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OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

2022/23

ED

2841
STUDENTS VOTED IN OUR ELECTIONS

3300

WORKING HOURS FROM OUR STUDENT STAFF

1200 STUDENTS SUPPORTED

THROUGH OUR ADVICE SERVICE

THOUSANDS

OF FREE FOOD ITEMS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO HELP DURING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS



135
CLUBS AND SOCIETIES
WERE JOINED 3845 TIMES

£650,000

WAS COLLECTIVELY SAVED ON ACCOMMODATION FOR OUR STUDENTS AT THE GREEN RESIDENCE

1540
STUDENT AND STAFF
AT OUR END OF YEAR
CELEBRATION ASTONBURY

1100

FREE BREAKFASTS WERE GIVEN OUT AS A PART OF OUR WELLBEING INITIATIVE

6667
FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM



Input	Outputs
 Student Voice and Officer Impact Budget: £289,000 Four Student Officers 2.0 FTE staff members 	 Student Voice and Leadership All student elections National campaigning Student Representation across the University
 Student Advice and Wellbeing Budget: £141,000 1300 student clients 4.5 FTE staff members 	 Casework, information, advice and guidance Mitigating circumstances, disciplinary committees support Initiative-taking wellbeing initiatives
The Green – Aston Students' Union affordable, sustainable student community Budget: T/O £1/2m, £50,000 profit 165 Tenants 2.8 FTE staff members	 170 value bed spaces Saving £650,000pa compared to private sector Immensely popular with International Students
 Aston Student Homes Budget: £0 (self-funded via advertising student accommodation) 0.8 FTE staff members 	 The only place for housing and accommodation advice on campus Advertising 15,000 bed spaces in the local areas Advice for bespoke accommodation needs from students
 Student Activities Budget: £233,000 130 Clubs and Societies, 1000s of events and opportunities 5.0 FTE staff members 	 1000s of opportunities for student engagement Guest speaker and event administration Leadership opportunities for 100s of students on committees

Input	Outputs
Building and Operations Budget for Lease and Utilities £531,000 Budget £134,000	 Safe and secure operation of the best building on campus Multiples use by students, club and societies and the University Best place on campus to spend time
 Marketing and Media Budget £124,000, and £45,000 income 5.0 FTE staff members 	 Social Media channels driving digital engagement SU to Student Communications Promo Videos for campaigns Physical and digital signed Website update and development Media sales and partnerships
Building, Operations and Commercial Services - Hospitality and Retail Deficit for Commercial services £65,000 5.5 FTE staff members 20 casual staff	 Management of all space, including evening and weekend room bookings Classic beer and burger offer for students Retail off to support our wide range of students Aston University branded goods, including the famous Aston hoodie
Financial Services • Budget £114,000 • 2.8 FTE staff members	 Ensure audited and compliant accounts and financial governance Paying of 1000s of student volunteers experiences and financial needs
Human Resources • Budget £63,000 • 1.0 FTE	Ensure proper HR systems and process for our growing and expanding staff team Recruitment and induction of staff

BUDGET £289,000 (£136,000 plus £153,000) SABBATICAL PART TIME OFFICERS OFFICERS

FTE STAFF MEMBERS

Student Representatives Scheme

The main voice for students on all their academic matters, ensuring the University and Students' Union meet their legal obligations under the Education Act and students have a genuine voice in their academic experience.

- 1. 597 students signed up and agreed to be student reps, with 61% of those continuing to the next stage and completed our online training module - 364 student reps in total..
- 2. 144 nominations were received from across the campus for the annual academic awards. We awarded five student reps, nine university and union staff (lecturers and support staff) for their contribution to the academic student experience.
- 3. Researched and wrote a well recieved 10-page Student Written Submission as part of the University's TEF submission.
- 4. By the end of the year we had agreed a new Student Representative Framework with the university to continue to improve and evolve the scheme for staff and students.



Student Led Democracy and Elections

The bedrock of the Students' Union, ensuring we remain student-led and focused, with cross campus elections and forums for discussion to steer the direction of the organisation and its campaigning work.

- 5. Election candidates 36 candidates
 - a. Overall 111 total nominations across the two elections
- 6. Elections Votes highest turnout ever for the Students' Union
 - b. 2841 individual voters
 - c. 16597 total number of votes
- 7. One new Student Officer Vice President Communities created and elected to support students across the campus in future years.
- 8. We held six SU Councils over the year and have attempted to increase its accessibility by extending the voting period.
- 9. We organised two emergency student council meetings, allowing students to discuss and decide their positions on the new Vice President Communities role and Lecturers strike.

Student Surveys and Feedback

Student Voice needs to be both qualitative and quantitative, the democratic process gives officers the right to be in the room, their voice is amplified when it is backed up with data and insight.

- 10. 572 students told us directly how the University could improve the academic experience as part of the Speak Week campaign in term two.
- 11. One thousand international students completed our survey to explore and better understand their experiences at Aston.
- 12. We completed our first Post Graduate Research Survey, and one hundred students told us about their experiences
- 13. We established a new SU Education committee an interested group of School and College Reps who meet up and discuss key issues facing students.

University Feedback

A core part of our role is to hold the University to account, and Aston University respects and demands that student and student officers have a key role and voice in decisions across campus.

14. Our Student Officers spent countless hours in countless University committee meetings, providing feedback to the University about your student experience. Key wins we made happen for students include:

- a. Additional student learning space on floor seven in the main building
- b. Student Counselling to be provided in languages other than English
- c. Additional funding for the Students' Union to deliver wellbeing projects, student advice and events and activities for students
- d. Financial support for student travel costs in term two
- e. Raising awareness of the academic support for students
- f. Supporting the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- 15. Our Aston Expert Fairs, where we brought together all the academic student services (Learning and Development Centre, Library, Careers and Placements, Student Hub, Aston Enterprise), enjoyed footfall of over three thousand students.

Having a National Impact

We are part of the National Union of Student (NUS) a network of 100s of Students' Unions representing 7million students. This collective voice allows for nationally elected Student Officers to lobby governemnt at the highest level and ensure the needs of students are considered within government policy.

- 16. We have met with Conservative ministers to discuss the wonderful things that Aston contributes to the local and national economy and how the government can better support students.
- 17. We have met with one Labour shadow cabinet minister to talk about what a Labour government, and its new policies could achieve for students.
- 18. We were part of a significant BBC Midlands Today November newsreel about how the cost of living crisis is impacting students.
- 19. We have been part of panel debates, at the Student Voices in HE Conference.
- 20. We have influenced the national debate by engaging with the National Union of Students (NUS).
- 21. We delivered key presentations on sustainability and the energy crisis at the Hope for the Future conference.

The Years Big Issue: Cost of Living

At the start of the year we didn't know how all-encompassing the cost of living crisis would be, as each week, the money our students had in their pockets was worth less and less. The Students' Union supported by the University, soon assembled, and ran a variety of projects throughout the year providing essential items to students, helping to create community and reduce the financial burden on our members.

- 22. **Keeping Prices Low** we kept the prices in the shop and The Lounge artificially low during the year, choosing not to pass on increased costs of core products. You will not find a cheaper beer or burger or coffee and cake within a 10m radius of the Students' Union.
- 23. **Free Breakfast** for students an average of 42 students per week (Oct-April). The free breakfast is every Wednesday for students, and has developed into a community of students.
- 24. **ASU Pantry** on average 132 students use the ASU Pantry per week (Nov-April). The student kitchen was rebranded the ASU Pantry and opened Nov 22 and provides the equipment to cook, take essential food items, swap clothes & books.
- 25. **Bring your own bowl** pop-up project, where students can get warm cooked food. 82 students enjoyed this free meal and 120 students benefited from the term three pop-up with local chef Dan Lee providing an amazing one pot wonder.
- 26. **BBC Midlands Today** visited the Students' Union to see how the SU was supporting students through the cost-of-living crisis.
- 27. **Food Distribution** 251 students received food bags with essential food items. Giving students a bag with up to 3 three meals inside.
- 28. **Nifty Thrifty Market** 43 students' attendance (within first 2.5 hours of opening, all items were taken).
- 29. **750 Energy Bags**, (a partnership with Careers and Placements) over the exam periods to provide students with essential pick me ups whilst revising, leading to (we hope) better grades.



STUDENT ADVICE AND WELLBEING

Student Advice

Sometimes University life does not go the way you want it to - we are there to catch students and help them get back on their feet, helping to navigate, what can seem complex University policy and procedure. The advice centre supports (mainly) academic needs.

BUDGET £141,000

1300 STUDENT 4.4 FTE STAFF **CLIENTS**

MEMBERS

- 30. In 2022 opened 1364 new cases, supporting 1191 students (up from 714 the previous year). We support students in a wide variety of ways including:
 - a. Supported students with academic appeals and Extenuating Circumstances (EC's) resulting in students gaining additional assessment opportunities and not being withdrawn.
 - b. Helped students understand and respond to allegations of misconduct and avoid the most severe penalties being applied such as expulsion.
 - c. Helped students understand and respond to fitness to practice concerns and avoid being withdrawn.
 - d. Helped students resolve complaints about the University, improving their experience and satisfaction.



STUDENT ADVICE AND WELLBEING

Wellbeing Projects and Initiatives

A new strand to what we do, the SU is putting student wellbeing at its heart, adopting a proactive approach to student mental health, creating opportunities for community, whilst having fun and a laugh.

- 31. 120 students enjoyed Pizza and Puzzle: a chance to make new friends, put together puzzles and play boardgames while enjoying some pizza.
- 32. We organised puppy yoga and therapy dogs, and over 70 students loved it. Our embroidery session became an important friendship circle for 20 students, and we created a space for a Henna artist to work with our students.
- 33. Our women-only yoga session has grown in popularity through the year with regular attendance of 9-15 students, using yoga to help improve wellbeing, fitness and mental health.
- 34. We created new maps of the campus in fourteen different languages to be used during welcome week, supporting the international student's transition.

Welcome Desk

When you walk into the Students' Union, we want all students to feel welcome, a genuine place on campus to talk to someone IRL - and get the answers you are looking for.

BUDGET £17,000

1.5 FTE STAFF MEMBERS



ACCOMMODATION

- 35. The desk was open each day from 9:00 to 18:00, staffed by students for students.
- 36. Over 12000 student walk though our doors during the course of the year.

The Green

We have run The Green for over 40 years, providing affordable student accommodation and creating a unique accommodation-based student community.

BUDGET T/O £1/2m, £50,000 PROFIT 165 TENANTS

2.8 FTE STAFF MEMBERS

- 37. We provide the best value accommodation for Aston students in Birmingham. Our fees of less than £80 per week save our students a staggering £650,000 per year compared to the other mainstream student accommodation providers.
- 38. 95% of our residents say that are very satisfied with the accommodation and service they receive.
- 39. The tenancy experience will be improved further with the adoption of the new BUNK tenant and management system.

Aston Student Homes

The only place at Aston University for accommodation advice, information, and guidance. The service advertises 1000s of rooms available to students in the local area and provides bespoke advice to students on their particular needs.

ZERO BUDGET
SELF FUNDED VIA ADVERTISING
AND STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

0.8 FTE STAFF MEMBER

40. The website continues to be the main route you engage with us, with 1000s of hits per year.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- 41. We have supported students with bespoke accommodation related issues, from non-standard tenancy lengths to housing families and helping student find schools for their children.
- 42. The accommodation fair, which runs twice a year, is a fantastic opportunity for 100s of students to engage and speak with accommodation providers directly.



Student Activities

The life blood of the Students' Union is its student-led clubs and societies, all of which need support and guidance to deliver 1000s of opportunities for students each year - creating lasting memories and friendships that will carry students through Aston and beyond.

BUDGET £233,000

130 CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

5.0 FTE STAFF MEMBERS

43. The student led committe provide over 450 students with leadership experience, and the department administered over 1200 event request forms.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Student Sports Clubs

- 44. Twenty-five sports clubs with 1099 individual members.
- 45. Number of attendees to AU Ball 260.
- 46. Ranking in BUCS 86th.
- 47. £45,000 was spent on transport around the midlands for training and competitions.
- 48. Individual club Competition and achievement.
 - a. £7,500 was raised or for Movember by the Hockey, Football, Rugby, Snow and Swimming and Water polo Clubs. We were one of the top University groups to raise over £5000.
 - b. Dance Club Gloucester (1st and 2nd) Loughborough (1st) Northampton (3rd).
 - c. Cheerleading Club winning National Championship for All Girl Large Level 1 Division at Legacy University Nationals.
 - d. Taekwondo Club -12 medals at British University Taekwondo League National Championships. 11 medals at GTUK.
 - e. Grace Mantova part of England Basketball for University level.
 - f. Cricket Club -3rd place in indoor cricket in British University Collegiate Sports (BUCS) league.
- 49. A Sports Therapist from University College Birmingham (UCB) has been secured for all clubs, and they also have access to UCB's human performance centre for strength and conditioning beginning September 2023.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES



Student Socities

- 50. Number of society memberships 2746 and 49 new societies.
- 51. Notable Society Successes:
 - a. Sikh Society shortlisted for National Society and Volunteering Award for Event of the Year
 - b. Sikh Society finalist for British Sikh Awards. 'Social Inclusion Group of The Year'
 - c. Law Society winner for LawCareers.Net 'Best Social Event'
 - d. Enactus Society Winner for Action for Impact competition in the Stop Hunger category for Sodexo
 - e. Vietnamese Society hosted an event celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relationships with the Vietnamese Ambassador to the UK

Celebrating Faithy, Culture and Inclusion

The student membership at Aston is one of the most diverse and inclusive of any Students' Union in the country. This year the Students' Union has made a genuine effort to celebrate this diversity for its students, helping to create more student communities and bring 1000s of students together, having fun celebrating their cultures and heritage.

- 52. 500 students enjoyed food and fireworks for Diwali in November, and we followed this with a celebration of Lunar New Year in February.
- 53. We brought together staff and students for a time of reflection on Armistice Day and Holocaust Memorial Day.

CULTURE

- 54. Our continued partnership with the Cambridge Education Group and the Aston OnCampus students bloomed with four bespoke induction events organised and attended by over two hundred students, helping them transition into UK life.
- 55. With more international students on campus than ever before we evolved the International Buddy Scheme encouraging student-student interaction. We organised five individual event with 245 attendees.
- 56. We administered over 291 guest speakers forms, representing 431 speakers, encouraging debate, protecting freedom of speech and the University's reputation.
- 57. Our Islamic society supported students through Ramadan, helped them celebrate Eid and raised over £20,000 during the year.
- 58. We helped raise funds for Turkey and Syria Raised £2000 in 6 hours donated half to British Red Cross and Islamic Relief UK.
- 59. We distributed 160 Christmas wellbeing packs and 200 Ramadan packs.
- 60. Our Part Time officers worked to ensure the students' union was recognising and celebrating student success and struggles including, but not limited to Black History month, Pride Month, International Women's Day.

Astonbury

This year was the year we brought Astonbury back – a whole campus event to celebrate the diversity and inclusivity of our membership, by showcasing the best of students, culture, food, and music on campus. Following the pandemic the Students' Union and University wanted to give all students a chance to celebrate together again.



- 61. Over 1500 students enjoyed the day and made memories for life.
- 62. The event featured the best of our clubs and societies, some of the best up and coming acts around and arguably the best food in the UK. As a first event we could not be happier with the feedback.

Commercial Engagement and Building Operations Hospitality and Retail

For many students, our spaces, and places to eat and drink, and spend time with friends, charge a device or simply do a bit of work are the most important part of the Students' Union building.

DEFECIT £65,000

5.5 FTE STAFF MEMBERS

20 CASUAL STAFF

- 63. 70,000 IRL face to face interactions with students in The Lounge and 30,000 face to face interactions with students in The Union Shop.
- 64. We have supported our students with employment and have paid out over 3000 hours in student staff pay.
- 65. You have become brand ambassadors for the University by purchasing over 3000 branded items including 1000 hoodies.
- 66. We have served 6,400 discounted hot drinks products to assist the cost of living crisis.
- 67. We provided a safe space on campus for those socials on Wednesdays with over 1000 club member getting involved and making amazing memories.
- 68. We provided you with 4,500 snacks & crisps, 11,500 confectionary items and 12,000 soft drinks. You loved munching your way through Bebeto, Haribo, couldn't get enough of anything Kinder, Cadbury was also high on your shopping lists (good job, we are in the Adrian Cadbury building) and are very partial to a bag of Cheetos, loved drinking Fanta fruit twist.
- 69. We showcased live sports throughout the week and have given you the opportunity to watch the Premier League, Women's Super League, Champions League, World Cup 2022, Women's Euro's 2022 & Cricket World Cup 2022 to name a few.
- 70. Over one thousand people participated in the quiz and we paid out £1500 in prize money.

COMMERCIAL

- 71. We have had over four hundred entries into our pool tournaments, supporting the Pool Society to increase their membership and get free access to the tables, with also 12,000 games of pool being contested over the course of the year.
- 72. And finally, over 300 separate songs have been beautifully sung on a Friday night with our karaoke night.

Building and Operations

The award-winning building remains one of the best places on campus to spend time, moreover it provides facilities for our student groups for meetings and get togethers, and hosts a number of events for the Students' Union and University.

BUDGET £134,000

BUDGET FOR LEASE AND UTILITIES £531,000

- 73. We have helped deliver many events throughout the year with the highlights being Welcome Week, Diwali, Lunar New Year, Holi and Astonbury.
- 74. Our clubs & societies have used the space to practice, meet up and deliver their yearly events with Cheerleading, Dance & Bhangra using the halls to sharpen their skills over 130 times.
- 75. We make a positive contribution to the University's recruitment tragets by being an integral part of the University Open Day experience, hosting prospective students from around the West Midlands.
- 76. We have interacted with over 10,000 students, supporting them to deliver opportunities and their use of space.
- 77. We spent £130,000 on the facilities team to ensure they are safe and clean for our students to use.
- 78. We were an integral part of the Aston University Graduation experience hosting over 10,000 visitors during the celebrations.



Marketing and Media

Our digital space is as important as our physical space, it is a place students come together and literally share their thoughts and ideas. Our website and regular communications keep students informed about Students' Union activity and our partnerships link-up exciting brands to students.

BUDGET £124,000, W/ £45,000 INCOME 5.0 FTE STAFF MEMBERS

Instagram

79. Instagram continued to dominate our digital engagement, you love it, and we love it. With 3273 posts, 1300 stories and an average reach of 2600. Our total number of followers is now over 6800.

Website Engagement

- 80. 132,000 times you visited our website to view over one million pages for key information and advice, and to visit the online shop to join various clubs and societies.
- 81. The website statistics we are proud: Impressions 1250, Engagement Rate 4.69%, Bounce Rate 47.53%

MARKETING

LinkedIn

82. Our profile and activity on LinkedIn continued to grow, as this fast becomes the place for final year students, Post Grads, and recent alumni to engage with the Students' Union.

With over 1800 impressions and an engagement rate of 20.4, there is no better place to share your professional success stories.

Newsletter Engagement

83. We continued to send out fortnightly newsletters to students, with different newsletters aimed at differing year groups. On average the newsletter was opened by 22% of all students, keeping you informed and engaged.

Media and Advertising

- 84. Over the year we facilitated thirty student-facing businesses that attracted almost 4000 students and generated 600 personal interactions, from freebies to students or great deals online, saving students money.
- 85. Our media and advertising work has generated £46,000 that we have invested back into the Students' Union.

Partnerships

86. We worked with Marketing Society to create the start of a genuine marketing eco system on campus, engaging up to 34 society members.



CENTRAL SERVICES

- 87. We have supported the Aston Student Engagement Team (ASET) for Astonbury promotion across campus. We provided real time experience and relevant training to volunteers in terms of best practises on approaching students and selling tickets.
- 88. We have worked with popular brands like Dominos, National Express and ensured they followed our sustainable practices, provided valuable deals to students (£2 pizzas, discount codes for bus travel).
- 89. We have provided no or low-cost high value partnerships (to our student members) with charities like Umbrella, to offer the latest sexual health and wellbeing advice and NHS Blood Transplant, to help students save lives.

Students' Union Central Services and Governance

Not everything we do in the SU is student facing, so much has to happen "in the back office" to support what happens across the entire organisation.

Financial Services

During the year, the finance department have provided financial services to students, volunteers, staff, and external stakeholders. These include services such as making timely payments for goods and services and ensuring the Union meets its financial liabilities.

BUDGET £114,000

2.8 FTE STAFF MEMBERS

- 90. Around 12,000 payments to student volunteers and employees to enable the smooth running of student group, operations, and events..
- 91. Timely management accouns are produced each month for eighteen seperate budget headings, allowing staff and officers to make informed decisions. During a year, the University will give the SU £1.75m as a block grant and we will turnover £3million..
- 92. Meeting regulatory compliance such as submitting returns and filing of accounts in accordance with statutory deadlines is a priority for the Students' Union as measured by the clean audit conducted by our audit partner Crowe.
- 93. We have submitted a sizeable investment fund to ensure the Students' Union follows the same trajectory of growth as the University, in line with its new 2030 strategy.

CENTRAL SERVICES

Governance and Trustees

Our Trustee Board ensure the Students' Union is run in a timely and effective manner, providing oversight and scrutinhy of its strategy, outputs, and outcomes.

- 94. The Board and its sub committees met ten times during the year, with volunteers donating two hundred hours of their time and reading up to five hundred pages of reports and 'papers'.
- 95. Key outcomes of the trustee board this year include:
 - a. New strategic HR support
 - b. Additional financial support for staff and officers during the cost-of-living crisis
 - c. Oversight of budget setting process, a block grant increase of 5% and funding for new events and wellbeing priorities

Human Resources

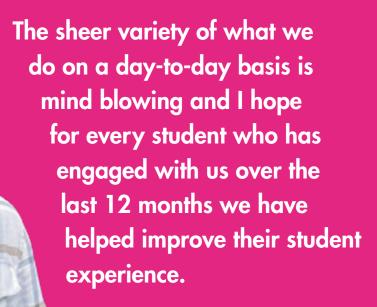
The Students' Union spends more money on its wage bill than any other single items of expenditure - we are our staff members, who work tirelessly and selflessly to deliver the best student experience possible. They need support and guidance to be able to conduct their roles effectively.

- 96. 32 staff members work in various roles to deliver services and opportunities to enhance your student experience and one quarter of the staff team are new into the role this year.
- 97. Student staff have worked over 6400 hours in the Students' Union and earnt over £71,000.
- 98. Our Staff Engagement Survey was completed by a record number of staff, both permanent and student (casual) and returned a respectable staff engagement score of 74%
- 99. 20 staff and officers attended a First Aid at work training course, we want our students to feel safe and cared for.
- 100. 25 staff attended Race Equity Training, delivered by Mission Diverse, fifteen staff and officers attended a Pause Mental Training, and our Senior Leadership as part of our evolving Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity plan.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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When I was elected as the Students' Union President I had no idea what an utterly amazing and exciting organisation I, and my other sabbatical officers, would have the pleasure of leading.





ATUL RANA
PRESIDENT 2022-23 & 2023-24