



northumbria  
students' union

# STUDENTS' UNION PLAN 2013-2018

## VISION

By 2018 we will have a worldwide reputation for outstanding representation, creating community spirit, offering life changing opportunities, and enhancing the employability prospects of Northumbria students. Excellent at meeting the social and welfare needs of all our members, from the UK and around the world, we will be transforming, enriching and supporting their lives, having a positive impact locally, nationally and globally.

## MISSION

"A positive impact on the lives of all our students"

## VALUES

### **Democratic**

All key decisions will have the input of our members and staff and will be open to scrutiny. All elections will be conducted fairly

### **Inclusive**

We will take positive action to try and make all our activities, services and opportunities for involvement open to all our members

### **Ethical**

We will conduct our affairs and make decisions based on the principles of recognised sound ethical practice for membership based "not for profit" organisations

### **Innovation**

We will strive to be creative in all our work and will always seek out new and innovative ways of delivering services, activities and opportunities for members and customers

### **Quality**

Providing a quality experience will underpin all our planning and be our principal focus when interacting with our members and customers

### **Partnership**

Elected Officers, Students' Union Departments and staff will work together as a unified team at all times. We will develop partnership working with University Departments and other external companies and organisation

# VOICE

## WHAT THIS MEANS

Representing you is our first priority. Student voice means getting your feedback, knowing your concerns, your involvement in Union decision making and working together to bring about positive change and improvement to your university life.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

With increased fees students have a greater than ever stake in their education and how it is delivered. Student Voice is the key mechanism for you to bring about improvements you want to see whether across the University, within a specific course, in your Union or within the city of Newcastle and on the national stage. Your participation in Union decision making will make the organisation the legitimate voice for all Northumbria students.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**Have your say and we will work together for improvement**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Empower students to improve the quality of education from the recruitment of academic staff to the design and delivery of courses.
2. Create an academic representation system that reflects the University's faculty structures which delivers positive change.
3. Change the Union's democratic decision making system so you have more of a say setting our priorities.
4. Create more student champions to campaign on issues of equality, academic quality, local community and national matters that affect you.
5. Make first class representation and campaigning 'Winning for Students' what you value the Union most for.

# COMMUNITY

## WHAT THIS MEANS

Community might be your course, the activities you are involved in, where you live, study or socialise. The Union brings students together to help you form lifelong friendships, share interests, for mutual support and to work collectively for the good of all.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

The University is a diverse community of students of different cultures, religion, country of origin, sexuality, disability, age and family background and ensuring everyone feels valued is paramount. Strong on-campus social networks local community links, good friends and a sense of belonging is essential to a student's happiness at Northumbria and successful study. To reduce negative misconceptions locally the Union should act responsibly and promote the positive impact of students on Newcastle.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**Building student communities on campus, locally and globally**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Create a vibrant and diverse social program for students to make life-long friends in a safe environment.
2. Provide more Union facilities for you to learn, develop, have fun and build social and cultural connections.
3. Work with local politicians and policy makers to ensure key student issues such as housing and safety are a priority.
4. Increase opportunities for you to participate in the community you live in through your shared interests, beliefs and nationality.
5. Secure University support for an expanded Union facility at Coach Lane to better meet social, recreational, representation and support needs of students.

# WELLBEING

## WHAT THIS MEANS

All Northumbria students should enjoy a happy, healthy and personally rewarding time as a valued member of a friendly, supportive, inclusive and mutually respectful university community.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Student life can be very challenging financially, emotionally, socially and academically and impact on your wellbeing. The university community is made up of a rich diversity of people of different dispositions, backgrounds, cultures, expectations and needs which require support to ensure that no one is excluded and that all aspects of student life contribute to positive personal wellbeing.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**We will support you through all aspects of student life**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Develop a scheme that maximises your achievement, opportunities and personal wellbeing.
2. Develop an Advice Service for money, housing, consumer rights and general health and wellbeing issues.
3. Keep you safe on and off campus through campaigns, awareness and collaboration.
4. Work with the University to create a 'one-stop' destination for student support and guidance on campus.
5. Establish a University wide peer to peer buddying/mentoring system.

# EMPLOYABILITY

## WHAT THIS MEANS

The Union's services, activities and campaigns will help you, whether you are a volunteer, student staff member or neither to develop the skills and experience you need to stand out in the workplace after graduation.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Future job prospects concern every student. It is important therefore that the Union, through its services, activities and campaigns, provides a wealth of opportunities and experience that complement your academic achievement, make you stand out to employers and increase your confidence as you enter the job market.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**The Union will do more to help your future job prospects**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Work with the University to introduce an employability module for all courses to help you apply for jobs and be ready for the workplace.
2. Build links with local and overseas employers to help guide your involvement in opportunities which can improve your employability.
3. Work placement and internship opportunities will be created in the Union to benefit you.
4. Work with the University to have your volunteering and work experience in the Union to be recorded on degree transcripts.
5. Deliver accredited training in relevant workplace skills to students; leadership, management, budgeting, fundraising, communication etc.

# INTERNATIONALISATION

## WHAT THIS MEANS

Supporting Northumbria students wherever you are in the world, helping overseas students settle into life in Newcastle and giving UK students routes to go abroad while studying and after graduation.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

In an increasingly connected world it is vital that UK students are employable in an international arena and international students choose to study at Northumbria because it meets their social and personal needs as much as their academic expectations. The Union has an essential role in the success of both groups of students while at Northumbria and after graduation.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**An international Union for a global student body**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Ensure international students are welcomed and helped to integrate fully into life on campus and in the city.
2. Create an 'experience the world' scheme to link UK with international students to foster exchange visits.
3. Utilise international student language skills, knowledge and culture to improve the experience of UK students.
4. Create opportunities for international students to experience UK home-life, building city community friendships and support networks.
5. Increase international society activities and events in the Union to enhance cross-nationality understanding and encourage your involvement.

# SUSTAINABILITY

## WHAT THIS MEANS

Through effective leadership and management ensure your Students' Union maintains and develops viable, quality services and activities, with sound ethical decision making, delivering long term financial stability.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Successful organisations always take a long-term view of how their actions will affect future generations and make themselves accountable for the decisions they take. We want to grow and develop in a way that is financially realistic, has respect for the environment, transparent and in line with sound ethical standards. Doing the right things, in the right way at the right time will be essential to our long term success.

## IN A NUTSHELL

**Sustaining the organisation for students for all time**

### OUR BIG IDEAS

1. Successfully launch four new services to meet the needs of our very diverse student population.
2. Establish NU:LETS as the leading independent student friendly lettings agency generating income from landlords to help sustain and develop your Union.
3. Achieve recognition by NUS for our excellence for innovative decision making, student engagement, accountability and delivering positive outcomes.
4. Increase Union external fundraising to develop new initiatives, services and activities for you.
5. Developing commercial services in line with student needs we will grow income by 5% annually to reinvest in services and activities for you.