The characteristics of UoN students

Introduction

The following information provides an overview of UoN students – their demographic information, their personalities and their perceptions. This information, coupled with the ‘officer candidate packs’ produced by the UoNSU Insight Team, provides the information election candidates need to shape their manifestos and campaign strategies.

What is covered:

- Student perception and awareness of the SU
- Student interests and concerns
- Student demographics
- Student personalities

Also included at the end of this information sheet are the findings from the UoNSU’s 2015 elections review. Much of the findings are still applicable to this year’s elections and is therefore worth a browse.

Student perceptions and awareness of the SU

Satisfaction

Students satisfaction has steadily increased over the last 4 years, allowing for consistent peaks and troughs in student mood.
Students with lower levels of satisfaction tend to be:

- Part time students
- Students aged between 22-44yrs old
- From UK or has English as a first language
- PGs
- Commuters

**Awareness**

77.4% of students are able to correctly answer questions about the SU, although common misconceptions are:

- The SU is a department of the University (43% of students don’t realise the SU is separate to the University)
- The SU isn’t a charity (26% of students don’t know that the SU is a charity)
- You have to register and pay to be a member of the SU (14% of students believe this)
- The SU is only available in the Portland Building (36% of students believe this)
- The SU generates income for itself (13% of students don’t realise that income is reinvested)

Students who are unaware of the current Officer’s work are far less likely to vote for new officers.

**Perceptions of the SU’s brand and purpose**

Current perception of officers:
Suggestions from students to increase officer awareness by students includes:

Q21 Which, if any, of the following Students’ Union Officers (students elected to represent your interests) do you follow?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of students who follow each type of officer.]

Suggestions from students to increase officer awareness by students includes:
- Visit satellite campuses more
- Host ‘meet the officer’ events
- Visit halls more
- Be ‘on the ground’ more. ‘It feels like the officers are too above us’
- Promote what they do more
- Promote office opening times
- Whatsapp groups
- Drop in surgery times
- Free food!
- Manifestos should include language that all students (including first years who are new to University) understand
- Have not more continuity between officer manifesto points year on year
- More opportunity for students to feedback about officers actions/approach
- Come across as more approachable, less clicky.
- Introduce themselves in lectures from time to time.
- Have more connection to existing SU student groups, including the smaller societies.
- Visit postgrad centres

Other areas for improvement:

UoNSU is perceived by some students as slow to respond, and disjointed between its departments – too bureaucratic at times (the events process was provided as an example).

In addition to this, the lack of external awards won, and low levels of external PR that takes place in comparison to other Unions means that students do not have cause for pride in their SU – because they, and their friends at other unions, do not know about UoNSU achievements.

Engagement

In terms of engagement, 45% of students say that they are a member of a society, 29% say they are part of a sports club and 26% volunteer.

For those who aren’t members/participants in these opportunities, demand is high to get involved. 2 in 3 non participant want to get involved in societies, 1 in 2 want to get involved in sports and more than 2 in 3 want to volunteer. Volunteering has the highest latent demand.

Students want to be more involved in decision making – perhaps through online polls or more well-advertised referenda
Perceptions

(Q20 To what degree do you feel...)

(NB: Above graph 0 = Not at all, 10 = Extremely so)

Following on from the above ratings, students also provided the below feedback:

* There is no middle ground – the SU engages well with students who are already involved in SU activities. The SU also works hard to engage minority groups. However there’s a feeling that if you’re not a minority, and just not engaged with SU activity due to lack of awareness, then there is not much on offer for you through the SU.

* A lot of students aren’t sure what we do & why. We’re not great at sharing success.

* Societies/clubs consider themselves to be separate to SU. Yet non-members see the SU as the societies and clubs, and not much more

* The term ‘academic representation’ isn’t something that students tend to associate with the SU, nor do they expect the SU to focus on this.

* Transparency is lowest amongst students not based at Jubilee, part time, commuting students, from the UK. Two thirds of students who believe the SU lacks transparency are part of a society. i.e. students who are members of a society are more likely to perceive low transparency than those who are non-members. Students do not see the evidence of SU challenging the university or how the SU makes changes to student life – therefore the assumption is that the SU has minimal influence over the university. Students don’t always know the outcome of projects that they hear the SU is working on

* Students are most likely to associate the SU with the following terms: Mooch, societies, sports, support, events, social.

Student interests, communication preferences and concerns

Interests

Students tell us that they are most interested in hearing about student discounts, deals and events.
From a Students’ Union department perspective, communications about societies, employability, volunteering, health and wellbeing and course advice is also considered of interest.

Less interesting to our students are topics such as officer/student association updates and campaigning feedback.
Communication preferences

Students prefer to hear about these topics through:

1. Direct email (most likely to check between 10am-6pm)
2. E-newsletter (most likely to check between 10am-6pm)
3. Facebook (most likely to check between 6pm-10pm)

Facebook and Whatsapp appear to be the communication platforms that students feel they can’t live without. PGs favour Facebook and text messaging more than UGs.

App popularity is decreasing. Particularly ones that have limited day to day usefulness, or take up a lot of phone space. Most users use 3-5 apps on their phone daily – and 65% of users didn’t download a new app in 2014/15. Instead, students want easier ways to instantly access answers to their questions, rather than having to search for the information. Students want to be able to receive advice on all sorts of student related issues: ‘from mental health, to how do I remove a stain?’ – almost like a ‘siri’ / ‘mum’ / ‘google’ for the Students’ Union.

There is emerging evidence of University’s abroad using ‘communication bots’. These bots can be programmed to automatically respond to student enquiries, often by repeating queries back to the customer in a way that seeks clarification before moving on to the next question. These bots could also be used for self-coaching. The bots can be used to create a personalised connection between a student and the SU brand, and it also takes away the need to personalise everything the SU does – the generic information will be on the website, and the personalised content can emerge through the bot. A good bot system moves customers to humans at key points. Chat bots are the new apps.

Student cohort has an increasing presence of generation Z students. Traits that present opportunities to the SU = Constantly connected through their phones, Want to be more involved and make a difference, Are more engaged by more personalised experiences, want to be entrepreneurial and independent, keen to find a social cause they can support, motivated by free food and value perception, eager to differentiate themselves professional, more likely to listen to microinfluencers rather than celebrities, more engaged content that is viral, authentic, or offers quick learning/behind the scenes information. Generation Z want content through multiple methods and channels and require a more sensory experience through touch, feel and see which can be difficult. They prefer to ‘do’ not ‘sit and listen’. Generation Z students are also seen to be a little less organised than other generations due to the expectation of push notifications and event reminders – there is little manual intervention (or physical need for memory testing) for this generation of students to remember to go to meetings.

To raise student awareness of what the SU does, it would be beneficial to target channels/outlets whereby all students are involved, for instance not all students are member of a society, but all students have a course/school rep, therefore upskilling these reps to discuss the benefits of the SU with their constituents may prove useful. Students would like a ‘this week on your campus’ email. This should include society events and stalls. Committees would like to promote their activities on the Portland big screen.

UoNSU Thought Forum comments gathered in relation to marketing tactics.
Where can subliminal messages be hidden around campus?

Portland building food court. 34, 35, 36, i4, indigo, skiylink, 18, 21, Y36, hopper and medilink buses. Tram. The windows in front of treadmills. Doors to dining halls. Printed on sweet wrappers that can be handed out. Bus stops, JCRs, Libraries. On food court tables and trays, library mouse mats, spray painted logos on paths and tree trunks along main walking routes, disposable coffee cups, napkins, corridor under the coates building, QMC walkway, Spar, Boots, on sides of bins, toilets, trent building clock tower! notice boards in lecture halls and teaching rooms, sports centre, desktop backgrounds for computers (people would notice a move away from the stock image of Trent building). Students recommend to distribute the icons slowly - so to build suspense and get people gradually talking about them. could turn it into a treasure hunt with different icons revealing different features. Students spend most of their time in subject specific buildings. cubicle doors. scanners in the library to enter. Main doors to Portland building. Entrances to hall bars. Cafe queue points. High up on walls in Portland Building as when it’s busy, you can’t see the walls.

What time do you tend to share or click on content through social media?

Students seemed to tend to browse their social media in the mornings or evenings. Some browsed when bored or on a commute. One student said that the time of post doesn’t really matter as long as the post is relevant and or has an engaging title.

How should key messages be shared with students?

Social media. Union staff giving 5 minute presentations in lectures / hall dinner times. (save students having to go to a separate event / out of their way). Emails. A stand in Portland and Exchange building at Jubilee - give out tactile leaflets explaining when the changes are happening, how they are going to be implemented, what this means to the average student and how things were done previously and how the new way is better. High-priority email should be sent out with links to all of the social media pages that it will be posted on, but be aware that this may just look like a cheeky way to boost engagement with social media. Getting academic tutors to email with a rundown of the changes and a survey so people can feed back on them (regular surveys that engage students in gradual decision making of what’s better x? y? z?). Surveys allow students to feedback anonymously, without the pressure of having their name or handle attached to something on social media. Students say they are more likely to look at something the SU shared than their friend shared on social media. ‘I would also consider testing out the info to be given. People often forget that those not involved with the process of change have little or no understanding of what is being communicated and why it is important for them. I am in my 2nd yr PhD now and still have no idea what the SU can do for me and why I should make the effort to travel from Med School over the main campus to find out’. Changes should be summarised - huge chunks of texts are unnecessary and unappealing so this should be taken into consideration when the format is designed. Having some representative come and talk about big projects/events before the start of lectures is also a good way to do it. Would prefer updates through email because ‘I often miss things on social media’. ‘Online surveys are a really good way of giving feedback- that is the way I would be most likely to respond’
Student concerns

Have you experienced any mental health problems in the last 12 months? What does this include? (NHS definition) It’s normal to feel down, anxious or stressed from time to time, but if these feelings affect your daily activities, including your studies, or don’t go away after a couple of weeks, get help. Signs could include: feeling low, feeling anxious or more agitated than usual, losing motivation and interest, sleep problems, feeling withdrawn, skipping lectures, stopping to care about the way you look/hygiene, changes in weight.

We asked students to tell us what their main concerns were at key points in the year. They are as follows (in order or concern for each time period):

Jan/Feb:
1. Anxiety, stress or depression
2. Deadlines
3. Rent payments
4. Academic ability
5. Lack of disposable income

Mar/Apr:
1. Lack of disposable income
2. Deadlines
3. Anxiety, stress or depression
4. Employability (finding part time work and future career choices)

May/Jun:
1. Deadlines
2. Anxiety, stress or depression
3. Academic ability
4. Employability (finding part time work and future career choices)
5. Lack of disposable income

Jul/Aug:
1. Employability (finding part time work and future career choices)
2. Lack of disposable income
3. Anxiety, stress or depression

Sept/Oct:
1. Gym membership
2. Rent payments
3. Making/maintaining friendships
4. Social anxiety

Nov/Dec:
1. Lack of disposable income
2. Deadlines
3. Anxiety, stress or depression

We asked students about employability and why it was on their minds, and they provided the following insights:

- EU students comment that ‘Careers dept’ is useful, but fears that eligibility to remain in the UK post-graduation may not be possible. Time of uncertainty
- International students find it hard to secure part time employment whilst at University.
- UK students are not as happy as international students with careers advice (though still high)
- Committee members would like a confirmation letter that details their committee position, hours and training.
- Students would like greater alumni links with meet and greets to hear their career stories, particularly outside of the ‘typical’ grad scheme route
- PGs would like more career fair options and PG specific employability workshops

How can student satisfaction be increased more generally?
Students suggested that the following actions may help to increase their satisfaction with the Students’ Union:

Events
- Highlight alcohol-free events more
- More events for students to make friends and get involved, but struggle with social anxiety/interactions
- Inter-hall activities
- Promote Postgraduate-specific events during the holiday periods (‘invest more into the events, not just tea and cake’).
- ‘Maybe have more things targeted towards people who are less confident. There seems to be a lot of emphasis on taking the lead in something.’
- Quieter segments of students list: Lunchtime coffee & cake, socialising in small groups, cinema trip. Pub night, mini golf, board games, crafts, bake offs, dinner. Take away with friends.
- Louder segments of students list: acoustic nights, bonfires, BBQs, pub quizzes, volunteering – as well as staying in with friends. Events related to food and drink proved popular.

Publicity
- Better promotion of volunteering opportunities
- Societies to better publicise their events
- Reaching out further to halls
- Hear more from course reps or have a clearer way of (anonymously) giving feedback
- Highlight SU news further
- Communicate more about what the Union is working on
• Run more one-off student group sessions which are free, and are for anyone to attend to try out or observe what the services and societies of the Students’ Union has to offer.
• Having a designated and up-to-date Students’ Union noticeboard in all departments.
• Explain the Students’ Union’s role and responsibility on the website more thoroughly.
• ‘good news on a board in the middle of the Portland building’
• ‘tell students about the challenges that the SU faces – don’t pretend they don’t exist’.
• ‘Run a QA and forum with officers each term’, ‘do presidential vlogging’. Drop-in sessions in Portland Atrium every month for all officers to attend and have questions addressed towards them.

Connect the campuses
• Holding events that everyone can go to e.g. nurses- ‘nurses have different term times and working hours. We’re often older, so we’re looking for a different kind of social activity’.
• Further connections with satellite campuses
• Hopper buses to Kegworth
• Explore ways to develop more University spirit
• SU presence and visibility on all student campuses
• Have regular Students’ Union representation across all sites and campuses
• Even during Student Leader Elections, QMC students felt neglected, as no one came to visit.

Wellbeing and welfare support
• Awareness of mental health support
• Support finding housemates
• Ideas from students to improve student mental health and wellbeing: promote discounted exercise opportunities, more promotion of alternative services to the counselling service, social events focused on wellbeing.
• Some PGs experience loneliness and frustration with their supervisors - therefore more promotion of support needed here.

Working with the University to improve the services they coordinate
• Review of catered hall food
• Increase availability of Lecture Capture
• Quality of Student Services to increase
• Better facilities at Derby Campus
• Better payment plans for gym membership
• Increased number of water fountains
• Practice exam papers and more exam support in general
• Awareness of part-time job services such as Unitemps
• 24/7 libraries all term
• Assist with students going on placement with travel and accommodation support
• Allow rooms to be kept over the holidays
• Better feedback from the course to students
• More facilities & equipment (e.g. library space and computers)
• Improved teaching quality

Union customer service
• Quicker responses to email queries
Interact more with students (share more opportunities via email, and through face to face talking)

Utilise ‘a live chat option across all Union webpages, so that if someone needs something specific, they can quickly find where to go’.

‘Keep the website up to date and make it easier to navigate through’.

Reduce red tape, move forms online, and reduce number of emails that are required in general (for student groups).

Ensure that societies are more active ‘I joined a society and paid membership fees – I’ve not heard anything from them’

‘Be less pushy during elections’, ‘walking to lectures during elections was intimidating – I missed lectures to avoid this’, ‘stop candidates forcing people to vote using their iPads’.

Greater flexibility on opening hours, such that more is done on the weekends, and on holidays, when students are back for a short time from their placements, and when Postgraduate students are available. Additionally, by opening later, Derby students living in Nottingham would still be able to make use of Portland. More availability in the holidays.

If you change three things about the Students' Union - what would they be and why?
(Comments from the UoNSU Thought Forum Autumn 2017/18)

- More lively union- club similar to NTU
- Increased advertisement of events, mental health support, societies opportunities and resources for SB students
- Microwave in the SU building
- High street prices in Spar
- More buses into the city at the weekend
- More variety of food in Portland
- Reduce alcoholic events
- More tailored / personalised emails
- Improved website
- Regular contact between students and officers – and not just during election periods.
- Greater presence on Jubilee

What students would like the University to change
(Comments from UoNSU Thought Forum, Autumn 2017/18)

- Cheaper gym membership, with more flexible payment options, including a campus specific rate
- Improved transport links to campuses and areas of interest
- More printer credits based on modules
- Healthier / cheaper food options across campuses
- Better mental health support
- Better accessibility for disabled students (and more consideration when implementing building works)
- More part time work opportunities
- More hot water dispensers and microwaves around campus

Perception of transparency
Across the board, students feel that the SU could increase its degree of transparency. When we specifically explore the feelings of students who rate the SU particularly low for its transparency, we can see the issue is felt more within UK based students, Undergraduates, part time students, males, based at SB or UP.
Satisfaction amongst these students (who perceive low transparency) is much lower with the SU than other students. Reasons for this lower satisfaction were explained by these students below:

- It doesn’t offer much in way of a social events
- Prices of the SU are quite expensive for a student budget
- Problems communicating with the SU.
- Lack of understanding on how Portland Development expenditure decisions are being made (reference to the spending on the big screen, and the assumption that this is SU budget)
- Students are not aware of how the SU benefits / positively impact students.
- Not enough longevity for student union officers to make any substantial change
- Needs to be much more proactive at challenging the university

Of interest is that these students (who perceive the union as having low transparency) are MORE likely to participate in Union activity. This would suggest that there are a high number of students who are quite involved in SU activity, but are not clear on how the SU impacts this.

These students who perceive transparency as low, also gave lower scores compared to average scores for all three of the above statements. The largest decrease was for the “That the Student’s Union effectively represents student’s academic interests”. One of the most common comments were that these students felt the SU needs a better presence and explain what they do / how you can get involved. Many said they do not know what the Union is/does and therefore would like better communication on this point and how it actually helps students.

These students would like the Union to:

- Challenge the University more.
- Provide more accessibility across the Portland Building for disabled students
- Actively show that student views are being represented
- Research out to students in halls more readily.
- Reply to queries from students faster
- Organise more events that aren’t focused on alcohol.
- Reach out to all the campuses more
- Make contact with students, asking their opinion, beyond surveys and workshops
- Host PG events
- Reduce bureaucracy for clubs, and engage with them in a useful way.
- Ensure a fairer grant distribution process to societies.
- Provide more evidence of how officers represent students
- Show that the union and officers care about all the campuses.
- Make changes to the room booking system for societies.
- Make course reps more active, publicise who course reps are and the impact they have.
- Have more involvement in supporting student academic ability
- Show how the Union gets involved in addressing student concerns around Project Transform
- Show how the Union spends its money and allow students to have a say in this.
- Ensure student groups can contact anyone in the Union and get the right answer, rather than being moved between departments.
- Consult disabled students before naming events as ‘fully inclusive’
- Reduce the pressure and workload placed on committees
- Provide more support for first years who have never lived away from home.
- Open more doors to offices.
Students don’t always know the outcome of projects that they hear the SU is working on.

- Students suggest that more staff & student panels are used to allocate where SU funding is spent.

Generation Z students (i.e. the majority of UoN students) are more approving of organisations that are authentic, transparent and who look to do social good through advertising.

Students do not see the evidence of SU challenging the university or how the SU makes changes to student life – therefore the assumption is that the SU has minimal influence over the university.

A concerning point to note here is that there appears to be a disproportional amount of committee members within this ‘perceived low transparency’ group. Students that the Union relies on for support and advocacy are disenchanted by the results they see.

### Student demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>10.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>8.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>6.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human and Social Sciences</td>
<td>5.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical Sciences, Statistics</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>4.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Wellbeing</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Political Sciences</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Science</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software &amp; Computer Science</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Science</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Technology</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>1.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Departments and school size
A student’s sense of belonging differs significantly across the campuses. Students at SB and Derby do feel some sense of belonging/community, but this is rarely associated with the efforts of the SU.

Are you a mature student?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (I am an undergraduate student who started their course aged 22+)</td>
<td>4.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (I am a postgraduate student who started their study aged 20+)</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 - 21</td>
<td>19509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 25</td>
<td>8465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>2997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>3216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69% of students are British. Aside from this nationality, the majority of our students come from the following countries...
Where are students from?

- Home: 72%
- Overseas: 22%
- European Union: 6%
- Channel Islands / Isle of Man: 0%

Year of study

- Year 1: 44.87%
- Year 2: 24.71%
- Year 3: 21.92%
- Year 4: 7.03%
- Year 5: 1.30%
- Year 6: 0.13%
- Year 7: 0.05%

Sex (according to the University's records)

- Female: 55.2%
- Male: 44.78%
- Other/Unknown: 0.02%

Stage of study

- Undergraduate: 9635
- Postgraduate: 24500
NB – Postgraduates = around 59% PGT (e.g. Masters students) and 41% PGR (e.g. PhD students)

Student personalities

When asked what is most important, our students say they prioritise ‘accessing high quality teaching’ over other factors of University life such as increasing employability, feeling successful on their course, having fun, and standing up for what they believe in.

Personality wise, our students are more likely to enjoy debating and have a large friends network. The following graph measures the extent to which UoN students agree with the statements.
Over the past few years, the SU has noted an increasing presence of ‘generation Z’ students joining the University. Generation Z students represent a more modern generation of learners who have differing experiences with technology and communication methods to some of our older ‘generation Y’ and ‘generation X’ students.

The generation Z students, and their associated communication preferences, present opportunities to the SU in the following ways:

1. Constantly connected to media through their phones
2. These students are more likely to want to be more involved in SU activities and to make a difference through these activities
3. Generation Z students are more likely to be engaged through offering a personalised SU experience
4. These students want to be entrepreneurial and independent
5. They are keen to find a social cause that they can support
6. Research shows generation Z students are more motivated by free food and value perception than generation Y students
7. Generation Z students are eager to differentiate themselves professionally
8. They are more likely to listen to microinfluencers rather than celebrities
9. These students are more engaged content that is viral yet authentic, or offers quick learning/behind the scenes information.

The Students’ Union has conducted significant research to explore how our students interact differently with various SU offerings. As a result of this research, it’s been discovered that there are loosely 8 groups of students based on personality traits and university experiences and engagement preferences. These 8 groups (distributed unevenly across the student population as shown in the below graph) are detailed over the following pages. The information is provided to support officer candidates to 1). Appreciate that not all students are the same and therefore should be approached in different ways and 2). Shape their campaigning strategies so that they can reach all types of students, and not just those who are already interested in SU democracy.
Personality group descriptions and recommendations on how to engage each student type/group:

- **Social Butterfly**: Engage them with creative and dynamic activities.
- **Constructive Challenger**: Provide them with clear goals and opportunities to take on challenges.
- **Work Hard Play Hard**: Focus on practical, hands-on learning experiences.
- **Comfortable and Courageous**: Encourage them to take risks and try new things.
- **Knowledge Seeking Specialist**: Offer them opportunities to explore new areas of interest.
- **Pragmatic High Achiever**: Emphasize the importance of time management and efficiency.

*Give the facts*, concrete evidence, be realistic.
*Create desire* - They usually know what the SU is all about, but want to see how you’ll be able to empower them.
*Talk about the successes* from last year (link to their own successes) make them feel proud of what they do.
Link to *career development*
*Don’t waffle* or rely on gimmicks.
*Don’t rush them*.
Give them time to get to know you. ’People act differently when they are campaigning’. 
**Comfortable & courageous**

Show how to **get involved**, and where there is the **opportunity for adventure & new experiences**
- Quick, actionable outcomes (‘Click here to sign up’) etc.
- Highlight career and CV development potential
- Get to know their **background** - unique experience
  - Making friends for life (low alcohol socials)
  - Lasting memories
  - Gentle reminders
- **Face to face** is important with this group

**Clubs, societies, groups**
- Want to see well summarised manifesto points
- They’re like to go for the names they remember

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**Reflective Thinkers**

Dismantle the belief that the SU are just ‘BNOCs’
- Link to contacts they trust (lecturers, course mates)
- Focus on the support offered by SU, empathy.
- Would prefer to observe campaigns rather than approach.
- Explain voting isn’t committing. And you *don’t* have to be political.
- Explain it’s for ALL students - not just those already involved
- Offer a sense of belonging to these students
  - Not too ‘in your face’ - a friendly, calm approach is better received.
- Don’t rely on night time promotion
- Acknowledge that not all students have the ‘time of their lives’.
- **Reinforce** - lots of reminders and encouragement needed to lead to action.
  - Explain why it’s still important to vote even if you don’t have a candidate preference.
Social Butterflies

Gen Z
- Relaxed
- Disorganised
- Outgoing
- Confident
- Connected
- Popular

Focus on fun events and social opportunities to meet people.
Use funny gimmicks / gifs.
They'll remember the experience, not necessarily the facts, or the deadline.
Last minute prompt before the deadline needed.
Easy to read, clear.
Reinforce sense of belonging they feel - link that to the work of the officers.
Great campaign team members - social glue!
Social media messages in the morning, shared around 1-3pm.
Usually open minded, and willing to listen to ideas - if you make it fun.
Employability is important to them.

Dedicated Detailers

Gen Z
- Studious
- Organised
- Diligent
- Self-disciplined
- Grounded
- Enjoy responsibility

Promote as a really efficient use of their time.
Focus impact on their academic life - how you can make life easier.
Link activity to increases in employability skills.
Mention making SU more relevant to them - not just societies & drinking.
Avoid messages such as ‘time of your life’
There’s a demand for a love your course type event.
Explain that you don’t have to engage with the SU to vote.
Help them to achieve a better work-life balance.
Empathise - feeling of ‘never having done enough’ - a circle of worry.
Don’t pester, already high stress levels.
Knowledge seekers

Deliver a message with passion
Empathise with their thirst for knowledge
Find out what they are passionate about to establish rapport - it's often what brought them to UoN
Engage in the debate, but don't take offence!
Highlight that you don't have to already be involved in SU to vote.
Encourage questions and be genuinely interested
Reinforce the feeling of belonging
Highlight candidate variety (not all same person type)
Tend to be early adopters, therefore if they are not responding, it's because they're unaware
Focus on wellbeing, mental health and broadening opportunity Access through their academic departments

Work hard play hard

Highly involved in SU. Recognise and thank them for this.
With involvement can come cynicism. Reassure your action, your commitment to past projects, development plans and transparency
Leaders - influential group with many links
Discuss impact - how to turn ideas into action
Balance fun messages, with serious 'let's get to it' vibes.
Link to entrepreneurial activity that can enhance employability prospects.
Quick facts, Don't pester - they only need telling once (organised)
Explore ways in which we can collaborate more with these students with 'insider' knowledge.
Be willing to listen to criticism
Great assets to a campaign team
Campus specific findings

Jubilee
In comparison to other campuses, engagement with SU online is very low, students at Jubilee who don’t read welcome emails are more likely to perceive the SU as lacking transparency, and SU satisfaction is likely to decrease if course satisfaction decreases further. Fewer students who could register to vote in the general election didn’t at this campus compared to other campuses. There is no SU hub presence on Jubilee to encourage ongoing participation and generate a buzz around SU agenda. 21% of students said that the lack of on-campus events and the lack of a SU office at Jubilee are the largest barriers to feeling included.

2 in 5 students never attend a club/society. High proportion of international and PG students at Jubilee

Although generally KPI figures such as satisfaction, SU awareness, sense of belonging and perception of impact are lower at Jubilee – improvements in perception are increasing faster than other campuses.

Jubilee students are quite clear about the development they want on their campus (i.e. more study space, a place to collect tickets, gym space, a bar, broader food options) – and it is now well understood that the space will want to be used by students living in Lenton too. There is scope for introducing more one off volunteering opportunities at Jubilee. Latent demand to take part in SU activities is high. Jubilee students want more time to integrate & meet people – perhaps through some cultural events.

City Hospital and Derby
Volunteering is popular and concerns around employability are relatively low. Students at these campuses are less likely to feel that they belong to the SU as part of a community. SU presence very low at these campuses. Awareness of SU is good, with students having good knowledge ofSU ‘make change’ i.e. course reps, democratic representation, voting. Although SU association with more activity related terms
(societies, clubs, mooch, inclusive) is lower. More likely to say that the SU has had no impact on their uni experience / wellbeing in comparison to other campuses. Less likely to follow UoNSU social in comparison to other campuses. These students find it hard to access SU services face to face at times due to the limited opening hours at UP. It is difficult to get to Portland after lectures and once Hopper bus arrives. Long study hours and travel barriers prevents involvement.

Derby specifically: Students acknowledge the Hopper bus has improved, and like the effort made to promote wellbeing such as therapy dogs, fruit & veg, drinks. Over half of students at Derby report feeling isolated. Many are unhappy with cost of sport membership given their limited available to use facilities. Engagement in SU activities is lowest with Derby based students in comparison to the other campuses.

**Sutton Bonington**

Students based at this campus are highly engaged with SB based clubs, societies and online content (most of all campuses – 65% of SB students say they regularly participate in memberships). Students here are happy with their course (and this, ideally, correlates with SU satisfaction), but rate the SU lowest for transparency. SB students feel that they do not receive transparency particularly in relation to changes in gym pricing and hopper bus routes - perceived poor communication. SB students stating they lack trust in the ‘main campus’ officers (NB, this is how SB based students appear to perceive the SU Officers – they perceive them as representing University Park rather than SB students too). “Having made promises that directly affects SB and then not seeing them delivered. I see them on social media but never in person on this campus”. SB students explain that they are close to their Guild, but not the broader SU.

Travel arrangements impact 87% of Derby students and staff negatively, and have social and academic consequences. The removal of the Kegworth hopper bus route has led to some negative behaviour such as drink driving, or walking in the dark on dangerous roads. Some students associate the change to the service with the SU.

**QMC**

QMC based students are relatively well versed on the remit of the SU. These students sing the praises of MedSoc for their efforts in engaging students. They hope for more events outside of lecture hours- particularly ones aimed for PGs, not focusing on drink, and promoting meeting others. Most common way that QMC students engage with the SU is through societies (mostly linked to MedSoc). Unfortunately MedSoc members are not always clear that MedSoc is part of the SU.

Fewer QMC students are satisfied with SU services than University Park students.

PG QMC students raise that there is little for them to engage with, implying that MedSoc PG activities is not quite sufficient.

Financial worries seem to be high throughout the year for QMC students.

We can see that transparency is perceived to be low by QMC students, and there has been an associated drop in sense of belonging.

**Student Leader Elections 2015**

What are the barriers to voting that students face?

“I don’t feel passionate enough about the candidates and their manifestos” 37.04%

“I don’t understand who or what I am voting for” 34.97%
"I am not confident that the candidates will act in my best interest” 27.41%
"I don’t know how to vote, or whether I am entitled to” 18.68%
No barriers to voting 18.10%
"I am just not interested in voting” 16.48%
"I don’t think my vote will make a difference” 13.96%
"There’s no incentive” 9.05%
"I don’t have time” 8.79%
Other 4.07%

‘What makes a winning Students’ Union Officer candidate?

NB, text in bold represents comments from students that were repeatedly mentioned

- Qualities
  - A natural leader with leadership skills.
  - **Approachable, accessible, personable.**
  - Aware of all types of students and student groups.
  - Awareness and understanding that is relevant, and a ‘track record’ displaying this experience.
  - **Charismatic, enthusiastic, and confident.**
  - **Friendly, caring, and kind.**
  - **Genuine, sincere, and not just running to boost CV.**
  - Good communication skills.
  - Good intentions and indications that they will keep their promise.
  - **Hard-working, dedicated, committed, and sensible.**
  - Honest, trustworthy, and reliable.
  - Motivated and passionate.
  - Not relying on popularity to win votes (the term ‘BNOC’ comes up a lot in a rather negative light, but it is also seen by many as a quality involved in winning “people are voted in, not policies and that is a shame”).
  - **Realistic.**

- Campaign elements
  - A dislike for “bribery” techniques.
  - **A good quality campaign that is presented well and involved commitment on the candidate’s part.**
  - Answer questions and speak one-to-one with students.
  - Candidates handing out leaflets was also perceived as annoying and intrusive by some.
  - Clear and concise manifesto points/ policies that can be conveyed to people with ease.
  - Effective use of social media.
  - Groups felt left out: Derby, SB, Postgraduates etc.
  - **Having a good manifesto with achievable goals.**
o **Having a good presence on campus (all campuses).**
   - **Also talk to students on each campus.**
   o Keep voters/supporters updated (specifically post-election, students want to know what happened).
   o Lecture shout-outs were irritating.
   o Making an effort to engage fellow students and taking the time to speak to as many people as possible.
   o Not forcing votes (iPad voting has been mentioned).
   o **Not involving “harassment”, “pushiness”, or “bombardment”, and are active without being annoying.**
   o On SB there was very little face-time campaigning.
   o **Representing the students, and having direct engagement with students.**
   o **Some campaigns were annoying/ repetitive/ and overwhelming (particularly at dinner times).**
   o Strong dislike for interrupted lectures was a common theme. Conversely, many liked the lecture shout-outs (this may be a matter of timing and content).
   o Supportive campaign team which is large and active.
   o Too focussed on popularity.
   o Working in the students’ best interests so as to better their university experience.

- **Manifesto points:**
  o Address course-based issues which emerge.
  o **Feasible/ realistic ideas.**
  o Have goals that align with student goals, and correlate with real issues.
  o Make Union presence felt on non-UP campuses.
  o More consideration of postgraduate and international students.
  o New and fresh ideas.
  o Propose lots of activities.
  o Provide equal opportunities.
  o Represent what students need.
  o Tackle mental health issues.
  o Take all students into account when considering points

**Things to watch out for, lessons to be learnt**

Students who are likely to vote still express a few concerns around the voting process, which include the following:

- That they won’t feel passionate about a manifesto (or that the candidate manifestos are all quite similar).
- Doubting that the candidates will act in their interests, or that they perceive the process to be a ‘popularity contest’.
- That the candidates and voting procedure uses a lot of SU jargon – this complicates the voting process.

For these students, they are ultimately likely vote, but their confidence in the candidates is in need of strengthening.
Conversely, 29% of students say that they are unlikely to vote in the Student Leader Elections. These students are more likely to live off campus, and have low engagement with the Students’ Union throughout the year. These students voice the following concerns regarding Student Leader Elections:

- They do not feel passionate about manifestos (in that they believe all candidates to have quite similar points).
- They do not like or identify with the ‘type’ of person running for the role.
- They are not sure who the candidates are and why they should vote.
- They doubt that the candidates will act in their best interests, and believe the Student Leader Elections to be a popularity contest. “The candidates are focused on winning votes, not what happens afterwards”.
- A general dislike for voting.
- Not convinced they will ever hear the outcome of the vote, so they will not bother taking part.

These students are not only cynical of the process, but they also feel quite far removed from the “Students’ Union way of life”. They feel that the SU is only for the “cool people” and therefore they are not welcome to join in. This group will take a lot of resource and creative thinking to engage through voting.

How should we engage students through the elections?

In terms of different aspects of student engagement (and how to enhance engagement), the following responses summarise what was suggested by students:

- Events across campuses that all students can attend (not campus specific), which are time-friendly and therefore inclusive of students from courses such as medicine and nursing.
- More casual events, as well as fewer drinking based events (or events where drinking is not ‘the norm’). These events should not be perceived as ‘niche interest’ or marginalised, nor should they be made deliberately ‘quirky’ just to counter for the fact they are alcohol free or non-competitive.
- More understanding of what it means to be a healthcare student who must often commute in order to attend placements.
- Involving students: Asking for student opinions on various matters (social media opinion polls were suggested).
- Handing out free merchandise.
- Increased promotion through means other than email.
- Highlighting where policies have led to change.
- Strong presence around the University, and away from just Portland.
- More than just speaking to students, it is about having a true conversation.

‘What is your ideal candidate?’

We asked students what pathway they would like to see students take to becoming candidates, and eventually officers.

Student statements

In terms of attributes that candidates ‘ought to have’, students listed the following: healthy mentality, engaged, someone not solely involved in Karni or Welcome (i.e. known for other things too), someone who wants to “up the game of the university”, not obnoxious, makes an effort to speak to all groups of students, someone that actually speaks to students, involvement with SU that is relevant to their experience, and wants to make positive changes to the SU.
We then asked the students what they think contributes to candidates winning their position, and whether they thought that this was a good or bad thing. The following factors were linked to candidates being successful:

- Being engaging and willing to be held accountable.
- Someone that stops to talk to people.
- Having a good manifesto.
- Relevant experience.
- Evidence and research backing up their campaign.
- Confidence (“but they shouldn’t have to be the one that everyone has heard about”).

When asking students how they felt about candidates in general, the responses seemed to be mixed, there was mention of “aggressive tactics” (such as forcing people to vote, or candidates voting on someone’s behalf), and a popularity contest. However it was stated by one student that this has improved since last year, but still needs to be eradicated.

“What would make you vote/ not vote?”

We wanted to ascertain from students what (if anything) it was that encouraged them to vote, and what (again, if anything) discouraged them from doing so. These answers can help to provide us with a rough ‘stop, start, continue’ model.

Student responses

We first asked what in general would encourage/ discourage voting. We mentioned the candidates, the SU, the university, and the elections process explicitly, but stated that it could be related to other aspects all together. Students responded by saying that they were encouraged by the following factors (which we can try to balance with better efficiency in the future):

- Ongoing engagement in democratic structures.
- Seeing a candidates’ campaign.
- Good manifestos.
- Knowing candidates.
- Candidate shout-outs in lectures.
- Feeling that candidates deserve the position.
- Feeling that things needed to be changed.
- Having a candidate who clearly listens to students.
- Q&A sessions.
- Seeing the email about inter-school competitions (would have voted anyway, but this pushed voting to occur on this day).

Conversely, things that students reported putting them off voting included the following (we should make sure to dispel these myths):

- The idea of Student Leader Elections being a popularity contest.
- Candidates coming into lectures.
- Being a final year student.
  - This student said that they didn’t vote because a) they would not be here to see the impact of the changes made, and b) they have not seen noticeable changes taking place in the last few years.
- Too many emails from the SU.
Morning campaigners.
Knowing that certain people will win.
People begging for votes, or writing about it on social media/ sending lots of emails to students.

Following on from this question, we asked students what this year in particular has acted as either an encourager or a discouraging factor. Encouragers are listed as follows:

- Knowing and meeting candidates.
- Someone who stopped to speak to students.
- Increased knowledge about what each role actually entails.
- Feeling a duty to vote as it is a students’ way of ensuring that their voice is heard.
- Chalk-written shouts in places that lots of students pass.
- Email from elections committee.
- Good manifestos.

Things that put students off voting this year:

- Repeated emails after having already voted.
- “Constantly being harassed“.
- Not knowing what the previous officers have achieved/ or what is feasible.
- Feeling that it is a popularity contest and that important points get glanced over because of this.
- Emails and social media notifications flooding in.

It becomes clear through these statements that no two students are the same, as some dislike lecture shout-outs and SU emails, whereas others seem to like these tactics and are in fact encouraged to vote through their use.