

Strategic Plan 2017-2020



The University of St Andrews Students' Association

Contents

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

1

Welcome

2

Governance
Framework

3

Mission
Statement

4,5

Strategic Goals:
Student development

6

Strategic Goals:
Social responsibility

7,8,9

Strategic Goals:
Communication
& encouraging
engagement

10/11

Measuring Our
Success

12

Appendices



Welcome

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

Thank you for taking the time to read our strategic plan, an outline of our priorities for the next three years. The University of St Andrews' Students' Association has consistently provided a high quality service to students, supporting a University like no other. The priorities we outline in this document are intended to ensure this level of excellence and sustained partnership continues.

As the University expands student numbers towards a total of 10,000, the work of the Students' Association to enhance the quality of the holistic student experience will become ever more crucial. The University's additional aim to have 25% of the student body consist of postgraduate students, and the challenges of appealing to and catering for an international student body in the wake of recent political upheavals will also provide both difficulties and opportunities for our Students' Association.

With a newly redeveloped building and a consistent, highly regarded level of support for students, there is no doubt that we can continue to provide the best experience possible. However, we don't just want to maintain our current performance level, we want to improve and diversify our offering to our student membership and local community. Part of ensuring this occurs includes prioritising the long term sustainability of the organization and maintaining a positive relationship with the University and the Athletic Union.

The strategies adopted over the next three years are intended to help us successfully ensure an excellent experience for every student. They will mitigate the issues which might arise from the strain of student growth upon the current organisational structures which we have in place. They also emphasise measuring and evaluating our positive characteristics, seeking to highlight and celebrate them. Moreover, we want our graduates to have a developmental student experience which allows them to become active ambassadors for positive change, both during their time with us and long after university.

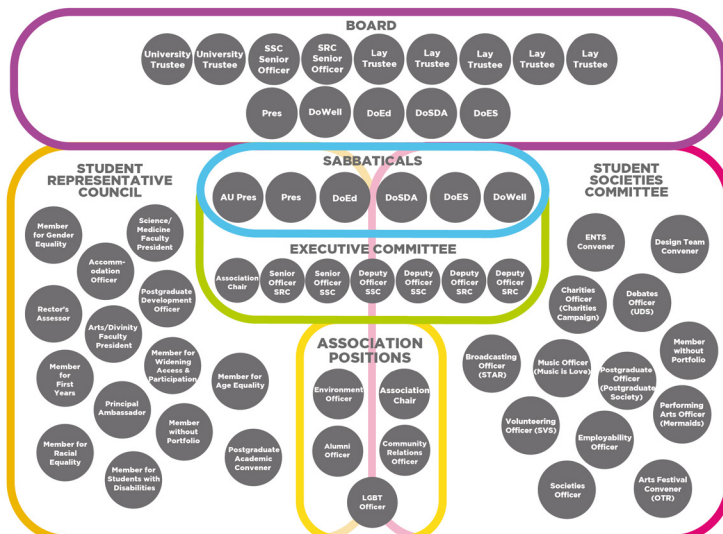
Governance Framework

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

The trustees of the Students' Association consist of 7 students and 6 lay members. The 5 Students' Association Sabbatical Officers, the 2 Senior Officers of the SRC and SSC comprise the student majority, whilst 2 University representatives and 4 external lay members form the remainder of the Board. The General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Athletic Union President, Clerk and Secretary to Board also sit in attendance at Board meetings. The Board of Trustees is the supreme governing body of the Association. It is responsible for maintaining the financial and legal integrity of the Students' Association. It sets the annual budget and determines the long-term strategic direction of the Association. Each of the four Board subcommittees (Audit & Risk, Finance, Governance & Nominations and Staffing) are chaired by student representatives.

There are 25 members of our Student Representative Council (SRC) and 24 members of our Student Services Council (SSC), each including all 6 Sabbatical Officers and 5 Association position members. Overall there are 38 members of our Student Councils. The SRC is the legally recognized voice of the student body, whilst the SSC is responsible for supporting and leading the activities and events of the Students' Association.

Three elected representatives from each council sit on the Executive Committee with the Association Chair and 6 sabbatical officers, to create a committee of 13 members. The Executive Committee passes procedural motions, decides on areas of disagreement between the SSC and SRC and decides who receives Honorary Life Memberships.



Mission Statement

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

The University of St Andrews Students' Association is dedicated to delivering an excellent student experience in co-ordination with the University and Athletic Union. We are student-led and student-run, dedicated to promoting an inclusive and progressive environment for students to develop into well-rounded and fulfilled individuals.

We represent students on all topics, ranging from areas such as educational experience, social responsibility and student wellbeing to the University and wider community.

We deliver and facilitate student development and charitable work through our wide range of subcommittees and societies.

We provide and support a wide range of events and facilities for students that caters to a diversity of preferences and needs.



Student Development

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

There are three broad themes within ensuring we provide sufficient areas for student progression; how we support and train our student volunteers and staff, how we provide opportunities more generally, and how we use our existing structures to advise upon the classroom side of university life.

Development of volunteers and staff

We rely on student volunteers for a significant amount of commitment to the operation of the organisation; from box office provisions in Freshers' Week, to raising money for charity, running the technical side of events in the Union, producing theatre and cleaning up Lower College lawn after the Raisin foam fight. Student volunteers are an intrinsic part of the Students' Association and they should be recognized and supported to a level that reflects their contribution.

Both permanent and student staff also contribute above and beyond the expected levels too, working extra hours on short notice, often over especially intense periods i.e. on Freshers' Week nights.

In order to ensure that the willingness to volunteer and work for the Students' Association continues, we need to be rewarding current work and ensuring there is a high level of training and recognition offered to develop individuals.

Future work streams:

- Volunteer recognition scheme
- Providing the ENTS crew with a more rigorous and detailed training, particularly in relation to health and safety and unusual equipment
- Further training for student bar staff in first aid and cocktail making
- Mental Health training for key student volunteers and permanent staff

General student development

Providing volunteer roles through councils and our various subcommittees is a laudable process, but we should also look beyond and focus upon the skills students will need in an interview and future career. Our graduate community is and should continue to be the best ambassadors possible wherever they live and work, promoting the concept of volunteering, university education and, where appropriate, the University itself.

Student Development

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

A focus upon employability is necessary, primarily to help students convey the level of experience and talent which they already gain through our current offering to future employers.

Future work streams:

- Continue to support and promote our Student Services Committee (SSC), the body that represents our primary volunteering activities
- A closer and more consistent relationship with the Careers Centre and a clearer understanding of which sabbatical remit is responsible for employability.
- Improve upon the recent developments in Alumni relations to create stronger and more coherent links between subcommittees and their alumni to encourage knowledge sharing, the availability of internships and career talks

Ensuring the education of students is of excellent quality

Our current system of Class Representatives and School Presidents, line managed by the Director of Representation, is one of the most comprehensive and effective in the country.

Development and promotion of the support we provide to the University with regards to education is imperative; we must ensure students are aware of the current framework and that we are consistently looking to advance the system. There must be efforts made by the Director of Education in conjunction with the University to enhance the School Presidents' role within the Students' Association, by giving them greater presence within the structures of the SRC.

Future work streams:

- Conduct our own survey into how students view our system of academic representation
- Publicise our School President and Class Representative structure centrally, with particular focus upon the fact it is a Students' Association operated initiative
- Present the SRC with a paper on how the academic representation structure works annually, so they are able to recognize the positive work of their fellow students and collaborate effectively with the academic schools.

Social Responsibility

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

One of the primary aims of the Students' Association is to represent and further the causes and needs of the student population. A consistent characteristic of student movements everywhere is an idealism that pushes for change and improvement; not just within the institutions they interact with directly, but also those of the outside world.

This also relates to our responsibility to reflect upon our own methods of engaging the entire diversity of the student population and providing services that benefit all of them. We should also consistently be holding the University to account for their obligations in this area, whilst providing support wherever possible.

Social responsibility also refers to engagement with our local community and advancing the cause of sustainability within both our own building and the actions of students. Additionally, it implies a duty to promoting the causes of equality and student wellbeing within and outside of university life.

Future work streams:

- Led by the Association President, engage intensively in a campaign to highlight the importance of E.U. and international students attending the University of St Andrews, universities in Britain generally and to oppose any further restrictions on their ability to remain in Britain upon graduation. This is particularly crucial in light of Britain's exit from the European Union.
- Directly reach out to groups within the general student body who have specific needs, i.e. commuter students, mature students through the new Life Long Learner forum, students who are carers or come from a care background and postgraduate students, in a more consistent and rigorous manner
- Work alongside the Student Ambassadors closely to promote Widening Access and Participation initiatives, including the outreach scheme to local high schools and the Ambassadors' summer projects in Fife
- Create a stable and enduring relationship with other Scottish Student Unions/ Guilds/ Associations in order to share best practice and also to enable us to make joint statements on government policies affecting students
- Ensure the distribution of bursaries by the University is as effective and accessible to students as possible
- Consistently raise the issue of a lack of affordable accommodation with the University
- Promote subcommittee outreach into local schools and other community activities
- Host Community events within the Students' Association, presenting our achievements and projects directly to the local population

Communication & encouraging engagement

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

We coordinate the network of approximately 350 Academic Representatives, 38 councillors, the financial and organisational management of over 170 affiliated societies and subcommittees, and offer impartial and independent support to students through our advocacy service.

It is vital that we consistently strive to more effectively communicate student activities, events and achievements to all stakeholders, highlighting where progress has been made and where broader participation would be welcomed.

Communication between the Students' Association and the wider student body

This is the most crucial aspect of our focus upon communication, ensuring student awareness of the opportunities available to them, as well as recognizing and sharing their success.

Future work streams:

- Reports of student trustees and councilors to be regularly published online
- Student awards and achievements to be promoted to all key stakeholders
- Consistent reviews of our website to be regularly administered
- Core focus upon communicating the activity of the sabbatical officers
- Utilise publicity and events at Halls of Residences



Communication & encouraging engagement

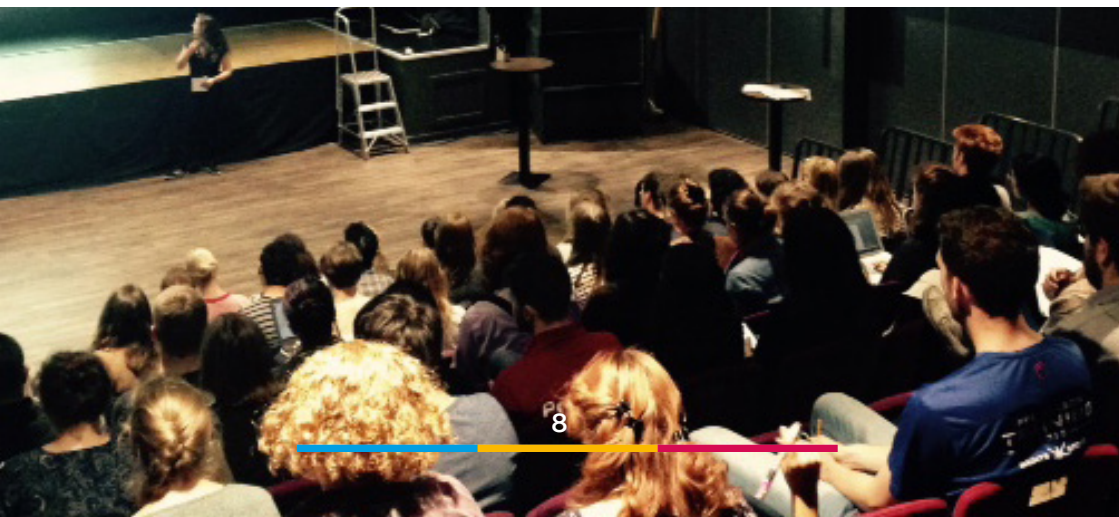
Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

Communication between sabbatical officers, staff members and lay trustees

Good internal communication is vital to a smoothly run organization. In order to ensure we offer students the best service possible, we aim to consistently be evaluating and improving our processes, conveying to everyone involved in the Students' Association the details of the events and projects that are being worked on. Given the annual change in teams of sabbatical officers, this must be a continuous process adhered to rigorously.

Future work streams:

- Development of a mentoring relationship between lay and student trustees
- Regular written and verbal updates on student activities to staff members and lay trustees
- Calendar of key events to be circulated at the beginning of each semester



Communication & encouraging engagement

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

Communication between the Students' Association and wider community (i.e. local residents, alumni, University staff)

Our students are incredibly talented and dedicated to both their work and their extracurricular commitments; we should always be looking to ensure they are not only recognized but that any recognition is promoted outside of just the student body.

We should also encourage an ever increasing level of connectivity between our alumni, local residents, the University and the Athletic Union with the Students' Association. In order to do so, our activities and events should also be promoted to interested parties alongside our achievements.

Future work streams:

- Consistently communicate our projects, events, achievements and concerns to the local media in order to inform residents of our activities and encourage their participation or comments
- Circulate the semester calendar of key events where appropriate
- Engage with Community Council, the Tourist Board, local radio stations and news papers (including The Courier, The Citizen and In Focus)



UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
ALUMNI FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Measuring Our Success

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

Few of our key performance indicators are quantitative, with the clearest outline of our work each year presented in our Annual Report. Outside of the National Student Survey and our finances, our progress and level of service to students must be evaluated holistically. Below are the key areas the Board of Trustees will use to assess the progress of the Students' Association.

1. National Student Survey results: from 2017 onwards, the NSS will measure the success of the Students' Association in terms of how well students felt academically represented while studying. At minimum, we aim to improve year on year in our ranking.

2. Democratic engagement: Our elections consistently record one of the highest levels of turnout in the United Kingdom. We aim to retain this performance and hope to regain the position of highest turnout.

3. Student achievements: Although the least quantifiable of the metrics we employ to measure success, our goal is to continue to develop a student body that receives both external and internal recognition at the highest level.

4. Union attendance: Comparing year on year attendance at similar events, footfall and head counts throughout the semester demonstrates the trends and changes in the usage of our building. We aim to increase the number of sell-out events whilst still appealing to a diverse range of tastes and providing a safe and open space for all, ensuring that our building is constantly busy and a welcoming student hub both day and night.

5. Utilisation of our advocacy service: Survey feedback on the service and the volume of appointments made will be used to evaluate our performance. Our objective is to increase positive feedback results, including response time and approachability, and to continuously adapt to the type and timing of student requirements.

Measuring Our Success

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

6. Student survey results: Our annual student survey recording the opinions of our members on our communication with them is used to improve our services. The target is to receive increasingly favourable feedback year on year, with innovative developments always encouraged.

7. Staff survey results: Our regular staff survey evaluating their experience within the organisation is crucial to ensuring both student and permanent staff experience personal development and enjoy their time employed by us. The objective is to increasingly favourable and representative survey results.

8. Commercial sustainability: Every penny spent in the Students' Association is directed towards student activity. In order to ensure we provide a high level of service to students, we have reached a careful balance of commercial profitability and affordability. We look to maintain this balance and, as far as possible, keep any financial risk to a minimum.

9. Volunteering: Without our volunteers, the Students' Association would not be able to provide the services students are accustomed to. We'd like to maintain and increase their prominence, success and the quality of the experience for our volunteers.

10. Society Membership: Ensuring that the currently high level of participation in our societies and subcommittees continues. By measuring the percentage of student participation in our societies and encouraging that to continue or increase each year we can ensure student development outside the classroom continues.

11. Sustainability: We regularly update our Sustainability policy, and the Board of Trustees annually reviews how well the Students' Association has met the aims of our policy.

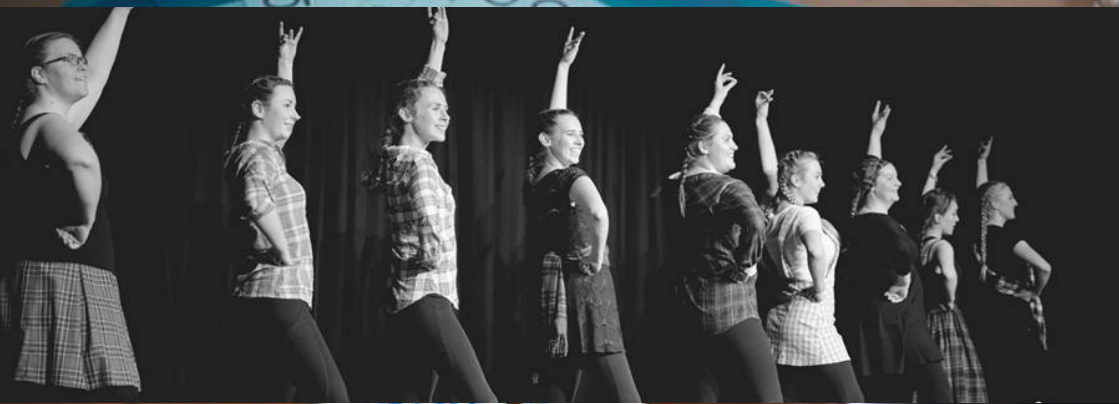
Appendix A

Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

Students' Association Constitution:

The objects of the Association are founded on those of the SRC and the Union and shall be:

1. To promote the interests and coordinate the activities of the SRC, whose activities are to include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Providing services supporting the health and wellbeing of all members.
 - ii. Providing its members with educational resources about issues relevant to them.
 - iii. Making such representations on behalf of its members as are deemed appropriate to the University Court, the Senatus Academicus, the Principal of the University or any other appropriate individuals or organisations.
2. To promote and develop the activities and goals of all of its affiliated clubs and societies, whose individual aims are to enhance education, culture, the arts or other recreational activities.
3. To initiate projects aimed for the benefit of its members' educational, cultural and social development.
4. To promote and maintain good relations between its members, the local community, and the wider world.
5. To support registered charities, nominated by members of the Association, through its Charities Campaign.
6. To provide its members with recreational facilities and other services which meet their needs.
7. Staff survey results: Our regular staff survey evaluating their experience within the organisation is crucial to ensuring both student and permanent staff experience personal development and enjoy their time employed by us. The objective is increasingly favourable and representative survey results.



YOUR UNION

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Scotcharity Registered Charity, no SC019883



University of St Andrews Students' Association
St Mary's Place, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9UZ
tel: (01334 46) 2700
website: www.yourunion.net
facebook: [standrewsunion](https://www.facebook.com/standrewsunion)
twitter: [@StAndrewsUnion](https://twitter.com/StAndrewsUnion)