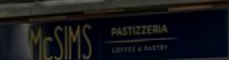
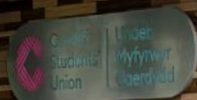




Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd



Annual Impact Report

2024-25



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**The heart of
Cardiff student life**

Our strategic cycle

In 2021, we launched our new Strategic Plan which has shaped our direction through to 2025. This academic year represented the last step in the five-year journey, building on the great work and success of 2023-24 as we continued to bring our vision to life.

Our strategy

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

This strategy had a greater focus on student wellbeing, particularly the services that help students combat loneliness and isolation, as those were prevalent issues during the pandemic and associated lockdowns.

2024-25 was another fantastic year for student engagement and commercial success against a challenging backdrop for the higher education sector. We have continued to provide all our amazing events and services to students, while supporting them to thrive and to focus on our mission to have their backs when things don't go as planned.



Our mission

Student leadership

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



Madison

Sabbatical Officers 24-25



Eve



Shola



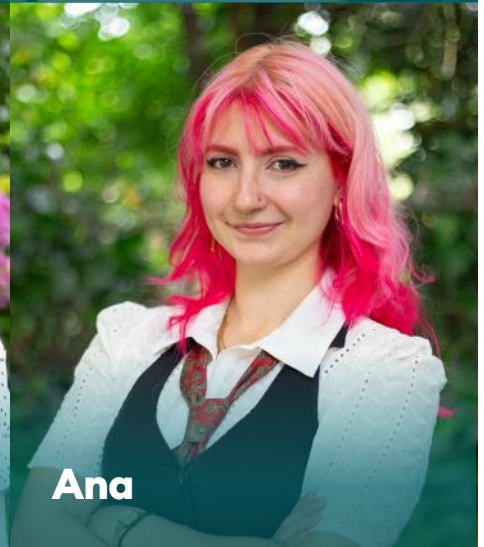
Georgia



Micaela



Catrin



Ana

Wins for students

Each year, our students elect a team of students to represent them, and their academic interests. The Elected Officers work on many 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 had students' backs when the Academic Future proposal was announced by Cardiff University. We campaigned to challenge the cuts, worked to protect students' educations, amplified student voices and stood with staff and stakeholders. This included hosting townhall events to give students space to share concerns and ask questions to the Vice Chancellor. We also provided accessible, structured ways for students to share their views, ensuring they were represented at every stage.

✧ We launched the 'Let's Talk Consent' campaign to educate students on sexual violence awareness and delivered Active Bystander Training to 300 student leaders.

✧ We ensured Graduate Tutors were not in scope for redundancy within the University's Academic Futures proposals and ensured PGR Teaching Assistants were removed from scope.

✧ We established the first ever cross-university Postgraduate Research Peer Mentoring Scheme.

✧ We lobbied the University to restore Cardiff Business School (CARBS) PGR's stipends when they were reduced – and got them increased to match the UKRI rate.

✧ We campaigned against student parking restrictions, securing 4,300 petition signatures and 250 consultation responses, ensuring students' voices were heard in local policy.

✧ As a result of campaigning for better prayer spaces at the Heath, we have a temporary solution of a new prayer room in the Cochrane Building. While it's an ongoing project, we have taken steps in the right direction and have worked in partnership with the University to develop sufficient prayer spaces.

Awards



After 10 years of being voted in the top 10 Best Students' Unions in the UK - and the best in Wales - we celebrated our fourth consecutive year as one of the top two at the WhatUni Student Choice Awards 2025. With a student satisfaction score of 94% - our highest ever - and a record number of 5-star reviews, this result makes us the top-ranked Students' Union in both Wales and Great Britain.



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 awarded the Welsh Language Award at the 2025 Cardiff Life Awards in recognition of our robust Welsh language development plan and our strengthened commitment to the Welsh language. We were also shortlisted in two other 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, 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 for another year. CSU is the highest ranked Welsh institution and is the leading institution among those without relevant academic programs.



Chief Executive

This has been a landmark year for CSU, marked by record student engagement, impactful campaigns, and enhanced services. Engagement with our students reached nearly 74,000 interactions and nearly 25,000 students engaged.

For a decade, we've been in the UK's top 10 Best Students' Unions - and in 2025 our students voted us into the top two for the fourth consecutive year at the WhatUni Student Choice Awards. Our staff are just as positive, with 92% agreeing that Cardiff Students' Union is a great place to work.

A real standout moment of this year came as we marked 50 years since opening the doors to our Students' Union Park Place building. While the Union itself has existed for nearly 130 years, we were proud to celebrate the golden anniversary of the building that has played a central role in shaping student life in Cardiff for five decades. It provided a great opportunity to bring together past Sabbatical Officers and staff to look back, share memories, and see how far we've come.

Daniel Palmer

Chief Executive



Students' Union President

The year got off to a great start as we welcomed 15,000 students to the SU during Freshers' Week, offering an expanded range of alcohol-free activities to give everyone a chance to participate.

We saw our second highest Spring Election turnout in history, with 8,521 students casting their vote to choose the team who lead the SU.

Alongside these successes, we've been working hard to support students' wellbeing and have their backs during a challenging year.

We campaigned against student parking restrictions, ensuring students' voices were heard in local policy. We also had students' backs when the Academic Future proposal was announced by Cardiff University, campaigning to challenge the cuts and amplifying student voices.

We're here to support and listen to our students, whether that's tackling the challenges of the cost of living crisis by providing our Feed Your Flat pop-ups and helping more than 1,000 students stock up on essential store cupboard items, or encouraging everyone to SHAG Safe through our sexual health awareness campaign.

It's been a huge year for us, full of growth, new challenges and plenty of proud moments. I'm excited to be a part of Cardiff SU as we work to make student life even better in Cardiff.

Maria Pollard

Students' Union President 2025-26



Engagement and satisfaction

Student engagement continues to grow, with 2025 marking the highest total engagement on record for Cardiff Students' Union.

Overall engagement

Total engagements: up from 70,923 in 2024 to 74,116 in 2025 - a 4.5% increase and the strongest overall participation recorded.

Unique students engaged: a slight decrease from 24,923 to 24,630 (down 1.2%), suggesting that while roughly the same number of students are engaging, each student is now taking part in more activities on average.

In short, the Students' Union is engaging a consistent share of the student body, but in a richer and more varied way than ever before. Students are connecting with more areas of SU life, from representation and advice through to social, cultural, and developmental opportunities, showing real depth and breadth in how engagement is growing across everything we do.

The period from 2023 to 2025 represents three stable, fully operational years for Cardiff Students' Union and the final phase of the current strategic plan. Engagement has grown consistently across most areas, reaching record totals in 2025.





Total engagements :

74,116

+ 4.5%



Voter engagements :

9,388

+ 21%



Venues engagements :

16,809

+ 14%



GIAG engagements :

6,303

+ 15%

Particularly noteworthy:

- **Venues:** Up from 14,798 to 16,809 (+14%), continuing a strong upward trend and now at their highest engagement level on record.
- **Give it a Go:** Up from 5,475 to 6,303 (+15%), highlighting increased demand for inclusive, low-barrier activities.
- **Voter engagement:** Increased from 7,771 to 9,388 (+21%), the highest level since records began, indicating stronger participation in democracy and elections.

Over the coming year, the SU will utilise Power BI, which will use analysis to move beyond headline totals to understand who is engaging, how often, and in which areas.

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.

The popular Welsh Varsity tournament returned to Cardiff for a very successful year. 7,404 Cardiff students bought tickets to cheer on their teams in venues spanning the city, including the Welsh Institute of Sport, Principality Stadium, Glamorgan Cricket and the International Pool. Cardiff competed against Swansea in more than 50 fixtures, retaining the Varsity Shield for another year, 38.5 - 13.5.

Students had more chances than ever to try something new, with 125 extra Give it a Go taster sessions compared to Autumn 2024, resulting in a notable rise in student engagement. The Give it a Go team also expanded their programme of summer events for students who stay in the city during the break, including offering dedicated trips for Postgrad and International students.

Activities engagement in numbers:

- › The Athletic Union had over 5,600 members for the first time, with 5,558 Cardiff University student members and 75 associate members. The Guild of Societies reached 8,452 members including 72 associate members. Between the two, nearly 12,000 unique students were part of the Athletic Union and Guild of Societies this year.
- › The Men's Rugby Club raised over £42,000 for Movember and Dancesport raised £2,000 for Marie Curie.
- › This season we entered 99 BUCS weekly teams who played 927 fixtures, an increase of 43 fixtures from the 884 played in 2023-24. Out of those 927 fixtures, we had 454 wins, 431 losses and 42 draws.
- › We trained 105 drivers who went on to make 515 trips in Students' Union vehicles, clocking up an impressive 140,000 miles in total.

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.

It was a good year for the Student Voice team, with increases in engagement across all democracy and representation activity. This included the 2nd highest Spring Election turnout in history with 8,521 students casting votes, 5,932 more comments being provided by students during the annual Speak Week campaign, and a record number of nominations received for the Enriching Student Life Awards (1,962). This year, Student Voice made a real effort to get out and meet students where they are, bringing the Union's opportunities straight to them.

The Student Academic Representative initiative continues to be a key success for the Student Voice team. The engagement levels reached are 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 newly introduced rewards scheme for the first time.

The Advice team continues to support students with proactive advice as well as assistance when things go wrong. This year, the Advice team have provided direct support to over 2,000 students, as well as refreshing their webpages to ensure information is more accessible and easily available to all students.



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.

This year, we delivered a diverse and packed range of events and services designed to give all students something to enjoy, from popular club nights to new chill-out spaces. Our Wednesday club night, YOLO, had another incredible year, attracting over 114k attendees between September and June, an 11% increase on the previous year.

By day, we launched The Cwtch, a new space designed to provide an improved area for students to study and relax in. The addition of the new Ty Tatws outlet has brought an affordable, tasty takeaway food option to campus, while helping to offset income from fewer nightclub events. The space is already home to smaller club nights and corporate bookings, with exciting plans for live music on the horizon.

Student services in numbers:

- › Freshers' Week welcomed 15,000 students to the SU, with an expanded range of alcohol-free activities to give everyone a chance to participate.
- › Our letting agency, Cardiff Student Letting, housed 3,343 students in Cardiff.
- › Love Cardiff, the Students' Union's retail store on campus saw a big increase in merchandise sales during Graduation week, hitting £70.2k in income compared to £64.4k in 2024.



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 for another year. The campaign and associated events aim to support students with the cost-of-living crisis. We hosted 13 Feed Your Flat pop-ups and helped more than 1,000 students stock up on essential store cupboard items. Thanks to funding from Medr, planning work also began on a new initiative, The Pantri. The Pantri will be housed on the 3rd floor of the SU building, providing a service to Cardiff University students in need so they can pick up essential food and hygiene products in a welcoming, judgement-free space.

We know that exam season can be a stressful time for students and our Revision Aid campaign aims to provide free resources and a quiet, supportive space to help manage stress. More than 1,100 students were supported with revision supplies and hot drinks at 16 pop-up stalls around campus.

As well as supporting the health and wellbeing of our students, we are proud to help them prepare for life beyond university. This year, 2,794 students found flexible, part-time work through our Jobshop service. Together, they worked 145,888 hours and Jobshop paid more than £2.47 million in wages directly to students.

As a student Jobshop is honestly one of the best parts of Cardiff Uni and I don't know what I would have done without this service. I am forever grateful //

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.

Accessibility

A new six storey lift shaft was constructed through the centre of the building and a second passenger lift installed, enabling DDA compliant access to all floors of the building and contingency for when the original lift is out of service.

We have achieved the Silver Award for the Attitude Is Everything Scheme, which recognises the venue as having considered deaf and disabled customers in the design and operation of our events.

Improving our building

Work commenced on a number of simultaneous projects to improve the infrastructure of our building, including recovering the roof, replacement of the RAAC roofs on the fourth floor and installation of new solar panels to improve our energy efficiency.

Sustainability

We have successfully set up a partnership with Too Good To Go to reduce food waste, in line with the organisation's sustainability goals. While the income benefit is small, this has stopped 321 meals from going to waste.



People

Cardiff Students' Union strives to create a positive workplace where all staff and volunteers feel valued, supported, empowered and engaged

- › We achieved a 92% satisfaction measure of staff completing the Staff Engagement Survey in response to the statement 'I would recommend this organisation as a great place to work'.

During the year, we took steps to strengthen and improve the way we support our people and ensure effective governance across the organisation. Following a review, we brought together HR and Executive Office functions into a newly created People and Governance Department. This change allows us to bring together key expertise under one team, creating a more joined-up and strategic approach to supporting staff and trustees.

The organisation promotes a positive, supportive culture where all staff can feel supported and have pride in their 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 2024-25

It's been a year of growth in our digital first approach; from improving customer journeys through the ticket sales process for the Welsh Varsity tournament and delivering a new nominations microsite for the Spring Elections, to improving our cyber security and introducing new data reporting tools.

We've surpassed our growth target for Instagram, which operates as our primary social platform. We began the Autumn term in a strong position thanks to a significant increase in followers during the Freshers' period. We've also seen steady growth on TikTok since launching the account in 2021. This year, we have focused on growing our presence to further establish it as a key secondary platform. Considering the evolving social media landscape, we have focused on creating engaging, trend-driven content to effectively communicate information and build a strong, consistent following.

Social follower growth

> Instagram **+24%**

> TikTok **+46%**



Finances

The Union's total income amounted to £14,039,688 (2024 - £12,908,971) with total expenditure of £13,108,936 (2024 - £12,835,212) in the year.

- The net income for the year was £2,302,539 (2024: net expenses £(73,037)). This comprises a restricted surplus of £536,861 and an unrestricted surplus of £1,765,678.
- The financial results this year were shaped by a section 75 pension buyout from the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme (SUSS) which has resulted in a positive movement of £1,371,787. The movement is based on a release of balance sheet discounting provision rather than commercial activity and does not result in additional cash reserves. The SUSS buyout was enabled by an interest free loan from the University which is repayable over 12 years commencing in August 2026. The organisation no longer has any defined benefit pension scheme liability as a result of the buyout.
- During the year there was also significant investment in the University Union building as part of ongoing improvements to enhance accessibility, sustainability, and the overall charitable and commercial offer. Key developments include the installation of a second passenger lift, addition of solar panels, replacement of substantial areas of roof coverings and upgrades to commercial areas.
- At 31 July 2025, the Union's free reserves amounted to £1,803,781 (2024 - £1,886,847) 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 £609,795 (2024 - £72,934) was held in restricted funds.
- Within the Union's trading subsidiary, Cardiff Union Services Limited, turnover decreased to £5,543,935 (2024 - £5,807,849). The resulting impact of movements in trading and operational costs is an operating profit of £89,033 (2024: loss of £(297,343)). Overall, the trading subsidiary substantially reported a profit of £1,471,834 (2024 - loss £(432,044)) as a result of the pension scheme buy out.

Trustees 2024 - 25

Sabbatical Trustees

Students' Union President:

Maria Pollard
(from 1st July 2025)

Students' Union President:

Madison Hutchinson
(to 30th June 2025)

VP Societies and Volunteering:

Eve Chamberlain
(from 1st July 2024)

VP Sports and AU President:

Molly Elliott
(from 1st July 2025)

VP Sports and AU President:

Georgia Spry
(to 30th June 2025)

VP International Students (Education and Welfare):

Hanan Haliru
(from 1st July 2025)

VP International Students (Education and Welfare):

Ana Nagiel Escobar
(to 30th June 2025)

VP Heath Park Campus (Education and Welfare):

Joshua Tandy
(from 1st July 2025)

VP Heath Park Campus (Education and Welfare):

Shola Bold
(to 30th June 2025)

VP Postgraduate Students (Education and Welfare):

Sean Strong
(from 1st July 2025)

VP Postgraduate Students (Education and Welfare):

Micaela Panes
(to 30th June 2025)

VP Cymraeg (Is-lywydd y Gymraeg):

Cynwal ap Myrddin
(from 1st July 2025)

VP Cymraeg (Is-lywydd y Gymraeg):

Catrin Edith Parry
(to 30th June 2025)

Student Trustees

Emilia Parker
(to 30th June 2025)

Edward Bright
(to 30th June 2025)

Henry Whittaker
(from 1st July 2025)

Esther Olusola
(from 1st July 2025)

Izaak Morris
(from 1st July 2025)

University Nominated Trustees

Jayne Sadgrove
(from 15th May 2019)

Agnes Xavier-Phillips
(to 30th June 2025)

External Trustees

Elliot Howells
(from 15th December 2021)

Ray Singh CBE
(from 13th November 2018)

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



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