

# The Big Impact



## Highlights for 2019/20

## Introduction

The 2019/20 academic year saw lots of change – not just for us at Greenwich Students' Union (GSU), but the University, nationally and internationally.

For us at GSU, our Big Plan was due to end July 2020, so we started working on a new strategy in Term 1 to launch for 2020/21. However, this, alongside many other things, had to be paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the challenges this has brought, we feel that the impact of our Big Plan in 2019/20 is still positive and something to be proud of. We hope you can see through this report the strength of our growth over the last three years and appreciate our candidness about where there is still room for improvement.

As we manoeuvred the SU offer in line with the guidance in the Spring and Summer term, GSU Officers – outgoing and incoming – and GSU staff worked on a plan that would steer the Union through a year of unpredictability, whilst we recovered from the impact of the changes brought on by the pandemic. To do this, we have kept the themes, values and goals of our Big Plan - we can still empower students to change the world and have a great time at Greenwich.

To see our plan for the 2020/21, visit our website at [greenwichsu.co.uk/bigplan](https://greenwichsu.co.uk/bigplan).



## Data and insights taken from...

### *Student Priorities research and vote (November 2019-January 2020)*

Work led by Representation team with the student community as part of our Democracy Review.

### *GSU Staff Survey (February 2019)*

Internal survey run through National Union of Students (NUS); taken by full-time and part-time Union staff.

### *GSU Union Survey (April-May 2019)*

Annual survey open for all Greenwich students to take online.

### *Covid-19 Impact Survey (April-May 2019)*

Open for all Greenwich students to take online to specifically ask them about their welfare and needs during the Covid-19 lockdown.

### *University Stakeholders Survey (May-June 2020)*

Internal survey sent to staff across Faculties, services, campuses and even other Unions (GK Unions and Kent Union).

### *Student Group Leaders Survey (May-June 2020)*

Internal survey sent to students who run our Sports clubs and Societies.

### *Academic Representation and Communities Survey (June 2020)*

Internal survey sent to Programme Representatives within Faculties and Academic Society leaders.

### *Building Better Communities - End of Year Impact Report 2019/20 (June 2020)*

Report by the Avery Hill Campus Engagement Manager about work done at Avery Hill to support students and campus activity.

### *Advice Service reports (ongoing)*

Monthly reports from our Advisers about the engagement with the service from our members.

Please note, some of these surveys during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this is referenced throughout the report.

Throughout the report, we will refer to ourselves as the Students' Union, SU, Union, or GSU.



## Representing You

*Academic advice* continues to be the most used Union Service and the one that students think is the most important one that we offer (85% agreed this was important or very important). This is compared to financial advice, Clubs and Societies, volunteering, social spaces and entertainment, and campaigning.

The top three services also stayed the same from last year to this:

### 2018/19

Academic advice (96%)

Representing your academic interests to the University (96%)

Welfare advice (95%)<sup>1</sup>

### 2019/20

Academic advice (85%)

Representing your academic interests to the University (84%)

Financial advice and Welfare advice (both 80%)

We believe the percentage decreases from last year in these are because of the shift in services due to Covid-19. Students were forced away from some of our services due to the lockdown from March this year and may have led students to opt for more personal/home-based solutions to any issues they were having, rather than focusing or caring about SU (or other) services. However, there has been increased use of the Advice Service since March; details about this are later on in the report.

This priority listing is slightly different in the context of Covid-19. In our Covid-19 Impact Survey, most students told us they were worried about the impact of Covid-19 on their education, secondary to the impact of their home life, financial matters and their mental health.

### Top services in terms of importance to students:

### Three-year comparison

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Academic advice	95%	96%	85%
Representing your academic interests to the University	95%	96%	84%
Welfare advice	N/A	95%	80%
Financial advice	91%	94%	80%



## Activity: understanding members are and their needs on each campus

The Avery Hill campus has been a continuous focus for SU. Officer Teams have been lobbying the University since 2016 to enhance the campus and provide more activity for the student community and ensure parity of student experience on that campus compared to Greenwich and Medway.

As a result of this lobbying, the 'Building Better Communities' project began in September 2019. The University provide funding for GSU to recruit a Campus Engagement Manager to run a programme of activity to facilitate community development.

Some key successes of the project this year are:

- ◆ A significant overall increase in democratic participation and feedback opportunities from Avery Hill-associated students.
- ◆ Voting within the FEHHS Faculty Officer Elections in Autumn respectively increased to 118 voters from 77 in 2018/19 and 51 in 2017/18.
- ◆ Participation from Avery Hill students in the GSU Student Priorities research increased from 97 students in 2018/19 to 243 in 2019/20. In the voting element of the project, participation of Avery Hill students increased overall from 251 last year to 399 this year.
- ◆ Increased provision of weekend and evening activity and support service for students through our Advice Service.
- ◆ The launch of GSU's 'Avery Student Community' webpage and associated 'Campus Creators' project.
- ◆ The first trial of GSU's 'Winter Celebrations' project, supporting students throughout the holiday period who were staying on campus with activities and care packages.
- ◆ The student participation levels of student-led activity on campus, facilitated by the 'Building Better Communities' project.
- ◆ We had 1,643 different engagements from Avery Hill students in GSU activity (as of March 2020), across 1,065 individual students (evenly divided between campus residents and students who study on site). This figure includes engagement with student activities, democratic processes, feedback opportunities, as well as the interventions organised as part of this project.

In addition, a successful extension of the project has taken place following the Covid-19 pandemic, including the delivery of a pastoral care project for those at risk of isolation within University accommodation, and a number of digital, remote community-building activities.

Our Campus Engagement Manager worked with the University Accommodation team from the start of lockdown to support students who were still living in halls and/or utilising the campus. They identified roughly 1,300 students who would need contacting, and trained up a team of 16 student staff members (previously bar staff, baristas, receptionists) to call each student

to check on their wellbeing, residential status, recommend some isolation activities and provide information and resources to make their experience better. A list of further recommendations for University consideration have been made to continue the programme, continue developing The Dome to become a better social space, further security enhancements on campus and enhanced support for Faculty of Education, Health and Human Sciences students who are based at that campus.

## Student Priorities

Alongside this, our annual work on Student Priorities asks students what they would like to see changed per campus, as well as Academic Changes, Support To Me, and Opportunities To Me.

From research conducted with 399 students in November 2019, a list of priorities were put to the student community to rank. Over the course of December 2019 - January 2020, 531 students voted on which priorities they wanted the Students' Union to work on to effectively represent their needs across various categories related to their student experience.

Below are the priorities for the past two academic years since we've begun the Student Priorities research.

### 2019/20 (research conducted in 2018/19)

#### Academic Changes

*Top priority:* Assessment guidance improvement  
*Second priority:* Personal tutor support

#### Support To Me

*Top priority:* Mental health and wellbeing  
*Second priority:* Employability fairs and career events

#### Opportunities To Me

*Top priority:* Course based social events  
*Second priority:* Socialisation and integration

#### Greenwich Campus

*Top priority:* Widen activities  
*Second priority:* Social spaces development

#### Avery Hill Campus

*Top priority:* Placement student support  
*Second priority:* Dome space investment

#### Medway Campus

*Top priority:* University bus times and quality  
*Second priority:* Improving student spaces

### 2020/21 (research conducted in 2019/20)

#### Academic Changes

*Top priority:* Communication with Lecturers  
*Second priority:* Timetabling of lectures

#### Support To Me

*Top priority:* Job/Internship Opportunities during studies  
*Second priority:* Assignments and academic skills

#### Opportunities To Me

*Top priority:* Course based social events  
*Second priority:* Social events and spaces

#### Greenwich Campus

*Top priority:* Development of social/study spaces  
*Second priority:* Vary food options and offers

#### Avery Hill Campus

*Top priority:* Cheaper food options on campus  
*Second priority:* Cheaper car parking

#### Medway Campus

*Top priority:* Bus timetable and prices review  
*Second priority:* Accessible and promoted social events



## Influencing the University

A majority of our University stakeholders (88%) rated their relationship with the SU as good (*1% increase on last year*), and 85% said there is strong working relationship between the SU and the University (*9% decrease on last year*).

This year, we asked them how they thought we handled the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to supporting students, and 82% responded that it was good or very good.

This year, 85% of our key University Stakeholders agree that the information and insights provided by the SU have directly influenced the University's activities, strategies and policies (*8% decrease on last year*). 9% neither agreed or disagreed (*2% increase on last year*).

82% rated the impact of our work as "High" (*4% decrease from last year*).

There have been some decreases in ranking levels since last year; we feel this is due to our work with the University over the last couple of years of the Big Plan, and the impact and influence we've had in that time. Positive strides have been made in a number of areas, so there is less for us to challenge and push for change on. We regularly make recommendations across the University on various schemes of work, e.g. Faculty policies, campus engagement, National Student Survey. In instances where these aren't taken on board, the full impact of them cannot be realised. We also believe there are some stakeholders we've started new relationships this year that may not attribute our work with GSU itself. We opened out our University Stakeholder Survey to more University staff this year to gauge their level of understanding of GSU and what we do. The results show that we have to continue to improve understanding of our role with the University community, and this is included in planning for our work next year.

Three-year comparison	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Rating of the relationship with the SU as good	74%	87%	88%
There is strong working relationship between the SU and the University	84%	94%	85%
The information and insights provided by the SU have directly influenced the University's activities, strategies and policies	85%	93%	85%
Rating of impact of the work of the SU as good	74%	86%	82%





**There have been a number of wins also spearheaded by our GSU Officer Team. These include:**

- ◆ A range of events and activity for Black History Month, including an exhibition that featured current students and University staff, and Breaking Barriers, and networking and speaking event that featured the University's Chancellor and Vice Chancellor.
- ◆ Campaigning with the University on the National Student Survey, providing induction talks and shoutouts in lectures.
- ◆ Supporting job prospects for students through the Student Ambassadors scheme.
- ◆ Championing the Libraries' academia support programme to members.
- ◆ Working with University to open a dedicated Faith room in Dreadnought, start a regular Faith Forum in support with Student Academic Services, and supporting a bid for a full-time Chaplin.
- ◆ Encouraging collaboration between the Employability & Careers Service and BAME Leadership.
- ◆ Increase in services for the Greenwich to Medway bus following Officer and student consultation, ensuring that every student needing to travel could travel.
- ◆ Built relationships with Head of Departments across the University and increasing awareness with academics to make them champions of the SU.
- ◆ Henry Setter, GSU President and the University Vice-Chancellor made a video Q&A in March 2020 to address students' questions about University service in light of Covid-19 (has 319 views).
- ◆ Lobbying for and influencing key policies for students during Covid-19 lockdown including early release from halls contracts, clarity of hardship funds and no detriment policy to support exams and assessments.

Whilst there have been some decreases in the ranking levels from our Stakeholders this year, there have been a range of wins with the University. When asked "What is the best thing the Students' Union has achieved this year", they responded:

- ◆ "Development of Academic Communities."
- ◆ "Representation of and communication to student since the move to a virtual campus."
- ◆ "Avery Hill Projects."
- ◆ "Contributions to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Attainment Gap project."
- ◆ "Student Assembly Elections."
- ◆ "Working with Vice Chancellor and in partnership with the University on difficult issues such as staff strikes, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and the Covid-19 response."
- ◆ "Listening to stakeholder feedback."
- ◆ "Campaigning for No Detriment policy."
- ◆ "Improved Welcome Week Fair."
- ◆ "Celebrating diversity of students."

# greenwich students' union



## Wider Influence

For the third year running, most students (66%) want to influence and be consulted about their course. This number has fallen 14% over the last two years as a result of our representation work across the University – we feel the positive strides we’ve made in representation work and working with students and representatives to make improvements in Faculty has reduced the amount of students wanting to be consulted about their course.

Students said they also would like to influence the opportunities that are available to them (50%) and academic organisation (45%) as the next most popular categories. Against last year, 5% and 6% lower respectively; again, a result of the influence of our representation work.

### What students want to influence and be consulted on

### Three-year comparison

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Their course	80%	70%	66%
Opportunities available to them	59%	55%	50%
Academic organisation	57%	51%	45%

### Activity: Promote, empower and equip students as leaders and representatives.

Our Academic Rep Network (ARN) consists of Faculty Officers and Programme Representatives in each Faculty and has been running for the past four years. The SU’s work to support Reps with training and development has growth over those years. Once they are selected, Reps are put through a robust training programme, and have a number of full-time staff at GSU to call on for information, support and further training throughout the year.

Our Reps have told us this year that they were satisfied of very satisfied with our training (66%). 15% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and the most useful aspect of our support to them was Training (76% found this useful), followed by networking opportunities, newsletters, drop-in sessions with staff and check-in phone calls.

70% of them said that skills they had developed as a Rep2 made them more employable in future, and skills they gained included:

- Confidence in addressing issues and having a voice
- Public speaking in formal meetings
- Leadership and teamwork skills
- Communication and organisation skills



Some commented about their experience this year as Reps, saying:

**“Overall, it was a positive experience and a good chance to talk to others and represent them in meeting with tutors.”**

**“[Highlight has been] Working with lovely people and observing some great teaching and inspiring experiences.”**





## Employability

Amongst our student staff:

77% of staff would recommend the Union as a great place to work. *7% less than last year – we feel this could be down to some reduction in work availability in some areas of the Union this year.*

86% say they achieve a good work life balance working with us. *1% more than last year.*

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
That would recommend the Union as a great place to work	67%	84%	77%
That say they achieve a good work life balance	77%	85%	86%

Our student staff told us the best thing about working for us was:

**“The sense of community. I feel like I am a part of a community where I feel good and the people I work with are really nice.”**

**“Very flexible working hours which works around my course.”**

**“Management is honest with me about available hours and what future hours looks like.”**

**“Diversity, great care for employees, friendly environments.”**

**“The support we are given.”**

For a second year running, they also said they had gained and/or developed the following through employment with the SU, making them more employable in future:

- Customer service and admin
- Communication skills
- Accountability and confidence
- Time management
- Ability to work independently

**Amongst our student group leaders:**

53% of students strongly agree or agree that being an active member of a student group has made them more employable. *7% decrease on last year.*

64% of students volunteering strongly agree or agree it has made them more employable. *8% decrease on last year.*



82% of group leaders strongly agree or agree that being an active member of a student group has made them more employable. *5% decrease on last year.*

55% also agreed there had been sufficient opportunities to develop in their role as a group leader. *12% decrease on last year.*

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Being an active member of a student group has made them more employable	60%	60%	53%
Volunteering has made them more employable	N/A	72%	64%
As a group leader, being an active member of a student group has made them more employable	N/A	87%	82%
There had been sufficient opportunities to develop in their role as a group leader	44%	67%	55%

**We feel these decreases are down to the following factors:**

- There was a period of time in the year where there was a gap in staff resource in our Student Activities team – our Student Activities Coordinator moved roles, leaving that post vacant for 3-4 months, reducing capacity for student support

- The impact of Covid-19 and lockdown – student groups were unable to finish their year of activity as campuses closed early in March, so they didn't get a full year of development in their role.

- Whilst we mobilised to provide training for incoming Group Leaders online in May and June, this differed to the usual experience of a Group Leaders Conference with face-to-face training sessions.

- Support from GSU Officers to Student Groups this year was spread amongst the team; previously, we had a dedicated Officer for them (Vice President Student Activities). This may have affected consistency in support and knowledge for student groups, e.g. which Officer to go to.

The drop in these percentages is disappointing, as student groups are a particular area of pride for us as a Union. We are investigating these drops further to understand all the factors, and how we can mitigate those in our upcoming recovery year. A major concern has been the impact in 2020 of Covid-19 on group leaders to deliver their student activities.

Students did recognise they had developed the following transferrable skills:

- *Teamwork*
- *Communication*
- *Managing competing priorities*
- *Networking, Leadership*
- *HR*
- *Marketing/PR*
- *Event planning*
- *Time management.*





## Health and Wellbeing

68% of students agree that being an active member of a student group had a positive impact of their mental health. **7% decrease on last year.**

61% said being a member had had a positive impact on their physical health. **6% decrease on last year.**

71% strongly agreed or agreed that the food offered by the SU includes healthy options. **3% increase on last year.**

All of our Commercial outlets continued their food and drink ranges that promoted health and wellbeing. Change also went through a rebrand and stocked a range of goods that are sustainable in produce and packaging.

In relation to Covid-19, students told us that:

- They were experiencing negative effects to their psychosocial wellbeing due to the Covid-19 pandemic (74% students reported this).
- Across national wellbeing indicators from the Office of National Statistics, Greenwich students scored significantly worse than the average against happiness, life satisfaction, feeling their life is worthwhile and anxiety. The biggest gap indicates that students are 24% less satisfied with their lives than the general population.
- We knew students could be adversely affected by the coronavirus lockdown, and we pivoted our work to capture how students were doing and the support they needed. The resulting work was the creations of our Covid-19 Impact survey, which ran for approximately three weeks from end of April into May. The full results can be found on our website at <https://gresu.uk/2YkQ2xn>.

GSU adapted its services in order to provide more support to students as a result of the pandemic, and our Advice Service has made significant impact in this area (as well as during the academic year).

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Being an active member of a student group had a positive impact of their mental health	69%	75%	68%
Being a member had had a positive impact on their physical health	55%	67%	61%
The food offered by the SU includes healthy options	54%	68%	71%

## Activity: Deliver a proactive SU run student Advice Service

Our Advice Service continues to be a vital part of our work to support our members at GSU. This has become more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In mid-March, we introduced a new triage form at [greenwichsu.co.uk/advice](http://greenwichsu.co.uk/advice) for students to contact us and submit information about their support needs. This was a step to get more information sooner to our Advisers, and cope with an anticipated rise in enquiries due to the pandemic. Since then, half of the enquiries each month come through the triage form (in comparison to email, telephone and online appointment system). Our Advisers also started offering Microsoft Teams appointments to students in place of face-to-face appointments.

By April, the service had opened more enquires at this point (448) than the whole of 2018/19 (440). The most common theme of enquiry was around academic assistance, e.g. submitting extenuating circumstances claims, advice on the University's no detriment policy. To date, our Advisers have opened 586 cases, helping students with a range of academic and non-academic issues.

The impact of our Advice Team, is wide-reaching; some examples include:

- ◆ 1,625 students engaged with via Wellbeing Checks, ensuring students have relevant information to start at Greenwich successfully. *600+ more than last year.*
- ◆ £88,7563 financial gains for students this academic year (money saved). *Over £20,000+ more than last year.*
- ◆ 94% of students who use the Advice Service this year stayed on at the University. *We are particularly proud of this and shows how vital a service this is in the Greenwich community.*

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Financial gains for students through the Advice Service	£44,598	£64,000	£88,756
Number of students who had a Wellbeing Check	600+	>1000	1,625
Percentage of students who used the Advice Service that stayed on at University	95%	95%	94%

Some feedback from students who have accessed the service this year include:

“Once again thank you for your continued help and support, it is much appreciated.”

“Thank you for all the help you've given me.”

“I want to thank you for helping me throughout these hard times, I am very grateful and appreciate your help from the bottom of my heart.”





## Student Communities

2019/20 was the second year of the Academic Communities initiative, our joint venture between with the University. The project was managed through our Representation team this year to have a cohesive approach to tackling disengaged students in the academic setting.

This year, more effort was made to gather feedback about events through the project and understand students' connection of them to GSU. 90% of attendees who gave felt the events offered met their expectation, and 48% of them recognised the event as being GSU-led.

The project also mobilised quickly to move online due to the Covid-19 pandemic and launched a set of Digital Stressbusters in early April ([greenwichsu.co.uk/stressbusters](https://greenwichsu.co.uk/stressbusters)). Between now and then, it's had 1,782 page views, and the most popular section of the Digital Stressbusters was its recipes (304 visits), followed by workouts and mindfulness tips.

Other highlights for Academic Communities this year include:

*- In person Stressbusters in Term 1 involving GSU and student-led sessions. Student groups were able to connect with 162 students through this scheme.*

*- Event Society's Winter Ball 2019 – successful student-led event with 107 tickets sold.*

*- More collaborations with GK Unions and Academic Societies at Medway, such as Natural Sciences and Forensic Sciences Societies' Halloween Quiz.*

*- Politics Society held an "Exit Polls" live stream event on the day of the General Election, which was supported by University Information and Library Services to go on into the early hours.*

To see a list of our Academic Societies, visit [greenwichsu.co.uk/academic-communities](https://greenwichsu.co.uk/academic-communities).

Student Group membership numbers from last year to this are as follows:

Sports	Individuals	Memberships	No. of groups
2017/18	438	481	16
2018/19	643	685	17
2019/20	446	530	14
Societies	Individuals	Memberships	No. of groups
2017/18	3,114	4,729	99
2018/19	4,532	7,040	102
2019/20	3,480	5,189	109



In regard to Sports Clubs, there were less competitive teams this year, so fewer individuals and memberships as a result. Our teams and Clubs that did compete had great success – by February, five of our teams were unbeaten in their leagues (Women’s Football, Men’s Football first and second teams, Men’s Basketball and Men’s Badminton). Men’s Football second team had even already won their league!

In regard to Societies, we saw a significant drop in activity and engagement from the beginning of March onwards due to lockdown and the result of Covid-19. Students planning foreign trips, sports tour and other events had to be cancelled, and results from our Covid-19 Impact Survey clearly demonstrate that taking part in co-curricular activity was not on students list of priorities.

We also understand that over this period, students spent free time volunteering for Covid relief efforts within their local communities and local NHS trusts.

2019/20 was the second year of us being in our new home in Dreadnought. Up until the lockdown due to Covid-19, we were hosting a range of activity. Student-led activity included exhibitions, bake sales, talent and fashion shows. Between August 2019 and March 2020, we had 1,497 bookings made by both students and staff - the majority of those bookings were by students for student group meetings and private study. In the same period, the Lower Deck hosted approximately 380 bookings from students, staff, University and external clients. These events ranged from table bookings for food and drink to student group socials, and from University team celebratory events to club nights (one was even attended by Stormzy!).

### Some highlights and feedback about our spaces is as follows:

- The Atrium in the Greenwich is still the most used SU facility, with 30% using it every day or a few times a week (2% decrease on last year). This is followed by Change (16%), our student group rooms (13%) and then the Lower Deck (12%). This demonstrates that students are using other facilities and campuses regularly rather than spending most of their time in Dreadnought, so our activities and engagement work needs to reach out to those places too.

Behind the Atrium, the ranking last year between Lower Deck, Change and Student Group rooms was as follows:

- Lower Deck - 13%
- Change - 13%
- Student group rooms - 12%

- 70% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that the facilities meet their needs, are easy to get to and are welcoming. A small proportion (2-6%) are dissatisfied with the facilities. *Dissatisfaction is decrease from last year’s percentage which was 4-7%.*

- Again, there were high levels of satisfaction with the SU website – over 70% agreed or strongly agreed that it has the information they need, is easy to use and is welcoming.

### Activity: Offer safe and fun physical and digital spaces for students to connect together in.

Due to Covid-19 this year, our three annual awards (Societies, Sports and Student Led Teaching Awards) were hosted online, rather than in Dreadnought as they had been last year.

We still wanted to celebrate the achievements of our members and recognise teaching and support excellence, and GSU staff worked throughout April and May to deliver each ceremony online.

Students were involved throughout, from being on the panels of each award to presenting them online in our Award show videos. We also had support from our University stakeholders, with the Vice Chancellor delivering a speech as part of our Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs).

Each of our awards were published live online as YouTube premieres, which allowed viewers (students and staff alike) to comment online alongside the broadcasts. The awards have the following views to date:

- ◆ Societies Awards - 482 views (attendance to awards last year: approx. 100)
- ◆ Sports Awards - 379 views (attendance to awards last year: approx. 150)
- ◆ Student Led Teaching Awards - 1,200 views (attendance to awards last year: approx. 200)

There was a significant rise in engagement with the digital ceremonies compared to the physical ceremonies last year. Comments about our awards this year include:

**“Such a wonderful initiative and well done everyone... and of course to all wonderful student groups!”**

**“This has been a fantastic evening. Well done nominees [of SLTAs], winners and most of all the amazing GSU. So lucky to work with a great team.”**

**“So great to have this boost to morale in these difficult times – reminds us all why we’re here and why we love doing what we do.”**

Nominations for our awards this year were as follows...

- Societies Awards: **340** (504 last year)
- Sports Awards: **284** (207 last year)
- Student Led Teaching Awards: **650** (922 last year)

Three-year comparison	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Societies Awards	129	504	340
Sports Awards	183	207	284
Student Led Teaching Awards	688	922	650

The Societies Awards may have been affected by the disruptions mentioned earlier in regard to Societies support. We did expect a rise in Sport Awards nominations as there has been an increase in engagement by some Sports clubs this year. We know the drop in SLTAs nominations is down the disruption to students’ studies due to strikes and in particular Covid-19; they may have been less inclined to engage with activity around academic awards during March and April 2020.



## Money Management

83% of students thought it was important or very important we offered financial advice and wanted that to continue. 45% were satisfied or highly satisfied with the service. *10% and 1% decreases on last year respectively.*

We feel this is due to an improvement in information available on student finance from the University in particular; in turn, less students need advice from us. Over this year, our Officer team have lobbied the University for clearer guidance around hardship funds, bursaries and scholarships in particular.

60% of students told us they wanted to be consulted on decisions that will affect their finances (6% decrease on last year), and want the following from us in the future:

- *More money management skills.*
- *Finance guides.*
- *Discounts for Aspire Card holders.*

### Activity: Offer good quality paid SU jobs to students.

We offer a range of roles for students at Greenwich to fit around their studies and develop skills they can take into future employment. For the past few years, we have also paid the National Living Wage to all of our student staff, regardless of their age<sup>5</sup>, and sometimes more for specialist roles.

Our student staff roles include:

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
That thought it was important or very important we offered financial advice and wanted that to continue	91%	93%	83%
That were satisfied with the service	38%	46%	45%
Who wanted to be consulted on decisions that will affect their finances	66%	66%	60%
From our Student Groups that agreed our group fees provided a high value for money	44% <sup>4</sup>	70%	70%





- ◆ Bar, Floor and Kitchen staff in Lower Deck, providing customer service to students and staff.
- ◆ Community Organisers in our Representation team, aiding in research and student consolation.
- ◆ Supervisors and Baristas in Change, our coffee shop in Dreadnought.
- ◆ Curriculum Consultants, working with GSU and University staff to create man inclusive framework for student attainment.
- ◆ Student Designer, helping our Marketing and Communications team produce materials for our online and physical spaces.
- ◆ Dreadnought Ambassadors who work with our Welcome Desk Coordinator to manage our reception in Dreadnought and help with room bookings and events.
- ◆ Admin support to our Student Activities team to help student groups.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown in March, we closed our physical spaces which meant that a significant amount of our student staff couldn't come into work. However, we worked with the University to secure the wages for all our student staff. The Vice Chancellor offered us funding to pay our student staff their average working hours each week until the end of the academic year, giving them wage security for 4-5 months.





## Local Community

### Activity: Utilise volunteer opportunities in the community for our members.

Volunteering continues to be an integral part of student-led activity at the SU, and of student lives outside of University.

Through our annual Union Survey this year, we discovered that:

28% of students volunteer with the SU.

A further 34% have voluntary roles outside of the SU.  
5% and 2% decrease of last year respectively.

86% of respondents got their volunteer roles outside of the Union or University. 8% increase in students finding external volunteer roles through the Union.

We feel this is due to more publication of external roles, and potentially through work done during the Covid-19 outbreak to promote opportunities for online volunteering.

Percentage of students...	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
That volunteer with the SU	25%	33%	28%
That volunteer outside of the SU	32%	36%	45%

Students also stated they recognised the following benefits of volunteering:

- Developing social contacts and networking
- Builds confidence
- Demonstrates commitment and self-motivation
- Opportunities to access training
- Skill development: Leadership, Organisation and planning, Time management, Team work and Creativity

Students have also continued to volunteer during the Covid-19 lockdown. Through our Covid-19 Impact Survey, we learnt that 45% of students have volunteered since the crisis, with the highest volume being SU engaged students and those with caring responsibilities. We feel this shows students wanted to help wherever they could, still developing key skills for future employability, and perhaps use volunteering as a way to cope.

## Conclusion

2019/20 has seen a lot of change – not just at Greenwich, but internationally. A lot of it happened in the latter part of the academic year due to the Covid-19; as a result, we changed our offer as quickly as possible to support students with what they needed and feel that this has had a positive impact on our members overall.

As we move into our recovery year, the principles of our Big Plan will stay in place, as will our measures as detailed in this report. It is disappointing to see some decreases in satisfaction and impact, and we understand some of the factors behind these. We will investigate these further to understand them fully as part of our recovery work, and hopefully see these gaps close over the next year. With our recovery plan in place, we know we can deliver great services to our students and have an agile offer to suit their needs as we move through the year.

As always, we look forward to continuing on with our goals: empowering students to change the world, and having a great time at Greenwich.