

1. University Activities

Discussion

The university is working on updating several policies. A challenge has been raised with the number of students submitting extension requests for short (less than 7 days) extensions. This has increased greatly in recent years and this causes challenges with support, other assessments and staff time.

There have also been a large number of appeals. The main reasons for these have been medical issues and evidence not supplied earlier. There is an understanding from the university that some of these could be dealt with through personal circumstances but this is not being used for some reason.

It would be good to hear parliaments thoughts on what they believe the cause might be. For example if students don't understand, know about or trust the personal circumstances procedure, if students are simply making more use of these options, students lives are more complicated so circumstances needing an extension are more common, etc.

2. Manifesto Updates

Information

- a. Access to Information
 - i. Ran workshop with Campus Support Services group to identify useful data to collect.
 - ii. Meeting with University CMA (competition and markets authority) manager to discuss fair and transparent information for students.
 - iii. Raised clarity and accessibility as a challenge of policies in Assessment and Feedback Working Group as part of policy review. In particular to do with Personal Circumstances, late submissions and extension requests.
- b. Sharing Good Practice
 - i. Attended the Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group run by sparqs. Discussions on how to define and evaluate partnership work and what good partnership entails.
 1. Draft of signs of good partnership
 - a. Solution-focused (not just about giving feedback).
 - b. Recognising expertise of all participants (students and staff).
 - c. Effective representative systems.
 - d. Evidence based.
 - e. Hearing diverse voices.
 - f. Present at all levels– course, department, institution, national.
 - g. Strategic approach built into the institution and the SA – doesn't happen by accident.
- c. Co-Design
 - i. StrathReps development workshop with programme and faculty reps at the Rep Skills and Development Day.

- ii. Pushed for students to be compensated for time contributing to work in the Generative AI Expert Working Group. 5 paid student positions secured which are currently open for applications (please share with your contacts [Job Vacancy \(strathunion.com\)](#))
- d. Sustainable Student Population
 - i. Raised student space challenges at a meeting with the university and Union exec.

3. Other Activities

Information

- Visited student unions in England (Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool). Main points of learning include:
 - Distinctive and specialised spaces were popular and allowed lots of creativity and feelings of community
 - Interesting to see different mixes in the exec team such as Manchester having a Union Affairs officer and City and Community officer or the way exec and non-exec officers work in other unions
 - Forums to support creation of policy worked well at the Sheffield student union and allowed a discussion rather than decision making space (they had Academic, Sustainability, Liberation and International forums which ran with particular discussion points that students moved between).
- SAD Day (Rep Skills and Development Day)
 - We had about 40 reps attend our Skills and Development day
 - The feedback was very positive with reps enjoying how interactive the sessions were, being able to socialise with other reps and the range of skills they developed.
 - Some areas we are going to work on is the timing of the event as reps felt they could have made more use of these skills throughout the year and how to encourage more reps to attend as we had only 40% of those who signed up actually attend the day.
- Exec to Exec Meeting
 - The Union and University executive teams met to discuss the Strathclyde Strategic Alliance ([Strategic Alliance 2023 2024 Strath Union University of Strathclyde.pdf](#)).
 - As progress on the points is generally good we used this time to have some more in depth discussions about 1) Student spaces, 2) ethical decision making and sustainability and 3) student partnership and communication.
 - We raised that student societies and sports clubs require more specialised spaces that are not currently available at the university to thrive. The university wants to prioritise increasing the number of students accessing societies and sports clubs over increasing quality of current provision. The Union Exec raised that if quality is increased it will improve the experience of those currently engaged and may also increase numbers of students involved but there are likely other barriers such as financial barriers, caring responsibilities etc that can also restrict society and sports club numbers.
 - The university exec agreed that more could be done to communicate university decision making with students. The principal agreed as part of this work he would host discussions with students on topics such as environmental sustainability.

- There was a discussion of good partnership practices in the university. Main points raised included different levels and types of engagement, staff and students as equal partners and good communication.
- All of these areas are very early in discussion but the university's executive team seemed keen to work on them together.

4. Meetings

Information

- Palestine Open Forum – Student and Staff run forum
- Glasgow Student Forum – Group made up of exec officers from universities and colleges across Glasgow
- Student & Campus Support Services – University Group
- Education Committee – Union Committee (For Faculty Reps)
- Gaelic Language Plan: Implementation and Monitoring Group – University Group
- Entrepreneurship for All – University Committee
- Student Experience Committee – Union and University Committee (Parliamentarians can attend and bring items here if they wish)
- Legacies of Trans Protest and Activism – Workshop
- Exec to Exec Meeting – University and Union Executive Teams meeting
- Strathclyde Online Learning – University Committee
- Learning Enhancement Committee – University Committee
- Military Education Committee – Multi-University Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee – University Committee
- Senate – Highest academic governing body of the University
- Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group – Group made up of students from across Scotland, run by sparqs and supported by NUS
- Assessment and Feedback Working Group – University Committee

If there's any of this you're interested in, would like to support with or want to know more about please get in touch at strathunion.vpeducation@strath.ac.uk