

## Statement from Students' Union President 2023-2024 Jack Stokes

"We believe in the potential of every student and the impact we can collectively create. Our mission is to empower, inspire, and champion the voice of every student, driving positive change within our community and beyond.

We see a future where all student's aspirations are not only possible but achievable. We are a source of strength, a pathway for growth, and a platform for every student to shine.



In unity, we harness the power of diversity, recognising that our differences make us stronger. We foster an inclusive and safe environment where every student's unique perspective is valued and respected.

Change is a core part of who we are, as we work tirelessly to break barriers, challenge norms, and shape a brighter tomorrow. We believe in student representation and democracy, and we embrace our role as drivers of progress.

We pledge to lead, inspire, and empower, making a profound impact on our campuses and in the lives of every student we serve. The future is ours to shape, and with unity, we will leave a mark of progress and empowerment on Dudley College."

**This report will highlight key areas of work under the DSU core themes and values 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.

This year has been one of the **Strongest starts for the Students' Union** with more students wanting to get involved than ever, and our Students' Union President did all students proud at the **principal Induction talks attending 31 talks over 2 academic weeks**, to promote the work and opportunities of the Union, this year we successfully gave flyers to every student in attendance which had a QR code to a form that students could fill out to register their interest in SU activities.

### **Representation- including campaigning, lobbying and liberation twork.**

Under the Leadership of our new President, Dudley SU has been **modernised to better reflect the needs of our student membership**. Starting with the swift implementation of a Leadership Program called '**Activate**' to support our incoming student leaders with their roles and empower them to make the change they want to see.

As a Union we are always evolving and adapting to suit student's needs, which is why we are striving to modernise how we operate, function and organise.

As part of this modernisation, **we hosted our first Union Parliament of the year** which is our sovereign decision-making body formally known as Student Council and Big Student Get Together. This momentous event **launched a resounding democratic kick-off for the**



**year**. This was our first complete Union Parliament gathering since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the attendees exhibited a remarkable passion for expressing their opinion and guiding their Union forward.

At this Union Parliament a **leadership reform motion** was presented with the idea to completely overhaul the Leadership of the Union to better target the issues and needs of students. This motion meant that the Leadership roles were redesigned, from job titles to job descriptions. **We are excited to**

**announce that this transformative motion passed with an overwhelming majority.**

With this motion we abolished the Officer roles, replacing them with Liberation Leaders and Campus Leaders. We went from seven Vice Presidents with outdated job descriptions to one Vice President as a Deputy Leader for the Union and six Assistant Presidents with brand new job responsibilities.

Before	After
Vice President of Campaigns	Vice President of Dudley Students' Union
Vice President of Finance	Assistant President of Union Development
Vice President of Student Matters	Assistant President of Education
Vice President of Equality and Diversity	Assistant President of Liberation
Vice President of Marketing	Assistant President of Media and Outreach
Vice President of Welfare	Assistant President of Communities
Vice President of Social Activities	Assistant President of Sustainability
Liberation Officer e.g. LGBTQ+ Officer	Liberation Leader e.g. LGBTQ+ Liberation Leader
Campus Officer e.g. Broadway Campus Officer	Campus Leader e.g. Broadway Campus Leader

We have **launched our Leadership nominations** and have hosted multiple very well attended **Election Info Sessions** to support students to write their manifestos. The nomination period ends on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October, during half term will get all candidates in for election briefing and preparation and then the election week will take place from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November.



**Learner voice is immensely important to us** and will be a critical part of the Ofsted framework, just like every year we have begun elections for our Class

Representatives who will **spearhead student voice and raise any concerns of the student population**. As this is such an important part of college life, we have ensured there has been a top-down approach from management to really push staff to promote this opportunity to students and facilitate a fair election.

With the **General and Mayoral elections rapidly approaching** next year, it is important that we politically engage students as they can really turn the tide of an election, but it is vital politicians listen to students- the best way to



achieve this is through **mass voter registration**, we have launched our **Turn up campaign** to encourage students to register to vote. We have implemented the link to register through the MyDudleycollege app, Induction surveys and PIP with the hope to have opt-in voter registration or auto-enrolment onto the electoral register when students enrol onto their courses, **by opting in, students will automatically be registered to vote** as the relevant data will be sent to the electoral commission to process, this will make the process of registering easier and simplified for students.

We are also launching a second part of this campaign called **Manifesto for our future** which is all about what students want in the manifestos of politicians. To get feedback from Dudley students we will be **hosting a Big Conversation on Education which will be all about designing a new vision for education**, this will then be collated into a Dudley Students Manifesto which will feed into the **National Students Manifesto** the National Union of Students is creating at the Manifesto Summit in December. These two campaigns will put students at the heart of every politician's manifesto as they won't be able to ignore us!

Alongside these campaigns we will be organising events and activities to engage our students with politics and show them the importance of being politically aware, which will have the theme of **'politics made better'** as **students have been failed time and time again by politicians**. We aim to make politics better to prove to students that every voice matters and every vote counts.

We have worked with senior management and the What?Centre to provide **regular scheduled drop-in sessions** on all the main college sites to give all students access to **sexual health advice and HIV testing**. This programme will be starting up for students in the very near future.

Dudley SU have supported 2 representatives **to attend the EU Youth Gathering** in London which will be across 2 days to discuss UK and EU relations and the impacts on students, they will also be discussing ideas to develop a stronger relationship to the EU and to open greater opportunities for students. The idea being that this will **launch a National EU and UK Network** that will then work to implement the outcomes of the Gathering and host further events and activities.

### Skills Development – Including training opportunities, professional development, and volunteering.



This year we have **Launched the SU Crew**, which is an initiative designed to support students to get involved in the SU, build confidence and gain skills without the added time commitment and pressures of being on the Leadership Team. It's a centralised Volunteer structure that is easily accessible for students to join and participate in, with plenty to get involved in from **volunteering at open day to supporting the Students' Union on events and projects**. This initiative is fundamental to increasing Union presence across all campuses as SU Crew members will be running the SU out and abouts on

the pop-up shops across college and conducting surveys and feedback opportunities.

We have and will continue to develop the skills and practice of SU Crew members by **holding SU Crew training sessions** where they are taught how to engage with students, promote effectively, and how to safely use equipment such as banners and pop-ups.

At the start of Jack's Presidency in July the Students' Union Staff team were all **3-day first aid trained with the addition of catastrophic bleed training**

**(tourniquet training)**. This beneficial as we can swiftly act to help and protect students on our many trips and activities.

We are ecstatic to announce that Aldrich Gonsalves former Students' Union President achieved a **distinction in his Youth Social Action**

**Apprenticeship**, he has worked so hard over the past 2 years, and we are all very proud of him and are very lucky to have him join us for another 2 years, **as the Youth Social Action Coordinator**, supporting students with their own Social Action projects and supporting students to lead their own clubs and societies, this is part of AOC's phase 2 of the Youth Social Action program which means Aldrich gets to mentor 2



new Youth Social Action Apprentices from Bristol and Leicester and mentor up to 8 Student Youth Social Action Ambassadors in each of his 5 Ambassador Colleges.

We invited the 2 Youth Social Action Apprentices to Dudley College to learn from Aldrich's experience and to develop useful skills they could take back to their colleges, throughout the day we organised an out and about to engage students combined with our Monday Fun Day club which is where students can play table tennis, badminton and arcade basketball out in the fresh air to tackle poor mental health, we then had an open discussion about experiences and reflected on our previous activities, we topped the day off with a train the trainer session where Aldrich delivered his Bags of Character which are designed to teach young people teamwork, problem solving, communication and effective listening. Overall, it was a positive day where the Apprentices developed their skills, learnt from experience and gained ideas that they could utilise on their own projects.

We hosted **Lead and change for FE Institutions** which is training organised by NUS, **53 people came to Dudley** and it was a full day of training for both Student Leaders and SU Staff to develop the skills needed to run a students' union, organise successful campaigns and develop effective strategy.

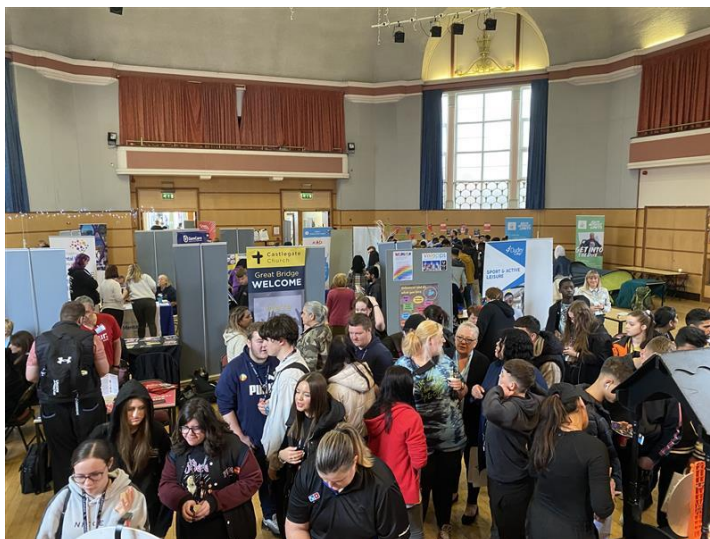
## Creating community- supporting students to meet like minded people, try new things and tackle loneliness and isolation.



**Freshers was bigger than ever before,** with more students engaged and more organisations invited, it really kicked off the year with a bang! This year was unlike any before with **over 3000 students**

**engaged over a 3-campus tour.** This truly was an action-packed week with plenty for every student to get involved in. Freshers marked

the launch of our **new Students' Union Marketing and Branding with new banners and pop-up-shops** that really represent our diverse student body and connect with a wider audience of people.



We had our annual **Alton Towers Fireworks trip on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November** which was fully sold out and a brilliant day of excitement for all the students there, and we have **launched the Harry Potter Studios tickets for the 15<sup>th</sup> of December.**

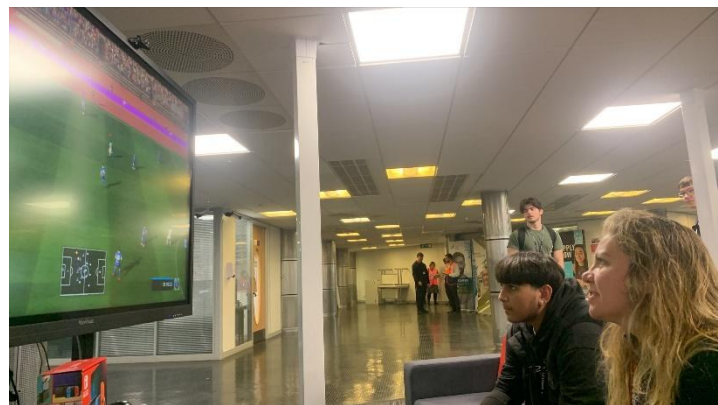


This year has been the **'Year of club and societies'** with **over 10 clubs each with approximately 20 members** provides students with loads of wonderful opportunities to meet new people, make friends and socialise away from the stresses of their course- some of the clubs students can get involved with are Pool, Monday fun day,

Dungeons and Dragons, we socialise too, deaf and sign language club, and running club.

We as a Union really want to unite people across college, celebrate diversity and build communities and that's why we have supported students to **create and lead an Afro Club** to celebrate, enjoy and educate people on African culture and heritage, this club **launched during Black History Month but will promote black history ALL year round.**

We are really striving to **increase our presence this year** and part of that is our new marketing but we have decided to outreach to the campuses that are overlooked or disconnected from the wider college community such as the CAT Centre, so **every**



**Wednesday we will be at the CAT running Gamers Club**, this will be a way to connect with students and be used as a foundation to develop meaningful conversations around mental health and other important topics.





As part of our Modernisation Reforms, DSU has **standardised and consolidated the Liberation Groups**, making sure they all have the same structures and processes which has made them more effective and easier to navigate for students. The groups have all been **re-organised into Networks** to focus on community and connection as well as utilising the Networks to create a united front for collective campaigning to advance the Liberation Movement. We have established five Liberation Networks which are: LGBTQ+, BAME, Women's, Disability and Trans+.

### Final Notes from us

As an autonomous, independent organisation we recognise the **importance of strategic direction** which is why we will be developing our **own Strategic Plan** over the coming months to launch in line with the College Plan. We want this to give students a greater understanding of our direction as a Union over the next 3 years and we will be **hosting focus groups with a variety of students** to get their important opinions and perspectives on where they would like to see the Union in the future.

Check out everything we are doing and follow us on socials:

Instagram: **@dudleysu\_**

Tiktok: **@dudleysu**

Youtube: **@dudleycollegesu**

Facebook: **@dudleysu**

Website: <https://www.dudleysu.co.uk/>

This has **been a strong start and we plan to keep the momentum going throughout the year** with more campaigns, events and activities for students to get involved in so keep an eye out for all the **great things Dudley Students** are doing.