

Dudley Students' Union Report to Corporation – NOVEMBER - MARCH 2022

Dudley Students' Union (hereafter referred to as DSU) continues to be committed to serving the interests of its members thus offering a diverse and inclusive programme of opportunities, activities and events.

This report will highlight key areas of work under the DSU core themes of work which are:

Representation – we want students to get the most out of their student experience, DSU represents students, advocates, and campaigns on their behalf.

Skills development – we provide volunteering and training opportunities to prepare students for life and work

Creating community – by offering activities, events, clubs and social groups we support students to get the most from their social life, meet new people and make new friends.

Many of the opportunities we provide have much cross over of these themes but we have broadly tried to place them under the appropriate heading.

There have been a considerable number of standout moments under those themes that we wish to draw attention to throughout this report.

Skills development – We will provide opportunities for students to develop their employability skills by providing relevant and appropriate volunteering opportunities internally and externally in the community. We are committed to students gaining essential work skills

Partnered work with National Citizenship Service Award

36 students aged 16/17yrs completed their NCS Award by participating in the Dudley College Students' Union specific cohort, this is a pilot scheme devised by us which NCS hopes to roll out nationally if it shows long term success.

The College/DSU were awarded 'Gold' partner of the year by our NCS providers for outstanding support and dedication to enabling Dudley College students to access the programme.

Those that completed the programme received a signed certificate from the Prime Minister, have made many new friends and have taken part in some challenging experiences which will provide them with lots to share on their CV.

The Commonwealth Games is just around the corner and the SU have been working



A level Student Nital Patel receiving her NCS certification at Graduation event in December

alongside the youth team to ensure our students have the opportunity to participate via the Gen22 youth programme. **Thirty of our students have so far completed the Gen22 certificate of 30 hours in Youth Social Action.** They've all been awarded with a package of incentives which includes a graduation ceremony taking place on Saturday 19th at Birmingham city centre. Other incentives include tickets to the games and merchandise. **Four of our students will also sit on the Gen22 consultation group** which will feed into all plans to make the games as accessible and inclusive as possible to younger generations.

This year we've had very positive feedback about the **'Stand Out to become Outstanding leaders programme'** Run in association with the college senior leadership team. It aims to give students the opportunity to be trained in a variety of leadership topics. All students that attend receive a certificate of attendance.

Students that attend 80% of the sessions will receive additional commendation at the end of the academic year.

We're really impressed with the work of our **new supported intern - David Ellett**. David is studying level 1 employability at the college and is now on a 6 month placement working at DSU 12 hrs per week. His work mentor Alex Crockett said – ***'David is having an excellent experience working at the SU, his confidence and self esteem has improved a significant amount in a very short space of time. We are really pleased he's secured a supportive and genuinely developmental placement'***.



David packing bags of goodies for International Womens' Day

Aldrich Gonsalves continues to work hard on his **Youth Social Action Apprenticeship** and has developed a number of partnered activities across the respective group of colleges, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Halesowen. **The role is being funded by the Association of Colleges.**

Student Development lead Sophia Daly was successful in bidding for the fully funded Apprenticeship (of which there are only 5 in the whole country) and for Dudley to act as the host college. The partnered approach is significantly positively impacting all partnered colleges as we have more opportunity to share best practice on social action and learner voice.



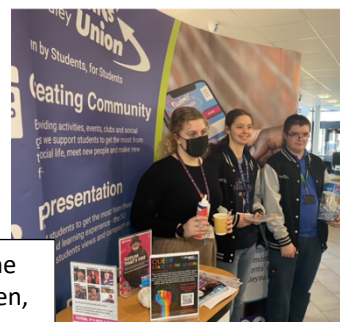
Aldrich with Food Bank collections – a project he ran across all 4 colleges.

We are proud to have once again been able to work alongside the Holocaust Education Trust and the Dudley Holocaust Memorial Organising Committee to support the organisation of the Holocaust Memorial Service which took place in January. Every year we recruit a new cohort of **Dudley College Student Ambassadors** to attend the Education Trusts educational programme **Lessons From Auschwitz**. Once trained these students then run a next steps project to share

what they've learnt amongst peers. They also attend the service as a speaker on the lessons from the project. This year our ambassadors (Photography students) Cassidy Woodrow, Faith Totney and James Hibbert spoke of the contemporary relevance from the lessons they have learnt over the course of the programme.

Representation – Representing students is at the core of what we do and we are determined to strengthen our activity and impact by engaging an ever wider range of students, ensuring that we are relevant to the needs of all those we represent. We will promote and protect the rights of students to access the support that they require to get the most out of their education. We will campaign for, and on behalf of, the rights of our students.

DSU have a renewed commitment to **attending all Open Days** in order to connect with prospective students on why Dudley College is a great place to have their student experience. Many students that have attended the talks have said there are activities and events taking place at the College that would make a positive difference to their decision as to where to attend such as the LGBTQ+ agenda, opportunity to participate in Duke of Edinburgh Award, the range of clubs hosted by DSU. We hope moving forward DSU could feature more as one of the **colleges unique selling points** encouraging people to attend the College on the basis of a broader experience than only studying.



Students studying at the Inspired Campus - Lauren, Eloise and David, have supported Open Days

DSU were the only further education delegation to attend the recent activity of the National Union of Students campaign - 'students deserve better, student strike'. The strike acted to bring students from across the country together to discuss their experiences and ideas of how



education needs to be reimagined to meet the needs of future generations. We were proud to represent FE at this event and an uplifting experience was had by our delegation.

Mitchell French (pictured), is a Public Services level 1 student and the DSU Disabled Students officer, attended the Strike – his mother is a Teaching Assistant and he receives in class educational support on his course. Mitchell designed his placard based on his dissent over pay in Education and funding of the FE sector.

DSU continue to work across every curriculum to hear the views and represent all our student members. **Hundreds of students attended their first learner voice meetings** for their respective curriculum over last term. Feedback received **supports students to feel valued and part of the college community** whilst at the same time supporting curriculums

to make the student experience the best it can be. A number of cross college issues have also been resolved by DSU by liaising with appropriate professional services departments. A broad overview of recurring cross curriculum items will be shared with SMT also.

This is the first academic year we have run a **formal disabled students committee**.

Committee members meet once per month to discuss issues impacting disabled students and are working on campaigns and communications to resolve items arising.

All students that identified as having a disability to the college on enrolment were contacted about their experiences and invited to attend the committee. **Numerous items have been successfully resolved for our disabled members** because of this work.

The committee have also organised a number of information sessions with various guest speakers such as SENDIASS and Mencap. These sessions have been received well by



students and on some occasions parents have opted to attend too.

The next big task of the committee is organising a Disability Sports Day, they are currently working alongside the college sports department and council sports activators to make plans.

The committee have organised awareness DSU pop up shops across campuses highlighting mental health items such as suicide

awareness, low mood, stress and depression. Helping students to have better understand and awareness whilst at the same time offering signposting to support services.

Black Country Students Unions is a cross Black Country affiliate independent union hoping to represent across student voices in the Black Country. The group were originated from the work of previous DSU President Dan Woods appeal to all Black Country Principals to support Students' Union activity within their colleges. The reformed group have affiliation from 3 Black Country Colleges thus far and our student and DSU campaigns officer, Jack Stokes, has been appointed as the President. As an affiliated union we look forward to their upcoming training and event opportunities.



Previous work of BCSU has included Student voter registration drives and voter registration education sessions. The above pic was taken at Wolverhampton College.

The National Union of Students (**NUS**) are hosting their **National Conference** next month and a **DSU delegation led by President Mollie Hehir** will be attending. Representing the

needs of our students delegates will vote on a number of motions in hope they are accepted as Policy by the NUS. Another exciting aspect of this will be **Mollie is standing for a national position** on the NUS executive committee, she hopes to win enough support of fellow FE delegates to secure her the vote and role of Vice President Further Education. We wish her every luck!

And finally we are really proud of Aldrich Gonsalves and Mollie Hehir for completing their Youth Work Award level 2 qualification. They are both now enrolling onto the Level 3 course. The course has been funded by the council as part of the Holiday and Activities Fund awarded to the Council. More qualified Youth support workers in the Dudley Borough will result in more opportunities for children and young people.

Creating community - The Students' Union will strive to be the heartbeat of student life and to provide an environment that is fun to be involved with by anyone. We aim to promote and facilitate student involvement and ownership of all student union activities and create and facilitate societies where students can feel involved and valued.

During December DSU once again hosted the annual foodbank collection across the College. Students and staff donated enough food to feed 400 Dudley families. Black Country Food Bank were overwhelmed with the support and could not stress enough the importance of educating others especially younger people on the importance that food banks play for struggling families in the Dudley Borough.

DSU volunteers also attended the College Christmas Fayre (organised by Business Students)

President Mollie and Vice President Campaigns Jack Stokes dropped off the food at the Black Country Food Bank. Whilst there they conducted a short interview with the staff on the topic of the importance of the

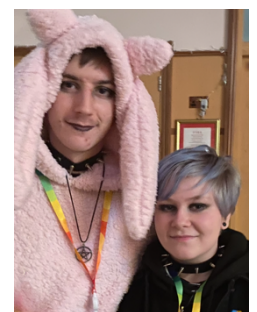


there DSU were able to **raise £125 from our stall and related activities** which also went to the FoodBank appeal.



Jack (right) and DSU colleagues

This year saw the first ever LGBTQIA+ event 'Queer State of the Union' organised and hosted by DSU. An event run by LGBTQ Officer Layla Mae Lunn and Campaigns Officer Jack Stokes during LGBT History Month. All members of the student college community (queer or not) were invited to celebrate and enjoy a range of guest speakers, student accounts of their experiences of being queer and college representation on what progress has been made thus far at the College on the inclusion agenda.



Student attendees of the event



The event was ended with music from the amazing student band 'The Teals' with thanks to the Production Arts team for support on the evening... Dancing, new friendships and fun ended the night on a positive high for all involved.

Following this, **in what we believe to be a Dudley College Principal first**, we invited Neil Thomas to participate in an Instagram Live Question and Answer session on the topic of the colleges approach to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. We feel that this shows the College are committed to the community and want to be open and accountable. Thank you from DSU to the College for this opportunity. To view please see our Instagram feed @Dudley.SU

To celebrate Womens History Month and International Womens Day on the 8th March, we hosted a special event on the theme of **Break the Bias**. The event saw a host of esteemed speakers come together to share their stories on the biases they had faced and do face in life and how they had overcome and continue to **fight for women's liberation**.

Guest speakers included Eva Echo who uses her own experiences to shed light on what it is to be transgender and to challenge the obstacles that may be encountered by gender diverse people within today's society and Salsabeel Elmegri who discussed the challenges of the intersectionality of being a woman, Muslim and black whilst holding a high-profile leadership position.



Guest speakers and organisers of the International Womens Day event



Left - Some students participated in a photo opportunity crossing their arms in the symbol for break the bias.

Further activity to celebrate the 'Women of Dudley College' is planned throughout March.

Our ever popular and longest running club is celebrating **10 years of activity this year!**

We Socialise Too! club caters specifically for students with learning disabilities and those that identify as on the Austistic Spectrum.

As part of a schedule of ideas to celebrate the clubs longevity the first event took place as a **Disco during February half term**. Members of the club planned and organised the event which was open to family and friends as well as Dudley College students. Everyone that attended had a fantastic time. The club plans for many more activities over the rest of the year



Members of We Socialise Too! promoting the disco

We hope you have found this report an interesting insight into the activity of Dudley Students' Union. We haven't been able to include everything only highlights so if you have further questions or would like to know more of what we do please contact us at student.union@dudleycol.ac.uk or pop in to see staff and student officers at Room B4/B5 Broadway Campus.

We also have a range of Social accounts you may wish to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok or Twitter.