

Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee

Date of Meeting	24 February 2026
Paper No.	LTSEC3-D
Agenda Item	4.4
Subject of Paper	Student Associations Update
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Flora Irvine-Hall, Student President; Megan McClellan, Students' Association Coordinator
Date of production	16th February, 2026
Action	For Discussion

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. To discuss the work of the Students' Association (SA) surrounding the Students' Associations representation systems that influence the student experience.

2. Consultation

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

2.3 Our [Student Partnership Agreement](#) helps ensure that our systems are working effectively and provides an outline of how the Students' Association works in partnership with the College.

3. Key Insights

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 Committee with an update on the following work:

- **Class Rep System**
- **Student Parliament**
- **Big Student Elections**

4. Impact and Implications

Having wider college staff support for our representative systems is important for ensuring the continuous improvement of the Student Experience. Staff support ensures that students throughout the College have the opportunity to engage in representation actively and have an influence on their journey.

Having a diverse range of students within our representation systems, such as parliament roles, allows students to offer guidance to the Students' Association on how our work will impact minority groups at the College.

Appendix 1: Students' Association Report

5. Class Rep System

5.1 Elected Class Reps

Our overall target for classes with an elected representative is 90%, based on previously elected figures. This year, we've seen a 5% increase in overall elected representatives compares to last year's figures. Our Nautical and STEM classes have seen their highest rate of elected representatives since Covid, largely in part to our new opt-out system, which was implemented last year, that allows the faculty to highlight any courses in which a Class Rep might not be suitable. These typically

include short term courses and overseas courses which make up a large percentage of the Nautical and STEM faculty.

Faculty	% of Elected Reps in Jan 2025	% of Elected Reps in Jan 2026
Creative Industries	91%	95%
Education and Humanities	88%	86%
Hospitality and Leisure	95%	95%
Nautical and STEM	63%	76%
College Wide	86%	91%

5.2 Class Rep Training

5.2.1 Overall Class Rep Training Figures

Our target for Class Rep Training is for 50% of classes to have at least one trained rep. In previous years, we measured this as 50% of all elected reps being trained. This year, due to staff changes and fewer Faculty Ambassadors, we've shifted the focus to class-level coverage. We plan to review this approach next academic year following a training refresh. Feedback from our Class Rep Check-In has highlighted areas where reps want more support, which will inform future training.

As of February 2nd, our training stats were:

Faculty	Total Classes	Classes with elected reps	% of Classes with an elected rep with at least 1 trained Rep
Creative Industries	126	120	52%
Education and Humanities	116	102	58%
Hospitality and Leisure	117	111	40%
Nautical and STEM	83	67	47%

Students highlighted that online options for training would be something that would help them to attend. Over the next few weeks, we'll be targeting communications at classes with no trained elected representatives, as well as highlighting our newly developed online sessions to students who have previously been unable to attend.

5.2.2 Cadet Class Rep Training

After reviewing feedback from our Cadet Class Reps, we've tailored our training to focus more on gathering and delivering feedback to ensure that this felt more relevant and engaging to our reps. In the past, they've explained that their courses operate differently from the standard cohort and feel that they're often ignored or forced to attend sessions that don't feel valuable.

In March, we'll be delivering this updated session to our Cadet Rep cohort whilst also asking for feedback to ensure that we can continue to update these sessions and provide a valuable experience for our Cadet Reps.

5.3 Class Rep Meetings

5.3.1 October Meetings – Safe Spaces Feedback Update

In our previous update to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, we'd fed back information we received from Class Reps regarding what they felt helped create a safe and welcoming learning environment. This information was shared with the college's Trauma Informed Working Group, who have since used this information to support a wider project to adapt physical spaces across both campuses to better support both staff and students.

5.3.2 November Meetings – Assessments

Throughout Class Rep Training sessions and October meetings, students raised concerns about assessments. As a result, this became the focus of our November Class Rep Meetings. During a dedicated session, reps were asked to reflect on three areas:

- Whether assessment timing helped avoid bottlenecks and supported effective study.
- Whether assessment content reflected what they were learning on their course.
- Whether they received enough notice for assessments.

Key feedback from November meetings included:

- Assessment timing was identified as the most significant challenge in students' college experience.
- Around four in ten Class Reps disagreed that assessment timing works well, while just over a third agreed.
- Reps highlighted multiple assessments being scheduled within short timeframes as a key pressure point.
- Students generally felt assessment content reflects what is taught on their course.
- Advance notice of assessments was viewed positively overall, with only a small number of concerns raised.

To strengthen faculty-level insight, we have produced faculty-specific breakdowns of responses and open comments. These will be shared with Faculty Deans by the end of February.

5.3.3 November Meetings – Cadet Specific Meetings

In November, we held a cadet-only Class Rep Meeting to support our aim of creating a more valuable representation system for cadets. We received feedback from cadets across several key areas:

- **Financial pressure and upfront costs:** Cadets highlighted high upfront course costs, inconsistent sponsor funding, and personal expenses such as accommodation, uniforms (including delays in receiving correct sizes), and essential materials (e.g., protractors).
- **Inconsistent sponsor experience:** Support and expectations vary significantly depending on the sponsor, leading to uneven experiences across the cadet cohort.
- **Administrative barriers:** Cadets reported challenges navigating processes such as arranging authorised absences for mandatory visa appointments.
- **Equipment and learning restrictions:** Some equipment used in college (e.g., welders and grinders) is not approved for use, limiting practical learning. Cadets also noted difficulty accessing some learning materials, including maths content provided through RGU.
- **Students' Association visibility and equity:** Cadets would like clearer information about SA support (particularly the pantry) and more equitable access to initiatives such as the Class Rep Reward scheme at Riverside.

This semester, we will continue to hold monthly cadet drop-in sessions to gather cadet-specific feedback and identify trends that align with the wider student experience.

5.3.4 February Meetings- Additional Course Costs

In previous updates to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, we highlighted concerns about unexpected course costs, including Bakery students being asked to pay additional fees after their course began, challenges with uniforms unsuitable for placements, and Creative Industries students being told midway through the semester to pay nearly £100 for a professional photographer.

Through engagement with NUS and wider research on the cost of living crisis, we are keen to work with the college to protect widening access by ensuring course costs are clearly communicated in advance.

To support this, February Class Rep Meetings, including cadet sessions, will focus on additional costs, asking students:

- What they were told they would need to purchase before starting their course
- Whether this matched what was required once the course began
- How much notice they were given about additional purchases and what support was available

6. 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.

At the November Student Parliament meeting, members agreed to focus further engagement on three areas:

Theme Identified	Action Taken So Far	RAG Status
Students' Experience of Accessibility on Campus	We're in the process of creating an accessibility survey to complement the external audit undertaken earlier this year. We are currently adapting questions to be more in line with the areas that were focussed on in the audit to ensure the information is valuable to the Learning Support team.	Ongoing
Additional Course Costs	We are currently preparing to deliver a Class Rep Meeting aimed at gathering more information about the specific course costs that students are asked to pay, how far in advance they get this information, and the impact it has on studying. We are also planning to host a Representation SA on Campus to identify other costs of learning outwith course costs that students experience to highlight the importance of clear, transparent and up front information about what students can expect to pay.	Ongoing
Guidance on staff use of AI as a teaching tool	Following student concerns about lecturers using tools such as ChatGPT to produce course materials and mark assessments, we are meeting with the Learning and Teaching Academy and Library staff to review current staff guidance around the use of AI.	Ongoing

Parliament also agreed several internal actions for the Students' Association. This included ringfencing £1,000 within the student grants budget to strengthen direct

student support, and ending the use of Twitter/X as a communication platform in light of ongoing concerns about the platform.

7. Big Student Elections

We are currently preparing for the Big Student Elections for the 2026–2027 Presidential Team. The nominations period will run from 25 February to 11 March, with voting taking place from 23–26 March. Students will be able to vote online or at in-person polling stations across both campuses.

To encourage engagement from a wider range of potential candidates, we will host SA on Campus activity throughout the nominations period and introduce a staff nominations suggestion form. This will allow 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.