



The Students' Union View of Internationalisation

**Daniel Stevens (NUS), Fadi Dakkak (Sheffield SU) Silkie
Cragg (Warwick SU)**

- Some Context
- Why Internationalise!?
- Quick Introductions
- The NUS Toolkit
- Challenges
- Overview of Internationalisation in an SU context
 - Sheffield SU
 - Warwick SU
- Questions

The context of Internationalization

- Given the present climate for higher education, the circumstances and economics of international student migration are set to change, perhaps quite rapidly. The map of migration may look very different in as little as a decade. The economic balance of power, the methods of delivery (with 'local' campuses of 'global' universities), even the ecology of the linguistic map of higher education, may all see fundamental transformation. (Sovic, 2012)

The context of Internationalization

- The shift from aid to trade in the past thirty years.
- Explosion in international student numbers.
- International student population has changed dramatically in the past 10 years.
- Are Unions able to represent these students?
- Are international students able to truly put forward their views?

The context of Internationalization

- “The ideal of transforming a culturally diverse student population into a valued resource for activating processes of international connectivity, social cohesion and intercultural learning is still very much that, an ideal.”

The Social Experience

- A 2004 survey from UKCOSA of 5,000 international students found that 59% interacted mainly with conationals and other internationals, 32% were friends with a mixture of British and international students, whilst 7% interacted primarily with British students.

Why are Students' Unions Important?

2005: 69.4% of students had a desire for international students to be more closely integrated with home students.

84.7% of those who attended Orientation said it helped them settle.

But 52.4% needed more from the Students' Union.


78.7% would be in favour of a Buddy System/Mentoring Scheme for new arrivals.

2007: Only 56.8% of international students felt sufficiently informed about their Union.

EU and international students were twice as likely as home students to state they have no knowledge of how the Union was run.

International students feel strongly that the Students' Union should commit itself to trying to unite and integrate the whole student community.

At Warwick it was found that “UK students hold the perception that international students prefer to stay together, don’t make the effort or are actively excluding. UK students themselves fear misunderstanding, leading to anxiety, embarrassment, and awkwardness. International Students still hold the perception that the Union is focused primarily on UK undergraduate 18-21 years. They feel that they are not adequately catered for despite making up a large percentage of the student population.” Internationalising the Student Experience. Pg. 13



**Internationalisation- more focus on academic
experience?
Do Universities try to do too much?**

Home
Country

UK

Home
Country

1. Honeymoon
Stage

2. Disintegratio
Stage

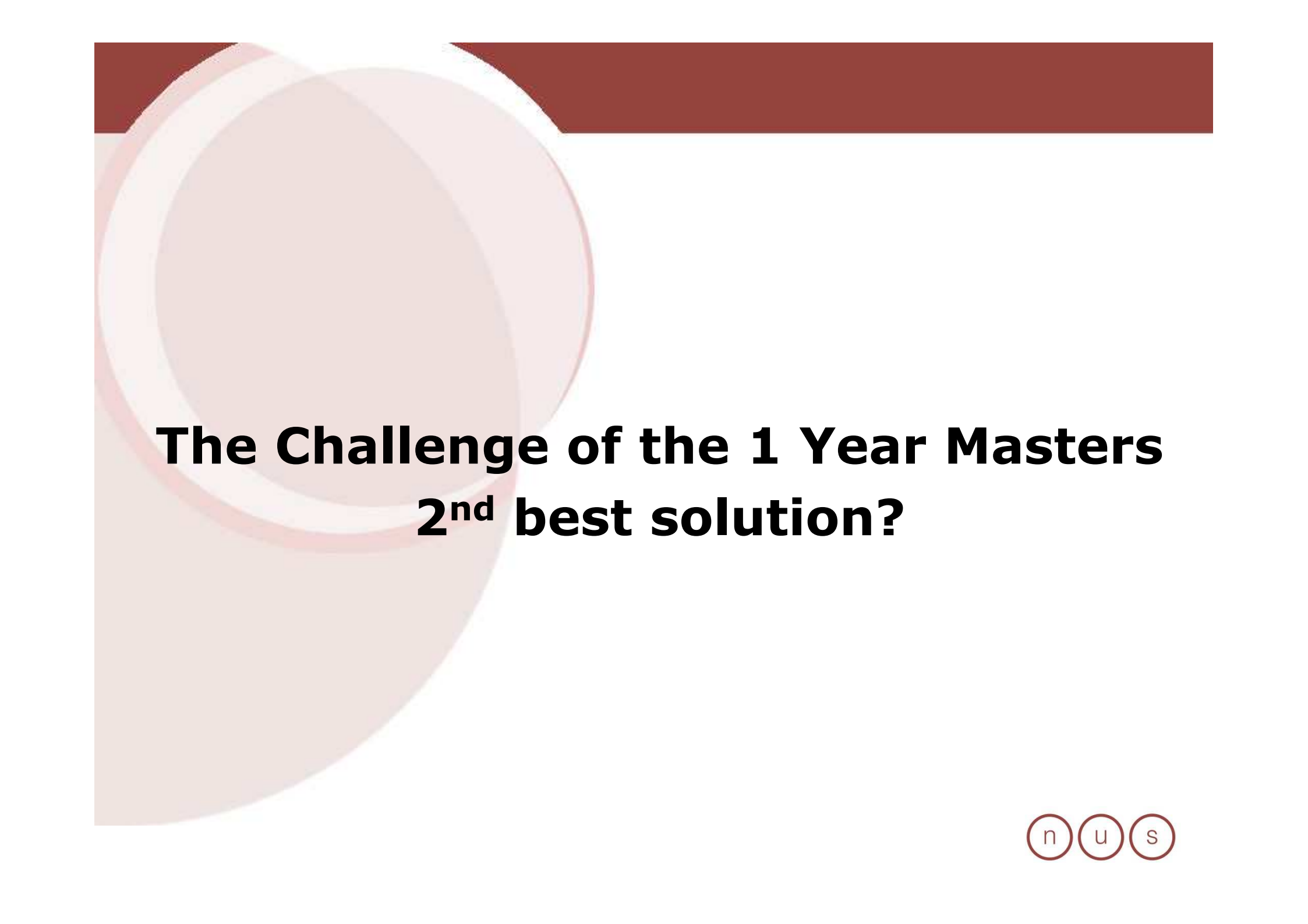
3. Reintegratio
Stage

4. Autonomy
Stage

5. Independenc
Stage

Source: Adler (1975)
"The Transitional Experience, an alternative view of culture shock",
Journal of Humanistic Psychology Vol 15 No 4, pp13 - 23





The Challenge of the 1 Year Masters

2nd best solution?

- There are two main paths of internationalisation:
- Make sure your Union is more **inclusive** for international students.
 - Participation of the SU in international student induction, international student participation in democracy, commercial venues, course representation, Union communication, volunteering, etc.
- Create an inclusive environment for *everyone* through **internationalisation**.
 - Promoting opportunities abroad, cultural events on campus, language exchanges, etc.

Internationalisation

- Engaging, supporting and representing international students more effectively
- Encouraging opportunities for integration between home and international students
- Incorporating a global perspective in all areas of students' union activity

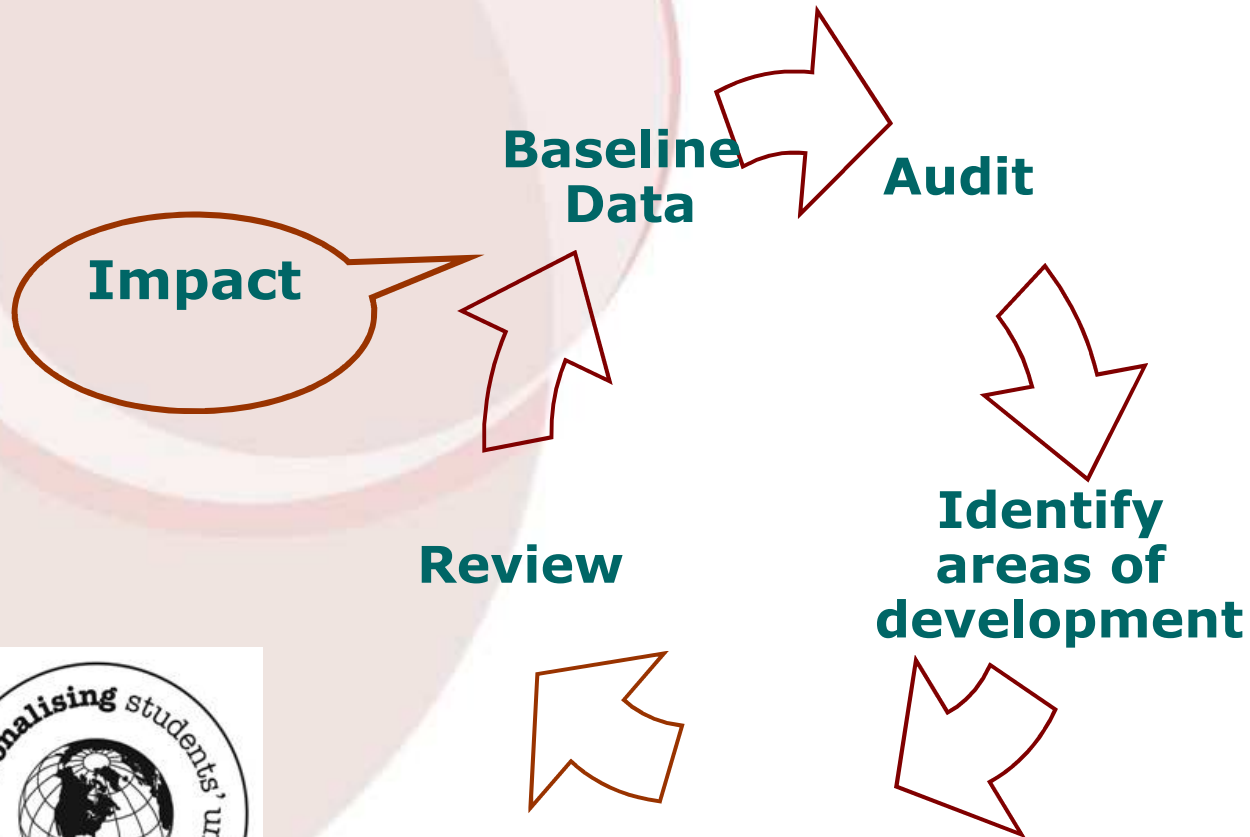
Internationalisation challenges

- Participation in democratic and representation structures
- Responding to key issues
- Facilitating home and international student interaction
- Providing services that meet needs
- Establishing genuine, two-way communication
- Developing appropriate partnerships
- Creating a global union



**In Groups- Introduce Yourself and the
Activities of your own Students' Unions!**

Building an Internationalised Students' Union



- ✓ Democracy and representation
- ✓ Campaigning
- ✓ Activities and participation
- ✓ Service: Membership and commercial
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Staff and Officer development
- ✓ Partnerships and collaboration
- ✓ International experience

Democracy and representation

We will ensure that all international students are able to participate in the democratic processes and representative structures of our students' unions

Informing

Targeting

Engaging and supporting

Monitoring and evaluating

We will campaign for positive change and make sure the voices of international students are heard locally, nationally and internationally

Experience

Injecting injustice

Visioning

Action

Activities and participation

We will create opportunities for students for home and international students to come together through societies and activities

Global perspective

Awareness of diversity

Monitoring participation

Engaging and integrating

We develop services that meet the need of our international student members

Holistic and diverse

Expert advice

Learning and responding

Participation and ownership

We will develop services that meet the needs of our international student members

Diversity and influence

Accessibility and provision

Staff and training

Hearing feedback

We will develop genuine two-way communication between our students' union and our international student members and ensure our communication is accessible and appropriate

Timing and planning

Angle and relevance

Language and culture

Evaluation and development

Staff and officer development

We will develop and promote learning and development opportunities for officers and staff

Training

External memberships and events

Sharing best practice

Taking the lead

International experience

We will provide an international experience for all students, make unions a space where home and international students can come together and promote a global perspective in all areas of union activity

Worldwide culture

International projects and partnerships

Strategy for internationalisation

Exchanges and study abroad

Student Unions/Associations

- Too dependent on having a sabbatical officer or student volunteers with an interest in international students
- A need for an Internationalisation strategy as well as an embedding (mainstreaming) approach
- Need for **clubs and associations** to be more **mindful** of international students and the **Equality Act 2010**

International Students with Dependents

- Appreciate organised trips etc.. **BUT also**
- **Require more information about schooling** (non-standard entry), schooling systems, **childcare, youth activities, further/adult education options, ESOL classes**

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.nusconnect.org.uk/internationalisation/. The page features a dark blue header with the 'nus' logo (three circles containing 'n', 'u', 's') and the title 'Building an Internationalised Students' Union'. Below the title is a subtitle: 'An Internationalisation Toolkit for Students' Unions in Higher Education'. A navigation menu on the left lists: FE Toolkit, HE Toolkit, Case Studies, Resources, Key Terms, Contact, and Links. The main content area has a heading 'Welcome to the building an internationalised students' union toolkit' and a paragraph: 'Welcome to the Internationalisation Toolkit for students' unions in the UK. This will help students' unions make a positive impact on the experience of international students in the UK and create a more international union for all students.' Below this is a prompt: 'Make your selection of which toolkit you would like to use below.' followed by a bulleted list: 'FE Toolkit' and 'HE Toolkit'. At the bottom left, it states 'Funded by the UK Council for International Student Affairs' with the UKCISA logo.

Click to go forward, hold to see history



Building an Internationalised Students' Union

An Internationalisation Toolkit for Students' Unions in Higher Education

FE Toolkit

HE Toolkit

Strategic Frameworks

Audit Guidance

Action Planning

Case Studies

Resources

Key Terms

Contact

Links

Funded by the UK Council for

Activities and Participation

3

1

2

4

5

6

7

8

9

[LOGIN TO BEGIN SELF-ASSESSMENT](#)

We will create opportunities for students for home and international students to come together through societies and activities.

3.01 What is the level of international student participation in student societies?

3.02 What is the level of international student participation in volunteering?

3.03 What is the level of international student participation in competitive sport?

3.04 What is the level of international student participation in student recreational sport?

3.05 What is the level of international student participation in other student-led activity?

3.06 What are the levels of international student participation in other clubs and societies?

3.07 What are the levels of home student participation in national/cultural societies?

3.08 With reference to the last three questions, what are you doing to investigate barriers and encourage participation?

3.09 How many national/cultural societies do you have? Are there any significant groups of students who do not have a national/cultural society?

3.10 Are there home student representatives on national/cultural society committees?



- As part of their internationalisation work, EUSA set up the 360° Society, to support students before, during and after exchange trips abroad.
- The society brings together exchange students studying at Edinburgh, and Edinburgh students who have been (or are about to go) on an exchange trip abroad.
- In addition to organising social activities, the society provides opportunities for students to share information, so that prospective exchange students can learn about their destination. The 360° Exchange Society won 'Society of the Year' at the NUS Awards 2011.

The logo for EUSA, consisting of the lowercase letters 'eusa' in a sans-serif font. The 'e' and 'a' are grey, while the 'u' and 's' are red. The logo is enclosed in a thin red rectangular border.

eusa

- York University Students' Union (YUSU) decided to increase the representative role of the International Students' Association (ISA) by bringing it under the students' union and making its President the part-time International Students' Officer for the students' union.
- The ISA has a large membership, but had previously functioned independently from the union and focused on social events and activities.
- The union hopes that under the new structure the ISA will be a channel for international students to get their voice heard in the union.



- The University of Nottingham has overseas campuses in China and Malaysia. While the students' union does not technically represent the students at these campuses, it offers support and advice to the students' associations which do.
- The students' union officers act as educational consultants to these students' associations, advising their overseas counterparts via video conferencing and an annual trip to the two overseas campuses.
- The partnership between students' representatives at home and overseas is supported by the university, who pay fund the annual overseas trip.
- The VP Education will focus on ensuring that the Quality Manual is being adhered to, while the President will meet with the students' association.
- They will look at accommodation, student support facilities and campus issues, and advise the students' association on how to handle problems. On their return, the students' union officers will report back to the university on their findings.
- The students' union also hosts visits from students from the overseas campuses.



- The University of Bath Students' Union works closely with the International Office and has over the last few years looked at ways of developing closer working relationships.
- In September 2007, the Chief Executive of the Students' Union and the Senior Assistant Registrar with responsibility for the International Office put forward a proposal for a member of staff who would work across both departments.
- The remit for this member of staff is to work on student-facing issues within the International Office, including organising events for orientation week, while in the student union they take a more strategic role, to look at the current experience of international students and the barriers to participation in the union.
- There are many advantages to this joint role, including the fact that the knowledge of individual students' aspirations and impressions which are gleaned from the face-to-face work in the International Office can be extremely useful when considering the current provision within the students' union and possible changes.





**What do you think the challenge is with
Students' Unions and Internationalisation?**

From a Union side?

From a University side?

The Biggest Challenges

- **Perception:** International Students have huge cultural and language! Many people won't understand these difficulties ubarriers until they experience them themselves.
- **Funding:** It's a very difficult time for Students' Unions and many of them are going through restructuring.
- **Making the Case:** Why is international more important than other students?

Where to start?

- **Warning! “Rome Wasn’t Build in a Day.”**
- **This is the product of 6+ years of work. OWW has been around for even longer!**
- **The most important thing to do is to build the support and resourcing to make sure internationalisation is a success.**
- **Many people have fantastic projects, but no one to carry them forward the year after they leave.**

So how to make it sustainable?

Step One: Contact Key People and Gather Previous Data

Step Two: Form a formal working group, conduct research and pass information to key individuals

Step Three: Develop a strategy, secure funding and resourcing

Step Four: Deliver the Project! Good luck!

University of Sheffield Students' Union

Internationalisation: Defining the
Global Perspective

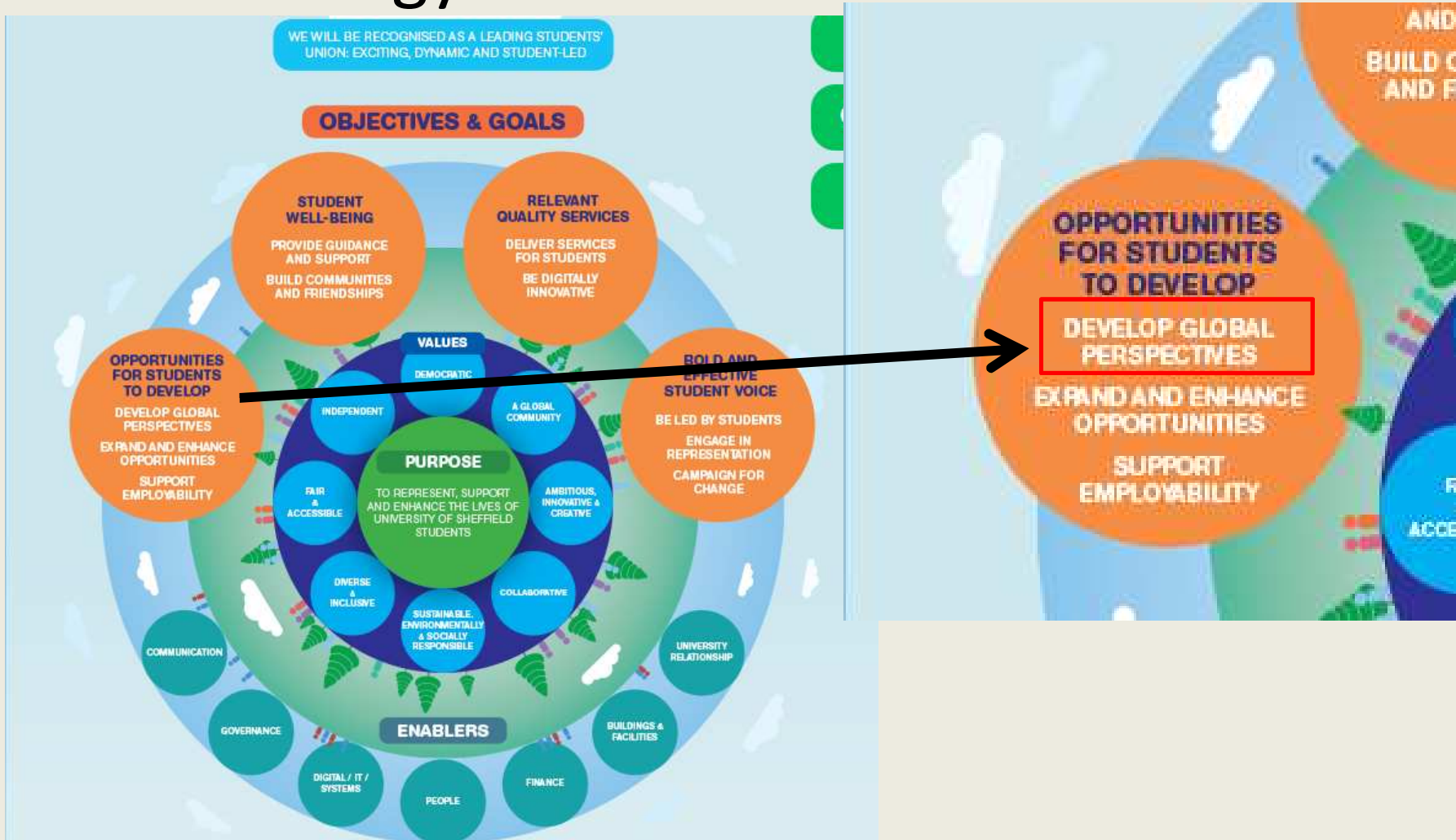


History and Background

- 25,000 students, around 6000 international.
- Full time International Students' Officer.
- Our immigration advisor wrote a paper that dates back to 1995 on internationalising students' unions.
- Long history of celebrating the diverse cultures we have here on campus, e.g. International Cultural Evening, World Food Festival and World Week.



SU Strategy 2012-2016



Develop global perspectives

Create an environment that enables our students to benefit from intercultural experiences, enjoy international friendships and develop their global understanding.

We aim to achieve this between 2012 and 2016 by:

- Recognising and developing our civic engagement with home and international students in the local community.
- Working closely with The University on the internationalisation strategy.
- Removing barriers for integration between home and international students by encouraging international students to engage with departmental societies and home students to engage with national societies.
- Reinvigorating our services and events to enable students to develop their cultural agility and experience alternative cultures.

Development of the Global Brand

- To be used with any event organised with the purpose of bringing all sets of students together.



Quotes from the Strategy Consultation with Students

- “Home students think it just happens and don't appear to consciously recognise the benefits of making global connections, however when discussed at length home students begin to see the benefits and why it is important but it is not on their immediate radar”.
- “International students (both EU and non EU) on the other hand have come to an English University to gain this experience, they find it easy to connect with other international students but difficult to connect with home students”.
- “They also made the point that some events are advertised as only for international students and feel it should be open to all - this related to the home students comments above about it not being on their radar - how do we find a way of appealing to all?”

Quotes from the Strategy Consultation with Students

- “Interestingly home PGT students become more aware of their international counterparts than at UG level and recognise the importance of connecting with them”.
- “Many students both home and international believe that societies help bridge the gap and it would be good if there was some way of using them more eg)showcasing the extra global benefits gained from mixing in societies to other students”.

How do we take it from here?

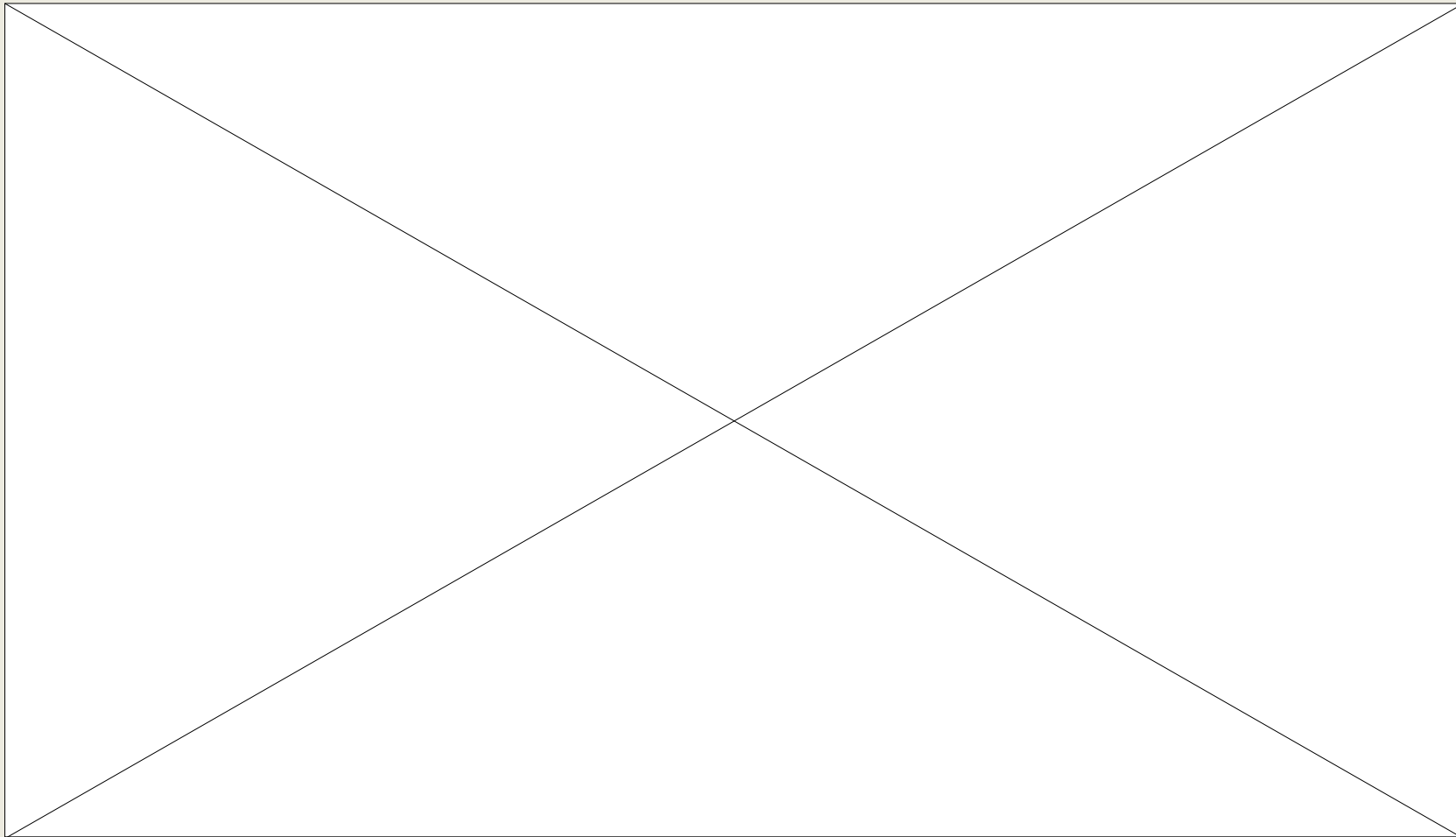
- Global Ambassadors
- Open Space event:
 - ✓ Allow all sets of students to tell us what the global perspective means to them.
 - ✓ Break the taboo that is international and get all students to feel part of it.
 - ✓ Look into the way we advertise events, e.g. Society flashdance.

Campaign on the Value of International Students



- Oxford Economics report measuring the impact international students have on Sheffield.
- Report indicates that international students contribute annually £120 million to Sheffield.
- The SU in collaboration with the University decided to capture the stories that would give this report an even bigger impact.

We are all International Students!





GoGlobal ...a brief history

- A great example of Union-University collaboration
- Mantra: Warwick – a Globally Connected University
- Go Global Guide: Every student can have a truly global experience while studying at Warwick
- Mutual aims:
 - Internationalise the University experience
 - Integrate home and international students
 - Enhance employability
 - Opportunities to study abroad
 - Intercultural competency



- 2007/8 Union President, Joe Kirby, conducted substantial research and put together a very influential report entitled 'Internationalising the Student Experience'
- “ ..there is a divide between UK and international students that is rupturing the student community. Many at Warwick undergo a divisive experience at the University because of this ‘magnitude gap’”
- Noted 4 key challenges
 - Arrivals
 - Accommodation
 - Student initiatives
 - Students’ Union provision





- Success for Kirby would be “...a visible and vibrant cosmopolitan community on campus. All students would consider themselves international; all would actively choose, expect and pursue a global experience... [t]here would be no dividing line.”

- Recommendations:

❖ Arrivals: Freshers’ and Orientation should be integrated

✓ Accommodation: ‘Immersion’ of nationalities within halls; Union Hall Societies should be set up

✓ Student initiatives: ‘Innovation Summit’: annual event to support growth and delivery of student-run initiatives

✓ Students’ Union provision: a buddy scheme



- Jointly-run Orientation Week
- Sabbatical Officers: cleared diaries, on-the-ground support
- 30 societies and sports clubs
- Overwhelming enthusiasm to welcome international students
- Satisfaction up 11.7% since 2011



- 2010/11 President Daniel Stevens began huge work with the International Office to turn Kirby's recommendations into concrete achievements!
- Go Global is a SU and University initiative designed to get students thinking globally.
- Go Global Fund
- Go Global Guide
 - Erasmus/Exchanges





The Warwick Global Checklist

25 departments offer the chance to study abroad

163 different nationalities study here

36% of the student population is from outside the UK

38 language classes are run every week by **world@warwick**

12 different languages are taught by **world@warwick** - for free!



The Warwick Global Checklist

200+ Universities across the globe are linked to Warwick

39 societies represent different cultures at Warwick

12 different language qualifications are taught by the Centre for Lifelong Learning

50,119 Warwick Alumni in 93 countries across the world



- A key part of 'Going Global' was facilitating student-led internationalism
- Best New Society 2012
- 1500+ members – biggest at Warwick
- Buddy Scheme
- Language Cafés
- Free language classes
- Trips around the UK
- W@W FC
- Fortnightly internationally-themed nights in the Terrace Bar





- Societies as vehicle for integration/globally-connected thinking
 - Warwick Fused
 - OneWorldWeek
 - Warwick Globalist
 - Warwick International Development Summit
 - Warwick Economics Summit
 - Third Culture
 - Salsa, Belly Dance, Argentine Tango
 - Amnesty International
 - People and Planet
 - RAG
 - Emerging Markets
 - China Forum, Peking Forum, India Forum, MENA Forum...
- Intercultural competency → employability
- Strategic Alliance: Monash-Warwick Varsity competition



- The developments in internationalisation via Go Global meant the Union needed to re-assess the role of students in its democratic structures
- Democracy review
- International students' welfare
 - Visas
 - Fees
 - Hate crime
 - Orientation/Freshers



- International provision at Warwick Students' Union would be insignificant without our collaboration with the International Office
- Where next?
 - Multicultural Teamwork, Centre for Applied Linguistics
 - Intercultural University Forums
 - Go Global Fund
 - Postgraduates
- Measuring impact: Autumn Wave ISB - 76.4% of all students reported that Warwick's Globally Connected ethos was important to them - a rise of 15.4% on Summer 2012...
- More insightful than 'tickets on the door' ...?



ANY QUESTIONS?





Thank you!

Daniel.Stevens@nus.org.uk