



**ANNUAL REPORT
SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES
SPORT
2008-09**

Introduction

As Chair, I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report [2008-09] for Scottish Universities Sport [SUS]. This summary identifies the major areas of our work and highlights significant achievements of the past 12 months.

SUS' members are served by an Executive Council and 3 committees, Competitions, Physical Activity and Professional Development. In addition a number of members input on SUS' behalf into a number of initiatives and organisations within and outwith the sector.

I thank everyone who has contributed to our progress this year and look forward to further strides in the coming years as we move towards 2012 and 2014.

The Executive Council

The Executive has met 5 times: 22 Aug 08 [Robert Gordon University], 7 November 08 [St. Andrew's University], 6 February 09 [Aberdeen University], 3 April 09 [Edinburgh University] and 15 May 09 [Dundee University].

I would like to highlight a number of key topics which the Executive have been grappling with throughout the year.

The Development of a Strategic Plan

Since Conference 08 the Executive has been striving to produce a Strategic Plan which aids the delivery of work by providing focus, sets SUS in context to Scotland's sporting landscape, allows SUS to meet obligations to our partners and clearly explains to others exactly what we will achieve in the coming years.

Thanks must go to Jacqui Stone, Executive Officer for kick starting the work & relentlessly driving us forwards, to Neil Park for his sound advice as well as to others on the Executive and around the network who have commented and amended the various iterations of the document.

I would recommend the Plan to you all and seek your approval to publish and share with all our partners.

Relationship with British Universities & Colleges Sport [BUCS]

Following a transitional year BUCS finally came into being in summer 2008. The Executive have been attempting to redefine, through consultation and negotiation, the manner in which the 2 organisations relate to each other in a number of ways, including financially, whilst fully participating in BUCS organisational activity.

Interim discussions resulted in an initial year's agreement with an increase of £10,000 coming back from BUCS to carry out our work in Scotland. The undercurrent of feeling within the network continues to be one of a need to establish a clearly defined relationship accompanied by financial

arrangements which reflect the value of services received by institutions from both SUS & BUCS.

To that end a “summit” to discuss SUS’ options has been set for June 29 at St. Andrew’s University so that within 12 months changes in the best interests of Scotland’s institutions can be agreed and implemented. I urge you all to make space in diaries to attend and debate the issues fully.

I would like to thank Gordon Cox who along with myself has attended a number of Nations and Regions meetings. Thanks are also offered to Jim Aitken for continuing to participate in BUCS groups discussing Eligibility and High Performance.

Active Students

Stew Fowlie has led the work revamping our Active Students proposal. This has involved discussions with a number of partners including sportscotland and the Government. We believe that the nascent programme gives the opportunity to make a step change in physical activity and sport participation rates especially within Scotland’s Colleges. We will continue to refine and champion the proposals in the firm hope of seeing meaningful progress towards a beginning for the programme in the next academic year.

Scotland’s University of Sporting Excellence & Winning Students

The Scottish Government’s announcement, prior to Conference 08, designating Stirling as Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence [SUSE] and linking a Scottish Funding Council [SFC] funded scholarship scheme to that announcement has created an amount of work for the sector.

The Executive Council was extremely keen to ensure that any investment into a scholarship scheme [subsequently labelled Winning Students] is well spent, utilises the experience and expertise of our network and gives both academic choice and appropriate support to high performance athletes in Scotland.

On behalf of SUS, Directors of Sport from Strathclyde, Robert Gordon, Dundee and Edinburgh Universities have been in regular contact with the Scottish Government and SFC as well as contributing to the Winning Students Shadow Advisory Board.

The manner in which the development of the programme has been managed has created frustration throughout the year but the willingness of those working on SUS’ behalf to consult as widely as possible and to act in the best interests of the network as a whole has resulted in a reshaped scheme which better reflects our wishes. I thank all those who have made comment upon and contributed to our response to the papers and meetings during the process.

Finance

The audited accounts for 2007-08 were approved at the EGM on 11th December 2008, showing an operating balance for the year of £10427.21 with cash assets of £83602.97.

As at end May 09 income and expenditure stand at £181711.21 and £131320.75 respectively [Appendix One]. Executive expects that outturn for the year will be inline with expectations returning a surplus in the region of £10,000; these figures will be reconciled, reported to Executive, internally audited and presented for approval at SUS EGM in December.

At the Executive meeting in May the Budget for 2009-10 was agreed and is attached for approval [Appendix Two]. You will notice that membership fees are proposed to rise by 2%; the first rise in fees since SUS was formed in order to ensure that we can continue to improve services to members whilst mitigating a small level of risk to an increase in contributions from sponsors and partners.

The Executive also agreed that because of exceptional costs related to maternity cover and further investment into our sporting offer that a negative budget for this financial year was the most sensible way to keep SUS developing as we would wish. However during this period the Executive will strive to drive up income from partners, external sources and sponsors to cover this deficit.

HR Oversight Group

The Group has met once in February 2009 to discuss matters all matters relating to the manner in which SUS recruits, manages and develops full time staff.

Early in the year the Group oversaw the appointment of Shona Roche, Administration Officer into the team who has settled in extremely effectively and is already making a great contribution to the work of the organisation. The Group also advised SUS Executive on the plans to cover Jacqui's forthcoming maternity leave.

Edinburgh University must be thanked at this point, not only for providing such excellent facilities for our office base but also for the invaluable support to our staff through the University's existing policies and procedures and the HR Department themselves.

Partners and Sponsors

Our key partner sportscotland continues to provide both financial assistance and in kind support in terms of sound counsel from Lorna Callan who contributes fully to Executive discussions. Thanks must also be extended to BUCS for their involvement over the past 12 months.

Thank you to our main sponsors Linklaters, Powerade and In Spirit. Without this support we would not be able to carry out all that we wish to achieve, including a free conference.

Competitions

The group gathered in various locations across the country over the course of five meetings and lived up to its name by engaging in some well-fought encounters on the field of play as a post-script to each meeting.

Within the body of the meetings, which were all structured around a tight operational plan, the following key areas were addressed:

- Development week - the first annual start of season workshops took place in across 12 sports (various sites) and sought to educate clubs on the season ahead and address other areas such as coaching, officiating and club development. The days were delivered in conjunction with SGB colleagues and proved very successful and will be rolled out further in 09-10.
- Strengthening structures - a number of sports have moved towards a development group model in place of the traditional one-man-band approach of a single volunteer completing every task. These development groups have formalised relationships with SGBs, brought some strategic direction to our sports and allowed for succession planning. This model will be pursued in most sports over the coming 12-24 months.
- New sports - work is well underway with embracing University Curling, which for many years operated outwith SUS (or SUSF). A revitalised programme of fixtures and events will come on stream next term. Work is also ongoing with cycling following a successful session during the Christmas Seminar at QMU.
- Event planning - the group has laid the foundations for a more rationalised approach to running SUS events in future seasons. We now deliver in excess of 150 events during the Academic Year and it is intended to move to a three year planning cycle for dates and venues of these events, allowing for fairer distribution and more advanced planning.
- Performance Sport - a sub group comprised of colleagues working in support of performance athletes has been convened and has provided the catalyst for emerging partnership work with the Scottish and Area Institutes of Sport on marketing and performance lifestyle issues.
- College engagement - 2008-09 saw the first involvement of college students in selected SUS events including athletics, golf, rugby and snowsports. Further roll-out of opportunities to college colleagues is planned for the 09-10 Season and beyond.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the group for their energy and passion during the year. It has been a pleasure to work with the Presidents who once again contributed fully to every part of our work and they have been ably supported and engaged by the old(er) heads on the group. The future of the SUS sporting offer looks very bright and I am proud to have played a small part in this over the past two years. Finally I must acknowledge the tireless and expert work carried out on our behalf by the SDCs and other volunteers in each of our sports. Their contribution is enormous and is greatly valued by students and staff alike.

Mark Ritchie, Chair, Competitions Committee.

Physical Activity Committee

Four committee meetings were held in July and October 2008 and February and April 2009.

Key areas of focus for PAC in 2008-09

- Active Age Festival - 28th August at the University of Aberdeen. Great weather and a fantastic turnout for this 3rd event. Huge thanks goes to the support staff of student volunteers and department staff.
- Dance Festival - 1st February at the University of Dundee. The first dance festival attracted 90 participants who took part in various types of dance including jazz, hip hop and contemporary. Several of the Universities put on performances of their own choreography and it is hoped that this will continue to grow and develop over the coming years.
- Special Populations and Exercise - at our February meeting we held a workshop to consider the implications of working with special populations. Dr Anna Campbell presented her research on exercise and cancer and the benefits of staying physically active during and after treatment. Dr Lynsay Rankin provided an overview to several conditions including Multiple Sclerosis, Stroke and Cerebral Palsy.
- Innovation in Physical Activity - at our April meeting our workshop focussed on new ways to get students and staff physically active. The SRU demonstrated their new street rugby concept which makes rugby more accessible and fun for all ages and abilities. Traction Kiting introduced the basics of power kiting on the beach at the West Sands in St Andrews.
- Flyers - new topics continue to be explored and are available for download from the website
- Quarterly newsletter -available for download from website and printed annually for conference

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their support over the past year. It's been fantastic that our events have continued to grow and none of this would have been possible without the hard work behind the scenes. Huge thanks also go to Jacqui and Shona for their guidance, advice and humour.

Jackie Davidson, Chair, Physical Activity Committee.

Professional Development Committee

The committee met on six occasions this year with meetings moving round the various Universities of the committee members, so many thanks to these institutions for hosting us. This has been an exiting year with major development for SUS such as the strategy and marketing plan which will drive forward the work of the committee.

2008-09 Actions for the Professional Development Committee

- Audit - SUS have committed to carrying out an annual shortened version of the Audit. A summary of the results was prepared and published in the early part of 2009. Many thanks to Jacqui Stone for all of her hard work administering this process and the institutions for providing this valuable information.
- Christmas Seminar - The Christmas seminar was hosted by Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh and we were very grateful for their fantastic support and indeed their excellent facilities. The main theme of the seminar was looking at active travel and how we can all inspire more staff and students to embrace healthier and more environmentally friendly ways of travelling. The seminar was well attended and continues to provide a great opportunity for the committee to provide members with development opportunities.
- Homecoming Annual Conference - The annual conference continues to dominate the business of the PDC committee. It has been a busy year both reviewing the successful conference held at Dundee University last year and planning and preparing for this years event. This year the committee have all been involved in the planning of the homecoming conference and we have tried to support the SUS staff to plan and organise the event. We feel this year's event has something for everyone and the programme has been developed to provide learning in all three areas of active-competitive-innovative. We hope you enjoy the event.
- Special Interest Groups - The committee continued to build on the special interest groups and held a second administrators forum and a Quest seminar for Operational Staff. Both days were a great success and have shown that there is a good opportunity and benefit to providing networking opportunities for specific groups of SUS members. Move events are planned for next year and there will be a follow up to Quest at this year's conference.

Acknowledgments

I would like to finish by taking this opportunity to thank the members of the PDC for their efforts throughout the year - Lorna Cruickshank, Grant Reilly, Alex Cooper, Paul Blake, Anne-Marie Hughes and Pete Burgon. I would also like to extend a special thank you on behalf of the whole of PDC to Jacqui Stone and Shona Roche who have guided and supported the committee. Your help is invaluable and we would like extend our best wishes to Jacqui for her own special event! We are praying it's after conference!

Catriona McAllister, Chair, Professional Development Committee

Concluding Remarks

My final thanks must go to Jacqui, Stew and Shona who work tirelessly on our behalf and very well as a team. I am confident that the arrangements to cover Jacqui's maternity leave will prove effective and wish Jacqui good luck as she takes a short break to start a family.

I hope that by the time you read this report we will be concluding another successful conference and looking forward to SUS continuing to make strides forward in placing the tertiary education sector at the heart of Scotland's sport and physical activity landscape.

Filippo Antoniazzi
Chair, Scottish Universities Sport

