



Steve Gore

VP Sports and Acting President

Twitter: @SotonVPSports
Email: vpsports@susu.org
Facebook: /suvpsportsdev

The details in this report reflect progress made since the last meeting of Union Senate, which took place on 13/02/18.

Minutes of previous meetings can be found on our website here: susu.org/representation/senate

Leading the Union

**Goal 1:
Lobbying Sport & Wellbeing for better value Sports Pass and split membership payments**

Progress: 0/1/2/3

The first aspect of this project (better value in Sports Pass) was marked as complete in a previous meeting of senate.

Improved Sport & Wellbeing access!

Thanks to your **VP Sports**, The Union has successfully lobbied Sport and Wellbeing to review the access they allow for their members to play casual sport. As of August 01 2018, access for members has been increased **at no extra cost!**

For full list of casual sports activities, visit susu.org

Membership type	Booking casual sports sessions		Access to casual sports sessions	
	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
Peak Performer	Any time	Any time	Unlimited	Unlimited
Frequent Fitness	Off-peak	Off-peak	Off-peak only	Unlimited
Sports Pass	No ability to book	Off-peak	One IM training session per week	Unlimited

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 aupres@soton.ac.uk

SUSU. Our Students' Union

One other common concern among students is the prohibitive cost of Sport and Wellbeing membership that is required to be paid for the whole year up front in one lump sum. In order to address this I have also lobbied S&W to allow students to split the cost of membership over the course of the year on a

	<p>semesterly basis to coincide with student loan payments. S&W and Student Services have agreed to implement this policy as well, however delays and uncertainty in the provider of their booking system have meant that this policy will not be acted upon until the next academic year (2019/20) at the earliest. I fully expect this to be carried out at this point however there is nothing more that SUSU can do to further progress this at the moment.</p> <p>May Update: Sport and Wellbeing have finally settled on a provider for their booking systems, and will be continuing to work with Gladstone in the foreseeable future while upgrading their offer. This does not affect the timeline, and recurring card payments should be available in September.</p>
<p>Goal 2: Promotion of welfare for members taking part in sports clubs</p> <p>Progress: 0/1/2/3</p>	<p>There has been little progress on this project since the last meeting of senate.</p> <p>VP Welfare and I have seen a significant increase in behavioural infractions reported to the sabbatical team and SUSU over the last few months, which we believe to be a successful result of our focus on welfare encouraging students to highlight issues they otherwise wouldn't have rather than being indicative of an increase in poor behaviour. I have ensured that all of these issues have been addressed fairly but firmly wherever they have appeared.</p> <p>May Update: With AGM season upon us a number of SUSU members have approached the sabbatical officers regarding various democratic infractions, again highlighting that we have the raised the profile around how clubs are being run and members are subsequently beginning to question some of the processes their committees have in place. We can't police all 300+ affiliated clubs and societies but their members can help us if we are seen as a point of contact and support.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Formal representation for casual users in sports facilities</p> <p>Progress: 0/1/2/3</p>	<p>There has been no progress on this project since the last meeting of senate.</p> <p>Too often the conversations regarding improvements to Sport and Wellbeing are focussed around the Athletic Union clubs. I believe the ~6000 members of S&W who aren't part of AU clubs are the silent majority but they currently don't have a formal route to communicate their concerns to management (except through me). I propose we create an elected position to represent these individuals who will meet regularly with management to present any issues with facilities that might have arisen. S&W have already given the go ahead promote SUSU's sporting representation in their facilities in preliminary conversations, I am now tasked with working out a way to fit the role into our existing committee structure and filling it.</p>
<p>Additional Comments:</p>	

New Ideas	
<p>Goal 1: Promote a culture of sporting excellence and align sports strategy with the University through the Sport Experience Board</p>	<p>I have sat on the Sport Experience Board as a major stakeholder over the last year. The goal of this board is to holistically reassess every facet of sport at the University (S&W, SUSU, Estates + Facilities, etc.) in order to create a unified strategy moving forward recognising the importance of sport as a recruitment tool and as a key part of student experience. The strategy proposal will be submitted to the University Executive in December, and we are hoping to pitch for and attract a significant investment in sport to cover expanded running costs and to upgrade facilities.</p>
<p>Progress: 0/1/2/3</p>	<p>Once the proposal is fully formed I will be carrying out wider student consultation and continuing to work with the SEB to work through the details of the project. SUSU's priority in this project is to ensure that there is no loss of student voice/power from students, as well as ensuring that we are ambitious and don't have any loss of functionality in any aspect of sport administration.</p> <p>The strategy is currently almost completed. Once Emma Rowsell (Associate Dir. Student Services) has completed the document we will be presenting to the Athletic Union Committee and Sports Zone clubs for feedback, as well as a slimmed down version to distribute on social media for informal feedback from the wider student population.</p> <p>May Update:</p> <p>The strategy has since been presented to the Sports Zone and Athletic Union committees, and a wider consultation forum of more than 50 student sports leaders and interested casual facilities users. The reaction was largely positive and we had a good opportunity to discuss a variety of strategic principles and longer term objectives.</p> <p>The Sport Experience Board Strategy is due to be discussed at the (University) Education Committee for finance approval, at which point if it passes it will be taken to University Executive Board for final approval.</p>
<p>Goal 2: An awareness campaign around recreational drug use among students</p>	<p>There is no further update on this programme since the last meeting of senate.</p> <p>Drugs are an endemic issue in society and University is no different. A recent <i>Tab</i> survey highlighted that 76% of Southampton students have taken illegal drugs, with 60% of those saying they had taken MDMA, 38% taken cocaine and 30% taken ketamine at some point. In May, two young people aged 17 and 20 tragically lost their lives at Mutiny Festival in Portsmouth due to a super strength batch of MDMA pills being sold on site.</p>
<p>Progress: 0/1/2/3</p>	<p>Despite this, our University and Students' Union have remained silent over the issue of drug use up until now. One of our values is to be brave and I feel that the time is right for us to begin having difficult conversations surrounding drugs and introducing a harm reduction approach to drug use among students.</p>

	<p>I have set up a working group that has been working over summer to identify the extent of the issue at Southampton. We have had support from UoS Student Life team, Solent SU, Hampshire Constabulary, No Limits, and the Southampton Common Forum to begin carrying out a project to reduce the risk of drug harm to students. This will be achieved by educating students on what drug taking activities can potentially put them in danger and what the implications of mixing drugs are, as well as looking into the possibility of providing drug testing kits from SUSU to indicate purity/strength of recreational drugs, and finally by teaming up with Solent SU to lobby the organisers of Common People festival to introduce “front of house” drug testing facilities provided by The Loop. This project has been widely supported by students and a group of students have already come to us to offer their support for the project.</p> <p>I am part of the way through constructing an information pack to be hosted on the SUSU website. The framework has been approved by the working group and I have reached out to South Central Ambulance Service for some medical advice on first responses to possible overdoses.</p> <p>Common People has been gone into administration and is therefore cancelled, however once the project is off the ground we will still begin talking to local clubs and venues to point towards our campaign.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Create a regular free sports programme for students to casually attend</p>	<p>Southampton has a lot of sport on offer however none of it is currently offered for free, which creates a barrier to participation and discourages some students from being physically active. I intend to introduce a programme similar to the “GetActive” programme at the University of Winchester, which will offer regular opportunities for students to take part in sport and physical activity at a casual level for no cost.</p>
<p>Progress: 0/1/2/3</p>	<p>May Update:</p> <p>This project has come a long way over the Easter break. Before Easter, I hosted some focus groups for students to come and discuss what they would like to see in a free sport programme. We had some very constructive discussions around offer, timing, and location. Out of this consultation came a set of principles and I have subsequently drafted up an action plan for a summer term trial period that I’m hoping to put into effect the week commencing 07 May.</p> <p>The plan revolves around two key aspects. The first of which is a variety of freely usable sports equipment to be held behind SUSU’s new desk at Avenue campus. This would be accessible to all students upon providing a valid ID, with the intention of being used at Avenue tennis/netball/basketball courts or the near side of the common. The second aspect is to offer a programme of regular free sports sessions that are facilitated by either SUSU staff or sports clubs. I am currently midway through discussions with a variety of stakeholders to begin delivering these sessions, and will hopefully have a completed programme by the time senate convenes on Wednesday.</p>
<p>Additional Comments:</p>	

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Building on the Union's Work	
Goal 1: Better information on nutritional and alcohol content of products sold in our outlets	In order to encourage students to have a healthier diet, we need to empower them to make healthy choices. This can be partly achieved by making the nutritional information clearer in our outlets such as the Bridge, Café and Stag's. Simple information such as Calorie content and ABV percentage can help guide students to healthier choices, so I will be pushing to see this adopted across our outlets by the end of the year.
Progress: 0/1/2/3	May Update: I have recently had a conversation with our bars and catering managers around our menu, how it is presented, and the feasibility of introducing Calorie content. To update this would take some time investment, but I think with further conversations down the line I might be able to get this moving over summer.
Goal 2: Introduce a lunchtime meal deal in the shop	I have spoken to our Retail Manager regarding this and she has ruled out the possibility of introducing this offer in the near future. Unfortunately meal deals make financial losses in order to drive footfall, and SUSU's budgets are being squeezed between a reduction in student numbers and a difficult trading environment.
Progress: 0/1/2/3	
Goal 3: Improved intramural programme	This project was marked as complete at the first meeting of senate.
Progress: 0/1/2/3	
Additional Comments:	

Conclusion/AOB

Since February senate I have had a steady stream of tasks and projects to get involved with in my role as Acting President. I have found the role challenging, but equally rewarding, as stepping up was sudden and unexpected for me. Line managing the Sabbatical Team and the Chief Executive is never an easy task for a fresh graduate trying to reconcile a group of large personalities, but I feel that my skills are growing from day to day.

A number of more general student interest projects and initiatives have taken up my time since February, as well as assisting with other projects that the team are working on:

- As part of the Vice Chancellor Joint Selection Committee, I was fully involved in the interviewing and subsequent appointment of our new Vice Chancellor, Professor Mark Smith, who will be taking up his post in September. This was the result of an incredibly drawn out, meticulous, and robust process that has been underway since October. Alex Auckland from Odgers Berndtson (the headhunters charged with assisting us in the search) commented that our staff and student consultation is the most comprehensive that he has worked with.

I was incredibly impressed with Mark at interview, who is a personable and approachable character with a deep understanding of the challenges that face students at Southampton. I am confident that he will take the university in a positive direction for our students in the long term.

- Along with Evie Reilly, VP DCI, and representation and marketing staff, I helped organise an All Student Vote to decide on whether SUSU should publicly support the People's Vote campaign on Brexit. I think it is important that SUSU takes a stance on more issues that affect students, and for us to be inactive on important issues is a disservice to our members. The outcome of the vote was an overwhelming YES vote (82.9%) on a turnout of 3755 students (17.9%). Following this, myself and some of the team represented SUSU at the People's Vote march in London in March, and we have got in touch with all four MPs in Southampton and Winchester multiple times to lobby for this cause.
- The sabbatical team have stood in solidarity with the SUSU LGBT+ Society in their motion to rename Brunei house in Glen Eyre halls of residence following the passing of brutal and inhumane anti-gay laws passed by the Sultan of Brunei in recent weeks. These laws are not compatible with the values of a tolerant and inclusive University community and we are publicly requesting that the University severs all ties with the regime of Brunei. This has been considered by the University Executive Board and we will be chasing University executives to respond in due course.
- Work on the Sexual Harassment Assault and Rape (SHAR) working group has moved forwards, and the final report and action plan has been submitted to be approved at University Council on 15 May. This is the culmination of input from a wide range of sources, and if approved and enacted would see Southampton lead the sector in terms of response to this issue. I have consistently called for preventative measures to be included on the action plan rather than just improvements in reporting. I am pleased to say that we have proposed something that covers both – education and continuous messaging to the student population is something that will play a vital role in future.
- Along with Scott (SUSU's CEO) and Paul (Director of Operations), I am part of ongoing discussions around SUSU's future block grant. The University currently provides SUSU an annual grant based on student numbers, which is used to pay for our "free" services, such as

staff/admin support, the Advice Centre, elections and support for elected representatives, campaigns and awareness, and clubs and societies budgets. We rely on this grant to provide an excellent service to our members, and consider ourselves the frontline of student experience. SUSU and the University currently have slightly different ideas about the future of this arrangement, but we are confident that the negotiations will keep us in a strong place with a continuous working relationship with the University.

- Grad Ball and Excellence in Volunteering Awards planning is moving forward under the capable hands of Jenna, our Events Manager. I simply cannot hold my excitement around the headline act for Grad Ball, but unfortunately the act's identity must remain secret for now. More to follow!
- The 2019 Whatuni student choice awards have been released, and SUSU has raised 14 places to be ranked **16th best** students' union in the country! Alongside holding our place as 9th best for clubs and societies offer, this is a fantastic result for us and shows that our hard work is paying off and we are being seen much more positively among the student body.

As always, I'm reachable at aupres@soton.ac.uk for any follow up questions.

Best wishes,
Steve.