



KENT UNION ANNUAL REPORT 2006/2007

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UNIVERSITY OF KENT, MANDELA BUILDING, KENT CT2 7NW



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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VISION STATEMENT

Kent Union is recognised by its stakeholders as an exceptional students' union that ranks amongst the best in the provision of representation and services for students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Kent Union is integral to the University of Kent, providing excellent quality representation, commercial services and membership services to its students, whilst providing a fulfilling and rewarding employment experience for its staff.

FOR YOU, NOT FOR PROFIT

Being a not for profit organisation means that every penny spent in our outlets is reinvested into services for students. By running successful shops and bars we are able to invest more in societies, sports teams, the Advice Centre and Jobshop as well as running more effective campaigns; enabling our members to have the best possible experience at Kent.



WELCOME

2006/2007 was another fantastic year for Kent Union with huge successes across all areas of our mission - representation, membership services and commercial services.

The year saw a change in Kent Union's governance structure, approved by a mid-year referendum, which will allow us to gain a better perspective of what can be done for our members, and facilitate the growth of our organisation.

Kent Union became the first students' union in the UK to achieve Investing in Volunteers status, a new quality standard launched by Volunteering England to raise standards in the management of volunteering. We also launched the very first student led FM community radio station, CSRfm, which brings together students from Kent, Christ Church and local schools broadcasting across Canterbury throughout the year.

The Union was national winner in the Best Bar None competition run by NUS Services Limited. Winning this award shows our commitment to the safety and welfare of our students by the practices and procedures we put in place. Alongside this, we achieved the Sound Impact Award for our ethical and environmental practices.

We were successful in the tender of the library cafe, BBs, which has proved an increasingly popular venue for drinks and snacks; and we opened our late night take away service, The Kitchen, in direct response to research about what students would like to see on their campus.

This year we have achieved a lot, but still have more to accomplish before we achieve our vision of being an exceptional students' union.

Achike Ofodile
Union President 2007/08



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DEMOCRACY

October 2006 saw our bye election turnout double from 350 votes the previous year to 700 votes; this is a record number of votes for a bye election at Kent. Following that success, our main March elections increased to a turnout of 3,000 voters, 50% more than previous years and putting Kent Union in the top 10 in terms of % turnout for elections in students' unions across the UK.

Our Annual General Meeting in January was fully quorate, with over 300 students attending to discuss issues such as the recycling pilot scheme, accessibility of Sabbatical Officers and ethical issues regarding the availability of Coca Cola on campus.

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

During 2006, the Union completed a governance review, which reviewed and amended the Union's trustee arrangements amongst other things. The Union proposed widening the trustee body to include two student trustees, elected from the membership, and two external trustees who should be appointed via a recruitment process. Inclusion of these positions will enable the Union to have a more rounded view of its operations from a student and professional perspective.

A referendum was held in the issues of the student and external trustees and the motion was passed by the membership in January, meaning that in the March elections, our first student trustees were elected. The recruitment and selection process for external trustees will be started early next academic year.

The Governance Review, completed in 2006, led to the most comprehensive changes to the union's Governance arrangements in our 40 year history



Elections in March saw a record turnout of 3000 students, 50% more than in previous years

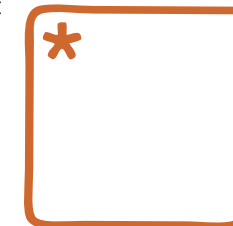


ENVIRONMENT & ETHICS

Kent Union won Sound Impact Award, which are designed to encourage, reward and celebrate best environmental practice amongst students' unions in the UK.

To ensure that our ethical and environmental practices develop accordingly we have put in place an Environmental Policy and Strategy. This strategy, alongside our E&E Scrutiny Committee, will ensure that we consider the impact that our services have on the global and surrounding environment.

We hope to achieve a higher level of award next year, and will be assessing all our services to make sure they comply with our strategy.



SOUND
impact awards
Bronze winner
2006/07

Kent Union won Sound Impact Award in recognition of its ethical and environmental practices



January saw the launch of the UK's first student led community radio station

SOCIETIES

Over 4,000 students joined our 85 different societies with interests from art to vegetarian, conscious consumers to a pirate and fairy society! Society events were more impressive and high profile than ever before, due to increased support from both staff and sabbatical officers. One notable success came from the Ballroom and Latin dance society who competed in Blackpool at the University Dance Championships and had a number of partners finish first in their group.

6.

RAG

Rag raised £17,991 for local, national and international charities over the year. The Snowball (Rag's annual Christmas ball) was reviewed to make sure that it was good value for money as well as a sound fundraising event. Headliners B*witched and a host of student bands played to a sold out Venue and raised £6,000 for local charities.

INQUIRE

The student Newspaper had a name change from KRED to inQuire and with it a complete revamp of design and content. This revamp was well recieved by members and saw inQuire recieve a 75% satisfaction rating in the annual satisfaction survey.

ONE WORLD WEEK

Our annual event to celebrate cultural diversity was expanded to include many more events and more students from the Canterbury campus and our partnership colleges.

Alongside the traditional International showcase and society/sports club workshops and demos, Kent Union held a cultural fair allowing students to sample delights from a variety of different cultures and an art exhibition by students from Ashford School of Art and Design.

Rag raised almost £18,000 for charity

CSR 97.4fm

January 2007 saw the successful launch of CSR, the UK's first student led community radio station broadcasting 24/7. The Lord Mayor, local councillors, Vice Chancellor and 1400 students attended a sell out evening, whilst behind the scenes, CSR executives and members connected two remote radio studios to create a seamless launch onto the FM airwaves.



In the year of its launch, CSR gained 200 members from the University of Kent and Christ Church University. Over the year, they have set up links with local schools and co-ordinated events where young students can learn about the radio station and showcase their abilities. Members have also been involved in major University events such as ArtsFest, Keynestock and One World Week, broadcasting live to the whole of Canterbury.

CSR remains the only student radio station broadcasting permanently on FM.



SPORT

Over 1,800 students joined sports clubs, many of which have teams in local and national leagues. In the BUSA (British Universities Sports Association) leagues 8 teams finished top of their tier with 9 more narrowly missing out and finishing second, whilst our Women's hockey team now boasts 3 England hockey players; Natalie Seymour, Natasha Brennan and Hayley Brown.

Once again, the University of Kent reigned victorious over rivals Christ Church in the annual varsity competition. Kent won 15 out of 22 games in 9 different sports and is looking forward to next year where it is hoped that even more teams will be able to participate in a bigger variety of events.

The colours ball is an annual award which recognises the outstanding achievement of our sports men and women.

Red Colours were awarded for sporting achievement at a regional level: Shaun Levy, Carl Homer, Rhiannon Lawson, Sarah Stacey, Filippo Vincentelli.

Blue Colours were awarded for sporting achievements at an International level: Natasha Brennan, Hayley Brown, Natalie Seymour, Thomas Everingham.

Club of the Year was awarded to the Rowing Club.

Sports Woman of the Year was awarded to Alex Gordon (Netball). Sports Man of the Year was awarded to Thomas Everingham.

7.

Team of the Year was awarded to the Women's Basketball team after their highly successful season in the BUSA league, knockout championship, premiership playoffs and the East Kent Basketball league.

Outstanding Individual was awarded to Natalie Seymour (Hockey) for her International performances, captaining the Women's 1st XI and coaching the rest of the club with an unparalleled desire to succeed and infectious enthusiasm.



“students volunteering through Kent Union gave over 15,000 hours of their time to the local community”

VOLUNTEERING



Kent Union was granted Investing in Volunteers status, and is the first students' union in the country to do so. Gaining the award demonstrates our commitment to student development through voluntary activities, and the value we place on students' ability to partake in extra-curricular activities that are of benefit to the communities around them.

Students made a real difference to the community and have undertaken 15,110 hours of volunteering over the year, giving the equivalent of £67,239 in unpaid labour back to the local community. The University of Kent has now recognised the value of volunteering by offering students the chance to gain academic credit for their voluntary work.

CAMPAIGNING

Our student group 'Campaigning Through Action' had a busy year, focusing on student safety and respect for the local community. In the first few weeks of term, the Slow and Steady campaign encouraged first year students to take measures to protect their own welfare in the first few weeks of term and beyond.

Pressure from students led to the University introducing recycling schemes into student accommodation. Initial trials were so successful that the scheme has been expanded for the coming year and students across the entire campus can easily recycle their waste products.

Kent Union also launched the Anonymous Marking campaign which has the aim of stopping discrimination from tutors when marking assignments. We also dedicated time to the national 'Kick Racism out of Football' campaign, which saw our sports men and women join together for the cause.

STUDENT ADVICE CENTRE

The Advice Centre achieved the Community Legal Services Quality Mark

Community Legal Service



Quality Mark

Following last year's success in achieving a provisional Community Legal Services Quality Mark, the Student Advice Centre received confirmation that this has been updated to the full quality mark recognising the systems we use and the standard of advice we deliver. 769 cases were opened in the past year alongside casework from returning clients; in total 1,373 cases were undertaken by student advisors. The majority of these cases were in relation to financial issues, and we helped students obtain £496,567 of additional funding to aid them whilst they study.

Alongside this, we have also been preparing to take over all immigration work from the University's International Office. Student Advisors have been trained to a high standard in areas of Immigration and Visa applications, meaning that they can provide a helpful and thorough service to students. The Advice Centre has been aiming across the year to make staff and students more aware of the services they offer. A number of open days have been held to publicise the advice centre, and advisors now make a point of visiting stakeholders in their place of work to further publicise what they can do for Kent students.

JOBSHOP

Jobshop launched a temp-supplying service, and now offers temporary staff to University departments and local businesses for a variety of roles. This provides an additional service for students, helping them get through their studies. As a direct result of this service being launched, revenue for Jobshop increased over 300% from the previous year. The number of registered students also increased to a record high of just over 3,800 for the academic year, and over 5,500 jobs were advertised by JobShop.

Over 500 students were placed into part-time or temporary positions

COURSE REPS

The success of the course rep system in previous years has continued to grow. This year saw the launch of intra-departmental elections, giving students an even greater voice with regards to their course, faculty and department. The introduction of the 'Train to train' program empowered Course Reps to train others in the expectations and responsibilities of the role. Course Reps spent the year lobbying their departments on issues such as assessment feedback, plagiarism and access to online materials.

We helped students obtain £496,567 of additional funding to aid them whilst they study

THE VENUE

Following last year's success, The Venue was named National Winner at the Best Bar None awards 2007. Winning this award shows the commitment that Kent Union has towards the welfare of students, and that procedures in place within The Venue help guarantee a safe and secure night out.



Our security measures have increased across the year with more security patrols in residential areas surrounding the University to make sure students get home safely, and minimise the impact on the local community. Alongside this, we have increased attendance at our security review panel which includes local authorities, University staff and student representatives.

Over the past year The Venue has seen some massive acts including Pendulum, Zane Lowe and Tim Westwood and some more interesting events such as a silent disco, a lock and key party and student DJs being able to broadcast live on BBC Radio 6 straight from the club.

WOODY'S

Throughout the year, Kent Union has been looking to update the offer and decor of Woody's. Over the summer, the bar was transformed into a traditional pub serving good food and drink whilst maintaining a focus on quality service and value for money.

The menu has been revamped and Woody's now serves a wide range of foods, from main meals to snacks to share, sandwiches, baked potatoes and lots of promotional offers such as beer and a burger, Sunday roasts and Friday curry night.

Woodys is the busiest bar on campus and it is hoped that a face lift will continue to provide a safe, secure and quality service provision to students for some considerable time to come.

"Kent Union was the National Winner at the Best Bar None awards 2007, showing our commitment towards the welfare of students"

After a successful tender process, Kent Union took on responsibility for running the Library café, BB's. Situated in a student hotspot, BB's serves fresh and organic foods alongside lunchtime favourites.

SUMMER BALL

The Summer Ball is a perfect way for students to end their time at University, and say goodbye to their friends. This year's ball was our largest to date. 3,280 students got dressed up in their best outfits and made their way to their largest marquee with 4 bars, 3 arenas and a giant drop tower. Throughout the evening this arena played host to RnB star, Beverley Knight and top 10 chart act, Scouting for Girls amongst many other bands, singers and entertainers.

CATERING

After research into what services students wanted on campus, Kent Union opened The Kitchen, located within The Lighthouse. This service offers fast food throughout the day and through the night, and an on-campus delivery service in the evening to those who feel like putting their feet up.

After a successful tender process, Kent Union took on responsibility for running the Library café, BB's. Situated in a student hotspot, BB's serves fresh and organic foods alongside lunchtime favourites.

RETAIL

Our retail department had a fantastic year, offering a better range of products for students including an increased range of FairTrade products and clothing. New ranges of Co-op own label products, Chinese authentic products and more options for healthy eating and balanced diets mean better value for money and the ability to provide a more competitively priced service to students.

Parkwood Essentials was refurbished to offer a better product range and easier access to Parkwood students. It also introduced the cashless card system, which will be available in the main shop from late 2007.

After a review of the service offered by Essentials and Extras, opening hours have been extended to suit the needs of those living on campus. Essentials is now open until midnight on weekdays during term time.



UNIVERSITIES AT MEDWAY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

From the start of the year, UMSA has been operating the licensed trade premises on the Medway campus. The Drunken Sailor Pub, became 'Coopers' and now boasts a great space for staff and students to come and relax, have a drink and try what's on the menu. Purple, the nightclub is now open most nights and can be booked by students for events.

UMSA also took over the Campus Shop. In January 2007, this shop was moved to a dedicated space in the Jellicoe building and became Medway Essentials providing students with good value, healthy and local produce.

This year saw the first ever Medway Summer Ball. Students from Kent, ChristChurch and Greenwich Universities joined together to watch live local bands alongside chart toppers Wheatus, enjoy fairground rides and their last couple of weeks at University.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

UMSA made the evening news by holding the inaugural 'Universities at Medway Boat Race'. 4 teams competed in a race down the River Medway whilst hundreds of supporters and many TV and Newspaper cameras watched on.

The UMSA Student Newspaper, PULP is up and running, with students from the Medway Universities contributing their news, reviews photos and ideas.

The Jobshop service at Medway was launched, providing part-time and temporary jobs for students studying at the Chatham site.

12. UMSA has a growing number of societies, one of the most popular being the Islamic soc, who have over 30 members and last year held high profile events such as Islamic awareness days. Sports teams at Medway did well with Men's football teams coming top of the league in their SESSA divisions, and the dance club gaining over 50 highly active members.



UMSA held the inaugural 'University at Medway Boat Race'. 4 teams competed in a race which was watched over by lots of local media

HR



Highly Commended
National Training Awards 2007

Kent Union achieved a National Training Award and became only the 2nd students' union in 21 years to win this prestigious award. The training focused on the Student Activities Training Programme, which can reach 3,000 students directly, and 16,000 indirectly.

Kent Union spent over £50,000 on staff development to ensure that staff receive the training and continued professional development they need to enable improvement in services for members. 2 senior staff are working towards Masters Degrees in Business Administration (MBA) whilst 10 staff members have completed their Certificate in Management Studies. Our continual commitment to Health and Safety has seen all managers attending a 5 day course to ensure compliance with current legislation and ensure safe working practices for our staff. We also were re-accredited for Investors in People status, showing our commitment to training and development of staff.

Kent Union gave employment opportunities to over 60 new student staff in 2007 meaning the total number of students employed by Kent Union was over 250 and over £430,000 was paid to students for work within our outlets.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

MARKETING

The quality of our publications and identity has continued to rise with far more emphasis placed on communication with our members. The past year saw the introduction of a new website which allows each of our departments to update their information as and when it happens. It also gave us the ability to take payments online for sports clubs and societies, giving us all the information we need to be able to contact students directly, something which we have struggled to do in the past.

Kent Union won a prestigious National Training Award



Kent Union gave employment opportunities to over 250 students and paid over £430,000 to those working within our outlets



FINANCE

Our finance department focused on ensuring financial operations meet the needs of the organisation and stakeholders. Monthly management accounts are now being produced within 9 working days after month end, compared to a historic average of 20 days.

This, amongst other changes, allowed us to achieve a ‘Substantial Level of Assurance’ in the University of Kent’s Internal Audit of Kent Union, generating confidence in us to manage our resources for the benefit of our members and enhancing our ability to secure additional resources and facilities. Over the next 2 years we aim to achieve a ‘Good Level of Assurance’(the next and highest level) and we shall be reassessing our processes to achieve this status.

Our finance team were shortlisted, alongside the Terrence Higgins Trust and Stroke Association, in the Third Sector Excellence Awards. The basis of the application was the impact of the achievements made throughout the year, and how these have impacted on the quality of service we are able to provide to our stakeholders.

Kent Union’s finance team were shortlisted for a Third Sector Excellence award

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Union achieved another strong financial performance in 2006/07. For the third consecutive year the Union recorded a surplus in excess of budget, with a surplus of £53k. The Union’s balance sheet also continued to strengthen with net assets rising by 32% from £191k to £252k. The cash position improved from £289k at 31st July 2006 to £421k at 31st July 2007 due to the surplus achieved during the year and improved working capital and cash management.

Commercial services revenues increased by almost 16% from £4,560k to £5,240k, comprising approximately 10% through new trading activities and 5% from like for like revenue growth. This demonstrates a strong performance in a challenging environment against a backdrop of declining commercial revenues in many students’ unions.

Particular successes within the Union’s commercial operations have been the Essentials shop, which increased turnover year on year by £106k (5.5%) and operating surplus by £41k to £142k, Parkwood Essentials which increased revenues by almost 14% to £490k and operating surplus to £58k from £14k, and the Library Coffee Shop, which opened during the year and achieved an operating surplus of £20k.

UMSA, the Universities at Medway Students’ Association, operated by Kent Union on behalf of the Universities of Kent, Greenwich and Christchurch performed well in its first year of commercial services trading, showing a £13k favourable variance compared to budget.

Commercial service revenues increased by almost 16%, demonstrating a strong performance in a challenging environment and a national trend of declining commercial revenues.

Year ending 31st July	2007	2006	% change
Inome and expenditure	£000	£000	
Gross Turnover	6,436	5,551	15.9
Commercial Turnover	5,240	4,560	14.9
University Grant	1,081	895	20.8
Surplus from Commercial Operations (invested back into non commercial services)	195	207	-5.8
Union surplus for the year	53	62	-14.5
Balance Sheet	£000	£000	
Net Assets	252	191	31.9