STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT: OUR IMPACT 2016-17
We are the students’ union for the University of Kent. Initially run by volunteers back in 1965, we exist to represent the needs of the 20,000+ students studying at the University. We are a registered charity run by students for students; we employ around 130 career staff and over 400 student staff each year. We run a diverse range of services on the Canterbury campus and through GK Unions at Medway – our partnership with Students’ Union University of Greenwich. As a membership organisation, we are here to support all students studying at Kent, ensuring their needs are represented and they get the most out of their studies. We believe in the power of education as a transformative experience and that we have a key role to play in the student experience at Kent.

Welcome to our 2016-17 Impact Report. We hope you enjoy reading about all the fantastic work Kent students did across the year. Every year thousands of students get involved in Kent Union, by volunteering for projects, representing other students, working in our outlets, joining our clubs and societies, and so many other co-curricular activities. Their hard work and creativity are what makes Kent Union an amazing organisation and through their dedication we are well on our way to achieving our Vision of offering Kent students one of the best student experiences on the planet.

Thank you to all our members, staff and supporters. If you have any questions about our work please contact us.

Ruth Wilkinson
Union President (2017-18)

Jim Gardner
Chief Executive

Kent Union Full Time Officer Team 2016-17: Key Officer Highlights

Free Academic Societies
Academic communities are so important for supporting students, we secured funding to allow every undergraduate student membership to their academic society and to allow those groups to run some fantastic events.

"We wanted to break down barriers for students getting involved in their academic communities. This free membership will really support students and help societies to run some amazing events." - Ruth

Zero Tolerance
Canterbury is the first place in the UK to change licensing policy to place a duty on licence holders to challenge sexual harassment and discrimination in the Night Time Economy following 18 months of lobbying work.

"We worked in partnership to start changing the culture of the Night Time Economy in Canterbury. It’s great to see us supporting licensed premises to challenge inappropriate behaviours when they occur. Canterbury is leading the way!" - Rory

Mental Health Related Events
We ran more mental health related events to reinforce the idea that mental health is as important physical health. Working with student groups, the University and the Medical Centre, we held events tackling stigma and ran destress activities.

"It’s vital that we challenge mental health stigma. We want all students to know that help is out there, and that we are here to support them wherever we can." - Clara

Sports Facilities in Medway
Sport facilities on the Medway campus are not fit for purpose. We worked collaboratively to present the case that the Universities need to invest in the sports provision. We secured £23.5k from Kent and Greenwich to hire an architect to assess options for the campus.

"It is so exciting that we are finally making steps forward with this project. I can’t wait for Medway students to have state of the art sports facilities. More students will engage with our clubs and access the countless benefits of playing sport at university." - Elliott
1. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO HAVE A VOICE

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS TO HAVE THEIR OPINIONS HEARD, ON CAMPUS, IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND IN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

OUR DEMOCRACY

As a membership organisation, democracy is at the heart of what we do. Every year, hundreds of Kent students stand for election to a range of elected roles, so they can represent the views of other students and lead student groups. Every elected role provides the opportunity for students to lead and represent Kent Union, build their leadership skills and gain valuable experience, crucial for succeeding in a challenging job market.

40,281 TOTAL ELECTION VOTES CAST
31% OF MEMBERS VOTED IN DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS DURING YEAR

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ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION

Ensuring students get the most from their academic experience at Kent is pivotal to our work. Kent Union Officers spent hundreds of hours sitting on University committees, ensuring that decision making reflects the needs of students. We were pleased to see the University achieve Gold in the TEF, evidence of students working collaboratively with academic and professional staff to create an outstanding experience at Kent.

We rolled out the recommendations from our Course Rep review, working collaboratively with Schools and Reps to make positive changes to students' academic experiences. Our Reps collected insight from students via Digital Rep, our powerful new research tool which enables Reps to collate and analyse feedback from students about their course. We provided feedback to 18 Schools about how they could improve their academic programmes and the learning environment.

CONGRATULATIONS TO HANNAH WILLIAMS, COURSE REP FROM THE SCHOOL OF HISTORY!

She worked in partnership with her School to develop the way modules are run and more widely has made sure students' voices are heard in the Simplifying Kent projects. She won Best Student Rep at the Kent Union Awards 2016-17 for her work.
In January, the University of Kent announced it was reviewing the future of the School of Music and Fine Art, which included the potential of some courses closing. This news had a profound impact on Medway students. Kent Union Full Time Officers, Student Reps, SAM (Students At Medway) and the wider student body worked collaboratively to ensure students’ voices were heard throughout the process, negotiating the best deal for students impacted by the changes.

The potential closure of SMFA deeply affected students in the School. My role was to stand up for all year groups in the meetings, to make sure I was vocal for all those who were unable to speak for themselves. The Reps, Kent Union Officers and SAM worked really well together throughout what was such a difficult time. I cannot heap enough praise on the Officers for the support they gave to students; they were always in Medway to provide a listening ear.

Hearing of the potential closure of SMFA was devastating. The atmosphere completely changed. SAM was involved from the beginning, organising protests and meeting with the Officers during the consultation. Kent Union Officers, SAM and Reps all had the same goal, which was to help keep as many courses as possible. We all utilised our channels to gather feedback from as many students and staff as we could. The students spoke (and cried) and the Officers took our words, and presented it in the best way possible to the University.

Student representation is so important. We all come from such diverse backgrounds, it’s impossible to know how to cater for all without helping students have a voice. I want to make sure that no student ever feels disconnected the way I did. Being a representative for others is also an extremely rewarding experience, delivering wins for students from feedback you’ve gathered.

Charlie Bond, School Rep, SMFA

Representation at University is vital to ensure University staff understand students’ wants and needs. I’m passionate about my role as a Rep as I want to help all students at Kent have a voice. The experience has also benefited me, as it’s given me so many opportunities and skills which will be vital for when I enter the working world.

James Burns, President of Students at Medway (SAM)
The annual Kent Union Awards celebrate the achievements of Kent students who have given over and above for their fellow students and local community. Well done to all the 2016-17 winners who are featured in this report.

BACK TO BLACK HISTORY #B2BH

Back to Black History was a revamp of Black History Month and comprised a week filled with five different events. Each event was specifically designed to celebrate different aspects of black history. We held a JAAMS Ladies Night consisting of an open panel to discuss important issues revolving around our race and gender. We also had motivational speakers, an open mic night and a controversial debate. The events were an opportunity to inspire people who feel isolated or silenced. It was our passion for change that pushed us towards putting on a series of events in celebration of such a pivotal month. Planning the events took real dedication and lots of hard work. We are individuals proud of our heritage and culture. We are proud of our family. We are proud to be sisters, united on a journey to becoming better women.

We are proud to be JAAMS!

REGISTER TO VOTE 2017

2017 was a fantastic year for student democracy. Kent students turned out in their droves to vote in the General Election helping to achieve record levels of student participation in local democracy. We are passionate about mobilising Kent students to care about local politics, so they can influence decision making and participate fully in their local community.

Thank you to all the students who turned out to vote – however they voted (but especially if they voted for change). I hope to see Kent Union continue with all the fantastic work to get the student vote out in this election and to continually encourage students to participate in democracy. It was an amazing job. I’ve always loved living in a university city, and loved what the presence of students do for this city, but when students really dive in and play an active part as they all did this year, it’s even better. We don’t need to agree on everything, but we need to stand and work together as one community, and I think we should be proud to do so.

Dr Sarah Cardwell, Canterbury resident

THE KENT UNION AWARDS 2017
A CELEBRATION OF STUDENTS

CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR
JAAMS BACK TO BLACK

CAMPAIGNER OF THE YEAR
NADINE EASBY

COMMITTEE OF THE YEAR
SAM (STUDENTS AT MEDWAY)

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2. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL
PROVIDING ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR MEMBERS SO THEY CAN GET WHERE THEY WANT TO IN LIFE

FINDING STUDENTS LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We run our Jobshop to help students find temporary, seasonal and part-time work whilst they study. Every year we advertise thousands of vacancies across many different industry sectors so students can find a suitable position to fit around their studies.

Jobshop runs a series of events each year featuring local employers, giving students access to a range of employment opportunities.

1,962 TEMPORARY JOBS AVAILABLE
5,153 VACANCIES ADVERTISED
14,146 STUDENTS REGISTERED WITH JOBSHOP
15,873 TEMP HOURS CHARGED

OVER 1,000 STUDENTS ATTENDED OUR RECRUITMENT FAIRS

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

We are passionate about providing Kent students with the best possible co-curricular experience. We run different outlets and services so we’re able to offer valuable employment opportunities to students, enabling them to build their skills and experience whilst they study.

In 2016/17 Kent Union employed 442 students across all its different departments. I was lucky enough to work in two areas of Kent Union whilst completing my degree. My first role was as a member of the bar team at Woody’s, but the position that has helped me the most after graduation was working as a Marketing Assistant for the Union itself. The time I spent here was invaluable, as I got a real taste of what it’s like to work to deadlines in a creative environment, while developing skills that I’m now using in my job today. I really felt a part of the team, despite only working for a few hours a week and loved every second. I know that the knowledge and expertise I gained through my position helped me go on to secure a full time role in the highly competitive marketing sector.

Ellie Murphy, BA Hons English Language & Linguistics and Drama & Theatre Studies

442 STUDENTS EMPLOYED DIRECTLY BY KENT UNION
£892,445 PAID TO STUDENTS

TEMP OF THE YEAR
ADHAM DEVENNEY

STUDENT STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR
JADE COOK

DUTY SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR
THEO ROSS
Last year I got involved with Post Pals, a project where we make cards and write them to children who suffer from various illnesses and their siblings. I began going to this project every two weeks and variations of the project including writing postcards to the residents of local care homes. By the end of the year, we had our best turn out at a Post Pals session and between me and the 12 other volunteers we made around 30 cards. It was fulfilling knowing that the children were about to receive these cards which were artistic and personal. I enjoyed the project because it felt as though you were making a huge difference to the often difficult lives of these children and their families.

This year I am taking over Post Pals and will also be running my own variation where we make birthday cards for the residents of local care homes as I believe that it would make them happy, especially as some may not have much family.

Rebecca Harding, Year 2, Psychology with Clinical Psychology
OUR CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT ADVICE CENTRE

Our Advice Centre sees around 1 in 4 students every year for a range of academic, welfare, financial and housing related concerns. We provide a consistent support network for students so they are able to successfully complete their studies.

Thanks to you I can actually finish my degree and start putting all of that mess behind me. It’s been a very stressful time and you have really helped me out of that. Keep doing a fabulous job, we’re very lucky to have you here. I shall be popping in at some point to thank you properly.

Undergraduate student who had a problem with Student Finance Wales and was worried they would not be able to graduate.

£495,000 AWARDED THROUGH THE STUDENTS ACCESS TO LEARNING FUND

1 IN 4 STUDENTS USE THE ADVICE CENTRE

OUR ADVISORS HELPED SOLVE 6,822 STUDENT ISSUES

STUDENT ISSUES AWARDED THROUGH THE STUDENTS ACCESS TO LEARNING FUND

OUR ADVISORS HELPED SOLVE 6,822 STUDENT ISSUES

ÜBER STAMP: SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO FIND OFF-CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

Our partnership project has gone from strength to strength, helping more students than ever find safe, affordable off-campus accommodation.

Thank you very, very much for all your support, help and time in assisting me with finding off-campus accommodation!

1st Year Undergraduate student

Thanks for what you and your team are doing to regulate the letting standards in Canterbury. Both landlords and students will benefit.

Mark Williams, Canterbury landlord

1,234 STUDENTS REGISTERED ON HOME STAMP

2,376 ACCREDITED PROPERTIES ADVERTISED
Sports and Societies

Sports and Societies are some of the most popular areas of Kent Union. Every year thousands of students give up their own time to participate in our diverse variety of groups, ranging from academic to environmental. Taking part in activities helps students build valuable skills and form their own communities whilst they study. Sport is a vital part of the co-curricular experience at Kent. We are committed to supporting as many students as possible participate in sporting activities, through our partnerships with Kent Sport and other local providers.

People don’t always realise the impact sailing can have on the environment. Our project focused on encouraging good practice. It involved sensible fuel usage for powerboats, ensuring the prevention of the spread of invasive species across lakes, and encouraging people to think about what they are using, such as reusable water bottles.

We wanted to make sure our members understood the impact that sailing can have on the environment, but also were looking to take part in a nationwide challenge. We only planned on completing the Bronze part, but carried on all the way to Gold - ended up finishing at the top! We really enjoyed learning more about what we can do for the environment whilst doing the sport we love!

Kelele
East African Society

The East African Society hosted Kelele, an amazing fashion show celebrating music, dance and fashion from the African continent. This event was the first of its kind on the Canterbury campus. It was a fantastic celebration of inclusivity and helped international students from the African continent feel more at home here in the UK. We are so proud of how the event united not just African students at the University but also led to involvement from Africans across the globe.

DID YOU KNOW? ‘Kelele’ means ‘noise’ in Swahili; the event was all about making noise for African students.

Sailing and Windsurfing Club, Competed in the Royal Yachting Association’s Green Blue environmental award

3. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO GET THE MOST FROM UNIVERSITY

HELPING OUR MEMBERS RUN THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS, PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT SO THEY ENJOY THEIR TIME WHILST STUDYING AT KENT

58% OF STUDENTS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN KENT UNION
Enterprise sponsorship of Team Kent

Sport is taken extremely seriously at Kent. Participating in sport helps build transferable skills – leadership, communication and organisational skills to name but a few – which are crucial in the fierce and competitive job market. Graduates need to get involved in co-curricular activities; nowadays a University degree is not enough to make your CV stand out from the crowd! At Enterprise Rent-A-Car, we are so proud to work with Kent Union supporting students and excited to see our brand being represented by all the successful people involved.

Tomas Christodoulou, Talent Acquisition Specialist

LGBT+ Society Canterbury and LGBT+ Society Medway Present the LGBT+ Ball

The event was a prom style evening event for our members called the LGBT+ Ball. It was the first event of its kind and unique because it was one of the only events that the LGBT+ Societies at Canterbury and Medway put on together. For many LGBT+ students, it is not possible to be yourself at your school prom, so we wanted to create an event that would allow students to relive their prom being able to be who they really are. We were really proud to deliver an event that had never been done before, to work closely with the committee at Medway and with Kent Union, and to create a magical, inclusive and affordable event for our amazing members.

LGBT+ Society Canterbury and LGBT+ Society Medway
Sport at Medway goes from strength to strength...

Sport has benefitted me so much during my time at university. It has enabled me to meet some real troopers, enhance my performance and even gain skills and experience that will be of significant use in my future when it comes to employment. I have boosted my confidence, social network, achievements and goals since being a part of Team Medway and it is a time in my life that I will never forget.

Dele Egberongbe, BSc Business Information Technology, Medway Taekwon-Do (President) & Team Medway Basketball

Spotlight On: Chiara Gattoni, PhD Student. Team Medway Women’s Basketball President and Team Medway Executive.

Chiara was the driving force in re-establishing a women’s basketball club at Medway. During 2016-17, she drove up membership numbers, entered the team into a local league and subsequently BUCS for the 2017/2018 season and led them to their first ever Varsity match against Team Greenwich in which they narrowly lost. She also secured a £1000 sponsor from an overseas travel agent to enrich the students’ experience and help pay for kit. Chiara was pivotal as part of the Team Medway Executive and her ideas and enthusiasm were instrumental in the extremely successful Varsity Launch and Sports Awards.

BEST EVENT
UKC MEN’S RUGBY

MOST DEVELOPED SPORTS CLUB
MASS
I've been passionate about radio from a young age. Having been a CSR volunteer for 2 years already, I can say the best thing about volunteering is that we have the opportunity to represent the community of Canterbury and provide a voice for students and the public. Being in this position is an absolute privilege. I know my volunteering will help me pursue a career in radio after I graduate. I'm really looking forward to gaining skills in people management, leadership and getting a wider understanding of how a radio station operates.

Jake Peach, CSR Station Manager, 3rd Year Film, Radio and TV – Canterbury Christ Church
4. AN EMPOWERED AND EFFECTIVE CHARITY WITH A CLEAR SENSE OF PURPOSE

RUNNING OUR ORGANISATION BASED ON STRONG PRINCIPLES AND ETHICAL VALUES, CARING FOR OUR STAFF AND SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS WHILST ENSURING OUR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY.

OUR GOVERNANCE

Our governance structures are at the heart of the operations of our charity. We are 100% compliant with the NUS Code of Good Governance.

Kent Union is governed by our Board of Trustees and the majority of members are elected by and from the student body at Kent. We also invite a number of External Trustees to sit on our Board, who bring industry knowledge and experience to help us ensure our organisation is sustainable and forward thinking. Each Trustee volunteers around 750 hours of their own time each year to sit on the Kent Union Board.

KENT UNION AS AN EMPLOYER

We pride ourselves in being a great employer and are very proud to be listed in the Sunday Times 100 Best Not For Profit Organisations to Work For, for the eighth time. In 2016-17 we employed over 400 Kent students in all areas of our organisation in a variety of different roles. We also have career staff who have worked with us for almost 30 years, testament to their commitment to our organisation and to helping students make the most of their University experience at Kent.

STUDENT SPACES

2017 saw the opening of GK Unions fantastic Student Hub on the Medway campus. The facility has transformed Medway, giving a sense of community to the campus and a vibrant flexible space perfect for Kent students to study and socialise. Kent Union Officers campaigned for many years for improvements to Medway facilities, knowing that they play such an important part in the overall student experience.
ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR 2017/18

Full Time Officers, reps and volunteers worked together to secure £100,000 additional funding from the University to support:

ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES for students who can’t afford sport memberships or equipment

EVENTS helping student groups run performances or events on campus

KENT SPORT GYM BURSARIES for students that struggle to pay for use of the gym facilities

ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES enabling all Undergraduates to join their academic society for free.

Co-curricular experiences are such an important part of being at University and some students just can’t afford to get involved. These funding options will hopefully remove that cost barrier to allow all students the opportunity to gain skills and experiences alongside their degree. I’m really excited to see the amazing work clubs, societies and groups will do across this year!

Ruth Wilkinson, Union President (2017-18)

New Union Facilities

After extensive student consultation, the plans for the new Park Wood development have been finalised. This exciting new facility will house retail and licensed bar spaces, a roof garden, study space, flexible social space and our new Lettings Agency.

The University has committed in its Estate Strategy to a multi-million pound new students’ union building in Canterbury. Kent Union Full Time Officers are now focused on planning this exciting new project, in time for its hopeful launch in 2020.

OUR MISSION

We are a charity that supports students at the University of Kent; we

Stand up for students;
Help them have the best time at Kent;
Prepare them for life after Kent.

OUR VALUES

Bold – we are brave and courageous; we stand up for students’ rights; we are innovative and we challenge the status quo

Inclusive – we welcome all people and appreciate their uniqueness; we are champions of equality and diversity

Supportive – we look out for people; we want students to succeed in life so we offer transformative experiences for them to get involved in; we ensure our staff have a healthy work-life balance

KENT UNION FULL TIME OFFICER TEAM 2017-18

We know we have a way to go to realise this vision, but our strategic plan, our culture, out values and our purpose will help us achieve our vision.

Our Vision is for students at Kent to have one of the best student experiences on the planet, to be the best students’ union in Europe and to be a world class employer in the not-for-profit sector.

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