



Strategy 2017-2021

Introduction

In the last three years, the Students' Union and the environment in which it operates has seen a tremendous amount of change. A change of direction and democratic structure for the Union; a new Vice-Chancellor and new senior management in many positions at the University, and a new government with a new philosophy towards Higher Education.

Now, in 2017 we can see a period of stability, and this allows us to look forward with a realistic view to where we think the Union can be in five years' time.



The University of Surrey Students' Union.

Who we want to be

To be a leading UK Students' Union

What we want to do

To enrich students' lives, the community in which they live and the University of Surrey by creating the changes they want and to enable them to achieve their ambitions



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The University of Surrey Students' Union is a registered charity, registered with charity number 1142479

Where have we come from?

Seven years ago we last looked at our strategy for success, and a huge amount has changed for the Students' Union, and for the University of Surrey in that time. So what went well, and what did not go to plan? What can we learn from the past that can help for the next four years?

Last time, we concentrated on the following themes

1. Community

We have a diverse range of members, with differing needs and wants. We will ensure that their Students' Union can support them in their campus community, and develop new ways to meet the needs of the 21st Century student

We have continued to invest in new ways to work and interact with our members. Our online services have received a great deal of investment and focus; our club and society finances are now all online, including payments and statements - this was an entirely paper based system. Long queues in the rain on a Monday morning are a thing of the past as our partnership with Tixtu has brought a new convenience to nights out. Union communication continues to develop with the development of the weekly personalised email update, as well as thriving Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tumblr, Instagram and YouTube channels - our online presence is unrivalled for a medium sized Union. Finally, the entire area of community has dedicated representation and is bridging the long maligned gap between town and gown. Evidence from the University survey sent to local residents shows the increase in positive views towards University students. In the two years this zone has been in place, there have been a host of new initiatives such as community reps, the welcome home booklet, improved relations with local policy makers, and more

2. Satisfaction

Over the whole student lifecycle we will ensure that the Students' Union is enriching the lives and experiences of our members as well as supporting the University of Surrey to achieve their strategic aims

The biggest challenge for the Union has been ensuring continued and improving satisfaction. Since the introduction of the "Union" question into the NSS in 2012, Surrey has scored 77, 80, 80, 79 and finally 77% ending up where we started. Other Unions have however improved their score and whereas 77% satisfaction represented 15th in the UK, in 2016 77% put as at 27th. Undoubtedly the closure of Chancellors affected the final year satisfaction score, and with the NSS reform in 2017 we will not have a comparable question to carry over. Satisfaction amongst all Surrey students in the annual iGrad survey have fared better however, with a consistent score of over 94% (even higher for clubs and societies).

3. Legacy

The Students' Union has an obligation to ensure that it is able to carry on its work for future generations of students. It is our duty to use our resources for the benefit of our members, while demonstrating value for money to our stakeholders who provide funding



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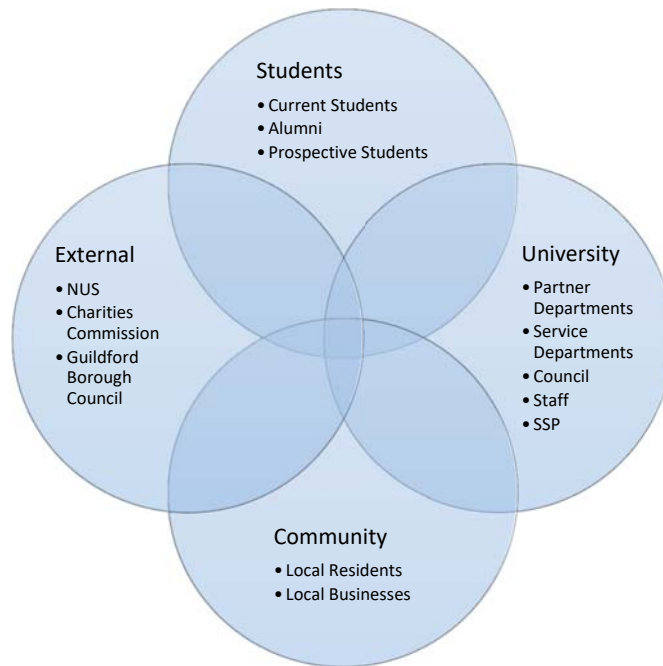
One of the biggest changes since we created our last strategy was our review of campus commercial services and closure of Chancellors. This was a key decision in ensuring we continued to be able to fund the resources our members want. Whilst difficult, and clearly controversial, we have been able to fund more societies, clubs and student activities.

4. Democracy

As a membership led organisation, we constantly tell our members that it is their Students' Union. We will make sure that this is more than a phrase and we are directed in what we do by our members.

Student voice, and a student led agenda has been key for the Union. Elections have continued to develop, grow and become a highlight of the student year. Not only is participation up, but more students have a greater knowledge of how they can influence their Union and University, as demonstrated by increased attendance at course rep assembly, AGMs, the AMM, etc

Our Stakeholders



Students

- Current Students of the University of Surrey
These are our full members and our **primary stakeholders**
- Alumni
Graduates of the University of Surrey
- Prospective Students
Those who have opted to attend the University of Surrey in the future

University of Surrey

- Partner Departments
Those who we work with to deliver services
- Service Departments
Those who provide the Union with services
- Council
The governing body of the University, and a regulating body for the Union
- Staff
All full time staff of the University, classified as Associate or Staff Members

External

- NUS
The National Union of Students, with whom we affiliate
- Charities Commission
A regulating body for the Union
- Guildford Borough Council
The local council for our members as well as a regulating body for the Union
- Companies House
A regulating body for the Union

Community

- Local Residents
Those who live with, rent houses to, or are otherwise related to our members
- Local Businesses
Local suppliers and customers with whom the Union deals with



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Towards 2024. A Union for all of your student life

The 2024 Experience mandated the Union to remodel its approach to student representation, and introduced our zones. These are not simple renames of previous roles. We now have true collaboration between student leaders, with, for example, all VP's attending Faculty learning and teaching committees, rather than 'education' being the remit of just one sabbatical officer. Our zones allow for more students than ever before to act on what is passionate to them, and give more opportunity for a wider range of voices to be heard.

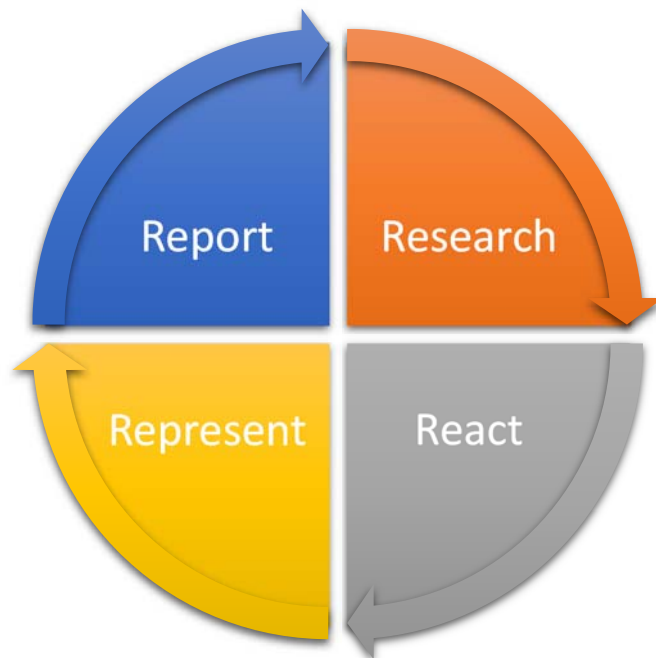
Our zones are defined as follows

- Voice
 - When students have something to say
 - Students taking democratic decisions
- Activity
 - Students taking part in extra-curricular activities
 - Activity in which students wish to lead on & need support
- Support
 - When students need help
 - Students helping other students
- Community
 - Students coming together as a community
 - Students as part of the wider local community

Now, with this strategy, we take ourselves further along the road of the 2024 Union, by developing the zone work and further deepening our reach, and impact.

What our members want today and tomorrow

For our members, everything the Union does should advance our mission to enrich students' lives, the community in which they live and the University of Surrey by creating the changes they want and to enable them to achieve their ambitions.



Research

It is not possible to member led, democratic and representative if you do not know what your members want and think.

Key Aim: The Union will be proactive in learning what our members want

By talking more to our members, giving them the opportunity to talk to us - easier and quicker, and doing quality research without the burden of endless lengthy surveys, the sabbaticals, and Union executive will have a closer and more relevant understanding of what our students think, and what is important to them.

React

To create change, and enrich the lives of our members, we must react to what we know. Although it is important to acknowledge that we are constrained by our charitable objectives. Student leaders are not just elected to deliver on election promises, but to react to the voice of students.

Key Aim: Student leaders will be supported to take action in response to the student voice

Represent

With a solid foundation of student opinion to support elected student officers in their decision making, it is also vital that student officers do not simply become messengers, reporting through committee what the latest survey results are. The diversity of ideas comes from the annual election process and the resultant manifestos. The representative democracy of the Students' Union will be supported by enabling elected officers, not only to develop their election manifestos, but to deliver on them.

Key aim: Elected student officers will be supported to deliver on key manifesto pledges

Report

Finally, we will not just listen silently to our membership, but will inform them of what their Union has been doing in their name, and what it continues to do following what they have told us. By hearing about the impact their voice has made, and how they have been listened to, the credibility of the Union will be enhanced and continue a virtuous circle of student engagement.

Key aim: Students will be well informed on the work of the Union and their representatives

Our Values

The way the Students' Union collectively operates is important, for the credibility of the organisation and the relationships that exist with external stakeholders as well as with our members. Our values will be rooted in what we do, elected officers, signatories, staff, and all active members will be expected to know what is expected of them in the living realisation of our values.

Key aim: Students will recognise the Union as an organisation that is true to their values

Our Values:

Supportive

The Union will be able to provide a variety of support to students which is clear to find or be able to signpost them in the right direction. The organisation should enable students to be confident with the ability to express themselves without judgment. The Union should be a challenging friend and not a substitute parent.

Approachable

It is vital the Students' Union remains up to date with technology and regularly reviews its communication provisions. The organisation will use creative methods of having a two way conversation with students.

Democratic

The democratic balance should ensure students are given the opportunity to debate and make informed decisions as a whole student body.

Dynamic

Whilst innovation is important, in order to be effective it is vital people understand how to use new tools. The benefits of innovation need to be communicated. We will balance what students needed against what benefits would be gained from innovation.

Ethical

The Union should act in an ethical way that shows its accountability to students. Students and stakeholders must be confident that the Union is operating to the highest standards expected of a registered charity, and a membership organisation

Our definition of success

We must do what we do well, with as many students engaged as possible, and make a real difference - not just exist for the sake of existing. Our measurements for success should not be too cumbersome, however they must be appropriate and achievable.

We will measure our success in three key areas



The more students we can engage, who have a positive experience with their engagement, the greater our impact.

Participation

% of students are members of groups (clubs/societies)

Election turnout

Course rep recruitment

Social participation

Diversity of active students

% of 'Active' students

Satisfaction

National Student Survey Union score

iGrad (or equivalent) score

Best companies score

Annual survey overall satisfaction

Impact

Community perception

Stakeholder engagements

Manifesto deliveries

Annual survey impact perception

These measures will monitor the overall performance of the Students' Union, and within these areas, each zone will be responsible for agreeing their own definition of appropriate measures and what the annual target for these measures shall be.

Summary

A powerful, independent, and representative Students' Union will be an important asset for any successful University in the next decade. The best institutions will be those who can react to, and work with and engaged student body - supported by a world class Students' Union. This strategy takes the University of Surrey closer to our vision of being a leading UK Students' Union, within a world class University