



Communications Strategy

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BY LAW of

CHESTER STUDENTS' UNION

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1. **Background**

- 1.1 In June 2018 Chester Students' Union will adopt a new strategic plan, guiding its work until the summer of 2021. This communications strategy has been developed to ensure that the key communications, engagement and financial objectives of that strategy are achieved.
- 1.2 In order to maximise our potential, it is vital that all communication outlets of the Union are focused on achieving these objectives, that they reflect the values of the Union and that our students are at the heart of everything we say about ourselves.

2. **Our Vision**

2.1 **Inspiring you to be Happy and Healthy Students**

In order to inspire people, it will be necessary for CSU to adopt more exciting and engaging ways to communicate with students, whilst the positive health and wellbeing aspects of our work will need to be moved into the foreground.

3. **Our Mission**

3.1 **Improving Your Student Experience**

Improvements by definition require change and CSU should increasingly celebrate the role of our officers and students in creating change, and welcome new ideas for change and feedback.

4. **Our Communication Objectives**

- 4.1 By 2021 we want students to identify more with the work of the Union and be able to articulate how it makes a positive impact upon their student experience. We have set these as our objectives because when we asked students how they related to us in 2018 the response was disappointingly low.

In order for us to achieve our objectives all departmental communication goals and plans must identify which of these they are trying to address and how the content and tone will have the desired outcome.

4.2 **Whole Union Communication Objectives**

By 2021 we want to achieve the following:

- 80% of students will say we are a place for advice and support

- 50% of students will say we are an exciting place to be where they feel like they belong
- 80% of students will say they are satisfied with our officers, students' council and academic representation system
- 80% of staff and volunteers will say they would recommend us to a friend
- 80% of students will say we have done a good job of keeping them informed.

4.3 Departmental Communication Objectives

In order for us to achieve our objectives all departmental communication goals and plans must identify which of these they are trying to address and how the content and tone will have the desired outcome.

5. Our Communication Goals

5.1 To Establish One Clear CSU Brand Identity

Our current brand is confused and confusing. A number of logos exist from different periods, many of which do not name check that they are part of CSU. Neither our Vision nor Mission is communicated in any of our online or offline communications.

At our board meeting in April, CSU resolved to adopt a new uniform brand image, utilising one logo with a uniformed font and a heavily reduced palette of colours.

However, branding is not just a logo, it is everything that we say about ourselves and people say about us. Our communications must reiterate our Vision and Mission, making it clear why we exist and increasing awareness of our charitable objectives.

5.2 Values Driven Content

We are a membership organisation and yet the 2018 survey revealed that the majority of our members do not feel that they belong to the Union. Too much of our current content is based around logo and artwork rather than images of students enjoying an activity. Too many of our announcements are corporate rather than focused on and about our students.

In the future our content must reflect our values, it must be student centred, must celebrate student activity and success, be inclusive of all students and their voices and must reflect our democratic structures with major announcements through our officers and student volunteers.

5.3 Varied Output

Over recent years we have been heavily focused around our successful work in Sports and Societies and about CH1. This is reflected in the huge discrepancies between awareness scores in our services.

In January 2018 we began to organise our communications collectively through meetings involving all departments, and have seen a positive impact in our key social media engagement. We will continue to have weekly communication meetings where officers and staff prioritise the key messages each week and develop the ability of each department to create and commission their own output.

5.4 Strong Internal Communications

In order for all staff to be brand ambassadors we need to improve our internal communications culture. All staff should feel that they collectively contribute to the charities objectives, are all aware of what we offer and how students can interact with them.

Beginning with Easter 2018 we will abolish the old style of staff meeting which was only accessible to Chester based salary staff and replace them with quarterly staff briefings for all staff. These briefings will give an opportunity for success to be celebrated, for developments to be communicated and for all staff to participate in discussions that shape their workplace.

5.5 The Digital Shift

The world is increasingly digitally driven, and the majority of students are drawn from the most digitally literate generation within society. The Union will be hindered in its work and relevance if it continues to use outdated and bureaucratic processes to engage and transact with students.

The digital shift allows for the creation of messages that are targeted at distinct groups of students avoiding the need to send out repeated 'push' campaigns.

The Union will continue to invest in digital technologies in all its work, seeking a digital solution to how students interact with all aspects of Sports and Societies, increasing the relevance and use of online advice and creating targeted mail shots for groups of students.

6. Monitoring

The Union is committed to ensuring that the communication objectives it sets form the basis of all staff annual appraisal and reviews. The CEO will be expected to meet the whole Union objectives as part of their review with departmental heads responsible for their areas.

Data will be collected throughout the year and will be reported monthly to the CEO and quarterly to the Board of Trustees.