



Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd

Annual Impact Report

2023-24

Contents

3	Our strategic cycle	12	Cardiff community
4	Our mission	13	Academic life
5	Sabbatical Officers	14	Student experiences
6	Wins for students	15	Wellbeing and future
7	Awards	16	Resources
8	Chief Executive	17	People
9	Students' Union President	18	Digital and data
10	Engagement and satisfaction	19	Finances
		20	Trustees 2023-24



**The heart of
Cardiff student life**

Our strategic cycle

In 2021, we launched our new Strategic Plan which will take us through to 2025. This academic year was the penultimate of the five-year cycle and built on the great work that took place in 2022-23.

Our Strategy

The strategy aims to rebuild activities and services to pre-pandemic levels of student engagement, income, and satisfaction, whilst recognising that not all of these will return quickly due to the lack of student memory and changing student expectations following COVID-19.

This strategy has a greater focus on student wellbeing and a focus on the services that help students combat loneliness and isolation, those being the greatest impacted during the pandemic and associated lockdowns.

2023-24 was another fantastic year for student engagement and commercial success. As we move further from the pandemic, we have continued to provide all of our amazing events and services to students and have seen things getting bigger and better than ever before.



Our mission

Student leadership

- › We will ensure that students are involved in decision making at all levels across the organisation and feel empowered to wcreate change.

Inclusion

- › We are committed to engaging with all our student members, through reducing barriers to participation and reaching out to underrepresented groups.

Partnership

- › We will ensure we develop effective and impactful partnerships with organisations that help us achieve our strategic priorities from Cardiff University, the wider community and the students' union sector.

Diversity

- › We will celebrate the diversity of our staff and student membership and will support students to be a voice for change in challenging injustices throughout education and society.



Angie

Sabbatical Officers 23-24



Madison



Alex



Georgia



Micaela



Deio



Noah

Wins for students

Each year, our students elect a team of students to represent them and their academic interests. The Elected Officers work on lots of projects throughout the year, from lobbying the University to change and improve the things students care about, to campaigning on the issues that matter to students like housing, mental health and representing the student voice at Cardiff University.

✿ We introduced Disability Awareness Training and Bystander Training as well as pushing for Wellbeing Training for the University Sport's IMG teams.

✿ We lobbied the University on preventing sexual violence and harassment on campus and set up our first Tackling Sexual Violence on Campus Student Working Group.

✿ We ensured that Graduate Tutor and Demonstrator contracts were implemented in all schools and chased down those who did not comply.

✿ We lobbied the University for a cross-university PGR mentoring scheme, which is due to go live in October 2024.

✿ We welcomed our first VP Welsh Language, Community and Culture to represent our Welsh students and champion the Welsh language.

✿ We increased the library loan limit from 35 to 50 for all students and staff.

✿ We introduced free STI testing kits and pregnancy tests to the Students' Union, allowing students to actively check on their sexual health.

✿ We ran a Winter Wellbeing Campaign to tackle the winter blues. We hosted events, signposted, gave away wellbeing essentials and recorded a wholesome podcast on our experiences with winter blues and exam stress.

✿ We helped create a new Gender Identity Fund, providing trans and non-binary students access to gender affirming products and care. This is the first of its kind at Cardiff University and we cannot wait to see it being used by our queer students.

Awards

✧ After 9 years of being voted in the top 10 Best Students' Unions in the UK - and the best in Wales - Cardiff Students' Union (CSU) celebrated its third consecutive year as one of the top two at the WhatUni Student Choice Awards. This achievement highlights the pivotal role CSU plays in student life here in Cardiff.

✧ CSU takes great pride in being based in the capital city of Wales and as an organisation we work to have a positive impact on Cardiff and its community. We were pleased to have been shortlisted for the 2024 Cardiff Life Awards in two categories: Bar & Pub and Civic. It's an honour for the organisation to be recognised for its contributions to enhancing Cardiff and enriching the city's entertainment scene.

✧ In addition to this recognition, CSU continues to excel in sports, which is particularly impressive given that Cardiff University does not offer academic courses related to sport or exercise. We ranked 11th in the British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS) table, coming closer to entering the top 10 than we have in recent years. Notably, CSU is the highest ranked Welsh institution and is the leading institution among those without relevant academic programs.

✧ Our student media volunteers had a fantastic year too, picking up some impressive awards on both national and regional levels. Xpress Radio won 4 awards at the Student Radio National Awards 2024 including gold for Best Podcast Programming, silver for Best Sport Programming and Best Speech programming, and bronze for Best Student Radio Station. Gair Rhydd, our student newspaper won Best Publication at the Student Publication Association Regional Awards 2024 and Quench magazine picked up awards for Best Photographer and Best Culture Publication at the Student Publication Association National Awards 2024.



Chief Executive

We work tirelessly to improve the student experience and increase satisfaction, so it's amazing to see satisfaction rising to 92% and remaining 2nd in the UK for the 3rd year running. We achieve our success by bringing students and staff together and our staff engagement remains high with 91% of staff saying they would recommend Cardiff Students' Union as a great place to work.

Despite the challenges students face at University, they want diverse, in-person experiences and support from their students' union, alongside their studies. We are thrilled that our activities and services are so highly valued by our students and will continue to build on this as we develop our new strategic plan from 2025 on.

Daniel Palmer
Chief Executive



Students' Union President

We started the year with one of our most successful Freshers' yet. We had a whopping 21,000 students attend one of our 5 Freshers' fairs, breaking all previous attendance records!

The Welsh Varsity tournament was another highlight in the calendar, seeing thousands of Cardiff students travelling to Swansea to cheer on our Cardiff athletes. Cardiff brought the Varsity shield home for another year with a resounding win of 33.5 to 13.5.

Throughout the rest of the year, we joined our students in campaigning about the issues important to them. We recognise that for many students, times are still tough and that is why we have campaigned on cost of living challenges, nighttime safety, mental health, gender identity support, standing with you in industrial action and sexual health awareness to name just a few.

We also celebrated our amazing female students during Women's Month, marched at Cardiff Pride, celebrated Black History Month, championed volunteering opportunities and encouraged you to get out and vote in the General Election.

Madison Hutchinson

**Vice President Societies and Volunteering 2023-24
Students' Union President 2024-25**



Engagement and satisfaction

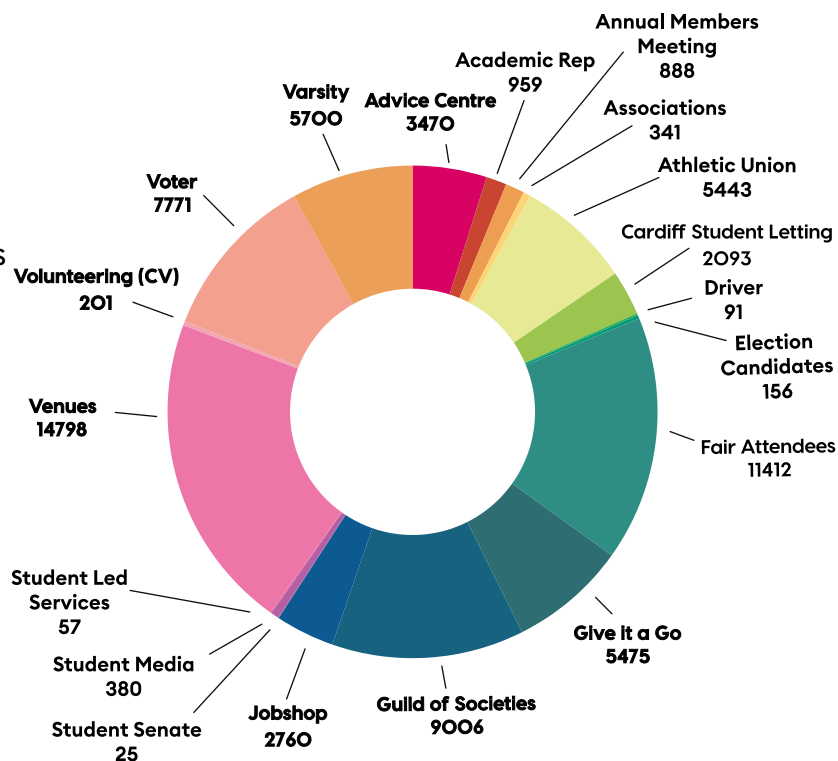
This year marked a milestone for our Students' Union, achieving our highest engagement figures on record.

Overall engagement

Total interactions reached an impressive 70,923 – a 3.7% increase from last year – while unique engagements hit 24,923, growing by 5.3%. From popular events to an expanding advice centre, each department has contributed to creating an inclusive and vibrant community. Significant growth in our commercial venues, students who undertook work through Jobshop, and a growth in students standing as election candidates highlight the diverse opportunities students enjoy, reflecting the Union's ongoing commitment to connecting and empowering every student.

In our student groups, we have seen our highest recorded engagement in a number of areas; in Sports Clubs a total of 5,443 students participating in Sports Club activity, an increase of 3.7%. 9,006 students became members of Societies, a 6.9% increase compared to the previous year and our highest number of participants on record.

Finally within Give it a Go, we saw more students than ever before engaging, with a total of 5,475 unique students taking part.





Total engagements :

70,923

3.7%



Unique engagements :

24,923

5.3%

Freshers' satisfaction

2023 saw the most successful Freshers' program to date, with high levels of engagement and satisfaction. Over 8,700 unique students attended Freshers' events, with over 10,000 attending Freshers' fairs. The priority aim for 2023 was to develop a diverse social program, supporting students to engage and build communities with other students in multiple ways, focusing on building more non-alcoholic and experiential activities.

- 88.1% (up from 83% 2022) stated satisfied or very satisfied with overall Students' Union Freshers' events and activities.

- 82.6% (up from 75% 2022) stated the Students' Union helped them settle into University life.

NSS

The National Student Survey (NSS) is an annual survey completed by final year undergraduate students between January and April each year. The NSS is a sector wide survey and students across the United Kingdom are invited to participate.

The Students' Union scored 78.86% this year on Q25 (How well does the Students' Union represent students' academic interests?), an improvement of 3.17% from 2023 where we scored 75.69%.

The Students' Union remains the University's best performing question and remains their only question to be significantly above benchmark (70.5%).

The Students' Union appears 2nd amongst the Russell Group universities (only behind Sheffield SU) and 2nd amongst the Welsh Universities (only 0.01% behind Wrexham).

Cardiff community

We work to empower students to lead and develop opportunities to build their communities, prioritising the development of activities that grow a diverse membership.

It was another huge year for student sport as the Welsh Varsity tournament returned to Swansea and 5,699 students travelled to cheer on Team Cardiff. Over 500 students competed in 48 fixtures with Cardiff retaining the Welsh Varsity shield 33.5 - 13.5.

The Give it a Go programme has once again proved to be very popular with our students, both in terms of engagement with our trips (one day and residential) and the student group taster sessions. We ran a record 40 day trips with over 92% of tickets being sold and an overall satisfaction score of 8.7/10 from attendees.

Activities engagement in numbers:

- › 5,443 students joined the Athletic Union and over 9,006 students joined the Guild of the Societies, representing an all time high in activities engagement over the last 10 years. 12,549 unique students were part of the Athletic Union and Guild of Societies in 2023-24.
- › Our Give it a Go team sold 1,998 tickets and 953 individual students attended our day trips.
- › The Men's Rugby Club raised over £33,000 for Movember and the Ladies Cricket Club raised over £1,400 for Cardiff Women's Aid.
- › 120,000 miles were driven by our student groups (4.5 times around the Earth) in both leased and hire vehicles.
- › 884 BUCS fixtures were played, which is an increase of 57 fixtures compared to 22-23.

Academic Life

CSU aims to support students in all aspects of their academic life, empowering them to shape their education and provide support should things go wrong.

The Student Academic Representative initiative continues to be a key success for the Student Voice team. Engagement has consistently hovered around 1,000, which is seen as the maximum capacity for the scheme since there are very few unfilled Student Academic Rep positions across the University. Each year, the number of successfully trained Student Academic Representatives keeps improving, and this year, we saw great engagement with the end-of-year survey and the new reward scheme introduced for the first time.

It was a strong year for student democracy at CSU. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) that took place in November was one of the largest in the Union's history, with 960 students filling the Great Hall. The introduction of a new priority ballot process generated buzz about the AGM and its motions well in advance of the event. The Autumn Elections also saw a notable increase in engagement compared to previous years, while the Spring Elections maintained strong performance despite a shorter voting period.

Meanwhile, our Student Advice team has been busy supporting students when things didn't go as planned, with 3,657 students accessing independent support and advice through the service in the last year.

Activities engagement in numbers:

- › 999 Student Academic Reps were elected to represent their programme peers and feedback concerns to University staff through formal meetings and additional activity.
- › 1,317 students submitted entries in the Enriching Student Life Awards, an increase of more than 200 on the previous year. The Enriching Student Life Awards was created to recognise the fantastic staff and students who contribute to the Cardiff student experience so it's encouraging to see so many students nominating.
- › 3,822 advice enquiries and cases were processed by our Student Advice team.
- › 960 students attended our AGM and 607 preference ballots were submitted to determine which motions were debated.

Student experiences

CSU aims to deliver exceptional events and services for all students, with a focus on a diverse offering throughout the day and night.

Our Wednesday club night, YOLO, had an amazing year, attracting over 106,000 attendees to the Students' Union from September to June.

We achieved our highest attendance at our Freshers' Fairs, seeing 21k attendees at the five fairs spanning four days. //

The Taf, our student pub has been hugely popular this year, seeing good growth across our Friday and Saturday night special offers. We also introduced interactive darts oches to make the space even more engaging.

This year's live music lineup exceeded our expectations, featuring 55 events compared to 51 last year. The ongoing closure of St David's Hall has allowed us to capitalise on the growing demand for live music and unique events.

Plus, the implementation of the Universe platform helped us boost ticket sales for external promoters by over £10,000.

A major highlight this year was the Welsh Varsity tournament. Team Cardiff travelled to Swansea to compete in an impressive lineup of over 50 sporting events. With 6,000 Cardiff students cheering them on, our teams secured the Varsity Shield once again, winning with a score of 33.5 to 13.5.

Student services in numbers:

We achieved our highest attendance at our Freshers' Fairs, seeing 21k attendees at the five fairs spanning four days.

Our letting agency, Cardiff Student Letting, housed 2,968 students in Cardiff.

Love Cardiff, the Students' Union's retail store on campus saw a big increase in merchandise sales during Graduation week, hitting £64.4k in income compared to £50.3k in 2023.



Wellbeing and future

We work to actively listen to what students need and have their backs throughout their university journey. Our activities aim to empower students to look after their own and each other's wellbeing, and we support students to gain the skills, knowledge and resilience they need to find their place in the world.

Our popular Feed Your Flat campaign returned this year. The campaign and associated events aim to support students with the Cost-of-Living crisis. Throughout the year, we ran eight events spread across the two campuses giving students the opportunity to access free food and store cupboard items. Through this activity, we achieved more than 1,200 engagements and students told us that the campaign was extremely useful for them as they were struggling with money and the cost of food. In addition to receiving free food items, these students were also redirected to the relevant support services in the University.



HEFCW funding allowed us to continue our very popular Period Dignity campaign, now in its third year at the Students' Union. Through this campaign, we aim to provide free sustainable period products to students who menstruate, alongside information and guidance on menstrual health and dignity. During this academic year, the campaign has expanded to reach 10 more University schools, widening accessibility to free period products across campus. Nearly 10,000 items have been purchased, with campaign stalls and promotional materials also able to take place.

Resources

Resources covers both the financial stability of CSU alongside the physical spaces and assets we developed for the enjoyment of students. Financial reports can be found on page 19.

Our building

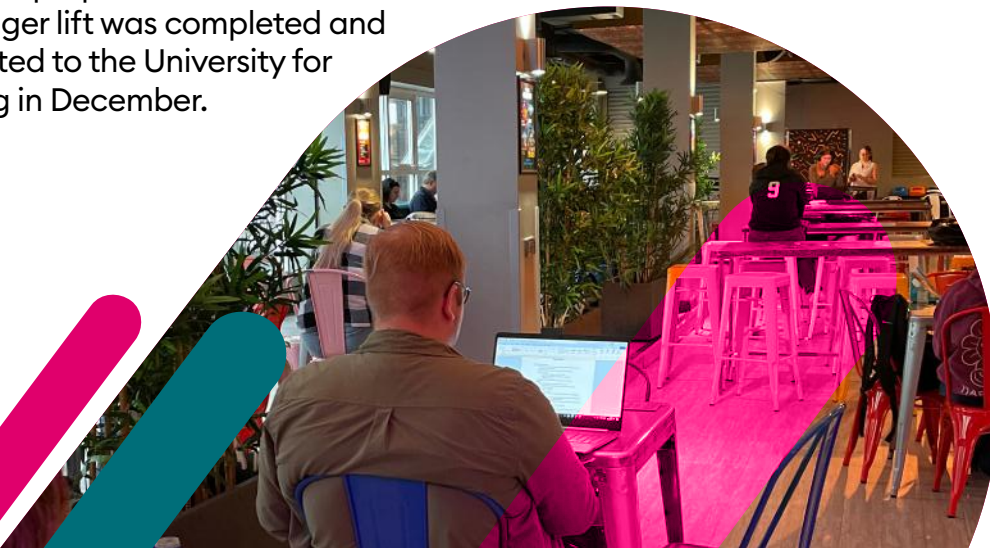
During 2023-24, we have worked to improve the accessibility of our building. The main passenger lift controller was replaced in January and the lift was rewired, which has resulted in only one breakdown during the last 4 months of the academic year. This is a vast improvement over the reliability being experienced prior to this work and has helped to improve the experience of visitors with accessibility needs.

A costed proposal for a second passenger lift was completed and submitted to the University for funding in December.

The proposal was successful, and work is now underway on diverting existing services out of the way of the new lift shaft. The new lift is expected to be ready by Easter 2025.

Sustainability

Our four yearly ESOS energy audit was completed, with the building performing 24% better than the CIBSE University Campus Benchmark (244kWh/m² vs 320kWh/m²).



People

Cardiff Students' Union aims to have an empowered, engaged and equal team across staff and volunteers.

- We achieved a 91% satisfaction measure of staff completing the NUS Employee Engagement Survey in response to the statement 'I would recommend this organisation as a great place to work'.

I would recommend this organisation as a great place to work //



Digital and data

Since the pandemic, we have taken a digital-first approach across the organisation and have continued to build on this during 2023-24

We grew followers on Instagram, our primary social platform, by 27% across the year, hitting 23.9k followers. We also saw a 55% increase in our TikTok following in 2023-24, reaching 5k followers by the end of July.

Our website had another strong year, achieving nearly 8 million pageviews from August – July.



Finances

The Union's total income amounted to £12,908,971 (2023 - £12,393,500) with total expenditure of £12,835,212, (2023 - £12,643,876) in the year.

The unwinding of the discounted pension provision resulted in a debit to the Statement of Financial Activities of £(146,796) (2023 - £(390,908)). Overall, this resulted in net expenses of £(73,037) (2023 - £(641,284)). This comprises a restricted surplus of £29,326 and an unrestricted deficit of £(102,363).

At 31 July 2024, the Union's free reserves amounted to £1,886,847 (2023 - £1,746,590) and the trustees are satisfied that the Union has a sound financial base to continue to operate and pursue its objectives and activities. In addition, a further £72,934 (2023 - £43,608) was held in restricted funds.

Within the Union's trading subsidiary, Cardiff Union Services Limited, turnover increased to £5,807,849 (2023 - £5,515,116) resulting in a gross profit of £2,759,189 (2023 - £2,517,348).

Administrative expenses increased to £5,109,202 (2023 - £4,808,546) in the year. Overall, the trading subsidiary reported a loss of £(432,044) (2023 - profit £80,034).

During the year the trading company's pension liability decreased to £4,625,233 (2023 - £4,821,724) arising from a re-evaluation of future liabilities coupled with deficit payment contributions. The deficit arises from the company's future obligations towards the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme (SUSS). The trustees and directors are satisfied that it has the funds to meet the obligations to the fund as they fall due over the life of the scheduled deficit recovery plan up to 2037.

Trustees 2023 - 24

Sabbatical Trustees

Students' Union President:

Madison Hutchinson
(from 1st July 2024)

Students' Union President:

Angie Flores Acuña
(to 30th June 2024)

VP Societies and Volunteering:

Eve Chamberlain
(from 1st July 2024)

VP Societies and Volunteering:

Madison Hutchinson
(to 30th June 2024)

VP Sports and AU President:

Georgia Spry
(from 1st July 2023)

VP International Students (Education and Welfare):

Ana Nagiel Escobar
(from 1st July 2024)

VP Heath Park Campus (Education and Welfare):

Shola Bold
(from 1st July 2024)

VP Heath Park Campus (Education and Welfare):

Alex Meers
(to 23rd February 2024)

VP Postgraduate Students (Education and Welfare):

Micaela Panes
(from 1st July 2023)

VP Cymraeg

(Is-lywydd y Gymraeg):

Catrin Edith Parry
(from 1st July 2024)

VP Welsh Language, Community and Culture (Is-lywydd Iaith, Cymuned a Diwylliant Cymru):

Deio Siôn Llewelyn Owen
(to 30th June 2024)

VP Undergraduate Students (Education and Welfare):

Noah Russell
(to 30th June 2024)

Student Trustees

Courtney Endall
(to 26th February 2024)

Michael Summers
(to 2nd February 2024)

Emilia Parker
(from 12th June 2024)

Edward Bright
(from 12th June 2024)

University Nominated Trustees

Jayne Sadgrove

Agnes Xavier-Phillips

External Trustees

Elliot Howells

Ray Singh CBE

Sian Davies
(from 12th June 2024)

Senior Staff

Chief Executive:

Daniel Palmer

Deputy Chief Executive:

Raechel Matthey

Director of Finance:

Jan Boyce

Director of Enterprise:

Phil Dayment

Director of Participation and Safeguarding:

Steve Wilford

Registered office

Park Place, Cardiff, Wales. CF10
3QN

Registered Company Number:

07328777

Registered Charity Number:

1137163



Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd