

University of Glasgow

Students' Representative Council



Annual Review 2020-21

Providing effective representation, support, opportunities and services for and on behalf of the students of the University of Glasgow.

Foreword

Welcome to the Glasgow University Students' Representative Council (GUSRC) Annual Review for 2020-21! This last year has provided its fair share of challenges for all of us, but it's one the SRC have faced head on. This report provides a summary of some of our key activities in representing, supporting and engaging students at UofG.

In a year where we may have expected engagement to drop given the pandemic and online fatigue, the opposite happened. Students were more engaged with the SRC than ever before as they reached out to us in these difficult times. COVID-19 brought serious challenges for students; studying throughout a pandemic, being isolated from loved ones, job losses and less income. We raised these issues and more right up to Court and Senate level, constantly lobbying for the best student experience during an unprecedented set of circumstances. Through our work, we saw the University implement a No Detriment policy and set of Academic Support Measures, offer early cancellation and rent rebates for those unable to return to university accommodation, and alter their conduct procedures to be more supportive of those in halls of residences.

Our Autumn and Spring elections saw an increase in positions filled and voter engagement. Almost a year after it was originally meant to take place, we coordinated the rectorial election, which saw The Honourable Lady Rae come out victorious to work alongside the SRC for the next three years in representing students.

Offering support and ensuring student wellbeing are central to the SRC's work.

We moved our Mind Your Mate Suicide Prevention and Let's Talk About Sexual Violence workshops online to ensure we were still reaching and educating students on these important topics. Our Mind Your Mate training is expanding to include resilience training, necessary now more than ever to equip students with the skills to protect their mental health.

Working alongside the University, our representatives have been involved in reviews of the Disability Service and the Student Code of Conduct, ensuring that the student voice is heard and pushing for better outcomes for students. Early in the academic year, there was a COVID-19 outbreak at the university halls of residences. We worked closely with the University to ensure welfare checks were carried out on isolating students, as well as providing them with food packages and financial compensation in the form of one month's rent rebate.

Longer term, our Council voted to endorse a report from the Green New Deal society, noting the SRC's commitment to sustainability and to influencing the University to go above and beyond its own Sustainability Strategy.

2020 saw our volunteering efforts grow in new directions. At the onset of the pandemic, GU Volunteering introduced our #ViralKindness campaign to help vulnerable people in the community impacted by COVID-19 whether that was offering to pick up shopping, post mail, giving a friendly phone call, or getting urgent supplies. Our Volunteering & Social Justice Fair was held online over 3 days in February and featured 21 presentations from community and student-led volunteering providers, leading to over 100 new volunteers signing up to our service. At the start of the academic year, our

volunteering opportunities continued with Freshers' Week where we were able to hold our Freshers' Festival, the only one of its kind in Scotland. This was a huge success and provided new students an opportunity to be welcomed to Glasgow and see what the SRC and our clubs and societies have to offer.

With so many students isolated and alone the inaction offered through student societies was more important than ever. As the support needs of societies changed drastically and we saw a 250% upsurge in requests for assistance as we reviewed our support provision to assist our 306 affiliated clubs and over 16,000 members with operating effectively in lockdown

In a year consumed by COVID-19 and its many challenges, 2020-21 was still a success for the SRC. We remain an integral part of the student experience and the University, continuing to respond to student needs and expectations in a fast-changing environment. None of this would be possible without every individual involved with GUSRC, both staff and students. An immense amount of work goes in behind the scenes to keep us all afloat so a special thank you to all involved. Thank you as well to those we work closely with in the University and in external organisations for supporting us and challenging us in our roles. It has been a pleasure to be involved with GUSRC this past year and we hope you enjoy reading about all that we have accomplished this past year.



Liam Brady
SRC President 20-21



Bob Hay
Permanent Secretary

About Us

MISSION

GUSRC's mission, as stated in the 2015-2020 strategic plan is:

"To provide effective representation, support, opportunities and services for and on behalf of the students of the University of Glasgow."

AIMS

GUSRC operates according to three high-level aims which define the three key roles of the organisation on campus. These are:

Representation & Engagement

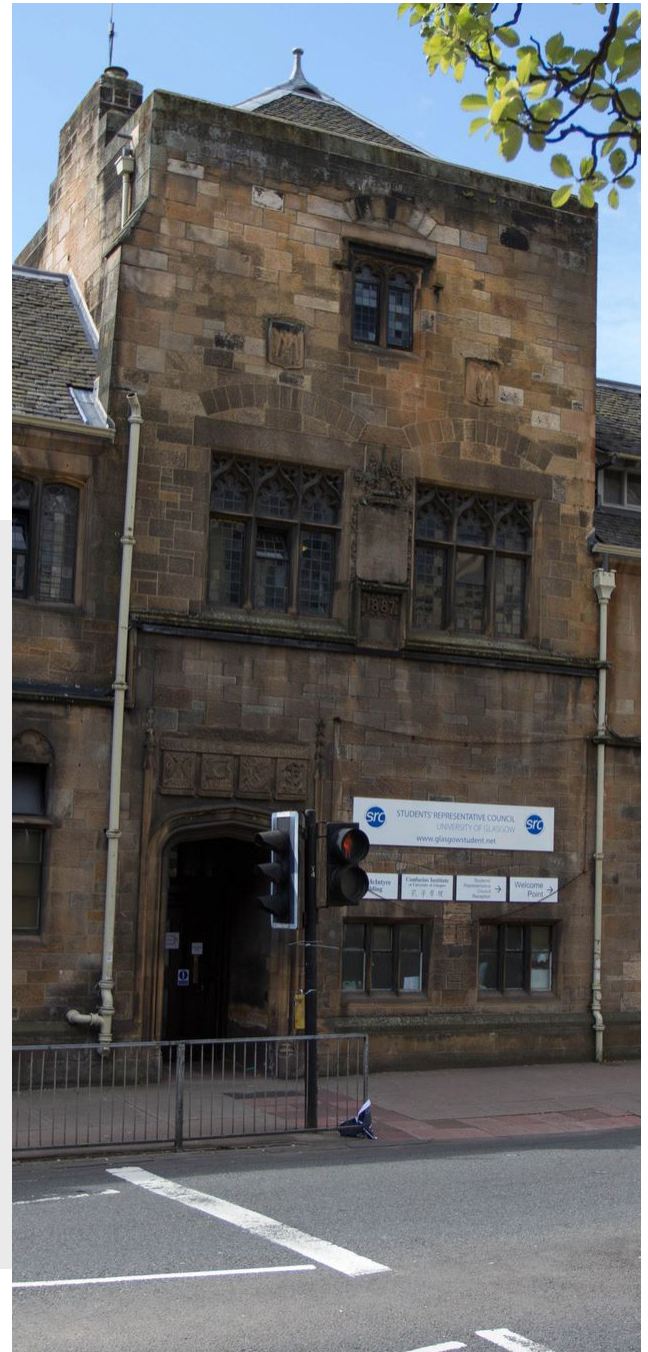
Ensure the interests and views of our members are represented and addressed throughout the University and externally.

Support & Well-being

Promote the well-being of existing students and potential students by providing independent professional support services which reflect the diversity of the student body.

Volunteering & Community Engagement

Contribute to a thriving campus life and individual personal development through provision of opportunities and activities which meet the intellectual, cultural and social needs of our members.



Representation

Elections

GUSRC runs two sets of elections annually. The Spring elections include the most senior positions of SRC President, VP Student Support, VP Education and VP Student Activities all of which are full time salaried (sabbatical) positions. The Autumn elections are for less senior positions and tend to have a smaller voter turnout as a result. This year GUSRC also assisted in running the University of Glasgow Rectorial Elections.



AUTUMN ELECTIONS

Our voter turnout in the Autumn 2020 elections saw a 21% increase versus the previous year.

October 2019:

2204 students voted

October 2020:

2664 students voted



SPRING ELECTIONS

Our voter turnout in the Spring 2021 elections saw a 14% increase* versus the previous year. Every sabbatical position was contested, and the elected officers for 2021-22 are:

- President: Ella McCabe
- VP Education: Mia Clarke
- VP Student Activities: Sam Malis
- VP Student Support: Eva Simmons



March 2020:

3306 students voted

March 2021:

3773 students voted

14%
increase
in voter
turnout
for our
Spring
Elections*

Class Reps

GUSRC is considerably larger than its elected representatives on Council - with over 1,200 class representatives on campus, we consider there is potential to develop engagement and gain wider influence and understanding of learning and teaching.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES: INFLUENCING CHANGE

The SRC trained 894 class representatives in 2019-20.*

The most recent annual class representative survey found:

- 81% of respondents felt well prepared for their role by the SRC training (86% for international students)
- 77% found it easy or very easy to raise issues at Staff Student Liaison
- 81% reported that some action had been agreed or taken as a result of their input

894
class
reps
trained*

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Through our annual class representative survey over 80% of Class Reps reported that they had developed communication and listening skills and felt these skills increased their effectiveness in their role and their future employability. Class reps consistently espouse how rewarding they found their tenure. Nearly half of all Class Reps reported that action had been taken by the University on issues they had raised this year with a further 25% of actions agreed to be enacted in the next year.

"a challenging experience by virtue of remote teaching but a rewarding one nonetheless"

"As my last year as a student rep, I really loved it and enjoyed it. It's great to be of support for students"

"Being a class rep has built my confidence in liaising with my student colleagues and the staff to resolve issues as a community"

"Character building - felt in contact with other students and aided them in their worries"

The latest class rep survey found

- 76% believing that the role enhanced their communication skills
- 53% believed it enhanced confidence
- 48% reported an improvement in negotiation and diplomacy skills
- 41% developed a greater understanding of meeting conventions



CLASS REP FORUM

We continued our strong links with class representatives and hosted 2 Class Rep Forums. Each event was split into three, mixing topical discussion platforms and opportunities for less formal interaction. Although hosting these events online was a challenge, both were well attended and allowed class reps to interlink whilst enabling us to gather important academic feedback. Topics discussed included: building learning communities, sustainability in and decolonisation of the curriculum, and student academic experiences during COVID-19.

'In one word, how would you describe your experience with online learning?'



Representation

Academic Issues

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES

The No Detriment Policy (NDP) ceased effect in September 2020, with the stipulation that discussions would open up again should the need arise. Following representations from Council members about the continuing difficulties of trying to study in the conditions imposed by the pandemic, we asked the University to reinstate the NDP. Due to concerns regarding the value of students' degrees, the University chose not to reintroduce the NDP.

Although we understand the University's reasoning, we also recognise that this decision was not easily accepted by many students, many of whom had hoped for a replication of last year's policy to reflect the significant negative impact on studying during COVID restrictions. We worked closely with the University to find the best possible alternative, and a number of Academic Support Measures were agreed and put in place including further extensions and relaxation of requirements for Good Cause.

FURTHER ADDITIONAL TIME FOR TIMED ONLINE EXAMS

Recognising the difficulties many students may face this year, we pushed for as much additional time as possible to be allowed for those sitting exams. The University agreed to allow for double time for all timed exams as it was felt this would address the challenges of online exams during the pandemic, but

also be inclusive to disabled students who required reasonable adjustments previously. Student concerns were raised about the fairness of this approach and we discussed these extensively with the University.

Moving forward, we believe that it is vital for the SRC and the University to find a way to engage with all students, especially those who previously had additional requirements when sitting assessments, in order to ensure the extent and variety of student concerns are recognised and addressed before any decisions are made.

24-HR EXAMS ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

With the move to online learning and assessment, it was felt that exams should be open for 24-hours to be more inclusive and as a supportive measure to address issues students were facing during the pandemic: such as being in different time zones and not having a quiet environment to sit exams.

We continue to believe that 24-hour exams are the most inclusive form of assessment and advocate for efforts to be made so these can be effectively delivered across the University. A University working group, including our representatives, has recently been set up to look at the future of inclusive assessment.



INFLUENCING NATIONAL CHANGE

Our President and 5 Council members attended the Scottish Affairs Committee to help with their inquiry into Universities in Scotland. We raised with MPs the reality of what students are experiencing and pushed for government support and action on issues including academic support, financial packages for tuition fees and rent, and better mental health support.

Further work on influencing national change includes our sabbatical officers attending a forum with Richard Lochhead MSP to question government decisions and relay the concerns of our students. At a UK level, we have been involved with our counterparts in the Russell Group (RG) and other student associations to collaborate on campaigns, including the #ForgottenStudents campaign and letters to the RG and MPs demanding better for students on issues ranging from rent to tuition fees.



CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

We participated in the University Code of Conduct working group; arguing for students' continued right to have an independent Advice Centre advocate in senate assessors meetings, seeking greater clarity on appeal grounds, and ensuring serious misconduct cases in University accommodation are dealt with under formal conduct procedure and thereby carried out properly, transparently and according to clear rules laid down. We also successfully argued that those accused of breaking conduct rules in halls have the right to independent representation in the form of a member of our Advice Team. The revised Code was approved by Senate in April 2021 and will come into force in 2021-22

RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (FEBRUARY 2021)

Our submission outlined concerns that exempting PBSAs from regulation had resulted in inconsistency, lack of clarity and unfairness for students, most of whom were unfamiliar with housing law and many of whom do not have English as a first language. We highlighted instances of providers placing barriers in the way of students accessing their new rights under the Coronavirus (Scotland) (no2) Act 2020.

We argued strongly for the need for standard tenancy terms, tighter regulation and clearer forms of redress for students. This is the first step in the SNP Government's manifesto commitment to "undertake a comprehensive review of the Purpose Built Student Accommodation sector and bring forward a student accommodation strategy for Scotland" and we will keep a close eye

on progress and any further opportunities to shape the strategy for the benefit of students.

ALUMNI FEES DISCOUNT

Following lobbying from the SRC, University Management agreed to continue the 20% alumni discount (introduced for 2020-21) for a further year. So, we have achieved double the normal discount of 10% for alumni starting a Masters or PhD in 2021-22, saving self-funded students hundreds - or even thousands - of pounds in fees.

OFFICER WORKLOAD

The workload on our 4 sabbatical officers continues to increase year on year, and working from home during the pandemic has further contributed to this. In the last year our officers participated in over 70 different University Committees / Working Groups. In total they attended 2,322 Zoom meetings.*

2,322
Zoom
meetings
attended
by our
Sabbatical
Officers.*

Engagement

Welcome Events



FRESHERS' WEEK

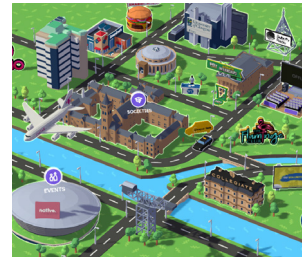
GUSRC continues to carry the responsibility of coordinating and managing Freshers' Week, working with the University and facilitating links with the other student bodies. In September 2020 we successfully organised and managed **the only blended Freshers' Week in Scotland**, as many organisations opted for online-only welcome activities. As with previous Freshers' Weeks, all of our events were free to attend and designed to be as inclusive as possible, including events specifically for international students, disabled students, student parents, mature students and postgrads.

63 events over 8 days

8,758 free tickets distributed

3,100+ students attended the only on-campus Freshers' Festival in Scotland

150+ events from across the Student Bodies hosted on the GUSRC Native site



REFRESHERS

In January 2021 we organised a series of digital Refresher events, including an exciting interactive platform: 'The Digital Welcome'.

31 events over
2 weeks
336 free tickets
distributed

Most popular events:

- **Find a Mate Whilst You Isolate:** a student mixer run via Zoom
- **Virtual Campus Tours**
- **Conversational English Café for non-English Speakers:** a volunteer-led event

NOVEMBER NEWCOMERS

We coordinated **16** events and activities across November to welcome the second intake of students to life at the University. Events had a focus on introducing the new arrivals to Glasgow and giving them opportunities to make social connections.

Awards

STUDENT TEACHING AWARDS (STAs)

This year marked the 11th Annual Student Teaching Awards organised by GUSRC. The aim of the awards is to provide a platform for students to recognise and celebrate the contribution of academic staff, support staff, and student representatives at the University. To maximise engagement, nominations were kept open across both semesters from 16th November 2020 to 26th February 2021. Considerable effort was invested in generating participation in the Awards. Both the 2020 and 2021 awards were impacted by the pandemic, however our team were able to pivot to online and provide extremely well received virtual ceremonies for both events.

1,100 nominations
76 shortlisted nominees
15 award winners
17,199 total online reach for the virtual award ceremony

VOLUNTEERING, CLUBS AND SOCIETIES (VCS) AWARDS

Each year, the VCS awards recognise and celebrate the incredible efforts made by any UofG student who plays a leadership role in a club or society, who volunteers with GU Volunteering or who makes a significant contribution to the local community. To reflect the University's and GUSRC's commitment to working with communities across Glasgow and beyond, we introduced the Principal's Award for Civic Engagement. We hope that this award will inspire students to engage with the range of volunteering opportunities we offer across the City. Our virtual awards ceremony received lots of positive feedback and we were pleased that the shift to an online ceremony allowed us to continue to showcase and acknowledge the considerable work done by UofG Volunteers.

550 nominations
47 shortlisted nominees
10 award winners
15,534 total online reach for the virtual award ceremony



Engagement



EXAM DE-STRESS

Once again GUSRC led on the coordination and delivery of the cross-campus Exam De-stress programme. This year the programme aimed to support students through the Winter and Spring exam diets. Additionally this year we targeted those in the August Resit diet.

It was challenging to move to a fully online programme of events, however we were able to host a range of engaging de-stress activities that received significant participation rates including: calligraphy for meditation, virtual therapy dog sessions, poetry workshops, de-stress doodling, dance classes, yoga and more. Every aspect of the campaign shared the common goal of encouraging students to be mindful of their mental health and take breaks from studying to try new activities.

‘Every aspect of the **Exam De-stress** campaign shared the common goal of encouraging students to be mindful of their mental health and take breaks from studying to try new activities.’



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We hosted a series of virtual events across October 2020, including intersectional panel discussions on topics such as “Being a Black Woman in Society Today” and “Being Black and Scottish” featuring both students and external speakers. These events, as well as our workshops on “Decolonising the Arts” and “the LGBTQ+ Sphere”, were extremely well received. The month of events was managed in collaboration with the student bodies, clubs and societies including GU Students of Colour Network and the African Caribbean Society.



LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

To celebrate and recognise students and staff in the LGBTQ+ community, we worked with our clubs and societies to put on a month of virtual events. Activities included film screenings, quizzes, online coffee meet-ups, an event exploring LGBTQ+ terms in British Sign Language, a look into Glasgow’s “Queer Interwar Underworld” and an evening with Inclusion and Wellbeing Consultant David E. Hull-Watters.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

In March 2021 we hosted a series of events to mark International Women's Week. Many of these were in collaboration with clubs and societies such as "the lowdown on contraceptives" with Glasgow Students For Choice, a Creative Industries Panel with GU Muslim Students Association, and a virtual art gallery curated by Glasgow University Magazine.

RAISING & GIVING (RAG) WEEK

We ran several fundraising activities for students to get involved, including dedicated events for a chosen charity every month throughout both semesters. The RAG programme included a dedicated RAG Week, with 5 days of online activities for students to come along to whilst fundraising for some very worthy causes.

The fundraising total at time of writing sits at **£57,178.*** Despite restrictions, we have more than doubled funds raised through RAG last year. Through RAG we have enabled students to raise money for charity whilst getting involved in a number of events and activities including: staying motivated during lockdown, virtual coffee mornings, DJ sets and speed-dating.

£57,178
raised by
the Raising
and Giving
Committee.*



TRANSGENDER STUDENT DAYS

We organised two key events in support of Transgender students: Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov 20th 2020) - in collaboration with GULGBTQ+ - and Transgender Day of Visibility (Mar 31st 2020). The first mourned the loss of trans people to transphobia, and featured a series of online activities, including a candle-lit vigil and poetry reading, as well as signposting to support resources. For the Day of Visibility we arranged for the trans flag to be raised on campus, and also produced a video instructing students on how to add their gender pronouns to their Zoom profile - a small change that can have a big impact.



Engagement

Digital Events

Throughout the year, we rose to the challenges of lockdown and sought to combat “Zoom fatigue” by putting on a series of innovative and alternative online activities, each with the goal of bringing students together and giving them the chance to make connections.



CRAFT UOFG: MINECRAFT PROJECT

Hundreds of students engaged in this unique project to recreate the University campus within the hugely popular video game Minecraft. Students were encouraged to form groups to work on different buildings and kept in touch with each other via the communications platform Discord.

FIND A MATE WHILST YOU ISOLATE

Throughout the year we ran 12 sessions aimed at students who were struggling to make new connections. These events were hosted by SRC volunteers, who gently led the conversation with ice breakers. Participants rated these events highly in terms of satisfaction.

VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH: CHINA CAFÉ

This event provides a casual opportunity for students who do not have English as their first language to meet one-to-one with their peers, to help improve their language skills and connect with someone new.

Postgraduate Events

Despite not being able to access The Gilchrist Postgraduate Club for much of the year, we were still able to put on a series of events aimed at our Postgraduate students, with the purpose of encouraging a sense of community.

THE DIVERSITY QUOTA

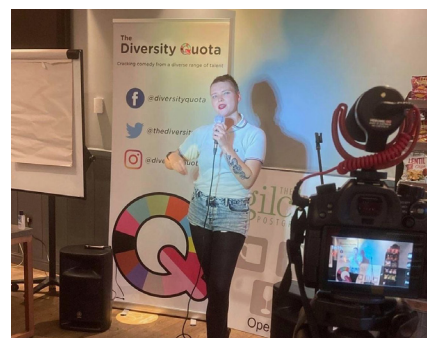
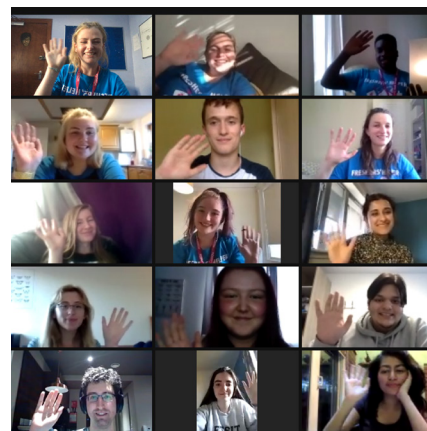
A comedy night which challenges the status quo. This is the only long running comedy night in Glasgow which selects comedians who are diverse and asks them to share stories about their experiences in a funny way. This night allowed students not only to listen to new perspectives (or see themselves reflected in a comedian), but also gave them a reason to laugh.

DRAG 101

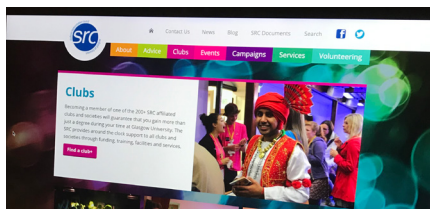
A drag night which showcases the leading drag artists in Glasgow, run by two longstanding Queens within the scene. The aim of the night was to share different styles and types of performers, to give the audience the full depth of what drag encompasses. This night was aired live, so that the performers and the audience were able to interact with one another and create that live gig feel.

KNITTING FOR FUN

A social knitting evening every 2nd Monday which was run via Zoom. This meant that our regular knitters were able to still meet and socialise, and it also allowed any new postgraduate students a space to meet people, which was especially important this year. As this was a regular event, it allowed people to build friendships and also pick up a new skill!



Communications



WEBSITE

Our webpage glasgowstudent.net continued to be a widely used resource, with many students returning to the site regularly (**858,327 total page views***). Six out of our ten most visited pages related to clubs and societies support, with other top pages including our Flatshare service (11,101 views) and our Advice Centre page of tips for writing an appeal letter (8,345 views).

Most visited pages:

- *Find a club* (44,900)
- *Clubs* (31,129)
- *Homepage* (30,696)
- *Clubs Handbook, Secretary Role* (30,696)
- *Letter to the Principal re: Tuition Fees 2016/17* (12,157)
- *Flatshare* (11,101)
- *Clubs Handbook, President Role* (8745)
- *Clubs Handbook, Treasurer Role* (8396)
- *Advice Centre, Tips for Writing an Appeal Letter* (8345)
- *Clubs Categories, Arts & Music* (8056)

858,327
total
webpage
views*

SOCIAL MEDIA

We worked to grow our social media presence across the year and used Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to engage with students, University staff and the wider community. Through these channels we aim to communicate to students the broad range of services that we offer, as well as promoting the work we do around representation, support & well-being, and community engagement.

In addition to promoting our internal services and activities, and assisting with the University's campaigns, we also created content focused on:

- Keeping students informed on the COVID-19 pandemic
- Responding with agility to local, national and international affairs
- Campus issues such as bookable exam spaces, digital accessibility and access to the library
- Student housing rights
- Studying and exam tips
- Fearless flat hunting tips
- Celebrating cultural, community and religious events (Christmas, Hannukah, Holocaust Day of Remembrance, Memorial Day for Sinti and Roma, Diwali, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Windrush Day, LGBTQ+ Awareness Days)

2,376,100
total Twitter
impressions:
1,110,221
total Facebook
impressions



EMAIL

Throughout the year we regularly used mass email communications to keep students updated on work we're undertaking on their behalf. Although there is always a lot for us to share, we try to strike a balance between keeping students informed and trying not to be intrusive.

Despite the proliferation of social media platforms, email remains our most reliable method of reaching out to students, and is often the best way to elicit feedback and engagement in our activities. The sector-wide trend for social media engagement is that Facebook and Twitter are being used less by the 8-24 demographic, with other sites like Instagram and Tiktok proving more popular with this cohort.

This stratification of social media highlights the importance of email as a channel for reaching all students, regardless of their age group or other factors, and is therefore essential to our commitment to being an inclusive organisation.

Support & Well-being

The Advice Centre

GUSRC's Advice Centre employs 4 FTE staff members and provides high quality, impartial advice and advocacy on a range of welfare and academic issues to students and prospective students of the University. The Advice Centre also plays a key role in informing and legitimising our policy development and campaigning work.

CLIENT CONTACT

During the year, the Advice Team dealt with 1,795 cases (for comparison, in the 12 months from May 2019 the advice team dealt with 2,076 cases). The Advice Team moved to remote working on March the 17th and quickly adapted to advising clients via email and online video meetings.

Between September and November 2020, along with the SRC's Welcome Point and Admin Team, The Advice Team was back on-campus on a rota basis, offering a same-day face-to-face appointment service along with telephone advice whilst continuing to offer advice via email and online video conferencing. The second lockdown meant a return to remote working with the Advice Team returning to campus in mid-May, operating a hybrid model that will likely be continued post pandemic.

TIME SPENT

89,903 minutes were spent in direct contact with clients during the year; this is comparable with the typical annual figure of 86-88k minutes. It was decided to add

'online meetings' as a contact category in the case-recording system in October 2020. Since then, the advice team have spent 3225 minutes in online meetings with clients (this is included in the direct contact figure above). A further 57,537 minutes were spent on non-contact casework (e.g. researching information for clients, contact with third parties on clients' behalf and so on), which is comparable with typical annual figures. This equates to around 9.8 hours per day spent by the team on advice work, compared with just over 9 hours per day in the last annual report (and 7 hours per day in 2017-18).

16% of cases were classed as 'Quick Advice Given', which meant they were dealt with in a single interaction. Conversely, therefore, 84% of cases required more work to resolve. (The equivalent figures in the previous annual report are 27% quick advice given, 73% more work to resolve).

STUDENT ORIGIN/FEE STATUS

Scottish domiciled students were 31% of those identified (versus 33% in 2019); international students 47% (versus 39% in 2019); EU students 14% (versus 18% in 2019); rUK students 8% (versus 10% in 2019). These figures should be treated with caution as over half of our clients did not provide information about their origin/fee status so this is not a complete picture.

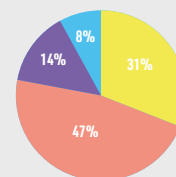
LEVEL OF STUDY

Of those identified, 46% were undergrads, 35% were postgraduate (taught) students

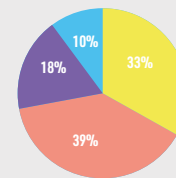
and 10% were postgraduate (research) students. The remaining 9% of our client group includes students' parents, staff, former students, prospective students and members of the public. Again, however, almost half of our clients did not provide this information so this is not definitive.

Student Origin

● SCOTLAND ● INTERNATIONAL ● EU ● rUK



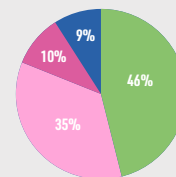
2020-21



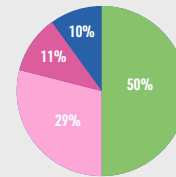
2018-19

Level of Study

● UNDERGRADUATE ● PG(TAUGHT)
● PG(RESEARCH) ● OTHER



2020-21



2018-19

CASE TYPES

As in previous years, University/Academic issues (796 cases), Housing (503 cases) and Finance (219 cases) are the most common types of enquiry. The top ten case topics (by number of cases) were:

1. Student Conduct (Plagiarism / Collusion)
2. Leaving Private Accommodation Early
3. Academic Appeal
4. Other University / Study Issues
5. Housing Disrepair
6. Complaint (academic)
7. Finding Accommodation
8. Tuition Fees
9. Student Finance
10. Council Tax Liability

£78,594
raised as
a result
of 44
student
financial
gains*

OUTCOMES & GAINS

Over the year there were:

- 17 appeal outcomes, of which 10 were successful
- 138 conduct cases of which 109 were successful
- 3 complaint cases, all successful
- 44 financial gains, totalling £78,594*
- 608 Non-financial gains

Non-financial gains included almost 500 cases where the student was provided with information they needed to make a decision about how to proceed. Other gains included students being accepted back onto courses (8 cases), resubmissions or resits being granted (31 cases). In addition, 10 students had a grade reviewed/revised; 3 were allowed an uncapped re-sit and 2 received an apology, homelessness was prevented in 2 cases and a health and safety risk averted in a further 2.

As always, there were potentially many more positive outcomes but we can only record confirmations from students when they choose to inform us. 656 cases were closed when the student did not make further contact.



PUBLICITY

During periods of national lockdown, it was even more important than usual for the Advice Team to make efforts to reach a wider audience, working with the SRC communications team to publicise elements of the range of web-based information at relevant times of the year. The aim is to make information available to students at the most likely point of need.

The Advice Team review and update sections of the website; adding new resources as the need becomes apparent - see page 19 of this report. Although impossible to fully quantify, website analytics data indicates that many students benefit from information downloaded from the advice section of the website or from the range of rights based leaflets the SRC produce.



Support & Well-being

Campaigns



HOME STUDENTS

We established a Home Students Working Group and invited University stakeholders to participate. The group circulated a survey amongst Home Students to ascertain their views of the student experience, receiving a significant response of **1,400**.

A paper was submitted to the Student Experience Committee, highlighting that **64%** of respondents did not feel that they belonged to a community. The committee endorsed the recommendations of the paper that an intern be funded to identify potential for “quick fixes” for some of the issues raised through the survey, and conduct further qualitative research into some of the more complex matters.

MIND YOUR MATE

We were awarded £22,000 by the National Lottery in March 2017 which enabled us to roll out the fifth iteration of our successful Mind Your Mate programme during 2020-21. The funding allowed us to recruit and train a cohort of 12 volunteer trainers in suicide prevention. Funding for the initial phase of the project had enabled us to fund the training of only 6 volunteers, most of whom have now left the project. The development of a further 12 trainers has enabled us to sustain the programme, despite previous departures, which are generally a result of student trainers graduating and moving on.

The volunteers went on to train 441 students/staff over 19 sessions (fewer sessions than last year as more can be trained when delivered online), including 119 PGRs & 45 Peer Wellbeing Support Service Staff.

Feedback from participating students:

- **87%** were more likely to ask for help if they were feeling down or depressed
- **98%** were more likely to help a friend if they were feeling down or depressed*
- **96%** would recommend other people attend the programme



98%

of students attending our **Mind Your Mate** workshops felt they were more likely to be able to help a friend if they were feeling down or depressed*

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure we continued to raise awareness around topics such as consent, support and bystander intervention, we reviewed our 'Let's Talk About Sexual Violence' workshops so that they could be delivered online. The implementation of the online model took longer than expected therefore participation reduced. We still managed to train 215 students, including Freshers' Helpers from the Unions and GUSA; we also trained student societies and ran monthly open sessions.

In other areas of our campaigning around Gender-Based Violence, we worked alongside one of our affiliated clubs 'Successful Women at Glasgow (SWAG)' to develop 'Dear Safe Space' – a social media campaign focused on providing a collaborative, cross campus approach to tackling GBV, as well as highlighting vital resources available on campus and elsewhere. Alongside SWAG we organised a vigil for Sarah Everard. The turnout and atmosphere hit close to home for many of us, reinforcing our determination to make the University of Glasgow a safe place for each and every person.

Feedback from Let's Talk included:

- 90% were confident about how to support survivors of sexual violence
- 88% know how to access support if they are affected by sexual violence
- 96% were more likely to intervene if they saw that a friend felt unsafe
- 100% think the programme will have a positive impact on students at the University of Glasgow*

Sustainability and the climate crisis have been key issues for our council members this year, and via a vote GUSRC have given our support to the student-led 'Green New Deal'. This document calls for a radical set of changes to be made in order to tackle the impending climate crisis. In addition to the Green New Deal, the SRC have adopted 'Ecosia – the green search engine' as each use of this site leads to a tree being planted.

'The Sustainability Challenge', organised in conjunction with GUSA, was set up to encourage clubs and societies to think about sustainability in their operations. Clubs were encouraged to compete against each other in terms of their environmental impact to earn points; the winners received prizes from sustainability-focussed companies. 5 SRC affiliated clubs won awards, including:

- **Language for Water and Global Goals** - Bronze
- **Glasgow Uni Amnesty and Glasgow Uni Magazine** - Silver
- **Just Love Glasgow** - Gold

100%
of students
attending our
**Let's Talk About
Sexual Violence
workshops think
they will have a
positive impact on
students at UofG.***



DISABLED STUDENT SUPPORT

The University undertook a review of disability provisions across the campus. The Disability Review Working Group was established with SRC representation. Our officers led a series of focus groups, and compiled the findings into a report which helped inform the recommendations of the WG.

In December we organised activities to recognise International Day of Disabled People, including a film screening, and the publication of a guide to 'Language and Disability'.

FREE SANITARY PRODUCTS

Since 2018 GUSRC have worked with UofG to provide free sanitary products to a number of key buildings on campus and to ensure these supplies are sustainable and reusable.

Support & Well-being

Services, Information, Publications

The Services, Information and Publications offered by GUSRC continue to be highly sought after by students and are a key part of the support we provide at the University.

WELCOME POINT ENQUIRIES

The Welcome Point remains an ideal show-piece for new visitors to campus with our student staff team happy to engage and inform visitors. Despite being closed for parts of the year due to COVID restrictions, our team handled **29,462** email & face to face enquiries during the period 1st May 2020 - 30th Apr 2021.

2ND HAND BOOKSHOP

With **3,500** books sold in the year up to closing early in March 2020 due to lockdown, the second hand bookshop benefited our students to the tune of **£33,500*** over the period. The bookshop has been closed since March 2020 due to social distancing and spatial limitations. With over **700** emails from students in early May 2021 asking about buying/selling books, the easing of lockdown has enabled us to establish a click and collect service operated through the Welcome Point.

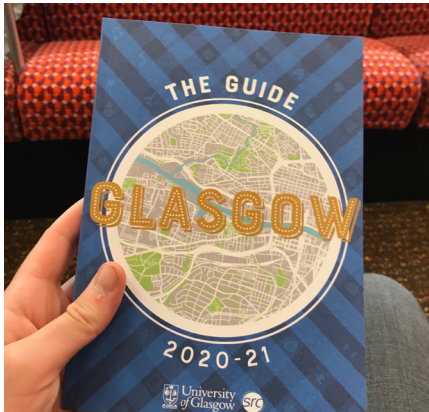


HISTORICAL TOURS

At lockdown (March 2020) we were on track to have our best year in terms of revenue and daily visitors. Future growth looked secured as we established two new contracts with an international tour company.

By lockdown there had been over **2,200** tour participants for 20/21 and we had to cancel **38** private tours booked between March and July with **468** participants. With demand increasing and lockdown easing we reopened the tours, operating on social distancing principles from April 2021.

£33,500
in funds
benefiting
students
raised by the
2nd Hand
Bookshop*



PUBLICATIONS

The Student Guide, produced by GUSRC, has long been seen as the key introductory document to life in Glasgow in general, and the University of Glasgow in particular. Produced to high quality print and design standards, 6,000 copies of The Guide were produced and made available to undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of Freshers' Week. As with previous years, we reviewed all aspects of The Guide including design, content, and structure in order to produce a stylish and relevant document that will hopefully serve as a useful introduction to University life and the city itself.

NEW INFORMATION RESOURCES: WEB-BASED

GUSRC's website continues to be the "go to place" for independent, accurate and up to date rights based information and advice for students on a host of topics unavailable elsewhere on University platforms. A sample of the webpages our team created includes:

- COVID-19 FAQs webpage updated regularly throughout the year
- Leaving Purpose Built Student Accommodation because of COVID19 webpage created to raise awareness of students' new rights under the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No2) Act 2020
- Debt and Consumer Debt sections of website updated, and linked in support for gambling addiction
- 'EU students and the Brexit Settlement Scheme' page
- 'Money at the End of your Course' and 'Benefits over the Summer' pages (in light of changes to COVID rules, Brexit and Universal Credit)
- '6 top tips on online exams' for Winter 2020 exam diet comms
- '5 top tips on housing', for general comms November 2020
- Flatshare guidance to assist students who needed to move flat, to do so in line with COVID rules
- COVID-safe page to help clubs, societies and volunteers with preparing for the ease of restrictions in Autumn 2020



Volunteering & Community Engagement

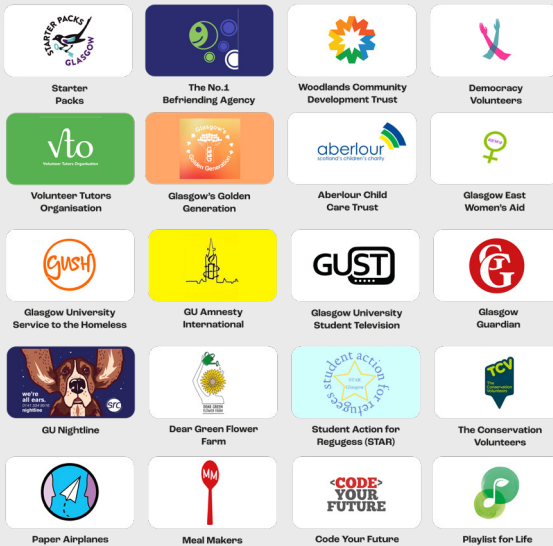
Volunteering

GUSRC is acknowledged by the University as the key partner organisation for progressing and supporting extracurricular activity at UofG: *"In partnership with the SRC and student services, we are increasing engagement with extracurricular activities through societies, volunteering, internships, enterprise, to promote skills development"*. UofG Outcome Agreement 2019-20 to 2021-22

812 volunteers

122 volunteering opportunities

58 community and student-led providers, including:



VOLUNTEERING & SOCIAL JUSTICE FESTIVAL

In early February 2021, we held our 2nd Volunteering & Social Justice Festival: an event designed to encourage student participation in volunteering through a series of interactive talks. Despite the restrictions of COVID, we were able to host a highly successful online event via our digital events platform. Some key event figures:

- 3 days, 21 presentations and Q&As (14 community / 7 student-led)
- 443 tickets sold, 311 confirmed (70% conversion from expression of interest to attending)
- 100+ new volunteering applications directly attributed to this event.*

100+
new
volunteering
applications
directly
attributed to
our
Volunteering
Festival.*



VIRAL KINDNESS CAMPAIGN

GU Volunteers collected or printed an SRC / GU Volunteering postcard and posted their details through neighbours' letterboxes, offering help with essential shopping and activities.

Community Action

Through GU Volunteering, University of Glasgow students have the opportunity to find and pursue new interests whilst developing themselves as individuals and learning about life beyond the more structured learning environment.

VOLUNTEER TUTOR ORGANISATION (VTO)

We have developed a strong working relationship with The Volunteer Tutors Organisation (VTO), a Glasgow based charity whose role is to “Recruit, train and place volunteer tutors to give educational support to children who need it the most”. We currently provide 16% of all VTO volunteers offering one-to-one mentoring to school children in need of extra support.

Our VTO Volunteer Bronwyn Moles won the **GU Award for Community Volunteering** for her work with one child, and was **commended** by the Social Work department and the child’s guardians.

DEMOCRACY VOLUNTEERS

Working with Democracy Volunteers, a leading UK electoral observation group, GU Volunteers helped observe recent local and national elections in Scotland. Our volunteers travel around their designated area and visit polling stations with a partner, in order to help Democracy Volunteers collect data on a variety of subjects such as accessibility, electoral malpractice, and the public’s interaction with the process.



GLASGOW UNIVERSITY FEMALE ENGINEERS (FEMENG) AND GLASGOW IMPROVEMENT CHALLENGE

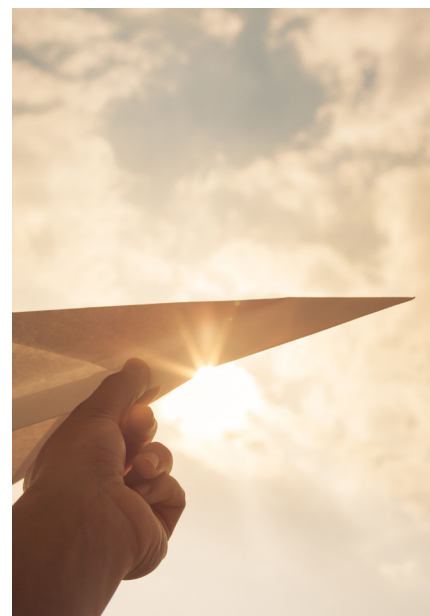
We used our established link with Glasgow Improvement Challenge (GIC) to facilitate a link with FemEng. Over the year the two parties developed a joint project focused on inspiring children and young adults in Glasgow’s schools to consider STEM subjects. The Project between GIC and FemEng is up and running and FemEng have created a 6-week curriculum-based programme with 7 schools participating, reaching anywhere between 550-600 pupils.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SERVICE TO THE HOMELESS (GUSH)

After hearing from the Clerk of Senate that Glasgow Homelessness Charity, the Marie Trust was having difficulties due to many of its volunteers shielding, we put the call out to members of Glasgow University Service to the Homeless (GUSH) who stepped up and assisted the charity with the preparation and delivery of food to homeless people around Glasgow. In April we agreed that it was safe for GUSH to recommence its own activities in the city, providing food, hot drinks and a friendly face to some of the most vulnerable people in the city.

PAPER AIRPLANES

We became the first UK university to partner with this Jordanian charity, pairing war affected children and adults in Syria with student tutors. Paper Airplanes focus on the skills learners need to access future training, employment, and higher education and with human connection as the foundation of their learning community, students and tutors bond and benefit from cross-cultural exchange. Through GUSRC, UofG students were among the standard-setting first, helping to provide inter-cultural communication and education to those in great need.



NHS GREATER GLASGOW & CLYDE

Working in partnership with the local health authority, GU Volunteers answered the call to help coordinate the winter period’s flu vaccinations, at a critical time.

Volunteering & Community Engagement

Clubs and Societies Support

The support needs of our 306 clubs and societies changed considerably. We reviewed and delivered a whole range of additional support: this included help with practical and legal issues associated with organising online meetings, assistance in promoting their activities and holding online events. We provided an online platform with our new partners Native, and delivered induction training, briefing sheets and technical advice on holding online events/meetings to 375 Society Office bearers.

AFFILIATIONS & ENQUIRIES

As of June 2020 the total number of student members of affiliated clubs is **16,204**, roughly 49% of all registered students*. We have 306 affiliated clubs at present. In the period 2019-20: we received 1,118 enquiry emails from clubs. In the period July 2020-April 2021 we received 3,961 enquiries: over 250% increase versus last year.

49%
of UofG
students are
in an SRC
affiliated club.*

HEAR

For 19/20 we completed a total of 764 clubs HEAR forms (out of a total 1122 HEAR Forms). We are still currently processing forms for 20/21, however we have a total of **1053** submitted so far.

TRAINING

From July 2020 to April 2021 we carried out 15 Clubs and Societies induction sessions. We still have 3 inductions left to deliver this year, and completed 2 others this month. So far we have trained a total of **346** Club office bearers. In 2019-2020 we held 14 induction sessions, training a total of 462 club office bearers. This year we also trialled a training session on Digital Events which we will seek to expand upon in the next session.

NATIVE

In September 2020, we launched the 'Glasgow Student Events Hub' in partnership with student events experts, Native. This reflects the SRC's aim to provide a central location for all club and society events, both virtual and in person. Through this service we have been able provide better support for clubs running events, including digital event training, and have also ensured that events are run safely and securely through our verified site. Since the start of the year, 47 clubs and societies have hosted over 120 events on the site, and we expect to see this number climb in the following session as we return to campus and we raise awareness of the service.



ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

In semester 2, following representations from our officers, we were able to secure space in an outdoor marquee on campus for clubs to be able to offer in-person activities. Since opening in March 2021, the marquee has been booked over 200 times by SRC affiliated clubs. In the period September - December 2020 we were able to facilitate 40 indoor bookings in spaces available to us on campus. Glasgow Student Dance Company noted their appreciation for access to space this year, saying "We want to say a massive thank you on behalf of the rest of the committee and the whole company for all of the help that you've given us in recent months regarding marquee rehearsal space. We appreciate it so much."

ZOOM PREMIUM REINSTATEMENT

In October 2020, we received reports from students that access to the 'premium' version of Zoom had been withdrawn. Premium Zoom access is required to host meetings longer than 40 minutes, and this year has been vital to students, and especially clubs and societies running online events at a time where on-campus events are extremely limited. Following discussion with our officers, the University agreed to reinstate premium Zoom access to all registered students.

Student Media

GUSRC continues to support a range of student media, attracting around 500 volunteers per annum and providing a host of personal development opportunities whilst promoting student engagement and encouraging discourse and debate.

THE GLASGOW GUARDIAN

Despite the pandemic this was a highly successful year for the Guardian. High profile stories included coverage of the student experience in Halls during COVID, Sexual Harassment, and the Scottish Election and implications for students. Guardian worked with STV, The BBC, The National Guardian and many other organisations as they foster long term connections which can be called upon in the future to assist as mentors or workshop guest speakers.

Guardian facilitated two highly popular workshop series including "How To" and "Getting into media" with the aim of enhancing students' writing and journalistic skills. This year they expanded their team to just over 90 students, enabling more people to get involved in student journalism. This has been a record year for awards as the paper brought home half of the Student Publication Awards for Scotland* and was able to achieve a record 7 shortlistings and one win in the UK Student Publication Awards.

Half

of all 2021 Scottish Student Publication Awards won by The Glasgow Guardian.*

GUST

Like many others, Glasgow University Student Television (GUST) faced unprecedented challenges over the year. Despite this GUST enjoyed considerable success. GUST enjoyed a successful Freshers' Week becoming one of only a handful of student television societies to produce a full week's worth of Freshers' programming. In October, GUST achieved significant success at the National Student Television Awards; winning Best Freshers' Coverage and Best Technical Achievement and being shortlisted for Best News and Current Affairs.

During the lockdown periods, GUST focused on fundraising through commissions, working with GU Student Dance Company, GU Acapella Society and Move On/FareShare to produce promotional videos around their organisations and events.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE (GUM)

GUM is the oldest student publication in Scotland and offers a mix of fashion, art and politics. Over the year three issues were produced with a circulation of 3,000 distributed at the University and throughout the West End.

The team at GUM performed extremely well at the most recent Student Publication Awards, winning the award for Best Website, and being nominated for Best Magazine Design, Best Human Rights Story, Best Interview, Best Science & Tech Piece at the Student Publication Awards. This year the team sought to diversify their offering through the introduction of a new podcast called 'safe space', and a new online publication, GUM Journal.



SUBCITY RADIO

Subcity Radio is GUSRC's student-led radio station, broadcasting from Glasgow to the world via the subcity.org website. The station is known for its inclusive community, inviting not only students, but those outwith the GU student bubble, to be part of its infrastructure.

Subcity Radio continues to grow and expand, boasting over 100 shows broadcast at various times ranging from 8am until midnight, 7 days a week. Subcity has also made a concerted effort to engage and promote those from the LGBTQ+ community, with shows such as Queer Creative represented on the station.

The station continues to fund itself through successful events. A sell-out Freshers' Week collaboration set the standard for the rest of the year, with record-breaking attendances. All parties are sound-tracked by DJ's from the station, and often for them it is the first time playing to an audience.

Looking Ahead

The limitations imposed by lockdown, meant consultation on our next strategic plan was delayed and our 2015-2020 strategy was extended for a year. Consultation on our next strategy is now complete. Without wishing to pre-empt the content of the next 5 year strategy we have agreed the following broad aims as an interim framework to guide our work over the next year.

KEY AIM: To remain responsive to a potentially fluctuating operating environment thereby ensuring we:

- Represent the interests of our students as effectively as resources allow. Work with the University in identifying and moving towards an effective postgraduate representation framework
- Contribute to student well-being through provision of high-quality independent information, advice and support, on an ever more complex range of issues to an ever-increasing student population
- Strengthen our support for student led activities through establishment of new services to clubs and societies (e.g. access to banking support; provision of University/SRC Email address) and increase capacity through development of custom-made training modules (leadership; financial management; diversity training)
- Work with the University on its civic engagement agenda, continuing to promote engagement with COP 26, forging new links with additional community and voluntary sector organisations and identifying new community action focused student volunteering opportunities
- Promote the Graduate Attributes Framework amongst our 1,700 registered volunteers and Clubs and Societies. Work in partnership with the University in establishing recognition/award system
- Work to ensure international students feel part of the UofG community, have access to advice and support, and opportunities to participate in UofG life beyond the formal curriculum, whether as a participant in PG Welcome Fortnight, Freshers' Week, a class representative, a volunteer in the local area or an office bearer/member of a club or society
- Continue to focus on the delivery of inclusive and accessible Freshers' and Refreshers Weeks which reflect the interests of non-traditional students
- Encourage good mental health, by continuing to lead student bodies on distress campaigns, continuing to deliver Mind Your Mate and develop and establish new peer led training initiatives including Student Resilience, and Harm Reduction in Drug Taking & provision of Drug Testing Kits (both under development)
- Continue to challenge and raise awareness of Gender Based Violence through delivery of our peer led "Let's Talk" workshops and the rolling out of our Moodle based GBV workshop. Rerun Dear Safe Place Campaign and run pilot of weekly Rape Crisis Surgery
- Increase our recognition amongst students and staff. Build on our investment in communications team; establish ourselves as The Online Glasgow Student Events Hub, building on relationship with current external partners and identifying new ones.
- Continue to promote the University through the delivery of historical tours and supporting the University during open days, offer holders days etc.
- Continue to communicate to students the work we are doing to represent and support them via all of the channels available to us, including further embedding our regular email newsletters

Postword

Reflecting on the last year, it is safe to say it has been a challenging one for our students for the University and for the SRC itself. Operationally, we embarked on a mission to adapt our services, so that we could continue to function online. While students took up remote learning, our sabbatical team and staff members adapted to remote working, learning to navigate a new work environment and forge team dynamics, all while remaining apart. Suddenly, there was a student population dispersed globally and unprecedented student issues emerging, and we worked hard to continue to represent and support our students effectively.

From being one of the only Universities in the UK to deliver an in-person Freshers' Week, to the creation of the Home Students' Working Group, to running engaging and successful digital welfare campaigns such as for Black History Month, this year we have not just managed, or been challenged - we have achieved. The success of our work to engage students was reflected in the increased turnout in our Spring elections; despite being mostly absent from the physical campus, we saw an impressive 14% increase in voter turnout, some reassurance that our digital presence has maintained our visibility across the year. It has been extremely positive to see that our work over the year has continued to deliver the aims of our extended strategic plan, and we have continued to represent, support, and provide opportunities to our students despite the massive changes to our operating environment.

Looking forward, GUSRC and our members

face further challenging and unpredictable times. The aftermath of Brexit will continue to have implications for our students, both in a domestic context, but also in determining the future landscape of our international student population, and the future of global exchange projects. With the JMS opening and the work on other planned new builds continuing, we will also have to observe and monitor the effects of a shifting campus, and adapt accordingly.

Monumentally, while the vaccine rollouts continue and the country finds itself slowly moving back down the tiers, looking forward to the next year, it is still unclear what the University experience will look like, what guidance will be given to the sector by the Scottish Government, and whether the situation will remain stable or change once again.

This year should also be an exciting one, mind, particularly with GUSRC having the opportunity to act as a conduit between the student population and the conference during COP26 in November, and with the installation of a new working rector, which will certainly make it an interesting year for student representation. Despite uncertainty, GUSRC will continue to rise to the challenges presented to it, and I look forward to seeing continued innovation and improvement because of this. This year we have learned, more than ever, to be agile and responsive, and I am incredibly excited to see this continued next year, in the hope that we will look back with similar pride in a years' time.



Ella McCabe
SRC President 21-22





www.glasgowstudent.net

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A REGISTERED CHARITY IN SCOTLAND | REGISTRATION NUMBER SC006970