



## ANNUAL REPORT ~ SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES SPORT 2007-08

### Introduction

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report (2007-08) for Scottish Universities Sport (SUS). This is presented in summarised format and seeks to capture and celebrate the major advances SUS has achieved over the course of the year.

Superb progress is being made across the board, and this is enormous credit to the vision, determination and professionalism of all those who serve on our Executive Council, Competitions, Physical Activity and Professional Development Committees, as well as the countless others, both organisationally and individually, who dedicate their time, energy and expertise to the delivery of our national and institutional programmes. We must rejoice that the scope and quality of our sport/physical activity offer has never been better, and our currency with national agencies never higher. This is clearly testament to the progress SUS is making, and underlines the impact our united voice and collective effort can bring.

My sincerest thanks to everyone who has played a part in the ever growing and improving SUS offer.

### The Executive Council

The Executive is dedicated to the policy, planning, resource and advocacy aspects of SUS. Five meetings have been held this year: 27 Aug'07 (Heriot Watt University), 2 Nov'07 (Stirling University), 1 Feb'08 (University of Dundee), 18 April'08 (Robert Gordon University) and 23 May'08 (Stirling University) with significantly more activity in between the formal gatherings. There are four discreet yet inter-dependant areas I would like to highlight.

#### *Executive Business*

There has been excellent attendance at this year's Executive meetings, with full and active involvement from elected members and committee reps. This has promoted balanced, open and searching discussion on a range of key topics, underpinned by a range of pre-circulated briefing papers to allow more informed and focused exchanges. All Exec papers have been administered expertly by Jacqui, and posted on the website for open viewing within the requisite 10 day turnaround period.

#### *Financials*

Budget planning, monitoring and review are key Exec functions, and it is pleasing to report that SUS is on a sound financial footing. As is now convention, the annual accounts will be reconciled at the end of the financial year (31 July), scrutinised by the internal auditor and presented for approval at the SUS Xmas Seminar/EGM in December. That said, some points of commentary are worth making here:

- *Partnership contributions* ~ after extensive discussion, debate and consultation two years ago, we now have an agreed formula for determining partnership contributions. This is based on a pro rata funding model founded on student population (50% of total), registered clubs (30% of total) and gym memberships (20% of total). It is pleasing that SUS enjoys 100% affiliation from its member institutions, which suggests the current subscription model is accepted as fair, transparent and affordable. Through a combination of prudent financial

management and additional funding assistance from our external partners, we have sustained activities on a stand-still budget, and Exec is determined that our commitment to value for money will remain key, especially as the UK landscape changes with the emergence of British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS).

- *External funding* ~ We are enormously grateful for the corporate funding support we receive each year from sportscotland (£35k ~ an increase of £5k from 2006-07), BUSA (£10k) and BUNAC (£5k), and to the many other companies who underpin our annual events calendar with financial and/or in-kind assistance.
- *Financial management* ~ SUS continues to bank with Royal Bank of Scotland, with the requisite protections a Club Treasurer's account provides. Income and expenditure is mapped against the agreed annual Budget, reconciled daily by the Executive Officer and reported monthly to Executive using a detailed financial management spreadsheet. Exec also receives a budget report at each of its meetings. In addition, annual accounts/transactions are scrutinised by the elected Internal Auditor, David Beattie. Exec considered and adopted his Internal Audit report (Nov meeting) resulting in improved petty cash handling, monthly reconciliation and consideration of a new commercial accounting software solution. The audited accounts for 2006-07 were approved by the SUS EGM on 13 Dec'07, and showed an operating balance for the year of -£2,729.53, but with cash assets overall of £73,169.76.
- *Budget update 2007-08* ~ Income and expenditure at end April'08 (period 9) currently stand at £158,519.15 and £125,841.72 respectively (Appendix 1). This is on target with projection, and with anticipated commitments over the next three months, should result in a small operating surplus for the year (circa +£3,000). The 2007-08 figures will go through the constitutionally agreed process of final reconciliation (Chair and Exec Officer), reporting (Exec in August) and internal audit (September-November), prior to formal presentation and approval at the SUS EGM in December 2008.
- *Budget 2008-09* ~ the financial allocations for the year ahead were discussed and agreed by Exec (18 April'08) and are attached herewith for approval (Appendix 2). This will provide the resources needed in key areas, and within affordable limits. It is recommended that partnership contributions for the year ahead be retained at 2006-07 levels. However, this is contingent on the emerging business relationship with BUCS proceeding as expected ~ Exec is confident that this will be agreed during July'08. The proposal is that Scottish HEIs will continue to affiliate to BUCS (to access UK programmes) but for SUS to receive a sizeable rebate to enhance the delivery of local competitions, physical activity programmes and cpd opportunities in Scotland ~ this will provide Exec with the resources it needs to develop the SUS offer, but within the context of a UK framework.

### *Planning and Policy*

Exec has produced and commented on a number of important policy papers, the most significant being:

- *UCS/BUSA* ~ playing a key advisory role in the on-going deliberations between BUSA and UCS around the formation of a new and united organisation BUCS. This has proved a major undertaking this year, and involved the Chair and professional officers in extensive dialogue with the new BUCS Chair (Ed Smith) and CEO (Karen Rothery) to clarify SUS' position within the new organisation. A decision on this, together with the likely financial arrangement, will be known during July.
- *Business Plan* ~ updating the SUS business plan to reflect financial, strategic and operational priorities.
- *Constitutional matters* ~ adopting a range of new policy commitments to 'Equity', 'Anti-doping' and 'Child protection'.

- *'Fit for Purpose'* ~ sustaining a major root and branch review of our governance and business practices to comply with sportscotland's 'fit for purpose' requirements. This was undertaken by AHL Ltd over 18/19 Feb'08 and involved an exhaustive examination of our HR, financial, legal and constitutional procedures. The consultant's assessment was most complimentary though did make a number of valid recommendations to improve financial handling (corroborating payments against invoices/staff expenses), risk management (underpinning contractual relations with the University of Edinburgh; IT back-up and disaster recovery) and succession planning (job remits and induction training of Committee officials). Exec will now address these matters over the year ahead.
- *'Active Students'* ~ following up the consultation response to 'Reaching Higher' with a specific costed proposal to Scottish Government to improve physical activity levels amongst the student population. Valued at £1M per annum, and framed within the working title 'Active Students' ~ SUS awaits a response from the Scottish Government.
- *'Reaching Higher'* ~ being invited to join Scottish Government's review group on 'Reaching Higher' ~ this will evaluate progress (from June'08 onwards) against the national plan and ensure the HE Sector is confirmed as a key delivery partner.
- *Commonwealth Games* ~ submitting a detailed response to the Scottish Government's consultation to secure a lasting Legacy to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.
- *Charitable Status* ~ commissioning Neil Park from Edgewood Consulting to evaluate the worth of charitable status and incorporation for SUS ~ this will be developed in the year ahead.
- *HR Matters* ~ instigating the SUS HR Oversight Group (Chair, Mike Fitchett, Filippo Antoniazzi and a representative from the University's HR team) to uphold the needs and interests of SUS staff.
- *Scottish University of Sporting Excellence* ~ upholding the consensus view of the sector following the First Minister's announcement on 14 May'08 by engaging with the Scottish Funding Council, sportscotland, Scottish Government and Scottish Institute of Sport.

### *Advocacy*

The Exec and the three 'engine room' committees continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the Scottish HE sector in promoting and/or lobbying around our sector's worth in promoting more and better sport/physical activity within the Scottish population. This advocacy role is beginning to pay dividends, and at a range of levels including:

- *Scottish Government* ~ meeting with the new Head of Sport Policy, Kate Vincent, to brief her on SUS and how Scottish HE might contribute to the vision set out in 'Reaching Higher'.
- *Scottish University Sport Research Academic Group* ~ maintaining a productive and mutually beneficial dialogue with our academic colleagues within SUSRAG.
- *Audit Scotland* ~ contributing to Auditor Scotland's thorough review of sport in Scotland (7 Nov'08).
- *National Associations* ~ continuing to engage with a variety of governing bodies/national associations on matters of policy, practice, representation and partnership.
- *Scottish Sports Alliance* ~ participating fully as a member of the Scottish Sports Alliance (3 meetings attended this year ~ involving Scottish Sports Association; Scottish Disability Sport; Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils; School Sport Federation; Scottish Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland) and co-producing

the discussion paper on School Sport, which has been submitted to Scottish Government.

- o *Specific Initiatives* - handling a range of issues and events as they arise, including attendance at consultation and/or promotional events, such as the strategic review underpinning the new University for the Highlands and Islands, the Scottish Government's Forum for Sport and the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games reception.

### *Acknowledgements*

Exec has enjoyed an exceptional year. We are making great gains in all key areas, and we must celebrate our achievements and build on them. A great number of people have played a critical role on Exec this year. My sincerest thanks and appreciation go to all Exec members for the parts they have played during the meetings, and beyond. Their selflessness, professionalism, intellect, time commitment and graft cannot be praised enough. Special acknowledgement must go to Juliet Balfour who is stepping down as Chair of SUSPAC after three years of outstanding leadership and championing of physical activity; and to Mike Fitchett and Filippo Antoniazzi who have provided me with the enormous support and the wisest of counsel during their three years' as Director reps; my thanks also go to Orla Gilmore who is demitting office as Chair of PDC to further her career abroad, to Dougie Macdonald (who has served as FE observer), to David Beattie for fulfilling so expertly the role of Internal Auditor and to Andy Smith and Anna Anderson who have been exemplary as AU President reps. A number of other colleagues also deserve recognition for their contributions to Exec this year, but especially Mark Ritchie, Simon Messenger, Lorna Cruickshank, Osla Allen as well as to Lynne Moyes (University of Edinburgh's HR department) who has assisted us with the SUS HR Oversight Group. I am also indebted to the support offered by some of our key partners, most particularly Lawrie Randak (sportscotland), Neil Park/Chris Robison (Scottish Sports Association), Callum Kennedy (BUNAC) and Anthony Stone (SUS photo). Perhaps above all though, I must pay tribute to Stew Fowlie and Jacqui Stone who have established themselves as the heartbeat of SUS and been responsible for much of the success we have enjoyed over the past few years. In short, their contribution has been truly outstanding, and I cannot thank them enough for the professional authority, innovation, reliability and countless hours they bring to every aspect of SUS. They have been privilege to work with, and an absolute credit to SUS.

In closing, it has been a complete honour and thrill to serve as SUS Chair for the last three years, and I thank you all for the opportunity, support, trust and encouragement you have given me during this time. I really do appreciate it, and genuinely so. I now look forward to continuing my involvements with SUS, but from the side-lines.

Jim Aitken, Chair, Scottish Universities Sport

## Competitions Committee

The committee met six times throughout the year, in various locations.

In line with the new Competitions Operational Plan a number of key objectives have been completed during this time.

For the purpose of this report, the main aspects of the year's activity will fall out of the priority areas identified by the committee in the operational plan at the start of the session.

- Ongoing NGB Liaison - The SUS Competitions Committee Members have led open dialogue with National Governing Body representatives. The main aspect of this dialogue was to be creative with our thinking in how both parties can help reach each others goals. An example of this is the engagement of the Competitions Committee with Tennis Scotland - exploring the possibilities of structured and competitive programmes for all abilities of player in the 16-24 age group.
- Student Consultation - An online questionnaire was setup and feedback collated which helped shape the structure of the new BUSA/ SUS competition structure.
- New League Structure - With consultation from the student membership and many healthy debates among the Competition Committee it was decided to move towards 5 team leagues in the majority of team-based sports for the 08-09 season.
- British University Games 2008 (BUGs) - A huge effort from across the SUS network helped deliver BUGs. BUGs is a multi sport event which sees the Home Nations compete under the Universities banner. The event was co-hosted by Heriot-Watt University & University of Edinburgh and was a major success. Thanks go to both Universities and to the volunteers, coaches, officials and players who all contributed greatly.
- Policies - A significant amount of policy work has been completed this year in areas including Representative team nominations, event discipline, captains' meeting guidelines, new sport criteria and more. These policies have been essential to make sure the SUS Competitions Season has structured guidelines and a clear governance framework.
- Ongoing Support to SUS Volunteer Network - A vital cog to the amount of work completed by the Competitions Committee is its partnership with the SUS SDCs and volunteers. SUS is continuing to look at ways to enhance support to the network of volunteers enabling it to become more robust and sustainable.

### *Acknowledgements*

The committee has enjoyed a busy and challenging but also very rewarding year and is already planning ahead to welcome on its new members. The operational plan is being revised to include new objectives and targets so that the group is ready for another challenging and productive year ahead.

My thanks to all who contributed to this year gone by and best wishes to the outgoing AU Presidents in their further careers.

Mark Ritchie, Chair, Competitions Committee

## Physical Activity Committee

Six committee meetings were held in July, October, and December 2007, January, April and May 2008. Each meeting date included a 2-hour workshop slot as well to which all SUS members were invited.

### *Key areas of focus for PAC in 2007-08*

- **Active Age Festival** - 30<sup>th</sup> August at St Andrews University. Excellent turnout once again from across Scotland and great assistance from student volunteers.
- **Intra-Mural Sport** workshops - following an initial meeting at our October meeting, a workshop was held in Aberdeen at our December meeting
- **Equity in Sport and PA** - at our January meeting, Kristi Long from Sport Scotland joined us. She outlined the context of equity and diversity before looking specifically at some of the challenges institutions face in terms of sport and activity. SUS will be looking to create an equity strategy in the near future and will be in contact with SUS membership for some ideas as to what issues need to be tackled and what the priority areas are.
- **Easter Roadshow** - 3<sup>rd</sup> April at Abertay University. Key members from across the network joined us. The topic for discussion was "Careers - how can we cater for our students through what they learn and experience at university, and how can we prepare them for their future?" The session highlighted a number of areas for future investigation
- **Fliers and good practice guides** - available for download from website
- **Quarterly newsletter** - now into its fifth edition, available for download from website and printed annually for conference
- **Physical Activity and Health Alliance (PAHA) Reference Group** - the group continues to meet and various members of PAC have attended sessions

### *Acknowledgements*

After 3 years chairing SUSPAC it is more than time for me to hang up my hat, vacate the captain's chair! I have been thrilled by the enthusiasm and dedication of the SUS membership. Whether turning its hand to running championships, holding fashion shows or volunteering at events SUS has shown itself to be first-rate. The students are vociferous, intelligent, hard-working and a lot of fun; staff engage with them in debate, frivolity and planning on equal terms, and we have seen changes at parliamentary level and across Higher Education.

Over the last three years I have been privy to meetings with a number of UK bodies and have had the backing of SUS to empower me to fight for health and well-being to be included in BASES, Scotland to be recognised by Skills Active and REPS at a UK level, and HE to be considered within the national PA strategy and ISPAL. SUSPAC has established a quarterly newsletter which is always packed with fantastic research projects, student activities, events and challenges, a series of fliers and good practice guides. I look forward to watching SUS grow and develop and seeing the students drive the agenda forwards, through competition, volunteering, participation and lobbying.

I would like to end by thanking my committee who have supported me, challenged me, and worked with me over these last three years. And of course we could not have done any of that work without the dedication, hard work and support of Jacqui Stone. She has worn out numerous innocent pencils writing minutes, has guided us wisely, negotiated well and always been the first to volunteer her services to filling goodie bags and organising social events. And of course none of our work would have happened if it weren't for the Exec and the good-humoured, wise and patient chairing of Jim Aitken.

Juliet Balfour, Chair, Physical Activity Committee

## Professional Development Committee

This is a short report providing a summary of the business of the Professional Development Committee (PDC) during 2007-08.

The committee met on six occasions this year - 10/9/07, 19/10/07, 22/11/07, 25/1/08, 4/4/08 and 20/5/08. The meetings were split between the University of Dundee and the University of Stirling, so many thanks to both of these institutions for enabling us to use their meeting room facilities through the year.

### *2006-07 Actions for the Professional Development Committee*

- *Audit* - SUS have committed to carrying out an annual shortened version of the Audit, therefore during the Autumn semester the committee spent some time re-visiting last year's questionnaire and adapting this. A summary of the results was prepared and published in the early part of 2008. Many thanks to Jacqui Stone for all of her hard work administering this process.
- *Website* - The website has continued to develop and grow throughout the year, with Jacqui working hard to maintain the high standard she set last year. It is hoped that a monthly e-newsletter will soon be available to members which will be a very valuable addition and should further increase the usage of the site.
- *Christmas Seminar* - The Christmas Seminar was hosted by the University of the West of Scotland through in Hamilton on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2007. This presented a great opportunity to visit one of our newest member institutions. Feedback from the event was very positive, with a varied programme providing interest for all. Once again thanks have to go to Jacqui for all her work in organising the event, and to Siobhan Wilson for organising the logistics for hosting.
- *Annual Conference* - The focus of the Spring semester has been development of the conference programme. Jacqui has worked tirelessly to implement the ideas of the PDC and co-ordinate logistics with our colleagues in Dundee. Our thanks should also go to Osla and her team, who have been instrumental in helping to organise what I am sure is going to be a fantastic event. For the first time this event will include an opportunity for colleagues working within two specific areas to meet and network - elite sport support and operations staff.
- *Student Handbook* - The first stage of the Student Handbook was launched on the website at the beginning of the Autumn semester, providing a very useful resource for presidents, SU/AU executive members and student club officials. Since then a sub-committee have been working to further develop this. The target is to make this information available for the incoming presidents and student club officials this summer. Many thanks to Gordon Cox, Simon Messenger, and Ian Lowe who have had the job of collating and organising this information.

### *Acknowledgments*

I would like to finish by taking this opportunity to collectively thank the members of the PDC for their efforts throughout the year - Osla Allen, Ian Lowe, Lorna Cruickshank, Anne-Marie Hughes, Simon Messenger, and Gordon Cox. I would also like to extend a special thank you on behalf of the whole PDC to Jacqui Stone, our Executive Officer. She has worked tirelessly throughout the year on all of the committee's projects, putting into action all of our ideas and visions. It has been a pleasure working with her.

Orla Gilmore, Chair, Professional Development Committee