



The University of Plymouth Students' Union

Annual Student Meeting

Tuesday 23rd March 2021 – 6pm





Agenda

Welcome and Introduction

Q&A Session with Jackie Weaver, Chief Officer of the ChALC

Notification of any other business – no items have been submitted

Matters to Discuss

- Amendments to UPSU Memorandum and Articles of Association

Accounts and Finance Report Presentation

Affiliations

Reports

- Report from the Board of Trustees
- Report from the Union Council
- Report from the Accountability Board
- Report from the Sabbatical Officers



Welcome

Robert Nutkins
Annual Student Meeting Chair

General Information

- This meeting is being recorded.
- Please use the Q&A function to ask questions. If questions are not relevant to the item being discussed they may be deferred to another section of the meeting.
- Please respect the opinions of other people and their right to speak, if you do get involved in debate, question the issue and don't get personal. Any inappropriate language or behaviour will not be tolerated and anyone being inappropriate or offensive will be removed from the meeting.
- All full members of UPSU can speak and vote on any issue. Other people present may speak but cannot vote. All students currently registered on a UoP course are full members of the union unless they have opted out in writing.
- This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the UPSU Memorandum and Articles, its by-laws and other UPSU policies as relevant.

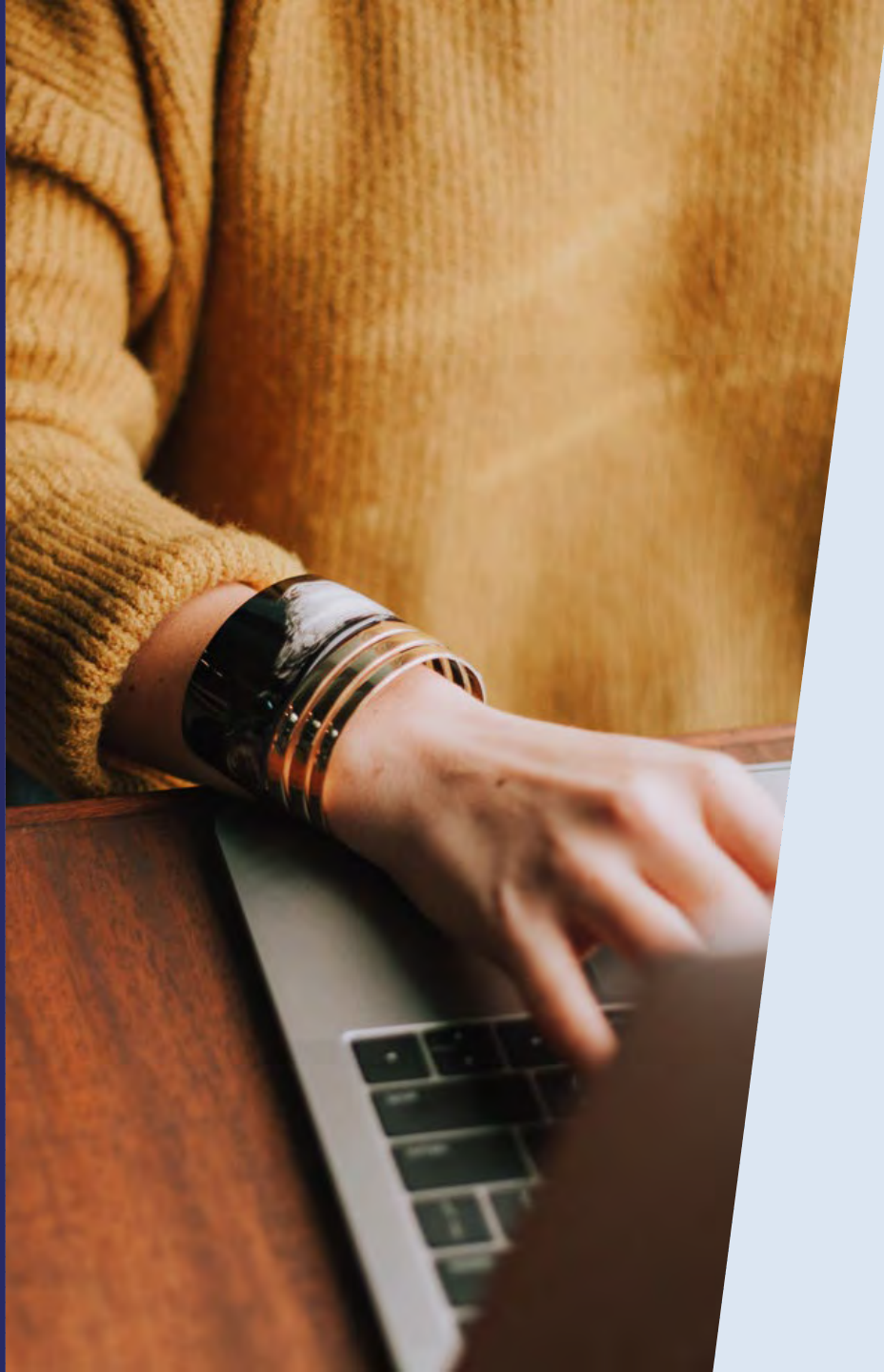




Introduction and Q&A

Jackie Weaver

Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils



Notification of AOB

We have not received notice of any items of other business prior to this meeting



Matters to Discuss



Proposed Amendments to the UPSU Memorandum and Articles of Association

A proposal submitted by the UPSU Trustee Board

[Read more here](#)





Overview

- Our Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&As) is the governing document that defines the Students' Unions aims and objectives and the way the organisation undertakes its core functions. They manage how the SU is run, governed and owned by the members.
- The UPSU Trustee Board is formally proposing changes to the M&As to provide greater flexibility to the decision making within the SU, ensuring that our decision-making structures are more accessible and led by students.



1

Student Petitions

To reduce the number of students required to sign a petition to call a referendum from 400 to 1% of the student membership. This is line with a resolution passed at Union Council on the 9th Feb 2021.

Based on current HESA data the student population at University of Plymouth is 18,410 (1% would be 184 students)

2

Trustee Type and Student Trustees

To remove the specific numbers of each trustee type listed in the Articles of Association, to allow such decisions to be taken jointly by the Trustees and Union Council.

To further note that a formal proposal to increase the number of student trustees on the Board from two to four will be presented to Union Council if these amendments pass at this meeting.



3

External Trustee Term Limit

To reduce the maximum term which external trustees may serve on the Board by one year, and to require ratification by Union Council of external trustees at the end of each term of three years, should they wish to continue to serve on the Board (to the maximum of three terms in total).

4

Removal of Trustees by Union Council

To recognise that External Trustees and Student Trustees, ratified by Union Council must be able to be removed by that body, and not by a referendum of all students.

5

Removal of Student Trustees

To recognise that Student Trustees (as well as External Trustees) appointed by the Board must be able to be removed by that body.



6

Motion of No Confidence Petitions

To reduce the number of students required to sign a petition to trigger a motion of no confidence in an elected officer either through a referendum or a vote at Union Council from 800 to 1% of the student membership.



Students' Union Governance Committees

To remove the list of committees that are required from the Memorandum and Articles and move it to the Bye-Laws. This is to allow the Board of Trustees (with the agreement of Union Council) to establish such committees as are required to properly govern the Students' Union.



UPSU Financial Report 2019/20

Antony Blackshaw

Interim Chief Executive Officer of UPSU

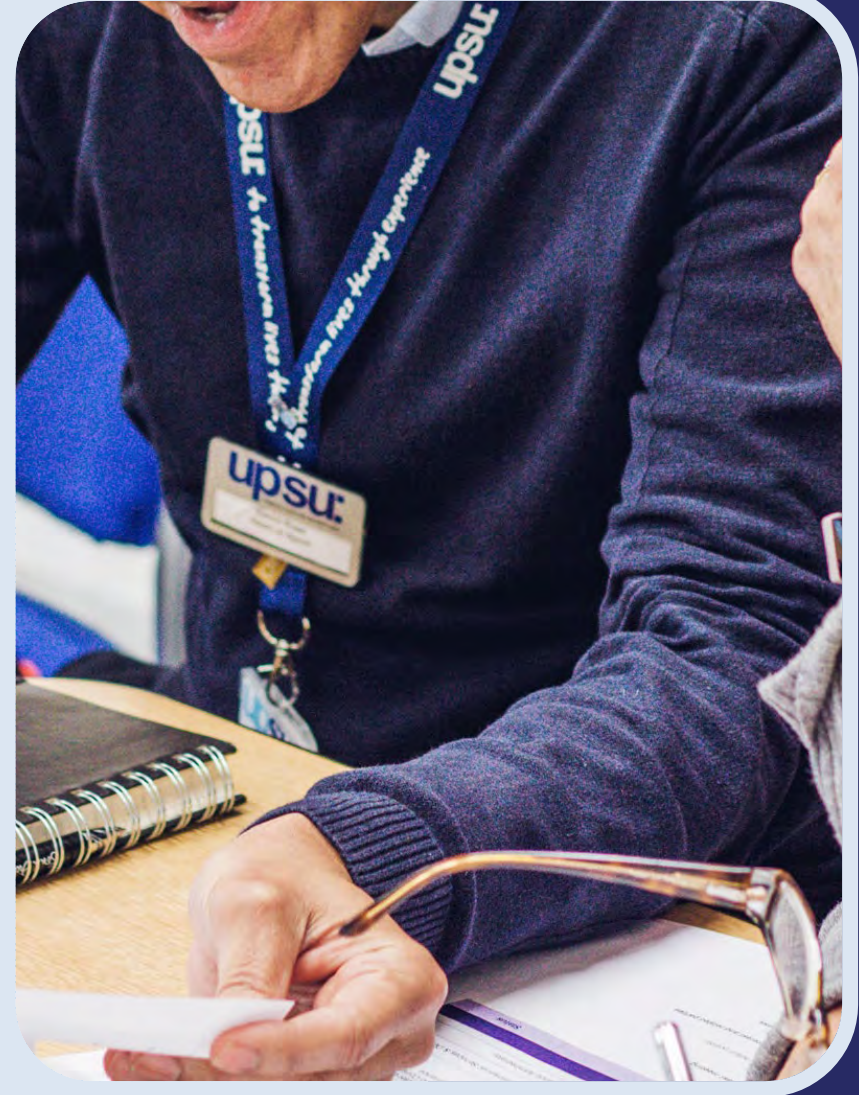


Introduction

- Part of the purpose of the ASM each year is to report on the financial affairs of the Union to our members.
- We became a registered Charity on 31st August 2011. We became a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) on 1st August 2017. Our Charity Commission number is 1172830 and our Companies House number is 106760710. [Read more here.](#)
- The four elected Sabbatical Officers are Trustees of UPSU and together with our four External Trustees and two Student Trustees form our Trustee Board
- The information shown in these slides is taken from our Trustee's report & Financial Statements for the 2019/20 financial year, which is available on our website. [Read the full Trustee's Report and Financial Statements here.](#)

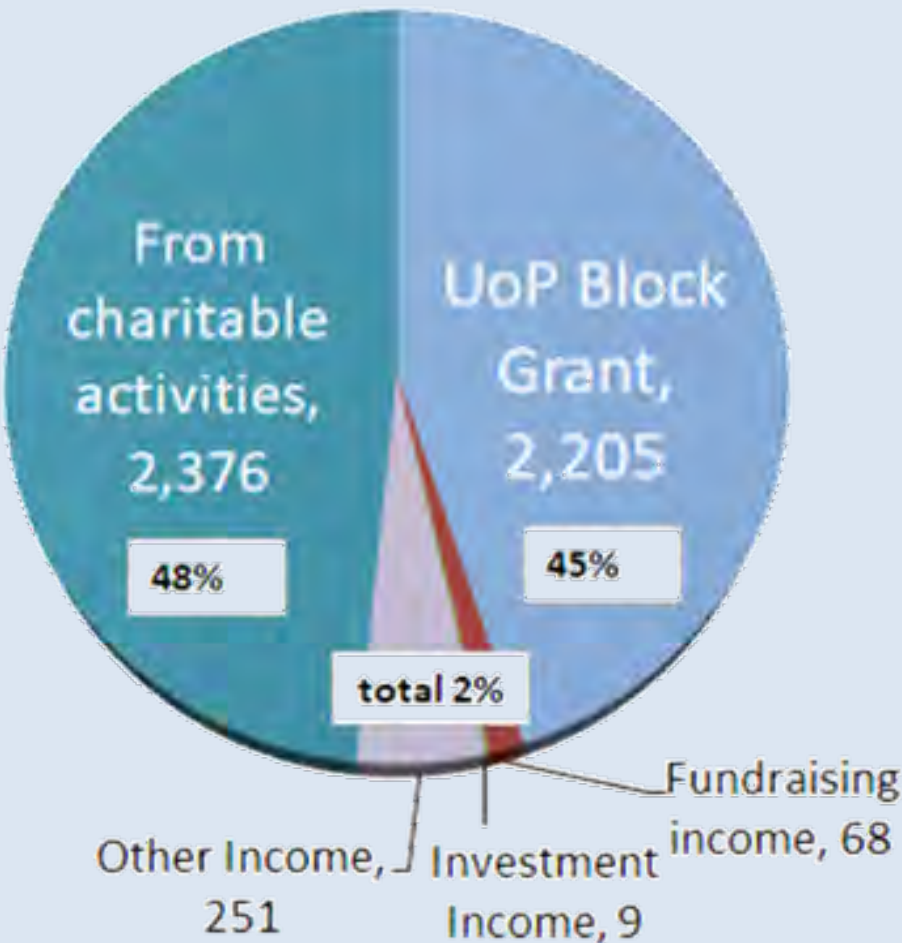
Financial Review 2019/2020

- Total income from all sources **£4,908,518**
- Total expenditure **£5,469,203**
- Management accounts - we generated an operating surplus of **£323k** including £178k of additional block grant for kitchen works.



Where does our income come from?

UPSU Income 2019/20 (£000's), total of £4,909



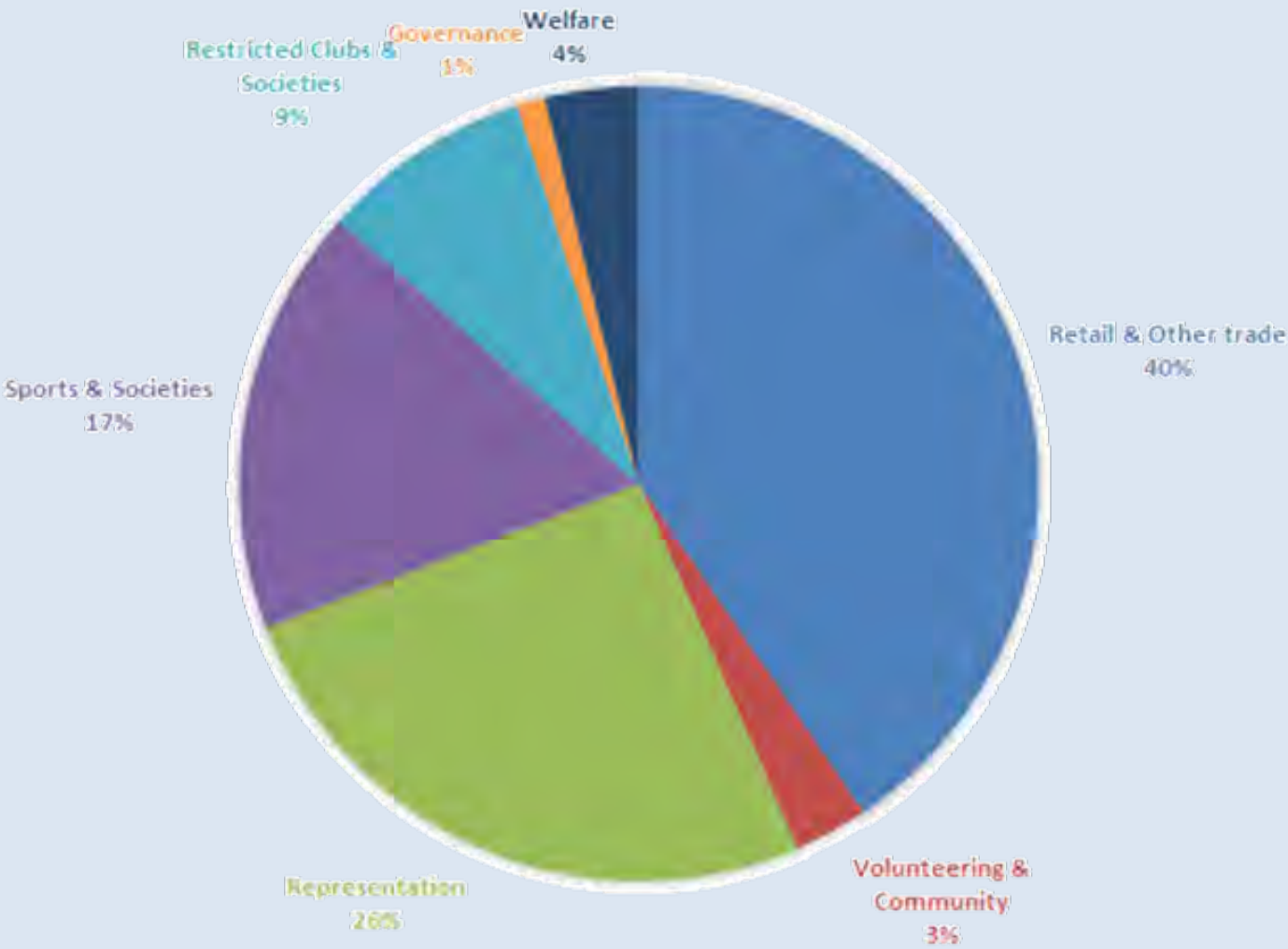
Summary of income since 2005

UPSU Income 2005 to 2020 (£000's)



What do we spend our money on?

UPSU Expenditure – total £5.429m



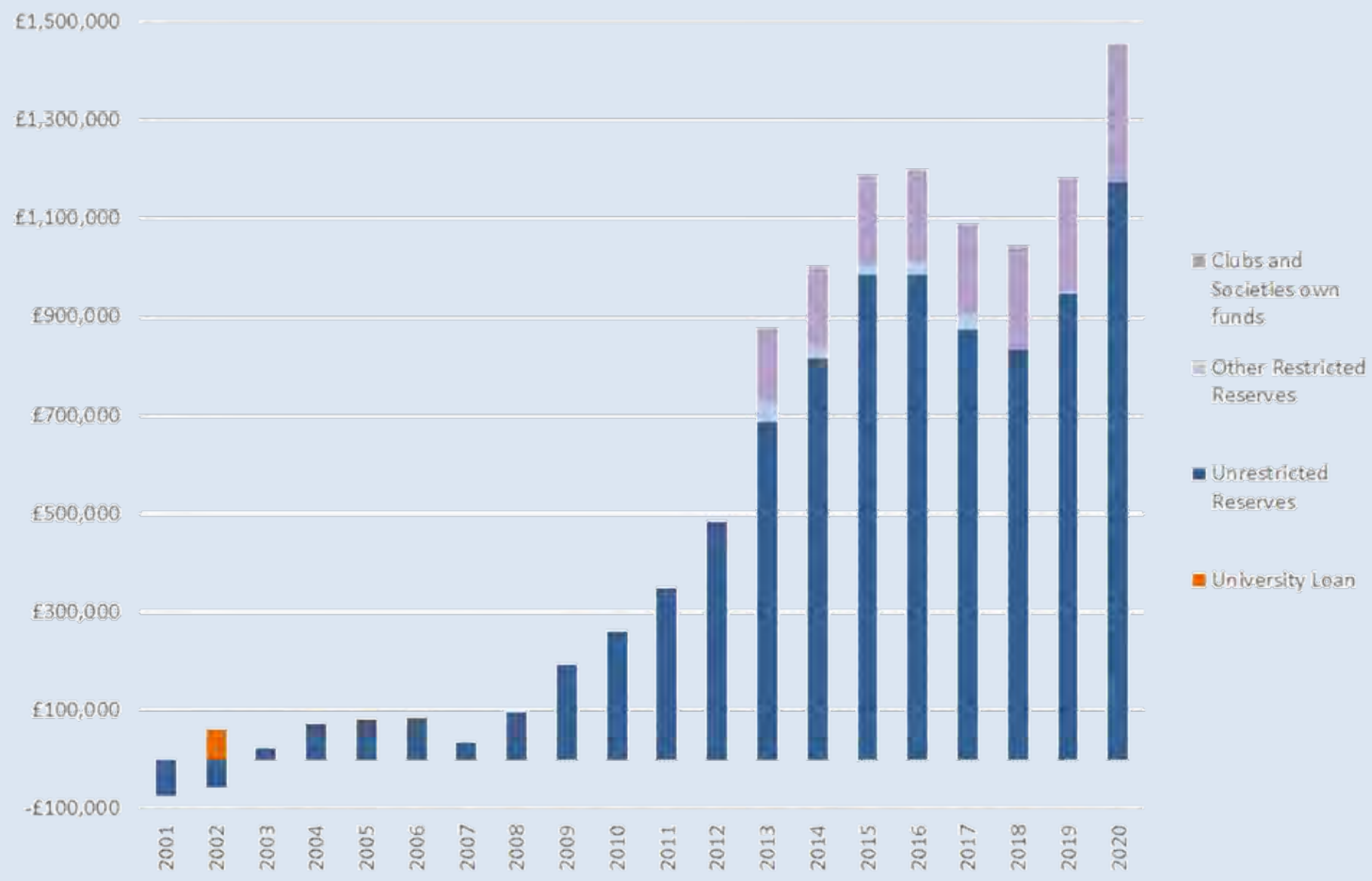


Our financial journey



UPSU Reserves

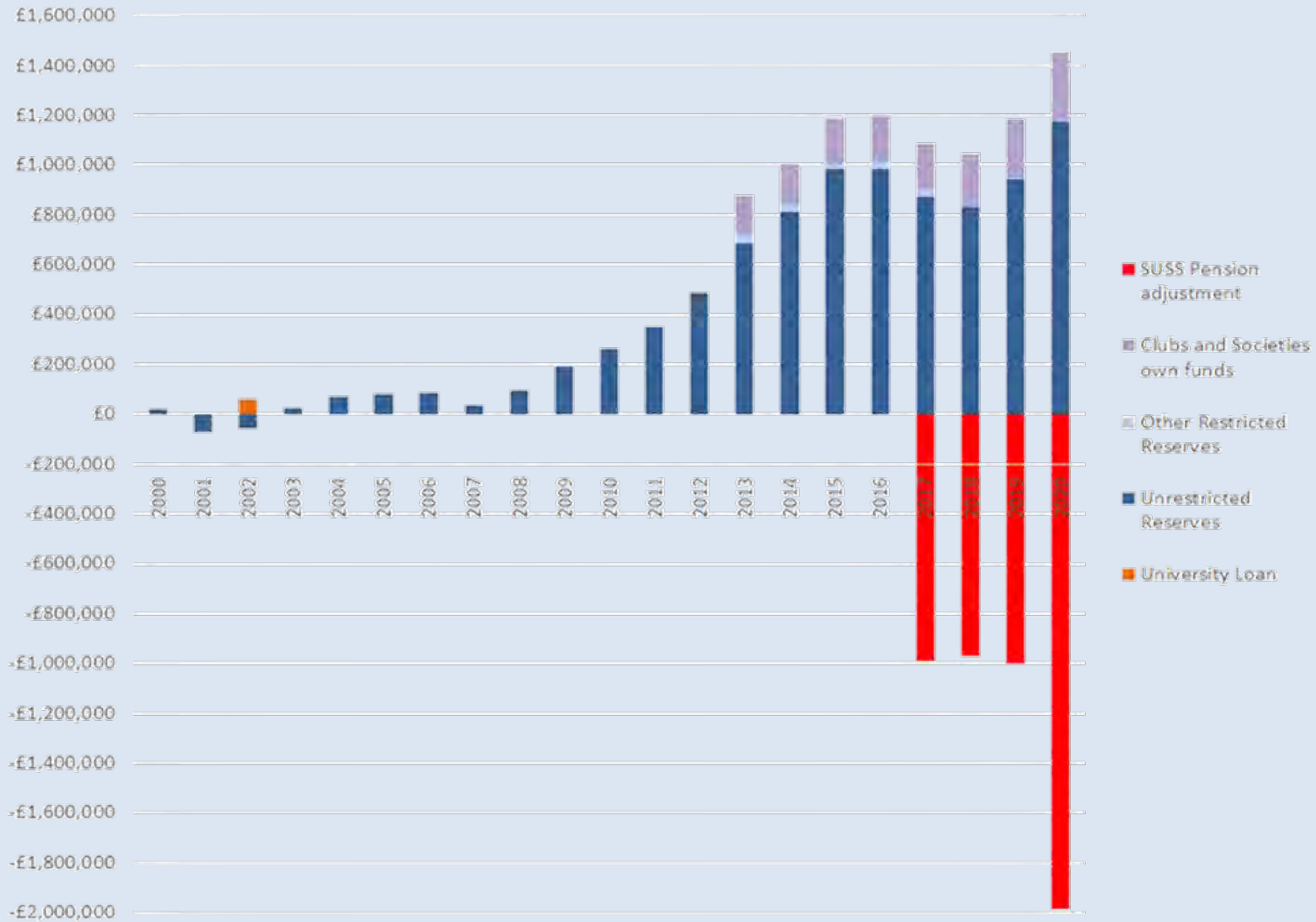
2000 to 2020 (not including pension adjustments)





UPSU Reserves

2000 to 2020 (including pension adjustments)



Summary

- The 2019/20 year saw a continuation of the building of reserves of UPSU
- However, the substantial increase in the pension liability means that, at year end the Balance Sheet is in deficit for the first time in many years.
- The impact of Covid-19 on the 2020/21 accounts means that some of the reserves are likely to have to be used to meet the shortfall in income.





Any questions?

Please use the Q&A function



Affiliations

Robert Nutkins

Annual Student Meeting Chair



Affiliations

Education Act 1994

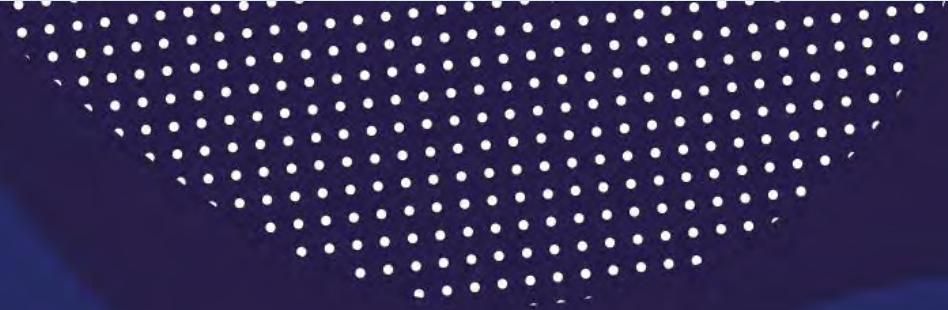
- (k) where the union is affiliated to any external organisations, a report should be published annually or more frequently containing-
 - (i) a list of the external organisations to which the union is currently affiliated, and
 - (ii) details of subscriptions or similar fees paid, or donations made, to such organisations in the past year (or since the last report),
 - and such reports should be made available to the governing body and to all students;

Affiliation in 2019/20

UPSU, on behalf of the generality of the students, is currently affiliated to, and paid affiliation fees and memberships during the year to the following external organisations:

	2020	2019
	£	£
National Union of Students	30,000	57,283
NUS Services Membership	380	380
Advice UK	1,241	1,236
British Universities and Colleges Sports	13,235	16,377
NASMA membership	360	360
WonkHE	3,500	3,500
	48,716	72,256

NUS disaffiliation commenced as of 01 January 2020



Reports





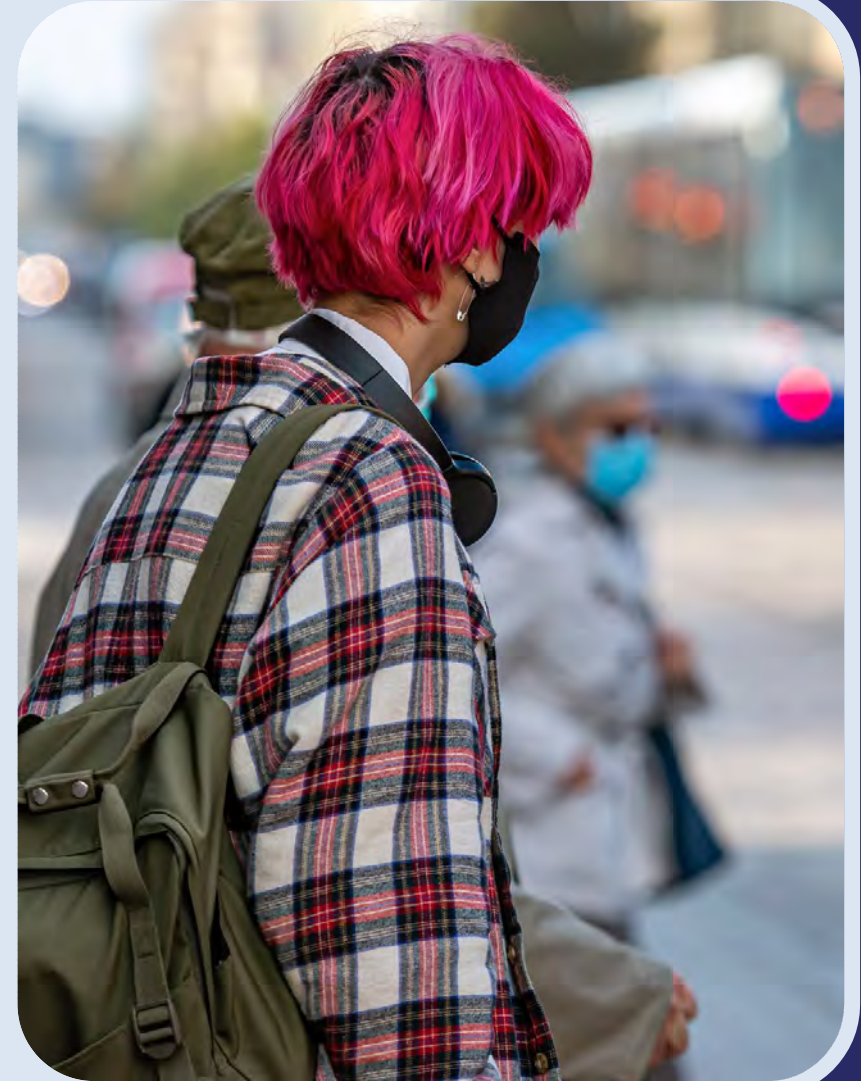
Board of Trustees Report

Chukwudi Ezenyi
UPSU President

[Read the Board of Trustees Summary Report here.](#)

Board of Trustees Report

- Everything the SU has done over the last twelve months has been heavily impacted by Covid-19. From the first lockdown last year, through the uncertainty at the start of this academic year and back into lockdowns 2&3
- The last year has also seen the departure of Gina Connolly, our long-term Chief Executive, the arrival and departure of Sarah Gibson into that role and the appointment of Antony Blackshaw as Interim Chief Executive
- The financial position has been covered in detail already in this meeting but the continuing impact of Covid-19 on our operations and the subsequent financial impact must not be under-estimated, although the Trustees are confident that the reserves held by UPSU will be sufficient to cover losses incurred in the current year. The substantial pensions deficit also is something which continues to exercise the Trustees and senior management of UPSU.





- UPSU has learnt quickly how to operate online with everything from Trustee and Union Council meetings through to the Advice Service moving entirely onto Zoom and Teams, with great success. We have also delivered some innovative online activities including Q&A sessions with key University senior management and have seen good student engagement with these.
- We are planning for the future and for re-opening of services to students as soon as we are allowed by Government restrictions and plan to have key services open after the Easter break.
- Plans for increasing capacity to cope with what we believe will be a record year for engagement and activity in 2021/22 are underway, as is the recruitment of the new permanent Chief Executive who is expected to join UPSU in the summer.



Union Council Report

Robert Nutkins
Union Council Chair

[Read the Union Council Report here.](#)



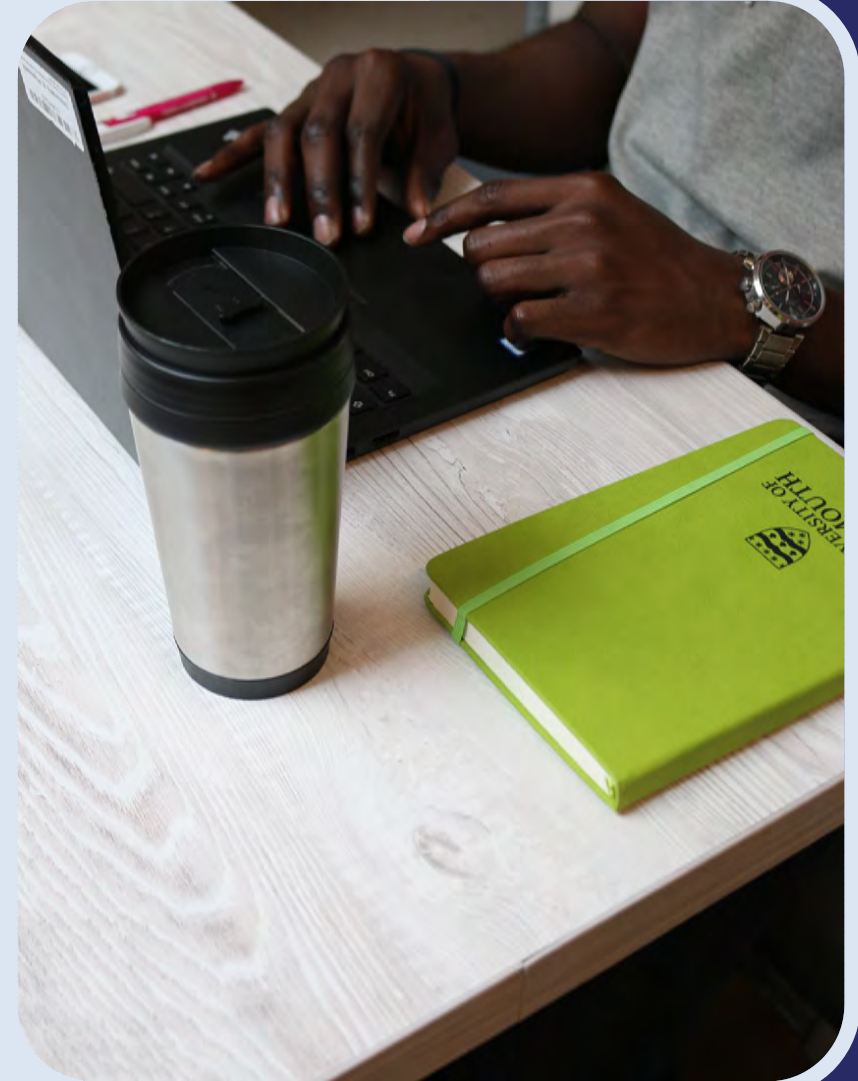
Enacted Policies

This Council has enacted three policies:

- **Advertising Partnerships**
Ending the advertising partnership with Clever Student Lets and enacting discussion before future partnerships are entered, with a capped length of one year.
- **Signature Requirements**
Lowered the number of signatures required to trigger a student referendum or to resubmit a proposal to Union Council from four hundred to one percent of the student population
- **Tuition Fees**
Endorsed the Sabbatical team and the representatives of the University of Plymouth Students' Union to vote for any university policy aimed at lowering university fees for the 2020/2021 academic year

2021 Democratic Review

- This Council, and the Student Voice Team, are currently overseeing the 2021 Democratic Review, to instrumentalise the principles that have become recurring topics of the Council meetings.
- **We are the union of students**, the collective will and wishes of the students, the united demands and requirements and the full spectrum of our diversity.
- There is a need for the University to be accommodating, accountable and answerable to the students and that is the Union's duty to do this.
- The ASM is the chance for the students to take this democracy into its own hands and change the governing documents to make the SU into the accountable and representative body the Council so desires it to be.





Union Council Team 2020/21

This Council and Student Voice team has fervently fought for you this year via:

- Forums
- Podcasts
- Policies
- Social media outreaches
- Charities and movements.

I believe the people of this Council will fight for you after their term has passed and lay a strong enough foundation and pass it on to you, students, to make the Union right and true to its principles expressed in Council meetings.



Accountability Board Report

Alexander Jobling
Accountability Board Chair

[Read the Accountability Board Report here.](#)

Accountability Board Overview

- I was elected to the position of chair of the accountability board after the election in September. When I stepped into the role, I found that students have been unaware of the role of the board and the council and that when they did know of them both they associated them not with students but with the Union itself who they feel was out of touch with students and their needs.
- The Accountability Board is there to scrutinise the elected officers and student led meetings to ensure they are being as fair and representative as they could possibly be, and to hold them to account.
- The board in its entirety believes in the democratic principles that lie at the heart of the Student Union and the Union Council. To that extent we as well as having supported the Chair of Union Council and its members, have worked towards the achievement of our manifesto points.





Accountability Board 2020/21

- The Accountability Board helped the Student Voice team with the discussion around moving the Sabbatical Officer elections online
- **Merging of the Society and Support roles:** A member ascertained the reasoning, then publicised the reasons as to why the roles were merged by the Trustee Board. Furthermore, the board member revived insurances from the relevant Union departments as to the keeping of the separation of the society and sport departments, an issue that was brought to us by students and so done to ensure that the students worries were eased.
- **Publicising the Board and the Council:** We have worked with the Student Voice team and Comms in consultation regarding the publicising of the board and council, this cumulated in the by-election of more members to the Board.

A call to the Student Body

- This year we have heard lots on social media with people loving what the Students' Union have done and people loathing it. Like marmite the student body either like or dislike the Union and there are points of both sides of the argument.
- There is nothing more you can do for your Students' Union than take an elected role and help run the Union as a:
 - Course Rep
 - School Rep
 - Part-Time Officer
 - Member of the Accountability Board
 - Sabbatical Officer
- There is nothing greater you can do to help the student body then representing those who elect you, so you can go on and help lobby the university for the change and the issues that the student body want
- **Find out more via the UPSU website.**





Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

[Read the full Sabbatical Officer Reports here.](#)

Chukwudi Ezenyi

President of UPSU

Emi Dowse

Vice President for Education

Verity Lemm

Vice President for Activities

Fawziyyah Ahmed

Vice President for Wellbeing and Diversity



Sabbatical Officer Report

Chukwudi Ezenyi
UPSU President

Sabbatical Officer Report

Chukwudi Ezenyi
UPSU President



Postgrad and International student engagement:
Creating events to help increase engagement with the SU.



More student representation on University committees:
Lobbying the University to make room for more student representatives on University meetings.



Tackling students' challenges with MP:
Reaching out to Luke Pollard (MP) for more student support from the government.



Uniting students and City Council: Building a two way relationship between the students in the City and the City Council.



Sabbatical Officer Report

Emi Dowse

UPSU Vice President of Education

Sabbatical Officer Report

Emi Dowse

UPSU Vice President of Education



Extenuating Circumstances:

Working to review the extenuating circumstances policy to include less common issues which may impact student's studies.



Safety Net: Lobbying the University for a safety net policy to mitigate for the impact of the pandemic on students grades.



Clever Student Lets:

Representing student's views on clever student lets, which ultimately led to the mutual ending of the partnership.



Buddy Scheme: Created the buddy scheme to tackle student loneliness and to allow students to share information and experience about student life.



Sabbatical Officer Report

Verity Lemm

UPSU Vice President of Activities

Sabbatical Officer Report

Verity Lemm

UPSU Vice President of Activities



Funding and facilities:

Lobbying the University to understand the needs of our student groups.



Mental well-being and support:

Continuing and expanding the training available for our student groups.



Faculty of Health: Supporting and representing the students across the faculty during the difficulties of COVID.



UCS South West Student Chair:

Being the voice of the students across the South West with issues surrounding Physical Activity and competition.



Sabbatical Officer Report

Fawziyyah Ahmed

UPSU Vice President of Wellbeing and Diversity

Sabbatical Officer Report

Fawziyyah Ahmed

UPSU Vice President of Wellbeing & Diversity



Celebrating Diversity:

Working with the diverse student body and University Equality and Diversity Committee to champion equality and diversity



Accommodation Campaign:

Lobbying the University to provide rent rebates for students during lockdown



Access Progress and Participation Plan: Working with the University to ensure that adequate support is provided for underrepresented groups in terms of access, progress and participation



Wellbeing Forums: A platform for students to find out information about the support services available for them. Also serves as a feedback session to find out what works for students and what does not work.



Thank you for attending

Minutes of the meeting and copies of the presentation and reports will be available on the UPSU website or email studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk

