Board of Management

Students, Staff & Equalities Committee

Date of Meeting	**Wednesday 17 May 2023**
Paper No.	**SSEC3-E**
Agenda Item	**5.1**
Subject of Paper	**Student Experience Annual Report 2022/23**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Gillian Plunkett I Student Experience Director**
Date of production	**May 2023**
Action	**For Discussion/Decision**

1. Recommendations

1.1 The Students, Staff and Equalities Committee (SSEC) is asked to note the Student Experience Annual Report of AY2022/23 and comment on service priorities, aims and objectives.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of the Annual Report is to provide members of the SSEC with a high-level overview of student support service priorities and developments in AY2022/23.

3. Consultation

N/A

4. Key Insights

4.1 Creating an inclusive environment that anticipates and supports student need through excellent advice, guidance and support services is fundamental to the College's **Strategic Priority 2 - To enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential.**

4.2 The Student Experience Directorate supports the student journey from application to graduation with students at the centre of our learning and support services. We aspire to engender a passion for learning among our students and we are committed to raising standards through a culture of continuous improvement to achieve the highest level of performance for both our staff and students.

4.3 Evaluating our performance helps the college to understand situations which may be impacting on our students and is an important factor in meeting our Student Academic Experience Strategy objectives, our Public Sector Equality Duty and in meeting our Regional Outcome Agreement objectives in relation to widening participation.

5. Impact and Implications

5.1 Student support services work together with learning and teaching to support the College KPis in retention and success. Failure to provide support could impact on the College's performance in relation to KPis.

Student Experience Annual Report 2022/23

CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Contents

Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to read our Student Experience Annual Report for AY2022/23. This year's report continues to be based on our professional experience and practice within the Directorate.

Most staff and students agree that it is fantastic to be back on campus and throughout this report I have highlighted how we are building services back better than ever, taking account of the new and emerging needs of our students. We all appreciate that it will be some years before we return to a more settled phase and that things will continue to change in education, learning and teaching and the whole of the student experience. We remain alert and ready.

Thank you to the Board of Management for their wholehearted support during this last year, and to the Student Experience Directorate staff for their professionalism and energy.

Gillian Plunkett

Director of Student Experience

May 2023

Meet the Student Experience Directorate Senior Team

Gillian Plunkett
Director

Scott Harrison
Associate Director
Learner Journey

Sandra Cook
Head of Student
Development

Sinead McKenna
Student Engagement
Manager

Brian Deeley
Student Recruitment and
Funding Manager

Lisa Hardy
Student Support and
Well Being Manager

# Key Objectives, Achievements and Challenges

Key Objectives	Key Achievements	Key Challenges

• Achieve student recruitment targets.
 	
• Build student affiliation, support student transition and early retention.
 	
• Support students, their welfare, learning support needs, mental health and well-being.
 	
• Improve student digital access.
 	
• Continuously review and improve services through evidence-based practice.
 	
• Champion the student voice.
 	
• Measure and improve Student Satisfaction.
 	
• Support and develop our staff and places of work.
	• Student support satisfaction rates of 80+%.
	
	• We continue to raise awareness of issues important to students
	    o Gender Based Violence
	    o White Ribbon Campaign
	    o Well-Being
	    o Cost of Living Crisis
	    o Breakfast Club
	
	• Improving communications for staff and students
	    o Student Exp. News – May 2022.
	    o Student Exp. News – Dec 2022
	    o Care Experienced Newsletter
	
	• Refocus of Learning Support.
	
	• Launch of Skills for Life Toolkit.
	
	• Shortlisted Herald Higher Education Awards for Trans Liberation (CitySA) and Preventing Gender Based Violence.
	
	• Award winning Students' Association.
		• Complexity of student need - psychological and financial needs related to the cost-of- living crisis are impacting on students this year. We have also identified skills gaps around digital literacy which will be a focus in AY 29023/24.
		
		• Our Block 3 withdrawal survey results showed that online learning as a reason for withdrawal reduced by 92% but there was a significant increase of 118% in student physical ill health. Health promotion will be a feature for AY2023/24.
		
		• Student engagement continues to be a challenge, whether in attendance or engagement with activities including student feedback. New ways of communicating with student effectively will continue to be a focus.

Student Recruitment and Funding

Admissions

Table 1 shows that applications for full time courses commencing in August (where entry is based on selection criteria including an interview) have declined over 5 years by approximately 17%, with a further decline of 7% in AY 2022/23.

Table 1 – 5 Year 1st Choice Applications Trend

1st Choice Applications (Headcount)

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
20281	19905	19230	18146	16808
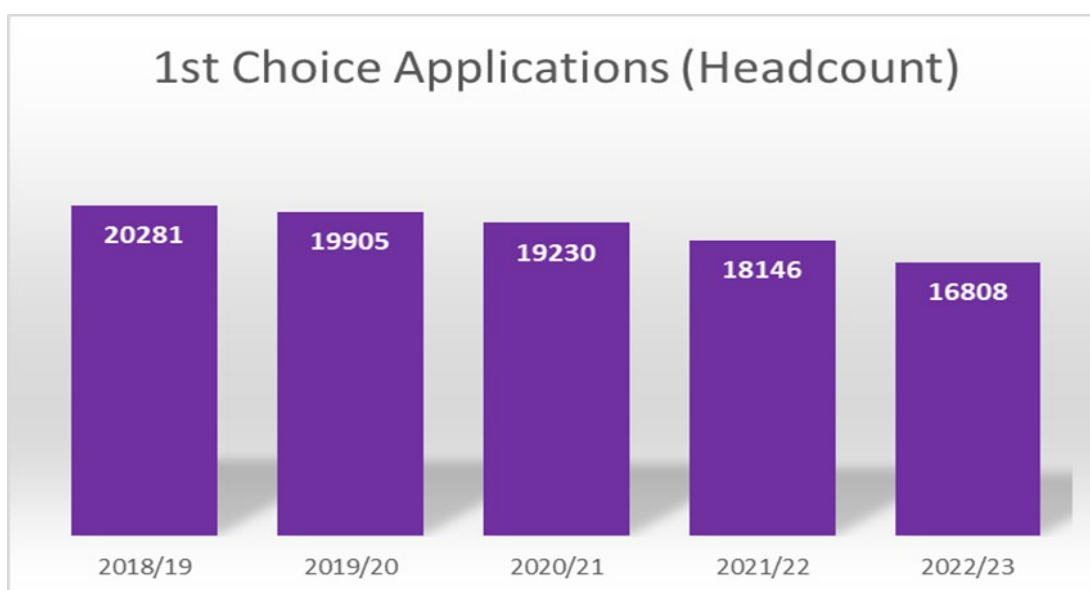
It is worth noting that a similar trend is has been evidenced across the Sector in a recent review by Colleges Scotland which highlights a reduction of 9.6% in full time applications nationally, between the years of 2019/22 and 2021/22.

The main factors influencing the downturn in full time applications continues to be changing demographics, and the impact of widening access policies currently being implemented by universities which target the traditional FE College market. The College has acted to both increase applications and retain offer holders throughout the pre-entry stage, including:

- Additional open days and promotion by the college Events Team. Open days have been well attended by curriculum teams and support staff and are open to new applicants, offer holders, parents, friends and family.

- Significant focus on, and development of, our award winning Get Ready for College initiative which aims to build excitement, affiliation and confidence through student vlogs, curriculum content, videos and activities together with offering practical support on key transition issues such as funding and finance, laptop loan and accommodation. Browse through the induction Hub for students [here](#).
- Improved data analysis and development of SMART targets for offers and acceptances within curriculum teams to ensure offers are optimised and take account of shrinkage.

Satisfaction with Admissions

Table 2 offers the results of our admissions student satisfaction survey over a 5-year period 2018 – 2022. This survey provides essential feedback from those who are both successful and unsuccessful in obtaining a place at college and helps ensure that the college admissions process is open, fair and transparent.

The main points from the survey are: -

- Results on navigation and finding information (Q1) have returned to pre COVID levels together with ease of creating an account and completing the application which have also improved.
- Between Jan 2022 – April 2022 restrictions were still in place and so Zoom and telephone interviews relaced some face-to-face interview activity which accounts for the lower satisfaction rate for Q4. This year all interviews will be face to face on campus and therefore this result should improve.
- We are delighted that the overall experience of our applicants remains high at 92% which is an increase of 4% on last year's overall experience.

Table 2 – Admissions Satisfaction Survey 2022

2022 Admission Survey Questions	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Q1. How easy was it to find information on courses on the City of Glasgow College website?	92%	93%	90%	86%	91%
Q2. How easy was it to create an account online?	92%	94%	89%	86%	88%
Q3. How easy was it to complete the application form?	89%	90%	90%	87%	88%
Q4. How easy was it to book an interview date online?	82%	85%	75%	72%	70%
Q5. How would you rate the interview information you received when you booked your interview e.g. interview details, date, time, what to bring to interview etc.?	88%	92%	88%	89%	89%
Q6. How would you rate your overall interview experience?	87%	91%	87%	89%	91%
Q7. After the interview how quickly did we get back to you with the outcome of your interview? (Response is for less than 4 weeks)	83%	84%	74%	76%	76%
Q8. How would you rate your overall experience with our application process?	85%	90%	89%	88%	92%

Action taken by the Student Recruitment Team to improve satisfaction particularly related to Q4 and Q7 includes: -

- A Project Group has been convened to improve the interview booking process, although it is worth mentioning that the college is still leading the way in this functionality with most Colleges and Universities continuing to contact students by email with a fixed date and time for interview which can be an inefficient use of lecturer time where applicants do not show for interview.
- Automated prompts have been introduced to encourage students to complete their application and/or move to the next stage.

- Automated prompts have also been introduced for staff to ensure they update applicant outcomes as soon as possible post interview to speed up feedback to applicants.
- A fully digital assessment process has been developed for scoring applicant interviews, portfolios etc.

Student Funding

Post COVID student funding has returned to (almost) pre COVID levels with Hardship Fund levels maintained in recognition of the cost of living crisis facing students this year. In addition to supporting students with living costs we offer a range of information and guidance on areas such as budgeting during our money week campaign.

Table 3 – Student Support Fund Expenditure 2021/22*

Fund Type	Total Expenditure per Fund AY 2021/22	No. of Students Supported	Total Expenditure per Fund AY 2022/23*	No. of Students Supported
Further Education Bursary Fund	£7,991,676	2,602	£7,092,183	2,053
Further Education Childcare Fund	£263,751	65	£334,150	66
Higher Education Childcare Fund	£279,974	74	£272,212	49
Further Education Hardship Fund	£2,737,750	3,185	£2,703,223	2,579
Further Education Winter COVID Fund	£348,877	1,412	N/A	N/A
Higher Education Hardship Fund	£789,325	626	£780,631	400
Higher Education Winter COVID Fund	£600,087	634	N/A	N/A
Total Expenditure	**£13,011,440**	**8,590**	**£11,182,399**	**5,147**

* Unaudited figures for 2022/23 at 1 May 2023

Student Support and Well Being

The Student Support and Well Being Team cover three main strands of support: -

- Personal Support
- Jobs and Careers: and
- Mental Health and Well Being.

Personal Support

A small team of seven FTE Advisors cover a huge area and number of students across the college. Table 4 shows the breadth and volume of activity to 23 April 2023 with a total of 9,067 support interventions recorded. This is a 61% increase compared to the 5,585 support interventions offered to the same period last year which was anticipated and mainly due to more students being back on campus and engaging with services. Personal support involves a system of triage to ensure that students get to the correct support intervention as quickly as possible.

Table 4 – Support Interventions

Intervention	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Accommodation/ homelessness	5	47	37	53	18	46	37	54	15	312
Articulation/UCAS	3	15	72	200	325	427	28	19	12	1101
Careers guidance/ employability	14	67	59	126	85	84	82	89	37	643
Funding	73	365	156	178	76	99	100	89	52	1188
Gender based violence report	4	8	1	23	18	2	0	12	3	71
Hardship funds	106	763	362	357	175	256	178	139	48	2384
Miscellaneous	27	97	61	76	32	38	39	44	8	422
Personal Support	31	279	326	502	295	484	492	422	115	2946
Total	**263**	**1641**	**1074**	**1515**	**1024**	**1436**	**956**	**868**	**290**	**9067**

Vulnerable students such as care experienced, young carers and estranged students continue to be the predominant client group for Student Advisor support and many of these groups will be included in one or more of the above support interventions.

Our Care Experienced Newsletter was a new addition for AY2022/23 as well as a new City life page for our priority groups.

Jobs and Careers

Articulation (University and College Application System – UCAS)

The UCAS deadline for entry to University in AY2023/24 completed in January 2023.

Table 5 shows the number of students, mainly final Year 2 students (HND), applying to University through UCAS and although the figures show a decrease year on year apart from the high figure of 1,854 recorded in 2020/21 which is a statistical blip attributed to COVID restrictions, the ratio of UCAS applications to HE Year 2 students has remained approximately the same. Rather than a drop in applications, this points to a reduction in Year 2 places possibly because of a move from two-year HNDs to one-year HNCs.

Table 5: City of Glasgow College Applicants to University

Status	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
UCAS Applications Submitted	1,737	1,681	1,854	1,436	1,342
Numbers Successfully Articulating	1,302	1,353	1,344	1,016	Available Nov 2023
% Success Rate	75%	80%	72%	71%	

We continue to build back services and had a fantastic turnout from employers and students at our Careers Event in April 2023.

Student Mental Health and Well Being

Throughout AY 2022/23 we retained options for face-to-face, telephone and online counselling with some students stating a preference for an online option.

Table 6 provides information on well-being assessments offered in the interim period August – March over a 3-year period. The main area to note is the increase in external referrals evidenced by an increase in complexity of need which is out with the professional scope of our Student Counsellors who offer person centred counselling. A high proportion of students referred externally will wait for up to one year for appointments through NHS which is an area of concern across the sector.

Table 6 – Counselling Referrals 2020 – 2022 (Aug – March)

Referral Type	2020/21	%	2021/22	%	2022/23	%
Referred for Counselling Internal (After Assessment)	190	45%	229	50%	276	51%
Referred for Counselling External (After Assessment)	44	10%	54	12%	89	16%
Referred to Mental Health Coordinator (After Assessment)	13	3%	10	2%	N/A	
Did Not Attend Assessment Appointment	65	15%	94	21%	126	23%
Contacted No Response	100	24%	68	15%	N/A	
Rearranged					4	1%
Referred to alternative internal support					15	3%
Cancelled					34	6%
Total Students	**420**		**457**		**544**	

Emily Test Charter

One area of support we are exceptionally proud of is our ongoing work around [gender-based violence](#) (GBV). While GBV increased during COVID, it has also been recognised as a hidden crime with only 1 in 5 women prepared to report an incident as a crime. We see several students with post-traumatic stress related to sexual violence that they have attempted to 'get over' or 'bury'.

So we are delighted to have co developed the Aware and Empowered workshops with the [Emily Test](#) charity which have now been rolled out nationally through the Emily Test Charter. The Charter was launched in 2021 for universities and colleges in Scotland and is the first GBV Charter in the world. This year we are working towards obtaining the Charter status. Some of the work already undertaken includes:

- Aware and Empowered class workshops piloted with Nautical Cadets (Shortlisted for the HE Awards in 2022 and 2023).
- Theory of Change workshop.
- Emily Test site visit.
- L.I.S.T.E.N. GBV training for 40 staff.
- In-house specialist support from Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis.
- Awareness raising activities at various points of the year.
- Report and Support platform for students and staff to report incidents and access support.
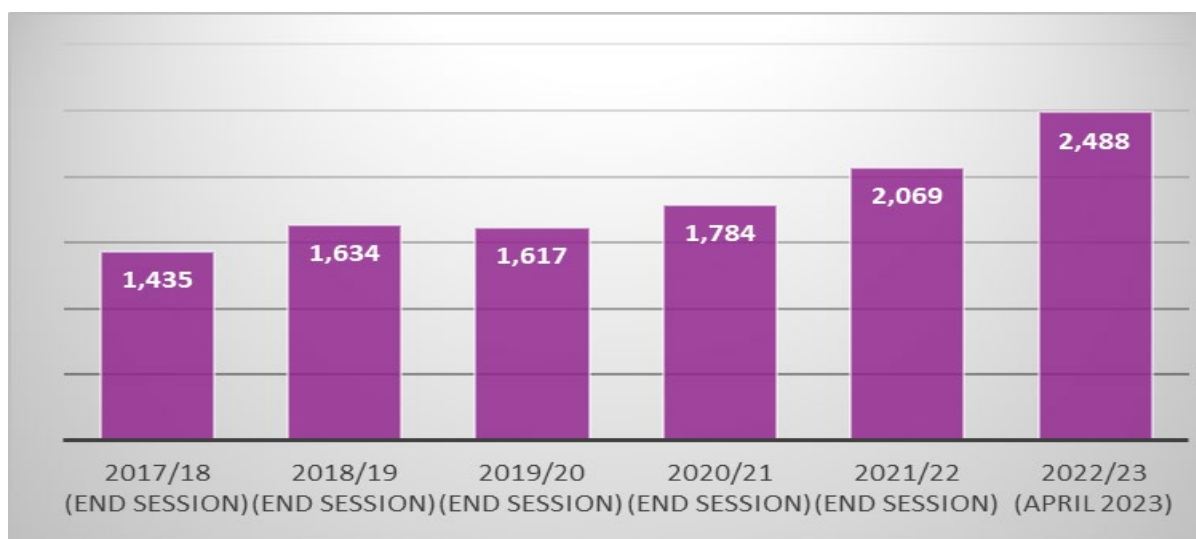
Learning Support

The Learning Support Team provides support interventions and essential study and skills development support to students with a disability or learning support need. This is delivered in three stages.

- **Stage One:** Identify a support need and gather evidence of the need.
- **Stage Two:** Assess student's needs and create a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP).
- **Stage Three:** Work alongside partners to facilitate support recommendations.

Needs Assessment

Table 7 shows that over the last 6 years there has been a considerable increase in the number of PLSPs assessed and created (73%). We welcome the fact that more students are engaging positively with the needs assessment process, recognise their need for support and that an increased number of disabled and ASN students can access the college and the learning and teaching offered by the college to realise their potential, however we also recognised that a new approach was needed.

Table 7: Personal Learning Support Plan - Totals

Developing a new approach to Learning Support has involved intensive analysis and research of student's additional support needs across the college.

Our findings concluded that: -

- Most students, and particularly FE students, had low levels of digital literacy skills which was causing students to fall behind and then be referred to learning support for screening for additional support needs which was incorrect. Having a skills gap is not a disability.
- Students who had missed classes were being sent to learning support for 'catch up' teaching which is not a learning support function.
- Schools offer significant levels of alterative assessment arrangements around exams which the college cannot provide in a post school and largely more independent learning setting.
- Most student support follows a common theme with 90% plus of PLSPs recommending the following actions to teaching staff having a student with additional support needs in their class; -
  - Make digital course content available via the VLE and preferably before the class.
  - Use captions in all video content.

- Record elements of learning and teaching and make these available via the VLE.
- Provide clear instructions.
- Offer regular check-ins to ensure understanding.
- Offer written feedback.

To help address that above Learning Support has been restructured and will work more closely with the Learning and Teaching Academy to be re-named Learning Development and Innovation Team in AY 2023/24.

New support interventions will include: -

- Further roll out of Lecturer Capture process to record elements of learning and teaching and make these available through the VLE.
- Further promotion of Ally for Canvas which is an accessibility tool which checks content on the VLE to ensure it meets accessibility standards.
- New Study Skills Workshops.
- One to one mentoring.
- Intensive staff training for new Learning Support Advisors.
- A disabled Student Network.

Most of these new approaches will be available for all students to provide additional support for their studies and to improve attainment. It is also expected that awareness of neuro diversity in the classroom will be embedded in the curriculum design, creation and delivery supported by the Universal Design for Learning principles, thus providing the best support for our students.

Learning Support 2022/23 Highlights

- Since September the Learning Support Team have supported 56 students to engage with an Educational Psychologist.
- In October the Disabled Students Network was established which offers peer support to disabled students. Session have included fundraising activities, cross society activities and involvement in focus groups.

- In January the team updated the Learning Support information on the college website and [MyConnect](#) and in partnership with the Learning and Teaching Academy launched the Supporting Students Campaign.

- At the end of March 101 students were supported to make an application for Disabled Students Allowance.

- By May 130 students had been tested for dyslexia using the Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening test.

- This term 430 students have been offered Alternative Assessment Arrangements.

Learning Support - Student Satisfaction

The 'Accessing Learning Support' survey was sent to a sample of 250 students in November 2022 with an aim to gather first impressions. The survey generated a 24% return from across the 4 Faculties.

- 45% of the sample found out about Learning Support from the College Application form.

- 96% of students found the information about Learning Support on the College Website informative.

- 98% felt their first meeting with Learning Support was positive and 96% agreed their support needs were met in a timely manner.

- In general, 96% of students expressed satisfaction with the support received from the Learning Support Team.

Student Engagement

The Student Engagement Teamwork in close partnership with City SA to engage students in their learning and teaching experiences and beyond. They support the wider college to engage students in college feedback systems as well as provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

In AY2022/23, the Team prioritised improving the accessibility and reach of our Class Representation Systems following Education Scotland recommendations. We did this by redeveloping the system and improving communications through digital and on campus marketing strategies.

The team have also continued to work in partnership to facilitate Student Focus Groups, deliver Student Engagement Workshops and create innovative opportunities for students to get involved in college life.

Student Engagement in Partnership with the Students' Association Highlights 2022/2023

August, we focused on welcoming our new students through hosting our Freshers Event as part of the college's welcome week. Over 3,500 students came to our event across the five days, with 200+ signing up to our clubs and societies and a further 7,040 accessing information through the City SA website.

September, our Student Engagement Workshops kicked off with Large Scale Team building, offering early engagement support across all faculties. To date, there have been 152 workshops delivered with 2,771 students participating.
Recruitment for Class Reps also began this month, including the introduction of a new Class Rep Hub, with 86.5% of classes electing representatives this year. Finally, our Sport Clubs and Societies started up again providing students with opportunities to meet like-minded peers.

October was extremely busy for our teams; we celebrated Black History Month in style by hosting our Pan African Cooking Demo with Chef Tunde Abifarin and organising Glasgow Slavery Tours through CRER.
We launched our Cost of Living Campaign signposting students to savings on Food and Energy costs. Alongside this we began promoting Fuel your Morning, the college's student free breakfast offering, serving 11,138 breakfasts to date.
The 2022 Student Parliament Elections took place where students elected their Faculty Reps and Executive Officers. At the same time, we raised awareness of digital anxiety during World Mental Health Day.

November, we took part in the nationwide [16 Days of Action](#) against Gender based violence which included a programme of campaigns and activities for students to engage with including a moving performance from [Drama Students.](#)

Once again, we ran the [Step count Challenge](#), engaging over 90 students and staff in walking, running, wheeling, and cycling. Collectively they took over 10 million steps which equates to approximately 4,500 miles.

We celebrated Trans Inclusion week by [demystifying pronouns](#) as well as organising trans inclusive fitness sessions with Tony Basra. The work contributing to our aspiring [LGBT Charter Mark](#) awarded by LGBT Youth Scotland.

We relaunched the city SA website with improvements to the user interface and overall design following student feedback. We have seen a massive increase to traffic on our website, 208,900 views this year, with our [how to videos](#) supporting students along the way.

December saw the team get into the festive spirit running ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Gingerbread house building competitions, hosting Santa themed [Pop Up Barbering at Riverside](#) and organised a [Winter Social](#) for Class Reps and Societies.

We ran our annual fundraising activities through our [City Cares](#) campaign, raising over £1000 of gifts in kind to support 51 children and 46 women seeking refuge with Glasgow Women's Aid. Students and Staff came together and volunteered their time wrapping, donated gifts and creating Christmas cards as well. Phew!

January, the new year started with us re-engaging our Class Reps in meetings around the Student Mental Health Agreement along with recruiting January Starts. Our monthly Rep meetings have seen some [great wins for students](#) as well as a 159% increase in attendance since last year.

Following funding input from the Nairn Foundation, we began recruitment for our new Volunteer Ambassadors roles, paid opportunities for students to support their peers in accessing volunteering opportunities. Our [Volunteer Hub](#) has seen a 72% increase in students enrolling along with 15 new registered community partners and we have hosted several group volunteering opportunities including our Campus Clean Ups.

We also welcomed one of our first advertising partners on site, Vintage Vera, to offer exclusive deals to our students.

February marked LGBT History Month; with a month full of events, activities, and actions for students to enjoy and engage with. Our Liberation activities saw an 82% increase in active participants at events in comparison to last year.

We welcomed fresh staff to our teams, bringing fresh ideas to across our remit including our Wee Grants Scheme. The scheme has welcomed applications from our students on projects that will enhance student communities, with our Student Parliament committing up to £1000 of funding to sponsor six successful applications.

Our annual Student Awards opened for nominations across seven categories, with shortlists published and winners being announced at the end of May.

March was a great month for Student Representation! We ran our Big Student Elections for our presidential team next year, where 11 candidates had put themselves forward, and over 1,950 students turned out to vote. Our team also carried out focus groups with senior phase school groups, gathering great feedback on their experience so far. SA on Campus was in full force, collecting student feedback on sport provision leading to our Activities for All campaign and inclusive sport fairs.

April, we launched a pilot of our Cadets Feedback System, a unique representation model that meets cadet modes of study. Working in partnership with Student Advisors, we ran a joint Volunteering and Careers Fair for students looking to develop further skills in the future. Finally, our Student Officers attended NUS (National Union of Students) Scotland conference where they contributed to passing NUS National policies as well as brought back three NUS Awards for CitySA.

Additional Reading

Here are some resources and information we are proud to have developed and shared with our colleagues across the college this year.

We created this resource for lecturers to help them talk about difficult subjects in class and embed this in learning.
Skills for Life (A Classroom Resource for Lecturers)

Our Newsletters
May 2022
December 2022

Because we can't be everywhere all the time....
Student Services Videos – Block 1
Student Services Videos – Block 2
Student Services Videos Block 3
Sign Posting Guide

New Supporting Students Series to help develop a more Inclusive Classroom.
Visual Impairment
Dyslexia
Cerebral Palsy
Autism

CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

LET LEARNING FLOURISH

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