



Education Executive

St Andrews Students' Association

Thursday 27th November 2025

18:00-19:00

Large Rehearsal Room, Students' Association Building

GENERAL INFORMATION

Meeting called by: Education Council

Type of Meeting: Education Executive

Chair: Faculty Presidents

Note Taker(s): Nick Townsend (Academic Representation Intern)

ATTENDANCE

Attendees: Faculty Presidents, Academic Representation Coordinator, Nick Townsend, Toby Berryman, Alex Wiseman, Ela Winter, Kat Raffan, Sophia Bruno, Ayra Ahmad, Ciara Rooney, Abi Collins, Ingrid Yeung, Ellie Shaw, Chloe Beechinor Collins, Hannah Straw, Emily Hadfield.

Online: None.

Apologies: President of Education, Stella Pascale Bagchi, Devina Naraindas Sainan, Katherine Day, Andrews Edginton, Riya Narain, Pedro Silva, Rebeca Ravara, Truman Cunningham, Evie Fisher-Cook, Bhani Kaur, Clara Curtis, Sayda Bir, Charles Deregnacourt, Alistair Grant, Claire Hutton, Gregg Clark, Evie Cullen.

Absences: N/A

Guests: None.

MINUTES:

- *Updates from President of Education (Arts/Div FP, 10 mins)*
 - *LTC Away Day*
 - *MFQ Response Rate Competition*
 - *Main Bar Survey*

Arts and Divinity Faculty President: (Overview)

- Please can School Presidents attend the LTC away day! They are planning a workshop involving DOTs and School Presidents and it is a really good space to discuss things informally with your department
- There are prizes for the highest MFQ response rates! They will be Main bar vouchers for 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- Finally, please complete the Main Bar survey – we really need better response rates and would appreciate your feedback. Please pass these on to your friends and departments
- *Methods/tactics for motivating feedback from cohorts (Physics & Astronomy SP, 5 mins)*
 - *Discussion*

Arts and Divinity Faculty President and School President of Physics (Overview)

- It would be really useful if the schools with good student feedback rates could give some advice on what works well for them to see if the same tactics could be applied to other cohorts where we are currently struggling to get good engagement

Discussion:

- School President of Biology:
 - I have found people usually respond to things in my weekly email – especially if you put the key information in the headline
 - I would also recommend using coloured highlights to make things stand out
 - Posters have also been useful
 - Write emails to specific cohorts
 - Unfortunately, I think the surveys have too many questions, which is reducing response rates
- School President of Medicine:
 - Do you get good lecture attendance? That could be a good place to promote things
 - It is good if you can bring your cohort together around a specific issue which they are all motivated about
- School President of Philosophy

- I got my cohort to sympathise with me after I revealed we had a response rate of 76 people
 - I told them this was only 3.6% of students, and that I needed more, and this worked
 - Print a QR code and put it up in the department
- *Schools Impact from the Master of the United College Redistribution (Philosophy SP, 10 mins) a. Discussion*

Arts and Divinity Faculty President: (Overview)

- The casual teaching fund has been changed this year, as you know. There have been issues raised regarding the impact this has on students' experience and the quality of their education
- One of the problems is that there are increased class sizes, and Philosophy has been particularly affected

School President of Philosophy: (Overview)

- Upon further inquiry, it appears that funding has not been cut but instead redistributed for equality across schools
- This has clearly affected sub-honours students and Philosophy, especially, which has seen an increase in class size and a reduction in teaching hours
- We would like to know which, if any, schools have been positively affected by this and have seen a relative increase in their casual teaching budget

Discussion:

- School President of Physics:
 - The Physics casual teaching budget has also been cut in half. They are in the process of bringing it down over this year
 - Physics was the only 1st year module that had to be capped this year, and it is the first time this has happened
 - We are experiencing the same issues
- School President of Biology:
 - Tutorials have been removed from our teaching pretty much entirely
 - We also had to cap our first-year module
 - By extension of this increase in numbers, we also had to cap other things as well, like lab tutorials
- School President of Medicine:
 - Have any schools had redistributions?
- School President of International Relations:
 - I can ask about the situation in the School of IR
 - As mentioned in previous weeks, our tutorial sizes have gone up

- School President of Biology:
 - I wonder if bigger schools have not had a cut and this is an issue for some of the smaller schools
 - I don't think biology has been cut
- School President of Philosophy:
 - Our school has had a significant cut
 - I need to know if other schools are also struggling and if any have received a budget increase to strengthen our case.
 - I have to give credit to Michael, my second-year class rep, for their work on this
 - The school is fully supportive of this
- School President of Biology
 - Could we find out the budgets year on year for comparison?
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - We could ask Emily (PresED) for the budgets and then compare them year-on-year – this would be a productive activity
 - Regarding why other schools have not noticed an increase in their teaching budget, this might be because the redistribution has been discounted by the increase in student numbers at UG level
- *Joint Degree Programme Updates (Classics SP, 5 mins)*

School President of Classics: (Overview)

- I had my Learning and Teaching Committee meeting yesterday
- There is a concern regarding the Joint Degree review process, and a worry that significant degree pathways might be cut
- We do not think we are at an immediate risk of this; however, we are worried
- People often add parts to their degree, and so they are concerned that while the applications might not be that high, degrees would be cut that are taken once people get here

Discussion:

- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - No degree is being cut that has been taken or graduated in the last 5 years
 - Schools will be consulted beforehand and will have the opportunity to discuss things further with College Gate staff should they wish
- School President of Biology
 - Some degrees in our department with a few people on them are being cut
 - Should I inform anyone about this?
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President
 - The Proctor has been clear that they are not looking at cutting programs with students on them, this might be a school-specific decision

- Italian Convenor
 - Have you heard whether there will be additional cuts to programs in the future?
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President
 - These current cuts will take 2 years to implement as it is, with consultation to individual schools. These are almost 300 programs, which take a long time to organise
 - We do not believe there is any intention to go beyond this at the moment. This is a large project as it is.
- Science and Medicine Faculty President
 - By doing the cuts, they should be able to open new programs and pathways which are currently not available but are popular
 - As far as we know, they are not planning on doing a second program of cuts
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President
 - There is a list of 20 programs they are already looking to add
 - Part of the reasoning is that untaught programs must be scheduled, to avoid clashes and this takes up timetable space
- School President of Art History
 - Schools have been given a spreadsheet that appears to count only applicants, but if you scroll across, you can see the other criteria available.
 - The colour coding for the documents is red, yellow, and green; the criteria for red is greater than 0, which is somewhat confusing given that those courses are not at risk of being cut.

Regarding another issue of concern, the proposed sharing of feedback (MFQs) between the USTA and the Students Association.

Science and Medicine Faculty President: (Overview)

- School Presidents would have access to quantitative data, including comments with censored names and the modules involved at the DOTs discretion
- Class reps would have the same access to their specific cohorts.
- The faculties would have access to their respective data, and Emily (PresED) would have all the data.
- This is not confirmed and remains in discussion.

Discussion:

- School President of Classics:
 - My DOT had concerns about it because some of the data might cause problems and perpetuate unfair criticism
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President:
 - This discussion was part of a long and difficult LTC meeting with DOTs
 - We faced significant issues from DOTs and they used it as an opportunity to try and ensure school presidents and class reps do not get access to any data.

- There is no suggestion that School Presidents would get unfettered access to the data
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - The reason we are doing MFQs and this project in the first place is to get better data, which everyone can agree on
 - When school presidents make their own forms, the questions can be very biased, and this can lead to unproductive SSCCs and not enough screening of the questions
 - This was also done to reduce the School President's workload
 - Under this system, the data would be collected by the school, and they could redact anything they believed was sensitive, instead of class reps knowing everything
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President:
 - DOT has criticised the increased workload that would come with being responsible for censoring all the data they wanted to. It is currently at a standstill. We hope to make progress on it soon.
- School President of Modern Languages:
 - On a different but related note, what exactly is the Pulse survey?
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - Pulse would be the mechanism/software of the new survey
 - It would replace you doing a form on your own platform, typically Microsoft Forms
 - It will be used for MFQs, and it will continue to be used for mid-semester feedback forms
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President:
 - This had not been done yet, because we are not willing to proceed if we don't have access to the data
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - Another concern/point of interest/solution is that an AI tool would be built into the program
 - They have an AI tool that can be used to remove bad feedback, but they have not brought a subscription fee
- School President of Medicine:
 - What is Blue?
- Arts and Divinity Faculty President:
 - We are not entirely sure
- School President of Art History:
 - I would like to mention that staff are also not necessarily keen on the new proposals. I sat in the Art History LTC, choosing the survey questions, and the

staff took perhaps 45 minutes to decide because they did not know which questions to ask

- The MFQ appears to be a misuse of time for Art History staff, and they are in favour of our individual survey
- School President of Philosophy:
 - Is the survey anonymous? Will it be rolled out next semester?
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - Yes, it will be anonymous
 - There might be a delay in the rollout of the project due to the current gridlock over the University-Students' Association data-sharing agreement
- School President of Biology
 - The Biology staff also dislike the MFQs. They have removed questions which are useful for promotion, such as ones that allow for individual mention of specific tutors
 - This is one of the only ways that they get respect and recognition for their work, especially if they are teaching-focused
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - You/the School can add questions to your feedback form; this might be something the school can resolve
- School President of Art History
 - Your school can choose to have these questions as a module or a school-wide question
 - I think Schools will gradually understand this
- *Second SSCC Updates (10 mins)*
 - *Discussion*

Request for further updates regarding SSCC activity and outcomes by the Faculty Presidents

Discussion:

- School President of Biology
 - The only problem I had was keeping time, given the amount of content to cover in 1 hour
- School President of International Relations
 - One idea that we are doing is that each class rep cohort is going to try to make a report of the main points from the SSCC and create action points available for each year group
 - This will be sent out to the school students to close the feedback loop
- School President of Medicine:
 - We are also trying to close the feedback loop
 - From a staff perspective, the individual feedback from students was returned to staff, and this went down well with them

- We are also taking a decentralised approach, with closer meetings between module reps and module coordinators.
- School President of Art History
 - A lot of the issues with MEQs were that you had no idea what happened to the feedback
 - Under the new system, we like the fact that staff must respond to MFQs by emailing students. However, the staff are frustrated about this.
- School President of Medicine:
 - One of the major points of our feedback was the STEM cost-of-living crisis
 - Lots of students mentioned this in their survey responses
 - Funding the STEM degrees is hard, given the cost of the equipment
 - The staff are keen to help
 - The price of the Medcafé is a big problem – £4.50 for a meal deal, compared to around £1.90 a few years ago
 - There is a well-known stereotype of “STEM-tax” a sense that it feels like you are taxed for being in those buildings whenever you buy something.
 - We raised that to the director of student experience, which was good and productive.
 - However, the RBS team were not productive or helpful; they only provided a one-line response
 - There was another suggestion of having a Café bus that went around supplying students, but there is some dispute over this after it was requested that the Medicine department should fund it
- School President of Philosophy:
 - Who sent the RBS team email response?
- School President of Medicine:
 - I am not sure
- School President of Art History
 - Does the university run the café?
- School President of Medicine:
 - Yes
 - They also said they are comparing themselves to the high street, but considering they own quite a few of the cafes, they are themselves the high street
- AOCB (5 mins)
- Meeting adjourned