



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL  
STUDENTS' UNION

# OUR VISION:

Bristol University students creating a world class student life for themselves

## OUR MISSION:

Enables you to...

Improve your educational and wider university experience

Have your say about the way the union is run

Get advice and be heard through clear channels of communication

Campaign on issues that are important to you

Develop your hobbies and interests

Have the space you need to carry out your activities

Have a great social life and make University more fun

Positively engage with the wider community

## OUR VALUES:

Student Focus

Democracy

Equality and Diversity

Quality services

Collaboration

Community

Sustainability

Fun

## Contents

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1. Executive Summary
  - 1.1. The Organisation
  - 1.2. The Journey
  - 1.3. The Vision, Mission and Values explained
2. Major Goals
3. Key Strategies
4. Business Objectives

## I. Executive Summary

### I.1 The organisation

The University of Bristol Students' Union (UBU) is a membership organisation democratically led by students, supported by staff that run the day to day activities and services provided by the organisation.

UBU is a complex organisation that provides the infrastructure for enabling the organisations vision, mission and values through which it is able to realise its core purpose which is to enhance the student experience of its members by creating opportunities for a fantastic student life.

UBU is an incorporated, registered charity. UBU is led by the Board of Trustees, who are responsible for setting the strategic direction as well as maintaining the legal, financial and reputational integrity of the organisation.

Sabbatical Officers have a number of responsibilities; their role is principally a representative one, they work with the Student Council to ensure that the views of all students are represented. They play a crucial role in the university decision making structures and represent the student voice at a range of university committees. They work alongside the Senior Management Team as members of the Executive Monitoring Group who are responsible for providing a 360 degree view for the organisation through which strategic and operational monitoring and recommendations are undertaken. They are also Trustees of the organisation.

The Chief Executive together with the Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for managing the business/charity and ensuring that the Trustees have sufficient information and understanding of the issues and options available to them in order to undertake their responsibilities effectively.

The management of the business involves responsibility for a wide range of activities including developing strategic relationships with the university and other stakeholders to ensure that the organisation remains financially stable and is fit for current and future purpose; ensuring a quality and continuity agenda and supporting and developing the Sabbatical officers and other student leaders.

The organisation currently employs 24 staff and provides opportunities for up to 3 paid interns per year and 125 student staff (FTE 5 staff). This team delivers activities through 4 principal departments:

**Membership Services& Democracy** which runs the **Do It hub**- facilitating Sports and Society activities, volunteering through SCA and fund raising through RAG; **Just Ask**-which provides impartial advice and facilitates campaigning and representation activity including managing the university course rep system and organising all the democratic processes such as the annual cross campus elections and referenda.

**Social & Events** which is responsible for the Anson Rooms, Winston Theatre, bars, retail outlets, events programme and room bookings.

**Marketing and Communications** responsible for strategic communications and brand awareness, market research and merchandising.

**Finance and Administration** responsible for internal finance, compliance and cash handling as well as club and society finance.

In addition to the above UBU organises and facilitates a calendar of key student events/activities including Freshers' Fair, The Varsity Programme, The Union Awards, A Leadership Development Programme, Hodgkin Scholarship.

## 1.2 The Journey

Further to incorporation in 2009 UBU has undergone a radical overhaul. A new Chief Executive was appointed in December 2009 together with a new SMT supported by a team of staff, of which over 75% joined during 2010. A dramatic change programme has been instigated based on transforming the culture based on a performance management framework.

A clear direction was identified in 2010 to underpin the changes and 4 key objectives were prioritised.

- Understanding who our members are and what they want
- Ensuring that UBU adds value to the Bristol University experience
- Reshaping our services with member need as the focus
- Creating financial stability

We have successfully delivered a wide range of activities against these objectives including;

- Undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise of what students are looking for from UBU- 'Say It'
- Turned round a financial deficit to a small surplus in our first 2 years as an independent company
- Implemented a new staff structure to provide the foundations of an effective and successful Union
- Signed up to the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) the national organisational development framework for Student Unions
- Agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University.

Current, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (SWOT)

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of activities available</li> <li>• Highly active members in some areas</li> <li>• Amount of space available</li> <li>• Ability to be responsive to member need</li> <li>• Skilled and engaged staff team</li> <li>• Extensive community networks</li> <li>• Open and challenging relationship with the University</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services and activities perceived as being only relevant to a proportion of the membership</li> <li>• State and location of the building</li> <li>• Effective communication</li> <li>• Low visibility of the opportunities available</li> <li>• Low brand awareness with high value services e.g AU, RAG, Student Volunteering</li> <li>• Governance structures require further development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment ( long term)</li> <li>• Improved working relationship with University to further influence decision making</li> <li>• To become a key partner in overcoming the challenges of the changing HE landscape</li> <li>• To become a leading union within the sector</li> <li>• To improve engagement with under- represented groups</li> <li>• To proactively raise visibility and market products and services</li> <li>• Improve service standards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment ( short/medium term)</li> <li>• Change in the HE landscape eg cuts and fees</li> <li>• Impact of economic pressures on income generating activities</li> <li>• Impact of economic pressures on students</li> <li>• Resource capacity to meet member expectation</li> <li>• Over reliance by the University on individual relationships</li> </ul>

### 1.3 The Vision, Mission and Values explained

The Trustees and the Senior Management Team have reviewed the vision, mission and values of the organisation to ensure that they reflect UBU's current and future ambitions. The review has been informed by evidence based research and consultation with students including: the findings of 'Say It'; consultation about the refurbishment of the building; consultation with staff and student staff- 'Your Services Your Say'; and aims to ensure that UBU directly contributes to the University's strategic ambitions.

We want to help to create opportunities for a world class student life particularly in the context of the changes in student funding. Our research has informed our belief that we will do this through listening to our members and providing them with the information and advice that they seek as well as representing their voice in the University decision making processes. They value the space that is available for them to carry out their many activities and they want the union to be a vibrant hub where they can socialise and feel welcome. Whether we deliver services directly, help students to help themselves or commission services on behalf of our members, we believe that it is our role to facilitate the organisations vision.....**Bristol University Students creating a world class student life for themselves.**

## 2. Major Goals – Where we are going over the next 4 years

The refurbishment presents UBU with many opportunities but also presents a number of uncertainties as to how we will maintain our existing levels of service during the upheaval of major building works. Our strategic goals reflect this context and focus on improving the quality of what we do:

- 2.1 Develop a fit for purpose building in partnership with the University by Autumn 2014
- 2.2 Maintain an operating surplus through the disruption of the refurbishment
- 2.3 Maintain participation in our activities and services growing engagement by 20% by 2015
- 2.4 Achieve Investors in People 2012, extending to a Bronze award by 2014.
- 2.5 Achieve SUEI Silver by 2015

### 3. Key Strategies- How we are going to get there

In order to achieve our goals we believe that they must be underpinned by the following :

- 3.1** Effective communication through understanding the needs of our diverse membership
- 3.2** Embed a culture of data driven evidence to inform our development and support the student voice
- 3.3** Develop activities and services that meet the needs of our diverse membership
- 3.4** Strategic partnership working with the University and other stakeholders
- 3.5** Measure the impact of our activities on our members, the University and the wider Bristol community

#### 4. Business Objectives- Examples of the day to day activity that will ensure we meet our strategic goals.

The organisation's first bottom-up detailed operational business plan was produced for 2010-11 and was underpinned by the introduction and embedding of project management principles as a key tool for implementing change. Each year a revised business plan will be produced to ensure that we effectively manage our resources, focus on our key priorities and can demonstrate that we are creating a culture of continuous improvement that values a deeper understanding of our members. Everyone in the organisation has a part to play and we ensure that there are clear lines of accountability through a Personal Assessment Review (PAR) process that links each member of staff to specific business objectives.

Over the next four years the following objectives will be key to ensuring that we meet our strategic aims

- 4.1 Expand and enhance Student Rep support and structures – 450 course reps trained annually by 2014
- 4.2 Review our democratic processes- increase attendance to the Student Conference/AMM by 10% year on year and increase electoral turnout to 5000 by 2013
- 4.3 Implement a membership database by 2011
- 4.4 Establish a high quality recognised Leadership Development Programme to enhance the attributes of a Bristol Graduate by 2013 to include attendance of 500 at the annual Union Awards by 2014
- 4.5 Manage the impact of the refurbishment- find at least 90% interim replacement space for student activity
- 4.6 Deliver a high quality, student focussed, social and events programme- through partnerships ensure that Freshers' and Graduation events throughout the refurbishment and agree 4 endorsed venue contracts
- 4.7 Increase our visibility throughout the university campus- increase footfall to Info Point by 10% year on year
- 4.8 Raise our profile amongst members, stakeholders and the community- increase online traffic by 10% year on year
- 4.9 Develop a fundraising and alternative income stream strategy to achieve additional revenues of £50k by 2014
- 4.10 Develop a talent management programme and ensure that all staff and officers complete PDP by 2012 and organisation achieves 95% staff satisfaction rating by 2013