

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH STUDENTS' UNION

our year 2017-18



WELCOME

UPSU has had another successful year where we represented the voice of our members and continued to deliver excellent services and activities with the aim of achieving the highest quality student experience for our students here at the University of Plymouth.

2017/18 was the final year of our current 3-year strategic plan and we are pleased to report we have achieved many of our goals and ambitions, whilst also continuing to grow and develop as a successful, sustainable organisation. Since November 2017 we have been working alongside an external research company to formulate a new three-year, outcome-focussed strategy. This will provide us with a framework for positive change, based on extensive feedback from our students and stakeholders.

We continue to celebrate the successes of our student communities through our Sports, Societies, Volunteering and the SSTAR awards. We received 578 nominations for our SSTAR awards this year, 81 students were recognised for their sporting achievements, 61 received awards for their volunteering activities and 65 for their accomplishments through their societies and activities.

Yet again, our students also recorded an incredible number of volunteering hours, with 24,820 community volunteering hours recorded in total this year. Students continued to passionately fundraise for local and national charities, this year raising £287,043. These are outstanding achievements for our students and clearly demonstrates their commitment to giving something back to society.

SABBATICAL OFFICERS

Hadiza Adah // Alex Doyle // Lowri Jones // Maja Smith
James Warren // Philippa Williams

EXTERNAL & STUDENT TRUSTEES

Núria Filella // James Hemsley // Matthew Horton
Jane Hopkinson // Neil Marshall // Graham Stirling

STAFF

Lewis Akeroyd // Emma Anderson // Rebecca Anderson
Abigail Aslett // Velu Balasubramanian // Sophie Bannan
Lucy Bannister // Sarita Banyard // Laura Beck // Jane Benton
Michelle Bell // Richard Best // Tammy Boniface // Lauren Brickley
Stephanie Brookes // Susan Cannon // Lisa Carkett
Alan Cheyne // Gemma Chilvers // Helen Chitseko
Alec Cockram // Gina Connelly // Fiona Covell // Taylor Curtis
Sarah Davey // Harry Davis // Carl Evans // Alan Ford
Daniel Forster // Edward Gilbertson // Esther Gray
Victoria Greenway // Julie Hahn // Janine Hems // Richard Hicks
Oliver Horne // Sarah Hounsell // Arun Hudson // Rachel Ince
Nadine Jeffery // Barbara Kaminska // Dean Lawton
Jessica Lever // Lynsey Lloyd // Mark Lockett // James Mack
Jack Marsh // Sarah Masey // Abby Mason // Daniel Matthews
Josephine Meakin // Louise Mealand // Rachel Miller
Helen Milne // Jonathan Noades // Nikki Parker // Johanne Porter
Joe Porter // Tracy Priestman // Katie Quick // Margaret Rees
Michael Richards // Paul Robinson // David Rose
Michelle Rysdale // Ian Short // Heather Stenning
Linda Stewart-Birch // Leona Sutton // Nicola Symons
Dean Toney // Susan Twomey // Wisam Waheed
Jacqueline Wakeling // Steve Whear // Nichola Wheeldon
Emma Wiggin // Ben Wiginton // Kate Wood
Paula Woodley // Elizabeth Worthington

UPSU continues to be recognised as a successful, high-achieving organisation; this year we achieved the NUS Best Bar None Gold award, coming third nationally, and have also achieved a NUS Green Impact Excellence award. We strive for continuous improvement and sustainability at UPSU and one of the ways we do this is by inspiring and engaging our amazing staff team to facilitate student experiences now and into the future.

Despite our many achievements and successes, this year has not been without its challenges. Continuing commercial competition, both on and off campus, has resulted in some budget challenges for us. However, with excellent cost control and the outstanding efforts of the commercial teams, we have seen improvements and are hopeful we will still achieve our year-end financial targets.

Our Sabbatical Officers, Part-Time Officers and Student Representatives have been busy running numerous successful campaigns, activities and projects. The Eat Sleep Recycle Repeat campaign, developed after Environmental Society's proposal to Union Council last year, led to great partnership working with the University and saw the launch of new waste signage around campus during Green Week. Green Week also saw the Environment & Sustainability Part-Time Officer lead on The Green Conversation, a new event focusing on gathering feedback, sharing knowledge and networking; all students who contributed to our Green Impact accreditation each showcased what they have been doing related to sustainability.

UPSU officers and staff also collaborated with the University to create a Student Charter, a tripartite agreement of commitments that was developed with student feedback. Lobbying the University on key student issues has been vital this year – from the international guarantor scheme, to the mental health task force, to hidden course costs and sports provision – representatives have celebrated many achievements this year. They have also driven to improve UPSU itself by carrying out a survey on barriers to engagement, aiming to alleviate some of the issues preventing students from participating in sports, societies and activities. They also hosted a survey on students' drug use to learn what more we could do to support students who choose to use illegal drugs. Officers have also been working hard towards NUS's Alcohol Impact accreditation and the LGBT+ Part-Time Officer successfully campaigned for an additional gender-neutral toilet in the Union and improved signage throughout the building.

We have continued to build relationships and work in close partnership with the University this year and we are grateful for their ongoing support. It has been another great year for UPSU and this report clearly demonstrates how we are successfully working towards our vision of “transforming lives through experience”.



Lowri Jones

UPSU President 2016-18



Gina Connelly

UPSU Chief Executive

SABBATICAL OFFICERS



PRESIDENT

Lowri Jones

It has been an honour to be your President for another year, working alongside our brilliant students and staff members on numerous campaigns and activities. Eat, Sleep, Recycle, Repeat continued into this academic year and working in partnership with the University was key to its success. The campaign was used for the launch of new waste signage across campus during UPSU's annual Green Week, which was better than ever before with 10 different events over the week. Our brand new tripartite agreement in the form of a Student Charter was written together with the University and based on feedback from over a hundred students. 345 students responded to the Practice Safe Sesh - Drug Culture Survey, from which actions for both the University and UPSU will be explored over the next year. I have attended over 50 University meetings to collaborate, lobby, influence and represent the student body.



VP SPORT

Philippa Williams

This year has seen a major step forward for Sport at the University. Beginning for the second consecutive year with a Quiet Hour at the Sports Fair, this hour is designated to be quiet, approachable and relaxed, improving accessibility for students. We have seen the importance of sport being integrated within the Mental Health Taskforce and received ethics approval for a study to understand the effect that physical activity interventions can have upon students with low-moderate mental ill health. We have investigated the barriers that students face to engaging in UPSU Activities, specifically timetabling on Wednesday afternoons, and have begun a campaign gaining support from the University on this matter. We have also been working with the University to revise the offer for Sporting Scholars, ensuring that we support them to achieve within their sporting disciplines.



VP EDUCATION

Maja Smith

Over the past year, I have had the pleasure of supporting the 17 School Reps and over 800 Course Reps, in ensuring that students get the most from their academic experience. We have had 861 participants in the Hidden Course Cost Survey, the results of which formed a series of recommendations aiming to ensure transparent costs for all whilst studying at the University of Plymouth. I have progressed the Postgraduate Development Grant, a fund of £9,000, which will allow PGT and PGR Students to bid for funding to enhance their student experience. This year we also had the pleasure of introducing the Mel Joyner Award for Championing Equality and Diversity at the 2018 SSTAR Awards, as well as considering 578 nominations across 4 student-led judging panels.



VP INTERNATIONAL & OUTREACH

Hadiza Adhah

This year has been an amazing year for international students and partner college students. We have been able to see an increased engagement from students on and off campus. A unified approach between the University, UPSU staff and students resulted in increased student engagement and satisfaction.

This year, I developed the international guarantor scheme further, lobbying the University to take action and make a huge difference to international students. I was also able to raise the celebration of diverse events within the University, resulting in an engaged school year. We raised awareness of opportunities available to students and created avenues for educating and sharing experiences and cultures.

I championed international and partner college students throughout, bringing them to the forefront of our priorities and I am so proud of all our achievements so far.



VP WELFARE

James Warren

I'm so honoured to have been your VP Welfare. I worked with the University to ensure there is an increase of mental health support on campus and worked to build a mental health task force to review our current offer. The result of this is training for staff, a wait time of no longer than 4 weeks and embedding resilience into the courses. I reviewed the Know The Line campaign, creating a new consent workshop and guidelines for students, looking at how to stay safer in Plymouth. UPSU continued the NUS Alcohol Impact accreditation scheme, which promotes responsible drinking on campus. I held 4 pop up SUs at various halls, ran an Alcohol Awareness Week in November, a Christmas party for students in December, worked with the University to create a document for protected characteristics for both students and staff and held UPSU's first Wellbeing festival.



VP ACTIVITIES

Alex Doyle

This year has shown huge success in all things under activities at UPSU. Membership of our student-led societies has shown a huge improvement, reaching up to 4,178 signups this academic year. There has been an increase in Give It A Go sessions, fundraising and creation of new societies. Furthermore, alongside VP Sports, I have researched the barriers to engagement in UPSU Activities and with this report, we can start planning to make changes to improve accessibility to societies, sporting, volunteering and all other UPSU activities. This year I have also worked hard to make sure student volunteers, whether that be through committees, charities, fundraising or coaching can recognise how they are developing their own skills to ensure they can articulate what they have learnt through reflections, recognition and the ICONS reward scheme.

REPRESENTATION & DEMOCRACY

Our core purpose is to represent the views of our students, to facilitate and drive positive changes and make improvements to their University lives.

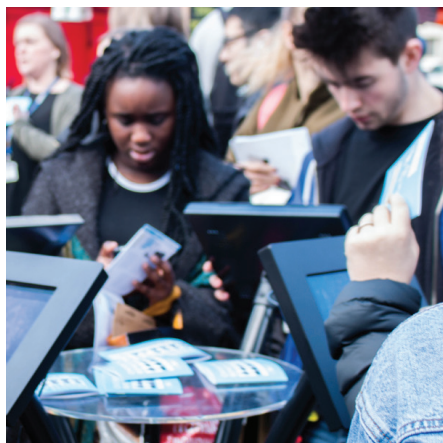
this year:

- 16 candidates supported in Student Elections running for 6 Sabbatical Officer positions.
- 4,704 students voted in the Student Elections casting 24,837 votes. 22% voter turnout, the highest in the past 6 years.
- Over 800 Course Representatives supported and trained through 7 sessions throughout the year.
- 10 Part-Time Officers & 1 Union Council Chair elected in our By-Election.
- 1,021 students voted in the NUS Referendum in May, with 55% voting for UPSU to remain affiliated to National Union of Students.
- We launched the Make a Change module on upsu.com, offering students the opportunity to put forward ideas to improve. In total 9 ideas were put forward, with 507 votes cast across all of them and 1 idea being passed.
- 6 School Representatives were elected in a By-Election. In total 15 School representatives were elected with 9 being elected in the March election of the previous academic year.
- 861 students participated in the Hidden Course Cost Survey, the results of which formed a series of recommendations aiming to ensure transparent costs for all.
- 2,986 students responded to our Strategic Plan survey, helping shape the future of UPSU.
- 2,088 students helped us in our Officer Role Review survey, to ensure that our key representative roles are fit for our membership.
- 52 Student Forum meetings were hosted.
- 490 students contributed to our Barriers to Participation survey to help us understand the difficulties they face when trying to participate in activities alongside their academic studies. This helped to support our campaign to Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free.
- 4 Union Council meetings were hosted this year, where elected officers debated and passed 8 motions that will be valid for 2 years.
- We had a full delegation (7) of Representatives attend the National Union of Students Conference in Glasgow.
- 345 students took part in our confidential drug use research as part of the Practice Safe Sesh Campaign; this campaign helped to highlight the risks associated with drug use and helped to keep students who choose to use illegal substances as safe as possible when doing so.
- A £9,000 Postgraduate Development Grant was secured, which will allow PGT and PGR Students to bid for funding to enhance their student experience.



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It's important to have your opinions heard and one way to do that is to vote for those who can represent you, otherwise nothing will get done.



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It is important for students to have their say in who is representing their University and Students' Union and to give them a chance to vote for what we want to see in those representatives and make sure they are standing up for what the students want to see.

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The SU is run democratically which is really positive and therefore all of the decisions made by UPSU will somehow affect students/prospective students. Therefore it's extremely important to make sure your voice is heard and vote.

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If you don't vote, you have no chance of seeing changes that you wish to see, and have someone represent you that you believe is best suited to the role at hand. It is important to vote, to voice your opinions and allow UPSU to run the way you want it to be run.

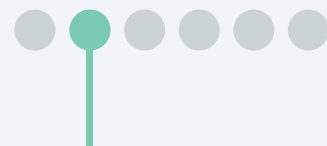


PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

We believe that by increasing and deepening participation, both students and the Union will be strengthened, creating lasting positive effects on the overall University experience.

this year:

- 24,820 Community Volunteering hours were logged by 512 students. 122 students received 50 hour Awards, 52 were awarded 100 hour Awards and 32 were recognised for over 200 hour Awards
- The UPSU Sports Centre had 39,636 visits to the gym.
- The UPSU Sports Centre provided 52 different types of classes, running 1,592 classes with a total attendance of 43,412.
- Our Thursday night Open Mic night remains one of the largest open mic events in the South West with over 12,000 attendees this year.
- Our nightclub had over 65,000 attendees, hosting 63 club nights throughout the year.
- The end of year Summer Ball event was attended by a sell-out crowd of 4,100 students.
- We supported 913 students playing in 34 British Universities and Colleges Sport Teams.
- We helped 534 students engage in watersports activities and hosted a Watersports festival with 188 attendees.
- We supported 693 registered students to try something new with Give It A Go Sport.
- We ran 6 Intramural Sport tournaments, with 3 leagues and 716 participants.
- We helped 262 students try something new with Give it a Go Societies and Activities over 19 sessions.
- We supported students to host 202 external speakers on campus.
- We retained the Varsity championship for the 6th consecutive year, with 20 teams over 12 disciplines and 297 competitors. The competition raised £16,975 for the English Federation of Disability Sport and the Mario Curtis Foundation.
- We helped 12 students sign up to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme with 1 Gold awarded.



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Before this role I surrounded myself with people of very similar mindsets and objectives, both in terms of my academic and personal life. This role has allowed me to step outside of that bubble and interact with a range of people, both during the development and the implementation of the sessions.

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I was really nervous about trying paddleboarding at the Watersports Festival but it was great – I will be going again as I bought myself a board

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There are endless opportunities available to me at University – from volunteering to paid work as an ambassador. There is something for everyone and it means that I can enjoy my current hobbies and interests as well as pursuing others that I may want to start.

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The atmosphere in the SU is amazing on nights out, and the entertainment and events put on are varied and apply to a range of people.

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All quotes are provided by students of University of Plymouth.

EMPLOYABILITY

Securing a job and enhancing employability is very important to our students. We provide a variety of opportunities to help develop skills that will enable our members to seek employment now and in the future.

this year:

- We launched our Core Skills Training Offer, providing 15 training sessions, covering 10 topics: public interaction, leadership, conflict resolution, effective teamwork, customer service, charity fundraising, social media, project management, emotional intelligence and bystander intervention.
- We hosted our first Build Your Future event, with a focus on developing leadership skills and highlighting everyone's capacity for leadership.
- We launched our Peer 2 Peer Training Scheme, which provided 5 students with the opportunity to upskill themselves and train their peers around core skill areas.
- 1,365 students had roles, activities and achievements recognised by UPSU to be included in their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). The report provides a single comprehensive record of a learner's achievement whilst at University beyond just academic recognition.
- Over 400 student staff were employed by UPSU during the year, receiving full training and skills development. Over £380,000 was paid to our student staff in wages.
- We helped 206 students develop key skills through our online hospitality training platform, providing accredited, certificated training.
- All committee roles in sports clubs and societies received full training about their responsibilities at a training day. 15 different workshops were run with over 350 attendees.
- 39 students trained and supported in their volunteering leadership roles, including RAG, Student Led Volunteering and UPSU's Volunteering Forum.





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The Peer 2 Peer scheme has been an amazing programme, which has helped me in a lot of ways become more positive about myself and my achievements. I have also come to develop new friendships which I hope will continue well after university.

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This was a really useful course. I'm looking forward to putting what I've learned into practice.

I will be able to apply what I have learnt to ensure my training is relevant and engaging for all who attend.

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I liked how many new skills I was able to learn whilst working at the SU, I have also met some really nice people. The shifts were so flexible which removed any stress of trying to fit work around my lectures.

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Working for the SU helped to build my confidence not only as a person but professionally and learning that I could do things I didn't think I'd be able to or expect to.

”



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SUPPORT & WELLBEING

The wellbeing of our students and staff team is essential for them to enjoy a happy, healthy and fulfilling life. Throughout the year we provide support, advice and information to contribute to their positive wellbeing.

this year:

- Our Advice service supported 4,673 cases.
- Our Advice service has had a 29% increase in the number of students we have assisted with the University's Fitness to Practise process.
- We launched our online appointment booking system for our Advice service, making it easier and quicker to access advice. 274 students used the system to book appointments with our advisors.
- 4 Student Led Volunteering projects hosted a total of 86 Volunteering events and opportunities which allowed students to explore their local area, make new friends and have a positive impact on their local community.
- We secured funding to deliver a Be Active Reduce Stress project, which will allow students to upskill themselves in numerous training courses such as walk leader, wellbeing champion and mental health to enhance their employability.
- 529 students participated in our Motivate, Generate, Activate activities as part of the Sport England Project. This wellbeing initiative offers discounted accessible activities to help balance the demands of University with a happy and healthy lifestyle.
- We were ranked in the top 3 nationwide for the NUS Best Bar None scheme, achieving the Gold standard. The scheme is aimed primarily at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises.
- We were awarded Plymouth Best Bar None Gold award for our commitment to safe environments and responsible management of alcohol.
- We employed 4 Drink Aware Crew on clubnights throughout the year to help students on nights out in our venue.
- Our Accommodation service helped students to backfill 100% of the rooms that they no longer required for a variety of reasons, saving them over £53,000 in rent charges.



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The best thing I can take away from being on committee is the boost of confidence it has given to me. Before taking on the role I was unable to speak to people I didn't know, so being Chair has forced me to do this and I feel able to speak to new people a lot easier now.

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The UPSU Advice has extremely open and friendly staff! Very open to questions. If staff didn't know the answer they were more than happy to spend time finding one to get back to us. Super friendly bunch! 10/10 would recommend

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The UPSU Advice service provided me with super support and understanding, as has been the case throughout the last 5 years. Not simply knowledgeable, they are always up to date with current policies and procedures

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Since being a volunteer for East African Playgrounds I have been able to expand my confidence by seeing my efforts paying off. I find that the harder I work the happier I am and the bigger impact I can have.

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It is consistent, it is always there if I need somewhere to go, if I feel anxious or need somewhere to sit and clear my head. It's great that somewhere on campus with a relaxing atmosphere is available to myself and other students, I feel very fortunate.

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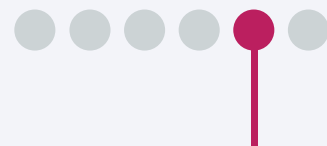


COMMUNITIES

Our members' communities might be their course, the activities they are involved in, where they live, study or socialise. We ensure that we support, promote and develop all communities that our students are part of.

this year:

- £287,043 was raised by UPSU Student Fundraisers, with the money going towards local and national charities.
- We had 4,198 Society members involved in 108 societies, with 16 new societies introduced this year. We also had 16 Student Networks running.
- We had 3,671 students involved in 59 UPSU Sports Clubs.
- The Student Staff Teaching and Representation (SSTAR) Awards received 578 nominations, with 16 main awards being presented.
- We hosted the UPSU Society and Activities Awards. 15 main awards were presented, with 43 half colours and 7 full colours.
- We hosted the UPSU Sports Awards. 8 main awards were presented, with 61 half colours and 12 full colours.
- We hosted the UPSU Volunteer Awards. 22 main awards were presented, with 24 half colours and 17 full colours.
- We ran 7 Market Days on campus throughout the year, bringing local produce and businesses to the University.
- The UPSU Volunteering department introduced 18 new community partners for students to volunteer with.
- We ran the Relays Urbanise event, where 46 primary school children attended sessions including Dodgeball, Radio, Robotics, T-shirt printing, Arts and Crafts and 3D Design. A total of 19 student volunteers contributed 100 volunteer hours to support the event.
- The UPSU Sports Centre has hosted over 600 community group bookings.



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I have formed some of my closest friendships through sport, it creates the sense of a 'family' when you grow together as a team. It has been an opportunity to stay fit, maintain my sport and continue training / competing regularly.

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Being a member of a society is amazingly social, in that you are immersed in a group of people with very similar interests to you. Societies in my opinion are the part of University people talk about when they said that university is the place you meet the most new people and friends.

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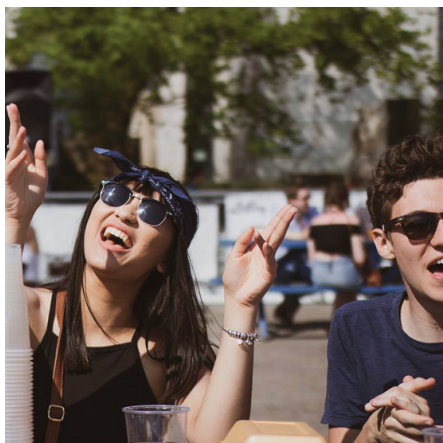


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Being part of a club has given me the chance to learn a new skill and is now my main social group and I have definitely made friends for life.

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The Club has been a very strong influence on my time here. I would not have enjoyed life at uni half as much without it



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When we gathered on the SU rooftop and enjoyed food in the afternoon, it really felt like a part of the uni.

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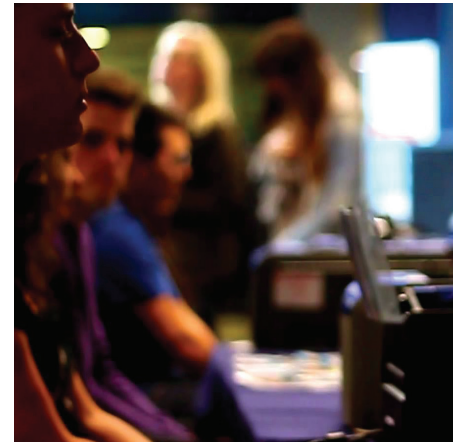
SUSTAINABILITY

To secure the future success and viability of the Union we need to ensure that we develop and maintain quality services and activities, with ethical and well-informed decision-making, delivering long term financial stability.

this year:

- We were awarded the NUS Green Impact Outstanding Excellence award for the second year. The award provides a foundation upon which staff and students alike can work together to develop ethical and environmental credentials at UPSU, with an emphasis upon sustainability.
- We stopped serving plastic straws in the SU Bar, to reduce the use of single-use plastic in our venue.
- We delivered a Green Week campaign, celebrating and educating everyone on the best practices and great work done by students, the University and UPSU in our stance on environmental sustainability.
- 81% of staff would wholeheartedly recommend UPSU as a good place to work (UPSU staff survey 2018).
- In our SU Shop all drinks packaging is fully recyclable and all carriers are fully biodegradable.
- The SU Shop introduced a Fair to Wear range selling 127 salvaged cloth t-shirts. This complemented the 191 Fair Trade clothing items sold. We also introduced a range of Fair Trade confectionery and biscuits.
- In our catering outlets 93% of the products that we prepare are locally sourced in the South West. 95% of our disposable products are recyclable.
- Commercial services saw an overall growth in its financial performance with bar revenue exceeding a million pounds in turnover for the first time in 8 years. Most areas performed to target contributing to our overall financial success this year.
- The Eat Sleep Recycle Repeat campaign, developed last year, led to great partnership working with the University and saw the launch of new waste signage around campus during Green Week.
- Since the launch of our Eat Sleep Recycle Repeat campaign we have sold over 220 reusable coffee mugs and 52 reusable water bottles.





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Students sometimes may get bad press in Plymouth for being messy and uncaring about the City but so many of them are keen to help and they do come out and get involved in the joint beach clean with Marine Science, which more than 60 people attended.”

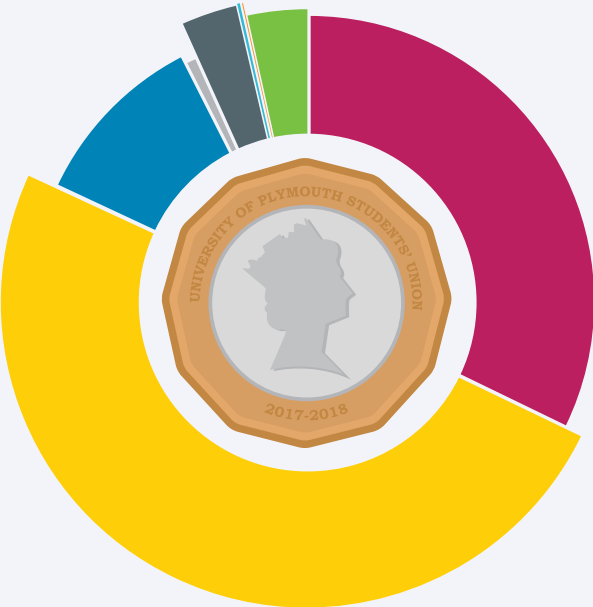
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The Netball Club spoke about what sustainability means to the membership and how as a collective they work to better the world we live in. This varies from reselling old kit / equipment all the way through to the type of bottles they use for training”



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This is a great step for UPSU to take and shows our commitment to a sustainable environment. As an NUS Green Impact organisation it is important that we are setting an example and ensuring that the environment is at the forefront of our thinking in all areas of the organisation.”

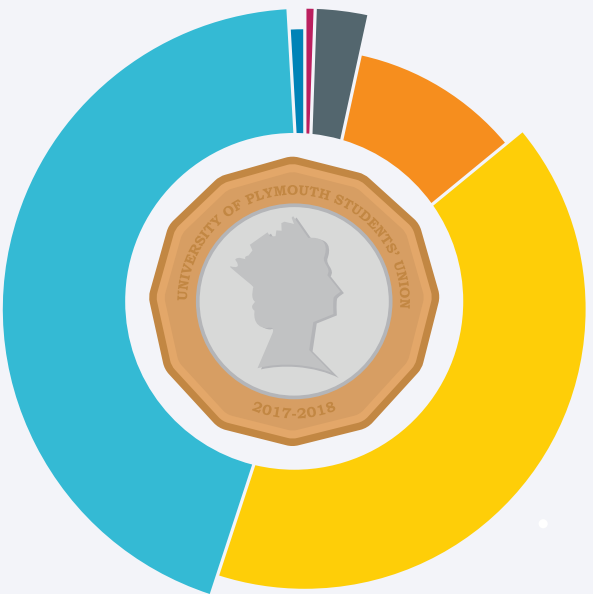


FINANCES



income
£5,607,828

	£	%
University of Plymouth Block Grant	1,805,495	33
Charitable trading and activities income	2,790,773	52
Clubs and Societies	593,936	11
UPSU Trading Ltd income	40,238	1
Other trading activities	173,392	3
Investment income	7,690	<1
Other income	2,829	<1
Transfer from reserves	193,475	<1



expenditure
£5,607,828

	£	%
UPSU Trading Ltd expenses	30,735	<1
Fundraising costs	160,142	3
Clubs and Societies	595,266	11
Retail and other trade	2,299,051	41
Other charitable activities	2,472,907	44
Governance	49,727	1



to transform lives through experience

