



UUSU

IMPACT

REPORT

Represent, Support & Connect You!



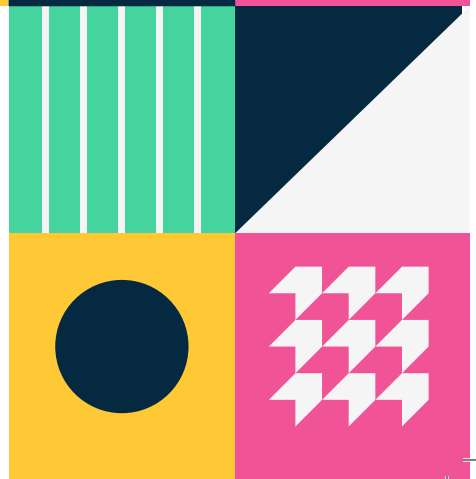
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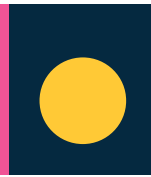


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**President
Grace Boyle**

Hi folks, I'm Grace your UUSU President, welcome to our impact report 2023.

It has a moment of huge change and transition as our members adjust to student life post COVID. Through representations and lobbying and raising student voice, UUSU has strived to represent support and connect you and help you jump right back into university life.

Our main campaigns this year have focused on building back that sense of community and belonging back on campus, tackling effects of the cost of living crisis and continuing to invest in our student union spaces.

We continue to work tirelessly for positive change for all our students and create spaces for our students to engage and get involved, so let me just give a snapshot view of what our students' union has been up to this year.

Our Mental Health Campaign (U Belong) focused on tackling loneliness and creating a sense of belonging within our membership. Our ongoing student mental health and wellbeing campaign is guided by our Mental Health Action Plan which ensures student mental health is at the forefront of everything we do. We've had over 1,500 students complete our Sense of Belonging Survey recently, the results of which we will use to plan our activities for the forthcoming year. As part of our 'U OK? We're here for you' campaign, we've hosted events to increase students' sense of belonging at Ulster and improve their mental health.

Students are facing financial pressures in like no year ever before, the ongoing cost of living crisis has impacted students from all backgrounds and throughout the course of this academic year, your Union has secured upwards of £1,956,500 of support through this Cost-of-Living emergency. Some of the mitigations we secured include free student meals, hidden course costs, free graduations, and discussions around reducing fees for team sport. We have continued



to campaign for a cost-of-living payment and have supported our national Union NUS-USI in their call for a cost-of-living payment, Free public transport and a student renters bill.

Social spaces are so important to connect our members and foster new friendships, we have lobbied for increased investment in our Student Union Spaces undergoing a major renovation of our Coleraine Student Union Bar as well as cosmetic investment in our Magee Bar, we have continued to engage with our membership to ensure that their voice is heard in the social spaces our members want!

Additionally, we successfully lobbied the university to provide financial compensation for the students who were affected by the relocation of the Health Sciences courses from Jordanstown to Magee campus. This was a result of UUSU's advocacy for the students' rights as they faced additional travel costs and inconvenience due to the move. This was a significant win for UUSU and the students involved, as it demonstrated the power of student voice and representation.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our membership for the continue support in creating community, belonging, and advocating for all that important change to make your university experience the best that it can be.

It's been an honour to serve over the years as your Course Rep, Faculty Rep, VP and finally your UUSU President

Grace Boyle



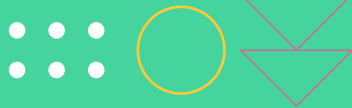
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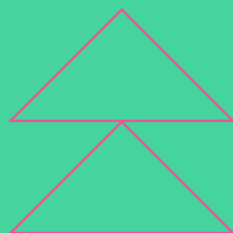


New **Belfast Campus**

New Academic Year



In September 2022 we moved into the new Belfast Campus. Within a fortnight of moving, we hosted our Freshers Fayre! The fayre allowed students to see the range of clubs and societies we have to offer. The Freshers Fayre also allowed you to pick up some deals and freebies from businesses and connect with charities and University support departments.





CAMPAIGNS

Net Zero Challenge

Sustainability

Sustainability is an important area of work for UUSU. We work closely with the University, NUS/USI and SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) on all aspects of sustainability. In November we ran our second Green Week across our campuses. The week involved projects and events for students to act on sustainability and push as many students as possible to sign up to Net Zero.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, diversity, and inclusion has been at the centre of the work carried out at UUSU. We aim to celebrate the rich diversity of our student population, while encouraging awareness and understanding of the issues that may be faced by students from such a wide range of backgrounds.

Our Student Voice team have been busy understanding & dealing with issues that are faced by students across all faculties including particularly International and postgraduate students and researchers. Equality and Diversity forums have taken place across campuses, where you can speak about any issue and discuss ideas.

Throughout the year we've organised different cultural events for example. Diwali & Holi Celebrations which were a great success on campus.

We also have more diverse council seats than ever, with the introduction of Equality, Mental Health, and Postgraduate Research seats.



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Student Mental Health

Our ongoing student mental health and wellbeing campaign is guided by our Mental Health Action Plan which ensures student mental health is at the forefront of everything we do. We've had over 1,500 students complete our Sense of Belonging Survey recently, the results of which we will use to plan our activities for the forthcoming year. As part of our 'U OK? We're here for you' campaign we've hosted 'U Belong' events to increase students sense of belonging at Ulster and improve their mental health.

We've also launched our suite of videos 'UUSU Meets..' where local young people discuss how they've overcome tough times in their lives and asked for help and built up their mental resilience.

This year we've run numerous social sport events e.g. Give it a Go, Paddleboarding, Mind your Mood sport events. UUSU sport has increased social training opportunities for students and collaborated with the Football Association Ireland UN Student League to promote recreational sport.

COST OF LIVING

Cost of Living

The rise in the cost of living is having a profoundly negative effect on students across Northern Ireland. The economic crisis is pushing students to the financial brink and forcing them to make tough decisions. Students are deciding whether to prioritise having somewhere to live, staying warm or having a substantial meal. Emergency intervention is critical.

Our position is clear, and in conversations with Ulster University, government we have indicated that our priorities are:

- Cost of Living Payment.
- Free or subsidised Public Transport.
- Hidden Course Costs to be covered.
- Graduations to be made free of charge to students.

We have continued to engage with Ulster University and NUS-USI and are making progress and have achieved several cost-of-living mitigations.

- Free Breakfasts and Free Lunches
- No cost for Graduations



Student Finance

Financial Recompense

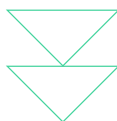
- Financial recompense for those students impacted by the Health Sciences move from Jordanstown to Magee. Through our lobbying efforts to the university to provide students with financial recompense for the additional travel that they would have to undertake we were successful in securing financial support because of the move.



Steering Group

- Established the steering group for student housing co-operatives and have developed a range of resources to inform students of this progress.

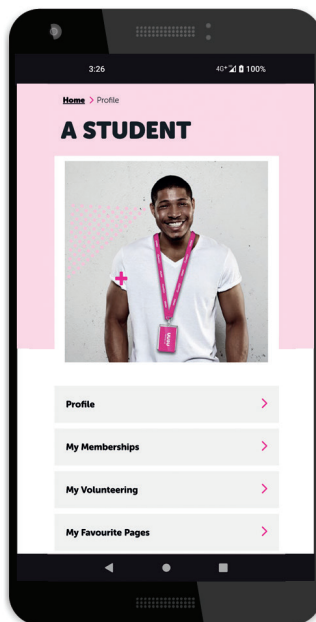




Student Website

Student Friendly Website

At the start of Semester 2 we launched our new student friendly website with a profile page for each student. Now when engaged students are logged into our website each student can see information personalised for them e.g., which societies they belong to, committee member training or their EDGE accreditations.



Social Media

TikTok

We've added TikTok to our socials this year to enhance our communication with you in a fun way! Check us out at @uusonline for some UUSU vibes!



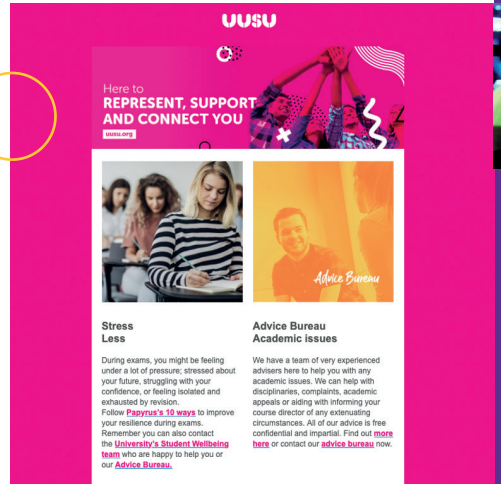
@uusonline



Digital Comms

E newsletter

We've reintroduced our E newsletter during term, responding to feedback from students that they like receiving information from us via email.



Campus Upgrade

Refurb of Coleraine

Design work is underway to enhance the students' union space and facilities. The SU space will be a contemporary centrally located space for students to relax and socialise both during the day and in the evening. The on-campus bar will offer a welcoming and casual atmosphere for the campus's 3,000 students.



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Representation

To ensure our students are represented in a democratic way we host elections. In October you elected your course rep and student council members. The election of the Student Council is a particularly important time of the year for UUSU because of the central role of Student Council in reflecting the views of our membership through the creation of UUSU policies. We registered 793 academic reps who have contributed nearly 24,000 hours of volunteering over the course of the year.

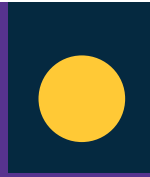
In March we had our leadership elections, and you choose a new student officer team for the forthcoming academic year and Faculty and School/Department Reps. In March we also held elections to make sure you had your say to who represented you at the National Student Conferences. At these National Conferences we worked with other Students' Unions across Ireland and the UK to pass policy, debate important issues and make real changes for all students.

We are pleased to record increases in membership engagement through our election activity through the number of nominations and number of votes cast, all of which were an increase from the previous year and bring us back to pre-Covid levels of engagement.

Elections

This year we expanded our work to support the Postgraduate Researcher experience with enhanced communication with this researcher community, spotlighting the educational support provided by PhD researchers through the Learning and Teaching Awards and developing partnerships with the Doctoral College.

Our Student Voice team have trained and provide ongoing support to more than 790 academic reps. We have celebrated the success and impact of our volunteers with Rep and Staff Member of the Month and have highlighted examples of academic rep impact on the day to day class experience, improved communication with Course Teams, improved academic support, responses to timetabling issues and more. In May we hosted the Learning and Teaching Awards to recognise the contributions to the student experience and academic excellence of students by university staff and researchers. For the first time, the role of PhD demonstrators was recognised in the awards. More than 380 nominations were received for 300 staff members, representing an increase on the previous year.



Representation

Student Voice Conference

In February we hosted our student-led Student Voice conference which was attended by over 140 students. This conference was an opportunity to discuss important topics such as equality, belonging, the student experience, and the campus experience. In addition to speakers such as the Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience, the conference was addressed by lecturers, students and postgraduate researchers.



Support

Training and ongoing support for club and society members, student council and academic reps. We have also this year introduced celebration events to thank our volunteers.



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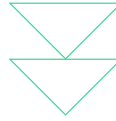


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Advice Bureau

What we offer

UUSU Advice Bureau are available throughout the year to advise, support, assist and represent you. We can discuss concerns and answer any questions via our free, independent advice service.

Our small team of experienced advisors dealt with 300 - 400 Student cases and over 200 enquiries within the last 12 months across all Ulster University Campuses-Belfast, Magee and Coleraine (and Jordanstown)

Main Matters/subjects covered

Academic

Housing & Accommodation

International student issues

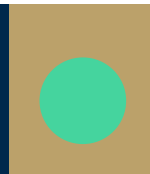
Funding entitlement / availability

Cost of Living/ Fees & Finance

Disciplinaries and Complaints

300 - 400
Student
Cases Deal
With





Sport

Wins This Year

UUSU Sport are proud to deliver a high quality, diverse and exciting array of sports and activities for you in partnership with a range of local and national bodies. We have over 70 sports clubs and teams, including Disc Golf, Sub Aqua, Squash, Golf and Karate.



We've had several Intervarsity and League wins this year. A massive well done to Ulster University Elks Women's Hockey who are legacy Ulster Premier League Champions 2023 and to the Ulster University Men's Basketball Team who completed the double, gaining promotion to the Super league for next season! Plus a big congratulations also to the UU Netball Team on being crowned champions of the 2023 Irish Netball Intervarsities.



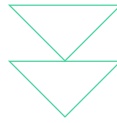
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Connect

Through our clubs and societies students can make friends and connect with their fellow students.



Activities and Societies

Throughout the academic year the Student Activities team hosted a variety of events for you to enjoy in addition to supporting societies to deliver their own, student led events. We've seen 20 new societies register with UUSU this year alone!

Society Spotlight

Dungeons and Dragons Society – just one of our many societies

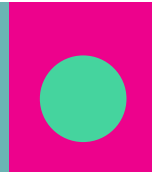
Belfast Telegraph Article - Slaying it

Find A Society

uusu.org/get_involved/societies/find-a-society/

Campaign Events

We've co-host campaign events and ensured that our student spaces are safe and inclusive areas where you can kick back, learn new skills, embrace new interests, celebrate faith and share in cultural celebrations.



Volunteering

2023 saw the appointment of our inaugural "UUSU charity of the year". Friends of the cancer centre was chosen by UUSU Student Council and we proudly have hosted fundraising events as well as delivering awareness campaigns on campus to support their work.



Staff and students also volunteered their time with "Mission Christmas" bringing festive cheer to disadvantaged children across Northern Ireland.

Our Student Excellence Awards in April celebrated the achievements of all our Student Volunteers and recognising their contribution to life on campus.



New Strategy

We are developing a new three-year strategy and we've surveyed our students and held focus groups to find out what student priorities are so that students are at the heart of our future.

In February we hosted an online survey for students to understand their perspectives on the role of UUSU in supporting their academic journey and student experience. We were particularly interested in understanding what students believe should be the future priorities of

UUSU. 762 students and researchers completed the survey which was followed up with an online cross-campus focus group of students and PhD researchers. The findings of this engagement survey will be published on the UUSU website and will be used by UUSU Trustees to develop the next strategic direction for UUSU.

Your Student Officers will keep working on the changes that are important to you, aiming to provide you with the best possible student experience.



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Campaign Reports



Main Campaign Topics

Cost of Living

Along with staff members within Ulster University (UU), UUSU have come up with a list of Cost of Living mitigations for students and staff.

Over the last few weeks we have been engaging in UU Cost of Living Task and Finish Group where we outlined our main campaign asks. UUSU Student Executive have provided a statement below on our main demands. The rise in the cost of living is having a profoundly negative effect on students across Northern Ireland. The economic crisis is pushing students to the financial brink and forcing them to make tough decisions. Students are deciding whether to priorities having somewhere to live, staying warm or having a substantial meal. Emergency intervention is critical. Our position is clear, and in conversations with Ulster University, government we have indicated that our priorities are:

- **Cost of Living Payment.**
- **Free or subsidized Public Transport.**
- **Hidden Course Costs to be covered.**
- **Graduations to be made free of charge to students.**

Our campaign efforts informed and negotiations to the University were persistent and in turn UUSU collectively lobbied for the below interventions.

The specific cost of living interventions 2022/23 cost £1,956,500. They include:

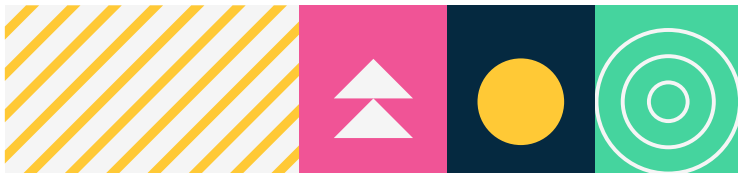
- **Belfast Trust: Mental Health Referral Service (£145,000)**
- **Accommodation Bursary (£125,000)**
- **Removal of hidden fees (i.e., re-examination / re-registration) (£350,000)**

UUSU President lobbied VC office to make no charge to graduations. No charge for Graduations, including Gown Hire and Hospitality:

- **Winter (£235,000)**
- **Spring (£235,000)**
- **Summer (£570,000)**

Working and lobbying campus life we secured, Cost of Living food offer

- **Free Lunches (£65,000) Free lunches every Wednesday**
- **Free Breakfasts (£63,500) Every Tuesday on each of the three campuses**
- **Stocking of Kitchenettes (at all campus locations) (£10,000)**
- **Student Experience: Free/discounted Events and Activities (at all campus locations) (£158,000)**



UUSU Officers have lobbied through interventions with the VC Office, and the UU Cost of Living working group for the following cost of living mitigations:

The other cost of living accessible support 2022/23, UUSU campaigned through the UU Cost of Living working group advocating for additional money to be added to the support funds at UU.

• **Funding for student hardship current being distributed (£2,600,000)**

As well as through lobbying with provision of free gym accessing, our VP Sport and Wellbeing wrote a paper that secured:

- **Free Gym Membership (£200,000)**
- **Access to Club Sport (final approach to be agreed) (£146,200-£192,400)**

UUSU also secured Student Kitchenettes to that were installed in our Belfast Campus. UUSU attended NUS Conference 2023 where officers and students throughout the UK collaborate and develop policy and motions. This year it took place in Harrogate Leeds from the 15th to the 16th of March. UUSU where delighted that our Cost of Living motion was voted to the priority ballot. We had a workshop on the first day and a debate on the second day to make recommendations and amendments to the policy asks and objectives. The Cost of Living proposal from UUSU calls for cost of living support package from the UK government, as well as raising the student maintenance package and apprentice minimum wage in line with the Living Wage. Our proposal recommends rent controls, free transport, inflation-proofing maintenance loans and additional grants or



subsidies for students who are facing challenges with living costs. We must recognize that students are affected across their educational experience and this motion aims to address issues such as food insecurity, transport costs, childcare costs, digital poverty and more that affect students' mental health and wellbeing.

UUSU ran an open letter campaign to include UUSU students who rent in HMOs within the Governmental Energy Payment Scheme. Many students, when at university rent out rooms in HMOs (House of Multiple Occupancy) in the private rental sector. This would mean that most students pay their electricity and heating through prepay (keypad) meters topped up either by the tenants themselves or by the landlord. In some cases, students may be renting a property in which their rent is 'all-inclusive', with a stipulated allotment for energy and heating laid out in the tenancy agreement. Through UUSU's communication with local letting agents, they (the letting agents) stated that it is the responsibility of the landlord to decide whether to pass this voucher on to the occupiers. This has created a situation where landlords stand to benefit from a cost of living measure designed to alleviate the financial pressure of heating homes, without any clear communication with their student renters on how/why this is the case.



U Belong



Building on the success of our campaign on mental health last year - U OK? We're here for you, we found that isolation and loneliness is one of the biggest factors in negatively impacting student mental health. Our officers focused on creating space for students to connect, to find their people, and to get support and guidance when they need it.

Our Mental Health campaign this year, UBelong, was focused on creating a sense of belonging and tackling isolation within our students. We ran a Céili on each of our campuses with music provided by our Magee trad group Brosna, students thoroughly enjoyed these, and international students also got to experience some Irish culture.

As part of the stress-less initiative of the campaign, UUSU is providing free tea, coffee, and hot chocolate during our 'Brew Monday' sessions, outside the library on each campus. Student officers tend these so students can ask questions or receive advice in a friendly informal setting.

At UUSU we have very aware of our diverse student network, which is why UBelong provided our positive mental health quote prints in Irish, English and Ulster Scots. We also provided journaling inserts which has helpful directions to student well-being services on the back, so students can practise self-care while also being made aware that well-being facilities are there to support them.

Through our events, students opened up and were triaged to Student Well-being services that can support them additional students forged lasting friendships and enjoyed tea and coffee during which allowed UUSU to share support services especially on the current barriers to education, this informed our next steps. Most importantly our goal was to foster a warm and welcoming community for all our members





Mental Health Action Plan

At UUSU we recognise that Mental Health is equally as important as physical health and as such, this plan outlines UUSU's dedication to improving students' mental health and wellbeing. Going forward, I will use the remainder of my term to progress the plan by implementing the objectives.

As a follow-up to the 2020 'Student Mental Health Action Plan' created by former student officers in conjunction with 3rd level institutions and NUS- USI, this plan focuses efforts on UUSU services and activities. The 2021- 22 Mental Health Campaign 'UOK? We're Here for You' (a Department of Economy funded programme to assist students in returning to campus following the Covid-19 pandemic), UUSU has generated research from students to understand the



issues impacting their academic and overall student experience. We believe that our services and activities can help. Over this evaluation period we have put together the new Mental Health Action Plan that will take us the next two academic years led by our VP Sport and Wellbeing.

The aim of this action plan is to make change and support some of the issues students have presented as part of the research process as well as embedding some positive changes to make their university experience the best it can be. This action plan ensures commitment from all areas of UUSU, from our student officers, full-time staff and even our student staff. It outlines the resources and outcomes as well as a timeline for all actions committed to supporting an inclusive and positive student experience. We are delighted to have launched this action plan in semester 2.



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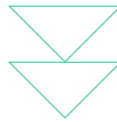


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Health Science Transition Bursary

The School of Health Science's (SOHS) move from the Jordanstown campus to the Magee campus was a momentous decision made by Ulster University (UU) that had a significant impact on all aspects of the student experience.

At the point of letter of offer over 600 students were not informed they were relocating 70 miles away to the Magee campus halfway through their studies. This caused students who work and study in a high-pressured health care environment to have an adverse effect on their mental health, being unable to plan for the move and disrupting their student experience.

Most significantly, travel costs to the Magee campus had a large financial challenge for students.

UUSU alongside School and Course Representatives campaigned for a Disruption Bursary and for students affected by the relocation to be financially supported with costs associated with the Jordanstown campus to Magee campus move. In addition, UUSU called for any supplementary costs, including childcare arrangements, accommodation, and extenuating circumstances to be covered.

UUSU actively lobbied the university, through student feedback, testimonial and research undertaken through monthly forums chaired by UUSU (averaging 50-90 attendees per session) this informed UUSU's Bursary Proposal Paper which was presented to the SOHS Project Board.

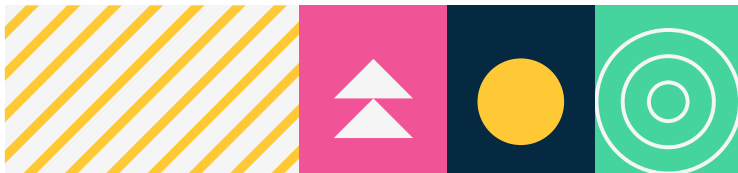
Hundreds of students made their voices heard through the forums. UUSU representatives elevated their concerns and feedback to the highest level.

Through 1-2-1 negotiations with the Vice Chancellor's Office, UUSU officers pushed for a statement to be released from the Vice Chancellor that advised that the university would support students who could not foresee the relocation of their course. As a result, negotiations of the proposed financial support scheme were to be supported through the SOHS Project Board Team responsible for the move. UUSU were successful in achieving a Travel Bursary and a Supplementary Payment to be available for the 2022/23 academic year on an application-based delivery.

Travel bursary was based on mileage and through discussions with the SOHS Project Team, UUSU advocating for students outside the Belfast Health and Social Trust would not be eligible for the bursary, this meant less than two thirds of 600+ students would receive funding. UUSU lobbied for recommendations to the Executive Dean which addressed this concern. This action UUSU secured an extra £110,000 raising the total funds available to £480,000 for the year for travel alone.

UUSU raised students voices the testimonials of Student with caring responsibilities and childcare needs secured a supplementary payment of £800 for the year to support these needs totally to £480,000 for extending circumstances of support available.

UUSU released a statement on January 13th welcoming the news and acknowledging the months of lobbying efforts made by UUSU and its members for this change. UUSU Collectively won £960,000 for this unforeseen disruption.



SHAG
Week

Here at UUSU, SHAG week has proved more important and impactful than ever, and we're thrilled to see it back with a bang!

SHAG week had fallen off the UUSU radar for the past number of years but has proved essential considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Student Wellbeing at Ulster have indicated that students are starting first year with little to no sexual health education as these classes had been dropped in the North during online teaching. UUSU is striving to fill that gap in knowledge, while also using SHAG week to call for a mandatory, inclusive minimum level of Sex and Relationship Education in the North, in line with England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. We have explored sex and sexuality with genital shaped shortbread at our Sex Positivi-tea Party, we've had a SHAG fayre with local sexual health services, and we're set to have the best turn out at any of our events all year at our upcoming Sex Toy Bingo! We've also been able to run a Queer Film Club, LGBT+ Speed Dating and a PhD researcher led event to ensure we've got something for everyone on all three campuses!



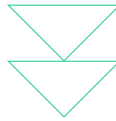
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Campus Officers Update

VP Coleraine Ethan Davies



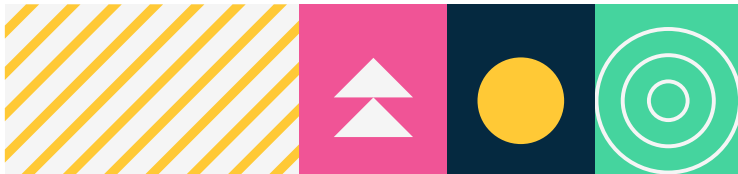
There has been substantial investment into the Coleraine Students' Union bar (Bann View Social) with over £200,000 being directed to the refurbishment of the bar. UUSU is leading on the design of this, directing & advising on what features/aesthetic is best suited for the student experience. We have confirmed new designs for this and have widely consulted the student cohort on how they want their bar to look.

During exam season students in Coleraine often struggle with group revision as the library area is smaller at night-time and is often not noise proof. Therefore, we decided to open U-Block for group revision, this has been received quite well with a lot of students using the room.

VP Magee Dónall Ó hÉigartaigh



The Magee Bar (Bunker) investment is a project that aims to create a welcoming environment for students to build a sense of community. The VP Magee has campaigned for designated spaces that promote this sense of community and flow onto their campuses. The temporary uplifts in the project are designed to promote footfall into the Bunker from those living in accommodation. This has resulted in an increase in the number of students visiting the bar and has created a positive impact on the student experience. The project has been successful in creating a welcoming environment for students to socialise and build relationships with their peers. This has led to an increase in student satisfaction and has helped to create a sense of belonging among students. Also VP Magee got taps on the bar!



Campus Officers Update

VP Belfast Robert Millar



New campus, new challenges. Problem solving was crucial in identifying and solving issues when entering this new space. Longstanding issues such as the lack of a campus bar were brought to a climax when the new bar was opened despite challenges in September, and VP Belfast remained close to the implementation of this, tendering both graphics for the bar and for the UUSU space. VP Belfast became involved in a visual solutions working group to identify ideas for how to improve the campus visually. Multiple spaces were inadequate when opened so VP Belfast lobbied for Islamic prayer room modifications, and a designated chaplaincy space, as well as feeding into plans for a quiet room and all have since been opened.

Booking rooms was difficult at first which created problems for student clubs, so we continually raised this to university leadership, and dismantled this barrier to events. Belonging, was encouraged through installation of pianos, pool tables and games on campus to encourage interactions.

Student housing Co-Ops Development
Over the course of this year, President and

VP Belfast have been in the development of establishing Student Owned Housing. Last March, UUSU Passed policy at NUS-USI Conference to explore and research an alternative solution to the accommodation crisis in establishing a student housing co-operative. President and VP Belfast have been working towards this goal. We have since made progress in the following areas:

- **We've made connections with the student housing network**
- **We carried out an initial legal and financial feasibility study**
- **We've passed policy as both UUSU and NUS-USI - mandating student officers to work on this to ensure we're growing and making the co-op a priority!**
- **Became members of Student Co-op Homes, Co-operatives UK, and Co-operative Alternatives & we're now officially registered as a legal entity**
- **Met with Lease holders**

We as a union have presented at a Co-operative Alternatives webinar, joining an introductory meeting with Co-operatives UK introducing our mission and model for a Belfast Student Housing Co-operative. **Webinar available on YouTube: [youtube.com/watch?v=Q3une5TPRE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3une5TPRE)**
UUSU VP Belfast and President had the opportunity to attend Student Housing Symposium in Switzerland, meeting others in the European Student Housing Co-operative network. We visited three student co-operatives across Geneva and Zurich, taking home inspiration of sustainable student co-operative models. We presented a report to UUSU Management Committee on our learnings and feedback was positive about our progress.

Attended Ulster University Students' Union Freshers Fayre in Belfast recruiting our steering group members and volunteers.



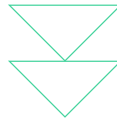
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Campus Officers Update

EDI - VP Equality and Belonging Chaudhary Hamza Riaz



Ulster University Students Union's (UUSU) campaign for equality is exemplary in its approach to promoting, protecting, and improving aspects of equality for all its students. UUSU has organized itself into six subgroups for equality, including LGBTQIA+, BAME+, part-time, parent/carer, mature, and international students. In our campaign, we have Food Requirement Policy and Gender-Neutral Bathrooms, LGBTQIA+ Lobbying, Bilingual Signage. We organized dozens of events, like 'Are you New Here?' event, promoted friendship. 'Guys, Gals, and Non-Binary Pals' event for a safe space for the LGBTQIA+ community. UUSU organized the first Diwali, Burns Nights, and Holi event in UU history for international students and they were some of the most successful events this past year. Team worked on Breastfeeding room and we have rooms across the campuses. As we have students from different communities and cultures, Bidet Showers policy is passed and that is the first in the history on NI and ROI where Bidet Shower policy passed. We are working with faith groups for interfaith harmony, pushed for a Belfast chaplaincy room, and Islamic prayer room adjustments. With this, Equality officer's organized E&D forum twice a year provides platform for

students to be heard. UUSU represented students in Belfast, Derry London-Derry, Mid-Ulster Pride parades. UUSU working for safer space for women with OMFG campaign across the campuses. UUSU working on employability for Neuro-divergent students.

Equality and Belonging was extremely important given the substantial increase in international students this past year. UUSU helped facilitate many UU firsts to show that everyone belongs in Ulster University including organising the first Diwali celebration, first Burns Night, and first Holi festival and we tried to involve engaged students in helping where possible. Many societies needed help in re-establishing so from a Freshers event, "Guys, Gals and Non-binary pals," UUSU grouped together students to reform the Belfast LGBT+ society which has thrived since. By empowering international students, a South-Asian Student society was set up to help represent and host large cultural events.

The UUSU Identity Policy passed Council and is now being implemented, it will give students a chance to be themselves. If implemented it will be the largest LGBTQ+ win the Union has achieved since establishing of the LGBTQIA+ Network. Our Identity Policy will allow students to put their preferred name & pronouns on the University system which will hugely reduce the amount of misgendering/deadnaming on campus, helping to make Ulster University a more inclusive and safer place for students.

Student's with Additional Needs Network has been passed, it is currently being worked on and will be fully functional by next academic year and will be representing over 3000 students on issues on and off campus. We're already working with students & staff for feedback etc.



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