



IMPACT REPORT 21/22



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Welcome from me

President > Owen McCloskey

The end of another academic year is here, and the UUSU community has accomplished so much! We'd like to take the chance to reflect on everything that's happened through our Impact Report 21-22. Despite the year having ongoing challenges for students, we hope that we have represented and supported our members needs appropriately. We were delighted to be recognised for our work in this area as UUSU were awarded the Large Students Union Team of the Year for 2022 at the SAI Awards.

Our return to campus defined the year, and I am so proud of how our students handled the transition. By working together, we kept our staff and students as safe and healthy as possible. Thank you to each and every one of you who followed safety guidelines, showed patience, and took care of our community.

Our students and staff were celebrated and recognized for their hard work and sacrifice throughout the year. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge praised the efforts of our student healthcare workers who put themselves on the front line of the pandemic. We saw students standing up for what they believed in by participating in local and National elections. And your officer team was recognized at USI Awards, as the Large Officer Team of the year!

This year was marked by change, from our in-person return to the continued transition to the new Belfast campus, which will open to everyone in September. Despite disruptions and changes, you persevered and committed to your education.

We completed our annual Green Impact Audit carried out by an independent organisation and are aspiring to receive a good/very good commendation at the beginning of July.

This is my final year with UUSU, and though it's presented challenges, I couldn't be prouder of the students here. You've inspired change, overcome adversity, and weathered a pandemic, and did so as a community. It has been an honour to serve as your President, and I want to thank each and every one of you.

Owen McCloskey



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Campaigns



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.



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 the student population at Ulster, while encouraging awareness and understanding of the issues that may be faced by students from such a wide range of backgrounds.



UOK? We're here for You

This year we delivered a major UOK? mental health and wellbeing campaign which included an inbound & outbound phoneline to assess student needs, which was then complimented by wellbeing events & digital campaigns. We also held a student mental health summit, activated mindfulness areas on campus including the provision of wellbeing packs for students as well as creating a suite of 'UUSU Meets...' mental health student videos for future use.



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Sustainability



Net Zero Challenge

UUSU partnered with the university in rolling out the Net Zero Challenge which incentivised and encouraged staff and students to improve their carbon footprint through daily challenges and rewards.



Green Week

This included securing £800 in funding for the union's Green Week campaign which allowed 10 of our student-led societies to run climate-themed events, contributing to the wider programme.

Engaging with further stakeholders created an immersive experience, including on-campus caterers going meat-free and launching keep-cup initiatives, and external charity 'Sustrans' also hosting events.



Sustainability



Wellbeing Garden

Created a community allotment on-campus for students in Magee to get some headspace, and get access to locally grown, organic, produce. Hosted a variety of events to create community and find out more about how we connect with the natural world (e.g., foraging trips and organic farm visits). Work is in progress to develop and put in place a similar provision in both Coleraine and Belfast.

Green Impact

Green Impact is a United Nations award-winning programme designed to support environmentally and socially sustainable. It suggests what people can do in their workplace to make a difference and guides them how to do this in an accessible but meaningful way, creating a widespread culture of sustainability.

UUSU completed its Green Impact Audit and we are aspiring to receive a good/very good commendation at the beginning of July.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Creation of VP Equality and Belonging

With the significant reduction in teaching taking place in Jordanstown in 2022-23, Student Council agreed that this would be an appropriate stage to consider dissolving the VP Jordanstown Officer role. In light of this decision, the Student Executive endeavoured to explore options for a suitable replacement. There had been an extensive consultation process with the student body in recent years which had highlighted the need for a Student Officer whose role would focus on EDI issues.

With this in mind therefore, a proposal was brought to Student Council, detailing the need for a VP Equality and Belonging. Student Council unanimously voted to accept this proposal and we are excited to see the new VP Equality and Belonging take up post from 1st July 2022.

This officer will have a diverse and wide-ranging area of work which includes supporting student communities and networks. These include but are not exclusive to BME, women's, LGBT+, mature, part-time, minority languages, students with disabilities, neurodivergent students and those with parent and caring responsibilities.

Student Council Structure

Currently, there are two equality seats per campus on Student Council. Nominees for these seats should self-define as being a member of one of the following groups: International Students; LGBT; BAME; Disabled; Minority Languages and or a member of a Faith Group. This is to help encourage more engagement and visibility from under represented groups, to help influence policy and activity. Equality Councillors amplify the voices of the entire UUSU membership, to encourage all voices to the table.

Equality, diversity and inclusion has been integral to the work of the Students' Union, aiming to celebrate the students from minority groups, but also educating those who aren't aware of the obstacles that students from diverse backgrounds face.

The Councillors have worked with students from minority backgrounds across all four campuses providing support and advocating for meaningful change.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Period Poverty Pilot Scheme

This year, UUSU were able to roll out the pilot scheme to help tackle the growing issue of period poverty. This scheme saw the provision of free period products in an inclusive and accessible manner that helps to combat period stigma. The scheme was funded by the Department for Education and was implemented in the gender-neutral bathrooms located in the Students' Union spaces on each campus.

The location of the products in gender-neutral spaces was particularly important in order to ensure accessibility, allowing any student or member of staff to avail of the products as necessary.

Feedback was provided by users of the service through our social media, surveys and testimonials from members:



Support for Breastfeeding Students Policy

During the 2021/2022 academic year, the UUSU Student Council 'Support for Breastfeeding Students' policy was progressed. It was fantastic that the university joined the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Scheme in 2021, and we wanted to continue their efforts by reaching out to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to procure more awareness stickers for our campuses. You will now be able to find more stickers in popular social spaces on campus, a reminder to students about the scheme and the inclusivity of our spaces.



UOK? We're here for You



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Support

- Provided an outbound hotline (in conjunction with Advice NI) which contacted students over 4 weeks during November/December to understand the potential impacts of students being back on campus.
- UOK campaign provided key signposts, support networks & resources for students.
- Redesign of our web services, to better focus on student support.
- Contributed to the UU 'Mind your Mood' project.
- Investment in online training and reporting platform to reassure students that consent & sexual violence is priority issue closely aligned to strong mental wellbeing.
- Developed mindfulness spaces & held events in spaces.
- Ran mindfulness campaigns and provided wellness packs & resources.
- Hosted Wellbeing sunrise walks & petting farms.
- Magee Wellbeing Garden has grown! Work underway to establish Wellbeing Gardens in Coleraine & Belfast.



UOK? We're here for You

Connect

- Significant increase on the ground engagement using student staff for Freshers Fortnight.
- Pre-welcome training around mental health indicators and support signposting.
- 200 students took part in Sunrise Walks during Semesters 1 & 2.
- UUSU Meets....' videos feature four student relatable figures in the public eye who have had to look after their own mental wellbeing. These are frank and honest assessment pieces of how mental health can impact anyone and how it has been managed or overcome.
- Launched Peer buddy scheme & 'Look After Your Mate' training completed by students.
- Hosted Wellbeing sunrise walks & petting farms.
- Magee Wellbeing Garden has grown! Work underway to establish Wellbeing Gardens in Coleraine & Belfast.

Represent

- Digital campaigns for Parent Mental Health Day, University Mental Health Day, Stress Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Week.
- Students were supported digitally during Stress Awareness Month by a series of information posts acknowledging, how stress can manifest itself; how phone use can impact stress levels; how we can manage our stress by performing activities and Top Tips to Reduce Stress Levels.
- Student summit held to plan and strategise on student future needs. Staff and students on the Student Mental Health Committee will now create an action plan so students' mental health and wellbeing is at the centre of everything that UUSU does. This will inform a update of the Mental Health Action Plan and focus on interventions and the potential lobbying of external stakeholders to better support the wellbeing needs of young people across NI.



Student Wins



UUSU is constantly looking to improve the student experience at Ulster through providing opportunities to represent, support and connect our members. Here are just a small selection of some of our wins across the last academic year.



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Student Wins

We have successfully navigated the intensive pandemic period and were delighted to welcome members back to campus in September 2021.

We have ensured the balance for members to have a face-to-face experience whilst ensuring a high degree of safety on campus is in place through our work as part of numerous groups across the University.

We are expanding our support for students and looking to access funding to recruit extra resources for 2022-23.



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Student Wins

We worked with the university to ensure 12,000 alumni students had access to an in-person graduation.

We ensured that a price freeze on graduation costs was in place to cover the backlog of graduations to keep the promise of profit free graduation.

We helped to secure 4,000 free travelcards for Belfast students who had to relocate to Jordanstown for Semester 1 & 2.



**Promise kept
of profit free
graduation**



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Student Wins

Our UUSU Advice Bureau has been on hand to provide support and guidance and has seen a significant increase in offering support around student health and wellbeing.

We facilitated the setup of 16 new Societies in this academic year.

We amplified your Voice with a growth in our representative structure with 678 academic reps in place, an increase of 114 reps on 2021/22.



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New Societies



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Student Wins

We put Student Sport back to pre-pandemic levels and have around 1600 club memberships and no restrictions remain in place to access sport.

We made sure you are represented through Student Council with 100% of the seats filled, giving members an active voice.

We relaunched a bigger and better award programme with the SEAs, LTAs and Colours all running successful in person events in 2022.



Student Wins

We continue to offer quality space on campus and have successfully lobbied for the sale of alcohol in Magee and Belfast.

We successfully set-up and provided to Magee students a wellbeing garden space which has yielded its first harvest.

Our voice transcends the University walls and we have worked with other unions across Ireland and the UK to pass policy, debate important issues and make real change for students, including securing a long-term intervention for period poverty in Northern Ireland



**Successful
set-up of
a wellbeing
garden space**



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We are back

Colours Sports Awards

We were thrilled to celebrate and reward the achievements of individuals and sporting teams at the University. The gala ceremony held at the Titanic is the pinnacle of our sporting year. It's a great night of celebration for all the hard work and successes of sportspersons across the University.



Presidents Plate Winner

Professor Paul Seawright
(Deputy Vice Chancellor)
with Darragh Ferguson,
winner of the Presidents Plate.



Silver Salver Winner

Professor Paul Seawright
(Deputy Vice Chancellor)
with Danielle Hill,
winner of the Silver Salver.



Colours 22 Awards Winners

From left to right: William McCartan,
Joseph McKinney, Clare Conway, Jo
McNally, Aaron Ferris, Adam Aiken, Jon
Sturgeon, Hollie Murdock, Faith Johnston,
Abigail Rafferty, Ciara White, Conall
Goan, Bethan McLaughlin & Megan
McNulty



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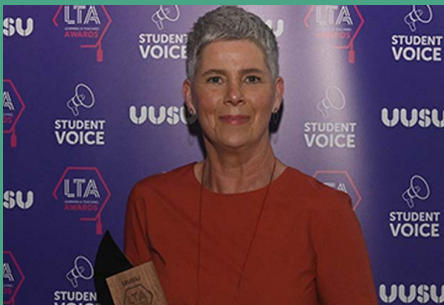


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LTA Awards

We were delighted to welcome back the annual Learning and Teaching awards. The awards recognise, celebrate, and reward the excellent staff and students who work tirelessly to make the student experience at Ulster University outstanding.



Inspirational Teacher Award

Inspirational Teacher Of The Year
Dr Catherine Ohara



Special Recognition Award

Andy Jaffrey, Head of the Office for Digital Learning collecting the special recognition award on behalf of the staff from the Office for Digital Learning.



Student Academic Representative Of The Year

Student Academic Representative Of The Year,
Hilary Fegan



We are back

SEA Awards

Our Student Excellence Awards held at the Riverside Theatre this year, recognised, and celebrated those students who contribute so much of their time, energy, and expertise to improving student life at Ulster.



Best Committee Member

Dungeons & Dragons Society: Zuzana Megger, Caitlin Power (Best Committee Member winner), Daniel Moore, Adam Kelso, Aidan Moore, Zach Watson



Best New Society – Dance Society

L-R: Eva Shearer, Cerys Milligan, :Hasan Kadri from the Dance Society



CASS Society Coleraine

CASS Society Coleraine



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Outgoing Officer Team



PRESIDENT
Owen McCloskey



VP EDUCATION
Grace Boyle



VP SPORT AND WELLBEING
Fintan Darragh



VP BELFAST
Robert Millar



VP COLERAINE
Curtis Donnan



VP JORDANSTOWN
Rebecca Allen



VP MAGEE
Ryan Harling



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