

## Undeb Bangor 2017 Annual Survey Report

Every year, Undeb Bangor compiles an annual survey to inform its direction and work for the next academic year. At Undeb Bangor, we want to know what students think about our work, what we can do to improve the lives and experiences of our students and what it is they want to get out of being a part of Bangor University and Undeb Bangor.

This year's Bangor Students Survey was completed by 479 students, (approximately 5% of the student population). Although this is one of our lowest response rate to date, a significant proportion of our respondents were our student leaders and course representatives, therefore we believe the sample size is representative of the student body, as many responses are on behalf of a student group and not just an individual perspective.

### Our Research: Undeb Bangor

#### Representation

In order to find out what students think about the wider Students' Union, we asked students how strongly they agreed with the statement; **"Bangor Students' Union speaks on issues that matter to me."**

We found that whilst 54% did agree with this statement (both in 2016 and 2017), only 8% of respondents 'strongly agree' with the statement in 2017, in comparison to 14% in the previous year.

Notably, less students (29%) felt indifferent, that is they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, compared to 37% in the previous year. However respondents who may have in the previous year fitted into this category, now disagree with the statement (13% of respondents reported to 'disagree' in 2017, in comparison to 5% in 2016).

**Table 1: Bangor Students' Union speaks on issues that matter to me.**

Label	2017		2016	
	% of respondents /	actual response count	% of respondents /	actual response count
Strongly agree	8%	(37)	14%	(85)
Agree	46%	(221)	40%	(238)
Neither agree nor disagree	29%	(138)	37%	(221)
Disagree	13%	(61)	5%	(30)
Strongly disagree	4%	(20)	3%	(16)



This is concerning to see, as Undeb Bangor continually works with students, particularly its course representatives, to ensure it is speaking on behalf of students on relevant issues. It might however, be that students are not aware of the issues which Undeb Bangor does represent them on, particularly given that more students 'neither agree nor disagree' than they do 'disagree'. Therefore, it is important that Undeb Bangor works with its student groups and course representatives' throughout the academic year in order to reassure students on the work it is doing and how it is working to improve the student experience.

We plan to implement and continue with the following, in order to improve our communication with the student body:

- More Officer drop in sessions
- Improving communication around our successes and achievements and tying more of our work in with the 'Together We' initiative
- Improve our use of Social Media and centrally manage all communications through multiple channels
- Introduction of new Undeb Bangor Council roles for;
  - Mental Health Champions
  - Wrexham Campus
  - Bangor College China
- Rebranding 'ideas' to make them more accessible to students
- Clarifying our role as the home of the Student Voice as part of our new student communication

In our next annual survey, we will evaluate the effectiveness of these changes and we hope that in doing so, when asked in 12 months' time, more students agree and strongly agree with the statement than currently do.

## Events & Activities

To understand more students' views on how informed they feel about Undeb events, we asked students to rate how strongly they are with the statement; **"I feel informed about Undeb Bangor events and activities."**

Interestingly, 60% of respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement, suggesting that whilst the majority of students know what events and activities Undeb Bangor provide, they are less confident about the work the Union does around voice and representation.

**Table 2: I feel informed about Undeb Bangor events and activities**

Theme	Response count	Response Percentage
Strongly agree	50	10.5%
Agree	237	49.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	73	15.3%
Disagree	84	17.6%
Strongly disagree	33	6.9%

However, it could also mean that the events the Union is providing are not as relevant to the student body as they once were. Therefore, Undeb Bangor will need to ensure more of its work is communicated to students and that its events and activities are appropriately assessed. This could also be done through the introduction of an Equality Impact Assessment, alongside further data analysis of what specific events Bangor students would like to see Undeb Bangor focus on. Additionally, Undeb Bangor could also introduce more roles for students on its internal committees, concerning campaigns such as Mental Health, Welfare, Healthy Living, Varsity and Serendipity.

Furthermore, we would also like to work, to remove any barriers that our students face when accessing opportunities through Undeb Bangor. It is clear from the table below, that some students feel they could be better informed about Undeb activities, and that funding is also a huge issue for students in accessing our opportunities. It is pleasing to see that a large proportion of respondents (24%) reported they face no barrier when accessing opportunities through the Students' Union, however, there is still some way to go.

**Table 3: What barriers have you faced in engaging with Undeb Bangor activities?**

Theme	Response count	Response Percentage
Communication / promotion	52	21.3%
Course timetable / workload / other commitments	49	20.1%
No barriers	58	23.8%
Funding / costs to students	46	18.9%
Health & Safety	2	0.8%
Focus on alcohol	2	0.8%
Training	4	1.6%
Bureaucracy	10	4.1%
Sports centre issues	6	2.5%
Too much demand on club / society	4	1.6%
Not inclusive	8	3.3%
Distance eg Wrexham Campus	3	1.2%

In order to address some of these issues we will be Equality Impact Assessing our activities, and we will be increasing the number of opportunities for students to provide us with feedback, both formally and through our officer drop in sessions. We will also be working closer with Undeb Bangor council to promote inclusivity and accessibility throughout the year.

## Our Research: Student Opportunities

### The value of Student Opportunities

It was known from our historic data collection, that a significant number of respondents to Undeb Bangor surveys are students who take part in our Clubs and Societies. When looking at the numbers of students involved in the Union, the largest section of involvement lies within this area. Therefore, we decided to survey our members on their understanding of Clubs and Societies and how we can work to improve their experiences.

When it comes specifically to Student Opportunities, it is clear that students value the role that their Club, Society, Volunteering Project or being a Course Rep has on their personal development. In our 2015-16 Student Opportunities Impact Report we asked students why they take part in extra-curricular activities. Our report stated that;

*“the three main reasons students gave was to socialise and make friends (92%); 78% because it was free and 75% found it as a way to take a break from studying.”*

We followed this up this year, with some specific questions on what students value the most from being a part of their opportunity/activity. You can see from the table below, that friendship, meeting new people and belonging to a community far outweighs the less personal elements that being involved in student opportunities bring.

**Table 4: What is the best thing about being involved in your Club/Society/Volunteering Project/being a Course Rep?**

Label	Response Count	Response Percentage
Socialising / social aspect	40	7.7%
Success / achievement / making a difference	38	7.3%
Experiencing and developing culture	4	1%
Experiences relating to future career	10	1.9%
Friendship / meeting new people	155	29.7%
Explore the local area	11	2.1%
Increasing employability / obtaining non-academic skills	36	6.9%
Exercise / stay fit	32	6.1%
Relax / get away from stresses and University work	21	4%
Health benefits – particularly mental health	12	2.3%
Sense of belonging / community	114	21.8%
Representing the University / Union at a national level	35	6.7%
Try something new without financial outlay	14	2.7%



Similarly to in our Impact Report, here students also provide comments about health benefits, employability and CV enhancement and stress relief.

The largest proportion of student respondents (48%) like in Our 2015-16 Impact Report, also confirmed that it is meeting new people, making friends and being part of a community – ie their sense of belonging - that is the most valuable outcome of being part of one of Undeb Bangor's Student Opportunities.

We reported last year that;

*“Students clearly feel that they are more involved through taking part in extracurricular activities as more than half indicated this and making friends in the process can help with them fitting in.”*

This is something that is also echoed in our findings, with comments such as;

*“It's hard to stick to one best thing about being part of B.U.Q.C. I could honestly go on for hours about the benefits being part of this club has had for me. I think if I had to condense them all down the main ones would be: - Physical health and fitness has improved dramatically - I'm more comfortable dealing with my mental health - It's offered me a chance to both lead and be led - I've been able to develop my coaching skills and have seen the benefits for the team at tournaments (which was priceless) - Through training with the club throughout the year I have developed as a player and was scouted for the TeamUK seconds squad - I've met the most wonderful bunch of people I've ever known (I know that's really cheesy but it is, honestly, the literal truth)”*

*“Aikido has helped manage my time and stress quite well. The club made me feel more at home when I first came to this university. I've had the chance to learn to deal with problems and manage a club this year.”*

*“The social side is brilliant, some of my greatest friends at university have come out of playing rugby. I also feel it's a brilliant way to get my mind off work for a day/evening. As well as this I love the sport and want to continue post University”*

*“Family, when I first came to the university I was very much alone and depressed, the clubs allow to you to bond and create a really tight knit family and I can't imagine my university experience without either clubs”*

It is clear that there is huge value in being a part of a Club, Society, Volunteering Project but we know there is more work to be done to enhance the experiences of our student body. With limited resources and growing demand, this can be challenging, but in order to continue to offer the best for our students and maintain our title of being an award winning Students' Union and University (Undeb Bangor has been the winners of the What Uni Best Clubs and Societies 2014-15 and 2016-17 and NUS Best Student Opportunities 2014-15 and 2016-17) we need to understand fully the challenges our student groups face.



Over the next academic year, we would like to work with the University to analyse the Destination of Leaver of HE (DLHE) survey responses, to identify who has and hasn't been in a Club or Society, in order to see what the impact is when it comes to graduate employability.

We know, through our Clubs and Societies Impact Report, that these experiences play a huge part in student satisfaction and retention, and this is something we would like to further explore through the DHLE statistics and also the additional bank of questions in the 2017 National Student Survey Results. Since 2010, the score for student satisfaction with the SU, has increased by 10% and we would like to explore more what this means for the overall satisfaction of the University.

## Our Membership

In order to fully understand the experiences of our Student Opportunities members, we needed to understand our membership; how it has grown and how we have developed to meet its demand. Firstly, we considered our growth in membership numbers. We decided to compare figures from 2011-2012 (academic years prior to Welsh HEI fee plan and free clubs and societies) with figures from 2015-2017 (our most recent data).

**Table 5: Club and Society membership figures since 2010 to present day.**

Academic Year	Club membership figures	Society membership figures
2010-11*	1300	355
2011-12*	1400	663
2015-16	3124	3387
2016-17	3880	3485

\*These figures are approximate and based on card sales.

Prior to 2012, any student had to purchase an AU (Athletic Union) or Societies card in order to participate in Undeb activity. This card was a one off, annual payment, in order to cover some of the costs involved in running clubs and societies, such as insurance. When clubs and societies became free to join, this card purchase was no longer required. Therefore, based on these sales, we are able to estimate the numbers of students involved.

It is clear from the data, that there has been a significant increase in memberships since the introduction of free Clubs and Societies, proving the campaign really did benefit students and allowed Undeb Bangor opportunities to be more accessible. However, we have seen significant strain on existing resources due to this increase in demand, resulting in students

feeling frustrated. We were concerned that some of this frustration has been caused due to there being some ambiguity around what free Clubs and Societies mean, what students believe to be included for free as a member and what student would like to see included in the future.

In our Student Opportunities Impact Report last year, we asked students what their understanding of 'free Clubs and Societies' was. We reported the following:

*'Sixty three percent made it clear in their comments about what being 'free' means and specifically said that it meant free membership. This is great to see, as a high percentage of the students clearly know that it is only membership to the club/society, which is free. In addition, 3% rightly noted that basic equipment/facilities were available through the club or society. However, a significant percentage did not clearly state that it was free membership or free to join where 18% said that it would not cost them anything at all.'*

When asked the same question this year, we noted that a similar number of students (67%) were able to demonstrate in their comments they knew what 'free Clubs and Societies' mean, there is still a significant number of students who are not sure of what is included, with many students being of the belief that transport, training, competition entries and the use of specialist equipment are all included for free. Whilst this may be the case for some activities, such as BUCS transport and entry to BUCS competition, this is not the case for all Clubs and Societies, and therefore it leaves some students feeling short-changed.

**Table 6: What is your understanding of the term Clubs and Societies being 'free'?**

Response Category	Response Count	Response Percentage
Free to join / no membership fee*	318	67%
Covered by tuition fees	15	3%
Training sessions are free	68	14.3%
Participation in competitions is free	12	2.5%
Insurance is free	2	0.4%
BUCS entry is free	6	1.3%
Events and Equipment are free	32	6.7%
Transportation is free	11	2.3%
Other comments such as; "nothing is for free", "they certainly aren't free" and "misleading, as certain clubs don't get enough."	12	2.5%

\*roughly half of these respondents noted that although membership is free, there is an element of cost to students due to travel, kit, accommodation, tournament costs or trips etc.

## The Figures

In 2012, when Undeb Bangor was working with the University to ensure that Clubs and Societies were adequately funded, we made calculations based on Clubs' and Societies' income from membership, competition fees, club equipment, coaching costs, external Affiliations, referee fees and facility hire.

The income from membership and cost to Undeb Bangor (through grants allocated etc) varies considerably between student groups, largely due to the nature of the activity and the number of members it attracts. For example, American Football – this club attracts a modest number of students each year, but in order to fully participate in the sport, students must have considerable protection and appropriate facilities to train, this means the cost per student, for being part of this clubs is significantly more than SODA, as this society does not have not pay to hire the facilities it needs, nor does it require specialised safety equipment for its members to take part.

**Table 7: Examples of membership income from Clubs and Societies in 2010-2012:**

Club / Society	Income from Membership fees (£)
American Football	4461
Badminton	2371
Dance	3140
Hockey	2192
Rowing	1910
Sub Aqua	5765
Law Society	848
SODA	481
Zoological society	635

What has become apparent over the last few years, is that these calculations did not factor in any real significant increases in demand, nor did it factor in increases in costs such as facility hire and cost of equipment, for example. Therefore, what was appropriate funding in 2012, is no longer applicable for today. Additionally, in order to meet demand, Undeb Bangor has had to increase its staff structure, and this too has had financial implications. Furthermore, since 2012, whilst the numbers of Clubs have remained stable, Societies have grown, with an additional 37 being formed over the last few years, and over the last academic year, we have seen the number of Volunteering Projects and opportunities increase significantly. All of this, has placed huge pressures on the budget and funding that Undeb Bangor can allocate to our student groups.

We know from Club and Society development meetings this year, our Student Groups have become increasingly aware of these financial pressures. Therefore we were keen to know specifically, what it was that students have not been able to do as a result of funding this year. Our findings are displayed in the table below:

**Table 8: What things has your Club/Society/Volunteering Project been unable to do this year due to lack of funding?**

Label	Response Count	Response Percentage
Trips / conferences	42	11.7%
Transport	45	12.5%
External speakers	5	1.4%
Repair and maintain broken / out of date equipment	11	3.1%
Friendly matches	6	1.7%
Training	48	13.4%
New equipment to meet demand	78	21.7%
Competitions / tournaments	70	19.5%
Coaching / coaching qualifications	20	5.6%
Adequate training space	11	3.1%
Field a second team	1	0.3%
Contribute and help local community (in comparison to previous years)	5	1.4%
Grading	1	0.3%
Hold events to increase membership	16	4.5%

34 respondents noted that members of their clubs and societies routinely have to pay out money from their own pockets to attend fixtures or trips.

We also asked an additional question, relating to the same topic, and it would be best to look at the findings together. Following on from what clubs and societies have not been able to do this year, due to funding, we ask, **'if you had increased funding for your activity, what would you spend the money on?'** again, our findings can be seen in the table below:

**Table 9: If you had increased funding for your activity, what would you spend the money on?**

Label	Response Count	Response Percentage
Equipment – replace old/broken	49	6.7%
Equipment – new / demand	165	22.5%
Training	76	10.4%
Travel	104	14.2%
Coaching qualifications / external coaches	43	5.9%

Competitions / Events	150	20.5%
Kit	63	8.6%
Player / entry fees	23	3.1%
Varsity	8	1.1%
Refreshments	7	1%
Speakers	9	1.2%
Marketing / Advertising	10	1.4%
Renting or improving venue / facilities	26	3.5%

From the comments in both of these questions, we know that students have had issues with accessing transport, and as a result have not been able to attend/run trips and conferences, and compete in tournaments and competitions (outside of BUCS). A large number of comments were in relation to not being able to pay for the transport (either from the SU minibus fleet or in particular due to the increase in costs of external hire if all the SU minibuses are already booked.)

Additionally, for sports clubs, particularly those who compete, training sessions have been a huge cause of complaint. Students want to be able to train throughout the academic year, and not have to stop and start their training depending on whether or not it is term time. Furthermore, students also noted comments about meeting demand, both in terms of equipment, which can be seen in the table above and also in training sessions.

Some examples of these comments are;

*“Providing the problem with the stopped sessions does not occur again next year, we would replace our damaged equipment, get more tanto (wooden knives used in practice), use it to give our students a reduced rate on seminars held here and away, and the price of gradings/dogi. If the training sessions stop in late march again next year, then of course we would prioritize more training sessions over anything else.”*

*“Better equipment and money towards kit. Transportation for all teams not just BUCS”*

*“Pay for player fees to national tournaments- i.e. Northern Cup, British Quidditch Cup, etc. Subsidise the transport costs on the minibus to get the team to the venue itself. Our tournament in Edinburgh, one most beneficial to freshes joining the team, is the most expensive to travel to, and this cost puts new members off joining.”*

*“Many of our equipment is regularly damaged, and has been simply placed in storage, to be repaired as funds become available. The money we have has needed to be used for other urgent things, which means repairing equipment (despite being the highest priority for funding) often doesn't get given enough money. More funding would be used solely to repair existing equipment, and to increase capacity at the club by buying more of similar equipment.”*

It is definitely a priority that these issues need addressing within Undeb Bangor. One resolution could be to remove the individual grant pots for Clubs and Societies and cover the cost of transport centrally, to make it easier for all Clubs to be able to access the vehicles they need. Additionally, providing transport allocations centrally, would enable Undeb Bangor to manage the use of its vehicle fleet better and in turn this may require less use of external vehicle bookings. Furthermore, Undeb Bangor may need to invest in more vehicles to also reduce the need for Clubs and Societies to use external vehicle hire.

When it comes to training times, Undeb Bangor is subject to the availability of the facilities within the University and local community. In order to ensure higher levels of student satisfaction over the coming academic year, Undeb Bangor will be looking at demand and requests through the club development meetings and grant request forms. Additionally Undeb Bangor will also be having conversations and making these representations to the University over the summer months. The additional year on year cost increases within Canolfan Brailsford have also been challenging to meet and has this year resulted in a severe cut of Clubs training allocations.

Finally, when it comes to demand, it is clear that there are a large proportion of students feeling the strain of being able to adequately resources sessions and opportunities for their students. The majority of respondents stated that if they had increased funding they would spend it on equipment to meet their student demand. Undeb Bangor will need to investigate further with individual Clubs and Societies to establish what this demand is, and how best it can be met.

It is overwhelmingly apparent that funding and communication are two of the biggest issues facing our students, as we have seen from the data above. This is further evidenced below in one of the final questions we asked our students to answer.

**Table 10: What could Undeb Bangor do to improve your experience of being in a Club/Society/Volunteering Project or being a Course Rep?**

Label	Response count	Response Percentage
Funding	108	41.9%
Communication	38	14.7%
Facilities	22	8.5%
Equipment	7	2.7%
Promotion / marketing	22	8.5%
Training	16	6.2%
Inter-sport / society competitions	6	2.3%
Sabbatical Officer visits	14	5.4%



Transparency	21	8.1%
Charge for membership	2	0.8%
Inter-University competitions	2	0.8%

Over the last few years, Undeb Bangor has resourced its Student Opportunities team, to meet the demand from students and to ensure that this area is able to develop and grow. We saw from our Impact Report, that students commented, that had they not been in a Club or Society, been part of that community and made new friends, they wouldn't necessarily have stayed at University.

The next steps for Undeb Bangor is to ensure that all of our activity is sustainable. We need to ensure our Student Groups are able to fulfil their core aims and objectives, students are able to participate and compete, and full embrace University life and all it has to offer. In order to do this, we will be further analysing the data we have to improve our services, and also ensure that we can resources our student activities in the best possible way.

## Developing Our Leaders

This coming academic year, we are investing in developing and delivering a brand new student leadership conference, designed to ensure our students are confident and adequately prepared for running their Club, Society and Volunteering Projects. We will be using data from our final question, in order to develop the conference and meet the needs of our members.

From the data, we found that students would like more opportunities to develop and learn practical skills such as first aid. This is not something that could be covered in the leadership conference in any great detail, but as a result, our Student Opportunities Team will be delivering more of these sessions over the first few weeks of Semester one.

Additionally, we learned that students would like more assistance in learning about their specific role, whether that be chair, captain, treasurer or secretary. They would like more training on transferable skills such as; leadership, public speaking and organisational skills. Student also commented that they would like to have the opportunity for their members to gain more coaching qualifications. This is something that has larger budget implications and therefore will need to be discussed with clubs and individuals over the next academic year.

**Table 11: What training could Undeb Bangor provide to support you as leaders?**

First aid	50
Safeguarding	1
Data protection	1
Ethics	1
Specific committee role training / handover	47
IT / MSL training	6
Accounting	6
Development days	4
Communication	9
Leadership	33
Coaching qualifications	42
Small clubs	2
Activity specific training	15
Fitness	2
Midas	4
Health and safety	6
Higher level first aid	6
How the SU works	5
Mental health training	10
Disability training	3

Difficult situations	6
LGBTQ+ training	1
Data collection	1
How to organise trips / organisational skills	4
Teamwork / committee bonding	4
Public speaking / confidence building	6
Employability	3
Sponsorship / fundraising	5



## Conclusion and Plans for 2017-18

Throughout this document it is clear that Undeb Bangor provides a huge amount of resources and opportunities for its students, however, it is clear that our development and expansion in this area over the last few years has come at a cost. It is now timely to evaluate where we are at and how we can move forward in the current climate.

Throughout this report we have referred to our Impact Report, in which we said;

*“Through the 2015-2020 Bangor University Strategic Plan, the University will be collaborating with the students and Undeb Bangor to ensure that widening access, retaining students and employability are all commitments they will be working on.”*

This is something we will continue to aspire to work with the University on, during the next academic year, particularly as we can see from the data here, that a large proportion of what we do, directly affects retention and employability. In our strategic plan, we reported that we want *“all students to have access to all our opportunities and that they feel included in their time here in Bangor”*. In our Impact Report we provided recommendations to support these commitments and priorities that both the University and Undeb Bangor are dedicated to.

We want to ensure that the student experience is the best it can be, at Bangor University, that students have the opportunity to take part in activities that will enable them to develop and gain new skills and that they can do so, without barriers such as funding, holding them back.

We will be working with our student leaders, in order to look over the recommendations made in our Impact Report, our commitments in this report and our strategic plan, in order to further improve and enhance our offer over the next 12 months.