

Make It Mattey

My Journey, My Record

As a student it was my time as a member on the dance society that gave me my first experience of the student movement. As well as being fun, it felt rewarding. We set up a community dance project which meant that young children from across the city had the opportunity to learn to dance for the first time. The society grew to having over 1000 members. Along with juggling my Law and Business degree, my involvement in the dance society was enjoyable and kept me incredibly busy but I was annoyed about the lack of support and relevance from the Students' Union.

I had never considered myself political, in reality I had no idea what my union was beyond a societies council; I just wanted the SU to support us to deliver our project. This motivated me to run for Societies and Services Officer. I started as an officer by battling the university for more society space and ensured the SU embedded funded community projects, by the end of my time as I was also campaigning against cuts to university courses. My journey was extra-ordinary but is not unusual. By the end of my involvement I realised that you can make change happen and I believed I could do more.

I ran for Deputy President of NUS Wales with the aim to put further education at the front of the agenda. Having delivered 100% affiliation from FE colleges, huge increases in participation at NUS Wales events and bringing the FE sector on board with supporting Learner Voice, what I am most proud of is our bold work with apprentices.

Securing a commitment from a work based provider to employ an apprentice sabbatical and truly embed representative structures within its organisation. This will be the first of its kind in the UK; a true example of empowering learners to have a voice. Union development in Wales has been at the cutting edge for the past 2 years, and I am proud to have led it.



"As VP Activities or as President, Raechel has always been my main support and really understands the issues. The UD zone needs to reflect local union issues and I know she will do that. That's why I'll be fully backing her and throwing her a party at conference!"

Helen Francis, Sheffield Hallam President

#1 Raechel Matthey VICE PRESIDENT Union Development

This year, building on my experience as a student director, I was elected as NUS Services Chair. Always with the dance project in mind, I've ensured that we invested in projects that give something back. We have doubled the amount of money available through the Enterprise project, recognising the importance of innovation and entrepreneurial activity in building strong and successful unions.

I believe I have experience across the VP UD portfolio allowing me to get to work on day one. Now is the time to really build on our strengths and challenge NUS to achieve more. It's time to put the UD Zone back in the hands of unions across the UK, because if it matters to students it should matter to us!

Raechel x

Let's make it matter, make it mattey!

developing our members. making activities matter

Change and activism happens day in, day out, throughout student led activities led by the most involved who don't know they are the most engaged. The challenge is how we communicate our impact to the wider world; when people know our success, our story and how integral our unions are to local communities, it will strengthen our ability to campaign and more importantly win for our members.

"Raechel really understands liberation issues whilst fully respecting its autonomy. I know it won't be a tokenistic add on, she will embed it fully into the UD program."
Hannah Paterson, NUS Disabled Students Officer

-Research the power of student activities on retention and experience, not only for the individual but highlighting the positive impact in the local area. Using the information to argue for investment and protection of this activity. Start applying the principles in FE, when we know it's so important we need to be finding the answers.

-Launch a commission into generating and inspiring a new generation of leaders. Further develop links between NASTFA, the SRA, and BUCS, utilising expertise and networks in student activities and media, and creating collaborative work for how we support these officers.

-Create an activities hub that supports you to tackle the day to day difficult issues from dealing with initiations to fundraising and developing an alumni network. You have the answers we need to step up and start the conversations.

THE FUTURE OF OUR MOVEMENT

We are heading into an incredibly important time- our success in the 2015 General Election will depend on how prepared we are, and how NUS and Unions build and come together now. What will be crucial for the UD zone is supporting you to discover how we get more students than ever to go beyond registration and actually vote on the issues that affect them.

Power over education is devolved to the Nations but the decisions in one part of the UK have an increasing impact on students in other parts. As we head to the next General Election, we need to develop a UK-wide view of how to win on our issues in Westminster. We need to:

-Conduct research in 2013/14 to see what takes students to the ballot box. This research will provide the evidence base strengthening our arguments with parties and policy makers while informing us in 2014/15 how to mobilise students on issues that are important on your campus.

-Develop an online hub where student unions and elected officials can upload all the interactions they are having locally. Lets not wait until weeks before the general election to launch a 'vote for students' style website, lets give students the chance to properly understand what elected officials are, or aren't doing for them now.

unlocking 7 million leaders

We know that Unions aren't just about providing a voice for their members, they are about helping members find their own voice. To truly unlock our members potential, we need to realise it is not good enough that many still think the answer to developing strong FE unions is to partner it with the local HE. It is not good enough that the development of the National Society of Apprentices has dropped completely off the agenda. And it is simply not good enough that we use a 'one size fits all model' when rolling out campaigns and projects.

- Using ring fenced funding from the Apprentice card, develop the National Society to empower and give apprentices a voice to represent themselves. Creating links with trade unions, to truly support and represent Apprentices we need to ensure work based representation exists alongside that in the classroom.

-When unions are throwing out the rule books, being bold and breaking down barriers to participation. NUS must support this work. Identifying what impact it has and how it can be adapted across the movement We can do more than just producing a 'Best Practice guide,' but a creative solution to a unique problem.

Look out for manifestos especially for FE and nations on the lead up to conference!

It's time conference reflected those who work the hardest on our campuses, those who are rooted in students' unions! I've always been honest about my politics and am standing as an independent candidate. If you want to get involved or feed into my manifesto, please email makeitmattey@gmail.com or call 07414488854. If you require this in alternative formats please get in touch.

