

# SUSTAINABILITY BOARD REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2018

The logo for The Students' Union at UWE is a white triangle pointing downwards, containing the text 'THE STUDENTS' UNION' in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'AT UWE' in a smaller font below it.

**THE STUDENTS'  
UNION**  
AT UWE

# THE STUDENTS' UNION STAFF AND PRESIDENTS TRAINING AND PLANNING

We have embedded a yearly summer training session for the incoming President team, and for a cross section of the staff body (new starters and those who have not attended one before), to understand the principles of sustainability and how their role contributes developing the culture of sustainability within the organisation.

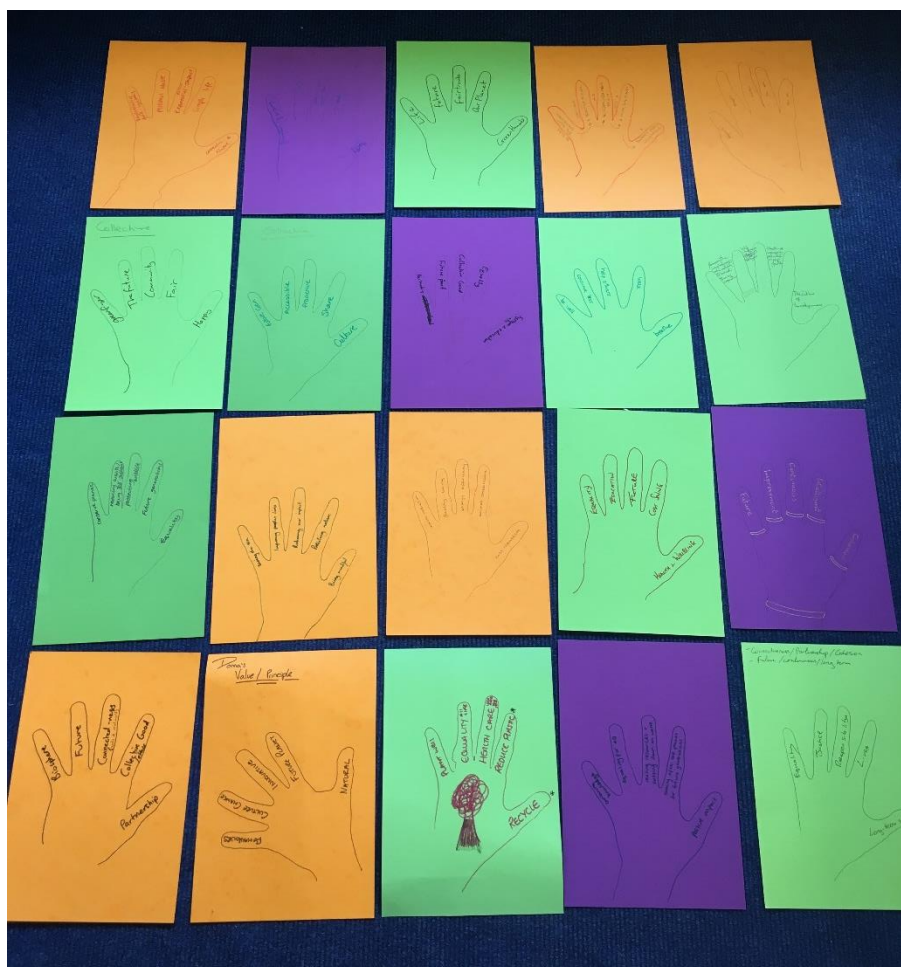
On Monday 3 September 2018, our elected Presidents and Officers and the Sustainability Committee alongside new staff from The Students' Union or staff who hadn't attended previously (25 in total), came together for an introduction to sustainability. We were delighted to welcome back Quinn Runkle, NUS ESD Manager, and Georgie Gough. During the session, each attendee created statements of how sustainability contributes to their role:

- "Sustainability is important to my role as The Water Lead on the Sustainability Committee as we all need water but it is under threat from population growth, climate change and modern lifestyles."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Retail Assistant because plastic waste needs to be reduced and food wastage needs to be reduced."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Representation Coordinator because I can empower reps via the global goals to bring insight, change a course and make impact at University and community level."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Finance Manager because I can facilitate funding for positive change and can develop an example of the future for my son."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Glenside Campus Community Coordinator because it has a direct impact on health care students who have the power to make a huge difference to the lives of others."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Students' Union Receptionist as we need to take immediate action."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as The Students' Union's sustainability officer as I am passionate about helping our planet and communities."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as The Sustainability Committee's IT lead because the University uses enormous amounts of energy each year – increasing numbers of computers and infrastructure running across all campus sites constantly."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Societies Development Coordinator because I work with students group that exist to campaign and make change on issues relating to the SDGs"
- "Sustainability is important to my role as Bar Supervisor because the Earth is where I live."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Biodiversity Lead for the Sustainability Committee as I care about safeguarding the healthy ecosystems for future generations"
- "Sustainability is important to my role as VP Societies and Communications because it ensures continued success for our societies programme."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Club Development Manager because we all have a part to play and I can develop sports club views and educate towards achieving our SU goals."
- "Sustainability is important to my role as the Vice Chair of the Sustainability Committee because I can bring positivity and influence the students and the wider community."

- “Sustainability is important to my role as VP Community and Welfare because I can use sustainability to create a platform that motivates and inspires students to look after their health, wellbeing and be the best they can whatever their passionate about.”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as the Senior Representation Coordinator because I can facilitate student led change to the student experience and improve the sustainability of the education offered at UWE Bristol.”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as Marketing Coordinator because we have lots of print materials so I can work to ensure we are being sustainable with our printers, their paper, practises and our own communication (both print and digital.)”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as the PR and Communications Coordinator because we want to educate and encourage the student community in our sustainability priorities and encourage them to make the small changes that have a big impact for the future.”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as the Food and Health lead on the Sustainability Committee because it is essential to health and food.”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as Sports Club Development Coordinator because I can inspire a large student population who have access to things like; facilities, equipment, different types of resource and it could be a good gateway to bring about change”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as Representation Coordinator because I can make real change in many areas.”
- “Sustainability is important to my role as the President of The Students’ Union because every action or activity such as campaigns can inspire other students.”



In the afternoon, we brought back all the sustainability champions, who underwent the session in the previous year, to look ahead to the next four year of The Students' Union's strategic plan and look at values that could underpin this plan.



Our feedback showed that attendees enjoyed the following aspects:

- Hearing about other issues, campaigns and ideas happening across different parts of the uni, so we know who to collaborate with and stimulates new ideas.
- The chance to voice departmental advancements and challenges.
- 17 global goals - gives a broad overview about sustainability.
- Got us thinking about what we already do and how we can be more sustainable as a department - makes you more aware and more likely to put best practice into your day-to-day work routine. Was also really interesting to learn about all the SDGs - some of which I wouldn't necessarily have thought of as sustainability before the training. Made me more aware of the concept as a whole, which will be useful when working on different topics within my role.
- Hearing the different vantage points of staff, as well as the great guidance from Quinn.
- Getting to know the UN sustainability goals in more detail, chatting with colleagues, understanding what UWE, the SU and NUS are doing for sustainability.
- Reflecting on how we as individuals can contribute to the goals. Also was great to learn about the true depth of the meaning of sustainability.
- Enhancing my overall knowledge of all the broad areas of this topic.
- Learning about how the SU at UWE and NUS work towards the SDGs. Session gave me knowledge to begin my role in the Sustainability Committee. Enjoyed the activities and

meeting a range of people. Also opportunity to team build with other SC members. Generation of loads of ideas both from others and in my head.

- Learning about how The SU, UWE and the NUS are all embedding sustainability into what they do and what their plans for the future are.
- Team discussion and what NUS is doing. The period where Rachel and the two other guests went round to speak to the different groups was great.
- Definition of sustainability explained. Whole UWE /SU ideology.
- Working with a cross-section of staff, exploring the breadth of sustainability - not just the bit I know.
- I really enjoyed learning about the different SDGs - it was really informative and amazing understanding that all that we do is part of sustainability.

### **What is the main action you will take away to implement or share?**

- Collaborate and communicate.
- UN agreement on 17 points gives internationally recognized goals.
- The broad scope of sustainability and the impact we can all have in various areas.
- To be more aware of how we can contribute to sustainability as an individual, and how we can share best practice with others. Be more proactive.
- To show others that sustainability is about people and how they interact with each other in a multitude of ways, rather than just about energy efficiency.
- I cycled to work today!! I will always think about how to be more sustainable in my work and life thus immersing myself in and continuing the sustainable culture at the SU.
- Learning about the stacked model of the SDG's, where we can only solve economic issues if we solve social ones, and we can only solve these if we solve biosphere issues. It nicely demonstrates how the SDG's are interconnected.
- The main thing I took away was that we can do so much more to raise awareness of the sustainability arena in my area across our student population.
- Contacts for help with developing/implementing SC ideas, and for working across different departments.
- Being more mindful of how open to change students are whilst they are at university and therefore how worthwhile promoting sustainability to them is.
- The idea of projects and actions SU and university can work together to achieve the sustainability goals such as embedding the sustainability sessions into courses.
- More student involvement. We can make a difference.
- Helped give the Sustainability Committee some steerage from the off.
- To identify what areas of sustainability fit into all our actions/goals/ambitions/objectives and highlight/promote that to increase awareness so more people know it is not just about recycling and renewable energy like I did.

## **EAUC GREEN GOWN AWARDS**

The Students' Union have submitted our stage 2 application for the Green Gown Awards 'Student Engagement' Category for Bring Your Own Bowl, our food waste intervention event series. BYOB will recommence this year in October during Big Green Week. We are also delighted that Amy Staff has been recognised in the shortlist for 'Student Champion'. We are looking forward to attending the award ceremony in November.

## **THE NATIONAL STUDENT FUNDRAISING CONFERENCE**

This August, The Students' Union at UWE hosted The National Student Fundraising Conference and annual award ceremony, celebrating student fundraising. We chose sustainability as one of the

conference's key themes, due to its importance to The Students' Union and our members. Due to this, we hosted workshops under the heading of sustainability and presented a workshop on how RAG's can engage with the UN's SDGs. We aimed to encourage sustainable habits by providing attendees with a free metal water bottle, reusable branded coffee cup and their own plant as RAG trophies. The awards were made of reclaimed wood from Bristol Wood Projects and engraved locally.

## **SOUTH WEST TRUSTEES TRAINING**

The Students' Union at UWE hosted the South West Region Students' Union Trustee Training Day on 3 - 4 September 2018. We were delighted to receive an invitation to present on our approach to sustainability and the UN's SDGs, especially from a strategic perspective and how SU's and Trustees can engage with the SDGs.

## **NUS GREEN IMPACT AND RESPONSIBLE FUTURES ACCREDITATIONS**

The Students' Union at UWE will be audited for two NUS Accreditations in academic year 2018/2019, Green Impact in April and Responsible Futures in May 2019, in partnership with UWE Bristol.

Rachel Colley, Community Manager at The Students' Union, was invited to discuss the synergies between Green Impact Students' Unions and Responsible Futures and identify possible efficiencies for the unions who are involved with both. We are waiting for the 2018/2019 Green Impact criteria to be released but in the meantime, we are working on our action plan for the year and anticipating the actions that will be required of us.

UWE Bristol and The Students' Union will launch our annual Sustainability Survey in Big Green Week, with the aim of 700 responses from students. The Students' Union will use this opportunity to consult our members on where they wish to see The Students' Union take action over the next four years, in line with our new strategic plan 2018-2022. This academic year we see The Students' Union form a value-based vision and road map of key priorities moving forward. We hope this can feed into the new UWE Bristol 2030 plan.

## **SINGLE USE PLASTIC AND FOOD WASTE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

The Student's Union were delighted that two task and finish groups were established with UWE Bristol this summer to tackle issues that students have raised and that both organisations are committed to improving our approach. A huge thank you to Paul Roberts and Katherine Piper for driving the group forward, collating the picture across UWE Bristol and ensuring action is taken in a timely and considered manner.

Key actions that have taken place as a result:

- Kitchen meetings: food waste and water saving message were delivered to each UWE Bristol managed flat (Frenchay, Glenside and the Hollies) as part of the Kitchen meetings co-delivered by The Students' Union's HallsLife programme and UWE Accommodation. It was a shame that the flats did not all have their food waste bins in place for this action, so the partnership will ensure more messaging is delivered by Browzer and emails to students when they are installed.

- Door knocking: The Students' Union are undertaking a door knock of students living in private rented accommodation.
- New Meal Deal: we have introduced a second meal deal, with the option of a can rather than plastic bottle. We have also installed can crushers with a can recycling charity in the shops to motivate recycling.
- Plastic Bottles: We are in touch with a reverse vending machine company, so that students could bring their plastic bottles back, and then be given a voucher to use in store as an incentive.
- Zero Waste Shop: we have partnered with the Zero Green Bristol shop on North Street, (<https://www.zerogreenbristol.co.uk/>) to learn more about zero waste retail principles and to run a student consultation on 16 - 17 October to understand what products would be of interest to students to construct our "journey to zero waste" in the U Block Shop. Currently there is a display of the more eco-friendly options in store – from plastic free menstrual products, to eco-friendly toilet paper and shampoo bars. We are excited to develop this area with our Sustainability Committee and customers.

## WELCOME: THE GREEN TEAM

September 10 – September 21 has been a very busy period for The Students' Union as we have been welcoming our new and returning students to the different campus sites. The Green Team have attended all three welcome fairs: Bower, Glenside and the Freshers' Fair at Frenchay speaking to students about projects, events and the Sustainability Committee and signing up students to the mailing list. The Green Team partnered with HallsLife to run a Love Glenside Festival on Thursday 20 September. Despite the weather, we engaged with 70 students with a smoothie bike and tie-dye T-shirt engagement activity.

### Green Gathering

The first Green Gathering of the year took place on Tuesday 25 September, where over 50 students enjoying free pizza and heard about projects, events and activities they can get involved with and shape moving forward. There was an exercise around project planning with the SDGs and we were delighted that UWE Bristol colleagues could join this evening.

### Community Garden

Wednesday 26 September saw the first community garden session of the academic year take place. Over the summer, we ran a staff BBQ event in the garden to raise awareness of its location, especially with the building works surrounding our building, and to showcase the project.



## **Divestment Campaign**

Curzio, Vice-Chair of the Sustainability Committee is passionate about exploring divestment at UWE Bristol and has had initial meetings with The Students' Union's Finance Manager to start shaping the campaign. We have linked with Bristol SU, who are also keen to push this campaign and share challenges and approaches. NUS have been providing us with resources and insight at this early stage.

## **WELCOME: SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

We were delighted that for the annual Freshers' Fair, we worked with stallholders to enforce our ban on plastic bags e.g. Dominoes utilised paper bags and canvas bags were given out by The Students' Union for students to carry around and put their goodies inside. Only two stallholders did not adhere to this rule, a significant reduction on last year and neither were handing out single-use plastic.

The Freshers' Fair had many sustainability related stalls; we were delighted that Wessex Water joined up to discuss #toiletiquette and water efficiency. We also have a blog lined up from a UK Drainage company to discuss what should and should not go down the drain, which we will promote as part of National Toilet Day in November.

RSPCA were also in attendance at the Fair and promoting ethical treatment for chickens, plus the Gamers for ORCAS Challenge, Whale and Dolphin Conservation game-athon. We are working with our societies to see if they wish to support this activity.

Thank you to Eddy Piper for joining with us with welcome to gift used folders, stationary and other items to students, still good items from previous students! The folders proved a big hit at the Glenside Welcome Fair.

## **PAPERLESS ELECTIONS**

The Students' Union at UWE are investigating the possibility of making the election process for the executive officers paperless. The definition of paperless is that we would use no printed materials/resources including; newspapers, posters, flyers, stickers and expenses sheets. It would make us the first students' union to do this. Last year The Leadership Race used approximately 8,000 sheets of paper, which equates to a trees worth of paper and costs an average of £31.29 per candidate, with 40 candidates running. Sustainability is an organisational priority and therefore this would promote this message externally and to prospective officers. The idea is a student-led initiative that came through the student ideas system and been raised as a concern due to the recently implemented free printing, which could lead to a rise in posters. A paperless campaign would reduce litter, ink, electricity, carbon emissions and plastic pollution. Whilst also encouraging creative campaigning and improving accessibility for all campuses and off-campus students. In order to be successful in this aim, we would have to ensure that we give further support to candidates and create alternatives to paper materials, such as digital screens. We are currently working on a proposal of viable alternative to discuss with The Students' Union Presidents.

## **THE STUDENTS' UNION: HALLEY NURSERY**

We have scheduled a woodland morning on the 27 October for parents and children; a local artist will be visiting to deliver a clay workshop. The children will be making clay hedgehogs indoors and have the opportunity to engage in a range of messy play activities outdoors. We have booked a



mobile zoo to visit the nursery, to coincide with Halloween, and deliver a 'Meg and Mog' session for the preschool/toddlers and a sensory session for our baby room. In addition to this, we will be organising our Diwali theatre session in November. The session deploys Rajasthani puppets to introduce the children to the story of Rama and Sita and weaves themes of diversity into the narratives/story.