

Your  
Union needs  
you!

We need your  
**FEEDBACK**

on our new

**PLAN**

the  
review.

**FIRST DRAFT:**

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## **Leeds University Union's Proposed Strategic Plan 2010-2014.**

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### **Introduction**

In February 2009 we asked over 4000 students what they were concerned about, what they wanted from the Union and about ways in which we could get better. After listening very carefully to what they said we wrote a new vision to guide our work to 2014.

**Together, we'll make sure you love your time at Leeds.**

It's simple. We want students studying here at Leeds to have a fantastic time. Our activities and services (representation, campaigning, student advice, sports teams, societies, joblink, bars, events and shops) will all contribute to a brilliant time in Leeds.

This report supports the consultation process for members to give their thoughts about Leeds University Union's new Strategic Plan for 2010-2014. The purpose of the consultation stage is to give us feedback on the general direction and themes for our new plan before we bring a proposal to a Referendum in November 2009. The specific content of the strategic plan will evolve and develop further once our direction has been agreed by students. We have proposed specific recommendations in the detail of the 9 reports within this document.

### **About our plan**

Our plan is based on 9 areas of work to 2014.

#### **1. Making it easy for you to improve your skills and enjoy new experiences.**

Our proposals in this area include providing space in the Union and on our website for you to grow your skills and get access to advice, support and opportunities so that you graduate with a great CV.

#### **2. Helping you to get the support you need to make your life easier.**

You asked us to make your money go further, so we're finding ways to help you with money saving ideas and advice on managing your money.

#### **3. Giving you more for your membership and more for your money.**

We will continue to be a not for profit organisation. We will be completely transparent in how we recycle the money that you spend in the Union to support our activities so that you love your time in Leeds.

#### **4. Working together for change on the issues that affect you.**

We will help you campaign on issues that affect you during your time in Leeds. Together we will prove that change is possible when you believe that it is.

**5. Making your membership fun and exciting.**

Proposals here include investing in technology in our shops and bars so that we can offer you a loyalty card, giving you discounts on products that interest you and rewarding you for getting involved in the Union.

**6. Creating a strong work culture that helps our staff help you.**

We will make sure that the Union recruits and develops the best staff to ensure that you love your time in Leeds.

**7. Being sustainable in every way.**

We are going to be innovative and creative in how we use new technologies and systems that benefit the lives of our members and make us truly sustainable. This theme also covers the changes that we need to make as a result of the Charities Act 2006. You can find out more about what this legislation means for LUU online at [www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/faqs/#charity](http://www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/faqs/#charity)

**8. Creating a vibrant space for you to meet other people.**

We are going to create a better Union building with more seating areas and social spaces for members. We will also continue to improve our websites to give you access to all of the Union's support, advice and representation services online whenever you need them.

**9. Building a community for all of our members.**

We want to make sure that we connect with members who have specific needs from their Union, making sure that they receive the information that they want about our services and activities.

We have focused on these 9 areas following feedback from over 4000 students in February 2009. Within each of the 9 areas of work we have identified 4 big ideas to work on.

**Individual Reports within this document**

Each of the 9 areas of work is represented in an individual theme report. The content of each report is intended to be a guide to the direction of our thinking. It also details some of the initiatives we have already identified. The structure of each report is as follows:

**- The Plan in summary**

- o This section highlights **what** we are proposing within this area of work, and includes a summary table that looks like this:

Strategic Theme: Title of the strategic theme here	
<b>Project Objectives:</b> i.e. the 4 big things that Leeds University Union is going to do by 2014	<b>Initiatives Include</b> i.e. how we are going to make those 4 big things happen
<b>1. Big idea number one</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail on how we are going to make big idea 1 happen.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Big idea number two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail on how we are going to make big idea 2 happen.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Big idea number three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail on how we are going to make big idea 3 happen.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Big idea number four</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detail on how we are going to make big idea 4 happen.</li> </ul>

- **What our members told us**

- o This section is a collection of highlights from the Strategic Review market research data from February 2009. We may have considered other data during the Review and Plan process, but we really want to illustrate what our members said and how we have evolved our ideas. This section highlights **why** we are focusing on this specific area of work.

- **Our Ideas in more detail**

- o The section explains **how** we intend to make improvements as a result of what members told us. This section is a narrative of the ideas we want to pursue. We have set our framework for this as, "4 big ideas in 4 years" so you can expect 4 main ideas under each theme. Under each "big idea" you will read something more about the initiatives which we are proposing to develop. More initiatives can follow, and that's where your feedback will be really valuable!

- **Measures of our success**

- o The section briefly outlines how we will evaluate our progress in each area individually. It is important we illustrate how we think we can measure our achievement, and we'd be happy to hear from you if there are better/more relevant ways you can suggest.

## Theme 1:

### Making it easy for you to improve your skills and enjoy new experiences

Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will provide somewhere that consolidates all the advice, support and opportunities that are available to members who want to grow their skills and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing space in LUU (virtual and/or physical) where all opportunities for skills development can be accessed</li> <li>• Making it easy for those offering opportunities to engage with students through a single point of contact</li> <li>• Partnering with the Careers Centre and Leeds for Life to increase student footfall and ensure a quality service for our members</li> </ul>
2. We will support students and graduates who want to gain more skills and experience before entering the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a support package for members who are enhancing their skills (time management, balancing working and studying)</li> <li>• Helping members gain life skills</li> </ul>
3. We will ensure LUU part time student staff can compete well in their chosen future path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing a skills portfolio for part time student staff to evidence their experience and training</li> <li>• Enabling part time student staff to access vocational training opportunities and develop skills in other departments through work experience</li> <li>• Building a profile of part time student staff Alumni as case studies</li> </ul>
4. We will push the skills message to members from day one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a skills week, promoting the benefits of personal development and how to do it in a fun and engaging way</li> <li>• Creating a high profile opportunities centre within LUU (as in objective 1)</li> <li>• Influencing the development of Leeds for Life to make it relevant to first year undergraduates</li> </ul>

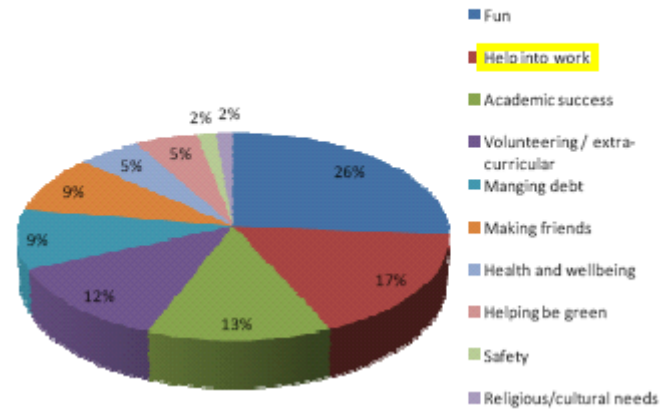
## What our members told us

- Many students seem to do their very best not to think too deeply about careers while still studying, but the levels of concern in this area do increase steadily through the years of study, peaking in 3rd position just behind Academic achievement and Money.
- There is an acknowledgement that simply having a degree is no longer enough. Volunteering, extra-curricular activities and direct career-related working experience are all seen as important.
- While there is a feeling that University academic departments should do a better job of providing links into career opportunities, a large number of students also feel that this is an area where the Union should be providing direct support.
- Students offer many different ideas on what the Union should be doing, including finding more career-related temporary work (Joblink), more support through career-specific Personal Development Programmes, and building links with employers and former students who could help provide an insight into the career options available to those studying on specific courses.
- The following chart shows responses to the question, 'How concerned are you about the following issues on a daily basis?' Students were asked to rate each statement.



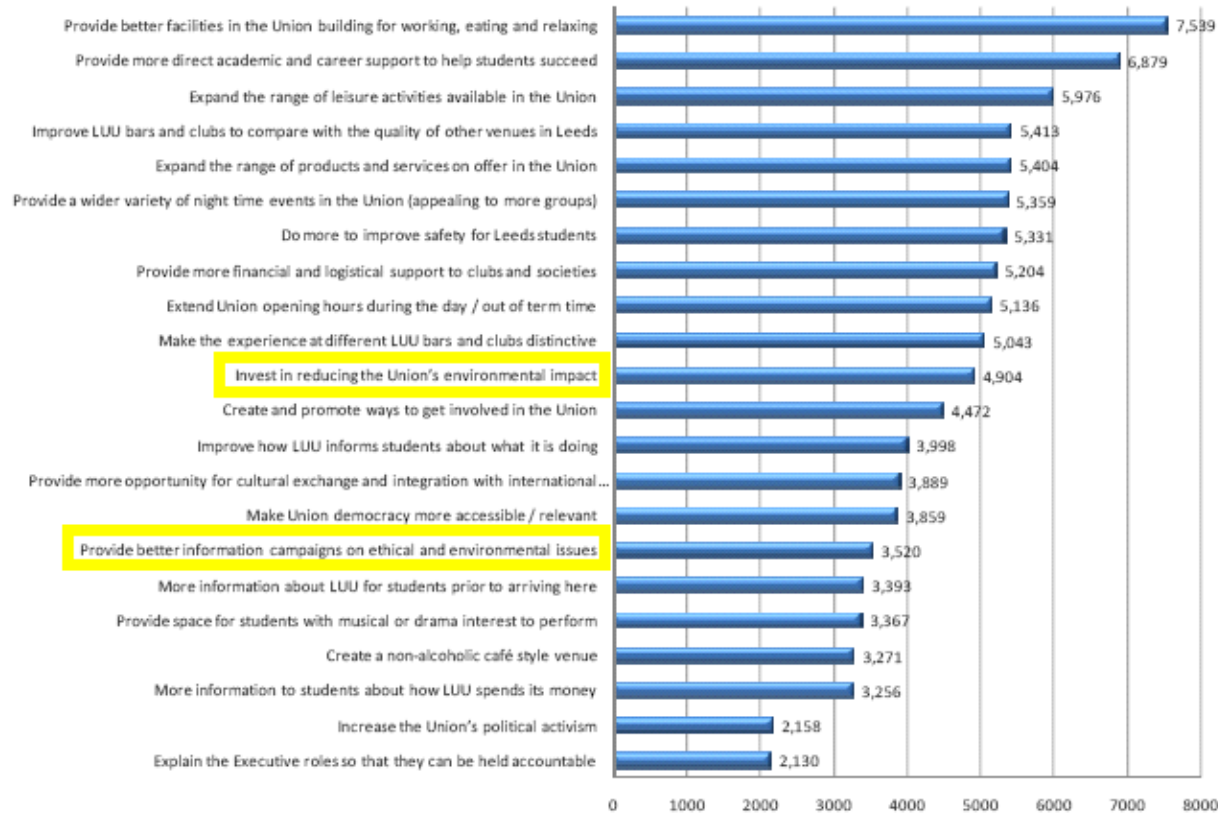
- The following chart shows responses to the question, 'What is the **single most important** aspect of your University life that the Students' Union could help you with?'

### Most Important Help



- There seems to be a feeling amongst members that 'help into work' is a practical problem that can be solved.
- The following chart shows responses to the question, 'How can we make the Students' Union better for you?'

### Big Ideas Rated



### Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

- We will provide somewhere that consolidates all the advice, support and opportunities that are available to members who want to grow their skills and experiences**

We know there are many activities already available to students at Leeds which offer the opportunity to grow skills and experience which will help in the employment market. LUU will seek to make it easier for students to access these opportunities by developing a space for information and learning. As with all our services, any physical development – most likely in the form of an opportunities centre in the style of Joblink – will also be reflected on the web to maximise the access to members.

Our partnership working with the University of Leeds Careers Centre and the Leeds for Life project will also be an important feature of this work. We will lead our staff to develop new ideas and easy routes for students to switch between our activities and support from the University Careers support. With a true partnership our aim will be to improve the quality of the University work as we assist with communications and feedback from students.

## **2. We will support students and graduates who want to gain more skills and experience before entering the world of work**

We can specifically help in this area by supporting other parts of the University who share our goal. We have a close relationship with our members and listen to them through various forms of feedback. We can use our strengths to build a support package for members who are seeking to enhance their skills. We know through our volunteers involved in clubs and societies that time management and balancing working and studying are areas our members need support. These are the basis for skills which will help in the workplace as well as make University life easier to manage. Helping our members gain life skills can come through both the experiences our activity programmes can offer and also from workshops and learning activities. We will look to tailor both to suit the diversity our student community now reflects.

## **3. We will ensure Leeds University Union's part time staff can compete well in their chosen future path**

LUU employs over 200 students every academic year as weekly-paid staff across all of its services. This alone makes a contribution to helping with the costs of University life. We also want to recognise the responsibility we have to not only create as many part-time jobs as possible for students, but to make this experience a key part of the evidence those students can use to help in future employment. One way we can help is to design a skills portfolio for student staff to evidence their experience and training.

A further way we can help our student staff develop their career potential is mentoring and development through internal opportunities in LUU. We will work with our managers to enable student staff to access vocational training opportunities and develop skills in other departments of the Union or University through work experience. We will build a profile of our former student staff Alumni, so they can be used as case studies to inspire current and new staff.

## **4. We will push the skills message to members from day one**

Our members have many messages thrust in front of them when they arrive at University, it is hard to prioritise with so many choices. What LUU can do to help is make it easy to hear the important messages about building your skills and experiences whilst at University. Our new high profile opportunities centre can be a focal point for this message. We need to be able to respond to the needs of our members - to balance academic study with building their skills and experiences, enjoy extra-curricular activities and undertake part-time work if necessary.

We will begin to feature a Skills Week within our regular programme of activity. Through this format we can promote the relevant graduate skills which will enhance your employment prospects and how to get them in a fun and engaging way. Our partnership with the University of Leeds Careers Centre and development of Leeds for Life are critical to making this work for students. We will use our influence within the University to make these messages relevant to the first year experience as much as for those closer to graduation.

### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways:

- Staff satisfaction survey scores from our student staff
- Numbers of visitors to our new services
- Students rating LUU as helping with their career development

## Theme 2:

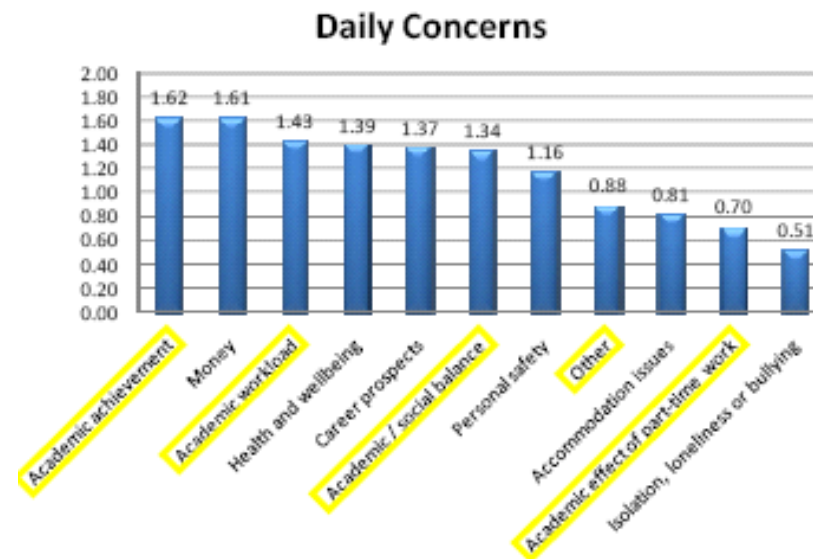
### Helping you to get the support you need to make your life easier.

Project Objectives: 4 big things in 4 years	Initiatives Include
1. We will make sure that it is easy to find help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in Partnership with the University to develop a single brand identity for finding help</li> <li>Developing a central help point in LUU</li> <li>Developing a Welfare day each term to bring all of the services together under one roof and promote range of help available</li> </ul>
2. We will help members to make their money go further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further development of the SKINT website and brand and introduction of more resources e.g. an online SKINT cook book. Focus on money saving ideas and on money management</li> <li>Introducing a SKINT development group to develop the brand, agree a set of guidelines for sales that come under the brand, and monitor on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>
3. We will develop a new academic support service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking work with UCRs and Course Reps to determine if our outline ideas would be helpful / relevant and of use to members.</li> <li>Working with Facilities and Retail to outline potential location for an "academic hub" (idea for something that is a shop front style facility)</li> </ul>
4. We will support our members in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering actions under the Community Plan to empower students to make positive impacts on their local community.</li> <li>Developing a new Community Plan in spring/summer 2011.</li> </ul>

### What our members told us:

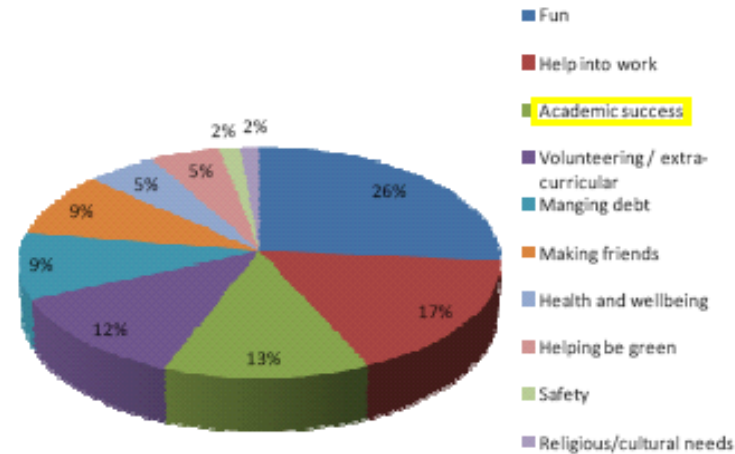
- Academic achievement is the number one daily concern among members. Other related issues such as academic workload and academic / social balance are also of concern for a large number of members.
- The membership appears to be split over what, if anything, the Union should do to support their academic lives. Some believe strongly that the Union should be directly involved in providing study areas, library / research materials, IT etc. Others value the Union as an escape from the pressures of academic life and would not want to see that diluted. Awareness of the Union's current academic representation work is very low.

- Part of the background to this debate is the perceived lack of a distinct identity for the Union as a separate entity from the University. Some members do understand this, but many less engaged members simply view it as one of the buildings on campus where all the shops just happen to be!
- There is an opportunity to develop a clearer identity in terms of representing the membership on issues relating to their education. The challenges will include, among many other things, maintaining good relationships with the University while doing so.
- The Union may feel that to get directly involved in providing academic resources would only further muddy the identity problem, and that it should focus its efforts on campaigning and representation in this area. Alternatively, the provision of a different, distinctive form of academic support could actually enhance differentiation and the sense that the Union is there to help its members achieve their academic ambitions.
- The following chart shows responses to the question, 'How concerned are you about the following issues on a daily basis?' Students were asked to rate each statement.



- The following chart shows responses to the question, 'What is the **single most important** aspect of your University life that the Students' Union could help you with?'

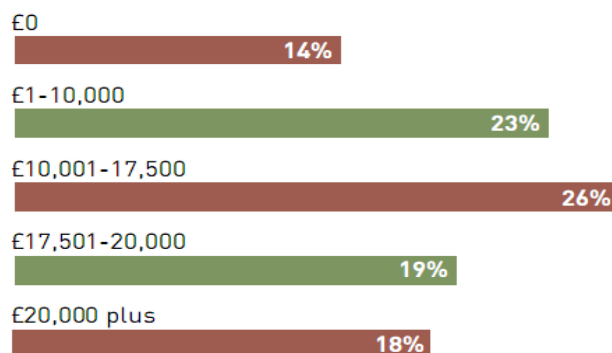
### Most Important Help



- While Managing debt is only 5<sup>th</sup> on the list, a significant minority (nearly 1 in 10) chose it as the one thing above all others that the Union could help them with.
- Results for Daily Concern and Most Important Help may have been inflated by recent poor economic conditions and doubts about the viability of the long-term resolution to members' financial issues through well paid employment.
- If this were the case, however, we might expect to see increases in the measures of Daily Concern and Most Important Help over the years of study. This has been shown to be the case with Career prospects, but there is no evidence of a comparable increase in the areas of Money and Managing debt, as members approach graduation.

## Sodexo Times Higher Research<sup>1</sup>

### Expected debt at graduation



### Top worries / concerns experienced at university

Achieving desired degree classification	1
Heavy university workload	2
Balancing academic, social and work commitments	2
Pressure to succeed (self motivation and external)*	4
Finding a job after graduation	5
Day-to-day financial worries	5
Amount of debt at graduation	7
Feeling of isolation	8

\*in previous surveys pressure to succeed was split between self motivation and external pressure

## Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

### 1. We will make sure that it is easy to find help

It sounds an obvious course of action to follow, but we are proposing to put considerable work into making access to help as easy as possible. We believe students can find it difficult to navigate the various departments and services on campus which are there to support them. The University of Leeds is large and can be a complicated structure to get around for many students; the Union is included in this. We need to create easy routes for students to access all the support services on campus whether physical or via the web. This will require a close partnership with the University student support managers to develop a single brand for "help".

Further to the planning and communication which will be required to achieve the above, we also believe there are some direct changes to make within LUU. Members should be able to enter LUU and whatever their need get the right answer first time and be directed to the right place to help them. In order to achieve this we will develop a central point to co-ordinate this in the best way. To

<sup>1</sup> Report findings based on national survey using students from The Student Panel (recruited via mailings by UCAS). Representative sample of 2,000 using quotas to cover university type, year groups etc.

get the message over to students we also suggest the development of a Welfare Day each term to bring all of the services together under one roof and promote the range of help available. This is not necessarily limited to just LUU services and could incorporate invitations to external organisations. At the same time we should look to extend our information outside the Union Building and build upon the previous drop-in sessions we have done in halls of residences and faculties around campus.

## **2. We will help members to make their money go further**

Money remains a specific area of concern for our members and therefore will be a priority for us too. Our SKINT brand has been developed with success over the past 2 years as a way to combine advice with direct discounts around our own shops. This has been a great channel for communicating simple financial guidance and we seek to continue this development. We will introduce more resources such as cooking tips and regular shopping advice. The focus will also be on money saving ideas and on practical money management. Internally we will organise a SKINT development group to develop the brand, agree a set of guidelines for sales that come under the brand, and monitor on an ongoing basis.

## **3. We will develop a new academic support service**

Our members have identified that LUU should be undertaking more direct academic support work. We have always supported students through academic representation – through Course Reps and Union Academic Reps - and advocacy when there are problems or students just want to give some feedback to the University. What we can start to do now is identify how we might provide a more productive level of support to aid the student academic experience. We will undertake work with Union Academic Reps and Course Reps to determine if our outline ideas would be helpful or relevant and of use to members. One of the particular initiatives we are developing is to create an academic support hub within the Union. Once we have outlined the ideas from our members further and we can identify a suitable space in the Union building, we would seek to develop a facility which can bring a variety of academic support together.

## **4. We will support our members in the community**

We first launched a co-ordinated plan for our community-related work in 2007. Since then we have been challenged to continually do more. In talking to local organisations around LS6 we have received feedback and developed a new plan which will be launched to cover 2009-2011. During this academic year we will be working on extending the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in areas where

students live and building upon positive work with West Yorkshire Police over the past few years. Our Volunteering and Community Office has become a hub of student volunteering and community relations and we want to see this focal point grow further.

Whether it is work on crime and safety, housing, volunteering or environmental action we will seek to develop activity ourselves and in partnerships which serve our members needs and the local community. As part of our new strategy for 2010-14 we will commit to a new community plan to be developed in spring/summer 2011.

### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways:

- Satisfaction from students accessing our services which can "help"
- Students providing feedback that our SKINT campaign and academic support respectively have helped with University life
- Feedback from stakeholders in our Community work.

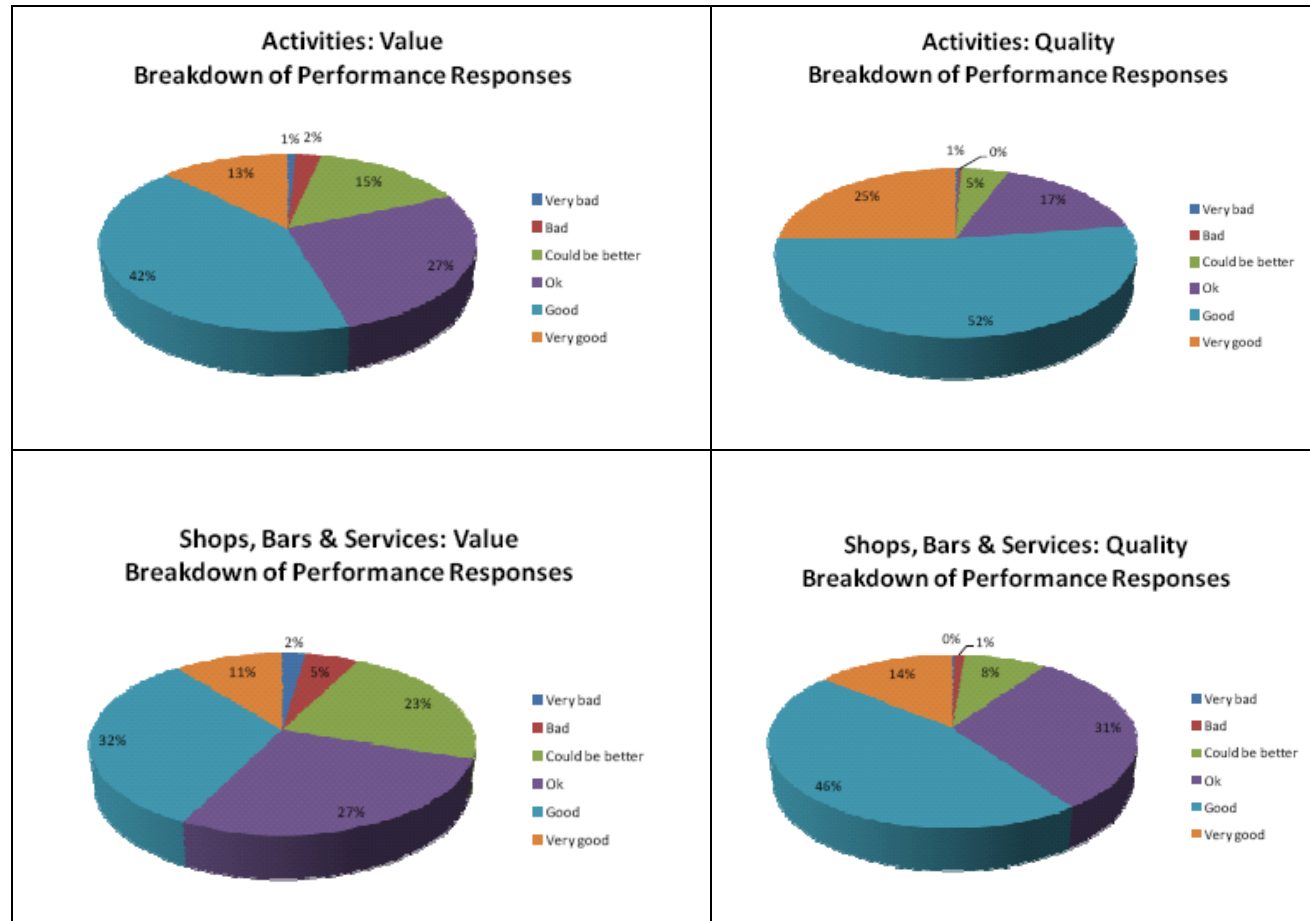
## Theme 3:

### Giving you more for your membership and more for your money

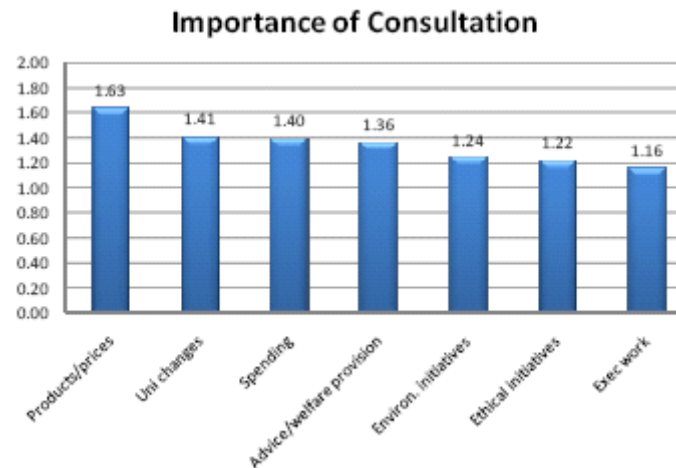
Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will create a new, more direct and transparent way of communicating profit recycling that occurs within LUU (how we spend our members' money)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a new message. E.g "This is what we spend your money on" to increase transparency about how we spend our money.</li> <li>• Having a 'price tag' poster in each area of the building that communicates what we have spent in this area. E.g in reception, "This cost £30,000 and what you get for your money is...."</li> </ul>
2. We will develop and monitor a culture of excellent customer service through innovative and inspiring methods (including the internal customer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing two customer service programs which will be linked: Staff/Member Facing (external) and Staff/Staff Facing (internal)</li> <li>• Underpinning the programs through our recruitment, development and performance management approaches</li> </ul>
3. We will empower Department Managers to take ownership of their designated space and maintain the physical standards of that space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving designated areas of the building to Department Managers for them to 'own'.</li> <li>• Introducing a Planned Preventative Maintenance Program</li> </ul>
4. We will treat our members like stakeholders, creating a culture of transparency relating to our spaces and developments (letting our members have a say in how we spend their money)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that we have a cost / benefit pledge for all works so that our members can challenge us if we over promise and under deliver</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

- There is a stark division in the different attitude of members towards the Union's activities and the shops, bars and services.
- Ethical and environmental considerations, while important for the Union's activities, are bottom of members' considerations when it comes to retail.



- This division is re-enforced by the evidence that the majority of members are highly price-sensitive and whilst they may intellectually approve of various ethical and environmental initiatives, will usually choose the cheapest available option when they have to make a purchasing decision.
- The importance of quality and value in terms of members' rating and understanding of how the Union works is visible in the areas on which they wish to be consulted. Our delivery of quality and value has a direct and daily impact on the lives of our members.
- The shops, bars and retail outlets are perceived by members to be the things that they would most miss if the Union were to disappear.



## Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

Some of the initiatives we will pursue under this theme will relate to internal systems which should be improved and developed. Although this will mean significant work internally, members won't always see the benefit immediately. We will be looking to change the perception of quality and value in relation to LUU, based upon a real experience of an even better LUU.

## **1. We will create a new, more direct and transparent way of communicating profit recycling that occurs within LUU (how we spend our members' money)**

"*Not For Profit Just For Students*" has been a key campaign for LUU over the past 5 years. It started out as a simple way to show members how money spent in our bars and shops, is used to fund the clubs and societies, volunteering, Student Advice Centre and other non-commercial services. This message has developed into a brand in itself which sets our services apart from the high street. As with all campaigns, it goes in a cycle which must now be revitalised in a new way. We will use our profit recycling message to create more openness about the way the Union is run and how all members have a stake in the Union.

There are a number of ways in which we can refresh the profit recycling message. We will make things simple by explaining to members in easier terms what we spend the money that they spend in the Union on. It is really important to link this message across all our services in the building and the web-site. A simple suggestion has been to use a 'price tag' poster in each area of the building that communicates what we have spent in this area and what you get for your money.

## **2. We will develop and monitor a culture of excellent customer service through innovative and inspiring methods**

We need to work through our people to improve our customer service culture. Naturally we will involve members - as customers - in helping formulate ideas that can add to the training and communication we do with our teams. Two specific programmes of work are currently proposed. Firstly, staff training and reviews based upon interactions with students and other customers. Secondly, staff training and reviews based upon interactions internally between our departments and between people who work in the Union.

Both programmes will be underpinned by our recruitment, development and performance management approaches. As we seek to improve our culture we will celebrate successes and challenge ourselves when we do not reach our new standards. Feedback from members in a variety of ways (including comments and suggestions) will be vitally important to ensure we are going in the right direction.

### **3. We will empower Department Managers to take ownership of their designated space and maintain the physical standards of that space.**

Our building is vitally important to the way our members and all our customers view LUU. There are days during the year when our footfall exceeds 20,000 people! We will establish a new attitude to the ways in which we present our spaces which will continually improve standards. Our philosophy should be to keep everything "as new".

We will achieve this by an extensive building maintenance and improvement programme which will cover the simple things like repairs and cleaning standards. It is important that this also prioritises the areas such as toilets and the external areas to our building. Social spaces will be just as important as those areas which generate sales. We will give support internally to give ownership to department managers and the relevant student groups who can identify how to keep their space looking "as new".

### **4. We will treat our members like stakeholders, creating a culture of transparency relating to our spaces and developments**

It is important that our members understand how decisions are being taken to generate a new attitude towards Quality and Value. We will find new ways for our members have a say in how we spend Union money. We will consider where and how major spending decisions are being made to ensure transparency. Members will be given a stake in the decisions made in the Union.

The building is a crucial factor in the interaction we have with members and other customers. As we develop our building we will ensure we have a cost / benefit pledge for new works. This will allow our members to challenge us if we over promise and under deliver and increase accountability in our major plans.

### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- Increased rating of customer service from our members
- A new awareness from members of our profit recycling message and how our money is spent
- Increased rating against "quality" and "value" in our annual member survey

## Theme 4:

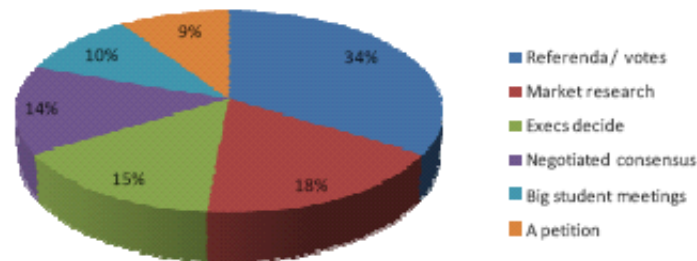
### Working together for change on the issues that affect you.

Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will create change through engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing our departmental representation work based on the Faculty of Environment pilot.</li> <li>• Recruiting School Reps for every School in the University and phasing out elected Faculty Reps</li> <li>• Working with the University to build a communications campaign to change the expectations and behaviour of staff with regards to student engagement.</li> </ul>
2. We will create change through participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing LUU's democratic system to ensure it fulfils the following 3 key functions: 1) Communicating and coordinating all student viewpoints 2) Holding decision makers and implementers to account 3) Providing a forum for discussing, making and implementing changes.</li> </ul>
3. We will create change through campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating more support for those leading our campaigns.</li> <li>• Developing a central database to identify potential campaigns, logging student concerns identified through the advice centre, our various rep schemes and executive officers.</li> </ul>
4. We will create change through conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a turning or tipping point in members' belief in their ability to affect the world around them.</li> <li>• Building our approach to participation through conviction, leading to 10,000 students voting in elections and referenda.</li> </ul>

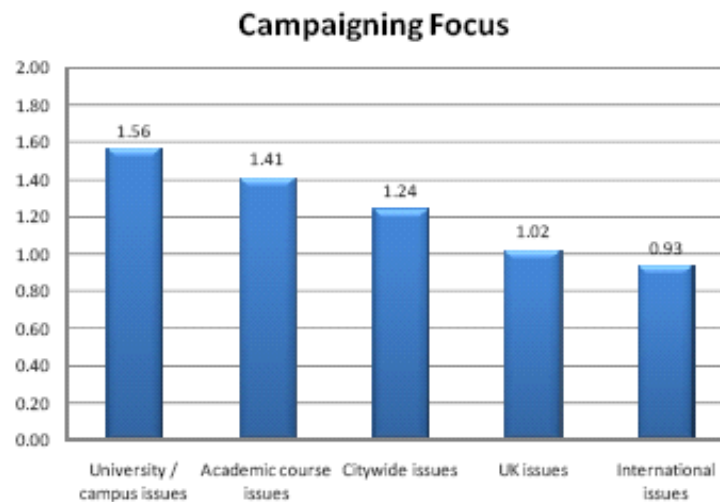
## What our members told us:

- Participation in democracy outside the referenda is a problem acknowledged by the members themselves, including those who choose not to participate.
- There is a feeling among some that Union democracy is a 'play-thing' for a clique who are more interested in pursuing their personal agendas on the wider stage than affecting any meaningful change for the benefit of members.
- Consequently, although Democracy and Representation are both Core Values for the Union, neither are of particular importance to the membership who focus strongly on what they might consider more 'practical' day-to-day values such as Quality and Value.
- In spite of the relative disinterest in democracy, members do express a strong desire to be consulted on issues, particularly those of immediate consequence to them as individuals (pricing, changes to Uni. facilities and how Union money is spent) rather than broader societal issues (advice & welfare, environment and ethics).
- When it comes to deciding on big policy issues, referenda and single-issue votes are the most popular mechanism, followed by market research, e.g. asking a representative sample. Only 15% would be happy for elected reps to make all the big policy decisions on their behalf.

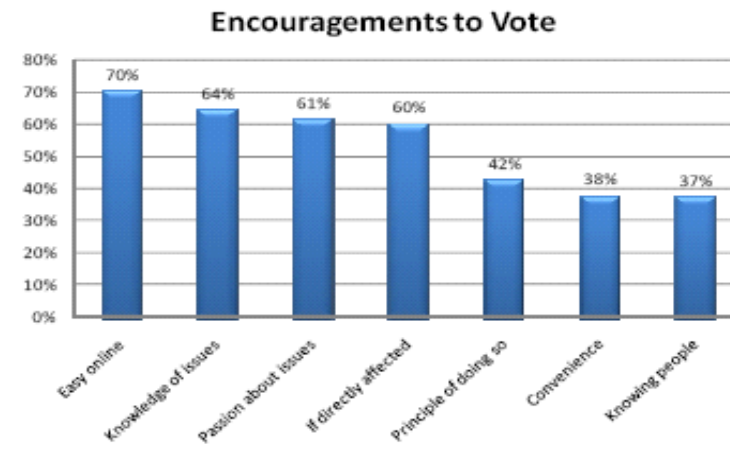
### Big Policy Decision Making



- Interestingly, while referenda would be the most popular method, decision by petition would be the least. There seems to be a suspicion among members that a vocal minority might be able to exert undue influence on the Union while the majority remained silent.
- There are clearly a proportion of members who are currently put off the democratic processes by what they see as 'frivolous' issues taking up their time.
- A clear agenda for where members would like us to support campaigns is highlighted in the table below :



- Members also express strong opinions about how they could be encouraged to vote more, including online voting and having a better understanding of the issues at stake.



## Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

We have structured ideas around how members will have a greater impact in the world around them to address the development necessary under this theme. Starting with the Union, students should be able to see that change is possible and the value in taking forward actions to make that change happen.

### 1. We will create change through engagement

During this academic year we have started trialling some changes to the Course Rep structures in the Faculty of Earth and Environment. From this pilot we expect to learn more about what can work to create a closer relationship between students and the decisions which affect their learning/course delivery. A significant part of this learning is around the role of the Course Rep and how that can feed up to a School Rep who can influence decisions made in the University at that level. Whilst this potentially requires much greater resource, we will seek to support this investment if we can create a greater impact for students across the whole University.

We propose to use the learning from the pilot project to instigate changes to our work under the new strategic plan. We will build upon principles of partnership with the University to create change, whilst maintaining a distinguishable, independent voice for students. Extending our work from these principles, we will work with the University to build a communications campaign to change the expectations and behaviour of staff with regards to student engagement. Use of the University Virtual Learning Environment will be key to this development. We will also consult with the University in order to agree a code of conduct on student engagement.

## **2. We will create change through participation**

Participation in our democratic activity has risen over the past few years, but not enough to satisfy our ambitions. In our referenda and elections we want to significantly raise the level of participation: 6,000 students taking part should be our expected level, with 10,000 our aspiration.

We don't believe we have the right answers to achieve this yet. We will evaluate the democratic system that we have, re-examining the functionality of all of our representative bodies to ensure that they are performing 3 key functions;

- 1) Communicating and coordinating all student viewpoints
- 2) Holding decision makers and implementers to account
- 3) Providing an accessible forum for discussing, making and implementing changes.

We anticipate bringing a new model before the Referendum in March 2010, which can then be launched in line with our full strategic plan from July 2010.

## **3. We will create change through campaigning**

We have a good tradition of member-led campaigning activity in the Union. This has covered housing issues, liberation, environmental and ethical issues, alongside tuition fees and change in the University. It is clear from the Review that we need to keep it our priority to support campaigning activity which is close to University activity and local to Leeds. We will make sure that we measure the outcomes of our campaigning has so that we concentrate on areas where we can have real impact for students.

Our membership will lead our campaigning agenda more effectively, through close work with the student executive and Campaign and Democracy Support team. We will look for ways to campaign on the issues identified by our research so that we are able to campaign effectively on the issues which matter most to the membership. We propose to find new ways to inspire our members to get involved and monitor how members are involved to increase participation. We will look to integrate web-based technology to help create new campaign activity and improve communications in this area. We will also look to find synergy between LUUs campaign agenda with the activity of our political and campaigning societies so that those leading campaigns get more support from LUU. A specific new development will also be a central database to identify potential campaigns, logging student concerns identified through the Student Advice Centre, our various Course Rep schemes and the LUU Exec.

#### **4. We will create change through conviction**

We want to create a conviction in the minds of our members that it is possible to change the world around you. Without the conviction and belief that individuals can make a difference we don't think members will get involved. Therefore we want to help students acknowledge what they can do within the processes around the University and LUU. We will give students the opportunity to make more decisions concerning the Union in simple ways. We can also help students to devise policies which really make a difference to the lives of students at the University of Leeds. We will build a tipping point in our members' belief in their ability to affect the world around them.

During 2009 we are supporting a piece of academic research in efficacy within the general student population and including our members. It is our plan that through this research we will be able to extract new recommendations for this work. We will aim to build these conclusions into our approach to participation through conviction, leading to 10,000 students voting in elections and referenda.

#### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways:

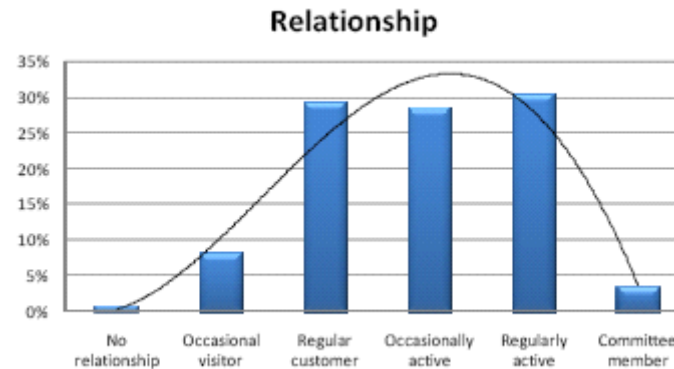
- We will set a target of 10,000 for voting in elections/referenda
- Numbers of members who believe that our student engagement work has improved their experience
- Delivery of campaigns which have a real impact on student life at Leeds

## Theme 5:

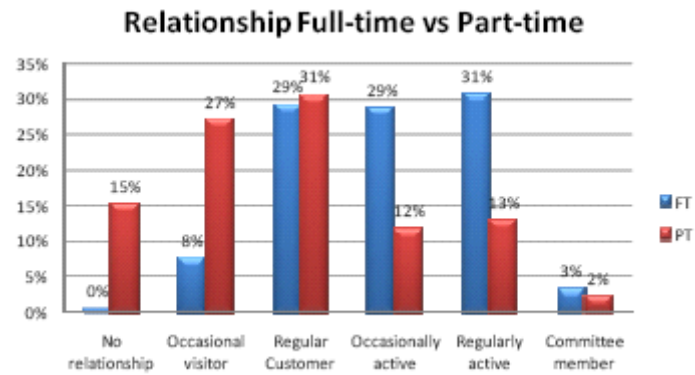
### Making your membership fun and exciting

Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will encourage greater involvement of students in societies through the use of new media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping clubs and societies to grow by creating a database that shows involvement in different activities across the Union</li> <li>• Helping members to get a feel for how many people are involved in clubs and societies so that they are attracted to join themselves.</li> </ul>
2. We will build a fun community within LUU that integrates all of our activities and encourages our staff and students to be part of that community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a visual family tree of the Union and place in a high-footfall area – this should also aim to contain a giant “family” portrait of all staff</li> <li>• Ensuring that all staff have consistent knowledge of key LUU messages by improving induction, training and briefings – particularly for weekly paid staff</li> </ul>
3. We will refresh the profit recycling message (currently ‘Not for Profit’) and place it back at the heart of our activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrating more clearly the benefits that profit recycling in LUU brings to students</li> <li>• Providing a more precise breakdown of what goes to students – i.e. 99p sandwiches (13p goes to...)</li> </ul>
4. We will introduce a membership card based on the student card to reward our members for their involvement with LUU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding Membership Management system to include ability to keep record of student purchases through membership card usage</li> <li>• Creating specific discounts for students depending on their membership of particular societies</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

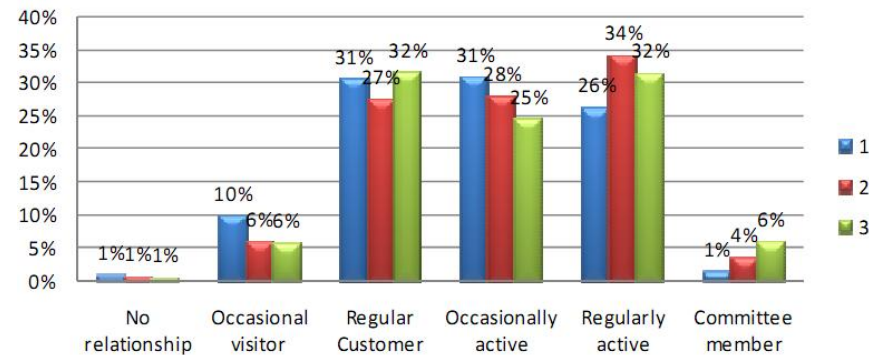


- Engagement and a Sense of Membership are threads that run across all aspects of the Union's interaction with its members.
- Most students consider themselves to be either a regular customer at the Union, regularly active (joining in with clubs and societies or voting occasionally) or regularly active (more regular involvement in clubs and societies or voting)
- Central to the question of a sense of membership is the issue of identity. Many members feel the Union is too large and impersonal to achieve a community feel. Others, particularly those involved in societies, feel the sense of membership very strongly.
- Democracy at society level seemed more active and meaningful than for the larger Union level, probably because of the community generated by like-minded people pursuing a common activity. But many students didn't seem to belong to a society. LUU support for societies, both financial and security, was seen to be inconsistent.
- Involvement in the Union varies quite a lot. The most significant variation is among part-time students who have much lower participation at the top end of the relationship spectrum. Similar results are seen for students with dependents, though these are not quite so extreme. International students are more likely to be occasional customers and less likely to be regularly active members

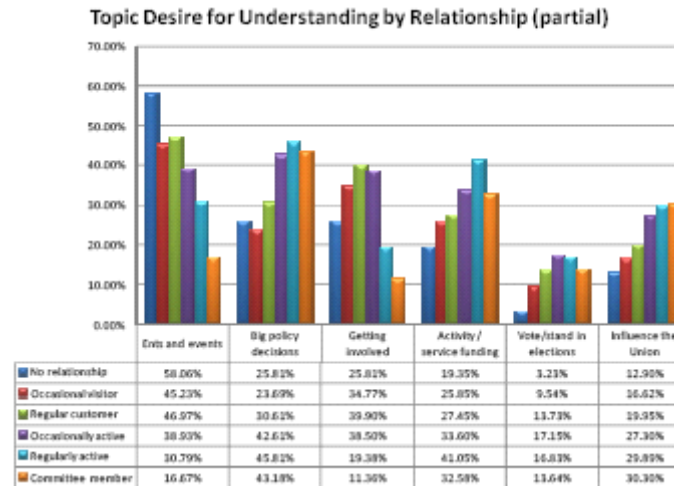


- There appears to be a significant tipping point in the second year when students decide whether or not to get more involved in the Union.

### Relationship by Year of Study (1, 2, 3 only)



- Stronger relationships with the Union lead to changes in what students want to find out more about. Those with no relationship at all are more likely to want to find out about events and entertainment whilst those who are regularly active want to find out about big policy decisions.



- There is a key challenge of transferring members from seeing themselves as regular customers to being occasionally active in clubs and societies. Once members are occasionally active in clubs and societies, the level and significance of the relationship is likely to increase.

## Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

### 1. We will encourage greater involvement of students in societies through the use of new media

We want to reward students who get really involved in the Union. In order to do this we need to develop a database linked to the website that shows members how involved in the Union they are (e.g. member of a club or society, voting in elections, regularly using the shops or bars). The more involved that students get, the more benefits there will be. Our website will allow students to see how many other students are using the Union like them. It will also inspire other students to get more involved with what the Union does.

## **2. We will build a fun community within LUU that integrates all of our activities and encourages our staff and students to be part of that community**

It can be difficult to feel part of something that is so big, but we want to make sure that you feel right at home here at the Union. We are proposing that we get students and Union staff to work far more closely. To do this we need to make sure that students know the staff in the Union and what they do. We can do this via our websites and in society briefings. If we develop better relations between staff and students then students will know who to talk to and how to get the most out of their Union. Staff will be motivated when we ask students to vote on their favourite member of staff to create a "People's Choice Award".

## **3. We will refresh the profit recycling message and place it back at the heart of our activities**

For every £1 spent in the Union, 13p goes straight back to funding clubs and societies, support, representation and the other services that the Union offers. We want to show students the direct benefits of being a not for profit organisation, and how this benefits their particular life in Leeds. We'll communicate how the money that is spent in the Union improves their personal life in Leeds, for example;

*"Every week Fruity raises enough money to pay for 3 dance classes for our ballet group. Thanks for that!"*

*"You buy pick and mix which means we can buy footballs"*

*"We sold enough sandwiches this week to pay for Art Society for a year..."*

We want to do this because it will show students how shopping in the Union is better for them than shopping in a supermarket or shop where the profits go to shareholders, not students. This crosses over with the plan to improve how we deliver quality and value in the Union.

## **4. We will introduce a membership card based on the student card to reward our members for their involvement with LUU**

We want to reward students who use the shops, bars and venues in the Union. After all, the money spent in the Union's retail outlets goes straight back to funding clubs and societies, support, representation and the other services that the Union offers. Students will receive points for every pound that they spend which can be redeemed or cashed in the Union exactly like a Tesco or Boots style

card. Students will get points for special purchases throughout the year, for example members of RocSoc will get more points for buying magazines like Kerrang and members of Horse Riding Society could get points for buying Horse and Hound magazine! We will reward students who get involved with the Union, for example you could get a one off points reward for voting in a Referendum or Exec elections. It will also be possible for clubs and societies to fundraise by using the points system, with the possibility of points going back to the club or society rather than an individual student. Students will also be able to collect points for involvement in other activities, such as Give it a Go or volunteering.

### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- More students classifying themselves as regularly active and highly involved – and being happy that they are there!
- Greater understanding of what the benefits are of spending money in, and using the services of the Union
- More members will be involved in clubs and societies
- Great relations between students and Union staff
- Members and customers will know how the money that they spend in the Union benefits them.

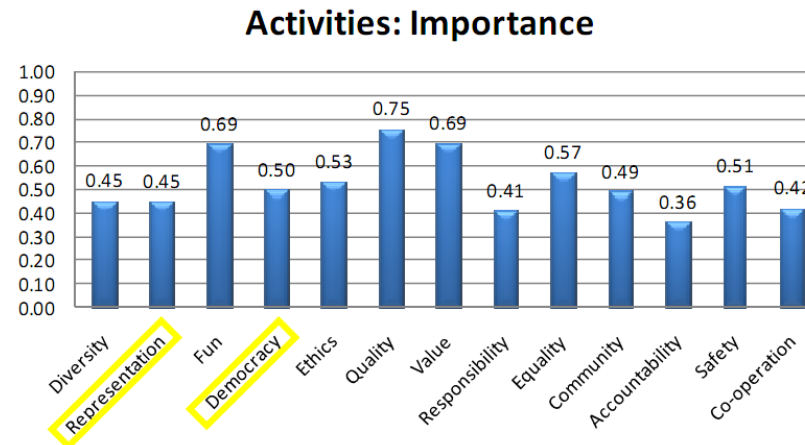
## Theme 6:

### Creating a strong culture that helps our staff help you

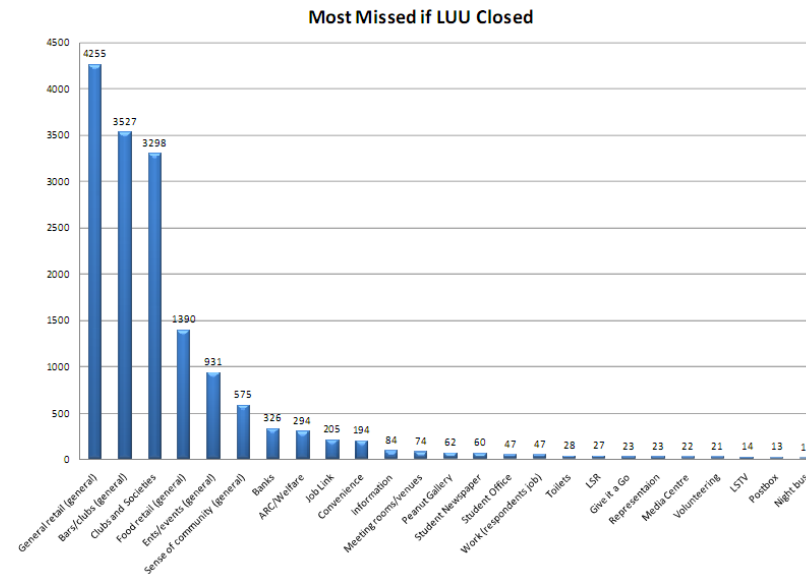
Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will be One Union, One Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating opportunities for LUU staff to spend more time together through events hosted by LUU.</li> <li>• Creating space for LUU staff to spend more time together in a single staff room</li> </ul>
2. We will show you what does LUU do for you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defining what LUU offers as an employer and communicate to staff so that it is more transparent, accessible and understood by all.</li> <li>• Enhancing the wellbeing at work of all staff.</li> <li>• Creating a brand to promote the LUU way of working to prospective and existing employees.</li> </ul>
3. We will find and grow LUU People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the culture of LUU to prospective employees so that the right people apply</li> <li>• Establishing a new training programme and encourage the development of transferable skills, making staff aware of progression within the whole organization. Linking this to effective performance management.</li> </ul>
4. We will improve employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working out how to define different levels of employee engagement and try to measure them.</li> <li>• Developing ways to ensure staff are more aware of their impact on LUU and on how they contribute through storytelling.</li> <li>• Going for Investors In People Gold</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

- Quality, fun, value and equality seem to be key factors for our members and should be reflected in our work culture.
- The outcome of a strong culture for our people to work and grow in should be better customer service and increased levels of member involvement.



- The Union's commercial offerings are crucially important to initial engagement with the membership. Only Clubs and Societies is in the same league. The combined result for Retail (including food, excluding bars) is over 5500 responses.
- Union staff is key to students' sense of membership and relationship with the Union.
- There is a key challenge to move members from occasional customer to occasionally active. Once a member is occasionally active they are far more likely to become more involved.



- In terms of communication scores, talking to Union staff scores very low in terms of how members want to be communicated to.
- There is a pull factor here – students want staff to be available when they want them but don't want staff necessarily approaching them unsolicited.
- International students, students who consider themselves to have a disability and part time students are more likely to want to have a face to face conversation with Union staff.
- The size and scope of the Union's facilities was seen to be excellent and, in some cases, a reason for applying to the University of Leeds. Many participants had high recall levels for the "Not For Profit" strap line. They thought it was good, but some were not sure how it benefited students.
- The Refectory was consistently perceived to be a Union facility. Our work culture should be one of the things that makes us distinctive.

## **Our Big Ideas in More Detail:**

### **1. We will be One Union, One Family**

We particularly want to bring our people together and make staff, members or visitors feel they are in a distinctive and welcoming environment. We need to build a single identity around what it means to work in LUU across our whole staff team. We will create opportunities for LUU staff to spend more time together through events hosted by LUU. The social time you spend with those you work with reinforces bonds and helps build our culture. We will make a very practical change and commit to creating a space for LUU staff to spend more time together in a single staff room. The space our members use should always come first, but the way we treat our staff will naturally improve the way our members are dealt with too.

### **2. We will show you what LUU does for you**

There are times during the year when we employ over 500 people. It is vital that our people get the best we can offer in benefits and really love their time working at LUU. A number of practical things we can do will improve the work environment. We will ensure that we clearly define what LUU offers as an employer and communicate to staff so that it is more transparent, accessible and understood by all. We will find new ways to enhance the wellbeing at work of all staff. We will create a brand to promote the LUU way of working to prospective and existing employees.

### **3. We will find and grow LUU People**

We are privileged in LUU to have so many great people working for us. We believe we have a strong culture that retains lots of people and helps others flourish in their roles. LUU should be a place where our people grow and develop constantly. This should be a great selling point to prospective employees and we will promote this culture so that the right people apply to work here. We will establish a new training programme and encourage the development of transferable skills, making staff aware of progression within the whole organization. We will link this training to effective performance management so that all our people feel supported and able to deliver their very best for our members.

#### **4. We will improve employee engagement**

In the same way that we will be stronger through the participation of our members, we know we will be better at delivering a great Union if more staff are involved in determining how their area runs. We are always looking for more ways to engage our staff, but we believe if we really prioritise this under the new plan then we can achieve much more. We will work out how to define different levels of employee engagement and try to measure them. Once we have done this we will be able to target different activities for different groups of staff just as we have done in the past with our member involvement.

We will go beyond simply assessing how to involve people in decisions and ideas. Every member of our staff team will make a difference and contribute to our vision. We will develop ways to ensure our staff are aware of their impact for students. One way we can do this is through internal staff celebration events and developing storytelling and within departments and right across LUU.

#### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- Level of satisfaction from our staff in our annual survey
- Achievement under the Investors In People Gold standard
- New measures for employee engagement
- High retention and development of our staff at all levels

## Theme 7:

### Being sustainable in every way

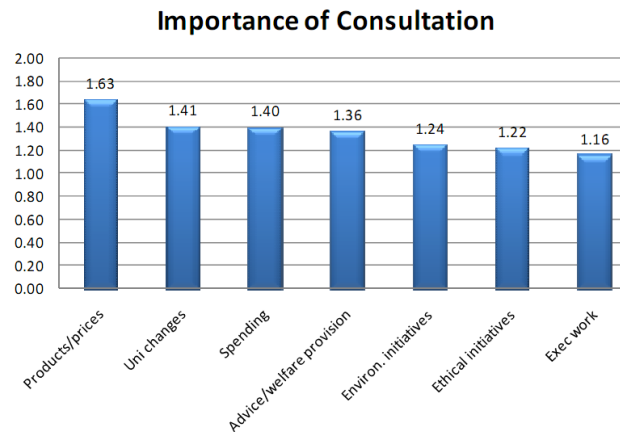
Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will measure and manage our impact on the environment. Improve the positive and reduce the negative. We will have an ethical approach to what we do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building active partnerships with the University to get them to improve their ethical and environmental practices</li> <li>• Delivering the targets within the Environmental Management System and review and report progress annually.</li> </ul>
2. We will make sure we have enough money to provide the services our members want and make sure we're here in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing a financial strategy that links in to the long term plans for development of our building and services.</li> <li>• Utilising our existing resources to generate new revenue streams and investigating new responsible and sustainable revenue streams.</li> <li>• Creating a fundraising strategy.</li> </ul>
3. We will ensure that our governance structure is fit for purpose and relevant to the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a governance review</li> <li>• Using an effective benchmarking system that will challenge us to maintain a high performing board.</li> </ul>
4. We will be a flexible and adaptable organisation that strives to be innovative and creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging and financially supporting innovative thinking and new ideas – based upon impacts on our members, income generation and doing it in an innovative way</li> <li>• Investing in innovative and leading technology which is relevant to our members needs.</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

- Students expect high ethical and environmental standards from the Union and seems quite happy in general for the Union to get on with it except when it comes to specific issues that might directly affect them, such as the restriction of products on environmental or ethical grounds.
- There is a very motivated minority – 5% of respondents said that 'helping me be green' was the single most important aspect of University life that the Union could help with.
- Ethical and environmental considerations, while important for the Union's activities, are bottom of members' considerations when it comes to retail. This division is re-enforced by the evidence that the majority of members are highly price-sensitive and while they may intellectually approve of various ethical and environmental initiatives, will usually choose the cheapest available option when they have to make a purchasing decision.



- Members want to be consulted on issues of pricing in the shops and how the Union spends its money.



- From an outsider's perspective, Students' Unions seem to operate within a peculiar paradox. Their purpose is to support members through their studies, but at precisely the moment of members' greatest potential need for support – graduation and the transition into work – they cease to be members, and support disappears.
- Universities make a concerted effort to extract support and funding from alumni and there may be an opportunity for the Union here also. While membership of a Students' Union would probably have to remain for current students only, there may be a way to maintain relationships with former members through associate membership or some other affiliation mechanism which, if properly managed, could be massively beneficial to current members.

## Our Big Ideas in More Detail:

### 1. We will measure and manage our impact on the environment. Improve the positive and reduce the negative. We will have an ethical approach to what we do

Over the past 4 years we have done much to save energy, recycle and minimise waste. We are recognised within students' unions as one of the best in this area and our students have a strong history of campaigning on environmental issues. However, we know we can achieve more and we know our staff and members expect us to constantly be finding ways to improve, especially in relation to

radically reducing our own carbon emissions. A fully developed Environmental Management System for LUU will enable us to raise our performance in energy and waste management. Our carbon footprint needs to be managed carefully and appropriate targets set and achieved so that year by year we are improving. We will continue to assist the University in their work too, providing ideas and being a test-bed for new initiatives around our building.

As the expectations for what we can deliver in terms of environmental management are raised, we also need to keep watch of our decision-making from an ethical perspective. This constant balance between the views of a range of stakeholders is the key question of sustainability for LUU. Our values are important to us and our practices will be informed by them. As we work with a variety of organisations and suppliers of goods and services to students, we will continue to promote the best ethical choices. As we develop our own building we will do this against an ethical procurement policy and the best guidelines on sustainability. We will educate and communicate this to our staff so that they become ambassadors for this with our customers, and away from LUU too.

## **2. We will make sure we have enough money to provide the services our members want and make sure we're here in the future**

We are constantly being asked to make financial decisions which affect the long term viability of our services. It is crucial that we think long term and ensure that the future students will also love their time at Leeds because of what LUU does. In order to deliver what our members need we will implement a financial strategy that directly links in to longer term plans for development of our building and services. Our financial strategy will be led by prudent budgeting, but releasing financial resources into the areas prioritised by our Strategic Review for development.

Over the past few years we have successfully diversified our funding streams away from simply the University and our commercial services. We know we need to do more of this and that means working on an effective fundraising strategy beyond our traditional model. We will look to alumni more and we will look to external funders who share our goals. This will mean being ready to respond when opportunities arise whilst actively seeking partnerships to deliver great services for students in Leeds.

## **3. We will ensure our governance structure is fit for purpose and relevant to the organisation.**

The governance structures of LUU may seem complicated to people outside students' unions, but they ensure that we are fit for purpose and the right people are making the right decisions. Since the Charities Act of 2006, all students' unions in England are required to register with the Charities Commission. This will mean a slight change in legal status for LUU. Registering as an organisation limited by guarantee will put the Union in the best position financially with regards to taxation. This will need our members to accept a

new governing document for LUU called our Memorandum and Articles which are based on a model for all students' unions. Importantly, our main objects remain unchanged and should not affect our democratic processes or the central role elected officers play in our Union. The full detail of the new Memorandum and Articles can be found at [www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/governanceandtrustees](http://www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/governanceandtrustees).

As our structures develop we also must be open to ideas for improvement. In order to remain relevant and adaptable to best practice, we will commit to conduct a governance review as part of our new strategic plan. We will also adopt an effective benchmarking system that will challenge us to maintain a high performing board which serves the needs of LUU best.

#### **4. We will be a flexible and adaptable organisation that strives to be innovative and creative**

Our final area for development under this theme of sustainability should protect us from stagnation and complacency in terms of our development. We are proposing that improvement and creativity should be priority areas which will keep good ideas and innovation flowing throughout our new Plan. We will encourage and financially support innovative thinking and new ideas. This will be assessed by how innovative approaches create positive outcomes for our members and generate new income. We will invest in innovative and leading technology which is relevant to our members needs to keep us at the cutting edge of the services we provide.

#### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- Delivery of our financial strategy to support the whole new plan
- Environmental accreditation within students' unions at the highest level
- Our governance structures benchmarked to the highest standards

## Theme 8:

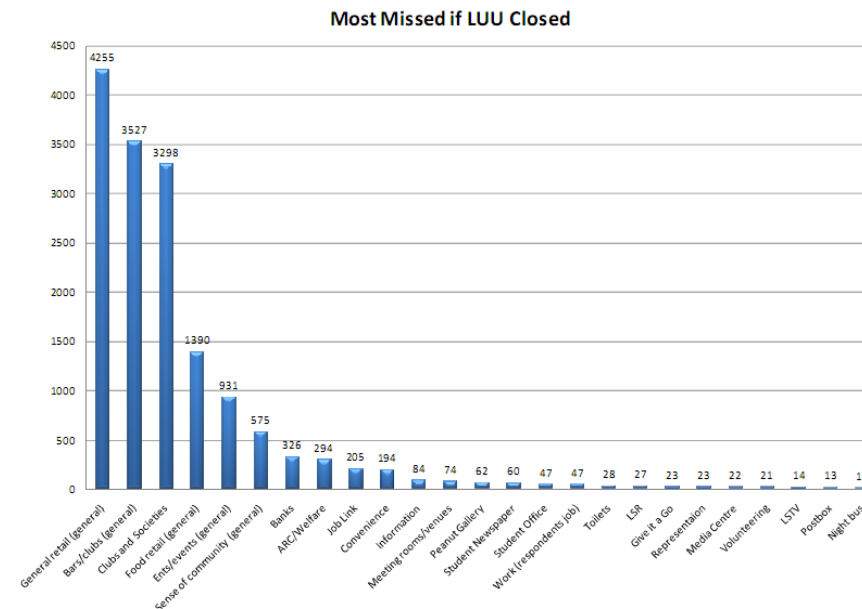
### Creating a vibrant place for you to meet other people

Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
1. We will make a better Union building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting the most out of the building through a phased plan of investment and maintenance alongside a building master plan, in consultation with all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Specifically developing our entrances and outside areas to make students want to come into the building.</li> </ul>
2. We will talk with each other more clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a Marketing Communications Strategy for the Union to talk (and listen) to other students and stakeholders</li> <li>• Our building and websites will feel distinctive because students will know that the Union building and websites are theirs to shape</li> </ul>
3. We will create better spaces for us to get together in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting seating and social spaces for students at the centre of our building</li> <li>• Creating multifunctional spaces (online and in the building) that are well managed so that students to get the most out of their Union.</li> </ul>
4. We will create spaces that students want to be in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrating our personality by using colour, design and lighting to encourage movement around the Union spaces day and night.</li> <li>• Investing in excellent amenities, improving toilets, baby change facilities and work spaces (put a computer cluster on Level One outside the CDS / Exec offices)</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

### The Union building

- The size and scope of the facilities was seen to be excellent and, in some cases, a reason for applying to the University of Leeds. Many participants had high recall levels for the "Not For Profit" strap line. They thought it was good, but some were not sure how it benefited students.
- Some members initially felt strongly that the Union should be a respite from academic pressure – an oasis of fun into which to escape daily problems. Others initially responded with great enthusiasm to the idea of better academic support within the Union, such as places to study.



- In terms of general alcohol-related activities, the majority perception was that current practice wasn't too alcohol oriented. However, there were other voices, particularly international students, who expressed surprise at this culture, but recognised that people had a choice. A few were opposed to free drink offers. Generally, the Union was considered to have a well controlled atmosphere.

- The need for a greater provision of study areas both in the union and throughout the University was highlighted. These areas need to be quiet and friendly, alongside a café service of some kind, without computers.
- Many students interviewed were satisfied with their 'sense of belonging', and others were happy enough not to feel like members of the union, but just use the facilities. Even so, the LUU social facilities, events and advice services could be used help to generate feeling of membership. Pricing might be one way of emphasising the membership benefits.
- The LUU organisation was mentioned in this context quite a number of times. It appears to some to be large and impersonal, and therefore difficult to penetrate unless you're part of the inner circle.
- There is a strong feeling among members that the Union's physical existence and commercial services are of vital importance in initial engagement with members.
- The research also finds major challenges in the levels of engagement of certain sub-groups, notably part-time students, which may present challenges to the Union as the demographic of membership changes over the years to come. There is a widely held feeling that the physical building, retail etc. are of vital importance to a sense of community in as much as they provide a focal point for activity on campus.
- However, first years in particular, though not exclusively, could not distinguish between what was a Union service as opposed to a University or even a private service.

### **Our websites**

- Everything about the research on communication re-enforces what we understand about the "Google generation". Members express contradiction in their high desire for understanding and information, their laissez faire attitude to finding out information for themselves, and their dislike of information 'pushed' at them either in the form of flyers or electronically.
- The implicit expectation of members is that the information they personally need and want should be presented to them without interrupting their lives, and free of 'irrelevant' information which, while of vital importance to another member, is of no interest to them.
- Many members feel that there is both too much information, and not enough of interest to them.
- The communication strategies and the tools used to implement them will have to grow considerably in sophistication and subtlety.
- Many expressed a dislike of having to search for information and admitted that if that was required, then communication was likely to fall down. The Union web diary was recognised as good for events, though often not used to the extent it should. Suggestions were made that there could be boards around the campus with the day's activities posted.

## **Our Big Ideas in More Detail:**

### **1. We will make a better Union building**

The Union building is one of the busiest and most exciting spaces on campus. It is used by students for a whole host of activities, including getting advice and support, buying lunch, socialising, dancing or performing in our theatre spaces. Many of our spaces are currently underused or badly laid out. There is a lot of dead space in the building that could be brought back to life. We will get the most out of the Union building by planning a phased approach to investment and maintenance. This will ensure that we have the funds to pay for developing our building. A Building Masterplan will detail what improvements to the Union building need to be made. The Building Masterplan will be written in consultation with members. We want the Union to feel like the best building on campus to be in.

### **2. We will talk with each other more clearly**

We will develop better ways of talking and listening to students and stakeholders. Students will be able to find the information that they want and will only receive the information that is relevant to them about the Union. Our websites will allow students to join in with the activities that they are interested in and meet new friends online. We will also make better use of emerging technologies to help us listen to students. It is the Union's role of listening to students that will make our building and websites feel distinctive to other places on campus. They will be places to find help, try new things and create new connections.

### **3. We will create better spaces for us to get together in**

We are going to put seating and social spaces at the heart of the Union. There will be more areas to meet friends, relax, get online and quiet areas to work. The Union building is a hub of activity and can have over 20 000 visitors per day. The Union is often open from 8.30 am all the way through to 5am the next morning! Our spaces need to be multifunctional and well managed, to ensure that students get the most out of our building. The use of the building changes radically depending on the time of year, week in term or even by the hour of the day! By having multifunctional spaces we will be able to cater for every type of activity.

#### **4. We will create spaces that students want to be in**

We will celebrate our students' personalities and the vibrancy of what they do in the Union by making the building more colourful and enjoyable to be in. We will use design and lighting to encourage and inspire students and visitors to use the Union spaces day and night. We will invest in our amenities. This will see huge improvement in our toilets, baby change facilities and work spaces. We will create a building that students and other visitors want to spend time in, so that they love their time in Leeds.

#### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- Footfall into different areas of our building, and page views on our websites.
- Students from diverse groups rating specialist areas of the building, such as baby changing facilities or alcohol free areas.
- Maximum use of space, day and night.
- Reduction in the amount of capital spent on short term building projects.
- Numbers of visitors to our new services.
- Students rating the Union as a good building to spend time in.

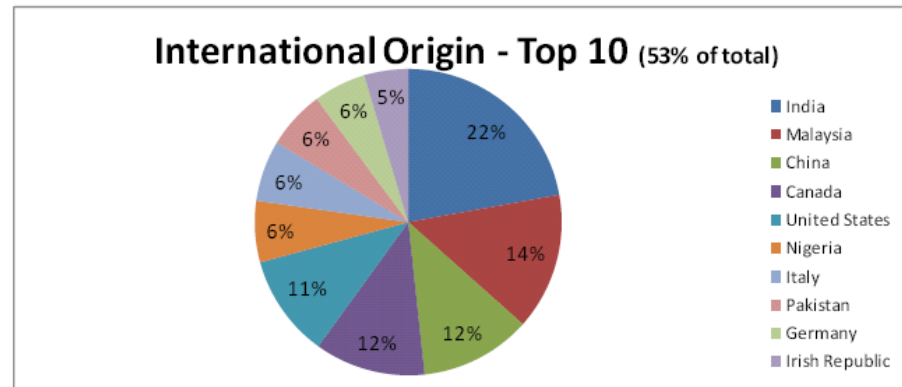
## Theme 9:

### Building a community for all our members

Project Objectives: <i>4 big things in 4 years</i>	Initiatives Include
<b>1. We will give all students a great start to University life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a Freshers week for all and encouraging all students to mix together</li> <li>• Sustaining a programme of activity for all groups of students</li> </ul>
<b>2. We will build a global community on campus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving NUS Internationalizing Students' Union accreditation</li> <li>• Expanding the International Cultural festival growing involvement from both home and international students</li> </ul>
<b>3. We will connect with our hard to reach groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the membership database to review usage and promote relevant services to each group.</li> <li>• Adapting Game On into a high quality open seating area and a hub of the building that is accessible and attractive to all students.</li> </ul>
<b>4. We will develop the right processes within LUU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging more with members – focus groups and continual asking of students to find out their response to what we are doing. Concentrate on different groups each year and develop an action plan for improvements</li> <li>• Building a culture through training amongst our staff where Diversity is second nature. Internally promote the good activity that is taking place.</li> </ul>

## What our members told us:

- First and foremost, are our terms of reference right and do they lead to meaningful relationships? We need to question whether the term 'international student' is useful or not, as this terminology may prevent us from reaching certain groups of students who may consider themselves, for example, to be Chinese and not 'international'.

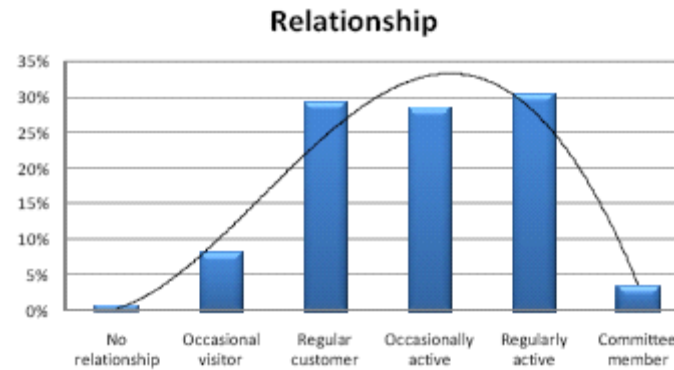


Note that over 90 different nationalities were recorded. The chart above presents the top 10 which account for just over 50% of the non-UK respondents. The sub-group 'International students' has been defined, for the purposes of reporting, as those members with nationality excluding:

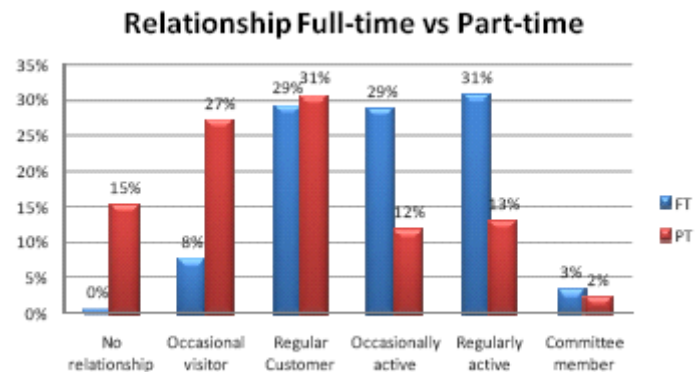
- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- United Kingdom (excluding the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man)

Given the diversity of the 'International' group it is unlikely to be widely useful as a demographic segment outside a few specific areas.

- There were variations within communication between part time and full time students. Part time students rated 'on campus' methods of communication far lower, for obvious reasons.
- International students, part time students and students with dependents are more likely than other students to want to find out about advice services and other forms of support.

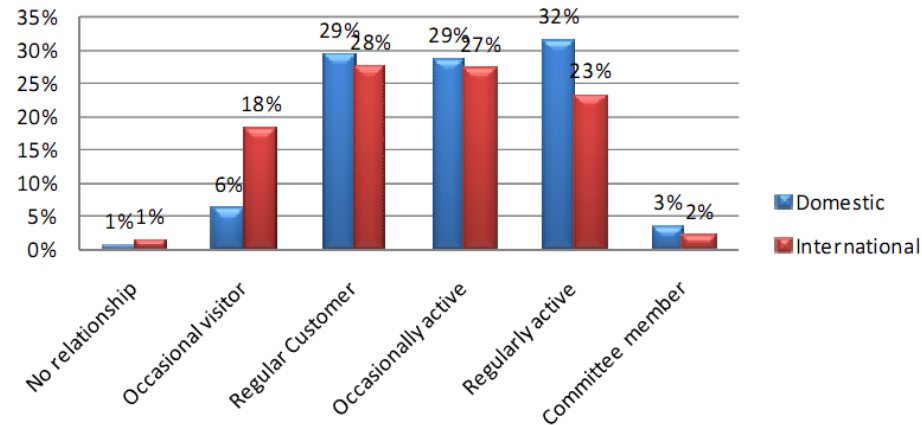


- The most significant variation on this response is among part-time students who have much lower participation at the top end of the relationship spectrum.



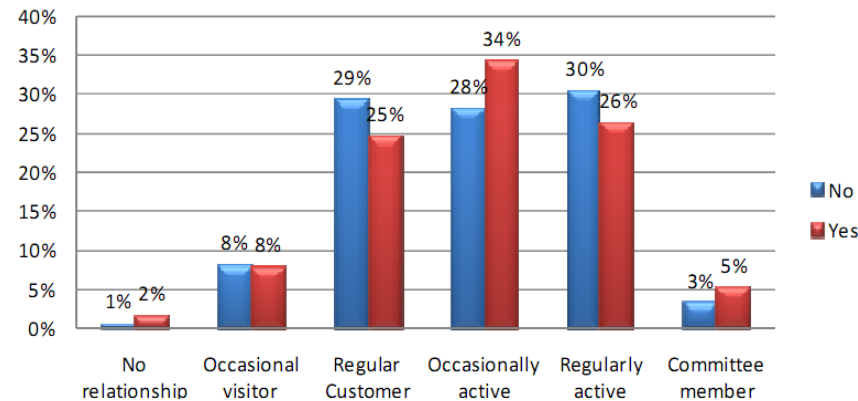
- International students are more likely to be occasional customers and less likely to be regularly active members.

### Relationship by Student Origin



- The graph for students who consider themselves to have a disability follows more of the traditional bell shaped curve than our overall membership. They are less likely to be regularly active, but more likely to be occasionally active.

### Relationship by Disability



## **Our Big Ideas in More Detail:**

### **1. We will give all students a great start to University life**

Loving your time at Leeds will start with a great introduction to University life. We've worked hard to improve the intro experience for diverse groups rather than traditional freshers. We know we could do more both as a Union and influencing the whole University to improve. Individual orientation programmes are really important to maintain, but we need to build a single, great Intro Week which encourages a single community from the start of University. We want to facilitate all students to mix, not separate although there will naturally be a need to still sustain some activity for individual groups of students. Making "Intro" a strategic priority will focus LUU on building a community for all from the starting point of entering University.

### **2. We will build a global community on campus**

The student community at Leeds is a unique body of people from across the globe. We want to reflect this international diversity in our activities and rather than set up special activities for "international" students, consider all students part of the same global community on campus. We can do this by nurturing students from different countries mixing in existing societies and clubs. We will expand our International Cultural festival and grow involvement from both home and non-UK students. We will adopt the NUS Internationalizing Students' Union framework as a way of generating further ideas and leading this development.

### **3. We will connect with our hard to reach groups**

There are a number of students in our membership who are "hard to reach" by virtue of being part-time, having dependents or just not being very interested in many of our current activities and services. We would propose finding new ways to reach these students and find connections with them through new activities or information which serves their individual needs. Our membership database will be developed to promote relevant services to each group. We can track preferences for communication and activity and hope to learn new ways of working which will support these students better. We also need to develop welcoming space within the Union building so that lounge areas are tailored to meet the needs of students with young children, signage easier to follow for international students and our services reflect the flexible study patterns of part-time students.

### **4. We will develop the right processes within LUU**

If we are to build the community for all students which is our vision, we know that LUU needs to change the way we work. We have achieved mark of Investors in Diversity, accredited in 2008. However we want to improve on this and develop better processes to

ensure our communications, our activities and our services are as relevant to the whole community of members as possible. We will engage more with members in this area of work, using focus groups and continually asking members to find out their response to what we are doing. We will prioritise different groups each year and develop an action plan for improvements so that we do our part to nurture the whole community. We will respond to what we see by building a culture through staff training where equality is fully embedded as a core value and diversity is second nature in our thinking.

### **Measures of our success:**

We will measure our success under this theme in the following ways :

- NUS Internationalizing Students' Union Accreditation
- Re-accreditation of the Investors In Diversity Mark
- Full participation in our Intro-week activities
- Higher levels of involvement in LUU by "hard to reach" members

## What happens now?

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So you've seen the plan, it's all about making sure that together we ensure that students love their time in Leeds. What happens next?

We have collected feedback from as many members as we can – every piece of feedback was valid and was taken seriously. The consultation period ended on **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October**. We made appropriate amendments to the plan based on the feedback, all of those amendments are within this copy of the plan you are reading.

The plan will go to the November Referendum for students to vote on. At least 1500 students are required to vote with a majority 'Yes' vote for the plan to be adopted.

If the plan is voted in, Union trustees, officers and staff will prepare the action plan and develop ways in which to deliver the initiatives that are described within this document. The new plan will begin in August 2010 and will be reviewed continuously until July 2014, when we will begin the Review process again.

It is vital that you let us know what you think about the Union's vision and plan for 2014. We want to ensure that every student loves their time in Leeds, and we would love to hear from you.