

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	26 March 2025
Paper No.	BoM3-B
Agenda Item	2.1
Subject of Paper	Students' Association Report
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Ciara McCarthy – Student President Polly Vaker – Vice President of Social & Activities
Date of production	18 March 2025
Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To discuss the Students' Association report to the Board on work and activities undertaken since the last Board meeting.

2. Consultation

- 2.1.** The Students' Association (SA) annually outlines its work after consulting student representatives during their induction and through Annual General Meetings. Our work is evaluated through various student feedback methods, including surveys, focus groups and digital analysis.

3. Key Insights

- 3.1.** The SA [Strategic Plan 2023-28](#) outlines our vision to work with students to influence change and add value to the student experience. Our work this academic year is guided by this strategy, shaped by the Presidential team's manifestos and informed by feedback from students. This report provides the Board with an update on the following work:

- Class Rep Training Outcomes
- City Attributes – Student Feedback
- Engagement Survey
- Big Student Elections
- SA Organisational Change
- Autism Accreditation
- Election Registration Trends

4. Impact and Implications

- 4.1.** The SA's work directly aligns with the College's priorities to be an inspirational place of learning and to enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2021-30.
- 4.2.** While many aspects of the SA operate continuously, failing to meet the yearly operational objectives could reduce positive student engagement and meaningful student representation.
- 4.3.** We aim to support and engage with students disproportionately affected by economic and social barriers, reaching out to those most at risk of withdrawing from their courses.

Appendix 1: Students' Association Report

Students' Association Report: March 2025

Class Rep Training Outcomes

The final Class Rep training session occurred in early March, with 42% of classes now having a trained representative. Students consistently report that Faculty Ambassadors (FAs) training is beneficial and enhances their understanding of the role – 99% fed back that following training they felt ready to take on the Class Rep Role.

City Attributes - Student Feedback

As part of the February Class Rep meetings, feedback on City Attributes was gathered and shared with the working group for action. This included the benefits and challenges for students whilst utilising City Attributes:

Benefits

- Improved classroom dynamics and social skills through cooperation and communication.
- Increased confidence from goal setting and skill reflection.
- Helped students recognise valuable employability skills.

Challenges

- Additional pressure on already intensive courses.
- Technical issues with Canvas, including layout problems and bugs causing lost work.

Engagement Survey

The Students' Association (SA) noticed decreased engagement within our networks and events this year. This academic year, we've had 388 students attending the networks; this number last year was 577 representing a 37.2% decrease.

After investigating further with our peers, from other SAs, and reviewing available sector research, it is recognised that the ongoing cost-of-living crisis is a contributing factor. The [Student Finance and Wellbeing Survey](#) published in December 2024, outlines that: "the median number of hours worked in the previous 7 days for all student groups (FE & HE) was above the 10–15 hours recommended".

In addition to this having an adverse effect on our students' mental health, the increase to weekly workload decreases the opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Polly Vaker, current Vice President of Social and Activities, is now beginning to explore this further and gather feedback on how the Students' Association can continue to provide impactful enrichment services whilst recognising that students cannot engage in the ways they have in the past, whilst navigating our current socio-economic climate.

The engagement survey will be launched on the 24th of March and will be live for a month to see the reasons for this change in engagement with our extracurricular activities. All students leaving feedback will be added to the ODEON voucher draw.

Big Student Elections

This year, we have had 31 students formally register their interest in running for student elections, resulting in 16 approved candidates. There has been significant interest in the role of Learning and Teaching Vice President compared to previous years and growing engagement from Nautical & STEM students (see appendix 5.1). The newly elected candidates will form the new Presidential team for the 2025-2026 term.

It is helpful for Board of Management to note that, none of the current student board members will be returning next year as they have served their full two-year election term.

SA Organisational Change

The Students' Association is undergoing organisational changes, as our SA coordinator, Lucy Treasure, has left the position and created an opening. We thank Lucy for her dedication and support to our Students' Association. As of now, applications have been opened, with expectations to close on the working day of March 20th. We hope to appoint a new SAC to support the newly elected Presidential team for 2025/2026.

Autism Accreditation

The Students' Association is undertaking an Autism Accreditation delivered by the National Autistic Society. This initiative is part of the neurodiversity campaign developed last academic year and is a continuation of the work we are doing to achieve the 2023 AGM motion to focus on campaigns that celebrate and support neurodiverse students.

So far, this work has included integrating an autistic and neurodiverse-led focus group, where students provide feedback about their experiences with the Students' Association's services. An action plan based on their feedback will be produced and actioned to support our accreditation.

In addition to this work, we have collaborated with college partners to create resources that both staff and students can utilise when accessing the Students' Association services. Upon completion, we will be the first Students' Association to achieve this accreditation.

Election Registration Trends

Breakdown of student registering candidacy interest by faculty and year.

