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RECORD BREAKING
STUDENTS’ UNION

5373
Nominations & votes in the YUSU elections

4000+
Summer Ball tickets sold

645
Nominations for the Love York Awards

450
Nominations for the Excellence Awards

Thanks to our members, YUSU has had a smashing year!
2017/18 was a year where universities, students and students’ unions came under regular criticism from some parts of the public and the press. Questions about the value for money of a University course. Allegations that students are ‘snowflakes’. A constant claim that Students’ Unions are compromising on free speech (ironically stated freely using a platform and audience which it has claimed we remove!). In that context it’s really important to critically self assess but also be willing to celebrate the successes and the impact we make.

There’s more work to be done on ensuring value for money at York and we need to ensure that it is the value we provide students that sets our agenda - not just the value we provide the government and the wider public.

With regard to free speech, we need to be clear that we provide student voices the chance to discuss, discover and explore a wide range of complex issues on campus. Lets not forget that YUSU’s students run and organise thousands of events each year and that YUSU funds and supports some of the most active student media groups in the country.

It is the allegation that students are ‘snowflakes’ that we must be the more vociferous in challenging. Our students are living in a very complex world. They are dealing with levels of debt that have never been experienced by previous generations. The current job market compared with rising number of UK graduates creates expectations to excel that go far beyond the pressure on those who studied before them. They experience time poverty as they have to take on work to cover their living costs, constantly feel a public scrutiny played out on social media and they do all of this whilst trying to understand what the changing global political environment means for them. Our students are at the cutting edge of navigating complexity and change in a way which should never be characterised as shying away from constructive challenge, lacking perseverance or strength of character.

We hope this year’s impact report shows that here at YUSU we try to help our students to celebrate difference and diversity. We encourage curiosity, creativity, honesty and confidence in our students to directly feedback to the University, the city and to one another. Our students are emotionally intelligent and are willing to be brave and challenge others to be so. They are focused on quality and are tenacious in asking ‘Why?’. If we keep nurturing these qualities then our impact will be long-lasting and will reach far beyond politics on-campus and out into wider society.

Lastly, a huge thanks to the staff, volunteers and representatives who have supported our students to make 2017/18 a truly special year. We look forward to working with you all in 2018/19 to create an even greater impact still.
Of the Student body at York voted in the YUSU elections.

£2876.50

Was donated by the University for the Equal Access Scholars Fund, Action for Children and IDAS throughout YUSU’s election process.

81%

Of students believe we put them at the heart of everything we do.

Was awarded by ‘Best Bar None’ to our commercial venues.

21st

Was where YUSU ranked in The Sunday Times’ Best Not-For-Profit Organisations to work for, beating Benenden, University of Sheffield and HEFCE.
Then vs. Now

In 2014, YUSU consulted students on what they wanted out of their union. They made it clear that representation is our core business, alongside providing opportunities, supporting their wellbeing and helping to build and nurture communities on and off campus.

This became the basis of our 2015-2020 strategy, and in 2015 we first asked students how we were performing on the areas above.

Now, two years before our strategy concludes, it’s time to check-in with our progress.

Representation

YUSU enables students to . . .

- Lead their academic experience: 79% (2018), 78% (2015)
- Have their voice heard: 73% (2018), 69% (2015)
- Provide feedback simply: 82% (2018), 88% (2015)

‘YUSU effectively represents all students’
2020 target 80%

- 2018: 71%
- 2015: 76%

Student Opportunities

YUSU supports students to . . .

- Take part in student opportunities that have long term value: 79% (2018), 78% (2015)
- Easily access opportunities for all: 75% (2018), 74% (2015)
- Reward and recognize extra-curricular development: 61% (2018), 63% (2015)

‘YUSU contributes positively to my personal development’
2020 target 75%

- 2018: 55%
- 2015: 57%

Community & Wellbeing

YUSU helps students to . . .

- Stay ahead: 73% (2018), 76% (2015)

‘Students will know how to access advice and support when they need it’
2020 target 90%

- 2018: 79%
- 2015: 77%

88% of students are proud to go to the University of York (8% above our 2020 target and same as in 2015)

Data collected from our annual Student Surveys.
Student Representation

Academic reps play an important role in improving the university experience for students, and work together to ensure that all students are equally represented during their time here.

486 Course Reps
29 Department Reps
3 Faculty Reps

were elected in 2017/18, bringing us a total of 518 academic reps - an 8% increase on last year!

Rewarding Excellence

This year, the annual Excellence Awards saw a record-breaking 450 nominations from students wanting to recognise the exceptional dedication of staff.

Teacher of the Year

Emma Rand - Biology
"She frequently holds open office hours to help with statistics, despite having her own work to do, and many of us biologists refer to her as the stats 'God' of the department."

Promoting Equality & Diversity

Mariana Lopez - TFTV
"Always plans exciting and interesting events for all kinds of students, teachers, parents and staff members."

Supporting the Student Voice

Paul Johnson - Sociology
"Tea with the HoD" has had a really positive impact on students feeling a part of the departmental community and feeling comfortable expressing concerns.

68% of students know how to contact their course rep, (8% increase compared to 2017)

Do you think YUSU effectively represents you?

YES

NO

2925 Responses

72%

Compared to 67% in 2016-17.

Statistic taken from The Big Student Survey 2018 Data.
Working Class and Social Mobility Officer Referendum

In 2017, a referendum was called to decide whether YUSU should introduce a new part-time officer role - a Working Class and Social Mobility Officer (WCSMO). This was in response to a lack of clear consensus during the policy consultation process.

Connor Drake and Sean Price-Regan were elected during the Elections. Despite a difficult referendum process on both sides of the debate, they are successfully building their network and organising a free and public ‘York has Class’ conference to take place in November 2018. The conference will explore socioeconomic disadvantage in the UK, and includes speakers such as Diane Reay (education lecturer at Cambridge University and author of ‘Miseducation’), Claire Ainsley (executive director of the Joseph Rowntree foundation and author of ‘The New Working Class’ amongst many others.)

“Should YUSU adopt a new Part-Time Officer position, the Working Class & Social Mobility Officer, who would represent their own network?”

```
| YES       | 495 |
| NO        | 472 |
| ABSTENTIONS | 23  |
```

Total Votes Cast: 990
Turnout: 5.1%

“Across the UK, socioeconomic disadvantage is one of the biggest dividers. This encroaches into every aspect of life, including education, mental health, and employment. We want to change this.”

YUSU Working Class & Social Mobility Officers
Exceptional Circumstances

Mia Shantana Chaudhuri - Julyan, the 2017-18 Community and Wellbeing Officer, produced a comprehensive report on exceptional circumstances, to gather information on student experiences when going through this process.

Mia’s aim was to analyse and review the results of this survey against current procedures and support to form an evidence base from which to improve the Union and University’s work in this area.

This survey had 209 respondents, and found marked inconsistencies in academic departments’ application of exceptional circumstances policy and a “lottery in signposting” rates with 48% of respondents reporting that they had not received information on support services from their supervisors when using exceptional circumstances. Calling for the findings to be taken forward as part of the University’s planned review of the exceptional circumstances policy Mia said:

“This research has been a key manifesto project. In pledging to lobby for a fairer exceptional circumstances procedure, I have been surprised by only one thing - that it has not been the policy itself that is the key issue. It’s clear from the research that it is generally well thought out. The problem is the variation in the implementation of this policy across the departments. The policy itself is broadly speaking designed to be applied in a flexible way, however this has not translated effectively into reality. Communication of the policy to students has been found to be lacking, along with supervisors’ understanding of the breadth of support services and their ability to support disclosures and signpost effectively.”
YUSU Elections

This year’s elections saw an incredible voting turnout, with 5753 votes cast. This equated to 30% of the student population - the highest turnout to date, and 5% higher than the previous year. The 2018 elections also saw the highest initial nominations ever, with 93 candidates putting their name forward to represent students.

Largest turnout ever - Number 7 in the country

This year saw the introduction of an incentivisation to vote through a charity contribution. The sabbatical officers worked with the University to agree that for every vote, they would donate 50p to the causes below. As a result of the high voting turnout, we raised £2876.50 for YUSU RAG’s beneficiaries, plus a university scheme:

- IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Service)
- Action for Children
- The Equal Access Scholars Fund which enables asylum seekers to gain access to higher education qualifications.

Staff members fed back that this promise of a charity donation meant that it was easier to engage with students in one-to-one interactions (such as YUSU on the move) and provided a powerful message for students and staff to use.
Providing and supporting student-led activities

Student opportunities at YUSU are vast - we run a variety of activities such as societies, student media groups, volunteering and fundraising opportunities and sports clubs. 2018 saw the introduction of a new strand of YUSU Student Opportunities too - YUSU Develops. YUSU Develops is the training and employability side of the union and works to help student leaders to recognize the skills they are learning via our opportunities as valuable to their future careers.

211 Societies
Up by 11% compared to 2017

167 Give it a Go Sessions

10 Student media groups

67 University Sports Clubs

151 College Sport Clubs

41% (7910) of students at York take part in at least one YUSU Student Opportunity

75% of students believe YUSU Student Opportunities are easy to access

75% of students believe YUSU Student Opportunities are easy to access
Student-led Societies

88% of students are satisfied with YUSU societies (+2% since 2017)

YUSU’s student-led societies had a successful year in 2017-18. Here are some of those victories:

The University of York Law Society
Shortlisted for Best University Society in the National Undergraduate Employability Awards

Central Hall Musical Society
Sold out their show ‘Sister Act’ at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre in Term 2!

Christian Union
‘Living For’ event was a week of 12 events that was open to all students, giving them an opportunity to explore Christianity on campus. The event had 100 volunteers, and each event had an attendance of between 70-130 students.

Swing Dance
Completed a York Dances for Sport Relief event, which raised £3,021.26. Due to its success, it has now become an annual event!

The University of York Meme Society
This new society made a huge impact in a short space of time this year, being shortlisted for Best New Society at the National Societies Awards.

Islamic Society
Participated in ‘Charity Week’, which was their second time representing University of York. ‘Charity Week’ raises money for orphans and needy children around the world, once a year for a whole week. The Islamic Society raised over £4,000 in collaboration with other societies, including Spanish Soc, Malay Soc, Arab Soc, Italian Soc and Turkish Soc for International Food Night.

Quidditch
YUSU’s Quidditch Society are 4th in the UK after finishing second at the regional tournament, meaning they have qualified for the European Quidditch Cup!

Student Media

“York student media is very good, and provides opportunities to join alumni families spanning the UK’s national media outlets”

(Student comment from the The Big Student Survey, 2018)

Student media at York had another incredible year, with many groups being nationally recognised for their contributions:

Nouse
Student Publication Awards
Shortlist - Best Sports Coverage
WON

Student Publication Awards
Best Design
Shortlisted

Oscar Bentley (Nouse)
Student Publication Awards
Best Reporter
Shortlisted

The Lemon Press
Student Publication Awards
Best Specialist
Shortlisted

YSTV
Technical Achievement & Development - NASTA
Highly Commended

Mars El-Brogy Award for Multimedia Content - NASTA
Highly Commended

Best Broadcaster - NASTA
Shortlisted
Give it a Go

64% of students said that Give it a Go is important to their student life.

Feedback sessions were incredible, with 100% of student groups who took part saying that the Give it a Go session was better than their average sessions. 91% of students who attended a session gave it a 4/5 or 5/5 rating.

In Give it a Go’s fourth year, we saw...

2443 Attendees
167 Sessions

£2641.22 Secured to support the programme

“Really great environment. Enjoyed going with friends and taking a break from exam stress.”
In 2017/18, Activities Officer Mikey Collinson created ‘The ST ARs’: an award ceremony to specifically celebrate the achievements of YUSU’s societies and their members. Mikey felt that those students running these societies, that add invaluable experiences to many students’ lives, needed to be better recognized and rewarded for their hard work.

Every aspect of the event was student led, with student leaders hosting and student groups performing and setting up the venue.

“YUSU needs to value its students and show them off. Let them lead the way.”

(Comment from the The Big Student Survey, 2018)

“I’m so delighted that this event happened, and thank you to Mikey for making it happen. It was a lovely evening.”

Winners

Faith Society of the Year
Islamic Society

Campaigning and Political Society of the Year
University of York Liberal Democrats

Special Interest Society of the Year
LGBTQ Social

Music and Performance Society of the Year
Dance Society

International Society of the Year
The Chinese Society

Games and Fandom Society of the Year
DougSoc

Arts and Cultural Society of the Year
Vegetarian and Veganism Society

Academic and Educational Society of the Year
CyberSoc

New Society of the Year
The University of York Meme Society

The Engagement Award
The Polish Society

The Community Outreach Award
African Caribbean Society

The Development Award
The Quidditch Society

The Inclusivity Award
PantSoc
The 2018 Love York Awards’ theme was ‘community’, with both staff and students celebrating the successes of student-led activities on and off campus. Sponsors included TeachFirst and First Transport.

This year the awards took place off campus at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre, instead of Central Hall.

We had a variety of high-profile presenters from around York, including York Central MP Rachael Maskell who finished the event by presenting the ‘Contribution to Student Life’ award to Samara Jones.

### York works together to . . .

#### Break stereotypes.

**Derwent AFC . . .**
Encouraged their members to support their friends’ mental health, and combat their sports’ image as encouraging ‘lad culture’.

**Darts Club . . .**
Invested in equipment, such as a stand to enable wheelchair users to compete against standing players.

**The Women’s Show by ComedySoc. . .**
Tackled the issue of a lack of women comedians by hosting ‘The Women’s Show’, with a cast of female, non-binary and transgender students.

### York works together to . . .

#### Help those in need.

**Islamic Society**
The University of York Islamic Society (ISOC) held a successful Charity Week this academic year. They raised £4,300, compared to £1,200 from last year, which all goes towards less fortunate children across the world.

**York Volunteering Committee**
This year, the YUSU Volunteering Committee has:
- Set up MAD (Make a Difference) days, offering one-off volunteering opportunities to students who don’t have time to commit to long-term projects
- Organised regular “family fun days” with the family network, for students/staff and their children
- Liaised with local and national charities, such as Post Pals, Carecent and Teach First

### York works together to . . .

#### Make sure students’ voices are heard.

**Department Reps**

- **Kia Alderson - Computer Science Department Rep**
  ‘I can’t commend her enough, she does everything one could want from a representative and more.’

- **Alvaros Lopez-Acosta - Chemistry Department Rep**
  ‘I believe Alvaros’ leadership has greatly heightened the respect that the staff in the department have for the student reps.’

**UoY Occupy**
Campaign led by students to stand in solidarity with striking lecturers

‘It was such a heartfelt and wholesome campaign that sought to [and succeeded in a lot of respects] foster solidarity and communication between students and staff, as well as between students themselves.’

**York STAR**
STAR’s campaigning resulted in the two Equal Access scholarships that the University offers to students who would otherwise be unable to attain a university education. They are committed to supporting asylum seekers and refugees, and have run campaigns to bring them to our University.
Winners

**Academic Representative of the Year**
Aaron Bhalla

**Campaign of the Year**
Darts Against Diabetes

**Committee of the Year**
supported by Endsleigh
York Community Consulting

**Highly Commended**
The Douglas Adams Society (DougSoc)

**Outstanding Contribution to Student Life**
Samara Jones

**The Student Media Award**
Edwin Barnes

**The Best Events**
The Best Event for Widening Participation
Comedy Society Women’s Show
The Best Small Scale Community Event
Lecturers’ Strike Debate: Should students support the strike?
The Best Large Scale Entertainment Event
The York Showdown

**Contribution to Student Well-Being**
Aisling Musson

**The Diversity and Inclusivity Award**
Connor Drake

**The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Award**
supported by First Buses
Omar Shahryar - A Shoe Full of Stars

**Outstanding Leadership Award**
supported by TeachFirst
Sarin Zaveri

**The College Sport Award**
Derwent College Athletic Football Club

**The Extra Mile Awards**
Union President Alex Urquhart
Peter Redshaw
Activities Officer Mikey Collinson:
Kendra Rabbitts
Academic Officer Julian Porch
Connor Drake
Community and Wellbeing Officer Mia Shantana
Chaudhuri-Julyan
Lucas North
York Sport President Laura Carruthers
Francis Overton-Eccles

**The YuFund Fundraising Award**
Islamic Society

**Society of the Year**
Feminist Society

**The Volunteering Award**
OpenMinds

**The Honorary Achievement for Outstanding Contribution to the City of York**
Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
NIGHTLINE
A confidential listening service run by students, for students. Volunteers have taken 654 calls in 2017–18.

NIGHTSAFE
Support and signpost vulnerable students on YUSU club nights, as well as other big events throughout the year.

“Each shift is so rewarding (even with the amount of vomit we deal with) and being able to get to know the volunteers that are in NightSafe has been a great opportunity to meet new people.”
Tierney Holloway, NightSafe volunteer

KEEN
(Kids enjoy exercise now!)
A service that offers free interactive sports sessions for children who have Special Education Needs or disabilities.

Shortlisted for three awards:
🏆 The Tab’s Society of the Year Award
🏆 The York Active Award
🏆 Student Volunteering Awards.
2017-18 saw many of York’s top athletes compete at a regional, national and international level, due to the scholarship awarded to them by YUSU.

The scholarship programme supports students financially, allowing them to travel to competitions and purchase any equipment they require to be successful. It also gives them access to additional support whether that be through strength & conditioning training to improve their physiology or sport science workshops to improve their diet.

The programme bridges the gaps that students are missing to be able to compete at the highest level.

Emma Albery
York Sport Union cricket scholar
Was selected to represent Middlesex County First Team

“I’m very excited for the season with both UYWCC and Middlesex. Being supported by the York Sport Union Scholarship over the winter has meant I can travel between York and Middlesex for my training. This gave me the opportunity to train with both the University Women’s Cricket team and Middlesex.”

Joseph Smithers
York Sport Union kendo scholar
Finished in the top 8 at the French International Open Competition as a member of the GB team

“For me one of the biggest impacts has been the huge interest and support from YUSU in publicising my results and helping put Kendo on the map in University of York Sport. Alongside, the funding and support, being both a Santander and York Sport Union Scholar has pushed me even further to excel in order to prove that not just York is Black and Gold, but that British Kendo is too.”

Rob Stewart
York Sport Union powerlifting scholar
Came 5th at the British Nationals in November 2017

“The York Sport Union Scholarship has improved my commitment and enjoyment of the sport.”
2017-18 was a historical year for The University of York Darts club (UYDC). The club was determined to make their sport as inclusive as possible, by purchasing specialised wheelchair access equipment to be used for practise and matches.

The team collaborated with the chair of the World Disability Darts Association (WDDA), Russ Strobel, who designed the ‘Wildfire 137’ stand that allows a sitting player to compete against a standing one, making the game more accessible. Alongside this purchase, the club have created an etiquette guideline document for its members to advise on how they should act when competing against a sitting player, stressing the club’s no tolerance rule for the use of offensive language and behaviour.

The purchasing of this stand also enabled the club to host the first accessible North of England Regional darts event. The club also worked closely with the University of Lancaster to run the UDUK Big Weekender (a national darts event) by loaning their ‘Wildfire 137’ stand for the games.

The club have also worked with campus venues (including YUSU run bars) to ensure that dart boards are able to be easily lowered if a wheelchair user wishes to practise there.

The Darts Club also raised over £2000 for JDRF the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation which supports young people suffering with Type 1 diabetes. Highlights of the ‘Darts against Diabetes’ campaign included many members running the Yorkshire 10 Mile and the club organising a “premier league predictor” - all of which helped to raise funds and increase awareness.

Spotlight on:
University of York Darts Club

“It is the club’s hope that the efforts demonstrate what can be done in the world of University Darts and inspire other darts clubs and societies around the country to follow the example set out.”

(Love York Award nomination submission, 2018)
College Sport

In 2017-18, £37,000 was invested into the college sport system by YUSU. This, coupled with the appointment of a new student staff member to co-ordinate college sport, made this year a successful one for these teams.

Is College Sport important to your student life?

65%

YES

NO

College Varsity 2018

College Varsity, an annual competition between Durham, the UK’s biggest and longest established College Sport setup, and York, saw York take their second home win making the overall score 3-2 to Durham!

450
York students took part

900
Students in total

13
Sports

York
73

Durham
55

21
Volunteering

In 2017-18, 818 students volunteered 10,169 hours of their time as part of one YUSU’s 13 volunteering projects. This is the equivalent of over one year.

Our RAG officers have worked extremely hard this past year, putting on jaw-dropping events and activities in the name of fundraising.

In 2017/18, RAG raised £57,533.18*

for YUSU and College RAG beneficiaries.

*This includes money raised through college RAG activity.

2017-18 also saw RAG become further embedded into the other work we do. For example, RAG’s hard work at election time significantly contributed to the high voting turnout - as they tirelessly promoted the message that for every vote, the University would contribute 50p to our beneficiaries.
YUSU’s RAG activities have also gained a lot of press attention, both on-campus and locally. Most notably, RAG’s bungee jump on Campus East was covered by both Nouse and the York Press which helped the activity to raise £6,549.

This year, it was the first time a YUSU President ran a marathon - all in the name of RAG! Alex completed the race in just under 5 hours and raised a huge £1,145.79 for these two wonderful charities.

Jailbreak
Eight teams and 24 students took part in this year’s Jailbreak. The teams raised an impressive £5,007.05 for Kidscan, which will go towards developing treatments that are less damaging to the bodies of children and young people diagnosed with cancer.

Treks and Challenges
This year, four students took on the Everest Base Camp Trek to raise lifesaving funds for the charity, Action Against Hunger: a global humanitarian organisation which takes decisive action again the causes and effects of hunger.

Together they raised £6,240.37 for this great cause.
Introducing YUSU’s newest strand of Student Opportunities

‘YUSU student opportunities have positively contributed to my personal development’

YUSU's Training and Employability Strategy 2018-2019 was launched in January, setting out three key objectives to guide the organisation’s work in this area.

Over the last 6 months a considerable amount of progress has been made in embedding the strategy into the organisation’s work.

**In 2018 we:**

- Launched the YUSU Develops brand to standardise the presentation of training and related materials.
- Aligned our employability framework with that of the University’s Careers Service, in particular its newly devised York Strengths framework.
- Created and launched the first of a suite of online training modules for students to complete (GDPR).

Additionally, YUSU has overhauled the way training is given to student leaders within the Student Opportunities department, delivering two day-long conferences and supporting sessions to approximately 350 students. From the feedback for these sessions, 71% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the training positively contributed to their personal development.

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**Results:**

- **Agree:** 2925 responses
- **Disagree:** 3% increase compared to 2017.
Our Advice and Support Centre dealt with 645 cases between August 2017 and July 2018 - an 18% increase compared to 2016/17, and 41% increase since 2015/16.

There have been particular increases in students getting in touch about:

**Academic-related complaints**
Up 71% on last year
(The increase will in part be due to the industrial action)

**Exceptional circumstances**
Up 72%

**Academic Misconduct**
Up 96%
Bigger, better events for students

Freshers’ Festival (formerly ‘Campus Takeover’) received an 82% satisfaction rating, +43% in satisfaction since 2017!

Event Satisfaction

Freshers’ Fair: 91%
Viking Raid: 92%
Comedy Night: 93%

Social Media
At a Glance

17,000 Followers
12,100 Followers
3,600 Followers
Summer Ball 2018

This year saw the largest number of tickets sold for Summer Ball, with 3634 students attending!

This year saw more student groups get involved than ever before, with two student-led stages. Feedback from students about this was extremely positive:

“What did you most enjoy about Summer Ball?”

“Beautiful set up, bands from the University were good”

“I thought the set up was fabulous. Each new place there was somewhere to go, new music to listen to etc.”

62% of students were satisfied with the event.

Elections 2018

This year saw a different approach to elections, with a changed emphasis from ‘career development’ to current issues, community enhancement and empowerment of the students.

The ‘Your Union Belongs to You’ message reinforced the idea that YUSU is run for, with and by students and this, coupled up with the donation incentive, resulted in a bigger and better election than previously.

Social media engagement doubled from last year’s elections, with particular interest in content addressing previous actions to tackle mental health provisions (e.g. the Graham report).

- Top tweet for February was an elections tweet introducing the new Sabb team which gained nearly 10,000 impressions
- Results night on twitter gained 85,000 impressions
- Final day of voting gained 40,000 impressions on twitter
- 500,000 impressions on twitter, along with 30k profile visits
- #YUSUElections trended both on the debate night and the Results night
- 17,606 video views related to Elections on Facebook
- Facebook reach of 52,000 over the elections period.
Delivering high-quality services for students
This year saw YUSU’s commercial services take on new challenges. We’ve won awards, expanded our venues and tested out innovative ways of engaging with our students.

**Inclusivity**

All of the student staff at our venues are paid the National Living Wage, regardless of age.

YUSU venues have translated the food menus in The Courtyard and The Glasshouse into Mandarin to improve our international students’ experience in our bars.

CS launched a Student-Staff culture club, giving our student staff a forum to suggest changes and improvements to the venues they work in.

**Protecting the environment**

A plastic straw takes 200 years to decompose! That’s why YUSU venues only provide fully compostable straws.

YUSU venues achieved Green Impact Gold for the 4th year running. Now we’re onto working towards the Platinum award.

**Supporting students**

In this past year, YUSU:

- Invested in and installed a new state-of-the-art lighting rig in The Glasshouse, which will be used for student-led activities such as karaoke, open-mic nights and fundraisers.
- Hosted 763 student-led events across the year, including Freshers’ Week and Welcome Week for the GSA.
- In total, £925 was discounted off drinks as a result of voting in the YUSU elections, in a bid to secure more voters.
- Rebranded The Lounge to become the home of student-led events with the help of 2017/18 Activities Officer, Mikey Collinson.

**Customer Service**

The latest round of Mystery Shopper results were YUSU’s best yet, with The Courtyard scoring 96%, The Glasshouse scoring 94% and The Kitchen@Alcuin scoring 86%!

95% of students are satisfied with The Courtyard and The Kitchen@Alcuin, praising their helpful and friendly staff, variety of food options and reasonable prices.

YUSU venues were awarded the Best Bar None Award, achieving its Silver rating.

This year YUSU’s bars sold 323,874 drinks in total, with 36,126 of those being cocktails!
In the 2017/18 academic year YUSU had an income of £3,698,309 with an expenditure of £3,699,585.

In 2017/18, YUSU paid student staff a huge: £411,209.

FINANCE

Income

Commercial Services 49%
Block Grant 32%
Other Grants & Funding 2%
YUSU Events & Marketing 17%

Expenditure

Commercial Services 50%
Student Opportunities 13%
Wellbeing & Community 4%
Representation & Democracy 8%
Events & Marketing 14%
Central Resources 11%

In addition YUSU acted as custodian of funds and supported clubs, societies, fundraising and volunteering groups to £1,391,903.

Student Activities Central support costs £127,718
Sport Central support costs £80,283
Society & Volunteering grants £67,508
Sports clubs grants £85,238

We are a national living wage employer.
While we are really proud of everything that’s been achieved by the hard work of our students, volunteers, staff, officers and trustees in the last year we also know that not everything went to plan. We are telling you this because you support our charity and so you have a right to know. You also might be able to help us to achieve even more in future.

**Increasing Storage Space**

We wanted to make real progress on increasing the amount of storage space and flat floor space for our student societies. We submitted reports to University management for the 4th year running and the Officer team even dressed up in Christmas costumes and delivered a huge card to University management signed by hundreds of students asking for better facilities for student societies, volunteering groups, College Committees and sports teams. At our YUSU Annual Meeting students asked why the University has empty buildings on campus such as the old Environment building and the old Unity Health premises but there is still not sufficient storage and flat floor performance space to support student life on campus. Despite these efforts to clearly articulate the needs of students we still haven’t had a response from the University that addresses the problem. We will keep lobbying on this issue because we know our students want a response and want meaningful action.

**Understanding the international student experience**

We wanted to do more to develop our understanding of the international student experience. A lot of our students come from all over the world and they invest huge sums of money into study and life at York. We feel that it’s essential to do more to understand their experience at York, to help them integrate with and participate in all aspects of student life and to celebrate the international make up of our student body. We want this to be articulated in international student strategy for the University and the Union so that it is sustained and embedded. We will be asking the University, the International Student Association and all our students to support this as an essential part of their future strategy.

**Evaluating the policy process**

We wanted to engage our students in shaping policy that could improve students’ lives but in order to do this we needed a policy process that was independently led and had the trust of our students. While we know we made a range of changes, ran campaigns and implemented new initiatives based on student views and opinions, we know our policy process remains a challenge. The changing nature of democracy is part of this challenge – we previously used referendums fairly frequently and yet we know that there is a growing question about the extent to which referendums are an effective way of making policy. We want to create a policy process that prioritises effectively so we are facilitating high quality debate and delivering achievable outcomes, that create a mandate for students and the Union to work together on changes, that everyone has confidence in. Our policy process seems inconsistent, perhaps vulnerable to hearing the loudest voices rather than the best quality ideas. We hope our students will look at this with us in 2018/19 and find innovative, accessible, impact focused ways to generate policy which is fit for purpose in the current environment.

**Closing YUSU Shop**

We took the decision to close our shop. The YUSU Shop had been suffering declining sales year on year similar to the ‘convenience market’ on high streets up and down the country. We felt that the service carried significant risk for YUSU given the high rental premiums, low margins and declining sales and that the shop could jeopardize other areas of YUSU work if we didn’t do anything about it. The service offered limited value and impact to the critical mass of our students, not least because there was a supermarket almost immediately next door. We were really sad to see the shop close and hope to use the resource and time that this has saved to look at other ventures and activities that are financially sustainable and deliver even greater impact on students’ lives.
The RON Campaign

One of our students ran a Re-open nominations or ‘RON’ campaign last year asking students not to elect a new president and instead open for new nominations and run another election. It was surprising to see the campaign but positive to see students using their democratic right to pursue a new vote. Not all elections have an option to ‘Re-open nominations’ but students’ unions have had this option for many many years in the belief that it is fair and more democratic to give students the right to vote for ‘RON’. The campaign generated some really impressive campaign materials that were fun and thought provoking and stimulated many students to talk about what changes they would want to see in how they engage with and work with their union. Despite an impressive campaign they were ultimately unsuccessful. YUSU officers and staff met with the students who ran the campaign after the election period to try to gather their ideas and observations about YUSU and student life as we were keen to learn from their ideas, understand their motivations and get feedback from the campaign.

Developing our digital culture

We have really struggled to provide a digital first culture. We know students are very technologically literate and that a digital first approach will better support our communications, be more efficient for YUSU and will better meet the needs and behaviours of students. While we are making some modest changes such as online payments for clubs and societies, upgrades to our web technology and some extra IT expertise and capacity to meet the immediate demands of students we know that we need a much more significant and long term investment into digital in order to reach the standard we would hope for. Our trustees will be looking at how we can prioritise the necessary investment into our digital strategy over the coming year.

Winning Roses

Finally Roses. Europe’s largest sport varsity run by the students’ unions in York and Lancaster. Let’s be honest, the score line was not what we wanted. We went to Lancaster hoping to compete and earn only the second ever away win in the history of the tournament and we were a long way off. Whilst the performance of the York athletes and supporters on and off the pitch was excellent and promoted the positive benefits and inclusivity of sport, the scores at the close of play were not what we wanted. We have started planning for Roses 2019 which will be back on home soil and really hope that we can return the Carter Jones trophy back to its rightful home here in York. We look forward to the support of the University, our students and all the community to claw our way back from last year’s disappointing result.