



Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Every student thrives at Brunel

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Introduction

The Union has been established alongside the university since 1966 and has changed dramatically over time to respond to the growing and changing needs of the students at Brunel University. Recent years have seen unprecedented changes in the external landscape from stock market crashes, changing entertainment trends, Brexit, a global pandemic, and more recently an inflationary and cost of living crises not matched in over 40 years. The pace of change in recent years has been relentless and as we move into a potentially more stable environment we have taken the opportunity to reflect on what type of organisation we want to be, what our members want of us and what we need to change to adapt and grow with our ever changing membership and environment.

The outcome of our consultations, surveys and workshops can be found in the pages ahead and map out our vision, our values, and how we will change and adapt to deliver ever improving services and support to the modern Brunel student, the university, our staff, volunteers and the wider community at large. Our focus through the Pandemic has been about maintaining services and providing the best we can through challenging circumstance. This strategy will concentrate on how we grow, how we improve, how we modernise and most importantly how our membership communities drive that change, to ensure that Every Student Thrives at Brunel.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

Every student
thrives at
Brunel

Our Mission

- To positively impact our members' university experience through;
- high quality, value for money services,
 - Championing and channelling the student voice
 - and supporting and growing inclusive and welcoming communities

Our Values

Driven by You: We always support and respond to the needs and desires of our ever-changing membership. We will talk with all of our communities to hear and understand differing views and we will provide a plethora of opportunities for members to choose who can best represent their voice. We help our members have the confidence and tools to drive their own agenda, challenge themselves and others and take responsibility and accountability in equal measure.

Open to All: We are welcoming, safe and friendly to all, actively taking positive interventions to drive equality and remove barriers to inclusion, but above all treat everyone with respect, compassion, and friendliness.

Passionately Positive: We are passionate about our purpose and passionate about our members and we are always looking to improve and make every effort to be the best that we can be, have a “can do attitude” and will always look at how we can create and drive opportunities for our members to be the same.

Integrity: We are honest, open, accountable and always aim to do the right thing for the right reasons



Delivering our Mission Promises

To deliver against our mission promises, we detailed what we believe our members and stakeholders want to see as evidence of a thriving, supportive, modern Students' Union and then explored what we would need to change to achieve and demonstrate that over the strategic period. We followed that up with priorities for the first year of this period and priorities for year two and three will be published annually and will change and adapt with the membership, who they elect to represent them and the local and wider environments around us. Priorities will adapt, ideas will drive new opportunities but our focus will be clear, and our drive purposeful.



What we want to see

High quality, value for money services

- Relevant services, accessible to everyone with clear published service standards and customer/member expectations.
- Paid for services will be considered value for money from the customer perspective and where applicable, provide budgeted financial contribution to the running of all of our other activities.
- Mechanism, either formal or informal for members to influence the scope and outputs of all our service provisions.
- A range of services that are relevant for the modern student whether they chose to engage in person or digitally

Championing and channelling the student voice

- Robust formal democratic structures, that are fit for purpose, relevant to the modern union environment and representative of our wide and diverse membership
- Appropriate staff support and research analyses to ensure that elected leaders and representatives, are prepared, confident and competent to be able to seek out opinions, challenge the status quo and influence decision making at every level throughout the union and university, and be demonstrable servants to their communities or cohorts.

Supporting and growing inclusive and welcoming communities

- An organisation that builds, talks to and supports formal and informal Brunel communities and understands, harnesses and promotes the positivity and power of togetherness and engenders a genuine sense of pride and belonging throughout the Brunel community.

What we need to change to make it happen

High quality, value for money services

- Develop our digital platform and website so they are comprehensive and user friendly, interactive and engaging.
- Champion a 'how can I help you' and 'we make it happen' ethos in everything we do
- 'Hello Brunel' we introduce ourselves to every student at Brunel
- Introduce data capturing to assess student needs and track engagement
- Tell and sell the story – 'Whatever your thing – we're here to make it happen!'
- Utilise a new Brunel-based branding approach, building off the successful Team Brunel Brand

Championing and channelling the student voice

- Conduct a comprehensive review of our democratic processes by 2023
- Develop and resource our digital engagement platforms to enable us to receive data about student habits and create personalised content
- Use University intel and research (Global Student Living Index) to better understand student needs

Supporting and growing inclusive and welcoming communities

- Become a talking organisation through focus groups, a 'how can I help you culture' and create more opportunities to listen to student voice.
- Create closed feedback loops so students understand what we have done as a result of their comments. 'you said...we did'; officer impact reports, infographics and videos.
- Review our systems and procedures to streamline them and make them user-friendly, not bureaucratic, allowing groups to confidently manage their own activities.
- Resource activities appropriately supporting groups to support themselves.
- Provide training for students to manage and develop their communities effectively.
- Support student successes by shouting about their successes rather than just ours, to create a sense of celebration and pride throughout the whole Brunel community.
- Establish a Union-wide reward and recognition programme that recognises group progress in areas such as diversity and inclusion, membership activity and collaboration.
- Work with the University to create a seamless introduction to the Brunel Community
- Conduct barriers to involvement research to find out what prevents students from getting involved in the community.



What we plan to do this academic year

Student Support and representation

- Provide a 'back to normal' Advice service provision that is accessible to everyone whether in person or digitally
- Develop our data capturing provision to better assess student needs, track engagement and seek member feedback.
- Develop targeted KPI's for our student representation system and review rewards and recognition
- Commission a full and detailed review of democracy throughout the union and develop structures for 2023 and beyond that produces a fit for purpose representation and governance as well as informal influence and opinion gathering. We aim to reduce bureaucracy, encourage different voices and have clearly defined channels for feedback, influence and decision making.
- Work with external support and the university to develop an election process that is fair and robust and encourages wide participation, and discourages conflict and has no tolerance for harassment bullying or intimidation
- Develop process and staff support to better support student leaders and representatives to ensure they have adequate knowledge, information and confidence to effectively seek out opinion and champion and influence change and improvement
- Develop support structures that ensure student wellbeing and championing liberation are organisational objectives and are not reliant on officer resource alone.

Culture and attitude

- Demonstrate our value of Passionately Positive in all our interactions by empowering and supporting staff and elected representatives to have a can-do attitude to all we do, to seek out alternatives and to overcome or side step barriers, and to work on activities, interactions and celebrations that make the Union a fun and exciting place for staff and students alike.
- Include values based questioning in our recruitment process.

Communications and Marketing

- Develop a new structure to our website that is engaging, easily navigable, integrated seamlessly with our social media and provides opportunities to drive revenue
- Create a mini site specifically to welcome and induct new members to our organisation and activities through the fresher's welcome period
- Develop insight management systems enabling us to fully investigate and better use the plethora of data gathering opportunities available to us to improve services, react to members needs and build evidence based arguments for change.
- Develop our brand portfolio so members and stakeholders immediately recognise union services or activities and have confidence therefore in consistency and quality of delivery.

Commercial operations

- Develop a guide plan for all events and sessions, enabling all staff to have confidence in overseeing a session, understanding service expectations and logistics and security processes.
- Actively seek feedback and support from students, officers and staff through open forums, NPS data collection, and staff reps, and to have commercial business a standard agenda item for the Executive Committee meetings enabling our part time officers input and influence over our portfolio
- Work closely with the Comms department to launch and grow the Party Brunel brand on social media.
- Create a culture of sales within the commercial team – have transparent and accessible sales targets and tracking mechanisms
- Champion a 'how can I help you' and 'we make it happen' ethos in everything we do – use this ethos to drive service standards

Student Activities

- Ensure that One Brunel is recognised as a key union project this year, and is renowned across campus as being a celebration of our cultural diversity – increasing awareness, and celebrating the differing cultures on campus, and improving engagement in our activity from students from different backgrounds.
- Encourage union Sport Membership engagement levels back to pre pandemic levels, and raise awareness of the value for money offered by our free club membership scheme, and increase knowledge of its uniqueness to Brunel. – target of 3000 members, more than we have ever had before.
- Develop our branded clothing portfolio and sales support to encourage a culture of pride in wearing our colours and our badge and of belonging to our growing community.

Back of house and organisational infrastructure

- Ensuring training and development needs appropriately identified are met, enabling us to deliver high quality services
- To build a community within the staff team encouraging and supporting internal social opportunities.
- Install a new modern accounting software that makes departmental financial management easy, enables students led groups to be confident in understanding their available resources, and ensures students are reimbursed swiftly and effortlessly for their legitimate expenses.



