



Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd

Annual Impact Report

2022-23

Contents

3	Our strategic cycle	11	Cardiff community
4	Our mission	12	Academic life
5	Sabbatical Officers	13	Student experiences
6	Wins for students	15	Wellbeing and future
7	Chief Executive	16	Resources
8	Students' Union President	17	People
9	Engagement and satisfaction	18	Digital and data
10	Awards	19	Finances
		20	Trustees 2022-23



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 second year of the five-year cycle and built on the great work that took place in 2021-22.

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.

2022-23 represented the first full academic year of student activity without Covid restrictions in place, allowing us to lay the groundwork and make good progress towards achieving the aims of our strategy.



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.



Sabbatical Officers



Noah



Rebecca



Shreshth



Angie



Olivia



Ashly

Wins for students

✨ After years of lobbying for better study spaces at the Heath Park campus, we worked in partnership with the University to open a new student common room at the IV Lounge.

✨ We launched daily £2 lunches to help students who are on a tight budget and in the first month we dished up 1,000 meals.

✨ In the 'Student View 2022: Study Space and Campus Opening Times', we asked the University for a system in which students can identify the capacity of spaces. The Arts and Social Studies Library has introduced a new tool to give users a real-time insight on how busy the space is (day and night).

✨ We launched our new Balconi space in the SU building at the Cathays campus. The space has enhanced our Great Hall venue and increased the capacity of both the nightclub and The Taf, as well as providing extra study space for students during the day.

✨ We listened to feedback from societies and installed mirrors in meeting room 3A to increase rehearsal space in the building for smaller student groups.

✨ The Officer team met with Cardiff Council to talk about the issues connected to student housing in Cardiff. As a result: (1) Cardiff Council agreed there is a lack of student accommodation in Cardiff. (2) Cardiff Council said private providers needed to play a role, but also that there needs to be a holistic solution and that the universities themselves need a plan for housing students (3) The Leader of the Council agreed to raise this issue when he meets with the VCs of each of the Universities. (4) Cardiff Council agreed to work more closely with the Students' Unions of each one of the universities as part of their plan for a closer partnership with the universities.

Chief Executive

2022-23 was a fantastic year for student engagement and commercial success across the organisation once again, particularly our Venues and nighttime entertainments offer reaching record-breaking attendances and income for our Wednesday club night for students.

It was a big year for building works, with major improvements to the Balconi space in the Great Hall, both improving our accessibility provision for live music gigs and providing an additional study space by day for students. The multi purpose space wraps around the upper deck of the Great Hall. Organised and built as one project between May and September 2022, the spaces were funded by a mixture of additional grants from the University, the Union's own funds and fundraising from live music attendees through an accessibility levy.

Alongside the development of the Balconi, we worked on major developments to the connection of our building with the Centre for Student Life creating a newly aligned entrance that further harmonizes the SU with this fantastic new space for students. The new spaces opened during the year and we expect to gain further benefits in 2023/24 and beyond.

2022-23 was a fantastic year for student engagement and commercial success //

Finally, I was delighted to maintain our 2nd place score for Best Students' Union in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards 2023. It's fantastic to know the hard work and dedication of our incredible staff team is being acknowledged by students with fantastic satisfaction scores.

Daniel Palmer
Chief Executive



Students' Union President

The priority campaign for 22-23 was supporting students with the cost of living crisis. Thanks to external funding, the SU was able to deliver a wide range of initiatives and activities to help ease the financial burden on students. This included providing £2 lunches, free food items through the "feed your flat" initiative and free tea and coffee from The Lounge.

The Elected Officer team worked tirelessly to deliver campaigns and activities that benefited the student body. From the first Sober Socials Week, a PrEPare campaign focused on sexual health testing and our last Vice President Welfare, Becky Deverell delivered many well-being focused events such as the Big-Unwind, Palentines and Period Dignity. In 2023, the first ever full-time Vice President Welsh Language, Community and Culture was elected, we look forward to reporting back on the great work this role makes in many impact reports to come.

During this academic year, Gina Dunn (SU President 22-23) and I were involved with the recruitment of the new Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University. We were delighted that Wendy Larner was appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor and look forward to working with her in the coming year.

Angie Flores Acuña

Vice President Postgraduate Students 2022-23
Students' Union President 2023-24



Engagement and satisfaction

Student engagement during the year remained at record levels, with more students engaging with us compared to prior years.

The number of overall engagements fell slightly compared to the prior year, which was anticipated due to the condensing of engagement by students who missed out on provision during the two years interrupted by the pandemic. However, we remain confident that student engagement will continue to thrive in 2023/24 as we take advantage of our updated spaces, student numbers rise and we see more in-person teaching and learning delivery by the University.

As our data capturing abilities grow, each year we will aim to build our engagement wheel to map out all engagements with the Students' Union, this year Freshers' Fair attendees have been added which adds 11,000 new engagements.

Understanding how satisfied students are with the Students' Unions activities and if we're having a positive impact on their daily lives is important to us, we check in at various intervals throughout the year to see how we're doing:

82% of students stated they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the events and activities delivered during Freshers' [Freshers' feedback survey n: 978].

76.6% of students stated they agreed the Students' Union was having a positive impact on their lives [Speak Week data collection N: 2492].

Awards



For the second year running, we achieved second place in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards for best Students' Union in 2023.



Gair Rhydd won Best Publication in the Student Publication Regional Awards.



Our Athletic Union achieved 11th place in the BUCS championships

(We are the highest ranked Welsh institution and highest ranked institution that doesn't provide sport-related degrees).



Xpress Radio won 3 awards at the Student Radio Awards including bronze for Best Event Programming, silver for Best Podcasting Programming and silver for Best Journalistic Programming.



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 a huge year for student sport as the Welsh Varsity celebrated its 25th anniversary and returned to Cardiff for the first time in four years. Over 6000 Cardiff students watched Cardiff come out on top with a record-breaking Varsity Shield victory of 38-9 and a resounding win in the Men's Rugby to take home the Varsity Cup!

2022-23 was also another very positive year for Guild of Societies events, with growth seen in some events and the introduction of one new cultural event called Culture Cwtch. The aim of Culture Cwtch was to celebrate diversity and culture within the Guild of Societies membership through food, fashion, and performances. All cultural societies were invited to take part resulting in an impressive 349 ticket sales to students.

Activities engagement in numbers:

- › 5,225 students joined the Athletic Union and 1,300 students participated in sport on a weekly basis.
- › 8,566 students joined the Guild of Societies as part of 243 affiliated societies.
- › 120 students have been trained to drive vehicles with up to 9 seats. Our student groups drove 118,913 miles (4.5 times around the Earth) in both leased and hire vehicles, giving them access to participate in sport and other social activities across the UK.
- › Over 100 student groups had a Wellbeing Officer who received training from our Student Advice service and Beyond Equality, an external partner. The Wellbeing Officers provide valuable peer-to-peer support and signposting to fellow members of their student groups.
- › 39 day trips to 21 destinations were delivered by the Give it a Go team, providing travel and social opportunities for students to get around the UK with ease.

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 Voice Team has been motivated this year by a desire to improve the depth of engagements rather than the number. For example, while Student Academic Rep numbers are down slightly on previous year (-67) the percentage of Reps who were trained and who engaged with additional Students' Union activity is up from 52% to 69% this year.

The Student Advice team continued to support students where things had not gone to plan, with 3,657 students accessing independent support and advice through the service in the last year.

Activities engagement in numbers:

- › More than 9,500 students voted in our Autumn and Spring Elections, with 7,507 students turning out to vote for their next Sabbatical Officer team in March.

- › 4,384 comments were gathered through Speak Week. This important feedback from students helps shape how we work with the University and impacts what our Sabbatical Officer team lobbies to change on behalf of students.
- › 1,106 students submitted entries in the Enriching Student Life Awards, an increase of more than 750 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.



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. During 2022-23, the organisation focused on improving the spaces available to students including expanding event spaces and increasing study spaces in the building.

Improvements and renovations were made to our Welcome Centre, Great Hall balconies and front entrance spaces, creating a vibrant and flexible entrance to the building and expanding entertainment spaces.

Popularity of our nightclub events soared in 2022-23, with 105,781 attendees across the year at YOLO, our Wednesday club night – this is the first time we have surpassed 100,000

attendees. Despite this, it was a challenging year as operating costs saw a steep increase and spend-per-head at our bars decreased.

For the first time in several years, the Students' Union was able to utilise the University's Main Building car park for an outdoor freshers' week event which helped diversify the type of events we offer to students when they arrive in Cardiff. A popular Silent Cinema screening took place with over 200 students attending.

Love Cardiff, the Students' Union's retail store on campus achieved the highest level of sales on record, this has been in part due to the growth into the University gift range market, with the store now selling to schools and departments.

This year, we had the highest attendance at our freshers' fairs since records began and over 19,000 attendees visited our five freshers' fair dates. //



Student Services in numbers:

Our letting agency, Cardiff Student Letting, has increased our managed properties by 50% from 149 to 219 during the academic year and now lets over 400 properties to students.

This year, we had the highest attendance at our freshers' fairs since records began and over 18,000 attendees visited our five freshers' fair dates. It was particularly great to see the return of our Heath Park fair, held at the Sports and Social club.



Wellbeing and future

A significant focus was placed on supporting students through the cost of living crisis and food poverty was noted as one of the biggest concerns for students.

- ▶ Thanks to £50,000 of grant funding received from the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales, we were able to deliver a series of events and initiatives to support students through the cost of living crisis and promote improved health and wellbeing.
- ▶ 1096 students were able to purchase subsidized £2 lunches during term time on campus.
- ▶ Our Period Dignity campaign was able to continue into its second year. Thousands of additional period products have been purchased to continue to support students on campus access period products for free.
- ▶ Free hot drink making facilities have been introduced in The Lounge at the SU building at Cathays and in the Heath Park IV Lounge. This allows students to reduce the cost of studying on campus by providing essential items such as tea, coffee, and milk (including non-dairy alternatives). To date, over 5,000 hot drinks have been made for free across these facilities.
- ▶ Throughout National Student Money Week, students were provided with tips, tricks and support in budgeting and money management. Students engaged with interactive stalls, online resources, and conversations with our Student Advice team.
- ▶ Our Jobshop team has continued to provide a high volume of work opportunities for students through a tough financial year, where increased numbers of students have had to rely on part-time work for extra income. During 2022-23, they paid almost £2,800,000 wages into student bank accounts across 7,388 work placements, helping students to manage their finances.



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 spaces

Following the opening of the new Balconi space and redevelopment of the 3rd floor lounge, we have worked to promote the availability of our versatile spaces in the building to students. The Students' Union provides valuable social learning space to the student community and since the return to campus after the pandemic, communicating the availability of these spaces and regaining the footflow through the building has been important to the organisation.

Sustainability

The Facilities team have increased the amount of waste we divert from landfill to 88% (from 77% in 2021-22). Diverting this waste to recycling, anaerobic digestion and incineration each year improves our environmental sustainability.



People

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

- › We achieved a 92% 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 2022-23.

We grew our Instagram followers by 25% across the year, hitting 18.4k followers by August. We also doubled our following on our TikTok account which is now in its second year.

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



Finances

The Union's total income amounted to £12,393,500 (2022 – £12,318,155) with total expenditure of £12,643,876 (2022 £11,064,178) in the year.

The unwinding of the discounted pension provision resulted in a debit to the Statement of Financial Activities of £(390,908) (2022 – £398,444). Overall, this resulted in net expenses of £(641,284) (2022 – net income £1,652,421). This comprises a restricted deficit of £(541,390) and an unrestricted deficit of £(99,894).

At 31 July 2023, the Union's free reserves amounted to £1,746,589 (2022 – £1,534,034) 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 £43,608 (2022 – £584,998) was held in restricted funds.

Within the Union's trading subsidiary, Cardiff Union Services Limited, turnover increased to £5,515,116 (2022 – £5,237,048) resulting in a gross profit of £2,517,348 (2022 – £2,611,536).

Administrative expenses increased to £4,808,546 (2022 – £4,191,369) in the year. Overall, the trading subsidiary reported a profit of £80,034 (2022 – £1,088,843).

During the year the trading company's pension liability increased to £4,821,724 (2022 – £4,757,753) arising from a re-evaluation of future liabilities. The increase in deficit position is additionally due to the extension of the recovery plan period to 2037 from 2035. 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 2022 - 23

Sabbatical Trustees

Students' Union President:

Angie Flores Acuña
(from 1st July 2023)

Students' Union President:

Gina Dunn
(to 30th June 2023)

VP Societies and Volunteering:

Madison Hutchinson
(from 1st July 2023)

VP Societies and Volunteering:

Shreshth Goel
(to 30th June 2023)

VP Sports and AU President:

Georgia Spry
(from 1st July 2023)

VP Sports and AU President:

Olivia Evans
(to 30th June 2023)

VP Undergraduate (Education & Welfare):

Noah Russell
(from 1st July 2023)

VP Education:

Noah Russell
(from 31st October 2022 to 30th
June 2023)

VP Education:

Thomas Walsh
(from 1st July 2022 to 30th
September 2022)

VP Heath Park Campus (Education & Welfare):

Alex Meers
(from 1st July 2023)

VP Heath Park Campus:

Ashly Alava Garcia
(to 30th June 2023)

VP Postgraduate Students (Education & Welfare):

Micaela Panes
(from 1st July 2022)

VP Postgraduate Students

Angie Flores Acuña
(to 30th June 2023)

VP Welfare:

Rebecca Deverell
(to 30th June 2023)

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

Deio Siôn Llewelyn Owen
(from 1st July 2023)

Student Trustees

Matthew Bird (from 8th December
2022 to 30th June 2023)

Chris-Grayson Diamond (to 30th
June 2023)

Courtney Endall (from 19 July 2023)

Michael Summers (from 19 July 2023)

University Nominated Trustees

Jayne Sadgrove
Agnes Xavier-Phillips

External Trustees

Elliot Howells
Ray Singh CBE

Senior Staff

Chief Executive:

Daniel Palmer

Deputy Chief Executive:

Ben Eagle

Director of Finance:

Jan Boyce

Director of Communications:

Raechel Matthey

Director of Engagement and Participation:

Steve Wilford

Registered office

Park Place, Cardiff, Wales. CF10 3QN

Registered Company Number:
07328777

Registered Charity Number: 1137163



Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd