

National Student Survey Results, 2024



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Executive Summary

The National Student Survey (NSS) gathers final year undergraduate students' opinions on the quality of their courses. Data collection took place from January 8th until April 30th, 2024. Every university in the UK takes part in the NSS and the data gathered supports university endeavours to improve student experiences, including the services they provide.

This report provides a summary of key findings that are pertinent to Bristol University Students' Union.

Key Takeaways

- **Increased Positivity:** Student voice (Qs22-24) and perceptions about the Students' Union (Q25) have shown increased positivity from 2023, with student voice rising by 2-3% and perceptions of the SU by 4%.

When looking at Q25 specifically:

- **Faculty and School:** The rating for the SU varies by faculty, with Sciences and Arts above the average and Engineering below. Notably, the school of Education and Teaching reports the highest positivity, while Engineering and Technology has the lowest, with a significant difference (84%; 24% higher).
- **Demographic Differences:**
 - Women have a more favourable view of the SU compared to men (70%; 8% higher).
 - Black students report significantly higher positivity regarding the SU compared to White students (79%; 15% higher). Mixed students reported the lowest positivity (61%).
 - Heterosexual and LGB students view the SU more positively than students with other orientations (68% and 66%; 6%/4% higher).
 - International students have a more favourable perception of the SU than UK students. (77%; 12% higher).
 - Students without disabilities have a more positive view of the SU compared to those with disabilities (68%; 7% higher).
- **Open Responses:** Overall, the SU is viewed favourably, with students appreciating the community atmosphere and the facilities provided. However, there is room for improvement in addressing the needs of diverse student backgrounds to ensure equitable access to resources and support.

Student Voice

Student voice is measured through three questions (Qs 22-24) which ask about opportunities student's have for feedback as well as the value and action on their opinions.

Responses are on a 4-point scale (e.g., "To a large extent" to "Not at all," and "Very clear" to "Not at all clear"). We report the percentage of students who gave positive responses to these questions, known as their *positivity measure*.

All three questions showed an increase in their positivity measures from 2023 (N = 4063) to 2024 (N = 4438), with Q22 and Q24 increasing by 3% and Q23 increasing by 2%. On average, 2% of students responded with "this does not apply to me" for these questions. Overall, these results show that while students feel more capable of giving feedback, they are less certain that it is valued and even less sure that it is acted upon.

Q22. To what extent do you get the right opportunities to give feedback on your course?

Benchmark = 84%



Q23. To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff?

Benchmark = 75%



Q24. How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?

Benchmark = 60%



Students' Union

Q25 asks about the Students' Union specifically:

Q25. How well does the students' union (association or guild) represent students' academic interests? *Benchmark = 70%*

Responses are again on a 4-point scale, this time from “Very well” to “Not at all well,” and positivity is measured in the same way as Qs22-24.

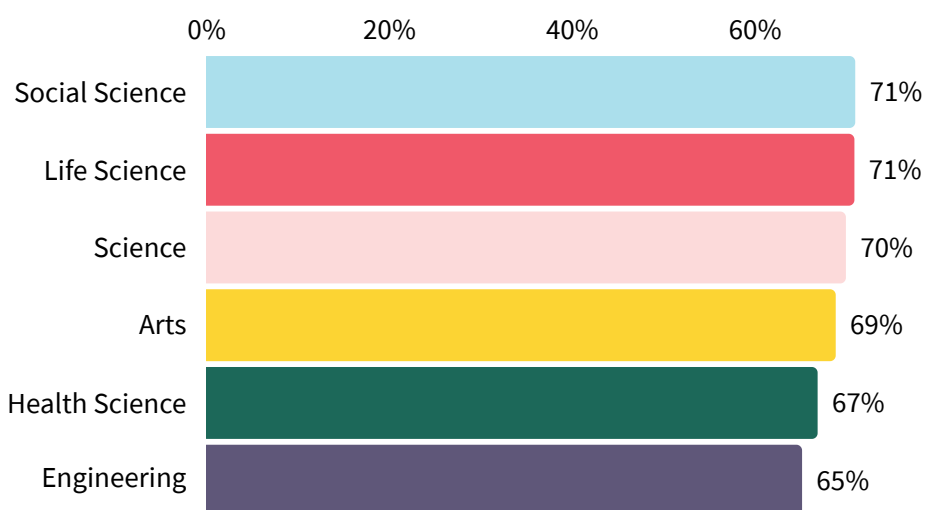
Just like the questions within Student Voice, the positivity measure for Q25 has gone up from 2023 (N = 4063) to 2024 (N = 4438), with a 4% increase. Of these responses, 519 students responded with “this does not apply to me,” around 12% of the sample.*



Since Q25 is most pertinent to the Students' Union, we look at results by important aspects such as faculty, school, and demographics. We also compare Bristol University Students' Union to the 24 other Russell Group Student's Unions.

Faculty

Certain faculties view the SU more positively than others. While Health Sciences (N = 718) align with our average positivity rating of 67%, the other Sciences (N = 2779) and the Arts (N = 575) surpass the average by up to 4%. Engineering (N = 470), however, reports the lowest positivity rating at 65%, which is 2% lower than the average.



*Analyses were conducted for those who responded “this does not apply to me” but no trends were found to explain the discrepancy

School

When viewing the positivity measure by school (CAH Level 1), most schools hover between the average at 67-68%. The highest positivity rating came from the Education and Teaching school at 84%, while the lowest came from the Engineering and Technology school at 60%, marking a significant 24% difference.

School (from highest to lowest positivity)	Positivity %
Education and teaching	84%
Psychology	74%
Design, and creative and performing arts	71%
Geography, earth, environmental studies	71%
Mathematical sciences	70%
Computing	70%
Business and management	70%
Physical sciences	69%
Combined and general studies	68%

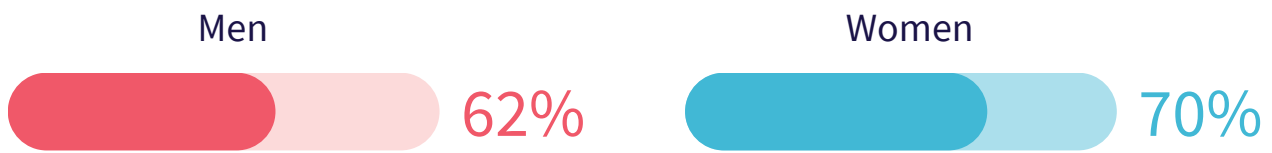
School cont. (from highest to lowest positivity)	Positivity %
Subjects allied to medicine	67%
Biological and sport sciences	67%
Law	67%
Language and area studies	67%
Medicine and dentistry	67%
Veterinary sciences	66%
Social sciences	64%
Historical, philosophical, religious studies	63%
Engineering and technology	60%

Demographics

Student demographics were analysed to determine if certain groups perceive the Students' Union differently. Age did not show significant differences. Major differences among groups are highlighted:

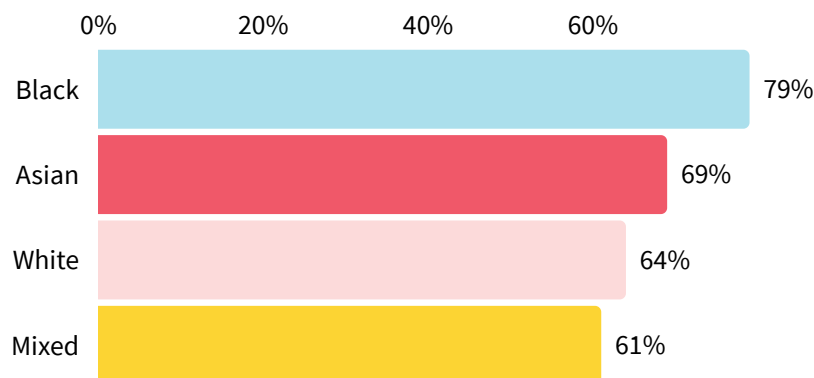
Sex

Women (N = 2,689) report significantly higher positivity regarding the SU, with a rate of 70%, compared to men (N = 1,748), who show an 8% lower rate of positivity at 62%.



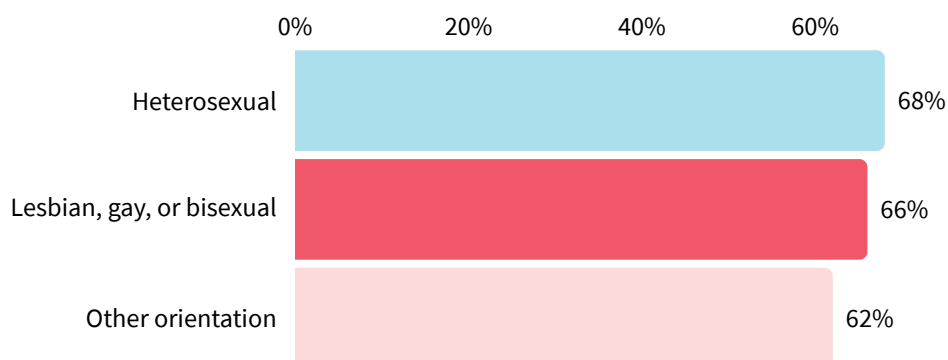
Ethnicity

Ethnicity is reported for UK domicile students only. Black students (N = 77) report significantly higher positivity regarding the SU, with a rate of 79%, compared to White students (N = 2,803), who have a positivity rate of 64%, 15% lower. Asian students (N = 291) fall in the middle with a positivity rate of 69%. The lowest positivity is reported by Mixed students (N = 228), at 61%.



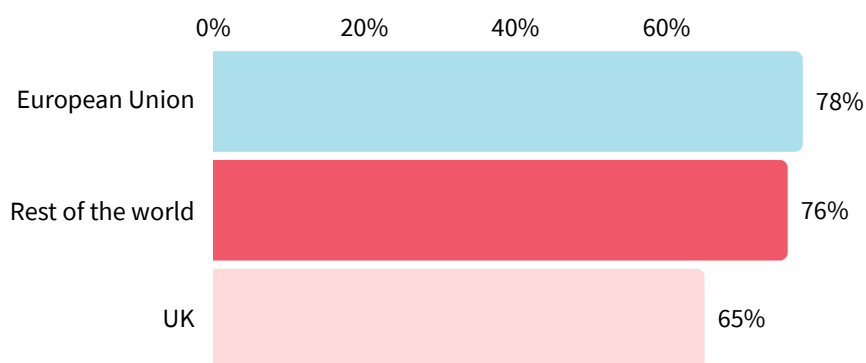
Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual students (N = 3,138) reported the highest positivity rate about the SU at 68%, 2% higher than lesbian, gay, or bisexual students (N = 801), and 6% higher than students with other orientations (N = 85).



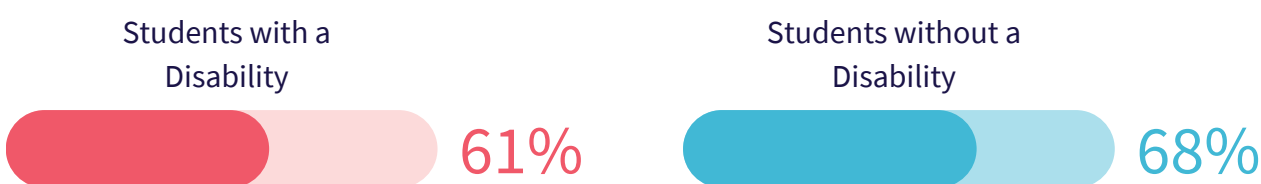
International Students

International domicile students report an average positivity rating of 77%, compared to 65% for UK students, a significant 12% difference. EU students (N = 166) show a 13% higher positivity than UK students (N = 3,540), while students from other regions (N = 732) report 9% higher positivity compared to UK students.

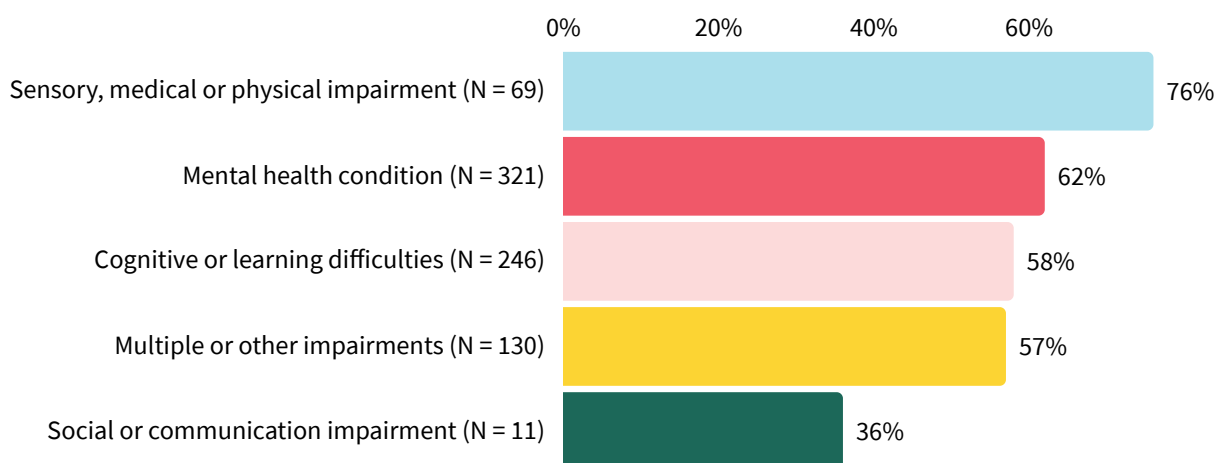


Students with a Disability

Overall, students with a disability (N = 777) have a positivity measure of 61%, which is 7% lower than that of students without a disability (N = 3661).



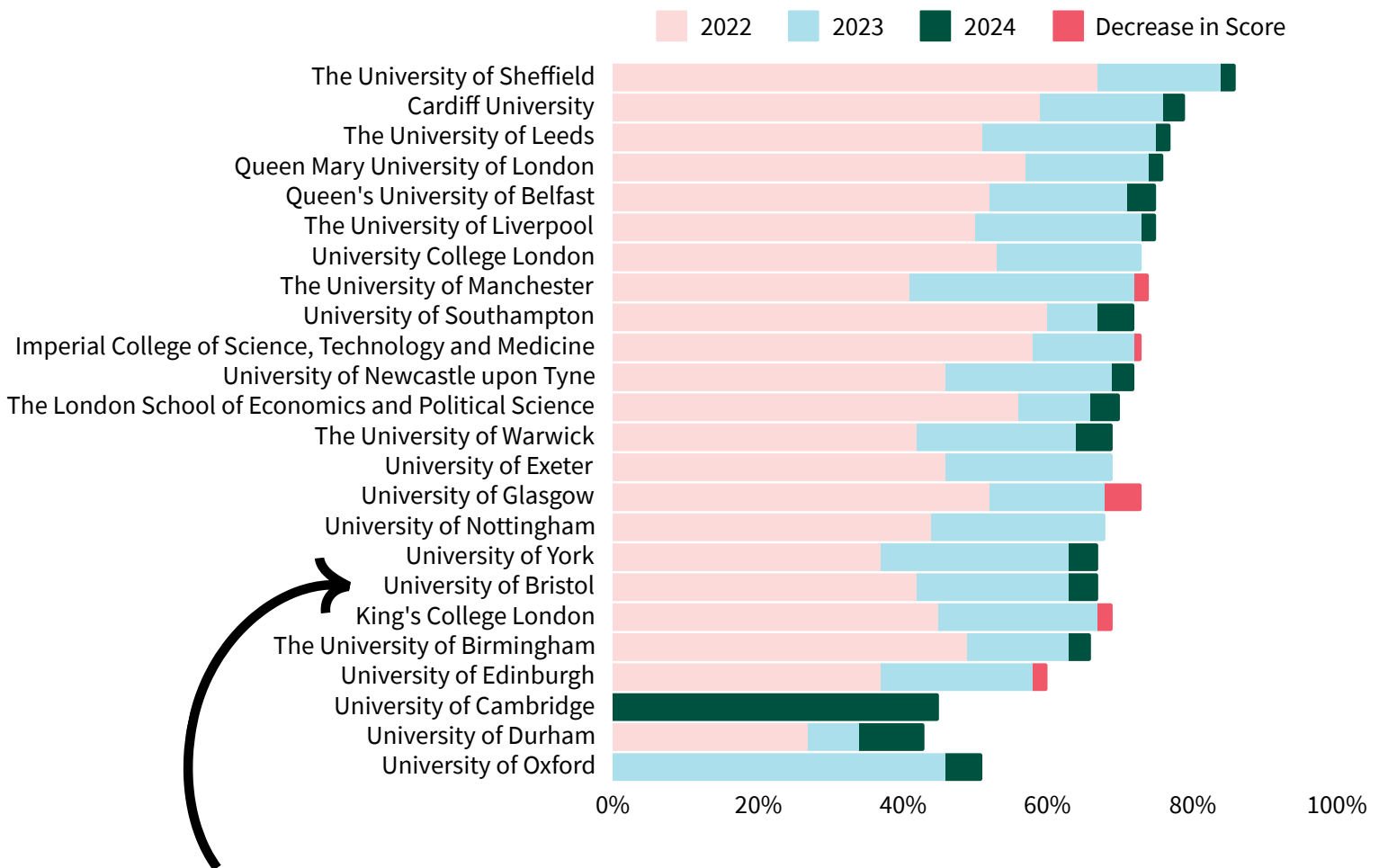
Further examination of disability types revealed that individuals with sensory, medical, or physical impairments tend to express higher positivity with the SU on average. In contrast, those with other types of disabilities, and especially those with social or communication impairments, report significantly lower positivity, with a notable 40% difference.



Russell Group Student's Unions

On average, Russell Group Student's Unions experienced a 1.6% increase in their positivity measure for Q25. Bristol SU significantly exceeded this average with a 4% increase in positivity, raising its rank to 18 out of the 24 universities. This year, the average positivity score across these universities is 68%, with Bristol University closely aligning with this at 67%.

Q25 Positivity Measure Compared by Russell Group Student's Unions



Q25 Positivity Measure Compared by Russell Group Student's Unions

University (ranked by 2024 results)	2022	2023	2024	% Diff (2023 - 2024)	Rank change
1. The University of Sheffield	67%	84%	86%	+2%	0
2. Cardiff University	59%	76%	79%	+3%	0
3. The University of Leeds	51%	75%	77%	+2%	0
4. Queen Mary University of London	57%	74%	76%	+2%	0
5. Queen's University of Belfast	52%	71%	75%	+4%	+5
6. The University of Liverpool	50%	73%	75%	+2%	+2
7. University College London	53%	73%	73%	0	0
8. The University of Manchester	41%	74%	72%	-2%	-3
9. University of Southampton	60%	67%	72%	+5%	+6
10. Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	58%	73%	72%	-1%	-4
11. University of Newcastle upon Tyne	46%	69%	72%	+3%	+1
12. The London School of Economics and Political Science	56%	66%	70%	+4%	+4
13. The University of Warwick	42%	64%	69%	+5%	+4
14. University of Exeter	46%	69%	69%	0	-1
15. University of Glasgow	52%	73%	68%	-5%	-7
16. University of Nottingham	44%	68%	68%	0	-2
17. University of York	37%	63%	67%	+4%	+1
18. University of Bristol	42%	63%	67%	+4%	+2
19. King's College London	45%	69%	67%	-2%	-7
20. The University of Birmingham	49%	63%	66%	+3%	-1
21. University of Edinburgh	37%	60%	58%	-2%	0
22. University of Cambridge	-	-	45%	-	-
23. University of Durham	27%	34%	43%	+9%	0
24. University of Oxford	-	46%	41%	-5%	-2

Open-Responses

Students were given the opportunity to leave comments, including positive feedback, negative feedback, and their thoughts on the best aspects of Bristol University as well as areas needing the most improvement. Each student could respond to one, none, or all of these categories. A total of 2050 students left negative comments, 1876 provided positive feedback, and 1516 commented on the best aspects and areas for improvement.

Positive Responses

A total of 28 students left positive feedback about the SU and its services. Key topics included:

- Welcoming and accessible student societies and engaging extracurricular activities (N = 12)
- Strong sense of community with opportunities to meet diverse groups of people (N = 6)
- Fantastic facilities, study spaces, and performance venues (N = 4)

Overall, the feedback highlights an SU experience that fosters a vibrant student community and provides excellent facilities and resources.



The SU has an enormous variety of societies who are inclusive and friendly, there is really something for everyone! The facilities are great and lots of study spaces, though these do get crowded around exam period.



I loved how cohesive the University, combined with the Student Union it creates an amazing sense of community with a range of study spaces and activities to take part in on top of your academic course.

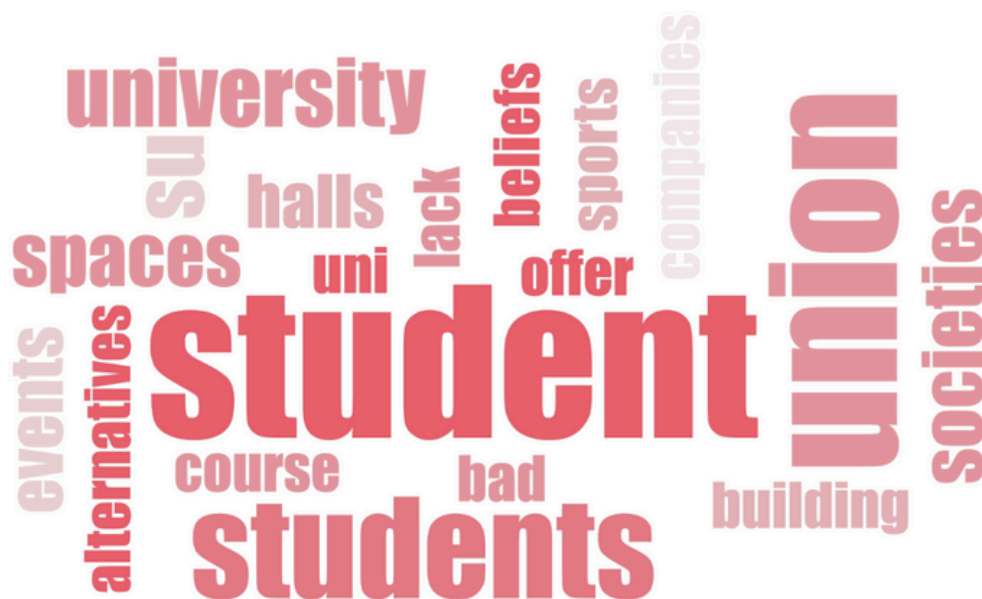


Negative Responses

A total of 15 students left negative feedback about the SU and its services. Key topics included:

- Insufficient or poor-quality services and spaces (N = 7)
- Does not represent student interests or lack of student voice (N = 5)
- Not representing of all students and only holds certain viewpoints (N = 3)

In summary, the biggest pain points with the SU tend to be regarding attention to specific student needs and interests, for example for students with lower socio-economic status.



The Students' Union does not at all represent my beliefs. The roles that they offer are nominal and are for well-off students with too much time on their hands to put something interesting on their CV. Moreover, the extracurricular sports clubs cost too much for the average student.



Also [a need for] more large SU spaces e.g., halls for events are often not great venue options.



Recommendations

Based on the results of the National Student Survey (NSS), actionable recommendations for enhancing the Students' Union (SU) and addressing the needs of diverse student backgrounds are suggested:

1. Overall Improvement of Student Voice and Services

- Encourage regular feedback, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, to continually assess and respond to student needs and preferences.
- Review and adjust resource allocation to ensure equitable access to SU services and support for all students, regardless of their background or demographic characteristics.

2. Enhance Visibility and Engagement in Engineering Schools

- Implement specific outreach programs and initiatives for students in Engineering to understand and address their unique concerns and needs.

3. Promote Gender Inclusivity

- Expand programs and support networks for men, including mental health, professional development, and collaborative/supportive opportunities within the SU.

4. Support for LGBTQ+ Students

- Continue our work supporting LGBTQ+ students including ensuring our community, spaces and campaigning work are inclusive and empowering.

4. Enhance Support for Students with a Disability

- Strengthen dedicated disability support within the SU that offers personalized support plans, advocacy, and resources.

5. Community Building and Outreach

- Continue to promote and enhance the community atmosphere within the SU by organizing inclusive and diverse social events, and creating welcoming spaces for all students.
- Strengthen collaborations with various student groups and organizations to ensure their needs and perspectives are incorporated into SU activities and policies.