective workforce. As one employer stated in a recent NUS Scotland report on employment.

"It is during these activities, graduates will learn the real skills needed to be successful in today's workplace. Creative thinking, teamwork, decision making interpersonal skills" This competitive advantage of student participation and engagement can really be understood when looking at just such employer perceptions. In the same report it was revealed that 40% of employers questioned claimed that job applicants with experience of co-curricular activities had, to some extent an increased chance of employment, with another 40% claimed it significantly influenced a candidates success'. Perhaps even more notable from this report is the evidence that suggests it is not only whether a student has participated in activities outside of their studies but actually to what extent they participated; When looking at graduates who had experience in a representative role within their given club or society 58% of employers recognised the transferable skills to some extent, 14% significantly so and 19% definitely, suggesting the more heavily involved the student, the more employable they are attaining through their extracurricular participation and propagate them in their search for a graduate job.

In order for students to meet these employer demands they must get involved in activities outside of their degree. For the Universities and Union who facilitate these opportunities, be it sports, societies, part-time work, entrepreneurial schemes or volunteering, perhaps the most important aspect is that they show that these activities are complimentary to their studies - co-curricular not extra-curricular.

With all these extra activities for students to get involved in, there is the reminder that employability is about a rounded individual, one who is able to balance their academic study with their own interests, work and activities. It is noted by the Committee of Inquiry into
Of their actual involvement with the volunteering (e.g. commitment to the project, positions of responsibility etc.) 54% said they are ‘somewhat’ involved and 16% are ‘extremely’ involved. 69% said their skill set had increased, confirming what employers have suggested that co-curricular activity builds more rounded skilled graduates. This shows that students are actually aware of the benefits of the volunteering they are doing, (more so than other activities analysed through the survey, such as club membership), perhaps this is because volunteering is seen as more like a form of employment. 53% of students also stated that their degree knowledge had increased since their volunteering indicating that perhaps volunteering in organisations or charities relevant to degree courses (e.g. Headway for Psychology students) is beneficial not just to employability but to academic performance. Conversely, from the recent Employment and Finance survey, 54% of students strongly agree that having a job has a detrimental effect on their capacity to study. Comparing this to the answers regarding activities and volunteering it could be argued that students who are spending their extra time working are doing so out of necessity and spending more time than they should, thus impacting their studies.

Whilst being involved in a club or society, 49% found their ability to lead others increased. It could be argued that such leadership skills are more applicable to those in representative roles, of which there are fewer numbers than the wider student involvement in societies. Compared with volunteering, the ability to lead others had increased in 58% of students. It is possible that their volunteering role placed them among children or others in need of direction where they recognised their leadership capacity more so than in a team or society of members their own age and capability. Given how important it seems that volunteering is, it is imperative that we continue to build upon the number and type of opportunities available to students and communicate the benefits of this activity.

Perhaps comparing these answers, based on student perception, to the view of potential employers would provide more of an insight into the actual development of their employability; An individual who plays hockey and is a member of the knitting society might not see how these activities relate to their future career, but an employer would see transferable skills such as team work, responsibility, patience and creativity. This highlights the potential issue around employability being a matter of perception; it is the responsibility of the students to recognise these skills themselves rather than taking what they are doing on face value. This awareness and experience of dealing with a varied cross section of society, it could be argued, shows employers that individuals who volunteer are more likely to cope with the transition between being student into a member of the workforce.

On the Employment and Finance survey, we asked students to select their main reasons for working while at University

- 57% selected ‘to have something to put on my CV and job applications’
- 49% selected ‘to gain some experience and skills generally’
- 16% selected ‘to get out of the University bubble’ and ‘fill my spare time’

This shows that a proportion of students who are going into part–time employment are at least partially aware of how what they are doing might contribute to their employability, and also indicates that of the students who completed this survey at least, the majority are fortunately not financially dependent on part-time work.

However, only 26% agreed with the statement ‘I’m not worried about securing paid grad level work when I finish my course’ suggesting the majority of students are in fact thinking about their prospective careers whilst still studying. Students who were working were asked whether their paid work had been related to their course or career plans, a majority of 61% did not see any relation between the work they did and their career. It is possible, however, that the respondents are aware of the connection in the transferable skills and experience their job delivers as a whole but not in the specific industry or role in which they are working. This would support the argument that students are struggling to find experience directly related to their future careers and it is recommended that the careers service examine its provisions towards providing more specialised opportunities for work experience or part time work in various fields.

As for working whilst being a student having a positive effect on employability, regardless of the type or relevancy of the field, 82% of students thought this to be true.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of students perceptions of Employability, three focus groups were held in March 2013 to discuss the different levels of engagement with career planning and employability skills.
This perhaps raises a wider debate around whether employers are looking for graduates with such experience or are they particularly interested in the ‘go out and getters’ who found the opportunities for themselves.

When discussing how they hear about the various opportunities the careers service offer, all of the engaged students stated emails to be the main source, but this method still required them to be proactive to sign up and they stated that they often had to look for the information ‘buried’ in the text.

“The emails from careers you have to sign up first, if you’re not proactive. I get the emails through different methods—... internship etc…As a member of committee I received and email at someone directly from Accenture then spread the word.”

This more direct and relevant information seems to encourage involvement despite the initial sign-up effort however they suggest that not all students are as self-motivated enough to even sign-up and in general shyness or laziness are the biggest barriers.

“It’s about incentives for example saying ‘there’s this careers event it’s at 5–6pm but there’s a free dinner.’ Saying its good for future is great but it doesn’t make it a strong reason sometimes. Incentives do.”

The general theme from this group was that they have been masters of their own self-development towards becoming employable graduates, they were critical of the careers service but also other students and thought themselves to be best placed to decide what was important.

“I don’t put it in boxes, I accept everything as helping me develop, I would take anything from having fun to volunteering.”
**GROUP THREE**

Students who are 'studying only'. The marked difference between this group and the others was their lack of participation but also a sense of apathy around their own employability, they had heard of many of the opportunities available but had not taken action to get involved. The general involvement in activities seemed to be one off volunteering or work experience carried out over the holidays or part-time work. With regards to promoting these experiences to future employers this group did not see this as a priority; they failed to make the connections that employers look for;

"Well I won’t be putting stuff like telesales on my CV for applying to my [Journalism] Masters, its not relevant"

"I would think my 2 week job in Tesco is a waste of time putting on my CV. What does it say, its not going to get me proper job"

These comments suggest a lack of awareness of the importance of transferable skills which will in itself act as a barrier to future employment. As earlier stated, it is this personal recognition and articulation of skills that employers want to see as much as the skills themselves.

This group could perhaps benefit the most from the careers service but part of the barrier is encouraging them to place this as a priority and take advantage of the opportunities geared directly at them. There seems to be an attitude despondency with one participant suggesting he didn’t need his CV checked by the careers service because he could probably just ask a friend or sibling, another said he was aware of the services on offer but it is difficult to balance his workload with the time it takes to apply and it he might not even get it (the internship) anyway.

---

**GROUP TWO**

Was with semi engaged students, those who are members of societies but had no position of responsibility. In general they had a similar understanding of skills relating to employability as the heavily engaged group. They were vague in their awareness of the careers related emails and discounted much of the information as 'irrelevant'. When asked about opportunities such as volunteering they were again not aware such things were on offer through the Union.

These students wanted more relevant jobs available through services such as Unitemps, reflecting the theme of the data from the Employment survey that students are struggling with relevant work experience. They also wanted more of a partnership between the university and organisations that have employed previous Nottingham graduates who may be available for buddy schemes. They also wanted more publicity of the opportunities that are available stating;

"I heard someone speak about an internship and said it closed for applications already last week."

They understood the information came through email but found it too non-specific and wanted it to come through faculty or at least be given reminders through lecturers or course reps as well as social media to make them recheck the email.

This group also spoke about their experience of trying to gain employment as a means of building their skillset alongside their society membership. They spoke of the well-known 'catch 22' with regards to getting a job without experience and the concern around having only irrelevant work. One suggestion for how careers advice could be more relevant is by altering the channels by which the information is communicated.
Some of the work related comments provided during the consultation events included:

- **Having TO WORK**
  - As well as study
  - Due to lack of money causes stress and depression

- **DIfficult to get to PORTLAND**
  - As on placement 9-5
  - and everything closed at other times makes it difficult to keep up with societies etc.

- **More**
  - Online Support
    - Like mobile year
  - Union/Union
    - Knowledge provided jobs
  - Help
    - Procuring work experience
  - More Networking with previous students who have done internships to learn about how they got it, application, experiences, about the companies
  - More Interaction between years in the context of near peer training
  - More Summer placements
  - More Internships
  - More Knowledge & help in creative industries

- **More**
  - Careers
    - Help from alumni
  - Advice
  - The Careers Service is a bit broad
    - It could be more specific to the type of job student wants
  - 1st Year
    - To help you plan e.g. when you apply for internships
  - Internships specific to departments/discipline
  - Jobs advertised more
  - Work experience in university departments

From both an assessment of the opportunities made available through the Union and university, together with an investigation into the data on participation, it is evident that activities and other opportunities on offer to University of Nottingham students are expansive. Therefore the focus of the recommendations drawn from this section are not necessarily geared towards the provision of more, but towards a better communication of the opportunities on offer and how they link to improving student employability.

One of the themes from the data seems to be the varying perceptions and understanding of employability. As one would expect, employers are acutely aware of the professional development and recruitment processes; they are able to look at the experiences presented by a candidate and analyse what skills they should possess and also how they are communicating this to them through an application form or interview. Some students are aware of these expectations and strive to meet them through not only engaging in a wide range of activities but also being analytical of the experience, recording what they have done with a view to calling on it in their search for employment. Other students, those who are ‘less engaged’ are possibly not participating in any co-curricular activities and some students are simply not placing them in the wider context of their experience at the University of Nottingham. What they have done cannot be translated to employers because the students don’t know how it relates to them.

Whether through a campaign, careers event, website or other avenue, there should be an accessible information service advising students about what ‘employability’ means in the context of their student experience as well as explaining the type of transferable skills students should look out for in the activities they are involved in. It could indeed be argued that much of this guidance is already provided by the Nottingham Advantage award, acting as a structure for personal development, but perhaps such a framework should be in place as a point of reference for all students, allowing them to deconstruct their time as ‘netball captain’ and re-package it as an experience of a leadership and team based role within a competitive environment, selling themselves to potential employers.

In-depth comment analysis of last year’s ‘How Can We Help’ survey and the recent consultation events both provided the message that students want more direct careers advice and relevant opportunities within their field or course. The introduction of faculty based careers posts should address this. We believe that a thorough feedback review of the services provided in these posts should be conducted in the next academic year in conjunction with the faculty and utilizing the contacts and specific student needs and expectations as canvassed through the corresponding course reps.

Exploration of alternative methods of communications on issues related to employability and careers that are an improvement on the present situation and make the messages seem more ‘relevant’ to students. Students have told us voraciously about the need for ‘specific’ or ‘targeted’ emails; they’re also stated that some lecturers were supportive and proactive in signposting students to opportunities and helping with applications, and that they held those messages about work activities from lecturers in great esteem. We also had suggestions about more time with tutors and JCR employability reps to drum the message home.

From an assessment of the opportunities on offer and the potential future benefits they had. This recommendation highlights one of the greatest barriers we face generally - the ability to reach, engage and inform students about the opportunities available to them.
Promoting acceptance of equality and diversity is especially important within the student population due to the diverse nature of the students themselves. There is the potential for clashes, not only between students but between the student population and wider community. In 2011 NUS released a series of reports entitled ‘No Place For Hate’ canvassing the experiences of 9,229 students on the subject of hate crime and other forms of bullying based on prejudice. The report revealed there are many ways in which people might be affected by discrimination and bullying, thus creating the challenge for unions and universities to develop a policy. How students feel they are accepted into their community plays a big part in their mental wellbeing and experience of university as a whole. Most universities already have provisions in place for minority groups offering support and a safe place be in the form of societies or networks such as LGBT, BME, DSA as well as religious societies and prayer spaces.

In February 2013 at the Students’ Union we put out a call for student experience of harassment whilst at university. Though the project was commissioned by the Women’s Officer, we purposefully kept the project open to all and therefore received submissions over a wide range of issues. Homophobic abuse were mentioned frequently:

Case Study 1
Gay male was the victim of homophobic comments in a lecture; one student asked another if they were uncomfortable to have him sitting next to them. One student in particular has made several homophobic comments. It is suggested that there is a certain level of tolerance of the abuse from other students as the comments frequently go unchallenged.

Case Study 2
A Lesbian couple received verbal abuse in many bars, in each case staff have not challenged or dealt with behaviour when it has been reported.

Case Study 3
A fresher heard homophobic chanting (endorsed by Week One reps) during their first night in Halls. Examples included “Cripps are faggots” and “Rutland take it up the arse”. The student was gay but had not yet ‘come out’; and after hearing these chants felt they didn’t want to. Racism and Xenophobia were also cited.

Case Study 4:
International student has experienced racist comments, particularly when on nights out in Nottingham, comments included ‘go back to your country’ and other slurs about being of Pakistani origin despite the student being from the Middle East. The student experienced similar slurs when at University in USA- wrongly assuming that they were from Mexico and were an illegal immigrant.

Case Study 5:
An international student was questioned by nightclub door staff about whether she was using or selling drugs. Their suspicions were based on the fact she was using a Columbian passport as ID.

According to the data from the NUS survey they found International or Overseas students were more likely to experience hate related incidents with 22% of those asked claiming they had experienced a racially motivated incident. The survey also highlighted other interesting trends from students experiencing this behaviour nationally which may inform on the issues in Nottingham. For example, when looking at specific ethnicities the survey revealed that 30% of Chinese respondents had experienced a hate incident of some kind whilst at university; this was the highest percentage among all the other ethnic groups. Equally 44% of Chinese students reported being fairly worried about being victimised because of their race. Nottingham has a high number of Chinese students, (2,285) if these national figures are even marginally in line with the situation at UoN this is perhaps a matter of priority for tackling racism. Much like the incidents reported by LGBT students, they typically (42%) took place in and around campus, places where the University and Students’ Union have not only the jurisdiction but the duty to eradicate racist behaviour.

LAD CULTURE & Sexual HARASSMENT

A recent report by NUS entitled ‘That’s what she said: a report on Lad culture’ investigates the growing trend at UK Universities for ‘laddish’ behaviour to eclipse the student experience. Such ‘Lad culture’ can be defined as the type of behaviour routed in masculine attitudes of individualism, competitiveness and humour. The NUS report accepts that the concept is not universally understood as problematic which adds to the challenge in tackling it. Much of the behaviour is dismissed as ‘banter’ and therefore continues unchallenged despite being the catalyst of many other welfare issues around sexism and harassment.

Lad culture seems to permeate all aspects of university life, from society initiations, nights out, even online. There has been a recent rise in ‘Facebook’ pages such as ‘Unilad’ and ‘Rate your Shag’ where students write stories about sexual experiences (most often degrading to women) and in the case of the latter, naming the ‘victim’ for all to see. At the University of Nottingham such websites are popular among students as well as more campus specific ones such as ‘Heard in Hallward’ where laddish commentary is rife. The NUS report argues that the behaviour is participated in by male and female students but that those who are affected are predominantly female, as in the following case study from our 2013 Harassment survey.

Case Study 1
‘Heard in Hallward’ being used to ridicule students featured. One example involved an image taken and posted without consent of a girl kissing a boy while sat on his lap. The image caused embarrassment for the girl in question.
In any other context this would be considered cyber bullying but in the university environment it is seen to just be part of campus culture and a way for students to have fun. As stated by The NUS National Women’s Officer, “The student movement is about creating safe, positive, empowering environments for all students and supporting students to shape the world around them. If something is happening on our campuses that threatens our ability to achieve this, or indeed harms our members, then we need to understand it in order to understand how to combat it”. This suggests the need for huge changes in what is deemed acceptable behaviour or practice within the university environment.

It is in this context that there have been national movements calling the removal of The Sun Newspaper from university campuses as part of a campaign against ‘Page 3’ – something which currently features on the Students’ Union Change It! forum.

The majority of the feedback from our 2013 harassment survey featured stories written by female students of their experiences of ‘everyday sexism’. In fact, when analysing content across the wide variety of topics students reported harassment about, 26% of all submissions had a sexist component.

Case Study 2
On a number of occasions, a student and her friends have been groped whilst on a night out in Nottingham. When they have challenged the actions of individuals they have been met with mockery or intimidation.

Case Study 3
A female student was harassed by a man on a bus returning from the city centre. Upon getting off the bus near university, the man followed. The student didn’t know whether the man was drunk or mentally ill but was scared and so ran away. The student explained the situation to university security officers but was told that as it did not happen on university premises there was nothing they could do. The student talked about the experience with fellow female students and some said they had experienced similar things in the city and in student areas of the city.

Case Study 4
A group of female students moving from one city centre bar to another were approached by a group of males who showed particular interest in one of the girls. They surrounded her and attempted to split her off from her friends making inappropriate comments about her appearance. The girl was helped out of the situation by a friend but was shaken by the incident.

Though the majority of responses came from women talking about social occasions, we also heard this example of everyday sexism during this female's studies.

Case study 5
One of the only girls on the course, this student assumed it wouldn’t be a problem, especially as she was studying at postgraduate level. However there are sexist remarks and rudeness on a daily basis, not just from course mates but also from lecturers. The student believes it is probably mostly just ‘good fun’ but doesn’t feel able to stand up and say otherwise. The student remarked that if the comments were made in the workplace and acted upon, they would be in very serious trouble and thought it sad that misogyny and cruelty are still deemed acceptable, especially in an academic environment.

The worrying trends featured in these experiences, and others from the survey, are firstly the lack of reporting of incidents and the fact that when the cases are challenged or reported they are met with an attitude of complacency. Secondly, the way in which female students are met with an attitude of complacency. Secondly, the way in which female students are described how themselves and their friends see it as something that ‘just happens’ to them all, that they must put up with. In follow up focus groups to discuss the content of the harassment submissions with the ultimate aim of working on the implementation of a zero tolerance approach to harassment, several male students remarked upon how nothing like that had ever happened to them and they were surprised that it happened to so many females.

Drugs and Alcohol

Student life and alcohol are thought to go hand in hand with students drinking in order to socialise. From the moment students start at the University of Nottingham they are exposed to a program of events that include alcohol on every night and they are away from perhaps the control or monitoring of their parents, as well as being away from long term friends who perhaps ‘look out’ for each other more if things go awry.

Problems arise not only when this alcohol consumption becomes excessive, but when individuals put themselves at risk of both acute incidents such as getting in fights, injuries, unwanted sexual encounters and walking home alone. Many of the criticisms from focus groups held with ‘Week One’ students was that too many of the events were dependent on alcohol in excessive amounts; for example, the club nights beginning with bus pick-ups between 7 and 9 pm and not returning until 3am, and that the big club nights were the major feature of the program without making alternatives seem like reasonable alternatives for students who wanted to have fun.

On our ‘How Can We Help’ survey launched after Week One in 2012:

- 9.8% of students said they had been injured as a result of their drinking more than a couple of times (31% said they had a couple of times).
- 15% of students have, more than a couple of times, had feelings of guilt or regret after drinking alcohol (43% had a couple of times).
- 20% of students have more than a couple of times experienced memory loss when drinking. (38.9% have a couple of times).
- 19% of students have more than a couple of times walked home alone when drunk. (28% of students have a couple of times) and 51% have never.
- 88% of students also stated they believed people are less likely to use a condom when under the influence of alcohol.

Interlinked with this is recreational drug use in the student population (particularly with regards to Cannabis), where the short and long term implications can be even more severe. In the same survey we asked students whether they considered themselves to be reasonably informed about recreational drugs. 75% said ‘yes’ so we tested their knowledge through 4 questions on recreational drugs known to be most used within the student and youth population. All questions were in a multiple choice so the answers were there for students to select. Only 60% of students got the correct answer for the question relating to Cannabis which is the most widely used recreational drug within the student population. Ketamine is a common cheap choice of recreational drug within the youth market, however only 36% of students were able to answer the Ketamine question correctly. The final question had a possible 3 out of 5 correct answers. Students could select multiple answer choices for this question but were not told they needed to. Less than 1% of students correctly picked out all correct answers throughout these 4 questions. Given that over 3,500 students answered these questions, this is particularly concerning. Even more so when we consider that the questions all related to long-term health effect of recreational drugs and in the same survey students said that long-term health effects were their biggest concern about drug use (49%), more than short-term effects, 7%, developing an addiction, 20%, financial implications, 3%, likelihood to lead to other drugs, 7%, and effect on education/job achievement, 14%.
Many counsellors and mental health advisors in universities are reporting increased demand from students for their services. This increasing demand has been confirmed by research from the Royal College of Physicians reporting that 29% of students are now showing clinical levels of psychological distress.

In order to understand some of the issues around mental health, from experience of disorders to service use, we prepared an online submission board for students to anonymously tell us anything they wanted around the issue of mental health at the University of Nottingham.

The issue of student suicide appears to be one that is occurring disproportionately in the student populations. As worrying as the incidents themselves are, the lack of support for students affected after the event is an issue among students;

“As a Nightline Committee member, we were warned recently about several student suicides, as well as the death of a lecturer… we were asked to publicise the service in the halls affected, in case students needed to talk. We were told that university policy is not to publicise the deaths for fear of ‘copy-cat’ deaths. Nightline recently branched out to Nottingham Trent, and when the Trent committee members were told, they informed us that at their university, the whole student body is informed about the death and invited to attend a memorial service. Perhaps this university policy needs voting on again – I feel that it is the responsibility of the university to support bereaved students - even more so if that is a death associated with the stresses of university. Making the news public knowledge means being able to offer public support, and this might be more beneficial to those affected - or at least serve as a reminder to all students that support like the counselling service is available to them if they were not aware.”

At UoN the University Counselling Service operates as a standard counselling service, offering students and staff free and unlimited sessions though it is largely expected and discussed that 6 sessions will be available for a course of treatment. Based primarily at University Park, the service also visits Sutton Bonington once a week to offer pre-booked appointments for up to five students or staff. As well as offering standard counselling, the service also runs workshops and group sessions. Focusing on particular issues such as managing depression and self-assertiveness, the workshops run for 1, 2 and 3 sessions.

According to the University's Counselling Service's Annual Report, the average waiting time for an initial appointment was 5.4 days, and 50% of students were offered an on-going appointment within 4 weeks. Whilst the Counselling service states that this is well within their Service objectives, students seem to view waiting times as problematic, with many stating that the counselling service was severely overloaded, and as such, they felt discouraged to access the service.

“Have struggled with anxiety and depression throughout the whole of university but only started trying to get help in my third year. By this time it was too late, my grades had slipped, I had isolated my friends and my confidence was at an all-time low. In the beginning I thought that it would get better and that everyone else was coping so why couldn’t I. I felt so pressured to pretend that I was ok.”

“My housemate killed herself due to depression. I found her in her bedroom. She had been to counselling once, and was seeing her GP regularly but still did not feel able to cope.”

“At UoN the University Counselling Service operates as a standard counselling service, offering students and staff free and unlimited sessions though it is largely expected and discussed that 6 sessions will be available for a course of treatment. Based primarily at University Park, the service also visits Sutton Bonington once a week to offer pre-booked appointments for up to five students or staff. As well as offering standard counselling, the service also runs workshops and group sessions. Focusing on particular issues such as managing depression and self-assertiveness, the workshops run for 1, 2 and 3 sessions.

According to the University's Counselling Service's Annual Report, the average waiting time for an initial appointment was 5.4 days, and 50% of students were offered an on-going appointment within 4 weeks. Whilst the Counselling service states that this is well within their Service objectives, students seem to view waiting times as problematic, with many stating that the counselling service was severely overloaded, and as such, they felt discouraged to access the service;

“Have struggled with anxiety and depression throughout the whole of university but only started trying to get help in my third year. By this time it was too late, my grades had slipped, I had isolated my friends and my confidence was at an all-time low. In the beginning I thought that it would get better and that everyone else was coping so why couldn’t I. I felt so pressured to pretend that I was ok.”

“My housemate killed herself due to depression. I found her in her bedroom. She had been to counselling once, and was seeing her GP regularly but still did not feel able to cope.”

“At UoN the University Counselling Service operates as a standard counselling service, offering students and staff free and unlimited sessions though it is largely expected and discussed that 6 sessions will be available for a course of treatment. Based primarily at University Park, the service also visits Sutton Bonington once a week to offer pre-booked appointments for up to five students or staff. As well as offering standard counselling, the service also runs workshops and group sessions. Focusing on particular issues such as managing depression and self-assertiveness, the workshops run for 1, 2 and 3 sessions.

According to the University's Counselling Service's Annual Report, the average waiting time for an initial appointment was 5.4 days, and 50% of students were offered an on-going appointment within 4 weeks. Whilst the Counselling service states that this is well within their Service objectives, students seem to view waiting times as problematic, with many stating that the counselling service was severely overloaded, and as such, they felt discouraged to access the service;

“I was having some mental health problems and emailed the university counselling service to book an appointment but they replied to say they were very busy and so I couldn’t make an appointment. I decided to go to a GP at Cripps instead to see if they could help and they said they would refer me to the counselling service. It’s been a week and a half and I’ve heard nothing, it’s really not helping my stress or problems and it feels very isolating and like no-one cares”

“Everyone knows the counselling service is greatly strained, and that from first talking to them to actually see someone typically takes weeks. Obviously that’s a problem that nothing except enormous funding increases by employing more counsellors could fix. But I think also there’s an issue for students like me who don’t want to talk to a counsellor or who feel that their problems aren’t worthy or appropriate for counselling. Sometimes you don’t want to bother a professional with your problems or take up valuable counselling time from people who need it more? If your stresses are more regular, less serious ones, which you might not ever generally recognise as needing help for like friend-related problems you want to sound off to someone about or from simple things like having a lot on your plate. This is why I think there needs to be more advertisement and where needed more SU support of student-led initiatives like Nightline (who in personal experience are very good) and Mental Wealth, that give you someone just to talk to, when you don’t need counseling or anything so drastic but you need to rant or speak to that impartial listener.”

Due to the intense demand on the service it is inevitable that some students will ‘slip through the net’, arguably it will be those who need the service most as they are least likely to be in a position, emotionally or mentally, to push for the help they need. It is clear that some delegation needs to occur between support services.

Some issues currently being dealt with by councillors could be dealt with outside the realms of professional mental health support – of the Counselling Service’s ‘presenting problems’, 20.2% were academic or work related.

These included anxiety about academic work and exams, those considering leaving university or transferring courses, and requests for extenuating circumstances. A large portion of these cases could certainly be picked up by another service as it is likely that it is more a question of practical advice than mental health issues. Obviously assumptions cannot be made when dealing with students health issues and the challenge for the development of support services will lie in ‘sorting and signposting’ students to the correct service.

The Students’ Union has a Student Advice Centre which provides information and advice on a wide range of issues affecting students, such as housing, education and money. The service should theoretically be a student’s first port of call when in need of support and function as the sorting and signposting point, however, in several focus groups conducted through the Students’ Union on topics ranging from employability to harassment to housing, when group members have been asked if they would go to the student advice centre regarding their problem many have said they didn’t know it existed or if they did that it is not somewhere they would think to go. The Student Advice Centres reporting statistics show that the majority of their time (or at least the highest number of cases) is spent on housing related matters and especially contract checking.
In a recent survey into Employment and Finance, students were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (extremely stressed) to 5 (not at all stressed) how they felt about their financial situations both now and when they thought about the position they would be in when they graduated. Only a third of students rated either of their financial situation as not causing them stress.

When asked about the areas of finance they felt least control over their spending, rent and course costs were the most frequently selected, and 2/3 of students stated that they are influenced by the spending habits of their friends.

With regards to safety, we have already discussed the issues of harassment and the need for zero tolerance policies to protect students. We have also heard from students about safety on campus due to lack of lighting and have heard from other specific student groups such as nurses who operate on different schedules whilst on placements and how they feel unsafe when travelling home or leaving work late at night. The current Students’ Union safety policy is due to lapse and needs rewriting. A proposal is in place to introduce a safe walking scheme whereby students through the volunteer centre will provide safe walking groups across campus. Initially this is proposed to run on University Park campus which certainly goes some way to alleviating the issues students are telling us about safety on that campus and particularly The Downs, it will also be in place on Jubilee. However, due to the concerns of Queens Medical Centre students on late shift patterns, and students on Sutton Bonington with regards to Station Road safety and the geographical isolation of that campus, the service really should be aimed at all students from the beginning.

91% of students said they were not aware of any students union, university or NUS campaigns on finance.
A campaign to encourage student victims to report harassment and discrimination of all kinds to feed into further work that is needed by both the Union and University to draw up a workable and relevant ‘zero tolerance’ policy on harassment.

In order for a zero tolerance policy to work, students must know they are to report incidents (and who to) but also that incidents that are reported will be acted upon. During the harassment focus groups, students discussed how they thought a zero tolerance policy could work and remarked that sanctions needed to be in place otherwise there was no ‘zero tolerance’. They discussed between themselves the need for some kind of warning system or ‘3 strikes’ or a withdrawal of society membership as a punishment.

Work on challenging ‘lad culture’ should not simply be a matter of the Women’s network. In the wider context of the NUS report on lad culture, the ‘everyday sexism’ project, recent lobbying of Facebook due to their inconsistent messages with regards to violence towards women, and the worrying range and frequency of female harassment stories submitted to us by UoN students, and the Change It! proposal to ban Page 3 newspapers on campus, it seems that there is work to be done to tackle female harassment and sexism in various forms, and that some of this work is about step changes and organisational messages not just campaigns by one student network.

Improve publicity and access to all support services, providing signposting from day one. Students should be as familiar with the welfare systems and support networks in place as they are to the library system, bus services and food outlets on campus. These services should operate in a tiered way so that students do not have to hit ‘rock bottom’ before they seek help. Such intervention could come in the form of specialised support services that help guide students through the system and help them with paperwork or appointment setting if that is the challenge they face, and provide a follow up aftercare package that means if a student makes contact about an appointment or wants help to access a service, there are procedures in place to ensure that they have been able to access what they’ve needed.
The University of Nottingham has over 30,000 students studying in the UK, they are spread across a number of campuses in Nottingham and the wider East Midlands. We have around 4,000 students in Halls on the main campus, University Park and the nearby Jubilee site and around a further 700 on the Sutton Bonington site. There are also around a further 4,200 rooms provided in external halls outside of the main campuses such as Broadgate Park. In Nottingham, we have large student communities in areas such as Lenten and Dunkirk and the town local to the Sutton Bonington campus, Kegworth, is home to around 500 students in private rented housing. Many International and Postgraduate students live in Beeston, and there are students living with their families or in other non-student homes within the city and within commuting distance. Our largest numbers are in Halls and in specific locations and this is typically how the focus of housing campaigns have been structured and how we use this medium as a way to contact large groups.

When students arrive to start their studies at the University of Nottingham, the Students' Union provide a booklet called ‘The Guide’, the commitment of which is that it will be on the bed on every student when they arrive. However this is obviously only happening for students in Halls where beds can be accessed. Previous feedback has told us that this is happening for students on Halls on University Park campus but that external halls managed by other companies are not getting the booklets into rooms and students on other campuses are having them given to them on registration rather than in their room and some have complained of missing out. As a key document welcoming students and providing helpful information on the things they can get involved with, who to contact if they need support and introducing the Students’ Union to students generally, it is not good enough that this booklet is missing from many new students welcome experience. We need to ensure that external Halls and accommodation on sites that are not on University Park also follow the model of getting the booklet on beds ready for students when they arrive. Students living externally have, over time, consistently fed back in surveys and focus groups that they have felt excluded from first week events and not received welcome information. This is something we need to improve upon but starts with us committing to finding out where and how these students actually live before we can put a proper plan of action forward through the Regional Students Association (RSA) itself has already been identified as requiring an overhaul to make it fit for purpose.

For students in Halls there are committees of elected representatives who collate student feedback to feed through issues for investigation to meetings and Union Council and across other arenas such as the Halls and Catering Forum. Moving forward, the Union wants to empower these groups to function more as drivers for change and to ensure that positions are taken on, or followed through, by students who want to act as representatives rather than simply enjoying the perks these positions can offer.

In the student consultations, for this project we held an event at one of the largest halls on University Park campus. One of the hall committee members assisted the staff and Exec officers running the event. This worked incredibly well, with the committee member taking iPads around corridors to gain feedback from students who hadn’t come to the event and gaining 60 pieces of feedback. We found that a key point in Halls made the feedback very ‘Hall specific’ but were pleased and encouraged by the response and believe this kind of event could be useful in future for gaining further insight into Hall issues as a supplement to the work and channels already in place.

One of the most frequently cited issues from Halls students’ surrounds food.

“The halls and their facilities are top notch in my opinion with one exception, the dining hall. The catering in the hall is not great. The hall produces plenty of variety of food with soup and salad bar, vegetarian etc., and that’s fantastic. The problem is that the quality of the main dishes seems to be somewhat compromised. Little things such as the constantly out of juice ‘juice machine’ and lack of milk are just trivial problems, that could be easily fixed”

Other commonly appearing themes are the lack of cashpoints, the facilities for cash back, temperamental internet connects and the lack of lighting/feeling unsafe walking across campus at night and the use of student meal cards at the Students’ Union shop.

On Change It! currently, there are Halls focused issues such as the demand for a Catered Halls Menu and Food Standards review to cover value, nutritional content, quality of ingredients on chef performance:

“The University knows this is an issue and we consistently complain in the Hall surveys but the changes we get are tiny. It is time for the Students’ Union to step in and demand better. Apart from a review we should have a clear system to complain to the SU about the food we are served, possibly this should be in the form of a student elected food board. A student should also be allowed if he/she is not satisfied to demand a refund for the cost of that meal so they may go and purchase something else off site.”

There is also a repetition of the idea for student meal cards to be able to be used in the SU shop, roll over of credit for catered students (or the idea for unused balances to be credited at the end of the year and the storage space/lack of reasonably priced storage space for students out of term time, especially for International students who are flying home.

All students are represented on accommodation matters by the Accommodation and Community Officer who is a full time, salaried elected officer. This officer becomes even more important for students after they leave Halls and do not have the representation of their Hall committees or are renting their accommodation from the university or its partners. Each year the accommodation and Community Officer runs
campaigns around housing which are largely focused on students signing for private rented accommodation. Typically, there is a ‘rush’ to sign with students believing that houses will be all taken, or only terrible housing left in prime locations very quickly. Previously the Union tried to attack this phenomena by pushing the message of waiting and using the service of Unipol to find accredited student housing when its list opens toward the end of January (official househunting date). However, in our survey in May 2012, we asked students when they had started househunting and found that a total of 51% had tried looking in the period before the ‘official househunting season’ began from 51% with 16% starting before December. In fact, only students in their 4th year or more or ‘other’ (e.g. placement students, transfer students, exchange students) reported less than 50% figures of beginning their househunting experience before the timing of the release of Unipol’s housing lists and our housing campaigns. In addition, when asked when they had finished the househunting process (i.e. viewed, selected and signed a contract for their next year’s accommodation), almost 1 in 4 (24%) of students had done so before the official househunting date. In this year’s survey, responses so far state that 28% of students are not aware of Unipol and only 17% have signed a contract to live in a Unipol property for next year. Last year’s ‘How Can We Help’ survey showed that 26% had never heard of Unipol and 34% did not know what Unipol does and the last years househunting survey stated that 2/3 of students had used other websites to look for housing.

As a result of this data together, with a number of other factors, and the content of the open comments of this survey (completed by around 3,000 students), for the following year we changed the househunting campaign completely. We changed the focus of ‘rushing/waiting to Love Your Home’ in order to give a positive and non-instructional message to students. The campaign was also brought forward to November and revolved around a series of short videos where students shared their stories and top tips for the househunting experience.

One of the most commonly identified concerns and tips provided through the survey was around who to live with so our tip of ‘choose your housemates wisely’ reflected this and ties with the context of not rushing into housing – though we have concerns about students welfare in being pressured to sign for houses with dubious landlords or agencies, we also are concerned about students feeling pressurised to sign for contracts with friends who, in reality, they have probably not known for more than a couple of months. Unfortunately, this will be a longer term battle – 30% of students stated they had felt peer pressure to signing for a house that they were not totally sure about. In other feedback, we’ve heard that students’ biggest concerns on coming to university (and how they felt about attending welcome events) is around making friends, not appearing boring or being lonely. In our current survey we are checking at the Student access services to help. 

The results showed that the experience was positive for students who perhaps are not the direct focus of housing campaigns or as able to access services to help. For example, where 38% of University Park students said their experience was positive, this fell to 31% for Jubilee, 29% for Derby and 28% for SB. In the same vein, 27% of UP students stated they had their contracts checked at the Student Advice Centre compared to 17% of Jubilee students, 6% of Sutton Bonington students and 4% of Derby students. When asked to select from 3 options what the message of that years housing campaign had been, 42% of students on University Park had misunderstood the message, compared to 50% at Jubilee, 70% at Sutton Bonington and 100% at Derby.

It would seem that better communication of what is actually available (and when), encouraging students to find the best houses for themselves rather than feeling they must live with everyone from their Halls corridor in order to have fun, and providing distinct strategies, advice and support for the varied student communities is needed.

A key issue surrounding student housing at the moment is the councils shift following last years housing survey – showing students concerns and the restriction of the provision of “further student housing (where the City Council is able to exercise control) within areas of concentration of students, where the creation and maintenance of balanced communities is threatened.” In essence this means that an investor who buys a property in an area such as Lenton or Dunkirk with the intention of renting it to students has to apply for a house to be registered as a HMO and the council can (and do) refuse such applications on the basis that they believe the area to be too heavily dominated.
by such properties (i.e., they make up over 25% of the area at present).

Whilst students dominating areas could be seen to bring problems that affect local residents, it cannot or should not be acceptable to plan a strategy which is intended to simply divert students to purpose built accommodation in ‘suitable’ locations.

The issues surrounding students clamouring to find private rented ‘student houses’ with their friends (as seen in Nottingham and other university towns and cities throughout the country) indicate that something which was stated by the Council was right for the Council to direct where and what type of accommodation students live in. Further, they do not believe in the Council strategy of paid (and reduced numbers) of parking permits for student housing. Many students understood the need for parking permits in certain areas and thought it was fair to pay for them but only if residents also did the same. Only 4% of students felt it was fair to charge students for parking permits but not local residents. Aside from having the right to choose where and how they live, students should be assisted to make good financial decisions and it would certainly seem from the prices of purpose built accommodation (even those including meals) they are not comparable to student houses in the community. The price of the private bedrooms on campus range from £5,993.13 to £4,328.90 (£193 - £140 per week for a 31 week contract including bills and 19 meals a week). Unlike in the local community, students cannot leave their possessions in their accommodation during Christmas and Easter vacations, they must pack up everything and take it away or face storage fees of around £5 per day.

Current research into third party halls (e.g., those not on campus or managed by the university, such as Broadgate Park, Raleigh Park and St Peters Court and the places that students could, in theory, be diverted to seeing as campus Halls would be taken by first year undergraduates) indicates that there are various other issues aside from finance that do not make these the choice for the best student experience. The Junior Common Rooms (JCRs) do not function as well within these sites as those in university managed and on-campus Halls with committee positions remaining vacant, social events not held or poorly attended, and a general sense of a lack of community. Other related activities such as charity, volunteering or sporting events are also lacking. These sites currently run under capacity (St Peters Courts have 627/808 spaces filled, Riverside Park have 281/484 and Raleigh Park have 1,058/1,196) despite being within 1-10 minutes’ walk to nearest campus.

Whilst private housing is the preference, there are problems within the student private rented market. The Union offers contract checking services to all students in order to help students get the fairest deal, and offers students advice on whether to argue for better terms, certain inclusions/ exclusions and highlights the importance and legal requirements of protected deposits. However, only 22% of students responding to the housing survey last year stated they had used this service. In reality, as surveys are typically responded to by those students who are more ‘engaged’ with the Union than not, if we had data for the entire student population as opposed to around 3,000 students, we’d expect this figure to be a lot lower. For example, around 26% of ‘home’ students stated they had their contract checked as opposed to 15% of International students, 32% of students living in halls said they’d had their contract checked in comparison with 16% of students outside of halls. Securing a fair contract (and being able to gather data on those landlords who repeatedly provide unfair terms and disingenuous contracts) is the first step in making sure that the house a student lives in is in good condition and that any problems throughout the year can be easily, quickly and honestly dealt with. We have heard reports through numerous feedback channels of students who have had repairs drag on for months, mould and damp being a common accepted occurrence, deposits withheld or only sent to one of the tenants, unscrupulous agencies and landlords ‘named and shamed’ through a blacklist style facility. Students have repeatedly asked for support in ensuring that agencies don’t charge unreasonable or unnecessary fees, that there be an intermediary to ensure repairs are dealt with and that student contact to agencies or landlords be taken seriously. One solution to this that is being trialled within the Students’ Union movement is that the Students’ Union letting agency, Queens University Belfast Students’ Union and Cardiff University Students’ Union are amongst the few names working to provide their own unique, ethical services. Locally, SUlets has been set up as a letting agency which is jointly owned and run by De Montfort and the University of Leicester Students’ Unions.
During the consultation events students provided a variety of comments around the themes already outlined above:

- **ADVICE**
  - About steering clear of dodgy landlords
  - About police talks at the beginning of the year for security awareness
  - About crime for Lenton helpline
  - About better landlord control
  - About nurse/med friendly self-catering
  - About providing accommodation on campus to reflect their work hours
  - About the university putting pressure on landlords to be better
  - About letting agents’ time to respond
  - About making communications better between agency/landlords and students so things get done like repairs
  - About making better integration of students across schools and across campus/off campus housing

- **PARKING**
  - Help clear up where students can park & for how long
  - About longer breakfast in halls
  - About having police talks at the beginning of the year for security awareness

- **SU BASED**
  - Not for profit estate agent
  - Not SU based
  - Landlord & wi-fi

- **HALLS**
  - Grade halls are limited
  - Most times by application time they are full & we seek accommodation elsewhere
  - Shouldn’t have to move stuff out of halls
  - Every holiday and too expensive to keep it here in the room they give

- **FOOD**
  - I live in Raleigh Park would have been nice if there were joint events with those on campus
  - I would rather save money to spend it if necessary
  - Cheaper accommodation purchased/hired from Derby Uni

- **THE UNI**
  - Should be putting pressure on landlords to be better
  - Many of them are criminals or just not very nice

- **ACCOMMODATION**
  - On campus to reflect their work hours
  - On landlords to be better
  - Many of them are criminals or just not very nice

- **COMMUNICATIONS**
  - Make communications better between agency/landlords and students so things get done like repairs

- **Better Landlord Control**
  - Better landlord control

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**
  - Ensure students in halls off University Park are all subject to the practice of “The Guide” being on beds upon arrival
  - Review the purpose and support of the RSA and external Halls JCRs
  - Extend access to housing advice and contract services beyond University Park
  - Review the purpose and service provision of Unipol and the accommodation office in tandem with an investigation into the practice of Students’ Unions running their own letting agencies
  - Continue to respond to Council consultations on student housing and student area policies and engage the university as a major force in the local economy to support and champion the student voice and the Students’ Union on this matter
As a multi campus university we face challenges with regards to integration and service provision to all of our students. Encouraging students to participate in activities and creating a unified sense of community is difficult when each campus has its own unique identity and problems. Though the campuses are all different, it is important they are perceived as equal by students in order for them all to have the best student experience.

**UNIVERSITY PARK**

University Park is The University of Nottingham's largest campus at 300 acres. Set in extensive greenery, around a lake and located only two miles from the city centre. The campus is home to the largest number of students, has around 3,000 students living on campus and a third party hall just outside the campus gates which offers accommodation to a further 2,000. At the centre is the Portland Building, which houses the Students' Union, and its specific offices for the Student Advice Centre, Sports and Activities, Students Volunteer Centre, Print shop and the SU bar ‘Mooch’. There is also space used by societies and student run services such as URN the student radio station, Karni the RAG charity, which is the largest in Europe, and is home to the elected Executive Officers. According to our data on Participation from a survey in 2011/2012

* 80% of students based on UP have been involved in a club or society.

The students at University Park have more on offer to them than all of the satellite sites. In much of the feedback received from the consultations held around University Park campus, students praised the opportunities and availability of services on campus. There were some key areas where students believed improvements could be made such as the main libraries, buses and safety:

- Ensuring all books that are regularly in short loan are put online
- 24 hour Library all year round
- More space in libraries around exam time—can never get a seat or a book I want!
- Update Hallward Library, its too dreary and hot
- Cash point outside of Halls
- Halls are fantastic/best looking uni/ cash back at hall bar only open 3 nights a week
- At about 5 the Hopper Bus is always hard to catch as its often so full it drives past. Its not nice in the winter especially
- More water fountains on campus
- Lights on at The Downs

We received a large number of comments during the consultation events about campus safety, especially to campus lighting and in particular lighting on The Downs. This area at the centre of the campus is used by students to walk across from their halls to academic buildings, the Students' Union, the library and meet up with other friends based on campus. The area currently has some lighting but students have repeatedly told us they do not feel safe when its dark in the current circumstances. Further issues of student's safety are discussed in the section on Welfare.

In our Participation survey, 2,012 students were asked to rate the following services currently available on University Park:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mooch (bar)</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Shop</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Volunteer Centre (SVC)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception/Box office</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Union shops (Portland, Jubilee, GMC)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Advice Centre</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a multi campus university we face challenges with regards to integration and service provision to all of our students. Encouraging students to participate in activities and creating a unified sense of community is difficult when each campus has its own unique identity and problems. Though the campuses are all different, it is important they are perceived as equal by students in order for them all to have the best student experience.
The Jubilee Campus is a modern purpose-built campus, which now extends to 65 acres and is located only one mile from University Park. The Campus includes; school and faculty buildings, a library, a Sports Centre and space for around 700 students in campus halls. There are approximately another 4,000 bed spaces in third party halls within walking distance of this campus.

Despite its proximity to University Park (it is within reasonable walking distance and there are free ‘Hopper’ buses running several times an hour), Jubilee students participation and access to services is not as high. According to our participation survey data, only 47% of students at Jubilee are involved in a sport or society.

This relatively low percentage supports the numerous statements of students provided at consultation events regarding society access, interaction and replication. There was an issue among students there and in previous feedback, of a ‘University Park centric’ offering of activities.

As part of a Jubilee based survey in January 2012, we presented the following statement on which we asked students to rate their agreement:

“When it comes to services or departments such as the advice centre, sports and societies or volunteering, I think it’s reasonable they commit to visiting Jubilee campus regularly to run drop-in sessions rather than have a permanent office/staff member on campus”

The majority of students felt that travelling/rotating services were sufficient and permanent services were not necessary (78.9% total agreement; 27.6% strongly agreed). This was equally felt by both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students based at Jubilee. This data confirms the idea that it seems nonsensical to replicate activities and societies a mile down the road thus splitting funding and membership numbers. However, in support of this, students were directly asked about that inference;

What do you think the Students’ Union focus should be when working with the university on space/facilities for Jubilee:

1 To ensure facilities on University Park are replicated on Jubilee so students do not have to travel between campuses (but would have less variety/range of facilities overall)

OR

2 To obtain different facilities on each campus so students have more facilities overall (but would need to travel across campuses by Hopper Bus or foot to access them)

Perhaps provision of different societies on Jubilee, or a movement of some from University Park would be a fair approach to splitting the travel between UP and Jubilee students. 2/3 of students felt the SU opted for choice 1: replicating UP services on Jubilee even though this would mean that there would be less variety/range of services overall. The breakdown of this result by program of study shows that while this represents the views of Undergraduates and Postgraduate taught students, PhD and Research students would prefer different services instead; they were among the 1/3 of students who felt the SU should try to obtain different facilities on Jubilee and UP so that there are more facilities overall even though that means students would have to travel across sites to access different provisions. This indicates that perhaps age (as PhD students are likely to be older) may be a factor in the expectation of provision or the willingness to make more effort to engage with activities out of eyesight.

You could infer from this that students on Jubilee do not see themselves as an overflow or extension campus of UP but that it is a separate entity entirely, as we see more with further away campuses such as Sutton Bonington or Derby. By asking for a replication of UP services, Jubilee students are essentially telling us that they don’t see UP services as being for them or they feel they cannot/will not travel to use them.

The consultation data from Jubilee also highlighted the need for ‘better’ and bigger sporting facilities on Jubilee campus, as did the January 2012 Jubilee survey. In this survey we asked about how land adjacent to the existing Sports Centre on campus should be developed by proposing 5 different options and allowing students to rate them by preference. 15% of students voted for the sports focused option as first choice and a further 36% as their second choice. This was the highest preference level expressed for any option.

A further selection of some of the issues raised by Jubilee students at their consultation event include:

- It is very hard to go to UP and Beeston, should have buses to go to Beeston
- More social opportunities to meet new people especially freshers. Lacked events to meet people within your course
- Provide more Halal food, suitable for vegetarians
- Better quality and more choice of food, no more rubbish brunches please
- That Starbucks on Jubilee accept students cards
- The Jubilee gym should be improved as when it’s crowded you don’t get a chance
- More money for societies, more activities on Jubilee, interaction with Jubilee improved
QUEENS MEDICAL CENTRE

QMC is home to the University of Nottingham Medical School where the majority of our nurses, midwives, and medics are based. It is just outside the main University Park campus and is linked by a skybridge. A walk from the medical school entrance to the centre of UP campus takes around 15 minutes. The Medical School contains a small Students’ Union shop and there is provision in the site redevelopment for the introduction of a drop-in/ bookable office space to meet the needs of societies and groups based there that currently do not have access to adequate meeting rooms.

Feedback received through the consultation events held at the Medical School focused on the lack of integration into the wider student and University Park community. Only 57% of students at QMC are involved in a sport or society, however this lower figure is obviously affected by the time demands of medicine and health science courses. Despite these extra demands on their time, students at QMC want to be able to participate in university wide societies:

- Greater SU involvement and wellbeing with medical students. We’re almost secluded from the rest. Include us more
- I would like more medic and non-medic society collaboration
- Midwives and Nurses don’t feel a part of university like and SU, would like more time to join in society events

DERBY

Nottingham’s Campus at Royal Derby Hospital is a further Medicine and Health Science campus which is home to the graduate entry medicine course amongst others. Derby students typically do not engage at a high level with Students’ Union feedback surveys and in a recent attempt to schedule a focus group on site, 2 separate attempts failed, despite a number of times and dates being proposed and the event had to be run electronically resulting in feedback from only 3 students. The majority of the feedback received from students about their experience at the Derby campus came through the consultation event held on site.

As to be expected, many of the difficulties faced by the medical students at QMC regarding integration also existed for the GEMs and other medical students at Derby. The feeling of missing out is perhaps intensified at Derby by the geographical isolation from many of the main societies.

- Derby Campus, seems very detached and separate from actual Notts Uni
- Feeling a bit left out of the Uni @ Derby, no access to sports facilities here, no Hopper Bus in evening etc
- Derby is pretty nice as long as you can leave every weekend

Students listed the need for more SU space as well as events and societies for them to get involved in. The Consultation event where we gathered much of the Derby student feedback for this report was held in the ‘Student Hub’ however many students that we spoke to didn’t know the room was there and would not have considered spending time socialising in there. It is not especially close or convenient for their teaching and learning rooms nor the cafeterias where they eat.

Some Derby students choose to live in Nottingham and face the challenge of getting to Derby for their lectures and placements. As with the other satellite sites there is currently a Hopper Bus running from University Park. Derby students reported the issue of the bus being overcrowded and, due to the time of buses, infrequency of service and the traffic at peak times, it did not arrive in enough time for their academic commitments. As a result many GEMs stated they commuted to Derby from Nottingham by car, incurring not only petrol costs but the high parking costs at Royal Derby Hospital.

- University should financially support expenses for travel to and from or make the Hopper Bus timetable better
- Students placed in Derby should get transport from Notts paid for. GEMs based in Notts get their transport paid
- Having to pay £8.50 parking a day when we only have a lectures at 9 then at 5 is not acceptable
- Student parking needs to be free

Though there are a great deal of older students at the Derby site, particularly on the GEM course, for some students especially those younger students on the Nursing program, it would seem from that there are a section of Derby students who do want the full ’student experience’ and to do so live in Nottingham due to perceived lack of activities and social opportunities and run a car due to poor bus services.
SUTTON BONINGTON

The Sutton Bonington Campus is over 10 miles south of University Park on the border of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Its countryside location is suited to the School of Biosciences and the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science. On campus there's teaching facilities, a library, student accommodation for 700 students, and a recently rebuilt retail and catering outlet and a bar. Around 500 students based at SB who do not live on campus, reside in private rented accommodation in the nearby village Kegworth.

Through anecdotal data from the SB Guild, we were made aware of a number of specific issues at Sutton Bonington Campus, and so in Spring 2013 we conducted research via a campus survey.

The recent campus redevelopment has seen a new shop and café building introduced which is operated by an external company, Sodexo. Students were asked to rate the building on a scale of ‘Poor’ to ‘Excellent’. Only 20% found the shop to be better than OK (1.3% excellent and 18% Good) the majority 37% found it just OK, whilst 25% found it be not so good and 17% said poor.

The café which has a Starbucks franchise, fared slightly better in a direct comparison with the shop section. 58% of respondents felt pricing needed to be improved as a priority, 17% said poor.

In a previous investigation into catering, retail and bar provision on campus, students were asked whether it mattered to them who provided their services. Whilst 49% said no, 16% said they thought it should be run by the University and 33% said it should be run by a private service.

In this years campus survey, students also felt that access to services were poor and that any provisions were not in line with timetabling for Vet students in particular. 59% majority of students would prefer service such as advice on health, housing, finance etc... to be scheduled every weekday during a lunch period (12-2) as opposed to 9-5 over 1 or 2 days a week.

There have also been problems with access to healthcare locally at the small surgery in the next village and with accessing university counselling services. There are high demands for healthcare due to the prevalence of gastronomic infections associated with working with livestock, and we have also heard of a high level of mental health issues through a variety of feedback channels and through discussions with the Guild at the campus, perhaps due to the isolated campus location or the stresses of high intensity and financial problems associated with the Vet degree program. Currently the university counselling service visits the site once a week on a Thursday with a capacity to see around 5 or 6 students on a fixed appointment system. 11% of respondents had attempted to make use of this service at some point, only 78% of this group were successful in acquiring the support they needed meaning 21% needing welfare support were missing out. Concerns associated with counseling provisions have been discussed further in the welfare section of this report.

Currently Sutton Bonington have their own societies as well as being able to access those on other campuses. During a focus group with freshers about their Week One experience, issues around participation that have been commented upon by SB students relate to their isolated campus location or the stresses of high intensity and financial problems associated with the Vet degree program.  Currently the university counseling service visits the site once a week on a Thursday with a capacity to see around 5 or 6 students on a fixed appointment system. 11% of respondents had attempted to make use of this service at some point, only 78% of this group were successful in acquiring the support they needed meaning 21% needing welfare support were missing out. Concerns associated with counseling provisions have been discussed further in the welfare section of this report.

Concerns associated with welfare support were missing out. Concerns associated with counseling provisions have been discussed further in the welfare section of this report.

More intercampus events to integrate all the campuses together, more entire university events at SB. Bring UP her

Currently Sutton Bonington have their own societies as well as being able to access those on other campuses. During a focus group with freshers about their Week One experience, societies were discussed with regards to sign up at Freshers Fair. Students felt that once they had seen the societies on offer at University Park those offered at Sutton Bonington did not compare, they seemed smaller and had lower budgets. They felt as though they were missing out however they felt travelling to university to join the societies there as too time consuming and impractical due to timetables and issues with the Hopper Bus. Further issues around participation that have been commented upon by SB students relate to their sports clubs. The campus has its own teams that have been entered into BUCs, this system is currently undergoing changes (alongside uniforms and kit to tie in with University of Nottingham Sports branding) and has angered students who feel their SB identity is being stripped away.

SBRLFRC should not be Nottingham 2nds but its own entity

SB rugby must stay in BUCS

Please keep rugby seconds on SB

All the clubs I’ve spoken to want to keep their names and logos not uniformed to 'university sport' and the same logo - its a highly emotive subject. I think we should vote as its supposed to be a democracy

I’m a student on SB and I play for SBLRFC. I really love the team spirit that comes from having our own rugby team, the SU needs to recognise how important SB specific team are to us!
The issues of Hopper Bus services is something that we hear about on a regular basis. Currently the bus runs from UP to SB, making stops in Kegworth on the morning and evening service only. Weekend services are infrequent. Buses regularly reach capacity so students cannot board. SB students themselves are fairly equally divided in opinion as to whether the service should stop in Kegworth on run or not. Though many stated in the recent survey that the preferred option would be a Kegworth stop perhaps on 1 out of every 3 service runs.

- Buses don’t arrive at UP early enough to join in with some societies activities e.g. climbing soc
- Buses to Loughborough are expensive; difficult to go shopping on a budget i.e £10 doesn’t go far when return ticket is £3.50
- Better weekend Hopper Bus, more frequent
- Make cycle paths between Kegworth and SB campus

The SB Guild conducted their own short survey specifically focused on Station Road which attracted over 1,000 responses, indicating that as a campus for around 1,700 students, the issue is widely and deeply felt. Their conclusion was that the main issues are lack of pavements and street lighting on the 30 mile an hour speed limit. However, in our campus survey we identified a further issue that road users need to take more care on the road generally. 53% of students said that the majority of cyclists they see on Station Road are not wearing high vis/reflective clothing and only 2/3s said that the majority of cyclists they see wear helmets. In addition, 16% said the majority of cyclists don't have lights on their bikes. This certainly indicates to us that if SB students are using the road as cyclists, in addition to improving road safety generally, they need to have the message instilled into them that helmets, lights and appropriate clothing are also a factor and they can take responsibility for this.

The research revealed that, by campus, it is the students at the universities satellite campuses who feel their student experience is lacking the most. Across a number of participation tracking issues such as group membership, elections turnout, registering for feedback through Students’ Union surveys and focus groups, University Park is always the voice we hear, and so presents the problem of how we cater to those we do not hear from when we already suffer the issues surrounding location.

It is impossible and impractical to even attempt to replicate the provisions of University Park however we can improve integration and accessibility to University Park for other site students and identify services and facilities that are priorities for installation or regular hosting at other sites.

That said, we should not conclude that University Park is the ‘Gold Standard’. The Farmers Market at Sutton Bonington is a monthly event relevant to its surrounding and is unique to Sutton Bonington campus, attracting students and staff university wide and winning national awards. Students at Derby have also told us that they really like the community feel of their site and that the comparatively small number of students and activities there makes them feel as if they know each other and can get involved with whatever is going on there.

This idea of frequent cross-campus travel by all students requires a reliable and expansive transport system of buses. According to our findings, the Hopper Bus system as it stands is not able to cope with the current load let alone the numbers that might use it if greater campus integration was encouraged. It is for this reason that we recommend;

- A review of the Hopper Bus system across all sites is required with student consultation and a transparency agreement so that students understand why certain changes cannot be made, or when service upgrades may appear. We cannot realistically continue to run surveys on Hopper Buses or deal with the same messages through social media if students don’t actually get to feed into the process or receive clear messages from the service providers about what makes the service tenable. Without this we also cannot work to improve cross campus interaction, travel between campuses for events and activities.

Recommendations

- Improvements to social space and related events and activities outside of University Park. If it is important to make the student experience the best it can be and if we are to live the union aim of “being where students are”, then there needs to be the provision to accommodate activities, services and social spaces across all campuses. Not only is this important to the student experience generally but it also promotes welfare for students who feel isolated and help maintain better relationships with groups geographically separate from the Students’ Union in Portland Building.

Finally, if the campuses are to really be considered by students as equal parts of a whole of the University of Nottingham then there is reason to suggest the union’s societies should not be located solely on University Park. Rather than other campus students travelling in to University Park on every occasion to attend a society it could be possible for them to meet at a different campus location each week so that students from every campus shares the burden of travel and increasing integration between all sites;

- Exploration of a campus rotating basis for activities. Students on campuses outside of University Park not only complain about access but also about integration, collaboration or lack of inter-group socials or competitions. It would make an excellent idea to trial a rotating basis for a society for example, perhaps with meetings, socials or training etc... taking turns across different sites to encourage more students to participate, and for students to improve their social networks and learn about other campuses in order to potentially start using facilities across the university portfolio rather than just their campus. If this did prove successful in the long term it would ultimately mean that there was not a great need for the replication of provisions across campuses so a larger number of different activities could be on offer instead.
For the purpose of this report we were looking at the student experience of University of Nottingham students on their UK campuses. We have over 9,000 students split between our Malaysia and China sites but the activities of the Students' Union are really only focused on our UK sites. This report refers to the 30,000+ students studying on University Park, Jubilee, Sutton Bonington and Derby sites as well as the other healthcare sites such as Mansfield, and the QMC and City Hospitals.

With such a large group across so many sites it is hardly surprising that the student body population is diverse and that means a variety of different student experiences. All students are represented in some way, whether that is through Course Reps, School Education Reps, Hall Committee or Welfare Reps such as LGBT or BME officers.

Two of the largest student groups which present us with profiles that are different to the ‘typical’ student experience are International students and Postgraduate students. As you will see from the following two sub-sections, these groups of students are currently experiencing a level of representation and engagement that is not consistent with the standard ‘Home’ Undergraduate student and work is required to ensure that these students, should they wish, gain a more participative and supportive student experience.

There are approximately 9,000 International Students registered as students at the University of Nottingham in this academic year 2012/13, making up around 30% of the student body. Almost 5,000 are studying at Undergraduate level, over 2,500 on Postgraduate taught courses and 1,500 on research programs (REF planning and management statistics).

But we don’t hear from International students in the same way as we do Home students. Focus groups held within the union typically attract little to no International student involvement and surveys we run where we collect demographic data vary considerably both in comparison to home student response rates and the varying nature between EU and non-EU Internationals. In our house hunting survey last year, completed by almost 3,000 students, EU International students contributed 7% of replies and non-EU 18%, whereas our Week One review in 2011 the EU response rate was 6% and non-EU 5%.

Anecdotally, we’ve heard from International Officers about unhappiness with the focus on plagiarism and academic misconduct during the very beginning and how it doesn’t really fit the tone of ‘Welcome’, how students feel unprepared or unaware of simple everyday practices such as having to flag down a bus and have the correct fare. There are misunderstandings of our grading system so as a 70 is a ‘First’ here it is not understood to indicate such high quality work elsewhere by the international students or their parents to whom they are reporting their grades.

On our new website facility Change It!, where students can propose their own ideas for change so that fellow students can discuss and vote on their merit, we have postings relating to free or inexpensive storage for out of term time and in a recent information gathering exercise on mental health, a student talked about the feelings of loneliness and separation and of being unprepared for the realities of Seasonable Affective Disorders.
Disorder for a student coming from a perpetually sunny and hot country.

In various activities through the union we struggle to attract international students, or at least struggle to get our message heard and ensure follow through – of this year’s Grad Ball attendees, less than 5% are international students and in our March 2013 Student Officer Elections, which saw a record breaking turnout of over 10,000 voters, only 20% of international students voted, whereas over a third of ‘Home’ students had their say.

We're proud of the diverse offering of clubs and societies the union facilitates and this is one of our biggest areas of student involvement, however a survey run in the final semester of 2012, which was completed by around 4,000 students, showed that 35% of International students who responded said they weren’t involved with any clubs or societies through the union as opposed to 26% of home students. For those students who were involved with these activities, almost a third said they’d found out about their club or society through friends or their own search of websites or social media as opposed to through the union or university, significantly lower than the 20% of home students saying the same. This suggests to us that both the union and university face a greater struggle in reaching and encouraging our international students than our home students. For non-EU students in particular this is an even more important factor when considering that they are less likely to try a new event than home or EU internationals – almost 20% of non-EU International student stated that they were first involved with a club/society activity prior to University as opposed to 10% or less for home and EU International.

That said, for the international students who had got involved, in comparison with home students they were more regularly involved with 22% being members of more than 1 club or society as opposed to 16% of home students. Almost half of non-EU international students who were not involved said they would like to be, as opposed to 38% for EU student and 39% for home students – something that shows us that even within the international community there is not an overarching theme of disengagement. It’s interesting to note however, that the wording on this survey specifically noted clubs and/or societies. A survey conducted in 2011 which asked specifically about the activities International students were involved with showed that though society involvement was high, of 1,500 respondents, 89% said they did not play sports at university.

In the more recent survey we learned that more Non-EU international (47%) said they had taken part in volunteer work whilst studying here than home students (43%), and EU international students (35%). Of the students’ questioned who hadn’t volunteered, many more Non-EU students said they would like to get involved (57%) than EU (43%) or home (42%). Again non-EU International students were less likely to say they were not interested in acting as a Course Rep (48%) than EU International (54%) or home (62%) students.

Interesting again to see that EU vs. Non-EU engagement can differ so much and that on some areas, EU students show more similar patterns of activity to home students than non-EU internationals students.

Over recent years we’ve seen a huge increase in the number of cultural societies within the Students’ Union. Examples include the Chinese Students Society, the American Society, Nigerian Students Society and Hellenic Society and currently there are over 50 of these types of societies. Given that there are around 200 societies in total, that’s a quarter of all societies being focused on culture or countries outside of the UK. However, not all of our international students can lay claim to their own cultural society. There is no German society yet German students are our second largest cohort of non-EU international students yet there is no separate society for them. They could join one of the China focused societies but many students from Hong Kong may not necessarily self-identify as Chinese. Indeed, one of our consultation event comments which was of a free format – the student could comment on whatever they wanted or was important to them about their student experience – stated that they wanted a “Canadian specific society”. Though we empower students to set up their own society if their interests are not currently accounted for, whether this message is getting through is unclear. Given that the majority of signups take place during Week One and Freshers Fair it is easy to see how students may scan the societies booklet or webpage and find they aren’t covered or overloaded with information during that busy time, don’t see the detail on how to
set up their own or feel confident enough to do so at that stage. At the Students' Union we want to deliver change but also empower students to start and deliver their own change. Some students may need guidance on this or know that this is exactly what we want them to do. By accessing data on who our students are and pushing the message through the International Office too, we could directly contact, for example, all students who are registered as Canadian on university databases and send a message along the lines of "we know you don’t currently have a society – if you’re interested reply to this email and we’ll help you get started."

Over the last few years, we have seen our International Students Bureau (ISB) collapse. This is an association within the Student's Union run by and for international students. Its purpose was regular events, helping with international Welcome program and supporting the elected International Officer. However, the End of Year Ball sold only a handful of tickets and no committees were in place to support the International Officer. Is it coincidental that as this association dropped off, the number of cultural societies flourished? The Students' Union have tried to look into this matter for some time to understand what has gone wrong with the ISB, whether a replacement is necessary and if not, what can then be done instead to support the International Officer. However, as discussed before it has been difficult to attract international student's participation in reviews and feedback and we still don't have the best grasp on who are students are. Also, given that there are so many international cultural societies we perhaps are hearing the message that those students don't define themselves as international as opposed to say, Indian, or necessarily see the similarities or needs to congregate with other internationals.

Feedback that is gathered from international students always talks about integration but it is integration with British students they want, and to improve their English languages rather than forming communities with students from other international countries. Groupings of International or EU and non-EU International just might not be the best way to understand a student body – does an Irish student have the same language or cultural background as a German student? Is a Malaysian student ‘the same’ as an American student?

It is difficult to look at our international students on a deeper level when we don't have the data, but also when other Institutions do the same. The 2011 International Student Barometer for example, showed that International students had lower overall scores than home students and would be less likely to recommend the University of Nottingham. Their ratings of 'First night' were lower and their group average scores for the four main components of Learning, Living, Support and Arrival were all lower than the ratings of home students. (REF) As discussed in the ‘Welcome’ section of this report, there are also concerns as to how appropriate, encompassing and integrating the current welcome program is for our International students.

At the consultation events we set up a number of themed boards for students to attach comments to. One of these was International. It is worth noting that when we talked with students generally and when some international students raised the specific question of what should go on the board we suggested that it was up to them whether they thought their comment was inherently of an international nature, so for example, if a student wanted to make a comment about a society it would depend on what the detail of the comment was – if it was that societies were too expensive that wasn’t an international issue even if the student was international, but if it was about the relevance of the societies on offer to them as an international student then that was an international issue.
Data sharing with the university and International Office from both sides on a continuous basis so we know exactly the make-up of our international student community and also so we can regularly share whatever we learn, whether that's something like event uptake and feedback or the international student voice in education forums.

A partnership project with union, university and the International Office to understand who our International students are, what they want and what they need.

Work to ensure that the Students’ Union has more input and presence in the upcoming 2013/14 International Welcome Week and successfully conveys the message that International students ‘welcome’ is not over then and they will be supported to interact with the full ‘Week One’ program.

Review the idea of separation of Week One and International Week One and its integrating Vs. segregating effect on the student population.

On-going, in-depth audit of student activities to see in further detail of where (and which) international students engage with the Students’ Union including sports, societies and volunteering but also to extend to tracking of participation in union feedback and democratic/representative activities (and service usage where possible). In addition, these should look to put in place auditing measures that help us to understand the student experience on a deeper level than the arbitrary and unhelpful overview terms of ‘international students’ or ‘EU’ and ‘Non-EU’.

Some of the interesting comments from the consultations are provided below. They spanned a range of issues from work and visa issues, funding and access to bursaries, help acclimatising to their UK study, interactions and social events.

**Recommendations**

- Perhaps International Students could arrive in the same week, I feel it alienates them in some way
- No support for Erasmus exchange students at their arrival
- What happened to ISB?
- Allowing us to move into assigned residence during international week in September would have solved problems and saved money
- International students should also get placement travel reimbursements
- More international scholarships
- The accommodation fees should be reduced to a more reasonable amount when you think about how much I have already paid
- I can’t get a work opportunity during my 1 year MSc course because of my type of visa
- It is great to study here in Nottingham as international students but I think that we, French, are not prepared enough for the amount of work here, so many books to read and stuff to do... its so different from France
- More additional help to deal with the language, especially for medical terms before starting clinicals
- It’s really quite difficult to make a lasting group of friends when you’re an international student. Maybe there could be more readily accessible opportunities and resources for internationals to socialize, not just with each other, but other students?
- Cultural fairs, small scale but more frequent
- International food more available in cafes, we love our food yum yum
- It would be nice to know more about the British culture
- How do you integrate internationals into the British communities?
- Should not end term so close to Christmas, international students have to get flights home

Data sharing with the university and International Office from both sides on a continuous basis so we know exactly the make-up of our international student community and also so we can regularly share whatever we learn, whether that’s something like event uptake and feedback or the international student voice in education forums.

A partnership project with union, university and the International Office to understand who our International students are, what they want and what they need.

Work to ensure that the Students’ Union has more input and presence in the upcoming 2013/14 International Welcome Week and successfully conveys the message that International students ‘welcome’ is not over then and they will be supported to interact with the full ‘Week One’ program.

Review the idea of separation of Week One and International Week One and its integrating Vs. segregating effect on the student population.

On-going, in-depth audit of student activities to see in further detail of where (and which) international students engage with the Students’ Union including sports, societies and volunteering but also to extend to tracking of participation in union feedback and democratic/representative activities (and service usage where possible). In addition, these should look to put in place auditing measures that help us to understand the student experience on a deeper level than the arbitrary and unhelpful overview terms of ‘international students’ or ‘EU’ and ‘Non-EU’.
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

As with International students, our Postgraduate students make up a large portion of the student body. We have around 8,000 postgraduate students registered during the 2012/13 academic year with around 2/3 on taught courses and 1/3 following research programs.

However, we don’t interact with our Postgraduate students to the same extent we do our Undergraduate students. Again, like our International students, Postgraduates generally are less engaged with our feedback systems – few or none attend focus groups and survey participation is sporadic. Of the respondents to our recent Employment and Finance survey, only 12% were Postgraduate students. When proportionately they make up around a quarter of the student population and our last Week One/Welcome survey results came from 11% of respondents. However, our ‘How Can We Help’ 2012/13 survey attracted 26% and last year’s househunting survey results (something focused on the kinds of housing issues typically faced by Undergraduate students) attracted 23%.

This year’s Postgrad Ball was successfully sold out but capacity was only 100 so the reality is that not many students are actually attending the event, something which in part has been influenced by the cancellation of last year’s event after only a handful of tickets were sold. Generally social events for Postgraduates are not as popular as those for Undergraduates. This could be due to the more diverse student body but also could be argued is due to the way events are communicated to Postgraduates and an underlying theme of events not being for them. In recent years Postgraduates have been barred from attending Week One events aimed at Undergraduates despite the fact that many are only a few years older than Undergraduates and still want to attend more typical party/club type events. Postgraduates up until the next academic year have not had Week One events communicated to Postgraduates.

Reps as Undergraduates do whose purpose, amongst other things, is to engage students in social events and during the International Welcome Week only one event, a Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA) coffee and cake event, was arranged despite the fact that around half of Postgraduate students registered at the University of Nottingham in 12/13 were International students.

In terms of representation, Postgraduates have their own elected officer who works full time in a salaried position alongside the Executive Officers. There is little interest however in this position – in the elections for 2012/13 only two students ran for the position. The current officer is continuing in the role for the next academic year 2013/14 after running uncontested in the election this March. Whilst that’s not to say the current officer is not a great fit for the role, it highlights the lack of engagement generally with representation and democracy at the Postgraduate level. In this year’s elections only 9% of Postgraduate students voted in comparison with 39% of Undergraduates.

In our recent survey into participation, students who hadn’t ever stood for any kind of elected positions (for example, a hall or school rep, network or group position not just the main Officer positions) were asked whether they would ever consider doing so. 81% of Doctoral level students said no, falling to 72% for Masters levels in comparison to 67% for Undergraduates.

In the PGSA survey of 2011, 60% of Research students did not know whether they had an academic representative within their school or faculty, 1/3 of taught Postgraduates did not know they had a course rep or that they should have one, with a further 20% knowing they had a course rep but not actually knowing who it was. When asked whether they thought the representation system worked, the results were fairly evenly split, with taught Postgraduates being fairly positive (55% yes) than Research Postgraduates (48% Yes) despite the majority never having participated in the PG Council academic forum and with many not even aware of this activity (45% PG taught, 58% PG Research).

Our participation survey run last year was completed by just under 1000 Postgraduate students. When asked whether they participated in sports inside or outside of university, Postgraduate students were more likely than Undergraduates to participate in sports outside of university, with the split of outside and inside university participation being at 64% and 36% respectively. In terms of clubs and societies within the Students’ Union, 78% of Undergraduates said they had been involved with a group or club whilst studying for their current qualification, dropping to 62% for Masters level students and lower still for Doctoral level students (40%). In terms of number of these groups or clubs involved with, again Undergraduate students were more heavily involved with 85% being a member of 2 or more. Whilst Masters level students were not far behind on 81%, only 41% of Doctoral level students were involved with 2 or more clubs or groups. Students who responded that they weren’t involved with any clubs or groups through the union, were asked whether they’d like to be and the levels of negative responses to this question rose as the level of study increased – 27% of Undergraduates said ‘no’, as opposed to 31% Masters level and 41% Doctoral level. The most important things to take from this though are that these students by
not participating may miss out—over 3/4ths said that being involved with a club or group had increased their social networks and around the same again said that it had increased the overall quality of their university experience. This becomes more important still when considering that when asked if students felt part of their university ‘community’, again the number of negative responses rose in line with the level of study. It is worth noting that comments provided by Postgraduates during the consultation events for this project indicated that it wasn’t simply a case of the message reaching them – students stated that they had perhaps joined a club or group but felt it was irrelevant to them as it was full of younger students or that they wanted separate clubs that reflected a more mature membership or one that was more inclusive and understanding of family and external commitments. Students also seemed keen to meet other Postgraduates outside of their departments and faculties and felt that this kind of network was lacking.

We invited Postgraduate students to attend whichever consultation event they wished as well as holding an event in one of our Postgraduate Centres immediately after a university careers event. For the Postgraduate-specific event, engagement was high with students providing a wealth of comments across a variety of areas. Some very specific to the Postgraduate experience whilst others reflected similar concerns to Undergraduates.

- I tried 2 societies but I couldn’t find mature/graduate students so I stopped participating
- Would be nice to have more activities and clubs for mature students/with families etc.
- More programmes to integrate postgrads
- Postgrad representation in most uni activities is limited

- Buses during non-term time
- Grad halls are limited. Most times by application time they are full and we seek accommodation elsewhere
- I love the international environment of the university but I would like to see more specific activities orientated to international graduate students
- Greater support for PG teaching staff, like cover for illness
- More help with finding suitable accommodation for students with family/dependants
- No desk sharing (hot desking) - need individual write-up space in Boots Science building
- I have submitted 13 pieces of coursework in 2 months
- Help communications between agency/landlords and students so things get done like repairs
- More water coolers in all buildings
- Cheaper gym membership... I mean c'mon!
- Less coursework near exam times
Running alongside this project is a Postgraduate Project within the Education Network. This project is looking at issues such as the ‘NUS Postgraduates Who Teach’ survey (and launching an extra call for additional information not covered by this survey such as Postgraduate demonstrators), replicating the consultation events of this event at further graduate centres and trying to establish what Postgraduate students generally want or need across other areas such as representation, communications, support, activities and events. An in-depth report of that project is being prepared but key findings so far include:

- Less than 40% received university training before teaching/demonstration (40%)
- Less than 17% received departmental training (17%)
- Only half were “taught” how to mark assessments in line with university regulations (50%)
- Over a third of students had no contract
- Numerous complaints were levelled concerning changes in the role, workload and expectations (with around 1 in 4 students saying they had not received a job description)

When we consider that the largest motivations for becoming a teacher/demonstrator were to gain experience, learn new skills and improve employability it is concerning that students aren’t actually being properly trained and around half stated that they had received no feedback on their teaching or demonstrating performance. Additionally, when you consider that these students are teaching Undergraduates here at the University of Nottingham there is a real need both for the students teaching and the students being taught by them, for Postgraduate teachers and demonstrators to have structured training and regular reviews and feedback to help them improve.

There are specific recommendations to be made about certain critical aspects of the Postgraduate experience such as those pertaining to the data collected through the NUS and Nottingham specific ‘Postgraduate's Who Teach’ surveys which are available separately from this report.

For the purpose of this project, as with International students, in order to make further recommendations on what a ‘Postgraduate’ student wants or needs from their university experience we need to fully understand who our Postgraduate students are. It is not fair to assume that they are all the same or that by splitting them into 2 groups of Taught and Research, or Masters and Doctoral level (as we do with EU and non-EU International) that we are even close to understanding their student experience. There is greater homogeneity in the Undergraduate population than in the Postgraduate population and so, even when we acknowledge that one size does not fit all for Undergraduates, it is even more so the case in the Postgraduate population. For example, looking at our home students, only 5% of Undergraduates are studying part time compared to 20% of Postgrads on research programs and 53% on taught courses. We know that around 60% are over the age of 25 and that the majority (over 85%) are within the age bracket of 21-39 but this represents a huge age cross-section whereby needs, wants and lifestyles outside of university will differ dramatically.

Some Postgraduate students may be fresh from their Undergraduate degree (some perhaps even have studied their first degree at Nottingham), still funded by parents and maintaining an active interest in the student social scene, happy to mix with Undergraduates (who are maybe only a year or so younger than them) at societies and clubs whereas there are a great deal who are older, not in student style accommodation, have family responsibilities or are holding down long-term paid employment during their studies.

We would propose that we try to gain a wider understanding of our Postgraduate student’s lives. In-depth analysis of planning and management data already available and liaising with faculties on a departmental level to explore any other data or feedback available is the first step, leading on to a further project where we go to students where they are, meeting with specific student groups and addressing issues on an individual basis so that we capture a more detailed portrayal immediately and going forward on aspects such as:

Demographic profile of students by campus and school to build a true knowledge set of who our students are by age, caring responsibilities, commitments and employment (including relevance to course/career) inside and outside of university, life participation in their own informal networks and those within their department (with other students and/or staff), general activity participation and avenues that they’d like to explore as well as their living accommodation style and location, because in comparison to our Undergraduates we know very little about the behaviours, needs and lives of the Postgraduate population. It is only by dedicating time and resources to fully investigate the profile of our Postgraduate students we will be able to further work to understand what it is they want (or don’t want) from their university experience and how we might go about trying to ensure that is delivered.
CONCLUSION

Students are masters of their time at university, shaping their opportunities, learning and development. They are a fully integrated part of the communities to which they belong. They are heard and affect the change they want.

With that in mind we have conducted our largest project to date – reviewing a range of feedback we’ve covered in the last couple of years, conducting new research through surveys, focus groups and online submission boards and holding a series of open consultation events across a variety of different locations. We’ve captured a picture of what the Student Experience is right now, and what students want it to be so as to help us think about what needs to be worked on going forward. Our Goals, as detailed above have been reflected back to us through what students have told us during this project and one of the key drivers of our 5 year strategy ‘to be where students are, when and how they need us’ has once again been the key message fed back to us across all themes covered in this project.

We’ve identified a series of areas for work as described in the recommendations throughout this report. In brief, they are as follows:

- Commit to The Guide being on every Hall bed for students arriving regardless of campus location or hall provider
- Overhaul the regional Students Association to ensure students outside of Halls are sufficiently well informed and included upon their arrival and review the purpose and support of third party Halls JCRs
- Commit to separate reviews of the Postgraduate and International welcome experience
- Ensure a Students’ Union presence within the university’s International Welcome Week
- Review the idea of separation of International Welcome Week and Week One with regards to its impact on segregation/integration
- A partnership project with the Students’ Union, university and International Office to further understand who our International students are and what they need
- Meet with various Postgraduate student groups and go to where they are, in order to understand who our Postgraduate students are and what they need or want (or not) from the Students’ Union
- Identify what other student groups are starting outside of the typical ‘Week One’ timescale and the support that’s needed
- Ensure the message of activity sign-up continues past Freshers and ReFreshers Fair
- Review space and storage facilities for societies, clubs and student groups
- Ensure activities occurring outside University Park campus have adequate support and access to social spaces, events and related activities
- Explore where possible the idea of activities operating on a rotating campus model so that students can have fair and equal access, expand their networks and integrate their activities
- Lobby for a student focused review gym membership options and pricing structures
- Ensure a clear and consistent message regarding sports participation in BUCS is passed from the university to individual teaching departments
- Map the difference in coaching appraisal and sourcing systems for sports clubs from pre-university and union Sports partnership to now
- Detailed investigation into areas of low activity participation levels
- Ensure the provision of an advisory system whereby students can understand what employability means, how to recognise and discuss the employability skills they have gained so far and ensure activities on offer clearly explain the employability benefits they offer
• Ensure that Postgraduate students who teach or act as demonstrators are sufficiently trained and evaluated to improve their work skills and to safeguard the teaching quality that Undergraduate students receive

• Commit to a student led review of faculty-based careers services

• Explore alternative communications for employability and careers in order to ensure that these crucial messages aren’t sifted out as irrelevant, unfocused or difficult to understand

• Encourage students to report harassment and discrimination of any kind

• Further explore what a zero tolerance policy for harassment and discrimination looks like and the ‘buy in’ needed from departments across the union and university

• Work to challenge the omnipresent ‘Lad Culture’ prevalent in contemporary university life

• Provide a ‘one stop’ service that helps students in need of welfare support but who do not know where to go or what they need to do with a follow up system of aftercare to ensure anyone using this service has had their identified needs met

• Extend access to housing advice and contract services beyond University Park campus

• Review the purpose and service provision of Unipol in conjunction with further investigation into the practice of Students’ Unions running their own lettings agencies

• Continue to respond to Council consultation on student housing policies and engage the university to champion the work of the union on this matter

• Transparency for students regarding Hopper Bus service provision, particularly with regards to what can and can’t be done to improve services

By acting upon these recommendations and continuing to conduct wide reaching feedback projects that allow students to have their say, in their way, on their student experience, we will go some way to our vision of success will be illustrated by the Students’ Union:

• allowing students to shape our work and direction

• enabling students to raise their voice on things that matter to them

• providing a supportive, developmental environment for them to take ownership of their activities

• reflecting the characteristics of our students in our identity and culture

• seeking out opportunities to collaborate, facilitate and deliver what students want

• rebalancing our resources between delivery to change-enabling

• influencing the response of key stakeholders and our partners to students’ needs and holding them to account

• delivering ourselves only those things we can do brilliantly