

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	9th Oct 2019
Paper No.	BoM2-B
Agenda Item	2.1
Subject of Paper	Amendment to SA Election Schedules
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dylan Duff (Student President) & Sinead McKenna (Students' Association Coordinator)
Date of production	1st Oct 2019
Action	For Approval

1. Recommendations

1.1 We recommend that approval should be granted to amend the Students' Association's Elections Schedules, to permit all students within each Faculty to elect their Faculty Representatives.

2. Purpose of Paper

2.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for a minor amendment to be made to the Faculty Rep Election process within the Students' Association (SA) Schedule One – Election Regulations. This amendment would see a widening of the electorate for Faculty Representatives, from only Class Reps to all students within said Faculty. This amendment is intended to enhance the democracy of these elections as well as bring the Faculty Rep System up to date with corresponding systems within the College.

3. Context and Content

3.1 The City of Glasgow College Students' Association (SA) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022 priorities include that “Students will determine the priorities of the Students' Association.” This goes on to outline that the SA will focus directly on “New governance procedures (that) will be developed to allow all of our students to take part in decision making.” This amendment to the Faculty Rep election system within the SA's Election Regulations is the SA's first step in achieving this aim.

3.2 Reflecting the partnership the SA has with the College, this priority is also mirrored in the College Strategic Plan in its strategic aim 2.4, to “Support and develop student engagement in all aspects of the student experience.” This is further outlined in the College's supporting Student Experience Strategy, Aim 2, “The Student Voice is heard and acted upon in a timely way at all levels through Student Association representation at Board level and on all key College Committees.” In widening the electorate of Faculty Reps to all students within said faculty Faculties the Student Voice represented at key College Committees is broadened, providing these committees with a truer reflection of students' views in their decision making.

3.3 At present Faculty Representatives are elected by their Faculty's Class Reps only, who in turn are elected by the students within their class. On reviewing this system at the beginning of the academic year, it was recognised that this tiered electoral system no longer reflects the role and responsibilities of the Faculty Rep, along with producing democratic challenges to the Faculty Rep elections.

3.3.1 In previous years, Faculty Reps drew evidence from the “Finger on the Pulse” Questionnaire which was filled out exclusively by Class Reps, to take to decision making platforms such as Academic Board. This questionnaire was discarded in response to recurring negative Student feedback (“too many questionnaires to complete”) and poor returns. Working in partnership with the College's Performance team, it was replaced with the information gathered from “Student Experience Questionnaires” which are accessed by all students. With this new system now established the SA believes that the electorate of the Faculty Reps should now reflect the voice of the evidence they present – i.e. all students within their faculty.

3.3.2 Case Study feedback from the Students' Association and Student Engagement Teams show that whilst every effort is made to ensure that fair and transparent Class Rep Elections take place across the College, this is not always the case. In some instances elections are uncontested and in others, Class Reps report that they had instead been nominated by lecturers. Both teams recognise further work in addressing the culture around the importance of Class Reps and their elections needs to be done. It is felt that increasing the visibility of the

Faculty Reps through widening the electorate will contribute to this culture shift. In addition to this it will ensure that any students who have not had opportunity to elect a Class Rep, in the intended way, will have had the opportunity to be heard when electing their Faculty Rep.

4. Impact and Implications

4.1 It is believed that this amendment will have a positive impact on the student experience as detailed above. Furthermore, we hope that in engaging the wider student body in these elections they will have a new sense of ownership of their student voice and seek to continue to use it at various calls to action across the year; thus gathering richer student feedback on a variety of topics and ideas designed to enhance the Student Experience.

4.2 NUS Scotland have confirmed that the proposed changes to the SA Election Schedules are legally compliant, advising that: “You’re not taking away the right of class reps to vote in to elect faculty reps, you’re just expanding the right to others.” (Douglas Smith, NUS Scotland Development Manager). They also advised that our Student Executive should vote on the matter prior to a change being sought. This vote was cast and passed unanimously in the Student Exec meeting held on the 27th of August 2019 where 7 of 9 available members attended.

4.3 A full EQIA has been carried out with regards to this amendment (please see appendices), in summary this has shown to be a wholly positive change for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Faculty Rep Election process.

4.4 Consideration has been given to Data Protection, as a record will be made and kept of student voting in this wider election; however existing election systems, that will be mirrored, are already GDPR Compliant.

4.5 There are no identified financial implications associated with this amendment. Resources are already set aside for Faculty Rep Elections to take place, with or without the amendment.

Appendices

EQIA – Amendment to Faculty Rep Elections

SA Constitution Extract and Proposed Change – Oct 2019

Extract from Current Students' Association - Schedule One: Election Regulations

21. Other Elections

i) Members of Student Representative Council will be elected by a meeting of the class representatives in each Faculty before the end of November, once elected they will serve until the end of the academic year.

a. Nominations will open at the start of the meeting.

b. If more than one nomination is received a secret ballot will be held. There will be representation for each Faculty.

Proposed Change to Students' Association - Schedule One: Election Regulations

21. Other Elections

i) Members of Student Representative Council will be elected by all students within their respective faculties by secret ballot before the end of November, once elected they will serve until the end of the academic year.

a. Nominations will open at the start of the academic year's first Class Rep meeting and will be open for a length of time that is no less than 5 calendar days, to allow a fair opportunity for all prospective candidates.

b. There will be representation for each Faculty.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The General Equality Duty and protected characteristics are detailed at the end of this form.
Refer to the EQIA Guidance Document for more Information on how to complete this form.

Title of Policy, Procedure, or Relevant Practice:	Amendment to Faculty Rep Elections		Lead Officer:	Sinead McKenna/ Dylan Duff
Type of Policy, Procedure, or Relevant Practice: (Please double click boxes and check value)	New: <input type="checkbox"/>	Existing/Reviewed/Revised: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date of Assessment:	01 /10 /2019

Step1: Outcomes and Potential Impacts

1A. What are the intended consequences (outcomes) of the policy, procedure or relevant practice?

This amendment would see a widening of the electorate for Faculty Representatives, from only Class Reps to all students within said Faculty. This amendment is intended to enhance the democracy of these elections as well as bring the Faculty Rep System up to date with corresponding systems within the College.

1B. Could this policy, procedure or relevant practice potentially result in differential impact on groups with protected characteristics?

Yes:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If "Yes", go to Step 2 and then complete the remainder of this form
No/Not Foreseen:	<input type="checkbox"/>	If "No/Not Foreseen", go to Step 6 and then complete the remainder of this form

Step 2: Consideration of Evidence and Information

2A. What information do you plan to use as the basis of this EQIA?

(What information is available and if information is lacking, how will you address this shortfall?)

Our reasoning for the amendment overall is based on case study feedback from staff and student officers who have assisted in electing these positions as well as working with the successful candidates in previous years - This is fully outlined within misc.

Information used for the basis of this EQIA are the current election practices used to run presidential and Exec elections which will be adopted should this amendment to faculty elections be approved. We have also sought statistics of our current Class Rep Protected Characteristics to compare to the wider Student body.

2B. Please indicate potential positive, neutral and negative impacts in relation to each protected characteristic.

(What does the information indicate about potential positive, neutral and negative impacts on people who share protected characteristics? Are the needs of people with different characteristics met? Does the policy, procedure, or relevant practice affect some groups differently?)

Protected
Characteristic

Detail the Potential Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impacts with Reference to Evidence, or Information

Age

This ammendemnt would positively impact all age groups, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different ages are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.

There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different age groups. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.

2B. cont'd.

Protected
Characteristic

Detail the Potential Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impacts with Reference to Evidence, or Information

Disability

This ammendemnt would positively impact all disability groups, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different abilities are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.

There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different abilities. Pre-existing practices include providing nomination packs in different readable format - eg Large Print. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.

Gender
Reassignment

This ammendemnt would positively impact gender reassignment groups, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students who identify as gender reassigned are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.

There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support gender reassignment. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.

2B. cont'd.	
Protected Characteristic	Detail the Potential Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impacts with Reference to Evidence, or Information
Marriage & Civil P'ship *	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact those who are married and/or within a civil partnership, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students who identify as married/within a civil partnership are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support students who are married and/or within a Civil Partnership. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact those who are pregnant or on maternity, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students who are pregnant or on maternity are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support students who are pregnant and/or on maternity. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>

2B. cont'd	
Protected Characteristic	Detail the Potential Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impacts with Reference to Evidence, or Information
Race	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact students of all races, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different races are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different race groups. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact students of all religions or beliefs, widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different religions and beliefs are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different religious or belief groups. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>

2B. cont'd	
Protected Characteristic	Detail the Potential Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impacts with Reference to Evidence, or Information
Sex	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact students of all sexes widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different sexes are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different sexes. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>This ammendemnt would positively impact students of all sexual orientations widening the Faculty Rep electorate to include all students within a faculty would ensure all students of different sexual orientations are adequately represented by their vote for their preferred candidate.</p> <p>There are currently no adjustments neccessary to be made to existing elections practices that would support different sexual orientations. Our elections code of conduct outlines the expectations of candidates with regards to respecting all protected characteristics in line with College policy.</p>

Step 3: Consider Alternatives and Mitigation

3A. Are you able to reduce any potential negative impacts identified above?

Yes: No: N/A: If N/A, go to Step 4

3B. If “Yes”, what arrangements could be implemented to reduce any potential negative impacts identified above?

N/A

3C. If “No”, it may be appropriate if the policy, procedure, or relevant practice affects groups differently where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. If this is the case, please provide explanatory details to objectively justify this decision.

(Note: you may be required to obtain legal advice to verify your decision. If you suspect this may be the case, please contact Diversity & Equalities for direction.)

Step 4: Compliance with General Equality Duty

4A. Does the policy, procedure or relevant practice comply with the three parts of the general duty:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**
- **Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**

Yes: No: For 4B- 4D, please detail relevant groups who share a protected characteristic and refer to evidence/information.

4B. If “Yes”, how?

This amendment would remove discrepancies between the PCs of our Class Reps and the wider student body that may affect the equality of opportunity. For example at present our Class Reps are made up of 12.9% of students that identify as BME in comparison to the wider student body where 16.4% identify as BME. This shortfall currently means that 3.5% of BME students are not being represented in this vote.

By widening the electorate of our Faculty Rep to include all students within a Faculty it encourages candidates to consider the identities and needs of the wider student body they are to represent as a pose to only the Class Reps that currently vote for them, thus fostering good relations between those who share and those who do not share a protected characteristic.

4C. If “No”, what are the negative impacts and the associated risks?

4D. If “No”, What arrangements exist, or could be implemented to better comply with the general duty?

Step 5: The Involvement of Individuals, Groups and Organisations Representing Protected Characteristics

5A. Who has been involved in the undertaking of this assessment? (Please detail the staff/student/stakeholder groups)

Members of Staff from the Students' Association and Student Engagement Teams. Student members of the Students' Association Presidential Team, Voluntary Executive Team and former Faculty Reps. Guidance was also sought from NUS Scotland.

5B. How successful has this been, and what changes can be made to improve this process in the future?

Due to the intricacies of Student Elections consulting with staff who work directly in this field alongside students who have experienced this first hand has been successful in reviewing the impact of such a specified change to the SA Election Regulations. Where more broader changes are made it would be prudent to consult with the wider student body.

5C. If you have further involvement to carry out, please list who you are going to involve and how?

N/A

Step 6: Making a decision and outcome

6A. What is your decision? (Please select an option from the drop down menu options using the arrow on the right)

A. A positive impact is explicitly intended and very likely.

(Note: if select option F, you may be required to obtain legal advice to verify your decision. If you suspect this may be the case, please contact Diversity & Equalities for direction.)

6B. Are you able to introduce the policy, procedure, or relevant practice without making any changes?

Yes:



No:

6C. If “Yes”, clearly explain upon which basis this decision was made

As we are adopting pre-existing election practices that have already been EQIA approved

6D. If “No”, what changes will you make before implementation?

Step 7: Taking action and monitoring

7A. What action will we take?

Approval is being sought from Board to amend the Elections Schedules with regards to Faculty Rep Elections.
Once approved Elections process will be updated to allow all students from within a faculty to vote for their Faculty Reps.

7B. Who will take that action?

Student President will be responsible for seeking approval from the Board.
Students' Association Coordinator will be responsible for updating election processes.

7C. When will that action be completed?

Approval will be sought at the meeting of the Board on the 9th of October 2019.
New election processes will be ready to use in time for Faculty Rep elections due to take place 27th of October.

7D. Once implemented, how will the policy, procedure, or relevant practice be monitored?

We will adopt the ongoing monitoring practices of our existing college wide elections to this amended regulation - including reviewing candidate interest/access/nominations, etc.

Miscellaneous

Additional Information (please insert any supporting information, or data here)

Case Study feedback from the Students' Association and Student Engagement Teams show that whilst every effort is made to ensure that fair and transparent Class Rep Elections take place across the College, this is not always the case. In some instances elections are uncontested and in others, Class Reps report that they had instead been nominated by lecturers. Both teams recognise further work in addressing the culture around the importance of Class Reps and their elections needs to be done. It is felt that increasing the visibility of the Faculty Reps through widening the electorate will contribute to this culture shift. In addition to this it will ensure that any students who have not had opportunity to elect a Class Rep, in the intended way, will have had the opportunity to be heard when electing their Faculty Rep.

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

For College records, but not for publishing publically:

- The information contained within this EQIA needs to be confirmed and approved as the completed EQIA will be published on the College web-site.
- As such, EQIAs must be approved by a Director or above.
- Ask a Director to review and sign off the EQIA (an electronic signature will suffice, as long as a paper copy follows).
- Following completion, send an electronic copy to both the Diversity & Equalities Manager and Director of Planning and Administration.

Name:		Position:	
Signature:		Date:	

Summary of the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010

Components	Due Regard
A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:	Having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:
a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.	
b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic * b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	a) Tackle prejudice. b) Promote understanding.

'Due regard' comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. The weight that public authorities give to equality should be proportionate to how relevant a particular function is to equality. In short, the more relevant a function is to equality, then the greater the regard that should be paid.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership *
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

* Although Marriage and Civil Partnership applies to section a) in employment only, this will be considered for all stakeholders