

Summary

In collaboration with Red Brick Research, a survey was conducted with a focus of; community on campus, the Students' Union, social life, lifestyle and wellbeing. It has provided valuable data for understanding the range of aspects which contribute to the student experience and given insight into how, as a Students' Union, we can improve. Overall, satisfaction scores do indicate scope for improvement with the average rating of university life as 6.83.

Segmentation

To better understand our students, they can be split into five segments. Each segment represents a specific demographic that share common characteristics. These characteristics influence the way in which the students experience university life and how they interact with the Students' Union and its services. Having these segments will enable us to think more about how we meet the student populations diverse range of needs.

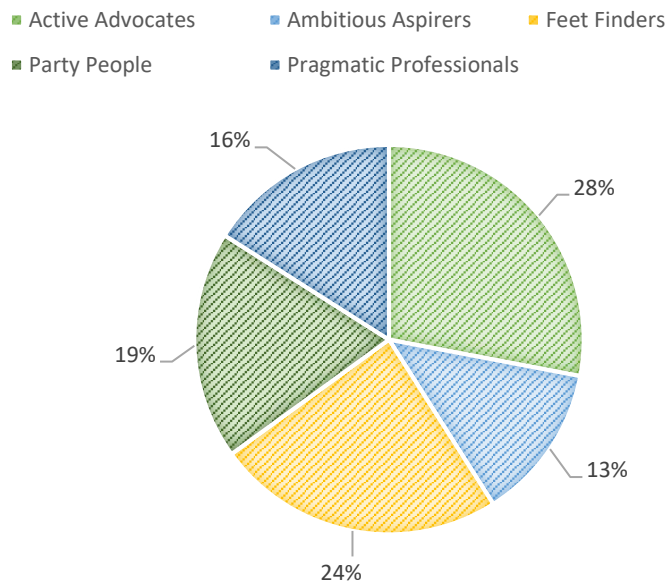


Figure 1. Overview of the segments and their proportions at the university

The highest percentage of students at the university fall into the segment 'Active Advocates' this tells us that a good proportion of students have a strong relationship with the SU services and opportunities, they are the most willing segment to consider using many of the services on offer.

Demographics

2,195 responses were collected from the survey, 58% female and 42% male. There is a good representation of all study levels in the final data; undergraduate (73%) and postgraduate (17%) with most students belonging to the age category 20-21 (32%).

Hertfordshire Business School, School of Life and Medical Sciences and School of Creative Arts were the schools with the highest participation. Physics, Astronomy and Maths and Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium had the lowest participation rates.

31% of individuals identified as commuting students. The highest proportion of commuters spent 1hour+ commuting every day to the university, with the most common form of transport being car/motorbike, and the least common being bicycle.

Community

8 in 10 respondents feel that community is important to them, indicating community is greatly valued amongst the students here. The results do show that students feel there is a greater sense of community at the University of Hertfordshire (58% agree), than at the Students' Union (47% agree). But, a lot more students opted to remain neutral in the SU question which may indicate a lack of awareness about the SU, or of the community it provides. Commuter students are less likely to feel a sense of community.

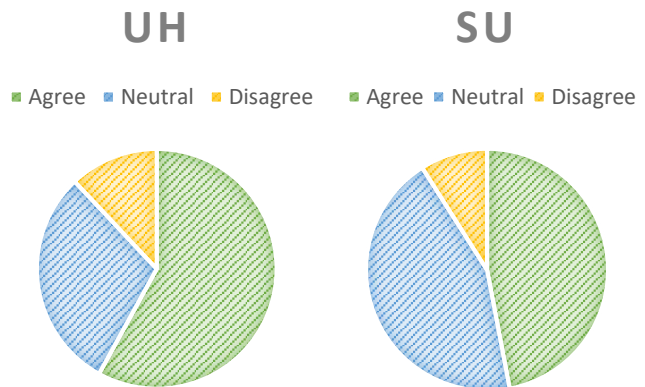


Figure 2. There is a strong overall sense of community at the (UH) and (SU)

Recommendations

- We should consider what the university provides that we don't, or what the students see promoted from the university more than they see from us.
- Ensure there are a wide range of events which would appeal to different people, so they can meet others with similar interests and things in common – the SU facilitating building communities.

Social Life

Regarding both day time, evening and night-time activities, the consensus is that it would be nice for the SU to provide them, but it's not necessarily expected. Also, most students (46%) indicated that if the SU did not provide evening and night-time social activities it would have no impact on their student experience (Figure 1). Non-commuters were more likely to say it would have a negative impact in comparison to commuting students.

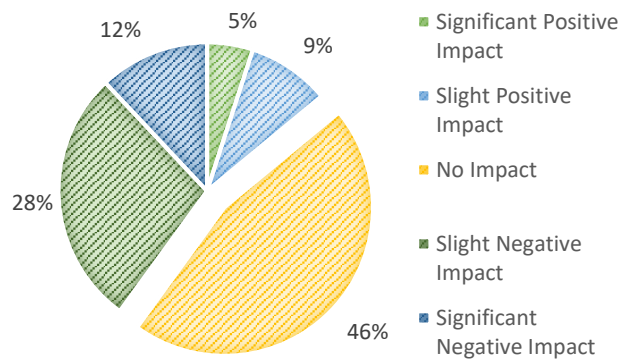


Figure 3. If the SU did not provide any evening/night-time social activities, what impact would this have on your student experience?

Ambitious aspirers and party people are most likely to believe providing events should be a core part of what the SU do, pragmatic professionals the least.

Benchmarking data suggests a shift in attitudes towards going out and drinking, with the appetite slowly increasing – we just need to keep this in mind for the future to make sure alcohol consumption does not become a problem.

Overall, 50% of students agree that the Students' Union positively contributes to their social experience, compared to 11% that disagree. Non-commuters agreed significantly more than commuters that the SU had a positive impact on their social experiences, commuters were more neutral to the statement.

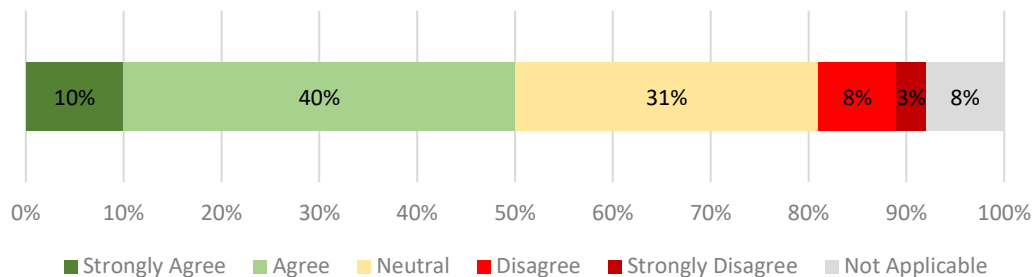


Figure 4. I feel the Students' Union positively contributes to my social experience

In general, non-commuter students are more likely to get involved with potential opportunities provided by the SU, with 14% of commuters stating that they could not see themselves getting involved with any of the following opportunities;

- 'Just for fun' sports / exercise classes
- Cinema / film nights
- Live events (e.g. music gigs, theatre, comedy)
- Community events (e.g. BBQs, picnics, fayres)
- International / cultural events (e.g. festivals, food fairs)
- Employability skills masterclasses / workshops (e.g. job applications, transferable skills)
- Life skills masterclasses / workshops (e.g. managing money, finding accommodation)
- Club nights / parties
- Volunteering / charity work
- Academic skills masterclasses / workshops
- Recreational workshops (e.g. arts and crafts, cooking, creative writing)
- Gaming (computer games, board games, LARPing)
- Extra-curricular talks / seminars / webinars
- Performing arts (e.g. music, acting, dance)
- Competitive sports, Watching live sport
- Student media (e.g. radio, journalism, TV)
- Competitions / talent shows

Commuters are more likely than non-commuters to get involved with volunteering and charity work, academic skills masterclasses and workshops as well as extra-curricular tasks, seminars and webinars.

In terms of what students want from the SU, although socially oriented opportunities came out on top (entertain me/give me opportunities to have fun, 14%) it was closely followed by many other options with no one stand out winner.

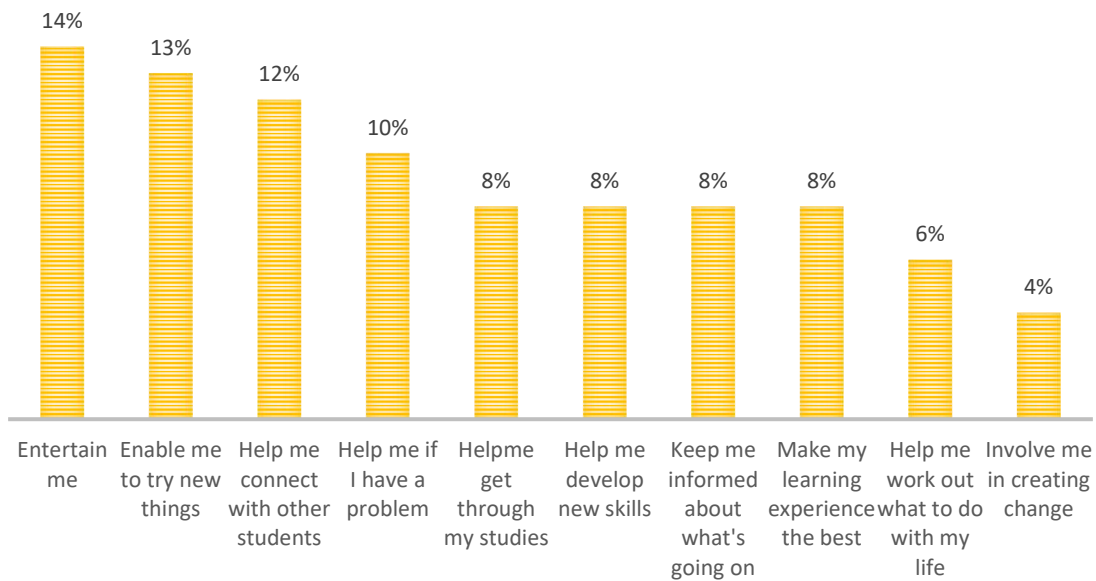


Figure 5. If your Students' Union could only do one thing for you during your time at the University of Hertfordshire, what should it be?

Recommendations

- Non-commuters are saying the SU doesn't positively contribute to their social experience, we can see from these results what events they are more interested in, we need to focus on providing more of these types of things to get them engaged and contribute to their overall student experience.
- With students not thinking it would have much impact if the activities were to be stopped, could fewer, but bigger events be provided, which would attract a great range of people.
- The social stuff is important, but a focus needs to be put on maintaining the range of opportunities/services we provide as there is a real mix of what students want from the SU.

Lifestyle

53% of students think that the university and SU should do more to help students feel safe at Hertfordshire. Non-commuting students agreeing more than commuters, which may reflect the amount of time spent on campus.

Recommendations

- A bigger security presence at night events
- Improved levels of lighting
- More regular bus services to reduce the number of people having to wait alone to get home
- Initiatives to help students be more aware, such as safety seminars or self-defence classes

Wellbeing

The University of Hertfordshire is seen to care more about student wellbeing than the Students' Union. 51% did agree the SU cared about their wellbeing, but a high percentage (38%) remained neutral to the question. A higher neutrality than disagreement suggests a lack of knowledge and an inability to accurately answer the question, rather than the perception the SU does not care. International students are more likely than UK students to feel the SU cares about their wellbeing. Of those who feel that neither the university nor the SU care about their wellbeing, 81% rated their university life between 1-6 and were more likely to be dissatisfied with their social experience.

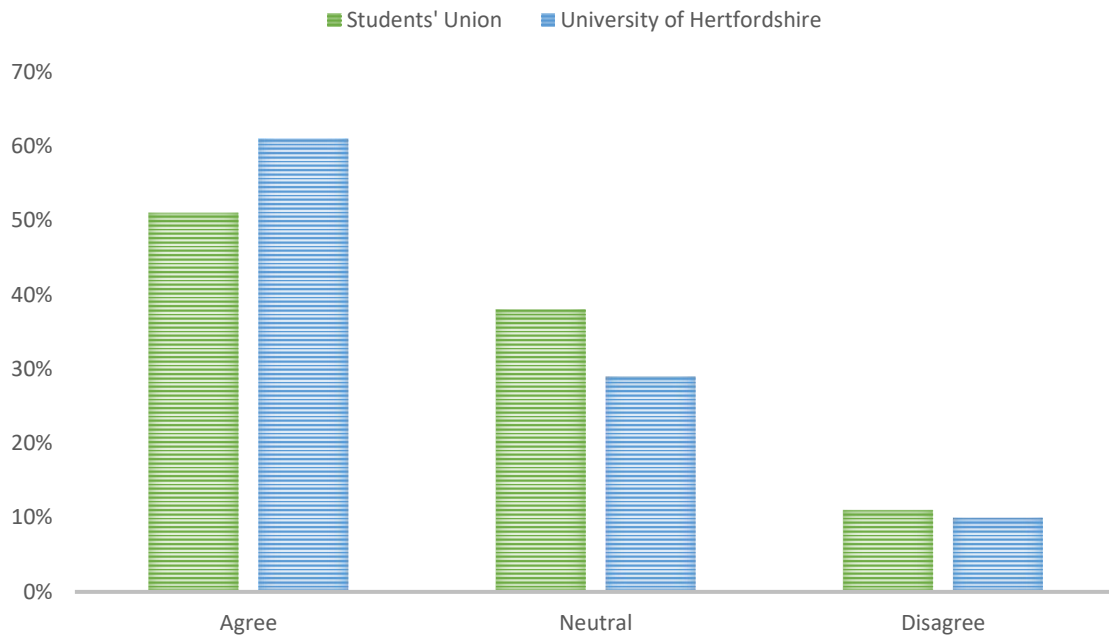


Figure 6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I feel my University cares about my wellbeing" "I feel my Students' Union cares about my wellbeing"

Recommendations

- Promote our wellbeing services and events more, focusing on the fact they are SU provided. This will inform students more of what we do, and that we very much care about their wellbeing. This is really important as knowing we care correlated with a better overall university life.