



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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The Students' Union at UWE Student Engagement The Green Team - #ThinkGreenBeGreat

About the project

Summary

Dream big, inspire change

The Green Team are a group of UWE students that have a shared interest in sustainability and are passionate about exploring ways to create positive change on campus and in the Bristol Community. Being part of the Green Team allows our students to be involved with an exciting programme of events, training, activities, talks, workshops, volunteering and provides support to set up student-led projects.

Project partners

UWE Bristol students are the key partner in the project; they create and shape its deliver, alongside elected student leaders. We have a strong partnership with our institution and UWE Bristol provides support, expertise and resources to enhance projects created. The Green Team has a strong ethos of partnership working and has connections with a wide range of local, national international organisations – especially local charities.

The results

The problem

85% of students surveyed said that universities should actively promote sustainable development and 69% of students said that universities should include sustainability in their courses in the HEA survey of over 4,000 students. Eight in every ten students consistently believe that sustainable development should be actively incorporated and promoted by universities, and this increases as respondent's progress through studies. The Students' Union recognised that students were demanded from us support and resource to lead on sustainability issues at their University. We also sought to empower and inspire all students around the agenda. In order to facilitate this, the Green Team was formed in January 2014.

The approach

The Green Team are a group of UWE students that have a shared interest in sustainability and are passionate about exploring ways to create positive change on campus and in the Bristol Community. Being part of the Green Team enables our students to be involved with an exciting programme of events, training, activities, talks, workshops and volunteering and provides support to set up student-led projects.



Profile

- Higher Education Students' Union
- Members: 27,000 students
- 90 staff in the Students' Union Bristol, 5 campus sites.

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Our goals

The Green Team, in promoting and providing a range of opportunities for student engagement with sustainability, would catalyse a culture change within the SU and contribute significantly to the achievement of UWE's sustainability objectives. To showcase that a Students' Union can take play a leadership role in the sustainability agenda through meaningful engagement of and support for its members.

Obstacles and solutions

<p>Funding for the project</p>	<p>After being unsuccessful for the NUS Green Fund, we had to lobby our University and create a business case to secure funding for an alternative source. Due to our positive and well established relationship with our institution, especially around ESD and the Sustainability Agenda, we have high level champions who were able to secure the seed funding for a staff coordinator and activity budget.</p> <p>After a two year trial period, the funding came to a close. The project would not be sustainable without a staff member to support the student-led activity long term. Due to the success of the programme, through extensive lobbying and showcasing of the benefits to the student experience, we were able to secure the post on a permanent basis.</p> <p>Staff Capacity – now that the scheme is fully established, and creating a plethora of student engagement, the programme is stretched with only one coordinator and a modest activity budget. We are needing to pull on our network, partnerships and local organisations to help support, empower students and seek other funding streams.</p>
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Performance and results

In **2015-2016**, The Green Team has:

- Achieved the NUS Responsible Futures Accreditation (first University awarded post pilot);
- The Green Team are developing or have supported 12 student led projects;
- In the Autumn Semester 2015, The Green Team organised 30 events engaging more than 1,600 students (fulltime, sandwich, part-time, postgrad, undergraduate, international, all campus sites);
- 90 Change Makers awarded for Bristol Green Capital (minimum of 37 from Green Team activity);
- Key partner in Green Capital Student Capital Partnership Project with Bristol University;
- Showcased a sector-leading approach through NUS Training workshops & EAUC Conference;
- More than 600 students signed up to the Green Team during Freshers' Fair 2015;
- Created and delivered 7 student-led campaigns;
- Run 15 'Green' volunteering action days, including a beach clean with 35 students;
- 15 sports clubs and societies have signed up to the Greener Futures Award – imbedding sustainability into their practices and engaging their members in the agenda; and
- Students have raised and passed 5 Students' Union policies in this arena, proving how crucial this is to their student experience, including the passing of the sustainability motion at the Students' Union Meeting that is now a student policy that commits the SU to imbedding sustainability in its actions and operations and ensuring the University has embedded SRS issues into every course. This proves that



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our students have concerns about sustainability for the environment and the long term environmental impacts – and they want to make a difference. The Commitment to Sustainability Policy is a response to growing student-led movement to take action on sustainability and green initiatives.

- The Students' Union continues to strive to be at the forefront of the sustainability and environmental movement, providing sector leading opportunities for student-led engagement on the issues.
- One full time Green Team Coordinator with a student staff assistant to support with social media and admin. The value of having dedicated staff resource for sustainability activities within the SU simply cannot be underestimated. The Green Team Coordinator and the Team itself have consistently been identified by students as their best memory of sustainability at UWE. Some students perceive all sustainability activities on campus as being led by the SU.

The future

Lessons learned

We have learnt that students are truly passionate about the Sustainability Agenda here at UWE, we need to ensure we have the correct resource and structures to support their ideas. We have learnt the importance of working in partnership to ensure the success of any activity – we are enriched by sharing expertise, resource, ideas, especially with our institution and with members of the local community.

Sharing your project

Evidence of the Green Team's commitment to dissemination and sharing of practice is demonstrated by the significant number of events at which we have presented our project. These include:

- International ESD Conference in Bristol, September 2015
- EAUC Annual Conference, hosted at UWE in 2016
- NUS Sustainability Conference and local SU Network
- Bristol Green Capital events in 2015
- Responsible Futures cohort webinar and associated activities.

These have proven useful opportunities for us to reflect on our successes to date, and share best practice to strive for continuous improvement with the programme. We have to be reactive to changing student needs and ensure we are on the pulse of student issues to stay relevant.

Further, the Green Team engaged with Bristol SU and the two Universities to run Bristol Big Give and worked closely with UWE, the University of Bristol and Bristol SU on a HEFCE-funded project called Green Capital Student Capital. This project involved proactively establishing and promoting opportunities for students to get actively involved in sustainability. Key lessons from this project have been published in the Bristol Method module ('How to Engage and Inspire Youth').

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

The Students' Union are very proud to win such a prestigious accolade, showcasing our true commitment to embed sustainability into all we do as a Students' Union and also demonstrating the power the student



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movement has to shape and contribute to developing sustainable practices and priding the solutions to global issues.

Further information

Email: thegreenteam@uwe.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/community/green-team/>

Twitter: @thegreen_team / @TheSUatUWE

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheGreenTeam1/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/uwe-students'-union>