

Board of Management

Learning & Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	Thursday 11 May 2023
Paper No.	LTC4-C
Agenda Item	4.1
Subject of Paper	Students' Association Update - Review of 2022-23 Representation Systems
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Megan McClellan/Josh Taylor
Date of production	3 May 2023
Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

To discuss the Students' Associations review of their 2022-23 A/Y Representation Systems.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide a reflection of how well the various Students' Association's Representation Systems have worked throughout the 2022-23 A/Y to aid discussion within the committee.

3. Consultation

3.1 Education Scotland Visit (May 2022)

During the last EdS visit in May 2022, the Student Assessor undertook a spot check among a small number of students on City Campus (in the catering outlet) to ascertain their understanding of certain Students' Association operations.

The feedback was: 'most learners were not clear about the roles of the Student Parliament and the class representative system and were not sufficiently aware of changes made by the college to address points raised through these approaches. Most learners were unaware of the work the Students' Association and of actions taken because of points raised through class representatives.'

3.2 Annual Review (2021-22)

Each year, the Students' Association undertakes an annual review of its systems with current members and staff to evaluate effectiveness and areas for improvement.

3.2.1 Class Reps

For the 2021-22 A/Y, member feedback indicated:

- 'Close the Loop' meetings, in which the Presidential Team provided Class Reps with updates on where their feedback had been taken and progress on changes, were more valuable than previous meetings.
- In-person meetings felt more valuable.
- To increase engagement, meetings should start before November.
- Students would like more information about what Class Reps are doing and what feedback they have provided.

3.2.2 Parliament

For the 2021-22 A/Y, member feedback indicated:

- The hybrid approach to Parliament Meetings worked to an extent, but members felt that in-person Parliament Meetings were overall more valuable.
- Members felt that more clarity was needed regarding the responsibilities of their individual roles.
- They felt that systems, including submitting proposals and papers to Parliament, should be more streamlined and accessible for all students.
- Parliament members fed back that they would like to be more included in directorate consultation processes for new areas of work being undertaken that directly impact the Student Learning Experience (i.e., consultation re: Canvas.)

4. Key Insights

4.1 Class Representatives

Based on feedback from Education Scotland and our 21/22 A/Y review, we implemented the following changes:

- We reviewed and updated our Class Rep pages on our website including introducing a Staff Information page and a Find my Rep Function.
- We set up monthly, themed Class Rep Meetings, sending comms to all students about the topics of these, including inviting them to feedback in advance of Class Rep discussions.
- We have set up a Class Rep Hub on the Canvas VLE, offering Rep Induction, resources, and a space to network online. Through this we have utilised the notification system through the Canvas App to get messages to our Reps in addition to emails.
- We have offered more regular training opportunities to reps, highlighting their responsibility to engage with their classmates and ensure they know how to reach out to them.
- We have sent out regular Class Rep Meeting Summaries to Reps and Students highlighting what has been discussed and next steps through our social media and SA News systems.
- We have implemented a new Student Feedback page that allows students and staff to see an overview of feedback that has been provided by Class Reps.

4.2 Student Parliament

Based on feedback from Education Scotland and our 21/22 A/Y review, we implemented the following changes:

- We reviewed existing Parliament positions and re-aligned them with core areas of work to ensure consistency of messages.
- During elections we sent dedicated emails to under-represented groups to ensure uptake of candidacies.
- We have offered enhanced induction to new Parliament Members introducing them to relevant key college contacts (e.g., Faculty Reps to Faculty Deans).
- Student Parliament Meeting dates and calls for questions have been featured regularly in our SA News (all student emails) and Social Media Channels.
- We have created and shared Presidential update videos of work achieved so far through our social media channels.
- In Feb 2023, our Student Feedback Page has been updated to include updates from Student Parliament Meetings as well as papers taken to Committees by the Presidential Team on its behalf.

5. Impact and Implications

5.1 Class Representatives

5.1.1 What's Worked Well

- The implementation of monthly, themed meetings has been a valuable change to the Class Representation system, allowing the Students' Association to work more closely with individual directorates and take more meaningful, wider pieces of work to college boards and committees.
- The introduction student feedback page and centralisation of Class Rep resources on the Students' Association website has seen an increase of 33.18% page visits.
- The implementation of a single session training has seen an increase of 6% in the total number of Class Reps who have been trained.

5.1.2 Next Steps

While there have been impactful changes made to the Class Representation System, we are aware that there are students, particularly within the Nautical and STEM, that are not benefitting from these changes.

As a result, we are looking to develop a specialist feedback system for courses that adopt alternative modes of study, starting with our Nautical and STEM Cadet Programmes and Foundation Apprenticeships. This will hopefully re-engage these student groups where they feel the time frames established from our current system do not suit their learning.

To ensure the continued growth and development of the Class Representation system, the Students' Association has worked with the Organisational Development department to establish training for Curriculum Managers surrounding 'What is Student Engagement,' which will highlight the Class Rep system as part of the training. This is to ensure that wider college departments are fully engaged in the college-wide responsibility of student engagement.

Failure to support wider student groups and/or engagement from wider college teams would depreciate the value of the Class Representative system.

5.2 Student Parliament

5.2.1 What's Worked Well

The introduction of a student feedback page, improved communications strategy, and centralisation of our Parliament Page on the CitySA website has seen an increase in overall Parliament interaction.

This year:

- There was a 6% increase in the number of students who voted in our Parliament Elections.
- There was a 133% increase in the number of questions submitted to Parliament
- 100% of Parliament Members have been appropriately inducted (20% increase than last year)

5.2.2 Next Steps

Unfortunately, the retention of Parliament Members has been poor this year, with two rounds of co-opting being completed to fulfil empty roles. This has meant that Parliament Members have not had an appropriate amount of time to build rapport with students and/or complete significant work areas to report on. Whilst students are familiar with the work of the paid presidential team and CitySA we do not feel confident they are familiar with Parliament Members for this reason.

To increase engagement with Student Parliament Members we are exploring the possibility of electing Parliament Members in May 2024 with students returning in August 2024. This was done prior to Lockdown (2019/20) to great success as members were able to be inducted to their roles earlier and then able to engage with students earlier including during Freshers.

Given the importance of the Faculty Rep roles (e.g., named within Faculty Boards Terms of References) we are seeking to establish these as paid roles. We have improved our external income streams through external advertising, including a 5-year contract, and have budgeted enough to offer a paid Faculty Rep role in each Faculty from these funds. We hope that offering a salary will ensure continuity and improved reliability of students who choose to take on these opportunities.

Failure to increase retention and engagement with the Student Parliament would decrease the level of accountability of the Students' Association and depreciate the value of college-wide representation systems.