



Education Executive

St Andrews Students Association

Meeting date: Thursday 30th October 2025 (18:00-19:00)

Large Rehearsal Room (Student Union Building)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Meeting called by: Education Council Committee

Type of Meeting: Education Executive

Chair: Faculty Presidents

Note Taker(s): Nick Townsend

ATTENDANCE

Attendees: Faculty Presidents, President of Education, Nick Townsend (ARI), Toby Berryman, Alex Wiseman, Sophia Bruno, Bhani Kaur, Ciara Rooney, Abi Collins, Ingrid Yeung, Ellie Shaw, Clara Curtis, Sayda Bir, Charles Deregnaucourt, Claire Hutton, Gregg Clark, Chloe Beechinor Collins, Hannah Straw, Evie Cullen, Emily Hadfield.

Online: None.

Apologies: Riya Narain, Stella Pascale Bagchi, Katriona Raffan.

Absences: Ela Winter, Devina Naraindas Sainan, Katherine Day, Andrew Edginton, , Pedro Silva, Rebeca Ravara, Truman Cunningham, Evie Fisher-Cook, Ayra Ahmad, Alistair Grant,

Guests: Aimee Richards (Convenor of the new Science and Medicine Faculty Journal), Beate Diene (Stockholm School of Economics Students Union), Nerea Zozaya Aguado (Stokholm School of Economics Students Union)

AGENDA

- **Weekly Wins Spotlight (5 mins)**
 - a. **Discussion**

Science and Medicine Faculty President: (Overview)

- Welcome back!
- We wanted to spend some time going through any Weekly Wins which you had from the last half semester

PresED (Overview):

- I would also like to introduce our guests for this EduExec!
- Aimee Richards, who will be leading the new Science and Medicine Faculty Journal
- Beate Diene and Nerea Zozaya Aguado, who are visiting our university from the Stockholm School of Economics

Discussion:

- School President of Physics:
 - The third-year coding module, which has year on year caused significant problems for students has this year been much more manageable thanks to the efforts of previous and current student representatives in the School of Physics
 - The changes were put in place last semester and a massive improvement has already been seen in the feedback from that module
- School President of Modern Languages:
 - We (the President of Mod Lang and Language Convenors) have hosted a variety of events, which have gone down really well with the student body
 - We had a pub quiz, which was well attended, and hosted a study abroad drop-in night in Brewco, which also went really well
 - It also brought the different parts of the Modern Language department together, which has created a good community spirit
- PresED:
 - I also wanted to bring to light the recent success of the School of Biology President
 - There have been some concerning issues with marine biology and fee-paying requirements, and Alex has been at the forefront of the effort to resolve these issue
 - He has been in contact with the VP of Education, and it seems as though there will be significantly more transparency on the issue in the near future

- **Class Rep Involvement Check-In (5 mins)**
 - a. **Discussion**

Science and Medicine Faculty President: (Overview)

- We would like to hear any feedback about how you are finding managing your class reps at the moment.
- We are aware that there can be problems with engagement, and it would be good to get your opinions on how you are currently finding the situation and what you have found works well.

- If reps are not onboard or not doing their job properly – you can get in contact with us and we can help!

Discussion:

- School President of Philosophy:
 - My class reps are very good and well engaged at the moment
 - I keep communication informal and through Whatsapp which I have found really effective
 - I do trust that the reps are doing their jobs and it appears that are
 - I also remind them that meetings with staff will be OK and not scary!
 - Reps are increasingly friends with each other which is really nice to see
- **SSCC Updates (10 mins)**
 - Post-SSCC Unequal Resources Update (Russian Convenor)**
 - Discussion**

Science and Medicine Faculty President: (Overview)

- We would like to hear how your SSCCs have been going and if there are any issues which have come out of them which you would like to discuss with EduExec
- The Russian Convenor has also come across some problems which we would like to discuss

Russian Convenor (Overview):

- The Russian department is small, both in staff and student numbers
- Each year, the department prepares several module offerings for the following year, fully prepared with resources. Students then sign up for their module of choice
- However, for a module to run, the University requires that there is a minimum of 6 people on the module
- Given the small number of students, this means that modules are often cut, shortly before the start of the semester, due to low uptake. As a result, there are only 2 module offerings
- This means if you are a Russian student, you have a very limited number of modules you can take
- On a separate note, there is no study space for Modern Language Students while many other Schools have their own space

Discussion:

- School President of Physics:
 - We see the same issues in the Astronomy degree
 - Due to staffing issues, modules have been cancelled, which has really reduced the offerings (down to 2) for students on the Astronomy degree pathway
- School President of Music:
 - Our modules are mostly compulsory, and there is not much choice.
 - However, most people do not have a huge problem with this as it is clearly communicated from the start what the offering is
- Arabic and Persian Convenor:
 - We are also a small department, but there is a good variety of modules on offer, even if there are not very many of them
 - There is the criticism that people would like to specialise more, but this is not a huge criticism

- We do not make more modules and then cancel them; we instead only offer a small amount, and so it is clear what you will be doing, and this is pretty guaranteed

Show of hands for people who do not have a school-specific study space:

- **10 hands raised**
- **3 non-modern language representatives among those hands raised**

Discussion:

- School President of Art History:
 - In recent years, Art History has been moved around, which has resulted in a significant loss of teaching and study space
 - We were moved from what is now the Principal's House to a space in North Street. We are taught in rooms all around the university
 - As a result, staff and students have a big problem with space
 - Staff question whether it is worth campaigning for increased space, as they do not think it is a solvable problem right now
 - This is further complicated by the lack of desk space for postgraduates and the fact that the Art History building is not an accessible space, so office hours have to be offered in alternative locations/online
- School President of Music
 - SP also studies Earth Sciences
 - There is no study space for their school either
 - The DOT has said they are working on it, and there might be a solution
 - Currently, there is not enough space for Postgraduates
- School President of Maths
 - We also do not have enough space
 - I have requested that students have extended hours to access the maths buildings so they can work there later in the afternoon/evening, which could be a solution
- Russian Convenor
 - Stresses what solutions could be found to the situation
 - How can we, as a committee, actually make an actionable difference on this issue?
- Science and Medicine Faculty President
 - The economics department opens tutorial rooms for students to study in after 5pm or lets people know of the times in which there is no teaching. This could be a potential solution.
- French Convenor:
 - There is no available space in any Modern Language building at the moment; they are totally booked up with teaching
- Arabic and Persian Convenor:
 - Normally, I will use empty spaces, and there are no issues. You can always leave if someone arrives
 - We could ask to get some sort of table of when rooms are booked/free
- Comparative Literature Convenor:
 - We could request more seating in the lobby of our building
- Russian Convenor:

- As representatives of the Union, do we actually have any mechanism to push this?
- PresED:
 - Yes, I push this issue frequently at College Gate with various individuals and committees
 - Much of the College Gate staff are on board with this and agree with the need for more study space
 - Some in the principal's office do not and decided to oversubscribe the university this year. There may have been other factors involved in this decision
- School President of Philosophy:
 - Philosophy is particularly affected by university funding changes
 - One of our tutorials has been removed, so they now only begin in Week 3 of teaching
 - This is because the budget for staff teaching has been cut
 - We met with the DOT to try and increase some transparency on this and as a department and myself would like some guidance on what and how this information can be effectively communicated to students.
- PresED:
 - All policies that are published are published, and every student and staff and member of the public can see that. Therefore, nothing about the reducing funding decisions is a secret/is confidential.
 - The school can say what changes have been made as a result of the university's funding cuts
 - Schools should be able to say that where there are funding cuts, this has effected what we can offer
 - The DOT should be aware of this
 - Any information on this should come from the DOT and not the School President
- School President of Philosophy
 - So there is no policy about how communications like this should be handled (correct)
- School President of Music
 - We have a big problem with student attendance at lectures
 - Currently, we have an 8/30 attendance lecture rate
 - We would like to hear solutions on how we can tackle this issue
- Science and Medicine Faculty President
 - You could do random attendance checks in lectures
 - You could make them compulsory
 - You are allowed to take attendance
- PresED:
 - You can make participation part of the overall grade of the module – this we have found works quite well
 - Ensuring the lectures are relevant to assessment is also a good idea and works well
 - Ensure attendance is gradable and students will show up
- French Convenor
 - For us, you get an extra grade on your presentation if, in the other seminars, you are actively participating well
- School President of Physics:
 - You have to answer a quiz question at the start of each lecture and if you do, you get an extra part of the grade
 - If you miss more than 6, you lose part of it. Which is about 4% of your overall grade

- This ensures that people attend and it works well
- School President of Art History
 - This is a question that has come from staff concerns
 - For the new Mid-Semester Feedback Form next semester, why does the university require the school and SP to choose from a pre-agreed question bank and not make our own questions
 - Additionally, the staff do not really know which questions they should be asking
- Science and Medicine Faculty President:
 - They want to ensure they have comparable data year on year – which is why we ask specific questions
- PresED:
 - We need standardisable data
 - We chose questions based on what School Presidents have asked over the last 4-5 years
 - It was done in collaboration with my predecessor to ensure better and more productive relations at SSCC
 - Additionally, School Presidents will be able to choose 4 additional questions at their own discretion. Perhaps there is some confusion over the new policy
- **Cross-School Careers & Employability Event Suggestion (5 mins, International Relations School President)**
 - a. **Discussion**

President of International Relations: (Overview)

- Meeting with Jonathan Jack (North American Opportunities Manager) where we discussed North American student anxiety about the current labour market and the role of AI in that
- We discussed the possibility of a Semester 2 “Myth Busting” session on the effect of AI on the workplace and the things you can do that will improve your employability
- The aim would be to try and reduce student anxiety and increase employability
- If anyone would like to be interested in making this a cross-school event, please let me know! I would be really happy to include you in this!

Science and Medicine Faculty President

- We can help distribute the information for this whenever the event is planned
- **Science and Medicine Faculty Journal Launch (5 mins, PresEd)**

PresED: (Overview)

- This year we are launching a new sister journal to the Arts and Divinity Faculty Journal, the Science and Medicine Faculty Journal
- Aimee shall be leading the efforts on this, and we are looking for SPs/LCs to be editors of the journal!
- The way it will work is that there will be editors in chief (FPs), and the editors (SPs/LCs) can join
- We ask you to edit them when they are 16.0 and above

Aimee Richards: (Overview)

- We also offer students the chance to write on anything they want, and contact a professor to review their work so that they can ensure it is up to scratch. Professors are often up to this, as I have found in the past!

- It would be great to have SPs, who understand their discipline best, to work as editors to ensure the work is suitable

PresED:

- Please, can we have a show of hands if you would be interested in working on this!
- **Biology, Maths, Physics, Psychology and Neuroscience, Modern Languages, French and Italian raised hands. There might have been some missed.**
- **Undergraduate Academic Forum Updates (10 mins, PresEd)**
 - a. **Discussion**

PresED:

- Here are the topics for UAF. Please let me know what your opinion is of them and if you would like alterations or redactions made
- Fee discrepancy for Russian industry placement
 - Russian Convenor – yes
- Study abroad support – asking for specific visa information and support
 - School President of Modern Languages: job support would be useful too
- Credit and resource disparities across schools
 - Dean of learning and Teaching has asked that this be on the agenda
 - We want to stay clear of dissertations
 - Standardisation of office hours will also be included in this
- Leaves of absence, raised by the Student Disability Officer
- Impact of student numbers
 - The university will be on our page about this
 - We should make them more aware of the impact of student staff

Discussion:

- School President of Biology:
 - There is a further problem that is worth discussing in that with an integrated masters, you are required to do a placement for a year and pay full fees
- School President of Chemistry
 - This is a closed discussion from the school at the moment
- PresED:
 - We can encourage College Gate to discuss it internally
- School President of Philosophy
 - The lack of teaching funds also means that postgraduates might not get enough teaching hours, which reduces the attractiveness of St Andrews as a teaching space
- PresED
 - I agree, but lets leave that point for the Postgraduate UAF
- Spanish Convenor:
 - Clarification over the standardisation point – cleared
- **Discussion with Stockholm School of Economics Students' Association (15 mins, PresEd)**

Stockholm Guests:

- We are a 2000-person business school which was fully taught in Swedish and is now taught in English
- This has brought a lot of issues as we get a lot more international students – there are issues with collaboration between domestic and international students
- We go to different schools around the world and ask what we can do to improve
- Could we get some insight into how you have promoted integration between communities?

Discussion:

- School President of Philosophy:
 - Every school has an EDI student rep and staff officer
- Spanish Convenor
 - We We as presidents all have funding – we get £50 and can put on a bunch of different events which have attracted a load of different people who might not know each other
- Stockholm guests:
 - We have a problem in that accommodation is an issue, and puts international students 40 mins away from the university
- School President of Biology:
 - We have found that free mixer events with prizes, drinks or food early on in the academic year really helps
 - Perhaps move events around the city to suit different people
- Stockholm guests:
 - We also have the problem that the university rents out 75% of the study spaces to earn money
 - Therefore, we do not have study spaces
 - We organise a study pub, which has worked well.
- AOCB (5 mins)
- Meeting adjourned