

WELCOME

Welcome to the first Annual Report from The University of Glasgow Students' Representative Council (GUSRC) In the year that we have launched our first Strategic Plan, it is an outstanding step forward to be able to celebrate all the promising results we have achieved over 2007 -2008 in this report.

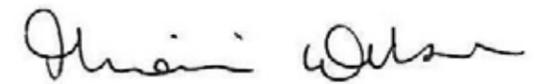
Building on the successes of previous years and initiating new ideas has been the main focus of this year, and it shows. The continued development and success of the Student Representative system, the ever strengthening positive partnership with the University, the increased usage of our vital minibus service, the success of the newly created Student Volunteer Support Service, and the newly established "Find a Solution" project, are all examples of why those involved in GUSRC have a lot to be proud of.

This report will guide you through some of our focal areas of work over the last year. It will outline our key achievements and highlight the massive range of activities through which we work for the benefit of all students at The University of Glasgow.

We will continue to work to improve our performance in all areas to ensure that all our stakeholders' expectations are met, that students at The University of Glasgow are represented to the highest standard and that they get the most out of their time here.



Bob Hay
Permanent Secretary



Mhairi Wilson
SRC President 2007/08

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MISSIONS & AIMS

Glasgow University Students' Representative Council is an independent, student-led organisation, recognised as the representative body for students registered at the University of Glasgow.



Raise and Giving Week kicked off with a balloon release.

Our mission, as set in the Strategic Plan 2008-11, is:

"To provide effective representation, support, opportunities and services for and on behalf of the students of the University of Glasgow"

In order to achieve the mission the following 'high level' aims have been agreed:

Aim 1: Representation and Engagement

Ensure the interests and views of our members are represented and addressed throughout the University and externally.

Aim 2: Student Well Being

Promote the well being of existing students and potential students by providing independent professional support services which reflect the diversity of the student body.

Aim 3: Volunteering and Employability

Contribute to a thriving campus life and individual personal development through provision of opportunities and activities which meet the intellectual, cultural and social needs of our members .

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Glasgow University Students' Representative Council (GUSRC) is a non-incorporated organisation and is a registered Charity (Charity No SC006970).

All students registered at the University of Glasgow are automatically members of GUSRC. Students can opt out once per academic session. Membership entitles students to vote and stand for election. Where students opt out they can still use GUSRC facilities and services.

SRC Council

The Trustees are the members of Council including the Sabbatical Officers as listed on page 4. Council is the governing body of GUSRC. Members of Council are elected through secret ballot.

The constitution makes provision for a Council of no more than 36 members, an Executive of no more than 12 Council members, Offices of President, Deputy and Vice-Presidents, and Permanent Secretary.

There are 30 elected positions on Council – 4 in the Sabbatical constituency, 8 in the Academic constituency, 9 in the Welfare and Equal Opportunities and 9 in the General student constituency (of which 2 must be postgraduate and 2 first year students). All members have one vote. A candidate can stand for one position at one election and for a position with which they can self-identify. Members can only vote and nominate candidates in academic constituencies to which they belong. Votes are cast online. There is also provision for 6 ex officio members of Council. The Executive Committee comprises of the Sabbatical constituency, together with 2 members elected from the Academic, Welfare & Equal Opportunities and General Student constituencies; with a further member elected from non-Executive members of Council (11 positions on the Executive in total).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Permanent Secretary (Bob Hay) fulfils a Chief Executive role and undertakes day-to-day management on behalf of the Executive; the Executive implement Council policy on a day-to-day basis. To do so, the Executive (on behalf of the Council and through the Permanent Secretary) has operational financial power and responsibility. Various checks and balances, as required by the University, are provided for.

Induction and Training of Trustees

There is a comprehensive training and induction programme provided for the trustees. A rolling training programme is delivered for Sabbatical Officers throughout the summer period and beyond. A 'training needs' analysis is undertaken and the effectiveness of the training is evaluated, based on progress against set indicators. Council and Non Sabbatical Executive -members are required to attend a full introductory training event plus additional sessions throughout the year. The training programme incorporates a range of areas in order to ensure effective governance and an inclusive, informed approach to future organisational development:

- Introduction to internal policies and procedures (including financial controls)
- Governance – roles and responsibilities
- Financial management and budgeting skills
- Managing professional relationships
- Planning and Objective Setting
- Managing professional relationships (Roles of Officers/Staff)
- Creating/Managing Change
- Equal Opportunities

Evaluation of induction process

To identify whether the induction training is fit for purpose, the quality of the programme is independently evaluated annually by an external party. This year, the evaluation report concluded:

“Once again I can report that the induction programme for elected officers of the SRC has been comprehensive, effective and well received. The planning and profile given to the programme as a whole shows that the organisation takes the induction programme seriously and this in turn, is clear to the participants. The participants themselves have shown an admirable commitment to attending and deriving the maximum benefit from the sessions and again it has been very helpful that those who have attended programme sessions before have taken a full part and joined their new colleagues in the discussions. It is recommended that the programme continue in its current format with some minor adjustments deriving from some of the feedback and discussions shown above”.

An Evaluation Report on the Glasgow University Students' Representative Council Executive Officer Induction Programme July to October 2007, (Mike Day March 2008).



Student Representatives receive training to help them in their roles.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The activities undertaken throughout the year to achieve the organisation's aims and objectives include the following:

REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

GUSRC is committed to its representational role, continually ensuring that it engages with students, university stakeholders and external partners. This section highlights some of the main aspects of GUSRC's work undertaken over the last year. It incorporates the processes whereby GUSRC seeks to ensure its representation function is legitimate and relevant as well as highlighting some of the activities and achievements in this context.

Elections

As a representative organisation GUSRC recognise the importance of building a strong democratic base. They are slowly but surely increasing the numbers involved in their elections. The recent trend of increasing numbers voting in GUSRC Spring Elections continued, with 1733 votes cast against 1664 the previous year. Particularly promising was the high number of contested seats with thirty-nine candidates standing for fourteen seats, four being uncontested. Over 100 people attended the Heckling Meeting, which is the highest attendance in many years. In addition, the Autumn Elections saw the highest turnout since 1995, a result of increased publicity and a strong group of enthusiastic candidates campaigning for votes.



Students campaign throughout the day during the SRC elections.

Support to Elected Officers

All student officers are elected on an annual basis. The officers are supported by a staff team who fulfil a combination of secretariat, advisory, support and developmental functions. Throughout the year the strong, positive working relationship between staff and student officers contributed to the organisations successes.

GUSRC Officers sit on a variety of committees and working parties within the University (currently Thirty Four) as well as a variety of external groups and committees. Staff members are allocated specific committees and will meet with the nominated student officers prior to any such meetings and prepare briefing materials as and when required. This ensures a degree of continuity.

GUSRC's structure ensures that its campaigning priorities and policy formulation are informed by the real issues affecting students. The Advice Centre, through its casework, is able to identify issues at an early stage. Matters emerging as a result of participation in University structures are communicated back to SRC Council for discussion and, where appropriate, agreement on future action.

Representation within the University

Student Representatives

Building on last year's success, 530 Student Representatives attended the training sessions organised by GUSRC and Student Participation in Quality Scotland (Sparqs). This is an increase on last year's figure and sets a new record in terms of the number of representatives trained at a higher education institution in Scotland.

Again, Glasgow has led the way in the implementation of the Student Representative System training with over 20% of all student representatives trained in Scotland attending Glasgow University. Sparqs own evaluation report concluded:

"This year saw a large number of course representatives trained at Glasgow University, the largest of any institution, and while there had been some initial concern that there would be a high level of students repeating the course following the well attended training last year, only 18% of those evaluating the session had been course representatives before, (although these students were not asked in the Sparqs evaluation if they had previously attended the training.)"

The administration of the student representative system was also streamlined this year to allow greater online sign-up and automated confirmation of attendance. This reduced the administrative burden despite the increase in number of student reps receiving training.

This year's training sessions represented a step forward not only in terms of the number of students who attended the sessions, but also in terms of the quality of training provided. The new GUSRC Student Representative Handbook was introduced as a further guidance and self-learning tool. The Sparqs report highlighted the value of the training offered through GUSRC:

"94% of those who evaluated the session (there was a 95% response rate) when asked stated they would recommend the training to others". Advanced training sessions were also offered for the first time to continuing Student Representatives who had completed the core training last year.

An end-of-session social event was also held in GUSRC's building to thank student representatives for the work they had contributed and to acquire feedback from their experiences throughout the year. The valuable feedback provided is feeding into discussion on how to improve training and support for session 2008-09.

As part of the process of continuous improvement, GUSRC and the Senate Office are working with Sparqs in a follow up to their mapping exercise, published three years ago. This reported into how students were involved in quality assurance and enhancement arrangements with educational institutions in Scotland.

The new mapping exercise began in April 2008. It was agreed that Glasgow would be one of four selected institutions to participate in an additional "intensive element" of the mapping exercise, aimed at gaining a greater understanding of how the Student Representative System works and how it can be enhanced.

Harassment Policy for Students

Until recently, the University had a harassment policy for staff but not for students. GUSRC identified this as a serious anomaly and successfully instigated the creation of a joint working group with the University; focussed on working towards the establishment of a dedicated harassment policy for students. Although not finalised, GUSRC anticipate a formal University endorsement of the policy early in 2009.

Student Maternity/Paternity Leave

The lack of any clear maternity/paternity procedures and rights for students studying at the University has been highlighted by GUSRC as a matter which requires to be addressed. The current University approach is ad hoc and there is no current student maternity/paternity policy. GUSRC is seeking the establishment of an appropriate policy to ensure students are not disadvantaged through inconsistencies in approach or subject to value judgements which may impact upon their academic achievements.

Advisors of Studies

GUSRC's Advisor of Studies survey, designed to elicit students' views on their experience of the advisor of studies system, was conducted during 2007. A report was commissioned, based on the results of this survey, and produced in November 2007. There were over 1800 responses to this survey.

The final report provided comprehensive feedback and recommendations including the need for a greater degree of consistency in practice across faculties in areas such as contact hours, advisor training and a match between staff speciality and a student's 'home' subject. Moreover, student input has been invaluable in demonstrating to university staff the clear link between general student well being and academic performance, highlighting the need for an ongoing element of pastoral care within the advisory remit.

These considerations have significantly informed the wider discussions surrounding the University Wide Review of Student Advisory needs. As a result of this, the working group's efforts have been focused upon creating a standardised job description that clearly lays out an advisor's responsibilities with regards to minimum levels of contact, knowledge of academic regulations and familiarity with student support provision, with the ultimate aim of implementing the finalised recommendations on an institutional level within the next session.



Members of the victorious Charles Kennedy for Rector campaign team.

National Student Survey (NSS)

This year, GUSRC had considerable success in facilitating student engagement with the University by being a key partner in the promotion of the NSS around the University. Based on the experience of last year's officers, GUSRC took steps to make sure that the impact of the promotional activity for the survey was optimised. A student designer was employed to produce an innovative marketing campaign and a co-ordinator was employed to manage the distribution of promotional material.

This worked extremely well, and the number of respondents totalled 2142 students or 71.5% of all eligible to participate. This compares extremely well considering that the average for all institutions is 64.01% or 62.05% for all institutions starting at the same time as

Glasgow (14th January). This excellent example of partnership working is beneficial to both parties.

The information gleaned from NSS Results forms part of GUSRC's overall evidence led approach to representing its members and identifying where change is necessary.

There are numerous areas of work where GUSRC and University have worked in partnership following from NSS results, for example recent focusses on feedback mechanisms and approaches to assessment.

Rector Elections

The Rector Elections also signified a huge development of student engagement with the role of the Rector and GUSRC. We ran an extensive promotion campaign, encouraging students to nominate a candidate and to vote on the days of the election. This raised the profile of the role on campus, and led to four serious candidates standing for the position. 5,108 students voted in the election, which is nearly 25% of the student population, one of the highest Rectorial Election turnouts in University history.

External Representation

CHES

The Coalition of Higher Education Students Scotland (CHES) provides a framework and forum for GUSRC to work with other Universities' in Scotland to share information and develop joint responses to issues and policy matters affecting the sector. CHES representatives are executive officers at their member student associations: The University of Glasgow, The University of Dundee, The Glasgow School of Art, Open University in Scotland, The University of Strathclyde, and The University of St. Andrews.

CHES's profile has increased markedly over the last year, which has seen CHES become a recognised, established student voice. This year GUSRC, through CHES, has been involved in a number of consultations with the Scottish Government. CHES and the National Union of Students were the only student organisations to give evidence to the Life Long Learning Committee on whether the Graduate Endowment Fee should be removed. Representations from CHES during the Graduate Endowment debate were influential in Scottish Government's decision to establish the Joint Future Thinking Taskforce to review all aspects of Higher Education. GUSRC provided the only student input to this review, setting out CHES' position on Higher Education policy, highlighting the importance of student support and widening participation. CHES have also prepared and submitted evidence for the current consultation on the Local Income Tax proposals, in seeking to ensure that students are not disadvantaged through any new system. Throughout the year CHES members worked to develop a wide-ranging policy document, setting out CHES' position on various issues across the Scottish Higher Education system which will shortly be put to GUSRC Council for formal approval.

Estrangement

Recent Advice Centre casework has brought GUSRC's attention to the difficulties students face in qualifying for estrangement status through SAAS and highlighted what GUSRC believe to be, an overly restrictive approach to interpretation of the guidance and regulations. SAAS' narrow interpretation regarding what constitutes proof of estrangement is causing an already vulnerable group of students, additional financial hardship. Through ongoing correspondence between GUSRC and Fiona Hyslop MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning), GUSRC are attempting to force a more flexible approach by SAAS and encourage them to accept confirmation from University Student Support services of estrangement status (rather than only solicitors), thus simplifying the process for these vulnerable students.

International Students' Access to Financial Services

GUSRC and the University have worked together in negotiating with local banks to improve the quality of service provided to International students. In particular, addressing the difficulties that some International students face when attempting to open bank accounts. GUSRC also provided information to a local MSP in order to inform his

meeting with a local bank. This information helped persuade the bank to agree to provide additional staff at crucial times of the year in order to 'smooth the path' for International students seeking to open bank accounts. The effectiveness of such a proposal is yet to be fully tested and further action by GUSRC on this matter will depend upon future feedback.

Mobile Phone Contracts

As a result of several representations through the Advice Centre, GUSRC became aware of a trend whereby many students found themselves tied into exploitative mobile 'phone contracts which were lengthy, expensive and did not meet the needs of the student. This was a particular problem for international students, many of whom appeared to be particularly vulnerable to some mobile phone sellers' desire to capitalise on new visitors to the UK's ignorance of the nuances and complexities of the contracts. On some occasions GUSRC successfully negotiated changes in a contract but on many occasions there was no willingness to negotiate. As a preventative measure GUSRC launched a poster campaign in 5 different languages encouraging students to visit the custom pages on its website - designed to ensure students made informed decisions when entering into a contract. Although difficult to gauge the impact of the campaign there was a 500% increase in visitors to the aforementioned website

Welfare Reform

GUSRC's ongoing review and analysis of new government proposals and future policy continues to ensure that matters which will impact students are identified early for discussion and consideration in terms of future campaigning priorities. For example, The Department of Work and Pensions proposed abolition of Income Support in 2010, for lone parents of children aged 7 and over, is likely to seriously disadvantage student lone parents. GUSRC has raised its concerns, in a detailed response, directly with the DWP. As members of Child Poverty Action Group's (CPAG) Benefits for Students Advisory Group GUSRC has informed CPAG's progress of this issue under the Scottish Campaign for Welfare Reform.

Students and Benefits

Following direct concerns of students as a result of their dealings with Government departments, GUSRC was instrumental in identifying a training need within the Department of Work and Pensions regarding student entitlement to benefits. As this issue is a resurgence of a similar training need identified in previous years, GUSRC had discussions with Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) on how the matter was best addressed. Consequently CPAG made representations at national level, resulting in a firm directive to DWP staff that they should consult the "Benefits for Students in Scotland" handbook which is provided to all Jobcentres. GUSRC continues to monitor this situation and should problems recur, will work with CPAG on finding a solution which permanently resolves this issue.

Office of Fair Trading

The Advice Centre identified a number of terms within the standard tenancy agreement of a large student housing provider, which were potentially unfair contract terms and therefore may have disadvantaged several hundred students. GUSRC has submitted its arguments to the Office of Fair Trading for consideration and an outcome is awaited.

Glasgow City Council HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) unit

GUSRC is represented on the Glasgow City Council HMO Group and is therefore offered an opportunity to contribute to the broader discussion around future policy and practice. There is a strong, positive, working relationship between officers of the HMO unit and GUSRC student officers and staff. This working relationship is invaluable; the nature of the relationship means that informal discussions can be had with key decision makers and experienced officials who may be able offer advice or facilitate a resolution to matters rather than students having to pursue lengthy, stressful and expensive court action. The Advice Centre also refers cases to the HMO Unit; some of which are currently awaiting prosecution of landlords running unlicensed and possibly dangerous properties.

Responses to consultations

GUSRC submitted a formal response to the Scottish Government's consultation document "Firm Foundations" (The future of housing in Scotland.). The response was focussed on elements which were particularly germane to student interests.

GUSRC's response therefore included arguments for:

- The establishment of a rent deposit protection scheme.
- The development of a properly resourced and enforced landlord accreditation scheme.
- Broader mechanisms for engagement between Local Authorities, Private Sector landlords and the communities most directly affected by the HMO sector.
- The provision of additional resources to local authorities in order to enable them to carry out their monitoring and enforcement functions more effectively.

GUSRC have also had ongoing dialogue with the Scottish government on proposed planning legislation relating to HMOs. Scottish Planning Policy SPP3: Along with written comments, GUSRC was invited to participate in a government organised event during March, aimed at involving key stakeholders in a discussion around the HMO proposals in the consultative draft of SPP3.



GUSRC had a strong presence at Glasgow's St. Andrews Day anti racism march.

Student Media

2007/8 was a successful year for GUSRC Student Media, which, amongst other achievements, swept the board at the 2008 Herald Scottish Student Press Awards by winning:

- Student Newspaper of the Year: GU Guardian
- Student Magazine of the Year: Glasgow University Magazine
- Student Journalist of the Year, best features writer and highly commended news writer: Chris Watt (GU Guardian)
- Best Photographer: James Porteous (GU Guardian)

Awards such as these reflect the commitment of editors and contributors, all of whom give their time voluntarily in order to produce the top-quality products which not only serve to inform and engage the student body, but also reflect well on the University of Glasgow.

also purchased 12 new branded display stands which will be placed at strategic points across campus and improve distribution and visibility of GUSRC publications across campus.

Glasgow University Magazine (GUM):

Three issues (3,000 copies each) of the oldest student publication in Scotland were produced.

GUSRC continue to receive positive feedback regarding GUM from University students and staff alike. The GUM team this year attracted around 25 contributors taking part throughout the year. Three formal training sessions in design and editing skills were delivered to enhance the capacity of the contributors. The formalised training was augmented by on going peer support and coaching by the editor and sub-editor to ensure the delivery of as top quality product.



GU Guardian

Ten issues (4,000 copies each) were published from September 2007 to the end of May 2008. There was the usual high standard of campus specific news, investigative reporting and hard hitting campaigning articles.

Increased income through outsourcing of advertising revenue generation enabled Guardian to move away from running at a loss and generate a small surplus which has been used to support other elements of GUSRC's media who find it more difficult to generate advertising revenue. In particular the additional money was used to subsidise the production of the third issue of GUM (which otherwise could not have been printed) as well a new mixing desk for Subcity Radio. GUSRC

GUM and Guardian both also introduced new websites in line with their overall look – both are linked and accessible from GUSRC's website and in particular Guardian received a number of comments from readers.

Subcity Radio

In 2007/08, Subcity's traditional FM broadcast was moved from February to Freshers' Week. The 10-day broadcast on 106.6 FM started on the Friday previous to Freshers' Week to end the following Sunday night. This was a major success and greatly helped the establishment of the brand among both new and continuing students. During the rest of the year, the station continued to broadcast online 24/7 on www.subcity.org.



The Lilybank Gardens Subcity stage is now an integral part of the West End Festival.

Subcity counted around 200 contributors in total, the core team of editors and team leaders being made up of 15 people of which about 80% were students and the rest recent graduates of the University.

Festival in Lilybank Gardens – attended by over 500 people. Aided by great weather, this all-day event was a suitable conclusion for a very successful year.

Overall, six training sessions were held for presenters, two of which being refresher training sessions, with 80 participants overall. Two further training sessions were delivered specifically held for the music team, with around 30 people attending them. One final editing training session counted about 10 participants.

Finally, with regard to collaboration with other media outlets, it is worth mentioning that members of the Subcity team contributed throughout the whole year to the Vic Galloway show on BBC Radio Scotland.

Glasgow University Student Television (GUST)

GUST's main project for the year was the re-establishment of its campus network, funded by a grant obtained through the University's Student Development Fund. This is currently underway with the aim to be completed by the beginning of the new academic year in September 2008. New network points will include the John McIntyre Building and both Unions to start with, with a possibility to be extended to the Hub once this new development will be open.

Furthermore, GUST plans for the future include the launch of a new website, which was tested in 2007/08 and is currently being finalised.

Subcity also ran a series of five very successful events at the Hetherington Research Club in November 2007, January, February, March and May 2008. At all events the venue reached capacity (about 250). Another major event for 2007/08 was the music stage at the West End



© Matthew Sillars

Subcity's monthly events have been extremely successful.

GUSRC in the Media 2007/8

In 2007/8, GUSRC enjoyed excellent relations with local and national media. This ultimately led to a significant improvement of GUSRC's media profile, above all where HE issues are concerned.

This was due to a combination of factors, which included both changes in the way in which the organisation deals with media enquiries and also important events and campaigns which put GUSRC in the spotlight several times throughout the year.

In terms of media exposure, the GUSRC has traditionally enjoyed a relatively high media profile. This is due, in part, to not being part of the National Union of Students thereby enjoying a freedom to comment on matters independently; thus, reflecting the interests of the particular students it represents

A great deal of work was done this year to consolidate and further develop relationships with the media. Measures taken included

- The implementation of a system which saw all media enquiries being routed through the VP (Media & Communications) This allowed for a greater flexibility in the response to the needs of different media outlets and different journalists.

- All media enquiries were timely met, allowing GUSRC to consistently offer a student voice on a variety of issues, whether through its sabbatical officers or other council members, who were also often involved in interviews and programmes.

- Glasgow University Rector's Elections

Examples of issues on which GUSRC were asked to provide an opinion will give an idea of the level of coverage achieved by the organisation

Communications Strategy

During the consultation process that informed the development of the Strategic Plan, it became apparent that many of GUSRC's key stakeholders were unaware of the variety and range of activities and services delivered by the organisation. Consequently GUSRC undertook a thorough review of how it communicated with and engaged its stakeholders, culminating in the production of a communications strategy.

STUDENT WELL BEING

GUSRC aims to contribute to and promote the well being of all students. The organisation delivers a number of services and events to support the range of students it represents. This section covers some of the work undertaken throughout the year under this heading.

during the year. In particular, GUSRC appeared in stories and commentaries related to:

- Scottish Government Budget and Settlement for Universities
- Abolition of the Graduate Endowment
- Student Accommodation issues
- Student Health
- Student and graduate employment
- Drinking culture
- Local area issues (Botanics Club Development, etc.)

Media outlets which gave exposure to GUSRC included:

- BBC Scotland
- Radio Scotland
- Real Radio
- Clyde 1
- The Westender
- The Guardian
- The Herald/Sunday Herald
- The Scotsman
- The Evening Times
- The Big Issue
- The Times/Sunday Times

Meanwhile, the GUSRC maintained a high profile in its own student media, in particular in GU Guardian. GUSRC events also received good coverage from student media and the so called "SRC Column" in Guardian helped create momentum around the organisation's activities throughout the year.

Money Matters

Budget Workshops

During February GUSRC piloted a budgeting workshop for students. A specific target group was chosen; in this case international students. Whilst this was run on a very small scale our evaluation highlighted that the session was clearly valued by the international students who participated. The average score for the usefulness of the session and the materials was 86%, and there were some suggestions and ideas for additional material which could be included in future events.

This has led to a proposal for this type of event to be included in forthcoming international student inductions.

Jobshop

Unlike recruitment agencies, Jobshop is a free 'job and skills' matching service, provided to all students and employers. Employers contact GUSRC with employment opportunities which are then advertised to students through GUSRC's website and on notice Boards in The John McIntyre Building. GUSRC also produce information for students about their employment rights and joining trade unions in order to prevent/minimise employer exploitation (see Publications). Currently, GUSRC is investigating the possibility of establishing mechanisms for measuring service usage in this area without impacting on the free flowing nature of its operation.

Second Hand Bookshop

GUSRC continue to operate its second hand book trading facility. This facility contributes to the alleviation of student poverty through providing a source of cheap course texts for students whilst affording an opportunity for other students to gain some financial return on texts no longer required. GUSRC continues to operate this service on a break-even basis and have achieved greater efficiencies through being more selective in terms of stock taken in, thus ensuring the organisation is not left with obsolete stock and books that are not relevant to current course work. GUSRC has also established automated electronic reminder and availability services through its website. The new procedures have been effective, in particular by reducing staff time spent on contacting sellers to ask them to reduce prices or pursuing them to visit the offices and collect books not sold after two years. For the period July 2007 to June 2008 a total of 4049 books were sold (slightly up on the previous year's total of 4034). Students have benefited by £17,580 through sales of their books. GUSRC further estimate that savings against the purchase of new books has provided an overall benefit of £17,000 amongst participating students. The foregoing figures indicate an overall financial gain of around £35,000 to students who use the service.

Photocopying, Printing, Binding and Faxing

Through its frontline office staff, GUSRC continues to offer high quality printing and photocopying facilities to all students at a considerably lower rate than commercial high street agencies. The usage of these services continues to expand with an increase of over 25,000 units purchased by students against the previous year bringing the total up

almost 300,000 units. There has also been an upsurge in usage of the binding facilities. The aforementioned services are provided on a 'break even' basis and are highly popular with students. They provide significant savings for users of the service. Long queues and frequent requests for information as to where similar services can be found nearby (usually from students who have been waiting for a considerable time) highlights a demand for an enhanced service. Current constraints within GUSRC's accommodation mean such services cannot be developed any further. It is hoped that the refurbishment of GUSRC's building (the John McIntyre Building) will result in more accessible services.

Finance Fair

The Finance Fair was originally envisaged as a standalone event with budgetary information, competitions etc. However, the short timescale between conception and implementation created real difficulties in recruiting volunteer students to participate in the running of the event. Consequently, what was originally intended to be an interactive event became no more than a stall furnished with finance information and student budgeting packs. Although the leaflets and packs were quickly gathered from the stall, there is little evidence regarding the success of this project or otherwise. There is a clear understanding however, that there is a need to review the format and nature of this project in future years.



Posters were placed around campus encouraging International students to seek advice before signing mobile phone contracts.

Health Promotion

Mental Health

During January GUSRC focussed on issues around mental health and worked with partners to organise a series of events through the month intended to highlight mental health issues affecting young people, promote discussion around the topic and destigmatise the issue amongst students of the University.

The main reason for choosing this area as a priority is because student mental health is generally worse than that of the general population (for age matched populations) with anxiety and depression being the most commonly noted difficulties. The number of students' with mental health issues continues to increase; with official statistics showing that the proportion of Undergraduates declaring a mental health difficulty on entering HE rising from 5 in every 10,000 (1994/5) to 30 in every 10,000 (in 2004/5).

There are many areas of GUSRC's work, which indirectly, will impact on Students' mental health. A recent government research review outlined the range of factors which impinge on a students' mental health, indentifying ".....a relationship between mental health and the following factors: finances, accommodation, academic issues, university systems and social factors. Academic issues, and specifically course-work, emerged as particularly related to stress levels and mental health issues".

Working with the Student Counselling and Advisory Service and Greater Glasgow Health Board, supported by the University's 'One Glasgow' project, GUSRC developed an art exhibition within the John McIntyre

Building. The exhibition displayed artwork by people with mental health issues and addressed the theme of personal breathing space. To help support the theme of the month GUSRC hosted a reception for University staff and those in the community who were involved in the project, as well as representatives from national helpline Breathing Space. Around 50 staff from key services attended the event.

There is evidence that physical activity can help mitigate some of the symptoms of poor mental health. As part of the month long campaign the University's Sports and Recreation Service allowed free access to the Gym for one week during January. This proved very popular with over 100 new students making use of this facility.

Sexual Health

In conjunction with World AIDS day, we held "Sexual Health At Glasgow" day. After undergoing a briefing session, a team of volunteers visited the Students' Unions during the evening with the objective of facilitating informal discussions with students around drink and sexual safety issues. Over 100 students were directly engaged with over the evening.

Due to the current policy of Greater Glasgow Health Board it is impossible for students to access free condoms without jumping through a variety of bureaucratic hoops. In order to optimise safe sex practises GUSRC uses its own resources to purchase and distribute 10,000 free condoms throughout the year.

Accommodation

SLAP Awards (SRC Letting Agency Prize)

The SLAP awards were initiated as a way of highlighting the 'most complained-about' letting agents in an attempt to shame the companies into improving their practices. The initial award to Grant Management in 2007, led to meetings with the company directors, and a demonstrable willingness to listen to our concerns and suggestions in order to improve their practices. In order to ensure that the SLAP awards continue to fulfil this purpose, 2008 saw the creation of an independent panel to judge the award. After considering nominations based on actual cases from the Advice Centre, the panel decided that the award should go to Cairn Properties. This was published in The Glasgow University Guardian and there has been subsequent contact from Cairn Properties that will hopefully lead to improvements in its services

Accommodation Options Forum

This event is run annually, in February, by Residential Services. GUSRC were, once again, invited to participate. GUSRC staff talked directly to 147 students (many more picked up information). This event is clearly a useful vehicle for promotion of the Advice Centre as a source of housing information and advice as well as serving as a good source of information for students considering seeking Private Sector accommodation.

Mediation Service

In March, as a consequence of numerous student enquiries, GUSRC entered discussions with the Glasgow Mediation Service and established that they would be an appropriate referral service for students experiencing disputes with flatmates or landlords. Glasgow Mediation Service was invited to give a presentation to relevant University Support Services in order to facilitate appropriate referrals. The event was well attended with staff from the Accommodation Office, Student Counselling and Advisory Service, GUSRC and several Advisers of Studies.

Student Safety

Halls to Campus Minibus Service

This free service, run during the evenings throughout term time, guarantees that students are safely transported between the University and their Halls of Residence. It ensures that students can spend extra hours in the library without having to consider the costs of a late night bus ride (where available) or a taxi journey. Students are also more likely to use campus study facilities if they know they don't face a long walk home in the dark through areas which at times can be dangerous and where students have, in the past, been targeted for acts of violence.

GUSRC currently run three minibuses on differing routes. Over 2007/08 the organisation, has again, seen a considerable increase in the number of student journeys which have reached 31,315 this year; an increase of 18.5% against 26,348 during 2006/07 and an increase of over 50% against the figure of 20,766 in 2004/05. The increase in student numbers is due to an ongoing effort to fine tune the service to meet the requirements of the users.

Feedback on Minibus service

Although formalised feedback on the Halls to Campus service has not been sought, GUSRC is aware of the high esteem in which the service is held by the University's Residential Services department who use it in their marketing material as part of the package to attract students to Glasgow. The ongoing financial contribution by Residential Services further highlights the value of our service to the University and its students.

Informal feedback from students through the minibus drivers is a useful mechanism for eliciting suggestions as to how we could further enhance the service. As a direct result of the feedback we plan to introduce the following:

- New timetables for each hall and bus route to simplify the current timetable.
- Additional expenditure of around £3000 p/a for designated return service from QM Halls, Winton Drive, Cairncross and Kelvinhaugh St.

In addition, the following are fairly common themes which recur and may add some value to the service but which, for reasons of economy or efficiency, we are unable to develop at the moment:

- Service to operate during the day
- Service to operate at weekends
- Service to operate into the city centre
- Service to operate out to the Airport.
- Service to run extended hours on a Thurs & Friday (4.00am)
- Service to operate over the Easter break when students are studying

None of the above has been 'ruled out' for the future but will be considered in the context of GUSRC's limited resources and future priorities.



Students can get home safely with the free minibus service to halls.

Although the minibus service, for many students, is now part of the Glasgow University Package, GUSRC receive the occasional email from students who are particularly appreciative of the service received:

"On Thursday evening I was at the Ceilidh organised by the LBSS faculty and had a slight accident there. I had to get to the Western Infirmary and a very kind SRC driver helped me (and my friends) out. I forgot to ask his name, but I really want to thank him (and the SRC) again for helping me out. Thank you!!!"

"Message: I would like to thank Frank, who is not only an amazing SRC bus driver but also a kind, generous, thoughtful, cheerful, punctual and top bloke. On the 24th of Jan I took the wrong SRC bus and the SRC service had finished by the time I got back to the UNI. However Frank agreed to take me to Wolfson hall on an out of hours. Thank you SRC especially FRANK"

Crime Awareness Panel for Educational Establishments (CAPEE)

GUSRC is member of The Crime Awareness Panel for Educational Establishments (CAPEE). This is a formally constituted voluntary group which currently represents student and facility safety for 3 Higher Education Establishments, and 8 Further Education colleges in Glasgow. The panel is made up of student and staff representatives from each institution as well as representatives of Strathclyde Police.

The stated purpose of CAPEE is to "increase the knowledge of both the student population of Glasgow and respective establishments in terms of Community Safety and Crime with a view to actively reducing

Information and advice

Student information point

GUSRC Reception staff undergo a wide range of training enabling them to fulfil functions far beyond traditional reception duties. The range of services provided by GUSRC, coupled with a central position on campus, means it is often the first point of call for student enquiries on a range of matters relating to the University and the City. (i.e. far beyond services provided by GUSRC).

GUSRC continue to use the 'Information Point' brand at SRC Reception in order to encourage students to approach. During the last year the service engaged with over 11300 students.

Publications:

Student Guide

The Student Guide, produced by GUSRC, runs to around 200 pages and has long been seen as the key introductory document to life in Glasgow in general; The University of Glasgow in particular. Produced to high quality print and design standards, 5,000 copies of the Guide are distributed directly to 1st Year students, as part of the registration

the crime figures associated with both areas". As well as chairing this group for the last year. GUSRC have also had significant input into the development of CAPEE's strategic plan and publicity.

Linking with local police

In addition to GUSRC's strategic work with CAPEE the organisation also developed stronger linkages with the local community police in order to increase their involvement and visibility with the general student body. One example of this new partnership in action saw the community police use our building as a 'one-stop shop' for safety advice. The publicity we produced for this saw over 300 students approach the officers and receive advice and safety tips on a variety of issues from personal property to personal safety.

Awareness Raising

GUSRC also designed and distributed a 'warning footprint'. Intended to be left in places where students had left themselves vulnerable to break in or theft. This warning was distributed around campus where students had left their bags, purses or mobile phones unattended, as well as scenarios where students' had left themselves particularly vulnerable (e.g. Rooms in Halls of Residence where windows were left open).

Attack Alarms

After unsuccessfully trying to procure free attack alarms GUSRC purchased several hundred alarms made available to students who feel particularly vulnerable. These alarms are available free from The Advice Centre

process. The Guide is not produced as a "throwaway" document. The high standard of presentation, quality of writing and range of information, seeks to ensure that The Guide is kept and used as reference book throughout the year.

Employment Rights Leaflet

In order to mitigate difficulties for students in part time employment as well as augmenting the Jobshop facility, GUSRC, in continuing a strong tradition of providing high quality and informative leaflets for students, has produced a new booklet outlining employment rights. The booklet has a particular focus on issues affecting the working student and the types of enquiries brought to the Advice Centre on a regular basis. The booklet is distributed through a variety of channels on campus including the Careers Service and GUSRC Jobshop, and can also be downloaded through the website.

GUSRC has been contacted by other student organisations across the UK, praising the quality of the publication and asking if they can use the text for their own publications. GUSRC were, of course, happy to oblige!

Student Diary

In Partnership with the University Careers Service GUSRC published the first ever 'Keep Track' Student Diary covering the academic year 2007-2008.

Targeted at first year students, the objectives of the Diary were to enhance learning and contribute to student retention through

- Encouraging time management, good learning practices and organisational skills.
- Assisting integration and participation in a range of activities
- Highlighting the range of Support Services offered by the University and GUSRC ensure that students knew who could help them with any issues.
- Assisting the process of students settling into the city and settling into the University environment.
- Encouraging a sense of belonging to the University

Feedback

GUSRC commissioned an independent evaluation of the diary which included a survey of diary users and focus groups. The evaluation report appeared to indicate that the Diary had been fairly successful in achieving its objectives. The report's 'key findings' included the following:

• It is clear that the Keep Track Student Diary has achieved excellent levels of retention and a good level of usage, with many students making very frequent usage of it.

• The content of the Diary is well-regarded, particularly in relation to elements such as term dates, University contacts and University Services. There may be some scope to provide broader information on the city and university environment that could be of value to students.

• The evidence is that users of the Diary believe it to have a significant impact on issues such as time management in particular and also on their learning practices and organisational skills.

• Whilst there is some impact of the Diary on people's ability to integrate with and participate in University life (and indeed on their sense of belonging to the University) such feelings are not quite so strongly held. The impact of the Diary on helping people to integrate into the city itself is fairly marginal.

• There is a widespread belief that the issue of the Diary by the University should be a "given" and, indeed, a belief that it would be beneficial for it to be disseminated more widely (i.e. beyond first years).

Some of the publications produced by the GUSRC



The Advice Centre

GUSRC's Advice Centre employs 4 FTE staff members and provides high quality, impartial advice and advocacy, on a range of welfare and academic issues to students and prospective students of the University. The Advice Centre also plays a key role in informing and legitimising our policy development and campaigns. This section focuses on the casework element of the Advice Centre, the rest of the work is subsumed within other elements of this report.

Casework Activity

During the last year the advice team made 8243 casework entries (e.g. interviews, phone calls research, emails). Roughly similar to last year's total of 8623 which itself represented an increase of 75% on the previous year; despite being one staff member down during September, October, November (our busiest period).

Issues

The nature and complexity of enquiries dealt with by the advice centre are such that, to give a true indication of the work undertaken, we apply a recording system which allows us to establish the weight of work against cases and enquiries for set headings. See Appendix 1 for detailed statistical report.

University and academic issues remain the largest number of enquiries dealt with (3403 casework entries), followed by accommodation problems (1973 casework entries) and financial issues (1620 casework entries).

Advice centre case studies

Student A's landlord had failed to refund the deposit after A moved out, claiming amongst other things that there had been charges for cleaning carpets – despite the property having wooden floors throughout! After the landlord refused to negotiate, the advice centre started small claims proceedings on A's behalf. When the landlord received the court summons, he then paid the deposit and expenses back in full (£400).

Student B was called to a meeting with the Senate Assessors as a result of plagiarism in his dissertation, but had already returned to his home country. The advice centre was able to advise by email and helped the student put together a personal statement for the Senate Assessors. The advice centre then represented the student in absentia at the Senate Assessors meeting. The Senate Assessors agreed that the plagiarism was unintentional and to recommend that the student be allowed to resubmit his dissertation.

Student C was owed wages from a former employer – she had contacted them several times and filled in two sets of forms but two months had passed and the wages remained unpaid. The advice centre wrote a letter to the employer raising a grievance under the statutory procedure. A few days later the wages were paid (£450).

Student D had been trying to get her utilities provider to send her a bill for two years. When the bill finally came it was unaffordable. The advice centre telephoned and wrote to the utilities provider and persuaded them to write off half the amount as they were at fault in not billing the students earlier. This saved the students around £350 and a good deal of stress.

Student E had had her course terminated by a Progress Committee which had not taken into account all the relevant facts. The advice centre was able to assist E to put together a letter of appeal and accompany her to the Faculty Appeals Committee hearing to help her put her case forward. E's appeal was upheld and she was allowed to return and finish off her course.

Outcomes

In many cases the client is empowered with the information to act for themselves and will not revert to the Advice Centre unless further assistance is required. GUSRC are however, able to provide some detail on the tangible benefits that students have derived through assistance from the advice centre.

Academic

There were 34 appeal outcomes during the year, of which 21 were successful.

There were 19 disciplinary outcomes, of which 16 were successful.

There were 6 complaint outcomes, of which 3 were successful.

Financial Gains

GUSRC confirmed financial gains give a total figure of £59,367.

Financial gains come from a variety of sources including reclaiming of bank charges, recovery of accommodation deposits, payment of wages or holiday pay previously withheld, successful challenging of student support overpayment decisions and as the result of advice given about eligibility for student funding.

The financial gains figure is always a significant underestimate of the true financial gain, as we only record gains which are confirmed, and in many cases clients do not return to tell us the outcome of their case.



Some of the many students to get help from the advice centre this year.

Non-financial Gains

In 16 cases, either through negotiation or the appeals or disciplinary processes, re-submission of an assignment or re-sit of an exam was granted. Students were accepted back onto their course in 18 cases and had re-sits uncapped in 1 case. GUSRC were able to sort out problems with council tax exemption in 3 cases. Our intervention also helped to prevent health and safety risks to clients in 8 cases, and homelessness in 5 cases. In 8 further cases our intervention helped to ensure housing repairs to be carried out when the landlord had previously delayed doing so.

There were numerous other non-financial outcomes such as negotiating a rescheduled date for a class test, assisting students to obtain bank statements and appointments with bank officials, advising on incomplete assessment, and assisting students to contact the correct members of staff to sort out course options and timetable difficulties.

Advice Centre User Survey

An Advice Centre User survey was carried out in November 2006. GUSRC conducted a follow up to this by sending out the same questionnaire to clients who had visited the Advice Centre between October 2007 and March 2008.

Findings from original survey

- There were a low number of responses;
- The importance of clients as referrers;
- General approval indicated by responses;
- Specific testimonies showed a 'substantial and beneficial' difference to students' lives;
- A call for longer hours.

Findings from 2008 Survey

- *Again the response rate was disappointing (just over 10%)*
- *Proportion who had found out about the Advice Centre via the Internet was now up to 35% (20% in 2006). 'Word of mouth' referrals were 20% (28% in 2006). Interestingly just as many clients attended the Advice Centre having noticed it whilst in the building for other purposes: this may indicate the importance of the Advice Centre's central location on campus.*
- *Again, the responses showed a high level of satisfaction in terms of opening hours, location, friendliness and support.*
- *Of the respondents to the recent survey who left additional comments, 83% left positive comments and thanks regarding their experience of using the Advice Centre. We hope this reflects the quality of service provided and highlights the significant positive impact on many clients.*
- *There were suggestions once more for the Advice Centre to have longer opening hours, but none of the respondents had been directly affected by this issue.*

Conclusion

The small number of respondents makes it impossible to draw solid conclusions from the survey.

The large majority of responses received were extremely positive and there seems to be a consistent number of word-of-mouth referrals of clients that suggests continued satisfaction with the service.

The increase in the number and proportion of clients finding out about the Advice Centre via the internet indicates that maintaining the website and developing GUSRC internet presence, should be an ongoing process. This will ensure that we continue to provide the best possible service to all possible clients, regardless of how they choose to access our services.

Freshers' Week

GUSRC is the lead student body in the organisation and administration of Freshers' Week. It works in partnership with the University's Recruitment and Participation Service (RAPS) and aims to provide a key link between the University and the student bodies, thus ensuring the smooth running of the combined Orientation and Freshers' Week. GUSRC convenes the student bodies' cross campus Freshers' Week committee and co-ordinates and administers the Freshers' Pass Programme. This year's record number of Freshers' Pass sales (2890) highlights the attractiveness of the programme and the importance of the student organisations on Campus, working in partnership when objectives coincide.

The GUSRC Freshers' Week Programme was extensive. GUSRC supported a number of clubs and societies events (in addition to the Freshers' Fair) and events aimed at mature, international and home-based students.

The GUSRC Welcome Tent provided free tea and coffee. It was also used as an information hub and as a venue for a number of different clubs and society events. In addition, it was used as an event venue as freshers' were already coming in for the tea/coffee or information and were then drawn into the audience/participation in, amongst other things, STaG's (Student Theatre at Glasgow) plays. The Tent was staffed by GUSRC Freshers' Helpers who mingled with the Freshers to provide advice, information and a friendly ear.

A free minibus and nightbus service was organised to ensure safe travel from campus to halls throughout FW '07 when students are still orienting themselves to their new environment. Minibus journeys were extended this year to increase the opportunities for students to take advantage of the service and to ensure students could be on campus for important events such as Freshers' Fair and the Freshers' Address.



Freshers' Fair is a great opportunity for students to find out more about clubs and societies.

The Freshers' Fair was increased from a two to three day event in FW '07; this was in response to the previous years' Freshers' Week evaluation where some students had commented that there was perhaps too much crammed into the first week. The extra day was intended to increase access and minimise conflicting priorities for students who would all have Registration and Induction events to attend.

To accommodate the increased demand for stalls in the Freshers' Fair, a large marquee was rented. The additional space ensured all clubs and societies could participate in the Fair.

GUSRC was also able to continue to reach out and build its profile by participating in an increased number of University Induction events. GUSRC Executive members were able to make presentations during Induction days, and to take part in informal question and answer sessions which allowed incoming students to witness the range and nature work the organisation encompasses.

Feedback

GUSRC and the University undertook a Freshers' Week Evaluation Survey (considered by the Student Support and Development Committee). The Survey allowed GUSRC to demonstrate progress from 2006, highlight the successes of Freshers' Week 2007, and draw attention to potential areas for improvement as part of an ongoing enhancement process. In general the review was highly positive

These comments below (from the survey) reflect the majority opinion voiced by many of the students who responded to this evaluation that Freshers' Week was not only extremely enjoyable but also adequately prepared them for their studies to come!

'I had a fantastic time during Freshers' week felt there was a great range of activities to choose from!'

'I enjoyed all the Freshers week activities and it was a good introduction to the Uni area as a whole. Very good way to make new friends etc.'

'It was one of, if not the, best week of my life!!! I had a fab time! Thank you so much!'



Students enjoying Global Village: a night celebrating cultures from around the world.

Additional Support to International Students

As the number of International Students registered at the University continues to increase GUSRC acknowledges the opportunities and challenges this brings. The increasing diversity of cultures and nationalities on campus represents potential for the influx of new ideas in taking GUSRC forward, as well as presenting challenges in how GUSRC supports, represents and engages with an increasingly internationally diverse student populace.

All GUSRC's services are well used by international students. The unique halls to campus minibus service, the Advice Centre as well as the information and reception services all enjoy high uptake from International Students. Elsewhere in this document there is some information how the work of GUSRC, directly and indirectly, benefits international students.

GUSRC work hard to ensure all their services are flexible and accessible to the diverse student population. In addition, GUSRC works in partnership with the University to develop additional initiatives which take the particular needs of international students into consideration.

An example of joint working to benefit international students was the Christmas vacation web pages project, designed to overcome feelings of isolation experienced by some international students remaining in Scotland over the Christmas period. GUSRC worked closely with the International Post Graduate Service (IPS) in the development and hosting of web pages which provided information on what services were open during the winter vacation and also activities students could undertake during the winter break.

The web pages were updated frequently, ensuring all information was current and relevant. It appears that this work was effective as GUSRC's monitoring systems indicate that more than 1000 different Glasgow students used this information during the relevant period (a 300% increase on the previous year).

GUSRC's commitment to represent the interests of, and engage with, international students was reflected in highly positive feedback through the International Student Barometer 2007/2008. GUSRC will continue to use the ISB as one of its key reference points in reviewing its work with International Students.

VOLUNTEERING AND EMPLOYABILITY

The primary goal of all Students' who come to University is to learn and get a degree. The first priority of GUSRC and the University is to ensure that this goal is achieved. There are, however, many other aspects of University life which shape the individual and add to the overall sense of the University experience. Activities, alongside the formal learning environment are influential. Not only in how individuals develop and grow and the future choices they make, but also in how they are perceived by potential employers and other decision makers who will have an impact on students long after they leave University.

GUSRC provides a dedicated service that facilitates volunteering opportunities for students as well as acting as the central campus hub for University clubs and societies.

Student Volunteer Support Service

Volunteers and Placement Opportunities

During 2007/2008 SVSS directly assisted 446 volunteers across 14 projects, 9 of which are facilitated directly through the SVSS Development Officer – the other 5 are student-led organisations who receive administrative support, advice and supervision from GUSRC. An example of the latter is Student Volunteers Abroad (SVA), who arrange voluntary summer placements for students with NGOs in countries such as Nepal and Senegal. SVA received guidance from GUSRC on issues relating to Disclosure outcomes and individual students' cautions/criminal convictions, as well as assistance in drafting their Child Protection and Equal Opportunities policies, committee handover procedures, and advice on Public Liability insurance – all of which were vital to the running of their projects.

A total of 142 students received Enhanced Disclosures through GUSRC at no charge, allowing them to work with children and vulnerable adults in a number of these projects, both in Glasgow and abroad.

In the past year SVSS created several new initiatives and enhanced some existing ones. The developments through SVSS have not only further aided existing client groups but also widened SVSS's scope and given assistance to organisations in greater depth than might have been possible previously. Below are examples of some SVSS projects: Conversational English Programme (CEP)

Building upon the "English for Doctors" scheme, the Conversational English Programme gives International Students at the University of Glasgow the chance to meet up with a native, English speaking student with the aim of helping them improve their spoken language skills. The aim is not to teach anyone how to speak English, but just to engage in conversation with them so that they can practice their spoken language. CEP has been piloted this year and has seen a handful of students get involved and benefit, we will develop this further next year with the support of the International Office, Careers Service and Vice Principal Learning and Teaching.

Classroom Support Scheme

The Classroom Support Scheme, which gives students the chance to volunteer in schools across the city, has seen not only an expansion in

the range of opportunities available to student volunteers but has also developed its training and support mechanisms. Through a partnership that has developed with the Faculty of Education, student volunteers are now given the opportunity to attend an induction session ran by third year BEd students who undertake this work as part of their accredited Service Learning Module. We have also introduced a mentoring system that allows the student volunteers to contact the BEd students and ask any questions they may have on issues relating to the classroom environment. This form of peer assisted learning is therefore a benefit to both sets of students.

Buddy a Granny

The elderly and housebound of Glasgow are a client group that has seen a development in their relationship with the University through the social outreach side of SVSS. In addition to the two West End Residential Care homes that SVSS have traditionally arranged volunteering opportunities with, SVSS has worked with local charity 'Contact the Elderly' to provide for student visits to housebound residents as well as hospital visits. SVSS has also arranged placements for students at a residential care home in Maryhill, as well as a sensory development unit at Carntyne Gardens in the East End of Glasgow. Volunteers at Carntyne also have the opportunity to use equipment purchased by GUSRC with funding from the University Settlement, a venture that gives them the chance to interact in different ways with the residents who have dementia.

Find a solution

SVSS also project manages the newly established "Find a Solution" project; a collaborative scheme between GUSRC and Research into Enterprise. It is funded by the University Settlement. This project provides students with the opportunity to undertake a piece of work for a local voluntary organisation and put into practice skills learnt through their academic studies. 12 students were initially selected and undertook a series of training workshops. Students then bid for the "contract" with selected voluntary organisations (Glasgow Womens' Library, Rainbow Turtle, Mark Scott Foundation). From this, six students were selected to work with the aforementioned organisations. The students are working to briefs set out by the organisations in the areas of marketing, business development and capacity building and receive £1,700 each for their work.

Work with Departments and other University Services

In addition to the partnership with the Faculty of Education, SVSS has also been given the opportunity to speak directly to students in the Department of Psychology via a dedicated section on their Portal, a Moodle-based site. Students interested in moving onto areas such as clinical psychology or occupational therapy are signposted towards the opportunities available at GUSRC through the Portal and a description of why it's important to gain experience is given. The evidence appears to suggest that students are more likely to take notice of such information, when it comes directly through the department and has seen a number of referrals.

SVSS also process Disclosure forms for Sports and Recreation Service (SRS), which allows their volunteers to carry out Sports Coaching projects with Glasgow City Council's Active School's scheme.

Recognising Involvement

SVSS has become involved with the Scottish Government's Millennium Volunteer Awards (MV) scheme to try and give our student volunteers a widely recognised award for their efforts. Over the course of the past year, 41 students have qualified for the award, and the breakdown is as follows:

- 33 students have devoted a minimum of 50 hours of their time to various projects, including Nightline, Classroom Support and Buddy-a-Granny
- 6 students have given 100 hours to volunteer with Nightline
- 2 students have given at least 200 hours to volunteer with Nightline



The classroom support scheme has proved beneficial to all involved.

and subsequently received an Award of Excellence, signed by the First Minister Alex Salmond

Feedback from Volunteers

"I thoroughly enjoyed my classroom support placement and would definitely recommend it to anyone who is thinking about a career in teaching or working with children. It enabled me to gain first hand experience working with children in a classroom environment while observing and learning from teachers both inside and outside the classroom". Katy McDougall – 3rd year Psychology Student and Classroom Support Volunteer.

Feedback from Agencies

"I would just like to re-iterate Gillian's thanks to you all for the work you have done. I know it can be difficult to find time to help us out with the Tea/Coffee/etc, especially during exam time, but it really is greatly appreciated. Offering a hot drink to people may not seem like a lot but it is very important to our service users, a lot of whom lead very chaotic lives. To be able to come along to us, have a cuppa and a chat means very much to them. Once again thank you for your help and look forward to seeing you all soon. For those who are leaving, I wish you all the best in whatever you are moving onto do." Michelle Kirkwood – Volunteer Coordinator, Glasgow Simon Community.

"Gary Szemes is helping a group of older pupils working with our DHT to create a school website Karen Robertson is being very helpful working with P3". Elsie Tysen – Head teacher, Bankhead Primary School.

Clubs and Societies

Clubs and societies are a key element of the 'student experience'. In 2007-08 GUSRC has supported over 80 clubs with over 5000 student members and provided more than £10,000 of financial support.

Clubs and societies this year have also benefitted from advice and support from GUSRC on issues as diverse as governance, risk assessments, publicity, and event management. GUSRC have continued to provide minibuses to allow trips around Scotland, travel to conferences and meetings. GUSRC also offer bespoke meeting and training facilities at zero cost to all affiliated clubs and societies.

Clubs and societies were also an integral part of GUSRC Freshers' Week. Events included running cultural fairs, fire poi displays, meet and greets with Society members as well as taking part in GUSRC Freshers' Fair.

Support for clubs and societies has also been subject to on-going review with the aim of increasing GUSRC involvement, making it easier for clubs and societies to access GUSRC services and advice, ensuring that clubs and societies are as accessible to students as possible.

PDP Programme

Personal development planning (PDP) was a key area of work across GUSRC in 2007-08. GUSRC were key partners with the Careers Service for the drafting of the PDP Policy which was passed through Senate in February 2008. The process ensured a student-friendly policy through the VP (Learning and Development) drafting sections of the policy and in holding meetings with Council members and student representatives from across the University. The value of GUSRC's input was acknowledged by both Education Policy and Strategy Committee (EdPSC) and Senate.

GUSRC were also heavily involved in the selection of a suitable e-pdp programme. Following pressure from GUSRC the original programme chosen was replaced with a more suitable, student-friendly programme GUSRC 'road-tested' this system and organised student representation for focus groups to inform the process.

In February The Advice Centre was invited, along with Registry, to deliver a seminar on Student Finance, as part of the Arts Faculty PDP programme. The event generated several specific enquiries in the ensuing weeks.

There are ongoing discussions between VP Learning and Development, SVSS and Clerk of Senate recognition of volunteering and employability skills through a University-endorsed 'My Glasgow' transcript.

Media Week

Media Week has by now become a fixture in GUSRC's annual calendar and represents the only event of this type organised by a student-led organisation in Scotland. The 2008 event took place on February 4th – 8th and provided the opportunity for students interested

in all forms of media to meet with and gain some valuable experience from top professionals in the field. Outlets represented at the 2008 event included BBC Scotland and Radio Scotland, the Herald, the Sunday Herald and the Herald Magazine, the Sunday Mail, SKY News 24.

Eighteen events were scheduled in the space of just five days, yet participation was overwhelming and in total, some two-hundred and fifty students attended Media Week. A major effort was put into publicising the event, with two adverts in the GU Guardian, posters, brochures and flyers delivered across the whole campus, and targeted lecture call outs for students of Media & Politics and Film & TV Studies.

This year's programme included innovative events such as a specific careers session with BBC, two visits to the new BBC Scotland HQ and a number of practical workshops in new media, namely web design and online journalism, the areas in which most of the growth is most likely to concentrate in the next years.

Some students were also able to arrange additional visits to newsrooms and studios and will hopefully gain some work experience over the summer with the organisations represented at Media Week 2008. This means that we have hopefully made of Media Week not just a one-off event, but rather a springboard towards further personal development otherwise unavailable at university.

Moreover, Media Week helped the relationship between GUSRC and Scottish Media. For more details about the coverage of GUSRC on local and national media see the specific section below.

A specific, detailed report on Media Week 2008 was also produced and includes a reflection on the experience and recommendations on how to improve the event under different aspects and diversify what is on offer.

RAG (Raising and Giving) Week

RAG Week was held on the 25-29 February. Previously branded as "Glasgow Student Festival", this year's RAG Week brought together different elements of past weeks but utilised the strong tradition of RAG in the University as a marketing tool. A variety of voluntary projects and clubs were involved in running 10 different events that were aimed at giving students the opportunity to get involved in all kinds of activities available through

GUSRC and the University. Almost 1000 students attended events ranging from Global Village, a celebration of international food and culture to a Clubs and Societies fair, aimed at encouraging students to get involved in University life. As a result of the fundraising during the week around £4000 will be paid to several different charities including the small animal hospital and Shelter.

Local Community

GUSRC has worked to consolidate University linkages with the local community. From Subcity Radio's high profile, massively attended sessions at the West End Festival to participation in and hosting of Hillhead Community Council's meetings. GUSRC continue to work in partnership with the local community and develop new working links and joint initiatives. We hope that by working together we can continue to show the benefits that students bring to the area and counteract some of the slightly more negative image of students that the media often seeks to reinforce.

GUSRC's aforementioned links with the local community council have been cemented further this year through joint working on matters of common interest such as recycling.

GUSRC also worked with the Community Council, Glasgow City Council and Ward Councillors on matters that can have a serious impact on the community in general and the student population in particular. The poor management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and the subsequent social, environmental and general 'quality of life issues' has provided common ground for all local partners to work together. GUSRC is represented on Glasgow City Council's HMO working group and therefore enjoys the opportunity of providing a student perspective on how the Council can help us overcome the difficulties and dangers experienced by students living in below standard accommodation.



Through find a solution, students get to develop their skills and help local charities.

CRICHTON CAMPUS

GUSRC provides support and training to registered University of Glasgow students based on the Crichton Campus in Dumfries. GUSRC employ an administrator, based at Crichton, who has responsibility for supporting Crichton students in developing extra curricular activities for the local student populace in order to enhance and enrich the cultural and educational experience on the Crichton Campus. Following on from such a successful year will be no mean feat.

POSTWORD

It's important to consider the past while looking to the future, considering previous success and more importantly areas for development. Student bodies, with their perpetual change in Executive, always risk the possibility of constantly re-inventing the wheel, repeating previous mistakes, ignoring previous successes and refusing to move forward.

My involvement in GUSRC thus far has shown that this organisation refuses to fall into this trap.

It is my role this year, as President, to ensure we continue to move forward.

There are some fantastic initiatives and developments coming in 2008-09. Our work in volunteering provides the opportunity to work strongly in partnership with the University to enhance the employability of students at Glasgow, offering greater and greater opportunities and crucially establishing a system to recognise the work being done. Raising awareness of student representatives and providing enhanced support is a key area of work for the GUSRC in 2008-09, building on the huge number of student representatives trained in previous years. A key way for students to engage with their time at University is through clubs and societies; I'm delighted GUSRC is looking at ways to increase support and to work more closely with clubs and societies this year.

As I said, 2007-08 was an incredibly successful year for GUSRC and the students it serves, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to build on those successes and ensure that the student experience at Glasgow is enhanced for all.



Gavin Lee
SRC President

FINANCIAL REVIEW

GUSRC recorded a surplus this year of £17,091 (2006 – surplus £3,594). The slight surplus is a result of the small amounts of additional 'one off' grants from varied University sources without which, GUSRC would have experienced a small deficit over the year.

Total reserves at 30th June 2008 stand at £377,467 (2007 - £360,376).

The block grant from the University increased from £410,000 to £425,000. There is an additional £27,000 allocated to this heading as a notional building rental charge granted to GUSRC for use of the building. In addition, from the student development fund, GUSRC received £11,000 toward the provision of furniture and AV equipment in its bespoke training facility (Williams Room) and £3,000 towards enhancing the Glasgow University Student Television (GUST) infrastructure.

GUSRC received £25,167 from the University's Residential Services as a funding contribution towards the running of the Halls to Campus

Minibus Service and part purchase of a new minibus. Last year GUSRC received £18,000 as a 'one off' from Residential Services. For several years previously, the grant from Residential Services stood still £9,000 (anything above this is still regarded as a 'one off' and is not an indicator of an ongoing increased contribution). The additional resources over the last two years have been significant in allowing GUSRC to develop and enhance the service

GUSRC received a contribution of £9,000 from the University's Graduation Photography income. Historically this contribution has always been around the sum of £25,000, a change in University policy resulted in the contribution reducing by around 50% in 2006/2007. The £9,000 awarded this year was accepted by GUSRC as a 'full and final' contribution from this source.

There was no additional income against the Crichton heading as the grant received two years ago was for a three year period. Funds available at the end of June 2008 are £11,594.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 2008

	Restricted Fund £	Unrestricted Fund £	2008 Total £	2007 Total £
Incoming Resources				
Incoming Resources from Generating Funds				
Voluntary income	-	452,000	452,000	437,000
Activities for generating funds	-	36,821	36,821	21,482
Investment income	-	25,141	25,141	21,402
Incoming Resources from Charitable activities				
	14,000	194,797	208,797	213,649
Other Incoming Resources				
	-	3,700	3,700	-
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Total incoming resources	14,000	712,459	726,459	693,533
Resources Expended				
Costs of Generating Funds				
Costs of generating voluntary income	-	5,500	5,500	5,500
Fundraising trading costs	-	1,281	1,281	1,234
Charitable activities	25,412	640,385	665,797	650,705
Governance Costs	-	36,790	36,790	32,500
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Total Resources Expended	25,412	683,956	709,368	689,939
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	(11,412)	28,503	17,091	3,594
Gross transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
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Net Movement in funds	(11,412)	28,503	17,091	3,594
Balance brought forward at 1st July 2007	23,006	337,370	360,376	356,782
Fund Balance carried forward at 30th June 2008	11,594	365,873	377,467	360,376

All 2008 figures relate to continuing operations.

Students' Representative Council
University of Glasgow
www.glasgowstudent.net



The University of Glasgow Students' Representative Council is a charity registered in Scotland. Registration number SC006970