

STRATEGIC PLAN

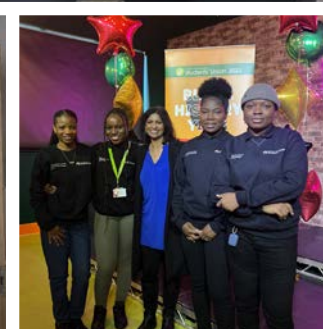
2024 – 2027



Proudly WOLVERHAMPTON.
Inspiring & empowering all
students get the best out of
university and life.



University of Wolverhampton
Students' Union



A message from our President



I am enormously proud to be the Students' Union President who has the honour of presenting our Strategic Plan 2024-27.

The role of the Students' Union is to represent and support our members who are the students. At Wolverhampton, we have diverse student communities, and they have been actively involved in shaping this Strategic Plan. Our students have given us feedback on their needs, hopes and aspirations and we have listened.

Our four priorities are Student Voice, Belonging & Community, Wellbeing & Support and Opportunity & Skills. We will be a Union that all students feel welcomed into and proud to be a part of. We celebrate our diversity and learn from each other. We will ensure that student wellbeing always stays at the top of the agenda. We will be a Union that provides its members with incredible opportunities to learn, develop skills, indulge passions, have fun and make life-changing connections. Finally, as a campaigning organisation we will be resolute in our determination to ensure the student voice is always heard, understood and acted upon.

One of our values is to be brave and this is a brave and ambitious plan to ensure there are no barriers to prevent any student from getting the best from their student experience and achieving their dreams. We are very much aware of the impact of the cost of living on our students and we will continue to work with external agencies, our local communities and businesses to benefit our students.

We will work in partnership with our university who have developed an ambitious and exciting 10-year strategy called "Strategy 2035 Creating Opportunity, Transforming Futures" to provide the best possible educational experience for our students.

We are excited about our Strategic Plan and the future of the Students' Union, to continue to deliver, grow and develop our services for our wonderful students.

Adeyemi Adebayo
PRESIDENT 2024-2025





A message from our Chief Executive

It is my great pleasure to introduce the exciting next chapter of our SU's proud history. We have had an incredible journey since the launch of our first Strategic Plan in 2021 which was against the backdrop of the pandemic.

We worked proactively with our students in challenging times to provide support, help to re-build student communities, create a sense of belonging and bring a sense of fun back to student life. Each year we have continued to deliver measurable positive impact. We also continue to look outwards and develop a number of mutually beneficial partnerships with local stakeholders that can lever in additional expertise and resources.

A special highlight for us has been our Regeneration Project, working in collaboration with our students we have transformed the SU into a beautiful, welcoming and vibrant space. After almost a 20-year absence, we have established a bar back on City campus, a Deli and amazing social space. This has helped us to broaden our reach, build deeper connections with students and bring different student communities together to celebrate our different cultures. We have increased employment opportunities for our students, created a home, and injected a sense of pride.

This Strategic Plan continues to build on these foundations, and I would like to thank all our students who have contributed by sharing their experiences, hopes and aspirations. I would also like to thank all the trustees, staff and university colleagues who have helped to develop this Strategic Plan.

There is absolute conviction that the vision continues to resonate. We therefore continue to be "Proudly Wolverhampton. Inspiring and empowering all students to get the best out of university and life".

Our focus going forward is very much on Student Voice, Belonging & Community, Wellbeing & Support and Opportunity & Skills.

We will continue to accelerate delivery and positive impact, innovate and develop new, strategic partnerships that add value. Finally, a special thank you to the University of Wolverhampton who provide us with valuable resources to enable us to support our amazing students.

Nirmala Devi MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CONTEXT

Our CITY

At the heart of the Union's vision is our ambition to be 'proudly Wolverhampton' recognising the role we can play at the University and wider region in helping people and communities to achieve their aspirations. The Students' Union is rooted in the City of Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton is a young city with a proud industrial and educational heritage. The University can trace its roots back to the early 19th century and just as it had a role to play at the heart of the Industrial Revolution it now leads the way in a region that invests and believes in young people and educational transformation.



Our UNIVERSITY

The University of Wolverhampton's strategic plan, Strategy 2035:

Creating Opportunity, Transforming Futures', sets out ambitious plans for the next decade.

The University's vision is:

We create opportunity, transform lives and deliver a more inclusive, productive and sustainable society.

We will be a key partner in the delivery of the University's vision and we are excited to work with the University and students on their priority to 'co-create the student experience to foster high levels of student engagement, satisfaction and equitable outcomes'. Our strategic plan seeks to position us firmly at the heart of the University community with a bold, outward looking agenda that enables our students to get the best out of their university life.





A STRATEGIC PLAN SHAPED BY OUR STUDENTS

Our strategic plan is rooted in the needs of our diverse student body and recognises the unique challenges and opportunities our students may face.

The University of Wolverhampton student population is diverse, with many students from backgrounds traditionally less likely to attend higher education.

Student Engagement and Evidence

We wanted a plan based on the needs of students. We undertook an extensive research and consultation exercise in partnership with Alterline, a specialist student insight agency, comprising:

- A robust student survey of 1,465 students to understand students' lives, needs, concerns and aspirations.

- Focus groups with 39 students to understand their lives and experiences in their own words.

- A student engagement week across all of our campuses during which our staff had conversations with students about the plan and their views and captured open-ended written feedback from 162 students.

Stakeholder Engagement and Evidence

We also engaged extensively with our stakeholders to produce the strategy, again supported by Alterline and including:

- A stakeholder survey, completed by 35 respondents, to explore perceptions of the Union and opportunities for the future.

- Interviews with our staff to explore their views and ambitions for the future of the Union

- Workshops that were open to all staff, student staff, sabbatical officers and our Board to discuss the evidence and shape the strategic plan.



A BODILY INVITATION TO SOLIDARITY

THE THREE THAILAND RULES

EQUALITY

UNGE

Create change
WS





OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Vision

Proudly Wolverhampton. Inspiring and empowering all students get the best out of university and life.

Mission

At the heart of the student community, our mission is to make life better for students, amplify student voices, provide exciting events, activities, and opportunities, and deliver services with impact.

Values

SUPPORTIVE

Supporting our students to get the best out of their student experience

INCLUSIVE

Welcoming, supporting, respecting and celebrating students of diverse backgrounds, experience or identity

INNOVATIVE

Creative and agile. We will actively seek opportunities that will have a meaningful impact on students' lives.

BRAVE

A strong, proactive Union, trusted by students who know we have their back.

OUR STUDENTS' PRIORITIES

In the research, students' told us what they want their Union to focus on:

Representing students' views to the University

Opportunities for students to socialise, as well as providing events, activities and entertainment

Providing independent help, support and advice to students

Helping students gain skills and experiences which will make them more employable for the future

Our four STUDENT PRIORITIES

Students' feedback has shaped our four Student Priorities for our strategic plan:

1

Student Voice

Students can find their voice and feel heard by their Union and their University.

2

Belonging & Community

We will be at the centre of a vibrant and diverse community, providing spaces and activities that bring students together. The union will be a place where all students and staff feel welcome, can be themselves, and can enjoy themselves.

3

Wellbeing & Support

Our students will feel happy and well, and we will be there to support and signpost them when they need our help.

4

Opportunity & Skills

Students can find the opportunities they need and gain skills for their future careers.





**STUDENT
PRIORITY**

1

Student Voice & Representation

**What does
the future
look like?**

**Students can find
their voice, and feel
heard by their Union
and their University.**

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS SAY NOW?

Our primary purpose as a students' union is to represent the interests of our students on the issues they face. Representation continues to be our students' top priority for their Union. While 54% of students agree that the Union effectively represents their views, fewer agree that they can influence our decisions (34%) or that it is easy to do so (32%). Similarly, just 31% of students know who their Sabbatical Officers are, and only 26% are aware of their achievements. Although we now have over 450 Course Reps, 17 paid School Reps and six Liberation Reps, students want their Reps to be more visible, and our Reps want more in-depth training support.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ①	Continue to develop an effective, easy-to-access student representation system, ensuring every student has the opportunity to be heard.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ②	Enhance our working relationship with the University to bring about positive change for our students.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ③	Regularly share the outcomes of student feedback so students can see the difference their voices make and we celebrate success.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Students will say in our annual survey:

"The Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests."

"I know how to influence decision made by the Students' Union."

In our impact report, we will also set out the following:

How many students have shared their input with us each year

How many student reps we have, and how many are trained

The successful outcomes we achieve for students

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To improve the student experience, the Union should represent students on the issues that really matter.

Student research participant

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**STUDENT
PRIORITY**

2

Belonging & Community

**What does
the future
look like?**

We will be at the centre of a vibrant and diverse community, providing spaces and activities that bring students together. The union will be a place where all students and staff feel welcome, can be themselves, and can enjoy themselves.

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS SAY NOW?

Just under half (48%) of our students are getting the social experience they want from University life. Some are concerned about loneliness, and many want more opportunities to try new things, make new friends and meet new and interesting people.

Whilst 69% of students would agree that the Union is welcoming and inclusive, only 56% agree that it is easy to get involved. We have further to go to break down barriers to engaging with us. Our students want a wider range of high-quality activities, events and opportunities delivered in different ways throughout the year, and at different times of the day.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ④	Deliver a vibrant programme of events and activities that celebrate diversity, foster friendships and build connections so students feel part of a community and have fun.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑤	Enhance our visibility and presence on campus and online, making it easier for students to know what's on offer and get involved.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑥	Establish a supportive structure that helps students to create and sustain societies based on their interests and passions.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑦	Make the most of opportunities for investment and income generation, allowing us to continue to develop activities and services for students.



One thing that would improve the Union for me would be more diverse events and activities. It would be awesome to see a wider range of cultural, artistic, and recreational events happening on campus.

Student research participant



HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Students will say in our annual survey:

"The Students' Union has a positive impact on my social life"

"The Students' Union is welcoming and inclusive to all types of students"

"The Students' Union provides a wide range of activities and events that I can get involved in"

In our impact report, we will also set out the following:

The number and range of events and activities delivered for students

How many student societies we have, and how many students are actively involved

How we have engaged with all student demographics in our activities and events





**STUDENT
PRIORITY**

3

Wellbeing & Support

What does the future look like?

Our students will feel happy and well, and we will be there to support and signpost them when they need our help.

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS SAY NOW?

Doing well at university is intimately related to being well. A quarter of our students say that their time at University has a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Our students are concerned about a range of issues relating to university life, such as their academic achievement and employability. More than half of our students are also concerned about their wider lives, including 56% who are concerned about paying for the things they need.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑧	Continue to provide support and advice to individual students through our Advice and Representation Centre (ARC).
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑨	Build effective relationships with stakeholders so that we can offer services and signposting that enables students to access the wider help they need.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑩	Deliver a programme of campaigns and activities that nurture student and staff wellbeing.

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One thing that would improve the Union for me would be a safe mental health space to just check into when life gets overwhelming.”

Student research participant

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Students will say in our annual survey:

“The Students' Union has a positive impact on my wellbeing.”

“I would turn to the Students' Union if I needed help or advice.”

In our impact report, we will also set out the following:

The number of students who we have supported through our Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)

Examples of the stakeholder relationships we have nurtured to impact on student wellbeing positively

The events and campaigns we have delivered to nurture wellbeing





**STUDENT
PRIORITY**

4

Opportunity & Skills



**What does
the future
look like?**

**Our students will
feel happy and well,
and we will be there
to support and
signpost them when
they need our help.**

WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS SAY NOW?

Our students are at University to learn, to grow and to help them achieve their ambitions for the future. Our students want us to help them gain skills and experiences that will make them more employable. Currently, 45% of our students say that the Union has helped them to develop a skill and 23% would say the Union is making them more employable. Students said they would like to hear about more events and opportunities to develop their employability and skills.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑪	Provide jobs, volunteering and work experience for students, with a focus on learning and personal development.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑫	Develop an effective relationship with the University and other external partners to help students access careers support, employability opportunities and advice.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ⑬	Provide opportunities that help students to realise their leadership potential and help them to articulate the skills they are gaining from their involvement with the Union.

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Providing more opportunities for professional development and skill-building workshops would greatly enhance the overall student experience.

Student research participant

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HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Students will say in our annual survey:

“The Students' Union is making me more employable.”

“The Students' Union has helped me to develop a skill.”

In our impact report, we will also set out the following:

The number of student staff the Union has employed

The number of volunteering hours our students have logged

Examples of the external partnerships we have developed and their impact on students

The number of learning opportunities our staff and volunteers have taken advantage of





OUR OUTCOMES

When we deliver our strategy, the outcome will be:

1

Student Voice

Students can find their voice, and feel heard by their Union and their University.

2

Belonging & Community

We will be at the centre of a vibrant and diverse community, providing spaces and activities that bring students together. The union will be a place where all students and staff feel welcome, can be themselves, and can enjoy themselves.

3

Wellbeing & Support

Our students will feel happy and well, and we will be there to support and signpost them when they need our help.

4

Opportunity & Skills

Students can find the opportunities they need and gain skills for their future careers.





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HOW YOU CAN GET MORE INVOLVED



 www.wolvesunion.org

 info.wolvesunion@wlw.ac.uk

 [WolvesSU](#)

 [WolvesUnion](#)



University of Wolverhampton

Students' Union