



Annual General Meeting
May 06 2008

**Reports from the
Executive Officers**

Report from the President

It feels rather early in the year to be saying thankyou and goodbyes, but it's also an apposite time for me to look back over the last 21 months in office and reflect. Hopefully between this report and my speech I'll cover the basics.

The obvious changes have been to the constitution and the structures of the Students' Union – coming up with structures is easy, I leave to next year's team and the students the hard work of implementing and driving through the new system. It'll take some effort, and not all of the changes will be immediately useful, but I really think that the right decisions have been made in order to safeguard the future relevance of the students' union.

Less obvious changes have been made to the staff – the end of the 06/07 academic year saw the retirement of the longstanding Clubs and Societies Administrator, leaving large shoes to fill. The appointment of Glyn Parry has been much welcomed and he has fit nicely into the Union family. Helen Munro was appointed at the beginning of this year as SVB Co-ordinator and is immensely capable, bringing with her a wealth of experience from the third sector and a willingness to challenge and be challenged. I look forward to a great future for volunteering at Bangor University under her capable stewardship. June will see the latest addition to the team, Ceri Russell, as Democracy and Communications Administrator. She stood out at interview stage as a talented and methodical individual and will be key to supporting the Union's democratic efforts. I chaired all of these three interview panels and am pleased to have chosen three great individuals who have/will fit in very well to the Students' Union.

Entirely un-obvious changes have been made to the Students' Union finances. I took on the hard task of setting the Union budget last year and set about the even harder task of persuading the University to part with cash. It has to be understood that we inherited an extremely precarious financial situation in 2006, a situation that will need yet more time to ensure that officers and staff alike can sleep soundly at night. One of the biggest responsibilities of being an officer and a trustee is safeguarding the future of the Union for coming generations of students. I'm proud to have done that here.

More than safeguarding the future of the Union financially, it has been very exciting to have led the Union during a time of change both for the University, with the name change and award of degree awarding powers by the Privy Council, and the Union, with the new structures and plans moving ahead for the new Arts and Innovation Centre. I am more than grateful for the unstinting efforts of the Union staff, who have an incredible passion for looking after students and seeing you all benefit from your time at Bangor; it has been a privilege to work in such a fun and productive environment.

I thank also the students who have supported our efforts as sabbatical officers in the past two years – I often wonder who I will bump into in future careers, mixing as I do with such promising and talented young people. I feel old these days, especially now that I'm five years older than the freshers who came in this year. Bangor has been especially good to me over the past six years and even though I'm leaving, I look forward to being able to support Bangor University and its students' union in the future.

Sam Burnett
Union President 2006-2008

Report from the Communications and Societies Officer

This year has been a busy one, although my priorities have been quite different to last year's; I worked on more big projects this year, sometimes struggling to complete smaller tasks as a result.

I spent a lot of time working on Bangor's governance review, culminating in our new constitution. I drove the consultation process, compiling all your responses into a report which shaped the new structures you will be working from next year. I hope the changes will make the Students' Union more accessible to ordinary students, that the new committees will allow for more student involvement whilst freeing up sabbats to get out of their offices and talk to students.

I also ran the sabbatical elections last March; although the figures were slightly down on the past two years, I was very pleased with the turnout as we were only electing five positions, not fifteen, and weren't running a referendum alongside the elections. The elections were very time-consuming and I felt I was neglecting the rest of my work, so I resigned as Elections Secretary after the sabbatical elections.

This year I started the Give It A Go programme, a year-round calendar of taster sessions. Although I think we had some really good events lined up, because Ellie retired and Jenna left I struggled to devote enough time to publicising the individual events this year so turnout wasn't great. All the same, almost everyone seems to have heard of Give It A Go. We have just employed a new staff member who will have responsibility for implementing the programme next year; I'm looking forward to handing it all over to her and think it has the potential to really grow into a big part of the SU's activities.

Approximately 2000 students attended Serendipity 2 this year, a fifth of all Bangor students. I'm pleased that stallholders feel Serendipity 2 is a worthwhile event, whether it be for recruiting new members or simply for publicising their activities. Many groups contributed to the festival feel of the day by doing activities like face-painting, photography, henna and even camping outside in a tent, and I'm very grateful to those groups for their efforts.

If I have one regret this year, it's that all this constitutional and election work meant I did not spend enough time on societies. I didn't get much developmental work done, I just responded to problems as they arrived in my office. However, the Societies Committee has gone from strength to strength, greatly reducing my workload by assisting societies directly with any problems.

Speaking of societies, the Societies Awards were held on 25 April in Bangor City Rugby Club. The awards were very successful: attendance was high, nominations were very strong and there was an amazing array of masks on show. I have worked hard to develop the awards during my term in office, and I felt that this year's awards upped the standard considerably. I'm very grateful to the Awards Committee for all their assistance and to all the societies who wholeheartedly took part for supporting me in my endeavours.

Seren has continued to develop this year, with the final two issues having an extra four pages. The office space I arranged for them last year has made a huge difference, and I think the editor's constant presence in the Students' Union has made everyone much more aware of the paper.

One of the hardest parts of this year was the debate over whether Storm FM should broadcast on FM or online. I strongly felt that we should consider carefully whether FM was the best means of broadcasting to our

students before committing to a five-year FM licence, and despite opposition from Storm FM I took this debate to Council, who decided that Storm should commence online broadcasting within a year.

Although it still has a very long way to go, I think the SU website is in much better shape than it was a year ago. Trying to implement changes to the website has been the bane of my life, one part of my job I can't wait to hand over.

Thank you to each and every one of you for getting involved in the Students' Union, for coming along to meetings such as these. The Union shouldn't be a top-led institution, it should be ordinary students shaping our policies and telling us sabbs what to do. And thank you to all of you who have taken your committee roles seriously and haven't had to be chased up for every single bit of paperwork.

Good luck to next year's sabbs and senators: it's undoubtedly going to be hard work implementing the new constitution, and I really hope you'll see it through.

Report from the Athletic Union President

Andrew Redfearn, Athletic Union President

It's been a busy year for the AU this year; working without an administrator till November proved to be challenging and very demanding but we made it through with no disruption, all our teams made it to their matches and some of them even brought back some silverware.

I said in October that I'd work to get financial support from the University for the facilities that we would have to buy in this year, well success, it was before Christmas that I had secured this! I also said we'd have a solution to the canoe sheds. Well chaps, success again, this been an issue since when I arrived in Bangor 5 years ago and I'm pleased to say its resolved. The building has been secured, the plans have been drawn and the renovation work will be starting soon. Come September, Canoe and Canoe Polo will have a shiny new home.

Results wise; this year has been better then last too, three teams top of their league and four through to knockout rounds, a great result for Bangor, its proof that even with what we have, we can be successful. We even managed to squeeze in a few friendly matches against Aberystwyth, proving definitively that we are better at sport than them!

Captains and the keen amongst you will have hopefully attended some of the consultation for the sports strategy. This has taken me the best part of two years to get going so please continue to be involved. Rob will continue to lead my fight but he will need your help and support to show the University how passionate we are about sport. Those of you at the meeting will understand how seriously the University are taking this. There is an opportunity to create something great here, a legacy for those involved. Being competitive by nature there is a part of me that would be sick to come back at old boys and see much better facilities than when I was here, but then again, I'd also be proud that it was us who were pivotal in achieving that! Make sure you stay involved in the strategy, there is plenty more work to do!

So finally not much more to add, I'm pleased to leave the AU in July in the safe hands of Rob and Glyn. I've done my best to provide continuity for the AU, passing as much as I can onto Glyn and I'm confident he'll do you all proud next year. I'd like to wish Rob the best of luck, he's got an exciting time ahead of him!

Report from the Education and Welfare Officer

My work this year...

:

This year has been a bigger challenge than I could have ever realised, but it has been fun! ☺

Freshers Week:

saw the beginning of the fun this year with organising minibuses, running serendipity stalls, visiting halls to welcome new students and hand out useful information, as well as training sessions for Nightline and LGBT.

Re-freshers week:

This was a one off week long programme of events and activities to get students re-freshed after their January exams. There was a mixed response to the week and its activities but on the whole everyone seemed very enthusiastic about the programme.

Give it a go sessions:

I have worked with Carolan, Frodo, and Bethan to organise events for the GIAG programme. I organised: self defense sessions, sign language, and a trip away. This programme of events was really good at getting people involved in new and exciting things.

Christmas and Easter Events:

I ran some films and events over the holiday periods to make sure that students who were still in Bangor had something to do and some way to meet new people. The sessions were not as popular as we had hoped but the students who did come along and get involved were very positive about them.

Nightline:

has been a big focus for me this year as I saw first hand how the service had lost its credibility, support and drive over the previous year- and this was something I was determined to change. This year with my help we have: set up on-line rota, revamped the publicity to be brighter and more attractive, standardised our new volunteer training, updated the constitution, produced an annual review to show everyone the true value of Nightline, introduced committee training to better inform the committees of their roles and helped them to plan more efficiently for the year, created a volunteer spreadsheet which has helped no end to keep tracks of our members and actually know who they all are! The Nightline constitution has been updated and SVB will now be Nightlines full time staff support which will mean that the sabbatical officer is not left to run nightline by themselves! We have doubled our volunteer numbers this year and have more welsh speakers than previously- but there is still lots of work to be done!

The advice centre:

I worked closely with the Advice Centre at the beginning of the year to organise publicity to help raise the profile of the Centre. I have made an effort to hold regular meetings with the Advice Centre.

Course Reps:

is a great system whereby students can have their say and make a real difference to the education that they pay so highly for. The scheme is definitely too big for one person to manage alone and this has been evident this year with the struggle to implement everything I have wanted to for course reps- but the discussion board, website and contact I have had with course reps so far has been very positive. The university and the

departments need to take their responsibilities for the course rep system a lot more seriously and I would like to thank those dedicated course reps from this year.

Wrexham campus:

i have been on regular visits to the Wrexham campus this year to visit the course reps and students studying there. The students in Wrexham face completely different issues to students here in bangor, both relating to their course and their location. There is obviously a limited amount that we can do for the students in Wrexham but simply being there for them and helping them to sort out any issues that arise for them has been so gratefully appreciated by them this year. There is now a Wrexham discussion board on the intranet, a room in Wrexham for students to visit if they have problems, union information boards for them, and

LGBT:

Committee have been working really hard this year and often with little thanks from their members. I think that this group could be a really strong force in Bangor for LGBT students and could be a really inclusive social and political arm of the union but it needs to be more open to support and more willing to work with the union in order to get what they need and wanted. They have some amazingly dedicated and hard working committee members who really are a credit to their standing committee and these people have been a pleasure to work with this year and I truly hope that they stay a part of the committee for the future and continue their good work.

What else.....?

I have held weekly storm shows with guests from various departments, societies and groups.

Daily fire fighting on various issues!

I have helped out at University Open Days to promote the Students' Union and its activities.

I have attended NUS Annual Conference and various NUS training sessions and events.

Attended the National Postgraduate conference.

Went with some students down to Cardiff for a rally on debt.

Done tonnes of work for steering and tried to help out where I can! ☺

Report from the UMCB President

End of year report:

Over the past year I've been doing all sorts of things that I didn't expect or imagine I would be doing. It's been an amazing experience and I'm proud to have had the opportunity. Here are some of the things that I've done:

JMJ:

One of my intentions was to spend more time at JMJ. Rather than going there during the day when many students are in lectures I've been going there for around an hour in the evening about twice a week. I've visited more regularly when there were names or money to collect for a trip or event. I believe that this approach has worked.

Also as JMJ is going to be moved over the next few years I prepared a questionnaire in order to establish what the students would like. I intended to circulate it in February but the JMJ move was raised at a University meeting. A working party was formed to discuss the matter and we have made some changes to the questionnaire. We hope that the needs of the Welsh students will be brought to the attention of those who decide the future of JMJ in plenty of time.

Events:

Since UMCB is a very sociable union, organising events is an integral part of the work. We have been lucky with Clwb Cymru. Despite seeing a decline in the popularity of other Union nights Clwb Cymru has held its ground well so far. The possibility of having Welsh language music only at Clwb Cymru was discussed but this proposal was rejected.

Clwb Cymru is held every other week so I have been organising evenings at the Globe to bring the students together. Unfortunately fewer events have been held there this semester.

A good crowd attended the Inter-Collegiate Dance in Aberystwyth in November and also the Inter-Collegiate Eisteddfod in February. It was great to see Bangor well represented there.

The annual rugby trip went to Ireland this year; we had one or two problems but on the whole everyone enjoyed themselves. Some have still not paid but I will ensure that everyone eventually does.

Federal College Campaign:

This year was a key year for the Federal College Campaign as Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party announced some kind of strategy for a Welsh Federal College. The Assembly Government launched a paper on the matter but as the government only recommended an increase to four million pounds in funding over three years (1% of their annual expenditure on education in Wales) we sent a delegation to picket the event at Cardiff. This was part of a national campaign that saw Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Bangor and Swansea students unite.

Bangor and Aberystwyth also got together to write End of Term Reports for all of the Universities' departments on the basis of their Welsh medium provision.

By the time you will be reading this report I will have attended the NUS Wales Welsh Language Conference with Glesni, the Union's Welsh Affairs Officer, where we will be discussing the way forward for next year.

Bilingualism:

It's very difficult to ensure that everything is bilingual and to get hold of those who have broken the bilingual regulations. I feel that I have been fairly strict with the bilingual policy. Before the term began I contacted the Television Licensing Authority as I hadn't received bilingual material from them as requested; this was subsequently resolved. Over the rest of the year I've been informing people, ranging from the Union's clubs and societies to external companies, about the bilingual policy and attempting to ensure that everyone adheres to it. Sometimes people don't understand the value of the bilingual policy or else ignore it and there remains a negative attitude towards it so this work can be difficult.

As part of the Elections Committee I promoted the Union Elections and encouraged people to vote and then took part in the count. I enjoyed these three days immensely but I'm sorry if I asked anyone to vote more than once!

As I'm still part of the Committee I'm still busy urging people to stand as Senators in the coming election by putting up posters and e-mailing UMCB members to inform them as well as other minor duties such as proof-reading elections material.

As the Local Council Elections are coming up I have been busy, along with Xanthe, the Welfare and Education Officer, and Carolan, the Communications and Societies Officer, encouraging students to register to enable them to vote in the elections as it is important that students are represented on local councils.

Communication:

I have a weekly programme on Storm FM to promote UMCB events and to raise awareness. I have worked closely with the *Ddraenen* crowd, writing articles and helping with the printing and have contributed two articles to *Seren*.

I have also contributed UMCB publicity material to the University's marketing department. This has been useful both to the University and to UMCB alike.

I have attended several Open Days, two of them Welsh medium. It's very important to have Union representation in such events in order to give prospective students the full picture.

As part of the Freshers' Week activities this year I welcomed a great many students informally as they moved into halls, and formally in welcome meetings for students living at home and students in general. *Canolfan Bedwyr* arranged an informal reception in collaboration with all the departments offering Welsh medium courses to raise awareness about Welsh medium modules. We have seen an increase in the numbers studying through the medium of Welsh this year but there is plenty of room for improvement.

This year a multi organisational group, *Mudiadau Dathlu'r Gymraeg*, was formed to celebrate the Welsh language. 13 organisations came together including UMCB. It was the group's intention to organise one big event this year but instead of that we have so far been organising individual events. UMCB held a special *Clwb Cymru* on Welsh Education Day as part of the celebrations. It is hoped that a conference will be held in July where each organisation will send delegates.

I was part of the Union Governance Review group that discussed possible new structures for the Union before consulting with students.

From day to day I have been doing various things such as translating the occasional piece, I was on the door at Academi when the Advice Centre and Nightline held a SIN night and I have mixed with students as much as possible.

In order to keep this report concise I haven't mentioned everything so if you would like to know more about anything you're welcome to contact me.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone who has been part of UMCB this year in any way and especially those who have helped on the committee. Finally, I would like to wish Rhion the best of luck next year.

Report from the Welsh Affairs Officer

Over the last few months my duties have meant that I have helped Bethan and worked closely with her. I have helped with almost every *Clwb Cymru* and they are still very successful. In the weeks when there wasn't a *Clwb Cymru* we tried to organise an event in the Globe, such as a Karaoke or quiz, or else a pub crawl. For example on Thursday 11th October we organised a quiz in the Globe and it's fair to say that the activity was a great success and the pub was full.

At the UMCB GM in October we elected the new UMCB committee. Unfortunately there wasn't a great deal of interest but we did eventually succeed in filling most of the posts.

I have been on Storm FM once or twice with Bethan publicising *Clwb Cymru* and UMCB events.

The Inter-collegiate Dance was held at Aberystwyth with a bus and a minibus going down on the Friday night with Bethan responsible and a full bus and another half full bus following on the Saturday morning and I was responsible for the people travelling on these.

After Christmas there was a bit of a mix-up between *Clwb Cymru* and AU night dates but we held our first *Clwb Cymru* of 2008 on the theme of Chavs during the first week of term.

We held practices for the choir and female singing party for the Inter-collegiate Eisteddfod at Carmarthen. Bethan couldn't be there as she had family problems so it was my responsibility to ensure that everyone got there on the Friday night. In the end only 22 people decided to go down on the Friday so we had to change to a smaller bus; another 60 people followed on the Saturday morning. We came fourth out of five in the competing but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. A gig was held in the evening and everyone knew when the buses were leaving. Rhion, next year's UMCB President, helped me round everyone up and make sure that they all got on the buses home.

We held our rugby trip to Ireland on 7th March. On the day of the trip everyone knew which bus and boat they were on and I crossed to Ireland with the first crew. After arriving we had a little difficulty finding our accommodation but with a little help we finally got there and everyone found their rooms. Although there were a few problems with the hostel regarding payment, we had a very successful weekend.

The year has been a valuable experience and thanks to everyone who has helped.

Report from the Students' with Disabilities Officer

Over the last year I had several aims:

Making links with other SWD Officers at other universities and seeing what ideas they have implemented.

Improve the amount of information given to students about what the university can do for them, from acceptance to graduation

Improve facilities at the university so that all students receive the best possible education.

I am pleased to say that a lot of these have been done, we now have links with Universities in Wales such as Lampeter, Glamorgan and Cardiff and know that Bangor is definitely on the right track in things that it is doing to help students with disabilities.

Over the last year I have been working with a few different people such as Liz Du Pre and Anna Storey in making sure that students do get the right information about the support that they can get. Over the next year, hopefully new students that state on UCAS that they have a disability will automatically be signed up to a blackboard site which on it will have information readily available so that no effort really need to be made in finding stuff out (e.g where to go to register for exam support).

Facilities that have needed improvement have been simple changes, but have had a lot of opposition. The main thing that I have been working on is the introduction of podcasts in lectures. Podcasts have the ability to make students revision easier and better. The university has in part agreed to review the copyright situation and rooms that are being renovated are having software installed so that it is possible for the technology to be used.

This is a huge step forward compared to the starting point last year but we must remember that we as a student population are still taking 'baby steps' in getting everything sorted to perfection. The copyright issue does need to be talked about so that lecturers are protected by law, when they are discussing their ideas.

I would like to end by wishing the sabbatical officers next year all the best and hoping that they will continue to take the battle for better facilities for students further.