

Board of Management

Date of Meeting	25 March 2026
Paper No.	BoM3-C
Agenda Item	3.1
Subject of Paper	Students' Association Report
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Flora Irvine-Hall - Student President
Date of production	16 March 2026
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:

- Representation
- Network and Events
- Diversity and Wellbeing Initiatives
- Future Campaigns

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:

1. Representation

1.1 Class Rep Meetings - Additional Course Costs

In February, Class Rep Meetings were held to explore concerns around additional course costs, which had been raised through Class Reps, the wider student body and Student Parliament. A total of 40 Class Reps attended. Of these, 43% reported that they had not been informed of additional costs at the start of their course, while others described mixed accuracy or clarity in the information provided.

There is significant variation in required materials across subject areas. For example, Accounting students reported good access to free resources, whereas Hairdressing students highlighted costs of several hundred pounds. Students also noted the wider impact of these expenses, including stress linked to graded units, travel and food costs, and the need to balance paid work alongside study.

Key suggestions included providing clearer, earlier communication about expected costs, offering more comprehensive breakdowns and alternatives where possible, and improving access to existing resources such as laptops, software and books, and more information on how and where to buy more affordable materials that still meet the needs of their course.

As part of this fact finding process, we'll be sharing more in-depth information to faculties and the Senior Management Team to identify best steps going forward.

In every session, students had flagged that their primary concern regarding costs of attending college was the cost of travel. We'll be creating a campaign based on this to find out more about how our students are impacted and advocate for better student travel.

1.2 Future Class Rep Meetings

We have had several reports from concerned students about the perceived misuse of AI from staff. These concerns were:

- Using AI to generate class teaching content without crediting it
- Using AI to mark work

As a result of this feedback, we met with the Library and Learning and Teaching Academy Services and agreed to look into updating staff guidance for correctly

referencing AI in their produced materials, as well as signposting to more environmentally friendly alternatives as students had raised ethical concerns about the impact of generative AI on the environment. To further support the Library and LTA, we're going to rerun our Class Rep Meetings on AI Guidance to compare how students feel about AI usage this year compared to last year and see if any further updates need to be made for guidance for staff and students.

1.3 Wider Student Feedback

Mature Students Stall

On the 26th of January, we held a stall for mature students. The event, which was organised by our mature students' officer Iain McClean had a total of 15 interactions and allowed us to understand issues relating to mature students. Some of these issues were:

- More assistance with IT
- More events catered to mature students
- More resources for students dealing with menopause
- How to manage brain fog

Iain has been working alongside our Skills Development team and attending drop-in sessions of the Mature Students Network, where he's passed along information about skills support that students have highlighted they would like access to.

1.4 Student Parliament

At Student Parliament, we review key themes from feedback gathered throughout the year through both formal and informal engagement, agreeing priorities and next steps for the Students' Association.

On the 27th of January, we held our second meeting on the academic year. During this meeting, we discussed whether the SA wanted to remain on X (formerly known as Twitter) following many controversies, such as the misuse of Grok to create explicit images.

After much discussion, we voted to keep our profile on the X platform, but to go inactive and state so in our bio. At our next Student Parliament Meeting, we'll be looking at

reviewing our schedules, and formalising a process for students to submit petitions and our next steps following the receipt of a petition.

1.5 Big Student Elections

We are currently running the Big Student Elections for the 2026–2027 Presidential Team. The nominations period ran from the 25th of February to the 11th of March. During this two week period, 47 students began the process of starting a nomination compared to 35 last year, with 19 candidates being approved overall.

To encourage engagement from a wider range of potential candidates, we hosted an SA on Campus activity throughout the nominations period and introduced a staff nominations suggestion form. This allowed staff to identify students who may benefit from or excel in these roles, with the Students' Association then contacting those students to encourage them to stand in the election.

Students will be able to vote online or at in-person polling stations across both campuses during our voting week, which will take place between 9am on the 23rd and 4pm on the 26th of March.

2. Networks & Events

2.1 Networks

The Students' Association has continued to provide opportunities for students to build community through our networks and societies. The Students' Association has 10 networks, with 2 new networks (LGBTQ+ Network and COGC Greens) being established this term.

Since January, there have been 36 network events, with a total of 157 students attending. Some highlights from this term include:

- Four Dungeons & Dragons sessions per week being established;
- The Writing Club has submitted three students' stories to the Edinburgh Short Story Awards;
- The Multicultural & Anti Racism Group have arranged a community Iftar event has been arranged for March 17th, which has 35 registered attendees;
- Provided a session to our Supported Education students to support them to establish their own group and activities;

Our goal for the rest of the academic year is to work with our Network Leads to plan for the new academic year and, if the students' aren't continuing, to encourage new leads to continue developing the networks - the goal is to have student leaders for our networks established for next year so we can start our network events and training as soon as possible. We have also hosted a stall at the Offer Holders day to create interest in networks for new students.

2.2 Events

In January, the Students' Association partnered with the Wellbeing Team in Student Services to host a 'New Year, Real You' event, which acted as a Refreshers' for the Students' Association and enabled us to reintroduce ourselves to returning students, and highlight our services to our incoming students.

The stalls were very successful and were a great way to feedback on some of the pieces of work students had supported this year. The events were held at the City and Riverside Campus and had over 150 students engage.

3. Volunteering

3.1 Volunteer Week

Back in February, we held a stall for Student Volunteering Week. The event was spread over two days, with one at City and one at Riverside. We had organisations such as the RSPB and Cats Protection Programme, as well as our own stall to promote our Volunteer Hub. Across the two events, we had over 80 students engage.

3.2 Volunteer Workshops

As part of our ongoing work with the Nairn Foundation to encourage students to engage in volunteering, we have redeveloped our Volunteering Workshops. We have launched these, and will start delivering from the 27th of March, with ESOL and Community Education classes as the priority target groups. These sessions are designed to support students to understand the value of volunteering, as well as how to recognise and record the skills, they've learned and their achievements that have been developed through their volunteering.

4. Diversity and Wellbeing Initiatives

4.1 Training and Team CPD

The team have been focussing on training and development and embedding that learning into our work this year to better support our students. In February, we completed Eating Disorder Awareness training, which was provided by a local charity, Support ED.

As a continuation of our Black History Month work, in which the team were keen to better understand the experiences of our black students, the team are looking to undertake a history of tour of Glasgow.

4.2 Gender Affirming Grant

As part of her work on LGBTQIA+ History Month, our Student President, Flora, reintroduced the Gender Affirming Grant.

The Gender Affirming Grant aims to reduce the physical, mental, and financial barriers caused by gender dysphoria. This discomfort can significantly impact a student's well-being and their ability to participate fully in college life. Many affirming items remain financially out of reach for students. This covers items such as packers, wigs, makeup, shapewear, breast forms, chest padding, and swimwear. This grant was established in 2023, and the Student Parliament agreed to continue the grant this academic year, allocating £800. In previous years, we had the application process open for four weeks and then reviewed all applications at the end.

Having recognised that we had a significant amount of the funding left last year, we changed our process to be a continuous piece of work until the funding runs out, enabling us to support more students. The grant has been very successful and so far, with eight students benefiting from it and £335 spent.

4.3 Upcoming Projects

We are currently looking at men's mental health. Our VP of Diversity and Wellbeing has reached out to local universities and colleges to see what initiatives are already in place to support men's mental health. Strathclyde were recently partnered with Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ), and undertook a project called Men's Mind. We have reached out to see if there are any parts of this project that we can replicate at City.

Our VP of Diversity and Wellbeing is also keen to develop an interfaith group for students and has been working alongside the Chaplaincy team to arrange this. The Chaplaincy team have been invited to our Iftar event on the 17th as part of this initiative.

5. Future Campaigns

5.1 Register to Campaign Vote

Our VP of Socials and Activities, Rebecca Ivers, has been working on a campaign to encourage students to register to vote and vote in the upcoming Scottish Parliament Election. Rebecca has reviewed manifestos and party policies and is coming with a guide for our website which highlights what each party is saying about key areas students may be concerned about.

Our current marketing plan is to do a series of TikToks where we give away freebies to students who can prove they've registered to vote, as well as promoting how students can register and who is eligible to vote. Our hope in this, is that students will become more engaged in politics.

5.2 Student Travel Campaign

Across our Class Rep Meetings, and across our SA on Campus events, an ongoing issue that many of our students' have highlighted that they face is the cost of travel. Some students have reported paying upwards of £350 a month on travel to class alone, with several indicating that they had to miss class at different points in the year due to how much it cost to attend.

With many of our students being above the age of 22, they don't benefit from the free bus scheme and, in some cases for those who do benefit, the bus adds a significant length of time to their journey.

As a result, we are looking to do a campaign around travel costs. This will include gathering more information about how students travel and how much it costs via survey, working alongside NUS to gather wider information, and lobbying local and national government to better support students by reducing the burden of the cost of travel.