

Nottingham Trent Students Union

Annual Report 2009





Nottingham Trent Students Union is proud to be at the heart of the student experience at NTU.

This year, we began a journey that I believe will see us become a sector-leading students' union. We overhauled our message to students by organising our work into four clear areas: Support & Advice, Representation, Development, and Services. I'm proud to say that fantastic progress has been made in all of these key areas and I hope you will read about these achievements through the course of this report.

We find ourselves in the midst of difficult times in the higher education sector. With funding cuts looming and national graduate employment approaching record lows, we can be in no doubt of the challenges that the coming years will bring. In the face of these challenges, NTSU is committed, as ever, to delivering a first class student experience for our members - providing the maximum opportunities to develop skills that enhance employability, and enjoy socially enriching experiences.

The positive relationships we have with key stakeholders will continue to ensure we provide everything we can for our members, and will campaign relentlessly for the necessary changes that we cannot implement ourselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the partners and stakeholders that we have worked with this year, and look forward to these relationships continuing and strengthening.

Most importantly, I would like to personally thank the outstanding staff, elected officers, and students of NTSU; without your dedication and passion none of the achievements in this report would be possible. It has been an honour and a pleasure to work alongside and for you this year, and through your hard work and commitment we have made the lives of NTU students better.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Walker'.

David Cameron Walker
NTSU President 2009-10

Nottingham Trent Students Union

OUR MISSION: We will provide effective representation, advice, development opportunities and high quality services for all students and enhance the experience on offer at Nottingham Trent University.

OUR VISION: We will be sustainable, ethical and legitimate; we will play a leading role in the UK students' union movement and will fully participate in the civic and community life of Nottingham.

OUR VALUES: We are inclusive, accessible and democratic, celebrating collective strength drawn from a diverse membership and seeking to create equality of opportunity for all students.

Support & Advice

Student Advice Centre
WelCam

Representation

Assemblies
Board of Elected Directors
Student Directorate
Campaigns
Course Reps
Hall Reps
NUS
Referenda
Union General Meetings

Development

Initi8 (volunteering)
RAG (fundraising)
Stride (training)
Societies
Sports Clubs
Trent Media

Services

Campus Shops
Entertainments
Fresher Reps
JobShop
Union Bars
Union Diners
Union Coffee Shops
WiFi

Support & Advice

Nottingham Trent Students' Union is proud of its record in the area of support and advice, which truly underpins our mission to "provide effective representation, advice, development opportunities and high quality services for all students, and enhance the experience on offer at Nottingham Trent University".

Major achievements in this area have been:

- An 81% increase in the number of students using our Student Advice Centre; equating to 1 in 5 students gaining advice on a total 12,668 combined issues.
- Increased networking with Nottingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council has proven useful, and the Student Advice Centre has contributed significantly to a report produced by the City council in relation to 'fit and proper' landlords.
- The Student Advice Centre has attended all major events and fairs, handing out vital literature and giving on-the-spot advice.
- Detailed plan produced for re-launch of student mediation services.
- The recruitment of an additional student advisor with extensive Citizens' Advice Bureau background increased the wealth of experience within the Student Advice Centre.
- The Students' Union has secured a working partnership with Nottingham Cars, with fixed prices to areas of high student population and 10% reduction of prices to other destinations alongside a high quality of student welfare provision and service.
- In relation to the above agreement, we have also worked with Nottingham Cars to run a fully marshalled taxi rank on major event nights in Byron House.

Representation

Nottingham Trent Students' Union is proud of its improvement in the area of representation, brought about through a total revamping of democratic and staffing structures allowing the Union to fully achieve its core value of "providing effective representation for all students and enhancing the experience on offer at Nottingham Trent University."

Major achievements in this area have been:

- Launched online registration for Course Reps, which have allowed both academics and Course Reps to access training registrations, leading to increased attendance at training sessions.

- Launched a range of halls clothing to help boost our Hall Rep scheme by helping to foster a greater sense of hall identity and pride.

- Agreed a new feedback rationale with the University's Centre for Academic Standards and Quality (CASQ) as a direct result of lobbying

on National Student Survey Statistics. This will allow students to receive timely feedback to enable academic performance improvement.

- Following lobbying pressure from the Students' Union, NTU library staff have agreed to extend opening hours at the Brackenhurst Campus in the summer term.

- Coffee mornings for parent students have been organised by the SU in response to a request by the Parent Students Officer. It is hoped this will form a worthwhile peer support

group as well as give the SU a better understanding of how to institutionally support its members who are parents.

- Successfully got a trial of School Representatives approved with the University.

- Ran one of the biggest general election registration drives in the country, which involved collaboration with *(next page)*



Annual General Meeting 2009 (photo: Sergi Arbusa)

(continued from previous page)
Nottingham City Council and canvassing on students' doorsteps.

- After successful lobbying and campaigning, the Union secured alternative accommodation, free travel cards, and support with moving for students who were required to move out of the Gervase halls of residence on Clifton Campus before the end of the academic year.
- A 61.4% increase in the number of students who voted in the 2010 NTSU officer elections compared to 2009, which represents a record-breaking turnout and puts NTSU as one of the highest ranking students' unions in the country.
- A 6.3% increase from 2009 in the number of candidates standing for full-time elected officer positions.
- The introduction of the first ever online voting system, which also led to an increase in ballot station

opening hours by 433%. Furthermore, we strongly believe students were better informed before casting their votes, as candidate manifestos were viewed a total of 15,988 times and average viewing time was above one minute.

- For the first ever Union General Meeting (UGM) of the new democratic representation structure, over 100 students attended.

- 75% of motions submitted to UGMs have been submitted by students who do not hold elected office within the union.

- Officers have been held to account for over 70 minutes at this year's UGMs, including questions from students, and reports on officer activities.

- Assemblies have been held before every UGM, with the most well attended averaging over 50 attendees per assembly.

- The Union is continuing its preparation towards registering with the Charity Commission, and has made a number of amendments (5) to its constitution to ensure compliance with sector regulations.

- The Union hopes to create a new developmental opportunity by appointing two students to its Board of Trustees.

- Following on from the first UGM, 65% of all Student Directorate positions were filled, which was impressive considering the majority were new positions and had no previous holders or presence within the Union.

- 2,091 Christmas cards were signed and sent to 246 MPs from all four countries of the United Kingdom (including 605 to Alan Simpson in Nottingham South, and 539 to John Heppell in Nottingham East) asking them to pledge not to raise tuition fees. Six MPs signed the NTSU pledge

“to vote against any attempts to raise tuition fees in the next parliament.”

- Launched a 'Vote for Students' billboard in Nottingham City Centre which received national media coverage from the BBC.

Development

The employability agenda is of upmost importance to the Students' Union, as we are firmly committed to producing highly employable graduates in what is currently a difficult graduate jobs market.

Major achievements in this area have been:

■ We have become an accredited ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) centre, and are approved to deliver Level Three and Level Five qualifications - which are both nationally recognised qualifications in management and leadership.

■ Over 1,000 places have been filled on our Student Training and Development programme (Stride) which is delivered by students to students, to improve skills in business practices and logical thinking.

■ The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce now provide accreditation for our Student

Training and Development programme, thus immensely improving the employability of students that attend the programme.

■ We now have a fully functioning and well attended Societies Management Committee, which allows students to take the lead in running the Union's societies.

■ All but two society forms and resources have been made electronic and placed in a new online resources area, meaning that society leaders now have the power to manage their groups when it suits them.

■ Whilst the total number of affiliated societies has not increased from that advertised last year, the percentage of those societies which are active has vastly increased. At present, close to 100% of affiliated societies are active.

■ Thanks to new measures in the Code of Practice, the Societies Management Committee is able to suspend any societies who do not meet the listed 'minimum requirements of operation', meaning that they can ensure a high standard of service by societies to members across the societies' body.

■ We have had more than 15 new affiliations and 5 restarted societies this year so far.

■ By the end of the 2008/09 academic year, RAG (Raising and Giving) achieved its greatest ever success of over £54,000 raised for various charities. To date for the academic year 2009/10, this figure has exceeded £60,000

■ 130 students took part in Initi8 volunteering activities throughout the academic year at City Campus, which is a 30% increase on totals from last year. Volunteers took part in 28 projects, which is a 5 project increase on last year.

■ With regard to Initi8 activities at Clifton and Brackenhurst, a total of 237 volunteer opportunities have been filled.

■ Platform, our student-led magazine, has provided more employability opportunities to students by moving to a 64 page monthly magazine. Furthermore, Platform has launched its very own stand-alone website at **www.platform-online.net** thus increasing exposure for students' journalism.

■ Platform Online has had 30,000 page views since its launch in November, and in addition, the online version of the magazine has been read by over 22,000 people.

■ At the Student Radio Awards, Martyn Littlewood won Gold in the Best Newcomer category alongside Sam Jarrett who won the Silver award in the Best Male category. Fly FM also won the Silver award for best radio station, therefore confirming Fly FM as the top two student radio station in the UK.

■ Steph Oliver, our Trent TV station manager, won Student Broadcast Journalist of the Year at the 2009 Guardian Student Media Awards.



Student Volunteering Week 2009 (photo: Debbie Whitmore)

Services

Nottingham Trent Students' Union takes pride in the unique range of services it provides for its members, ranging from a student friendly Jobshop, to cross-campus shops and entertainments which are operated democratically and ethically through the Vice President Student Services, allowing us to be "inclusive, accessible and democratic, celebrating collective strength drawn from a diverse membership and seeking to create equality of opportunity for all students".

Major achievements in this area have been:

■ Over 98,000 hits to our Jobshop website, proving our Jobshop service is used by the majority of our membership.

■ Over 1,000 vacancies offered and filled via our Jobshop, which equates to over 4% of part-time student employment

■ Improved relationship with the governments JobCentre Plus service allows our members to receive up to date information on campaigns, meetings and vacancies.

■ Increased opening hours which meant an additional 310 operating hours for our Jobshop, thus improving flexibility of our service to members.

■ The creation of a new 'one stop shop' combining finance, Jobshop and reception services, together improving the navigation of Byron House for students.

■ Record attendances at Climax.

■ In line with our commitment to provide a diverse range of services



we successfully opened coffee shops at each campus, all serving Costa Coffee.

■ The implementation of a new cross-campus EpoS till system has allowed us to increase our knowledge of our membership's needs and run more efficient commercial outlets.

■ The launch of a new menu has allowed us to offer better quality and greater consistency in our diners.

■ We have improved the safety of



Graduation Ball 2009 After-party (photo: Patrick Taylor)

our events by awarding a contract to Showsec International, the largest national provider of security crowd management. Showsec are several years' winners of the entertainments industry's prestigious TPi Awards for service and quality.

■ We again organised a massively successful Graduation Ball with over 2,400 students attending, and with high profile acts including Feeder, Calvin Harris and Pendulum. Alongside the main event we hosted the first ever Graduation Ball after-party.

■ The Union played a key role in Nottingham's annual live music festival, Dot to Dot, with a total of 18 bands playing in Byron House in the space of a day, and crowds of over 3,000 passing through the venue.

■ The October Freshers period proved to be a huge success. The entertainments department were responsible for bringing the students 53 night-time events within October, including 24 in Byron House, 9 in Benenson, and 20 in external venues such as Gatecrasher, Oceana, Ocean and Rock City.

■ The Union has continued to provide a diverse range of entertainments including mainstream club nights, rock nights, fashion shows, drum 'n' bass events, comedy shows, formal balls, roller discos and high profile live music shows.



House Services' redevelopment and redecoration of 'The Pulse' union bar (photo: David Blenkey)

Supporting the strands

Nottingham Trent Students' Union would not be able to operate without the supporting departments such as Design & Communications, House Services, Human Resources and Information Technology.

Major achievements in this area have been:

- The Union undertook a rebranding exercise in the summer months, with the aim of refocusing a consistent brand message across all of the promotional materials we produce. This new brand message is based on the Mission, Vision and Values statement, and features four strands

that encompass all that we provide: Support & Advice, Representation, Development, and Services. In line with this new brand message, consistent visual elements were designed and implemented across the entire range of Union promotions, beginning with Freshers. This rebranding is ongoing and we hope it will bring further improvements in the year to come.

- The Student Advice Center was rebranded during the summer, and a range of informational leaflets, posters, flyers, and signage featuring the new identity and logo were produced to increase the visibility of this service to our members.

- NTSU also launched a new website during the summer, after months of planning, design and development. The new website at **www.trentstudents.org** has improved our online presence and the range of web-based services we provide to our members, as well as further

promoting our redefined brand values.

- Successful staff conferences took place in June and September. The June staff conference included back-to-basics training sessions, delivered by the Membership Services Department. 65 staff members attended and participated in 4 separate training sessions. Feedback was excellent for the day.

- Inductions for new starters are now centrally controlled by HR, rather than Line Managers. Inductions now include a one-hour HR induction followed by a one-hour Health & Safety Induction. Approximately 100 new starters went through the new induction process in 2009, 85% of whom were from Commercial Services.

- The 'Union Fit For Purpose' restructuring process was fully implemented by the start of the new academic year in September 2009 – this was a major reorganisation

designed to better align the staff structure to the Union's mission.

- House Services have delivered internal training to over 400 attendees, ranging from fire safety to step ladder training.

- House Services have undertaken extensive redecoration of all Union buildings and made the majority of offices fit for purpose.

- House Services continued to successfully run the Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme (MIDAS), which gives member who become drivers of NTSU fleet vehicles the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised certificate which is valid for four years.

Financial summary

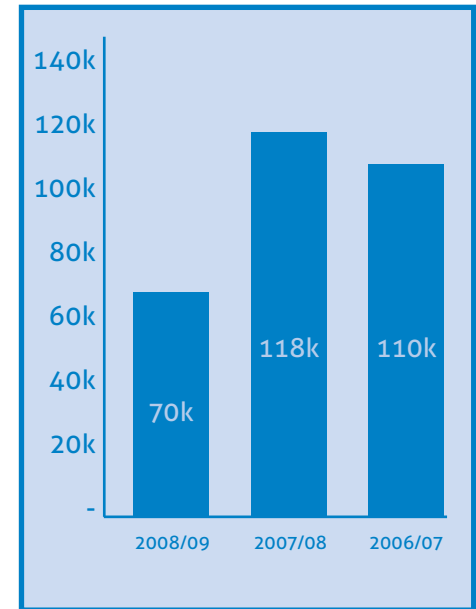
Financial review of the year to 31 July 2009

Income and Expenditure

The Union's Income and Expenditure Account can be summarised as follows:

	2008/09 £000	2007/08 £000	2006/07 £000
Income	4,465	4,502	4,307
Trading Purchases	(1,740)	(1,832)	(1,687)
Gross Profit	2,725	2,669	2,620
Expenditure	(2,655)	(2,551)	(2,510)
Surplus	70	118	110

Surplus



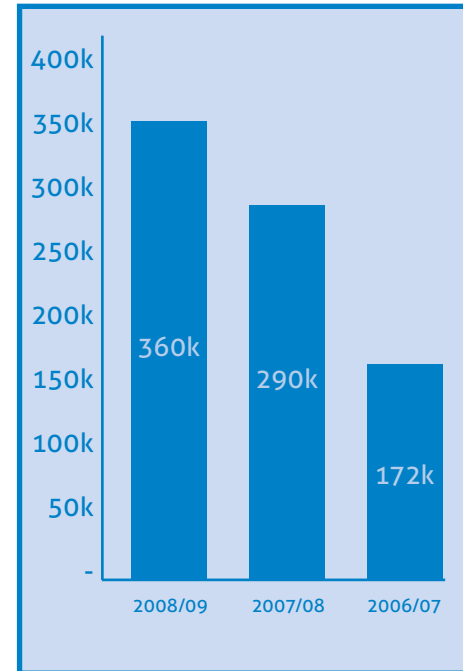
Balance Sheet

Net assets have increased year-on-year as the summarised Balance Sheet below highlights:

	2008/09 £000	2007/08 £000	2006/07 £000
Fixed Assets	482	557	681
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	(50)	213	185
Long-term Creditors	(71)	(479)	(694)
Net Assets	360	290	172

Long term loans were fully repaid during 2009.

Net Assets



Cover photo: Patrick Taylor

This publication can be made available in large print and alternative formats on request.

Please contact NTSU on 0115 848 6200 for more information.



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