

SUSTAINABILITY BOARD REPORT

December 2020

The logo for The Students' Union at UWE is a white triangle pointing downwards, containing the text 'THE STUDENTS' UNION' in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'AT UWE' in a smaller font below it.

**THE STUDENTS'
UNION**
AT UWE

SEMESTER ONE ACTIVITY

Green Week

In collaboration with Vicki Harris and the UWE Bristol Sustainability Team, The Students' Union at UWE ran Green Week in November 2020. Here are some of the highlights from this:

- Climate Anxiety Café: Leah Bromley (The Students' Union's Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator) and Vicki Harris ran a relaxed session with a small group of students to explore eco-anxiety. This is something we are looking to continue on a regular basis and expand, as there is student demand for this.
- Climate Justice Panel: three panellists came together to explore what climate justice means and how students can make a difference. This event was run in collaboration with The Students' Union's Celebrating Black Excellence campaign, run by our Presidents.
 - Feedback from one attendee said: *"Really glad to see a diverse range of voices for the event - has much more impact than a non-diverse group"*.



Community Garden

The Green Team in collaboration with the UWE Bristol Grounds Team ran one Community Garden session in October. This had good turnout despite it being a grey and rainy day! We haven't been able to run any sessions since, in line with Government Covid-19 guidelines. However, there are students interested in having a growing space in the garden to plant food. They will receive a group induction (six people maximum) with the grounds team in early January for this. This way students can still use the garden safely as individuals. We will review the guidance in the new year and hope to run more sessions in semester two.



Veg/Vegan Challenge (HallsLife event)

We challenged students to make at least one vegetarian or vegan meal and share it with us through social media and email. We also asked students for their motivation for making the switch, and if they were already a vegetarian or a vegan. We awarded two students with a prize of a £50 Ethical Superstore voucher. We received 22 individual entries and 121 students were reached through online engagement.

EAUC Conference

Several members of The Students' Union staff attended the EAUC Global Climate Conference in November. Rachel Colley (Community Manager) and Hayley Foulkes (Deputy Commercial Manager) presented on the journey of the zero waste shop, with the student voice and passion bringing this idea to life. We had an audience of just under 40 attendees, with a lively discussion too. We presented for a second time in collaboration with SOS-UK and Georgie Gough, presenting our reflections from the five year Responsible Futures review.

Leah, The Students' Union Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator reflected:

“Attending this conference was inspiring and also gave me lots of energy and ideas. The first two sessions I attended about hope and eco-anxiety were particularly insightful.

Hearing the speakers talk about their own emotions and acknowledge the messiness and complexity of eco-anxiety was both refreshing and reassuring. These sessions also gave me a better understanding of how we can support UWE Bristol students with eco-anxiety.”

The Forest the Size of UWE

In partnership with The Converging World, a reforestation organisation, The Students' Union and UWE Bristol have launched a project called '[The Forest the Size of UWE](#)'. This is a student-led campaign which aims to plant nearly 14,000 trees in India.

Jim Longhurst, alongside representatives from The Converging World gave an introductory talk to the project in November. We are now recruiting student volunteers to help create campaigns material and events for this, in collaboration with Bristol-based digital consultancy If Not Now.



Hedgehog Friendly Ambassador

As part of UWE Bristol's Bronze Hedgehog Friendly campus award, The Students' Union are working with the UWE Grounds Team to support students who have volunteered to be Hedgehog Friendly Ambassadors. They will help create blogs and social media posts to raise awareness of work being done at UWE Bristol to preserve hedgehogs, and also what students can do to be hog-friendly!

SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER AND COMMITTEE

Vanique Kruger, is our 2020/21 Sustainability Officer. She is a second year Education student.

So far, Vanique has been working on:

- Progressing [Student Ideas](#) related to sustainability. These include having a swap shop on campus and more food waste bins around campus;
- Meeting with The Students' Union's Finance Manager (Michael Blades) to understand sustainable banking and divestment further; and
- Attended the NUS Sustainability Summit, alongside our VP Community and Welfare and Sustainability Lead, Ubong Ante (Joey). You can read a blog post about their [experience here](#).

The Sustainability Committee received their induction in October. They will receive further campaign training in January. This will be run by SOS-UK/NUS (Students Organising for Sustainability) in January and equip them with the knowledge and skills to run their own campaign next March.

So far, the committee has been working on:

- A blog post about the intersection of sustainability and disability for Disability History Month (18 Nov – 18 Dec);
- Planning a sustainable period product workshop to run in Semester two, and during International Women's Week next March; and
- Online Christmas social media competition (details below).

LOOKING AHEAD

Social Media Christmas Competition

The Green Team will be running a social media competition from 1 – 14 December. To enter, students need to tag us in a photo, which shows their best festive sustainability hack (or email us). Upon doing this they will be entered into a prize draw to win one of ten £10 vouchers for a local zero waste shop of their choice.



Christmas Green Gathering

On Wednesday 9 December, The Green Team are holding a virtual Green Gathering to give students an opportunity to meet others and chat in a friendly and relaxed space.

THE STUDENTS' UNION SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Rachel Colley and Leah Bromley will be working closely with the Presidents and students groups to create a Students' Union sustainability strategic plan in early 2021. This will be a specific and concise piece of work, and not replicating the whole Students' Union strategic plan. It will focus on students' areas of concern around sustainability, and is likely to focus environmental sustainability. This is because the wider work of the Students' Union progresses social justice issues.

The plan will be informed by the Student Sustainability Survey and NUS Sustainability Skills survey, which have both been carried out this semester, in addition to visioning work done by the 2019/2020 Sustainability Committee.

We will also carry out focus groups with the Sustainability Committee, Sustainability Department Reps, our Presidents and part-time Officers, as well as with groups from the wider student body. We will ensure to reach out to our liberation groups to ensure we have a diverse range of students shaping the vision.

We welcome comments from the Sustainability Board on this as we plan and draft this work. We will also aim to map our work both against the SDGs and UWE Bristol's 2030 strategy.