The

UNION

University of Portsmouth

UPSU

Students' Union

Student at the Heart of Developing Professional Services: Perspective of a SU Officer

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RAISE Student Committee Member

Agenda

- Overview of the Union

- What student partnership means to us & our commitments

- Students as partners in action

- The typical student expectations of professional services (PS)

- My story as a university student

- The role of PS staff in ensuring a unique student experience

- Barriers to PS development and its impact on student partnership

- Developing student partnerships: Recommendations

- Recap & Conclusion

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What is UPSU?

- The University of Portsmouth Students' Union is a registered charity

- Seperate from UoP - Here to work with and for Students!

- UPSU is led by the 5 Elected Officers, voted for by UoP students.

- Three Key Charitable Aims:
    - Representation
    - Development
    - Welfare

- UPSU hosts a variety of activities and facilities including:
    - Student Development - Skills and Societies
    - Academic Representation including Course Reps
    - Advice Service
    - Dedicated Insights Team

Find out more at **www.upsu.net**

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The Union

The University of Portsmouth Students' Union

The Elected Officers

Natasha Layley
Welfare Officer

Dom Owen
Democracy and Campaigns Officer

Temidayo Dosomnu
Development Officer

Jade Underwood
Learning Experience Officer

Ayoola Johnson
Academic Representation Officer

What is does Student Partnership means to us?

- Partnership means shared responsibility – for identifying the problem or opportunity for improvement, for devising a solution and – importantly – for co-delivery of that solution.

- For this to work, the partnership must be genuine and there must be meaningful dispersal of power.

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Students as Partners: UPSU commitments?

- Our student partnerships are authentic, inclusive and reciprocal.

- Partnerships are a form of community building and empowerment.

- Give space within student communication channels to promote partnership opportunities.

- Recognise the contribution made by students through student volunteering awards, micro-credentials, and digital badging.

- Support students' participation by working closely with university services.

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Students as Partners in Action

- Course & Faculty Representatives

- Student Voice Assistants

- Student societies and sport groups

- Student Legal Advisors

- PGM/BAME Ambassadors

- Peer Assisted Learning Leaders

- Library Assistants

- International Student Ambassadors

- Elected Officers

Students as Partners in Action

In November 2021 UPSU launched the Pilot Student Outcomes Project with the aim to:
- Increase student satisfaction
- Drive up student outcomes
- Directly contribute to UoP strategic imperatives and success measures: NSS, TEF and B3

To deliver this, the Pilot project also identified co-creation as a key theme. As a result of this
- Course Reps and staff collaborated on 12 co-creation projects at course and school level
- UPSU and students inputted into the University portfolio review assisting with enable workshops
- UPSU worked with 2 schools in Science and Health to improve graduate job knowledge and create a stronger sense of community

As a result of the pilot the University invested more into the project to extend it until 2024.

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The Typical Student Expectation of Professional Services

- A major expectation for every students is to graduate successfully.

- Alongside this is the need to find friends, feel confident and above all, feel part of the course & institution. As such it is expected that:

  - There is the availability of academic resources, support with study skills and employability, support with finance, wellbeing among others.

  - Student services are immediately available and responsive when needed

  - That the services offered can be tailored to meet individual specific needs.

  - That the services can prepare them for active participation and increase the diversity of student experience.

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My Story…

The Role of PS Staff in Ensuring a Unique Student Experience

- Guide students through the use of their services.

- Aid students sense of belonging

- Help students navigate through complicated administrative processes and procedures

- Ensure that they are easily accessible and readily available

- Promote an effect academic, emotional and social connection with the institution at cultural level

- Contributes to the understanding and appreciation of ethnic differences, racial or otherwise.

- Prepare students for active participation in society

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Barriers to PS Development
And its impact on Student Partnership

- Communication

- Lack of creativity and innovation

- Lack of existential relationship between services and academic staff

- The distribution of power and responsibilities

- Conflicting priorities between students and PS staffs

- Student diverse needs and the Intersectionalities within student identities

- The imbalance of value & recognition

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Barriers to PS Development: The Imbalance of Value and Recognition

- As PS staff, do you feel undervalued by academic/senior staff in your institution?

- Are the contributions made by PS staff largely ignored by institutions because it is difficult to isolate the individual role in achieving improved student outcomes?

- Are there mechanisms in place in which colleagues can share good practice or cite examples where individuals have gone beyond the call of duty in helping others, be they students, academics or fellow PS staff?

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Developing Student Partnerships:
10 Recommendations

- Students as co-creators: Students should play an active role in the decision on how they are supported.

- Seek collaborative opportunities with students and explore model that works in terms of building effective partnership and teamwork with students

- Analysis and redesign current state of training and areas that requires prioritization and development.

- Create feedback mechanisms for students to share best practices and areas for improvement of institutional services.

- Shift the focus from 'staff as experts' to 'staff as facilitators'

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Developing Student Partnerships:
10 Recommendations

- Use of modern technology should be exploited in a consistent manner and implemented in a coordinated and targeted means.

- Create a framework to help PS colleagues understand how they should approach their work e.g., Training of PS at Edinburgh University

- Work more closely with academic staff to signpost clearly the support services available to students.

- Necessitate the importance of tailoring supports to specific community of students e.g., low-income backgrounds, students with disability, non-traditional, international etc

- Review, reflect and reward.

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Recap & Conclusion...

- Student engagement and transition relies heavily on the institution transformation of PS

- Partnership should be an ethos not an activity

- Partnership activities are professional development opportunities for both staff and students.

- PS must have an organic nature of change

- The student services value needs greater recognition, support and development in the interests of all students. This is one way in which institutions can embody an ethos and culture of partnership in practice.

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