

Strategic Plan 2008 -2013

Executive Summary

The next five years will undoubtedly be an exciting period for the University of Worcester with the City Centre Campus and projected growth. It is essential that Worcester Students' Union matches this growth in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the various stakeholders, not least the student membership.

The projected change to the micro environment is mirrored by a national change in student demographics and lifestyle. This further exacerbates the need for Worcester Students' Union to change to meet these new demands.

The Students' Union is currently under resourced in certain areas, undoubtedly resulting in missed opportunities. Without significant development and a change to its priorities this will become more of an issue as student numbers grow.

Worcester Students' Union as with many other Students' Unions can no longer rely on the cash cow of the licensed trade and a conscious decision to diversify the self generated income has resulted in more financial stability. Further growth is restricted by the physical building, lack of reserves to invest in Capital Projects and minimal staff capacity to undertake new projects.

Worcester Students' Union excels on numerous levels, especially in the areas of student groups, student representation and providing a campus community.

To conclude recent changes to the Governance of the organisation and legislative changes to charity law provide an excellent opportunity to change the organisation to better meet the needs of the membership particularly as this is at such an exciting vibrant period of the Universities development.

Andrew Hemming (President 2008/9)

Mission Statement

To provide effective representation and a range of member led services that are a consistently high quality and embrace the needs of our members.

Organisational Values

Empathy: The organisation naturally empathises with the membership.

Democracy: The organisation is governed by democracy.

Openness: The organisation is open to the membership in all its activities.

Togetherness: The organisation develops a feeling of togetherness and collectivism.

Quality: The organisation provides a quality experience.

Fun: The organisations activity is delivered in a fun and enthusiastic manner.

Rewarding: Interaction with the organisation is rewarding.

The organisation's background

The University was formed in 1947 as a teacher training college. It is thought that some form of student representation would have been evident at that time. This has organically grown to the present day situation. A bar and shop were evident in the existing students union building certainly since before 1975. In 1993 an extension to the building was completed called The Hanger and was used exclusively for student functions. In 1996 a large scale refurbishment took place in the building creating offices, training areas, shop and moving the licensed trade operation into the extension. The building remains operationally in a similar form. Undoubtedly the Union experienced (as did other Unions) high levels of usage in its licensed areas during the late 80's early 90's. Student Groups have increased in numbers and the emphasis is predominantly on sport, the students union has increased its support for the student groups.

The Union operates on the St Johns campus at University of Worcester, from one building of a central location. The building the Union operates from is dated in certain areas and its layout restricts its efficiency.

The Union provides welfare advice and education advice independent from the parent institution. Also generic information is provided through the Student Advice Bureau (SAB). The Union facilitates

student groups which include sports teams and special interest groups. The Union also supports a number of community and volunteering initiatives.

Social space and events is provided in the building by The Dive Bar and dance floor area. A campus shop is also situated on site and run by the Union. The Union also has a computer room which can be used by the members for work or internet use.

The Union franchises out two areas of commercial activity to third party operators. One area is food provision the other being media sales.

The Union has several links with national student organisations. These include National Union of Students (NUS), National Union of Students Services Ltd (NUSSL), Association of Managers in Students Unions (AMSU), British University College Sport (BUCS, formally BUSA). The Union is presently undertaking the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) and hopes to gain accreditation in 2009.

The Union is democratically led by Union Council and the Executive Committee. The elected officers are supported by a team of permanent staff. Involvement of the membership in the democracy of the organisation has been in decline as demand on student's time increases and the democratic structure was not relevant to meet members' needs.

Changing purchasing habits nationally have had an effect locally, daytime licensed almost non-existent following the smoking ban and evening sales have reduced due to a number of factors. This reduction in the licensed trade income has been stabilised by diversifying the income areas. However, minimal increases of self-generated income coupled with rising expenditure costs has resulted in an on-going budgeting problem and the organisation operates on insufficient funds with regard to the members and organisations aspirations. In truth all the income from the trading areas is used to supplement the block grant, resulting in no money available for reserves or re-investment in to the trading areas.

The University of Worcester achieved University status in 2005 and future plans include the development of a City Campus site in a central location in Worcester. It is planned for this site to be fully operational by 2012 and at present earmarked for the students Union is office space, a 150 cover café bar, laundrette and convenience store. Other milestones include the development of new halls on campus at St Johns by 2009 and the St Johns masterplan, which details substantial development of the St John site and includes a possible demolition of the existing Student Union building.

The Students' Union has always had good relations with the University, elected officers sit on the board of governors and elected officers also are represented on a significant number of University Committees.

A summary review

The Students' Union successfully integrates with the typical undergraduate. The Student Groups are widely used by this group and they tend to be the group most involved in the social aspect of the Union.

The Union is not so successful at integrating with part-time and mature students. Their needs are understandably different and external commitments are often a barrier to involvement.

The majority of the organisations time is taken up with trading areas and generating enough surpluses to be able to meet the memberships expectations of what WSU can offer them. This causes some problems as often decisions are made on commercial grounds rather than in conjunction with the mission and values of the organisation.

The organisation generates a not insignificant amount of self generated income; this income is unstable as the licensed area profit has fallen drastically in line with national trends. The block grant has increased year on year in line with inflation and at the request of the students Union. The Union has an excellent relationship with the University hierarchy.

The University of Worcester includes the Students' Union within its Strategic Plan 2007-2012.

"To support an active Students' Union, which provides opportunities for students to participate in a broad range of activities, in support of their academic studies, including student representation at all levels." University of Worcester, Strategic Plan 2007-2012, P11

Key points within the text match with existing Students' Union aims, objectives and services. This shows a commitment to the membership's welfare and development:

Student Development

"Facilities to participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities involving special interest societies, voluntary work, and sport at all levels."

Welfare and Academic Advice

“The University will work with the Students’ Union to ensure that there is effective co-operation in tackling a wide range of academic and personal issues.”

Representation

“We will also work together to ensure that the views of students are effectively represented in the University through committees and systematic surveys”

Campus Community

“The staff and students of the University value its friendly community ethos. As the University continues to grow, we will ensure that this positive ethos is further enriched.”

Trends

The average graduate is now leaving University £12,069 in debt, according to the findings of the Tenth Barclays Annual Graduate Survey. If this trend continues, graduate debt could reach as much as £33,708 for students leaving a three year course by 2010, including the proposed increase in tuition fees.

The internet presents the prospect of a growth in distance study with attendance on campus not necessarily required in the longer term. This has implications for the commercial areas and the Unions communication strategy.

Government legislation with regards to minimum wage continues to have an impact on the trading areas profitability. Other legislation which has had a negative affect on the trading activity includes the smoking ban, the security industry legislation and inflexibility of the premises license.

Future Trends and Developments

In September 2009 an extra 182 rooms will be available on St Johns Campus following the building of new hall accommodation. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allocates student numbers, and their attendant funding, to Higher Education Institutions on an annual basis. Significantly, the University of Worcester has secured a substantial increase in funding to support a 50% increase in student numbers by 2010. The University forecasts total student numbers will rise from 7,749 to approximately 12,000 to 13,000 by 2012. An increase of approximately 61.3% over

five years. A City Campus will be created to accommodate this expansion and will include 400 student residences.

Another increasing trend is the increase in commuter students and home students, from all 2008 current student numbers 48% are from the Hereford and Worcester area. This figure is projected to increase.

	Available Resources	Changes in how we work	Changes in demand and needs	Changes in political/economic arena	Changes in environment and market
Next 12 Months	<p>Block Grant</p> <p>Trading Surplus</p> <p>NUS Card Extra</p> <p>Third party contracts</p> <p>Loss of MV funding resulting in significant reduction in income</p>	<p>New executive team</p> <p>Constitutional Change</p> <p>External trustees</p> <p>Target/Outcome Driven (SUIE)</p> <p>Having to devote more resource to achieve trading targets</p> <p>Increased staff time devoted to upholding democracy of the organisation</p> <p>Longer opening for non commercial services</p>	<p>Students expect more from University and Union as paying fees</p> <p>Less time to devote to non essential activity as work and study requirements increase</p> <p>Demands on student groups increases</p> <p>A need to get representation right, especially with Course Reps</p> <p>University requesting further use of Executive Officers time for University matters</p> <p>Students demands on non-commercial services resulting in no money to assign to reserves</p>	<p>Minimum wage increases</p> <p>Charity Law</p> <p>Credit Crunch</p> <p>Price rises of goods and supply of goods</p>	<p>Further aggressive competition towards our licensed trade</p> <p>Tuition Fees and student hardship still affecting the membership</p> <p>Building in need of development, particularly social space and retail</p> <p>Further assumption by part-time and mature students that the Union s just for Undergraduate Students (particularly those involved in sport).</p> <p>Commuter students grouping lectures to minimise days on campus</p>

	Available Resources	Changes in how we work	Changes in demand and needs	Changes in political/economic arena	Changes in environment and market
1-3 years	<p>Block Grant</p> <p>Further Reduction in trading surplus in licensed trade at St John Campus</p> <p>NUS Card Extra</p> <p>Development at City Campus. Café Bar, Retail, Laundrette</p> <p>Increased Summer Trading</p> <p>Potential to bring catering in house across both sites</p> <p>Third party contracts</p>	<p>Staff/Elected Officer restructure to meet changing needs/resources</p> <p>Increase of 182 student bedrooms on St John Campus</p> <p>New executive team</p> <p>Split campus University</p> <p>Effective communication with membership becomes more difficult as numbers increase</p>	<p>Students' Union Social Space insufficient to accommodate increased numbers of students at peak periods</p> <p>Larger Student numbers, increased demand of non-trading areas?</p>	<p>Charity Law changes will effect Students' Union</p> <p>Raising the cap on tuition fees</p> <p>Possible change in national Government</p>	<p>Wet Sales decline due to credit crunch and general alcohol sales decline</p> <p>Market Growth due to new halls on campus</p> <p>Greater Opportunity for development of lunch time trade (food/retail)</p> <p>Capacity not suitable for large scale events</p> <p>Students become increasingly health, environment and fair-trade conscious</p> <p>Academic year increased by two weeks</p>

	Available Resources	Changes in how we work	Changes in demand and needs	Changes in political/economic arena	Changes in environment and market
Longer Term	<p>Block Grant</p> <p>Increased trading surplus due to split site trading</p> <p>Third party contracts</p>	Split Campus University	<p>A move away from campus community towards smaller social groups</p> <p>As Universities reputation increases changing student demographic swill be evident. Increase in full time undergraduates?</p>	Raising the cap on tuition fees	

Strategic Aims

- To be recognised by the University and the student body as the provider of excellent, effective representation and advice.
- To provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.
- Acknowledged by students at the University at Worcester as having made a positive impact to their student experience.
- To be well governed in an open and democratic manner.
- Establish appropriate physical, financial, intellectual and people resources to better deliver the organisational aims.

Specific Objectives

Recognised by the University and the student body as the provider of excellent, effective representation and advice.

90% of representative positions are filled with trained, enthusiastic and supported members of the student body by 2010

Ensure that effective student representation is evident on all University decision making committees/boards by 2010

Make available representation and/or advice to the student body within a maximum of three working days from the initial enquiry by 2010

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

By 2009 develop key quality systems for all services and activities

Integrate Union services with the City Centre Campus by 2011

Ensure access to Union services is available to all cohorts of the membership by 2009

Identify needs of the membership on an ongoing basis, identifying trends and providing services to match the needs within the resources available to the Union

Acknowledged by students at the University at Worcester as having made a positive impact to their student experience.

To be inclusive to all students by offering wide and diverse opportunities for improving their student experience

To provide an environment that fosters campus community and shared positive experiences

To be well governed in an open and democratic manner.

To uphold the democratic structures of the organisation according to the Constitution

To consult, listen and act on members' views and opinion

To ensure elections are conducted efficiently and effectively

Establish appropriate physical, financial, intellectual and people resources to better deliver the organisational aims.

To have a staffing structure in place by January 2010 that can deliver the strategic, operational and business plan during the period of growth

Develop a building strategy with the University by January 2009

To have commitment to finances in place by January 2009 in order to deliver the strategic plan

Implications

To meet this plan the Union will have to operate differently in several key areas:

The Union will have to be more outcome driven and to this end key performance indicators will have to be produced across the organisation. Greater use of departmental targets will need to be set in order to better measure the organisation successes against the organisations aims and objectives.

Departmental planning will need to be standardised across the organisation. This problem is exacerbated by the fact the majority of the core staff are term time only.

As the University grows it will be necessary for the Union to become more structured in its communication methods and organisational procedures.

The staff structure may need to be developed, specifically areas which can concentrate on communications, representation and student development opportunities.

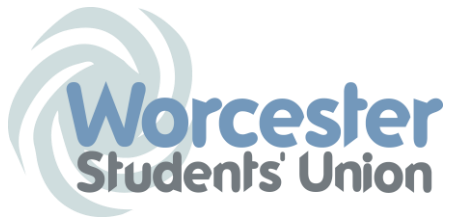
A new Constitution has been drafted, once ratified by the membership it will involve numerous changes to the committee structure and governance of the organisation. It is hoped the new Constitution will make student involvement easier and representation more effective.

Financial Implications

The main implications of the plan are financial.

The Union has no reserves, therefore unable to invest in capital projects to move the organisation forward. The Union needs to develop a reserves policy as not only is it sensible practise but it is a requirement under the Charity Act that a charity has suitable reserves. It has been communicated that a Charity will require 6 months operating costs (£191,000, if taken as total expenditure) in reserves and a reserves policy.

At present the Union is existing financially on a year to year basis which is effectively a break even, only with significant cuts to expenditure would the Union be in a position to direct surplus to reserves.



Appendix A

Immediate Operational Plan 2008/9

Recognised by the University and the student body as the provider of excellent, effective representation and advice.

90% of representative positions are filled with trained, enthusiastic and supported members of the student body by Jan 2010

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Create a campaign to advertise the different representative positions available	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)	Sept 2008	Increase in number of filled positions	Minimal cost of publicity
Improvement to Course Rep communication, data, training and intelligence gathering	Vice President Education and Welfare (or Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)	Oct 2008	Reports to Student Council Minutes from Course Rep meetings	Staff Resource (Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)
Map a succinct plan of available represented positions and times of election	Vice President Education and Welfare (or Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)	Aug 2008	Increase in number of filled positions	Staff Resource (Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)

Recognised by the University and the student body as the provider of excellent, effective representation and advice.

Ensure that effective student representation is evident on all University decision making committees/boards by Sept 2009

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Map the Universities decision making committees/boards	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)	Dec 2008	University Registrar to comment on accuracy	Staff Resource (Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)
Lobby for student representation on targeted committees/boards	Executive Committee	Sept 2009	Feedback from University committees/boards	Officer Resource
Provide training and staff support for representatives (including briefings)	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)	On Going	Feedback at monthly GM/Sabbatical meetings	Staff Resource (Student Development Manager (or Membership Services

				Manager) and Staff Resource (Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)
Audit minutes of meetings to ensure student opinion is made and listened too	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)	March 2010	Report to Student Council	Staff Resource (Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager) and Staff Resource (Course Rep and Volunteer Co-ordinator)

Recognised by the University and the student body as the provider of excellent, effective representation and advice.

Make available representation and/or advice to individual student requests within a maximum of three working days from the initial enquiry

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Introduce monitoring and data collection system to include K.P.I's across welfare and advice departments	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager) and Student Welfare Manager	Dec 2008	Monitoring system in place and monthly reports produced and reported to Student Council. Key Performance Indicators Established	Staff Resource (across Advice and Representative Departments).
Advertise the three working days pledge	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager) and President	Dec 2008	Monitoring system in place and monthly reports produced to Student Council	Staff Resource (across Advice and Representative Departments).

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

By Sept 2009 develop key quality systems for all services and activities

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Establish mystery shopper programme by Sept 2009 for Union services	General Manager	On going	Improvement to results. Bench mark to best in class.	Casual staff cost.
Achieve SUEI accreditation	Sabbaticals, General Manager, Student Development Assistant (or Student Group Co-ordinator)	Jan 2010	Pass SUIE	SUIE Cost, Staff
Deploy annual satisfaction survey	General Manager	On going, yearly	Research produced, report to Student Council, findings acted upon	Survey software subscription
Formulise KPI's across departments	General Manager, Finance Manager	Sept 2008	Reports produced, presented to Student Council	

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

Integrate Union services with the City Centre Campus

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Ensure Sabbaticals and Senior Management Team are involved in the planning process for City Centre Campus	President	Upon completion of City Centre Campus (2011)	Reports to Student Council and Staff Meetings	Minimal staff costs
Produce plan for integration of services	General Manager	Sept 2010	Plan produced, reported to Student Council	

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

Ensure access to services is available to membership

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Produce a communications strategy which incorporates the diversity of the Student Membership	General Manager (or Marketing Co-ordinator)	June 2009	Plan Produced	
Create a Marketing Co-ordinator staff position	General Manager		Position filled	Salary, management on costs
Further develop virtual on line environments for Union services which extend past normal office hours	General Manager (or Marketing Co-ordinator)	Dec 2008	Virtual environments created and in use	Negotiations with web provider. Staff implications outside office hours and term time.

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

Identify needs of the membership on an ongoing basis, identifying trends and providing services to match the needs

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Deploy annual satisfaction survey	General Manager	On going, yearly	Research produced, report to Student Council, findings acted upon	Survey software subscription
Promote and run Union Services & Student Experiences Open Forum	President	On going from Sept 2008	Open Forums held, opinions and findings acted upon, reports to Student Council	Executive time
Operate a 'You said, we did' feedback scheme	President	On going from Sept 2008	Register of feedback and actions	Executive time
Develop a suggestion box scheme	President	On going from Sept 2008	Feedback to Executive Committee and USSE Forum	Executive time

Provide quality, well used services for the diverse needs of the membership.

Remove or reduce services which no longer are suitable to memberships needs and are subsequently under used

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Formulise KPI's across departments, include in monthly management accounts	General Manager, Finance Manager	Sept 2008	Reports produced, presented to Student Council	
Promote and run Union Services & Student Experiences Open Forum	President	On going from Sept 2008	Open Forums held, opinions and findings acted upon, reports to Student Council	Executive time
Deploy annual satisfaction survey	General Manager	On going, yearly	Research produced, report to Student Council, findings acted upon	Survey software subscription

Acknowledged by students at the University at Worcester as having made a positive impact to their student experience.

To be inclusive to all students by offering a wide and diverse opportunities for improving their student experience

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Promote and run Union Services & Student Experiences Open Forum	President	On going from Sept 2008	Open Forums held, opinions and findings acted upon, reports to Student Council	Executive time
Target specific research at non-typical user groups	General Manager (or Marketing Co-ordinator)	Nov 2008	Completed research, report to Student Council	Survey software subscription
Diversify the opportunities available through the Student Development Department. Volunteering/Student Groups/Sport.	Student Development Manager (or Membership Services Manager)	Sept 2010	Higher number of volunteers. Increased number of Student Groups, Sports Teams.	Volunteering Co-ordinator, increased Student Groups Grant allocation.

Acknowledged by students at the University at Worcester as having made a positive impact to their student experience.

To provide an environment which fosters campus community and shared positive experiences

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
To improve the physical environment of the University of Worcester's Social Space	General Manager and Bar Manager	2011	Increased use by membership	Significant capital development
To provide an affordable range of different social functions on campus exclusively for the membership	Executive, Bar Manager	On going from Sept 2008	Entertainments schedule	Minimal, some risk to profit
To celebrate University, Union and member	Executive, Bar Manager	On-going from Sept 2008	Entertainments schedule	

successes.				
To provide a range of shared experiences for the membership from volunteering through to sports.	Student Development Manager	On-going from Sept 2008		

To be well governed in an open and democratic manner

To uphold the democratic structures of the organisation according to the constitution

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
To ratify a new Constitution, that is more relevant to the membership needs.	President	Oct 2008	Union Council/referendum approval.	
Map available represented positions and times of	Vice President Education and Welfare (or Course Rep and	Aug 2008	Increase in number of filled	Staff Resource (Course Rep

election	Volunteer Co-ordinator)		positions	and Volunteer Co-ordinator)
To produce a schedule of committee meetings and advertise	President	Oct 2008	Schedule produced and advertised	
To recruit external Trustees	President	Sept 2009	External trustees recruited and contributing to the strategic direction of the organisation	Possible advertising costs
To ensure steering committee meet and act	President	On going from Sept 2008	Steering group meet and report to Student Council	
To develop and agree a staff/officer responsibilities matrix/protocol	General Manager, President	Sept 2008	Agreed at Executive and Staff Meeting	

To be well governed in an open and democratic manner

To consult, listen and act on members views and opinions

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Produce a communications strategy which incorporates the diversity of the Student Membership	General Manager (or Marketing Co-ordinator)	June 2009	Plan Produced	
To ensure committee meetings, open forums and council meetings are effective and that member's views and opinions are acted upon.	General Manager, President	From Sept on going	Minutes from meetings, reports to Student Council	
Deploy annual satisfaction	General Manager	On going, yearly	Research produced, report	Survey software subscription

survey			to Student Council, findings acted upon	
Operate a 'You said, we did' scheme	President	On-going	Hits on web site	

To be well governed in an open and democratic manner

To ensure elections are conducted efficiently and effectively

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Improve number of candidates standing and members voting for Executive Positions by 10% year on year.	General Manager, Returning Officer	2008 to 2013	Election turn out figures	
Map available represented positions and times of	Vice President Education and Welfare (or Course Rep and	Aug 2008	Increase in number of filled	Staff Resource (Course Rep

election	Volunteer Co-ordinator)		positions	and Volunteer Co-ordinator)
To develop a procedure for officer and staff support for student group committees elections	Vice President Sports & Activities	March 2009	Record of Student Group Elections	Extra staff resource on evenings during committee hand over

Establish appropriate physical, financial, intellectual and people resources to better deliver the organisational aims

To have a staffing structure in place by 2010 that can deliver the strategic, operational and business plan during the period of growth.

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Update the staff appraisal system. Appraise all staff in new system.	General Manager (Line Managers)	Nov 2008	All staff appraised	
Produce a staffing structure which will deliver the	General Manager	Jan 2009		

strategic plan.				
Ensure staff training needs are identified and training is available.	General Manager (Line Managers)			

Establish appropriate physical, financial, intellectual and people resources to better deliver the organisational aims

Develop a building strategy with the University by January 2009

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Establish Universities timescales for St Johns Campus, specifically the Students' Union building	General Manager	Jan 2009		
Create a Students' Union building strategy project group	General Manager	Jan 2009		

Establish appropriate physical, financial, intellectual and people resources to better deliver the organisational aims

To have commitment to finances in place by Sept 2009 in order to deliver the strategic plan

Actions	Owner	Dates for completion	Evaluation	Resource Implications
Engage the University to discuss future funding arrangements	General Manager	Sept 2009		