

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BUCS EXECUTIVE

### **OPTIMISE THE RIGHT TIMES TO ENGAGE WITH STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN BUCS FOR THEIR FEEDBACK, DEPENDING ON THE TIMING OF THEIR INTERACTION.**

The breadth and type of engagement that a student can have with BUCS through an academic year can vary on a number of factors, such as the sport they play and the type of competition they engage in. In order to capture the thoughts and feedback of as many students as possible in an accurate and timely manner, we must engage at the correct times. The BUCS Insight team will review and implement improvements in the timing of survey and explore the best way to collect this data.

### **REVIEW THE AREAS OF QUESTIONS WITHIN THE SURVEY, AS WELL AS THE TYPE AND MODE OF QUESTIONS BEING ASKED.**

This is the first piece of research in this area by BUCS, which has thrown up learnings to be taken going forward into future iterations. From year to year, there is an opportunity to reflect on the data that has been collected and look for topic areas that can be included in the data collection. The BUCS Insight team will review the content present within the survey and make amendments where necessary, to ensure the most pertinent data is being collected.

### **INCORPORATE A LONGER LEAD IN TIME TO ALLOW BUCS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE THE SURVEY TO THEIR OWN STUDENTS**

The optimal way to engage with as many students as possible is a collaborative approach between BUCS and their member institutions. The support that member institutions can provide BUCS in engaging students is invaluable and can significantly help BUCS understand the viewpoint of as many students as possible. An increased sample size will allow meaningful data to be able to be shared with individual institutions on their own students, whilst also allowing BUCS to analyse the data from a wider range of intersections e.g. by sport, by institution, which will provide BUCS with a more comprehensive view of the experience being had by participants engaging with BUCS sport.

## **UNDERTAKE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE BUCS PLAY APP**

The BUCS Play app was a significant factor that is detracting from the student experience when engaging with BUCS. Listening to feedback from across the season, BUCS have committed investment to upgrading the app regarding improving the infrastructure and events section of the app which aims to improve the user experience. The impact that this has on the satisfaction of students and members using the app should be monitored and assessed.

## **ENSURE THAT THE DIVERSITY OF REPRESENTATION OF INSTITUTIONS, SPORTS AND PARTICIPANTS PRESENT WITHIN BUCS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS IS AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE.**

There were a very small number of comments from students around the representation within the BUCS communications of the traditionally 'smaller' institutions and lower participated sports. It is recommended that BUCS ensure they are reflecting as diverse range of sports and institutions as possible. Although there was not a direct theme on the diversity of participants reflected in this media, there were limited comments present. Therefore, the diversity of participant should also be considered as part of this.

## **STRIVE TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN.**

Although the comments made in this area did not constitute an overall theme, there were limited comments in relation to inclusive environments for para-athletes. For all students to feel like they belong at all BUCS events, the recommendation is to confirm the provisions for fostering inclusive environments are being implemented across the BUCS sporting event offer.

## **REVIEW AND ACTION WHERE POSSIBLE THE EVENT SPECIFIC QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK RECEIVED.**

There were limited comments made through the qualitative data collected, which highlighted instances where students had a negative experience with the areas of the organisation of specific events. The areas raised are recommended to be used by the BUCS event leads, alongside the post event feedback collected through the 2023-24 season, to implement improvements for the 2024-25 season.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBER INSTITUTIONS**

We are aware that our member institutions vary in a number of ways and not all recommendations may be applicable to each member. These recommendations are made by using the overall themes from the data we've collected on the sporting experience of our student participants in higher education competitive BUCS sport. We are aware that the sentiment of students may differ by sports within an institution. However, as mentioned within the report, we have been unable to analyse by sport to specify further within the recommendations. Therefore, these may serve as a check point for institutions to understand further internally the sentiment of students in the highlighted areas and how this may differ by, for example, different sports.

### **UNDERSTAND WHETHER STUDENTS FEEL SUPPORTED WHEN PARTICIPATING IN HIGHER EDUCATION SPORT**

When asked the question, whether support from university staff enhanced or detracted from the student's experience, the majority of the student responses fell into the neutral response, however over 1 in 10 reported this is detracting from the experience. BUCS recommend that member institutions engage with the students participating in BUCS sport to understand how supported they feel and any areas where they could feel more supported.

### **EXPLORE WHETHER STUDENTS FEEL THEIR SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE BEING CELEBRATED.**

'How my university promoted my team/sport successes' was the most reported factor that is detracting from the competitive higher education sport experience. With this being a general theme across the whole sector, it is recommended that institutions further explore, with their own sport clubs and students, how their successes have been promoted and what promotion they would like to experience. It is likely that this will be different from institution to institution, therefore a targeted internal approach is likely to be the most appropriate.

### **REVIEW THE COMMITTEE MEMBER TRAINING BEING UNDERTAKEN AT YOUR INSTITUTION AND HOW APPRECIATED YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS FEEL**

Given their positive impact on student experience, it is crucial for universities to maintain strong relationships with club committees, providing them with the necessary support and resources to continue their valuable work. Over a third of the club committee member responders to the survey were either neutral or disagreed that they felt adequately trained to carry out their club committee

member role and 40.7% agreeing that they feel appreciated by their institutions. We recommend that our members institutions further explore whether this applies to the club committee members at their institutions and if necessary, review the training being completed and understand ways they their committee members would feel more appreciated. In order to support the collaboration across the sector, BUCS will look to share the case studies of best practise from institutions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BUCS EXECUTIVE AND MEMBER INSTITUTIONS AS A COLLECTIVE**

### **SUPPORT THE COLLABORATION OF INSTITUTIONS, BUCS AND NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES TO HELP PROGRESS THE STANDARD OF OFFICIATING TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS ACROSS THE SECTOR.**

Standard of officiating was one of the most reported factors that is detracting for the student's experience competing in higher education sport. The improvement of standard of officiating is not something that one party can improve on their own. What is required is a collaborative effort between institutions, BUCS and sport national governing bodies. To help drive this positive change, BUCS can help support the level of awareness and connecting the conversations of where help is most required. The BUCS executive will also start to audit the standard of officiating landscape. This will look to identify the most impacted upon and challenged sports (and where this is occurring), the challenges that are being faced, but also areas of best practise to identify what is working well.

### **ADVOCATE ALLOWING WEDNESDAYS TO STAY FREE TO ALLOW FOR STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN BUCS SPORT WITHOUT CLASHES.**

Comments came through from students on the need to advocate Wednesday afternoons being kept free to enable them to attend and compete in their afternoon sports fixtures, without having to miss their timetabled academic studies. BUCS are currently working on a guidance document which will support member institutions in justifying the impact they are having on the certain aspects of the student journey e.g. student retention, student recruitment, graduate outcomes. This piece of work, once released, can help support institutions demonstrate the value sport brings to the institution and subsequently help support any conversation on advocating this topic, to make it easier for students to attend their fixtures.