



GLASGOW  
UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS  
REPRESENTATIVE  
COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT  
2016 / 17



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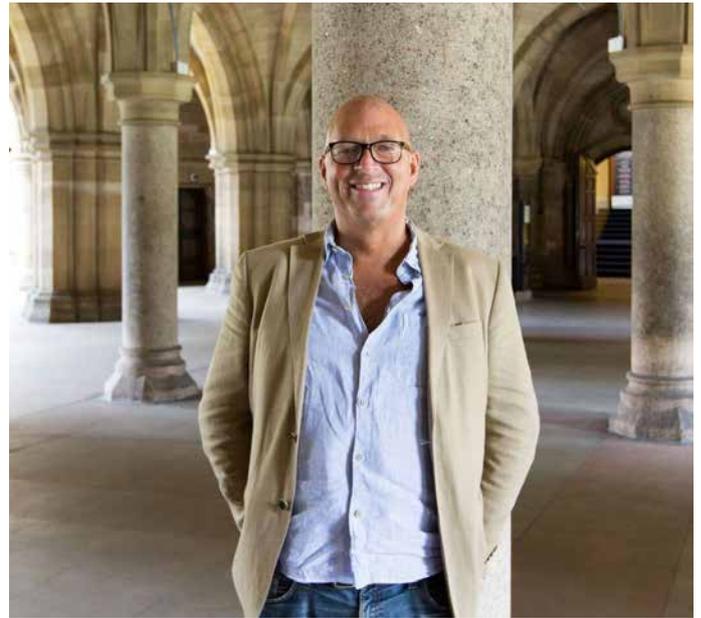
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PART ONE:

# WELCOME & INTRODUCTION





## FOREWORD

Welcome to the 2016/2017 Annual Report for Glasgow University Students' Representative Council (GUSRC).

During the year we have continued our work as an organisation, and in partnership with the University, to enhance the student experience for students at the University of Glasgow (UofG).

The higher education landscape continues to evolve, with changes to student fee structures, the potential introduction of TEF, Brexit, and other social policy issues; this marks a significant time for students.

In line with our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, we continue to make significant progress focussed around our organisational values, and in line with our key strategic aims; Representation & Engagement, Support & Wellbeing and Volunteering & Community Engagement.

Through Representation & Engagement, GUSRC has continued to consult with and represent students at the highest levels within the University and beyond. From fee increases, to Brexit, the organisation has continually proven to be a dynamic force and voice.

In accordance with our second strategic aim of Support and Wellbeing, the organisation has worked on a range of new projects and initiatives over the last year. Through pioneering projects such as

Sexual Violence Prevention Training, to the ongoing excellent work of the Advice Centre, we continue to support the student community at UofG in a broad range of ways.

With Volunteering and Community Engagement, 2016/17 marked a significant year for the organisation in its contribution to student life and further work to engage with various stakeholder groups. Our revamped, higher-profile, Volunteering, Clubs and Societies Awards recognised and acknowledged the work of our record number of volunteers and societies.

The University is currently developing one of the largest infrastructure projects in Scotland. With a project of such a size it is difficult to ensure students are effectively engaged in the broader sense. GUSRC this year created a student-led platform in the form of the GUSRC Campus Development Committee to increase consultation and student engagement at a time of substantial change at the institution.

This Report will further elaborate on key areas of our work over the last year. Our thanks to the University, SRC Staff, countless volunteers, and other stakeholders who contribute on an ongoing basis throughout the year to support the work of the organisation. 2016-17 marked a very positive year for us, and we maintain a positive outlook moving forward in continuing to support the interests of students at the University of Glasgow.

**Ameer Ibrahim**  
GUSRC President 2016/17

**Bob Hay**  
Permanent Secretary

# SELECT HIGHLIGHTS 2016/17

# 3500 VOLUNTEERS

The number of students at UofG registered with GUSRC to volunteer in some form tops 3,500 across all arms of the organisation, including the Student Volunteer Support Service, affiliated Clubs & Societies officers, student media contributors and class and postgraduate representatives.

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## STUDENT TEACHING AWARDS

GUSRC's initiative to encourage students to recognise the work of UofG staff continues to grow, attracting over 1,800 nominations in 2016/17 - the highest engagement in STA history.

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## CLUBS & SOCIETIES

The shift in culture of student life towards socialising through clubs and societies continued, with GUSRC affiliating over three hundred clubs for the second consecutive year, with nearly 15,000 student members. The academic year ended with a high-profile Volunteering, Clubs and Societies event hosted by GUSRC.

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# 827 REPS TRAINED

GUSRC's class and postgraduate representative training continues to engage students on an accessible level, with over 800 reps trained in 2016/17. Feedback on the bespoke training, conducted by GUSRC-trained students, continues to be overwhelmingly positive with outstanding scores from post-training surveys.

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93%  
ISB  
SCORE

In the final International Student Barometer, GUSRC scored 93.3% while the organisation's affiliated clubs and societies achieved 95.7%, ranking second and third for services within UofG.

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

GUSRC continued to work with the University to support students around mental health concerns, running a de-stress campaign around exam sessions and being granted £9,000 of National Lottery funding to support the development of training initiatives.

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Over six hundred students took part in bespoke sexual violence prevention training, developed in partnership between GUSRC and Rape Crisis Scotland. The training is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, generated widespread positive interest and media attention for UofG.

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950K  
WEBSITE  
PAGE VIEWS

The glasgowstudent.net website continues to be the go-to online source of information, advice and support for UofG students with the website gathering over 950,000 pageviews in 2016/17, the highest traffic for any academic year on record.

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## GOVERNANCE

GUSRC is a non-incorporated organisation and is a registered charity (Scottish Charity No SC006970). It is the sole representative body of students of the University of Glasgow.

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.

## MISSION

GUSRC's mission, as stated in the 2015-2020 strategic plan is:

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

## AIMS

GUSRC operates according to three high level aims which define the three key roles of the organisation on campus.

### REPRESENTATION & ENGAGEMENT

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

### SUPPORT & WELLBEING

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

### VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of GUSRC as set out in the constitution are:

- › To represent and promote the general interests of students of the University.
- › To advance civic responsibility by providing a recognised means of communication between students and the Court and Senate of the University.
- › To prevent and relieve poverty and to advance health by providing welfare services for students and potential students.
- › To advance the arts, culture, education, heritage, science and sport by providing amenities and supporting activities for students.
- › To promote equality of opportunity amongst students and challenge all forms of discrimination whether based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion, cultural background or other such status.



## GUSRC COUNCIL

Council is the governing body of GUSRC. Members of Council are elected through secret ballot of all students. The constitution makes provision for a Council of not more than 49 members, including an executive of four sabbatical student officers. One of the organisation's three Vice Presidents also serves as Deputy President. Additionally Council comprises of:

- › Four College Convenors
- › Four Postgraduate Convenors
- › One Postgraduate Taught Convenor
- › Nine Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officers
- › Four General Student Representatives
- › Two First Year Representatives
- › Nineteen School Representatives

The structure of GUSRC Council mirrors UofG's structure in that it includes elected College Convenors and School Representatives. Ideally these academic representatives link with and support the University's 1,200 class representatives (class reps). There is also provision for five ex officio members of Council. Council meets monthly to discuss GUSRC business and items raised by students and all Council members have one vote.

Council elections take place biannually. A candidate can stand for one position at one election. Members can only vote and nominate

candidates in academic constituencies (i.e. the School or College) to which they belong. Votes are cast online.

All student officers are elected for a minimum one year term. 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 contributes to the organisation's successes.

GUSRC officers sit on an extensive range of committees and working parties within the University, currently over sixty with a campus-wide remit, plus a significant number of college and school level committees. GUSRC's staff team are allocated specific committees and will meet with the nominated student officers prior to these meetings and prepare briefing materials as and when required. This ensures a degree of continuity as well as assisting informed, empowered student involvement.

GUSRC's structure helps to ensure that its campaigning priorities and policy development process are evidence based and informed by the current issues affecting students. Matters emerging as a result of senior officers' participation in University committees are communicated back to Council in the required council report format for discussion and, where appropriate, agreement on future action.



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

Following extensive consultation our strategy for the next five years was approved by our Trustees at a full meeting of Council in November 2015. It was presented to University Court in February 2016.

The Strategic Plan sets out our key values, vision, mission as well as key strategic aims and objectives which will underpin our work over the next five years. Where possible we have sought to align our aims with those of the University strategy: Glasgow 2020 – A Global Vision. We also gave consideration as to how our work will complement the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy, adopted by Senate in October 2015.

A slight delay in the finalisation of the strategy means some of our processes and systems are still being refined to enable us to report against stated priorities and success indicators. We have however interspersed paragraphs outlining progress against stated success indicators. The strategy document can be downloaded from the GUSRC website.

### UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

In recent years the GUSRC and UofG have worked closely together in establishing and developing meaningful informed student engagement. The University’s reflective analysis for the latest Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR 3) demonstrates the strength of this relationship:

*“A fundamental element of student engagement is the relationship between the University and the SRC and since ELIR 2, this relationship has been further consolidated as a working partnership as articulated by the SRC in its Strategic Plan: ‘The strategy of GUSRC [...] is both complementary and supportive of the University’s aims, whilst retaining the organisation’s independent status and role as critical friend of the University’”*

The aforementioned document further elaborates on the University and GUSRC’s working relationship and confirms the intention to maintain this strong partnership:

*“The SRC is an effective body and its interactions with the University are extremely positive; we will seek to continue this highly effective partnership throughout the next cycle and to ensure that our students retain a key role in discussion, policy development and decision making”.*

### ISB

In the latest wave of the International Student Barometer (Autumn 2016), GUSRC scored 93.3% and Clubs and Societies achieved 95.7%. In terms of support services, we rated second and third at the University of Glasgow behind the Graduate Schools. This rated positively against the support average of 88.1%. There was however a comparative drop from second to sixth against ‘Student Unions’ at other Russell Group institutions, still we believe a significant achievement, given the relative paucity of resources and difficulties in maintaining a profile due to the student organisations’ structure at Glasgow.

#### ➤ SUCCESS INDICATOR:

Our strategy states *“We will retain a satisfaction rating of 95% or above in the International Student Barometer”.* A drop of 4% against the previous reading (Summer 2015) showed us below target, and due to the discontinuation of the ISB, we are unable to average against an updated Summer score, which are typically higher. We’re pleased though that Clubs and Societies remained above the 95% target.

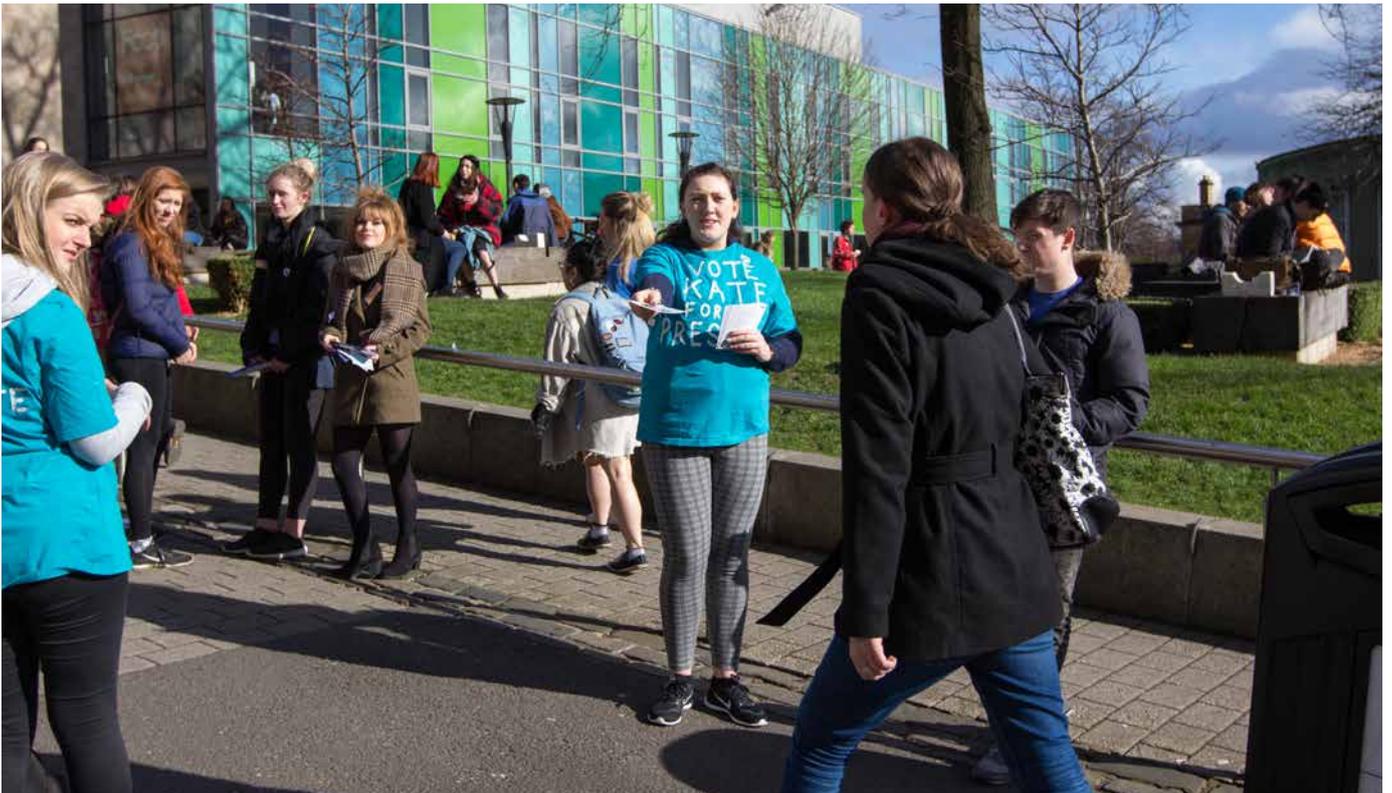
PART TWO:

# REPRESENTATION & ENGAGEMENT



WE WILL BE THE STUDENT VOICE ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES AND BEYOND, INFLUENCING THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF LEARNING & TEACHING, STUDENT SERVICES, AND ESTATES DEVELOPMENT TO COLLABORATIVELY ENSURE A POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

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## COUNCIL & REPRESENTATION ELECTIONS

Turnout at GUSRC autumn elections has always been low in comparison to the spring elections, however the October 2016 election saw a 23% year-on-year increase in voter turnout, with 2637 students taking part, a five-year high.

### GUSRC AUTUMN ELECTION TURNOUT

2012	1732
2013	2586
2014	2162
2015	2141
2016	2637

The 2017 spring elections saw 62 candidates contesting 35 positions, including eight for the four sabbatical positions (down from ten last year). Turnout for the election was up 5%, setting another record with 4239 unique voters. Heckling meetings were once again well attended and many more viewed online.

### GUSRC SPRING ELECTION TURNOUT

2013	3350
2014	3935
2015	3476
2016	4033
2017	4239

## COUNCIL SUPPORT & TRAINING

GUSRC provides a comprehensive training and induction programme for the trustees with a particular focus on supporting the four sabbatical officers with a rolling training programme throughout the Summer. Council members are required to attend an introductory training event plus additional sessions during the year. The training programme incorporates a range of areas relating to effective governance and an inclusive, informed approach to organisational development. It includes the following:

- › 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
- › Creating/Managing Change
- › Equal Opportunities
- › Organisational Planning and Goal Setting

In addition to sabbatical officers, GUSRC works to ensure that all members of its governing body (Council) receive adequate support to fulfil their roles throughout the year.



## CLASS & POSTGRAD REP TRAINING

GUSRC and the University have joint responsibility for the organisation and operation of the class and postgraduate research representation system. Glasgow students benefit from the bespoke University of Glasgow focused training developed by GUSRC. One of GUSRC's strategic priorities for the current period is to develop deeper links between class reps and the organisation and to identify and promote the impact and successes of the class representation system.

We recruit and train up to eight students per year to deliver the class rep training and as all trainers are current students, they are familiar with the structures and systems of the University. As well as training on the main campus, we also provide class representative training for students at the Dumfries campus, and for students on partnership programmes at Singapore Institute of Technology, the Joint Graduate School in Nankai, and UESTC in Chengdu, China (via video link). We are also piloting a new online version of the training for online/distance learners.

GUSRC runs one block of training per semester. During this academic session, we trained a total of 827 class representatives, an increase from last year's total of 732. Those who complete the training are asked to complete an evaluation, which this year yielded 795 responses.

### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TRAINED

2012/13	605
2013/14	830
2014/15	758
2015/16	732
2016/17	827

There was little change in the demographics of participants. As would be expected the majority were undergraduates at 69%, with 27% being postgraduate taught and 4% postgraduate research students. Only 2% of trainees were part-time students. There was almost double the number of females participating to males (63% to 36%) and 6% of those participating consider themselves to have a disability. 52% of participating students were from the UK, with 24% each from the EU and outside the EU.

### REP TRAINING FEEDBACK:

- › Statement: "The training developed my understanding of the rep role." - 96% positive score.
- › Statement: "The training defined the student learning and development experience." - 95% positive score.
- › Statement: "The training explored how I can gather student opinion about learning/research issues." - 96% positive score.
- › Statement "The training introduced skills and methods needed to present information to staff and fellow students." - 94% positive score .
- › Statement: "The training gave me a good overview of the feedback processes here at the University of Glasgow." - 94% gave a positive score.
- › Trainer's "knowledge of subject" and skill at "involving the group." - 98% and 96% positive scores respectively.
- › "Would recommend the training to other class reps." - 96%.

### ➤ SUCCESS INDICATOR:

Our Strategy states "We will train an average of 800 class representatives per year over the five years of this plan and maintain a satisfaction rating of 95% with the training". Both the number and satisfaction targets were met this year, but we will continue to review and develop the training to ensure these standards are maintained.



## ONLINE REP TRAINING

We are currently in the process of developing a system that will optimise the opportunity for distance learning students to enjoy the same representative experience as campus-based ones. We have run a couple of pilot sessions which were of only partial success due to the limitations of the technology, but are hopeful that the introduction of Skype For Business will ensure we can deliver an improved webinar experience.

In addition, with assistance from the Learning Technology Unit, we have further developed the online training package. Because student representatives could be in different timezones we decided to run a week long facilitated discussion forum rather than the webinar, augmented by pre-reading and a quiz. The discussion forum was managed by two GUSRC trainers to facilitate interaction between the participants, and afford online/distance learners the chance to network, something not easy to replicate in an online setting.

We have further asked participants to create their own wiki resource of useful hints and tips on representing others in the online/distance context, as this is obviously very different from the on-campus experience. The online training provision will continue to evolve as we become more aware of what students need and want from it in order to maximise their effectiveness.

Engagement with the training was low from most participants, which may have been partly due to holding the training late on in the year; the training will be scheduled earlier next year with a view to increasing participation. Communication between Schools providing online/distance learning courses and GUSRC needs to improve considerably if we are to deliver the training in a timely and effective way. Online training is still a work in progress and we are confident that delivery and engagement will continue to improve year-on-year.

### ➤ SUCCESS INDICATOR:

Our strategy states: *"In partnership with the University we will have established an online class representative training system for distance learning students by year two of this plan."* There is clearly some work still to be done in establishing a workable online class rep training package, but we have identified some easily achievable changes that can be made in order to make progress towards this.

## REP SYSTEM: IMPACTS & BENEFITS

GUSRC is considerably larger than its elected representatives on Council - with over a thousand class reps on campus, we consider there is potential to develop engagement and gain wider influence and understanding of learning and teaching matters. In conjunction with an independent consultant, we developed a pilot survey to identify the benefits and impacts of the class representative system. Almost six hundred class reps responded to the survey. Overall, the findings were positive and included the following recognised outcomes:

- › 75% of class representatives thought the SSLC meetings an effective vehicle for getting student issues actioned and action had been agreed and/or taken on issues they had raised - a positive result for the format. Amongst international students, this rises to 81%.
- › 71% of respondents reported that they had developed skills through being a class rep.
- › International students (non-EU) appear to gain even more from their role as Class Representative than other demographics.
- › Summary: "It was evident from the research that the class reps model at UofG works extremely well, students' issues are listened to and acted upon and Class Representatives felt they had made a difference and found the experience worthwhile. In addition, the role clearly contributes to the student's personal development in a myriad of ways; enhances their broader student experience and adds value to their CV and consequently their future employment opportunities."

This was a pilot survey and we are unaware of similar work conducted elsewhere so there is no comparative data. We intend to run the survey at regular intervals in order to measure progress on our class representative activity.



## ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

### PERIODIC SUBJECT REVIEWS

Over the year, student panel members participated in six Periodic Subject Reviews (PSRs): Accounting and Finance, Central and Eastern European Studies, HATII (Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute), History of Art, School of Life Sciences, School of Psychology.

Student representatives are prepared through a full day 'mini review' training event plus considerable pre-course preparation. The session was led by the Senate Office in conjunction with GUSRC and the Academic Development Unit, it provided participants with an overview of PSR in relation to the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework, as well as highlighting what is expected from student panel members, including how to analyse and interpret documentation; be an effective communicator and plan for the Review. The course evaluation again was extremely positive, particularly in relation to increased confidence.

#### ➤ SUCCESS INDICATOR:

Our strategy states: "We will participate in 100% of PSRs and 100% of feedback will agree that the student representative made a constructive contribution to the process". The Senate Office assisted by introducing a PSR Feedback form for clerks. Within this all seven Clerks (100%) agreed / strongly agreed that Student Reps made a constructive contribution to PSR.

*"Mr Liam Bergin was the student panel member on the PSR of Life Sciences. He was conscientious and took on the role with extreme professionalism. His comments on the SER were insightful, reflective and thorough. He was confident and was an active member both at the pre-meeting and the PSR itself. He confidently handled the sessions he led without any hesitation"*

*"Ms Jessica (Jess) Mac Sweeney was the student panel member on the University's PSR of Information Studies. Jess's written feedback on the Subject's Self Evaluation Report and supporting documentation was comprehensive and insightful - it was clear she made a considerable effort in the preparation of her commentary. I was particularly impressed with her knowledge and understanding of a broad range of complex topics related to learning and teaching in a higher education context."*

*"Ms Jessica Brown was the Student Panel Member on the PSR of Accounting and Finance and she did a fantastic job throughout the PSR process. Jessica had read the SER in great detail and provided extensive comments (more than most of the other Panel Members). Her observations were insightful, reflective and articulate, and helped to generate useful discussion at the pre-meeting and on the day of the PSR itself."*



## STAS

In the GUSRC Student Teaching Awards' seventh year, we continued our drive to increase student engagement with the nominations process, this year taking the form of a rebranding exercise alongside other promotional activities.

This year's awards attracting a record-breaking 1,816 nominations, a 45% increase on last year. Again, we are pleased that engagement from postgraduates has continued to increase, with 25.5% of all nominations being received from this group (last year's figure was 21.6%).

Fitting with the University's Learning and Teaching strategy around the development of online and blended learning, we introduced a new category 'Best Online Learning Experience' in order to capture additional feedback on the online student experience. We hope that information gleaned through this process will feedback into learning and teaching delivery at Glasgow and form part of the cycle of continuous improvement.

### STA NOMINATIONS

2012/13	767
2013/14	750
2014/15	1050
2015/16	1250
2016/17	1816

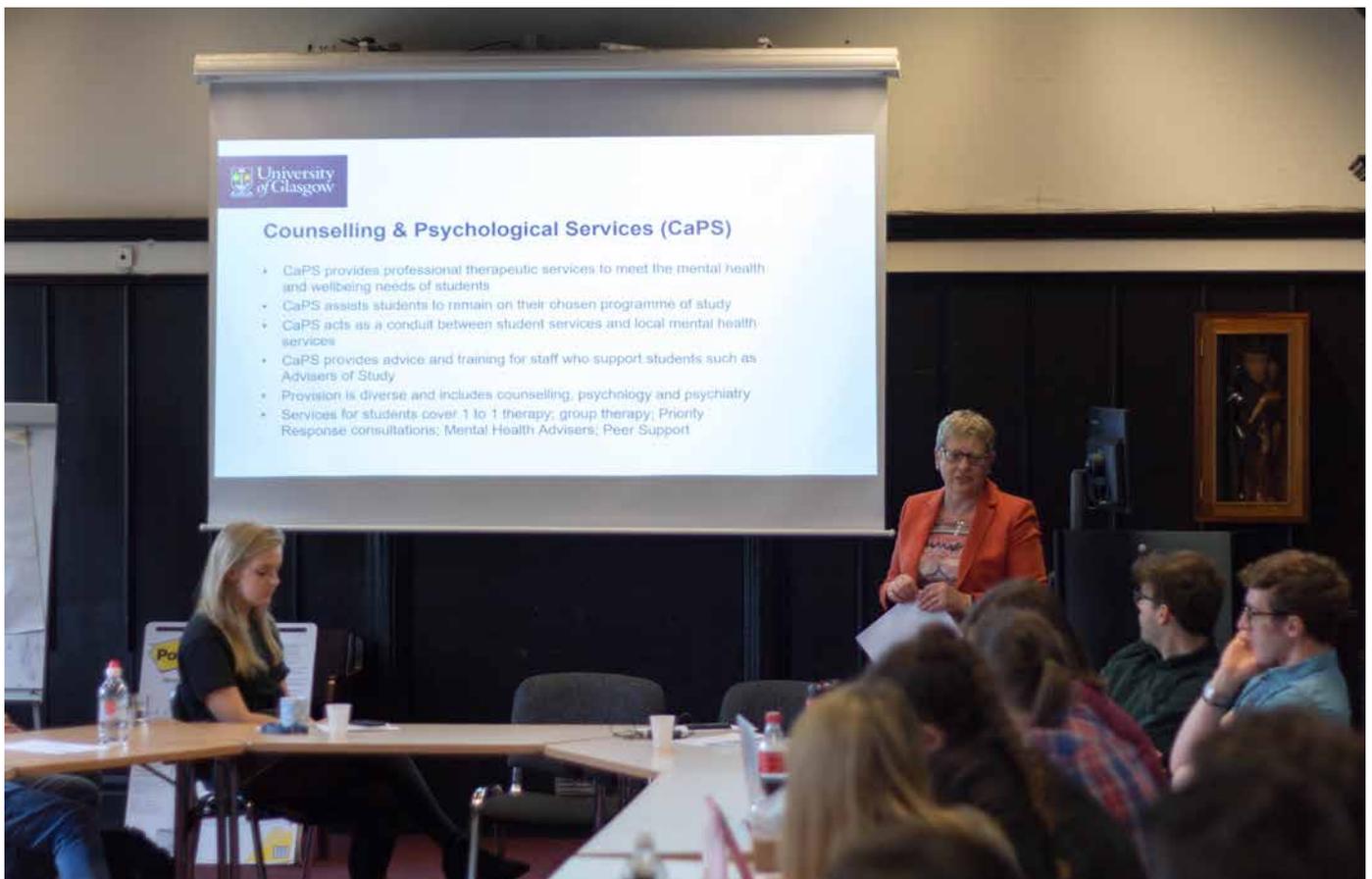
## STUDENT PARENTS' SURVEY

Following concerns raised by some GUSRC Officers regarding student parents' experience on campus, we commissioned a piece of research targeting the 6% of the UofG student population with dependent children.

The subsequent report was presented to the University Student Support and Development Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee, both held in May 2017.

The report highlights that 49% of respondents had considered dropping out due to childcare/parental responsibilities (63% amongst full time undergraduates) and draws out a range of issues encountered by student parents. Many respondents were highly positive about their University experience, and spoke highly of the support they receive from staff. Nevertheless, others were less than positive, referring to inconsistency and confusion around University rules and regulations, particularly for adjustments and special arrangements, and access to facilities. In addition to the general inconsistency of approach, the report also underlined issues around lack of crèche facilities, child-friendly spaces on campus and parent-friendly timetables, and suggests considerable demand for a support network for parents.

A new working group, the Parent Network, has been established consisting of University and GUSRC representatives to consider the report's findings and how they may be addressed.



University of Glasgow

### Counselling & Psychological Services (CaPS)

- CaPS provides professional therapeutic services to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of students
- CaPS assists students to remain on their chosen programme of study
- CaPS acts as a conduit between student services and local mental health services
- CaPS provides advice and training for staff who support students such as Advisers of Study
- Provision is diverse and includes counselling, psychology and psychiatry
- Services for students cover 1 to 1 therapy, group therapy, Priority Response consultations, Mental Health Advisers, Peer Support

## MENTAL HEALTH

The sharp increase in mental health issues amongst students has been well documented. Whilst the University has responded by increasing funding of Counselling and Psychological Services, we sought to make our own unique, student-led but complementary response.

In February 2017 we were notified that we'd been successful in our application to the National Lottery for a small grant of £9,000 to build on the work of our 'Mind Your Mate' programme delivered to University of Glasgow students in 2014/15.

Our intention is to use the lottery funding to develop a more sustainable delivery model by training a small number of volunteers to deliver mental health first aid training. To ensure continuity, trainees will include University and GUSRC staff rather than students. The University have agreed to allocate time to staff members to become trainees. Once the training is complete, we aim to roll out the programme across campus to students and University staff.

In addition to the training, GUSRC VP Student Support fed into University consultations on the current provision of mental health support across campus, conducted by an external consultant commissioned by the University.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

GUSRC took the lead in the establishment of the Gender Based Violence Strategy Group, chaired by UofG Vice Principal, Anne Anderson, following feedback from students. We worked with Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS) to develop comprehensive sexual violence prevention training tailored to students - believed by RCS to be the first of its kind.

Using a cascading 'train-the-trainer' model, 22 GUSRC Freshers' Helpers were initially recruited to attend a week-long initial training conference, who then went on to lead 16 open training sessions throughout the year which were attended by over six hundred students in total. Training was also delivered to University halls Living Support Staff.

There has been interest in the project from across universities, schools and services and our work in this area has also attracted substantial media interest, with articles, videos and frequent interview requests throughout the year.

Additionally, in conjunction with our Advice Centre team, we developed a new webpage on Sexual Violence Support and Resources, which is hosted within the advice section of the website.

The work has been positively received, so much so that the Director of Student Services invited our VP Student Support to be a key speaker at UK AMOSSHE conference on 'Tackling Gender Based Violence'.



## MEDICAL LAW WITHDRAWAL

GUSRC was approached by concerned students following a proposal by the Law School to withdraw medical law from the curriculum. A consultation with student representatives from levels 1 and 2 revealed significant concerns at being disadvantaged were they unable to study medical law in their honours year. In addition, we highlighted to the Law School the high-level of engagement and student satisfaction with the course and stated that the reputation of the University would suffer were this contemporary and fluid area of law to be withdrawn.

Following our representations, the proposals were withdrawn and medical law remains part of the diverse academic programme offered through the University's Law School.

## GROUP WORK GUIDELINES

As the pedagogical value of group work becomes increasingly recognised, group assignments are becoming a more prevalent method of assessment. The growth in group work correlates with increasing representations to our Advice Centre by students who've had poor experience of group work assessments in the University for a range of reasons including personality clashes, lack of clear guidance from UofG staff and unfair grading of work completed as part of a group.

Following discussions between GUSRC, LEADS staff and the Deans of Learning & Teaching we developed draft student guidelines on group work for the GUSRC website, and GUSRC VP Education submitted a paper to Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC). LTC welcomed the paper and agreed that LEADS would develop University guidelines as suggested by GUSRC to cover principles of group work, information on marking, and links to good practice resources.

## ISLAMOPHOBIA PANEL

With political tensions at an irregular high following the Brexit vote, and an increase in Muslims being targeted for violence and otherwise victimised, GUSRC decided to convene a panel discussion around Islamophobia and posing the question; 'should British Muslims become accustomed to the fact that they are likely to face discrimination within their daily lives or is there scope for positive action and change?'

The key aim of the event was to demonstrate to UofG students that the issue concerns us all and to provide a platform for students and staff of the University to discuss Islamophobia and its impact.

The panel was chaired by Ameer Ibrahim (SRC President) and included Shaykh Ruzwan Mohammed (Co-founder of Solas Foundation and iSyllabus), Scarlet Harris (Sociology PhD student) Zara Mohammed (President Federation of Student Islamic Societies), and Glasgow University's Honorary Muslim Chaplain Shoket Aksi.

In a packed venue an informed and occasionally heated discussion took place over two hours covering Islamophobia in a broad range of contexts and manifestations. In particular there was a consensus that the Brexit vote had given the right wing media a new freedom to push Islamophobic prejudice with some members of the audience voicing their concerns that, as Muslims, they felt they had experienced a higher level of hostility since the vote.

Although the event didn't achieve an overall consensus, one audience member summed up the potentially crucial role higher education can play in tackling Islamophobia by "creating the necessary critical consciousness through offering a safe space for education and campus activism where students from all walks of life have a voice".



## POP-UP STUDENT SPACES

At certain times of the year students find it difficult to access space to study, on or off campus. We worked with Central Room Bookings (CRB) to identify appropriate rooms on campus and when they would be unoccupied. Once agreed, we ran a cycle of pop-up spaces in the December exam diet in two lecture theatres and some small seminar rooms. Following feedback, we refined and expanded the offer for the May diet during which we offered rooms specifically for 'quiet' individual study as well as rooms, bookable through GUSRC, for group study.

We also used many of the University's pilot technology enhanced active learning (TEAL) spaces in order for more students to benefit from these new spaces. It has been difficult to gather numbers due to the drop-in nature of the individual bookings but feedback from students and the University's Social Media Team suggests the spaces are well used and appreciated.

## PATRIARCHITECTURE

In October 2016, we were delighted to host a ceremony celebrating the renaming of the John McIntyre Building. Opened as a student union in 1890, the building was funded by a donation from UofG alumni Dr John McIntyre in memory of his late wife Anne; the renaming gives greater recognition to the original intentions of Dr. McIntyre. This renaming is part of a larger piece of work to counteract the UofG's historical 'patriarchitecture' culture, to reflect the historic diversity of the University of Glasgow community in its building names. The concept was developed and lobbied for by GUSRC and is being taken forward by the Campus Naming Committee, who continue considering names for new buildings that will be built as part of the campus redevelopment in the coming years and naming currently unnamed buildings on campus - the next stage is for many of the buildings in Professors Square to be given plaques telling the stories of well-known University alumni.

## LECTURE RECORDING

In recent years we have been heavily involved in working with the University to increase lecture recording facilities on campus. This facility can be vital for a number of students whose personal circumstances may prevent them attending some lectures (e.g. parental responsibilities, illness etc.) as well as being of assistance to those whose first language isn't English. At exam times recorded lectures could provide vital exam revision support and assist with the relief of stress.

Our VP Education continued to argue for investment in lecture recording facilities. Following representations to the Future Learning Spaces board and consultation with The University's Central Timetabling Service, the University confirmed it would fund a 30% increase in the number of teaching spaces offering recording facilities before the next academic year and would aim to have all centrally-managed teaching spaces, of capacity 50 or more, equipped with recording facilities by Summer 2020.

## NON-ACADEMIC DEBT POLICY

Like many UKHEIs the University of Glasgow's debt recovery policy enabled the University to prevent a student from graduating or re-enrolling for the following year's study because they owe money for non-tuition fee debts, such as accommodation arrears or library fines.

GUSRC considered the policy unfair and disproportionate and had been in discussion with the University on this matter for a considerable period of time, achieving little progress. Following the involvement of the Competition and Markets Authority, to whom we outlined our concerns and provided details of the policy in operation, the policy was withdrawn and amended to comply with CMA advice.



## DUMFRIES

GUSRC provides support and training to registered University of Glasgow students based on the Crichton Campus in Dumfries. GUSRC employs an administrator, based at Crichton, who has responsibility for supporting Crichton students in developing extracurricular activities for the local student populace in order to enhance and enrich the cultural and educational experience on the Dumfries Campus.

## DE-STRESS CAMPAIGN

The University's first student-run 'Exam De-Stress' campaign took place over the December 2016 exam diet. Co-ordinated and funded by GUSRC and GUSA with some input from QMU and GUU, the campaign took the form of a range of anti-stress events and activities, augmented by giveaways and social media campaigning.

The record anxiety and stress experienced by students across the UK is well documented and our work was part of a positive approach designed to help mitigate some of the pressures facing students at exam time. The value of this contribution was recognised by the University with a spokesman quoted in the national media stating:

*"The University commends the SRC's proactive approach to putting on a variety of imaginative and popular events to help students deal with exam stress."*

Events over the three weeks included Group Knitting, a Hand Massage Workshop, a packed out special screening of Planet Earth II, the opportunity to let loose on a Muay Thai Punch Pad as well as Bouncy Castle. Some slightly more standard opportunities such as Yoga, Mindfulness and Physio Workshops (Sitting at a desk, a pain in the neck) were also offered. The GUSRC-funded stress packs proved highly popular and disappeared all too quickly. Contents included stress balls, scented tea lights, herbal tea sachets, bubble wrap and chocolates.

## CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The Senate Office's revised version of the Student Code of Conduct was introduced for the academic session following consultation. The revised code included several amendments recommended by GUSRC, the most significant relating to the University's ability to suspend students from campus pending the outcome of criminal/conduct proceedings. The code now permits a review of any suspension imposed that the student believes has been made based on an error in fact.

## CAMPUS ESTATES DEVELOPMENT

There are increasing demands on student representatives as the new campus development gathers momentum. Additional Boards and ancillary working groups relating to estates development represent a significant challenge in terms of supporting and sustaining effective student engagement. The increased demand means our existing student representatives are spread more thinly in addition to having less time to engage with our internal staff support framework, which is, in turn, struggling to meet the demands placed upon it.

To assist in mitigating this issue we worked with the Director of Estates in establishing the Student Campus Development Committee as a consultative forum with a remit to consider and comment upon relevant aspects of the campus development programme. An open recruitment process, publicised widely, ensured a diverse membership. From almost 100 applicants we recruited twenty-two students, a mix of undergraduate, PG research and PG taught, many of whom had not previously been involved in student representation of any sort.

Six meetings were held over the year during which the Director of Estates and GUSRC President worked closely in delivering jointly coordinated information/feedback sessions focussed around areas of the Estates Development.



## POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATION

There are still considerable challenges to be addressed in terms of postgraduate representation and we have specifically alluded to this as a priority in our strategy. The difficulties are acknowledged by the University in its latest ELIR Response

*“Another aspect where we recognise scope for improvement in relation to our PGR students’ experience is in student representation. Analysis of the student representative figures before and after the introduction of Student Voice shows a small increase. While this increase is positive, the issue remains challenging, with further work to be done to engage PGR students more fully in representation structures. A number of activities are under discussion with the SRC.”*

Postgraduate representation is an issue across the university and Student Union sector, with no one as yet appearing to have reached an ideal solution. We are optimistic though, that working closely together will enable new solutions.

## WELCOME FORTNIGHT

This is the fourth year we have organised Postgraduate Welcome Fortnight which runs during Freshers’ Week and the week after. The programme of events is intended to offer an attractive alternative to the Unions and to reflect the slightly more mature and international demographic of the UofG postgraduate community.

A diverse range of daytime and evening events were laid on for new postgraduate students, with a view to encouraging socialising and helping with orientation to their new university environment. Events included yoga, meditation, mindfulness, tea tasting, whisky tasting, poetry, drag night, DJs, murder mystery, early Oktoberfest, live music, comedy nights, a quiz night and a GUSRC meet and greet.

Both paid, ticketed events sold out, while the quiz night attracted 138 participants. A traditional folk band Midgieraker saw the Gilchrist at capacity, and the seminar space was full for both the knitting

and mindfulness sessions. Other events also proved popular, with additional seating having to be sourced for many.

We incorporate questions on Welcome Fortnight in our Freshers’ Week survey which demonstrated a significant increase in awareness as well as a 12% increase in engagement from Postgraduates in Welcome Fortnight, up to 30%.

### WELCOME FORTNIGHT FEEDBACK

#### Awareness



#### Attendance





## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

We have continued to channel additional resources towards the Gilchrist in order to sustain engagement with postgraduates and to further develop the sense of community amongst students.

Based on the success of Welcome Fortnight events, we have repeated some of the highlight events throughout the year. In addition to improvements to the monthly quiz night, we have organised additional folk band evenings, a new regular drag night and also piloted semi-regular jazz nights in the Gilchrist PG space.

Working with University staff, local special interest and community groups and members of UofG clubs and societies to plan, promote and execute special and one off events has also proven a successful model, with an array of events hitting capacity this year. Highlights included a Burns night supper, Thanksgiving dinner, Chinese New Year celebration, a Eurovision screening and supporters night, and an all-night screening of the US elections.

We have also dedicated an entire wall of the café to showcase local artistic talent. So far, this initiative has attracted a variety of artists from the local community as well as from the University itself. It gives artists a platform to share their work, and in some cases participate in their very first exhibition, and allows the postgraduate community

a chance to engage with up-and-coming artists. These displays have been popular with Gilchrist users, and some of the artwork has sold. It also helps build a distinct character within the café space.

The number and range of academic workshops and seminars continues to increase. The 'Presenting with Impact' series goes from strength to strength and is always well attended, and this year saw the highest number of academic workshops in our space.

A more strategic approach to our communications and a stronger social media presence, along with online ticketing, has made a perceptible difference in our work with the postgraduate community since the majority of research students study off-campus.

We also continued live screenings of University Graduations on the café screens for friends and family who struggled to get a ticket, or for those who wanted to enjoy a coffee and a comfortable seat in our space.

The Gilchrist continues to be a popular choice for our postgraduate community and our seminar room has been almost continually booked out this year for postgraduate events. The success is also demonstrated through the increased year-on-year profitability of the Gilchrist Cafe/Bar.



## EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

In January 2017 GUSRC hosted its first International Symposium in partnership with the UofG Vice Principal for Internationalisation. The aim of the event was to gain insight into the student experience for international students through discussion with them directly, in addition to celebrating the international nature of the UofG community.

Over fifty students heard from speakers, including the Vice Principal for Internationalisation, on various topics and participated in discussion groups. Feedback included suggestions around the following: - additional advance and more streamlined communication about the student experience, more flexible opening hours for services on campus, more integrated work experience opportunities during study.

A report from the event was submitted to the Internationalisation Steering Group; it contained no specific recommendations, but was intended to inform ongoing discussion around the student experience.

### CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

GUSRC sits on the panel of CPAG's 'Students and Benefits Project' which aims to increase the number of low-income students who are able to access further and higher education. It also aims to reduce the impact of poverty on students who access such educational opportunities.

GUSRC's participation provides an opportunity to input into CPAG's national campaigning and information activities as well as keeping up to date with national policy developments which may impact on students.

### IN THE MEDIA

GUSRC once again enjoyed positive coverage in the national media, including widespread positive coverage of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative [page 17]. Other areas of coverage include; student debt, student mental health and student accommodation issues.

Without ties to the NUS, GUSRC has freedom to comment independently on issues relevant to UofG students. Some of the media in which GUSRC featured included The Times, The Scotsman, The Guardian, The Independent and The Herald plus online coverage from BBC News, radio coverage by BBC Scotland and TV reporting by STV.

### LANDLORD FRAUD

As the international student community grows, so does the opportunity for fraudulent landlords to exploit those with a lack of knowledge of Scottish housing law and regulations. The Advice Centre once again experienced an increase in the number of students from overseas defrauded by rogue landlords.

The GUSRC website and '10 Tips to avoid Housing Scams' leaflet were updated in July 2016 and the University agreed to send a link to all incoming international students as part of a welcome mailing and advise them to contact us if they were at all suspicious.



## EUROPEAN STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Following the success of the international symposium we worked with the University again to organise a European Symposium in May of 2017. The aim of the event was to facilitate discussion on student hopes and fears around Brexit as well as giving students the opportunity to hear from key representatives from across the University

Structured discussion groups focussed on the following four key areas

- › Political Concerns
- › Impact of Brexit at the University of Glasgow
- › Erasmus and International Mobility
- › Employment

It would be reasonable to state that far more “fears” than “hopes” were expressed. In particular there were concerns around the future of International Student Mobility with the loss of access to the Erasmus programme. As would be expected concerns over funding and tuition fees were widely expressed as well as the potential impact on the diverse and vibrant culture of the University itself through the reduction in numbers of students from across Europe.

A report of the discussions and issues of the day was prepared for future consideration. As yet, many of the implications of Brexit are unknown but the information gathered will be of assistance to GUSRC in our future representative work around Brexit and the interests of our members.

## ONLINE & DIGITAL

The GUSRC website ([glasgowstudent.net](http://glasgowstudent.net)) continues to be one of the go-to hubs for students seeking support, advice and information during their time at UofG. Pageviews of the website grew by 4% this year, with 147,000 unique users, up from 131,000 in 2015/16. The website is designed to complement and work collaboratively with the University’s own website, which continues to be successful with 45% of the website’s referral traffic coming from [gla.ac.uk](http://gla.ac.uk). In terms of content, information about GUSRC-supported clubs and societies continues to be popular, though both Advice Centre and volunteering content drew a greater share of traffic this year.

Social media continues to be a key tool in engaging with students and popular content last year included coverage of GUSRC elections, photo galleries of events and GUSRC news content. Subscribers across GUSRC’s social media profiles, including the official Instagram and Twitter accounts in addition to supplementary accounts for sabbatical officers, totals over 18,000.

GUSRC also makes use of its official representative capacity to disseminate emails to all students on important subjects and to provide updates on GUSRC’s ongoing work.

### PAGEVIEWS OF GUSRC WEBSITE

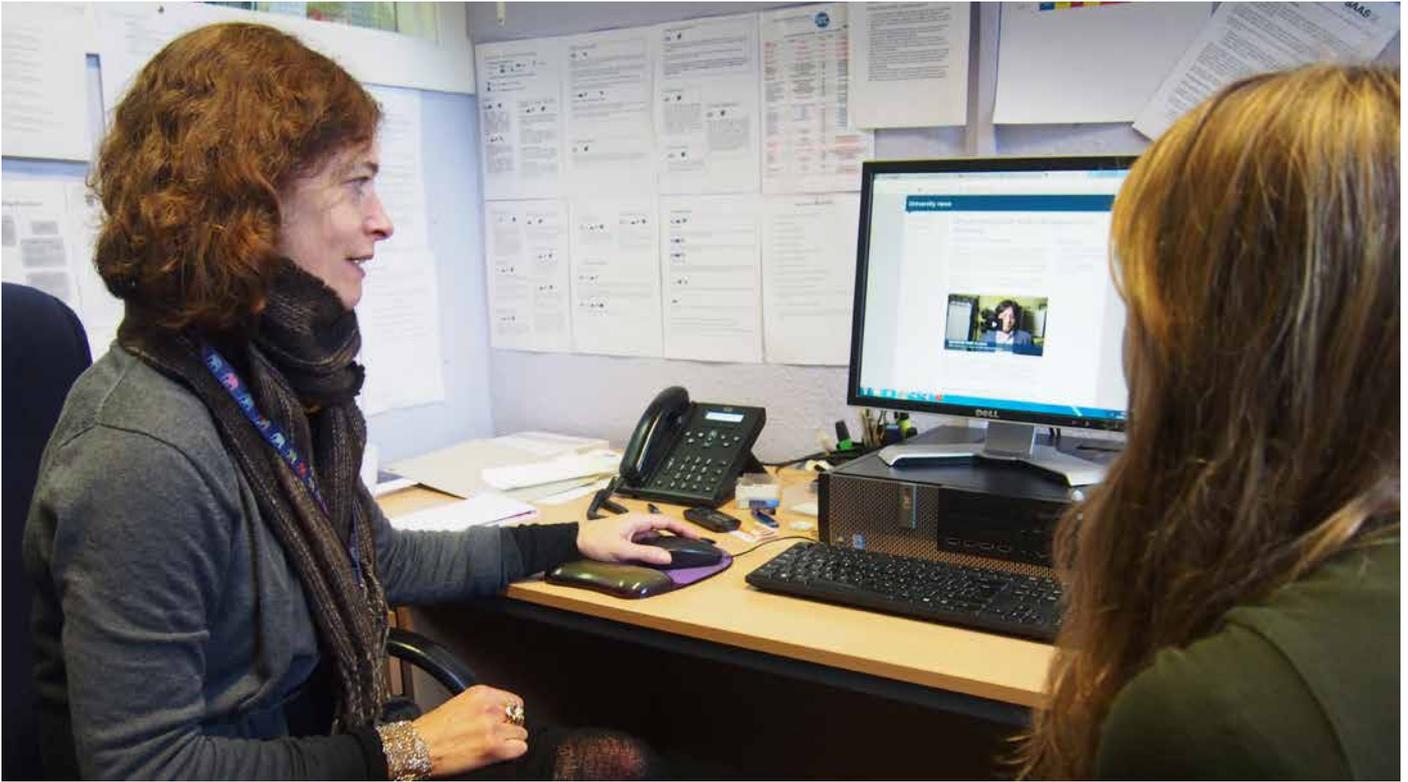
2013/14	851k
2014/15	888k
2015/16	914k
2016/17	950k

PART THREE:

# SUPPORT & WELLBEING



WE WILL PROMOTE THE WELLBEING OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS BY OFFERING UNIQUE SUPPORT SERVICES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT



## THE ADVICE CENTRE

GUSRC's Advice Centre employs four full time staff members to provide 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 the organisation's policy development and campaign work.

### CASEWORK ACTIVITY

There were 683 (2016 - 766) anonymous enquiries, 1225 (2016 - 1315) new cases and 11082 (2016 - 12932) casework entries between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017. In terms of cases and casework, this represents a slight decrease on last year's figures.

During the year, 60% (2016 - 56%) of the Advice Centre's client group were undergraduates and postgraduates made up 22% (2016 - 26%). The postgraduate figure can be split into 17% PGT, and 5% PGR students. The rest of our enquiries come from prospective students, students' parents, University staff members, former students and external sources. 4% were unidentified.

Of students whose nationality was given, 50% (2016 - 45%) identified as Home (Scotland) Students, 27% (2016 - 33%) were International (non-EU), 14% (2016 - 15%) were EU, 7% (2016 - 6%) were Home (England), and <1% (2016 - 1%) were Home (NI). This seems to reverse the last couple of years' trend towards increased use of the service by International (non EU) students, and decreased use by Home (Scotland) students, although it is difficult to draw any conclusions from only one year's figures.

## CASEWORK CATEGORIES

GUSRC tracks and monitors the types of problems that students approach the Advice Centre for assistance with, in order to monitor trends in student issues and ensure team members are suitably equipped to deal with different types of problem.

By far, University and academic issues continue to make up the biggest proportion of the Advice Centre workload, with 6,813 casework entries (2016 - 7738), followed by accommodation problems at 2341 casework entries (2016 - 3187), and financial issues with 884 casework entries (2016 - 1090).

Historically, academia has been the biggest casework area for the past seven years as there are no other alternatives to the Advice Centre for advice when it comes to matters such as academic appeals.

### CASES + ANONYMOUS ENQUIRIES

2012/13	2417
2013/14	2137
2014/15	2303
2015/16	2081
2016/17	1908

## ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Where possible, the Advice Centre will record the outcome of any enquiry or case, however in many cases the client is empowered with information to act for themselves and will not revert to the Advice Centre unless further assistance is required.

For academic appeals in 2016/17, there were 58 completed cases, of which 32 were successful. While the number of completed cases is consistent with last year, the number of successful cases has slightly declined. Though the number of completed student conduct cases decreased slightly, with 80 completed cases, 49 of them were successful which is consistent with 2015/16.

Finally, the number of complaints processed declined with 11 completed cases compared to 18 in 2015/16; seven were successful, versus ten last year. Though fluctuating each year, the success percentage has remained above 50% for the past six years.

## POSITIVE FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

While the number of individuals benefitting from positive financial outcomes of Advice Centre casework increased this year - 46 students compared to 45 last year - the total financial gain decreased from £62,271 in 2015/16 to £47,788 in 2016/17. Recorded financial gains came from a variety of sources across all categories of GUSRC Advice Centre work. These include:

- › Requesting the return of holding deposits
- › Resolving SAAS funding issues
- › Assisting students to challenge errors in their financial records
- › Challenging tenancy deposit deductions
- › Assisting with requesting rent reductions due to ongoing repair works.

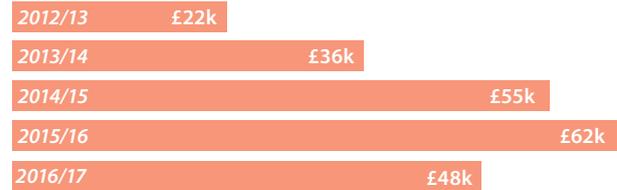
The recorded financial gains figure is always a significant underestimate of the true financial gain, as GUSRC chooses only to record gains which are confirmed. In the large majority of cases where there is a potential financial gain, it is most typical for these clients to not return to advise of the outcome.

## NON-FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

We recorded 286 non-financial gains over the year, down from the record 356 last year. This includes thirty resubmissions/re-sits granted, 15 students accepted back onto their course, six housing repairs carried out, ten re-sits uncapped, 12 grades reviewed, three apologies received, homelessness prevented in four instances and council tax problems resolved in two cases. In over two hundred cases, the student gained information on their rights and responsibilities which helped them to make an informed decision on what further action to take.

As always, there were potentially many more positive outcomes but, as stated above, we can only record confirmations from students when they choose to inform us. The GUSRC Advice Team increased their efforts this year to reach a wider audience by using social media to publicise our range of web-based information at relevant times of year for particular topics. We have no way of knowing how many students benefit from information downloaded from the advice section of the website or from the range of rights-based leaflets we produce.

## STUDENT FINANCIAL GAINS FROM ADVICE CENTRE WORK



## GUSRC ADVICE CENTRE CASEWORK AREAS



## CASE STUDIES

*Student A was a 1st year medical student who had been excluded by the School Progress Committee due to failing to meet the requirements to move into the second year of the course. We assisted the student with submitting an appeal against the Committee's decision on the grounds that adverse personal circumstances had not been taken into account. The student had an extremely difficult home life due to friction in the family, and a bereavement during the year which had exacerbated the problems at home. After the advice centre represented the student at an appeal hearing, she was permitted to resit the year and offered additional support by the School going forward.*

*Student B contacted the GUSRC Advice Centre regarding a longterm dispute with a former landlord. The student outlined that he and his former flatmate were owed £923 from the landlord due to an unnecessary overseas agent fee and a rent overpayment due to an accounting error.*

*At the time of contacting the Advice Centre, the student had almost given up recouping the money, however the Advice Centre, through six months of dialogue with the landlord, including the threat to take legal action, secured a complete refund for the student.*

*Student C had been expelled from the University following a Student Conduct case which showed them to have committed multiple acts of plagiarism from a single academic source over the course of several months.*

*The Advice Centre represented the student at a Senate Student Conduct Appeals Committee meeting, as it was felt that had the obvious and extensive nature of the plagiarism been detected by course organisers and staff earlier, more appropriate and reasonable action could have been taken, the student could have been educated about academic referencing, and they would have been able to continue with their course.*

*The appeal was upheld by the Appeals Committee and the student received H grades for their work, but were permitted to resubmit the assignments, capped at the pass mark.*



## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WORK

### RESPECT ADVISERS

As UofG 'Respect Advisers', Advice Centre staff have continued to attend scheduled meetings, and have input into University campaigns to raise awareness of the support and help available. The Advice team continue to monitor the number of harassment cases (although this number is still very low) and submit anonymised returns to the Equality and Diversity Unit.

### MISCONDUCT FEEDBACK

During the previous academic session, we formally expressed our concerns that in some academic misconduct cases the penalty handed down to some students went beyond what we would regard as a proportionate response. We also suggested alternative penalties that may have assisted in achieving more consistent and equitable outcomes. As yet there appears little consistent change in approach as we continue to assist students to appeal decisions which they feel are disproportionately harsh, with mixed success.

Timescales for dealing with conduct cases, as well as appeals, are also an ongoing issue due to the volume of cases and the need to find staff to deal with them. Students have reported finding it stressful to be kept waiting for their case to be heard. In one case a student was informed that his appeal was upheld and he did not need to sit a re-sit exam, ten days after the re-sit exam had taken place.

### WEB RESOURCES

The advice team created and published new web pages on the following topics:

- › [Jury Service](#)
- › [Guarantors](#)
- › [Moving out and what to do with your unwanted stuff](#)
- › [Out of hours and emergency help](#)

In addition, the web advice on housing repairs was amended to take into account the new Housing and Property Chamber tribunal replacing the Private Rented Housing Panel in December 2016.

A contact form was added to the advice section of the website to allow students an alternative means of contacting the Advice Centre.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TENANTS' RIGHTS

The Advice team were invited by the International Student Support team to deliver a presentation and question/answer session on the Private Rented Sector to a group of international students. This workshop was delivered by a member of the Advice team in May 2017 and was again well-received by the attendees.



## PROHIBITED EXAM MATERIALS

The Advice Centre team worked with Senate Office and the Registry Examinations Team in the production of eye-catching posters to remind students of items which are prohibited in exam rooms. The posters have been used during the exam diets and there has been positive feedback from University staff, with some staff contacting us to request additional posters for in-class exams. Despite this, the Advice Centre continues to deal with numerous cases each year where students are penalised for having a prohibited item in an exam. Work is continuing on other ways of raising students' awareness of the significant penalties which result from this.

## ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS FORUM

GUSRC once again participated in the University's Accommodation Options Forum event which is run every February, by Residential Services. Our Advice Centre staff talked directly to 226 students and many more collected leaflets. This event is clearly a useful vehicle for promotion of the Advice Centre as a source of information and advice on housing as well as serving as a good source of information for students seeking Private Sector accommodation. For February 2018 we are considering how we may develop a higher profile and more informative event that attracts more students.

## THIRD PARTY REPORTING

GUSRC has an integral role in developing and supporting the University's Equality and Diversity agenda and continues to be the only Third Party Reporting Centre on campus. Students wishing to report a hate crime can do so anonymously and more comfortably than previously. Staff from the GUSRC's Advice Centre, the Permanent Secretary, and the Vice President (Student Support) have all undertaken Third Party Reporting training.

## FRESHERS' WEEK

GUSRC continues to be responsible for co-coordinating Freshers' Week, working with the University and facilitating links with student bodies. We have responsibility for the marketing and administration of the Freshers' Pass programme as well as development, operation and maintenance of the online pass sales system.

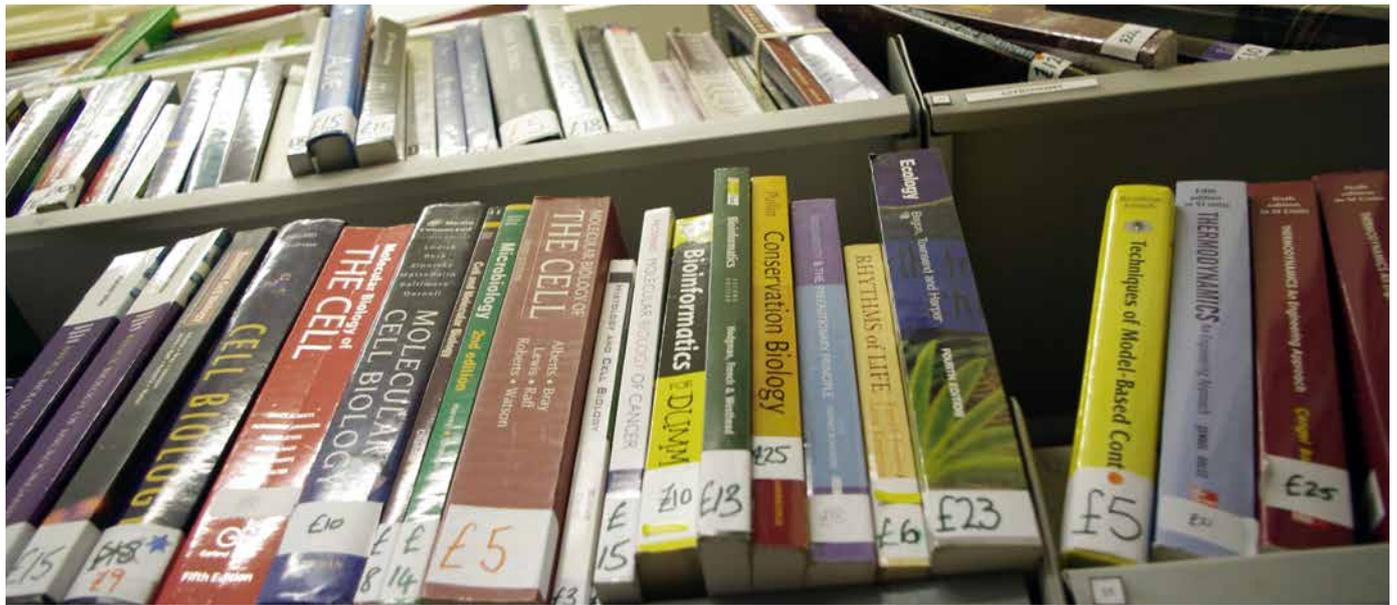
Freshers' Pass sales for 2016 continued the downward trend to 2,726 a further fall of 111 against 2015. There were door sales, which generated additional income of £3,381. The total income from the Freshers' Pass sales was £105,896. The Unions each received £28,798. GUSA and GUSRC each received £16,913. This percentage split is historical and has no particular rationale.

An independent evaluation into the current pass system concluded:

*"The drop in pass purchase is again an issue and continues to be related to value for money perceptions versus the quantity of events. Cost per event can appear high for those who do not attend as many events as first envisaged."*

GUSRC and GUSA both run a wide range of 'daytime' events during Freshers' Week. The events are free and not restricted to those with a Freshers' Pass. The Freshers' pass events however were criticised for their lack of inclusivity with the evaluation report concluding:

*"Finally, issues around the inclusivity of Freshers' Week are highlighted by those who do not drink alcohol as they feel excluded from the majority of Freshers' Week Pass events. Furthermore, many mature students and postgraduate students do not perceive these events to be targeted at them either... consideration could be given to the widening of the SRC's 'Welcome Fortnight' with the objective of targeting events at these particular demographic groups".*



## SERVICES, INFORMATION & PUBLICATIONS

### WELCOME POINT

The Welcome Point remains the key contact point for events such as Applicants' Visit Day and Open Day. It is an ideal showpiece for new visitors to campus with our student-staff team happy to engage and inform visitors. The Welcome Point handled 34,969 enquiries, a rise of 8.5% on 32,178 the previous year. The space is also used for small exhibitions and displays, and is currently being used to display materials showcasing proposals for the new campus development.

#### ➤ SUCCESS INDICATOR:

Our strategy states: "We will work with the University to increase the number of 'campus visitor' Welcome Point enquiries by 5% per annum over the life of this plan". We managed to go beyond the 5% indicator and hope that refreshing the image of the Welcome Point will increase usage further.

### STUDENT DIARY & THE GUIDE

GUSRC produced a redesigned diary targeted at first year students, with the aim of enhancing learning and contributing to student retention through encouraging time management and organisation skills, assisting integration, highlighting GUSRC support services and encouraging a sense of belonging.

The Guide has long been seen as the key introductory document to the University and life in Glasgow in general. The Guide was once again produced to a high standard, with content intended to be useful throughout the academic year, rather than a throwaway document.

Following a documentation review at the University's Retention Working Group the University offered a small amount of funds to enable all first year students to receive one as well as advisors of study. The additional funding was used to print 9,000 copies of The Guide, up from 5,000, to reach all new students, including January entrants.

### JOB SHOP

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. GUSRC also produces booklets and online information for students about employment rights and joining trade unions in order to prevent/minimise employer exploitation.

### PRINT SERVICES

GUSRC continues to offer high-quality printing and photocopying facilities at considerably lower rates than commercial outlets, however the reduction of University pull print rates continues to impact demand. Photocopy unit sales dropped by 12% to 114,000 against 128,000 units in 2015/16, continuing a significant downward trend with a 61% drop in sales over the last three years. However, the service is still cost effective to deliver, and the binding service has enjoyed a 54% increase in sales over the last two years. Inevitably, digital innovations will continue to reduce demand for these services and we will keep the situation under review.

### SECOND HAND BOOKSHOP

GUSRC's second hand book trading facility contributes to the alleviation of student poverty through providing cheap course texts, whilst affording an opportunity for students to gain some financial return on texts which they no longer require. We continue to operate this service on a break-even basis; sales revenue fell by 12% during the year to £48,991 while 5,336 books were sold against 5,304 in 2015/2016. Total estimated savings to students buying the second hand books is around £24,495 whilst those students selling books generated income of £32,660 from the sales. Total financial benefit to students using the service over the period is £57,155 (against £65,343 in 2016, £62,281 in 2015 and £47,593 in 2014).

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PART FOUR:



VOLUNTEER  
RING & COMM  
MUNITY EN  
GAGEMENT

WE WILL ENHANCE THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE OF OUR STUDENTS BY PROMOTING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP.

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## STUDENT VOLUNTEER SUPPORT SERVICE

GUSRC makes a significant contribution to students' personal development by offering a broad range of volunteering opportunities on and off campus. The Student Volunteer Support Service (SVSS) is the mainstay of our volunteering offer, directly and indirectly facilitating a range of opportunities within the University and across communities throughout Glasgow.

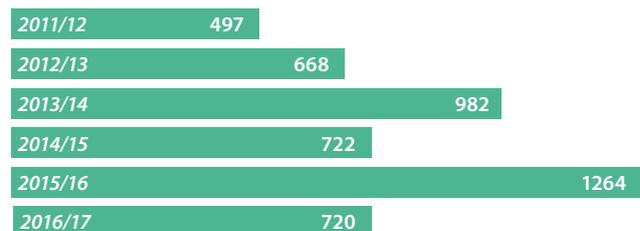
A recent review of our volunteering activities highlighted considerable previous undercounting of students participating in non remunerated activity as a result of engagement with GUSRC. As well as those who register through SVSS, generally taking up opportunities in the local community, we facilitate a range of other volunteering activities not previously included under the "volunteer" heading. Our class representatives, Council Members and societies' office bearers undertake considerable work over the year on behalf of their membership or those they represent as do our student media teams. Incorporating the additional, non SVSS related activity, our volunteers total over 3,500.

The graph below shows the pattern of volunteers coming through SVSS only. The considerable drop this year following a general upwards trend over the last few years is due to the departure of our SVSS coordinator, our sole member of staff covering this area, and the time taken to recruit a suitable replacement.

### DEMAND

The success of SVSS belies its limited resources. We are conscious of the latent demand amongst our students for volunteering opportunities but are concerned that our capacity to meet that demand is extremely limited. We are also aware that many students of UofG are volunteering in the community with no recognition or acknowledgment of their commitment. Although they do not volunteer for the sake of reward, it would be valuable in terms of reflecting the University's real contribution to the community, as well as individual students, employability, were we better able to promote and track the real level of volunteering.

#### SVSS REGISTERED STUDENT VOLUNTEERS





## SERVICE PROMOTION

After a successful event in Freshers' Week 2016, GUSRC organised the second ever stand-alone volunteer information session during Freshers' Week. The event was considered a success, attracting over eighty new first-year students for a short session in which they were able to hear the experiences of existing volunteers and receive information about options and projects available to them through the SVSS.

GUSRC continues to build upon our use of social media to reach the student population. University departments such as Careers and College of Social Sciences Employability has enabled SVSS to give regular updates about new opportunities and reach a wider audience.

A key part of promoting the service in 2016/17 was the return of Volunteering Week - a week long series of events to try and engage students about the possibility of volunteering. Further information on page 35.

## PVG

Volunteers wishing to participate in project involving children are required to go through the expensive and complex Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) disclosure process. SVSS, in addition to advising on compliance, liaises with Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS) to secure free access to the scheme for students, saving £18-£59 per student.

New guidance has enabled us to reduce the obligation on groups that we support in terms of the frequency of PVGs required. Over the year our PVG processing resulted in savings to students of £4297.

## HEAR

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) allows students who engage in certain extracurricular activities to have their participation recorded on their academic record.

We recently reviewed and updated our 'reflective log' templates to assist students in identifying attributes, skills and knowledge developed through their activities, as well as encouraging them to note how they feel participation in extracurricular activity has contributed to their overall University experience. Volunteering, in particular, gives our students practical experience and encourages them to record and articulate this, something increasingly in demand by employers.



## NEW VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

Many students are unable to commit to a long-term volunteering position but are still keen to become involved in aspects of Glasgow community life. The SVSS has worked closely with the University's Erasmus Network to communicate how students on exchange can take part in volunteering opportunities.

### DEAR GREEN FLOWER FARM

SVSS works with Dear Green Flower Farm, the UK's first urban flower farm - a community enterprise - specialising in the production of plants, flowers and foliage. They work with students as well as asylum seekers and refugees to enhance the appearance of gap sites around Glasgow. As a seasonal volunteering opportunity, it affords students flexibility and the chance to do worthwhile simple, task-based activities which do not require PVG or training.

### CHARITY SHOPS

Charity shops continue to be popular volunteering positions due to their flexibility, with three local Oxfam shops and British Heart Foundation added as partners this year. These opportunities are particularly valued by students who still find English challenging as they provide opportunities to practice discourse.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

Our recent 'longer term' befriender projects include youth mentoring projects such as PEEK (Possibilities for Each and Every Kid) and YCSA (Youth Community Support Agency) – these provide students with the opportunity to connect with children and young people from more deprived parts of Glasgow. In addition we have taken on additional specialist projects such as Terrence Higgins Trust, Shelter Online Advice Assistants and Navigate Citizens Advocacy project for homeless people.

## CONTINUING PROJECTS

### CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH

This service continues to be in high demand, and in the year 2016/2017 we matched 94 people seeking help to improve their conversational English with another student. Feedback from students has shown that many people become long term friends and students who are helping someone improve their English often learn just as much about their partner's language, culture and home country, one volunteer stating:

*"I think the conversational English programme is a very interesting programme and something that all students, who want to help others and help themselves in improving their language skills, should definitely have a go. It was a very enjoyable experience and it gave me the chance to make a new friend".*

### BEFRIENDER PROJECTS

SVSS continues to offer befriending opportunities which include working with people with disabilities (Sense Scotland and Cornerstone), those in recovery from health problems (MacMillan Cancer Care/Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, LGBT Health, Phoenix Futures), older people (Alzheimer Scotland, Food Train, Meal Makers), and young people (Plusone).

These options involve lengthy processing time via both SVSS and the partner organisations, with interviews, PVG, references and training before any matching takes place, however a total of 132 students volunteered under this category.

### GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SERVICE TO HOMELESS PEOPLE

This still proves to be a highly popular project. This year 187 students registered to volunteer with GUSH, and we managed to maintain 100% coverage, including during the summer months when many student volunteers either leave Glasgow for holidays or graduate.



## VOLUNTEER WEEK

February 2017 saw the return of Volunteer Week, following a successful launch last year. The aim was not only to promote volunteering opportunities to students who might be looking for a new challenge at the start of the calendar year, but also to celebrate the good work done by UofG students in Glasgow.

Timed to culminate in the 2017 Volunteering, Clubs and Societies awards, the week included taster events, one-off training sessions including:

- › Language4Water, Glasgow University Environmental Sustainability Team, Mary's Meals, Best Buddies and Giving What You Can meet & greet sessions.
- › St Andrew's First Aid CPR training session.
- › Volunteer Fair.
- › GUEST litter pick-up.
- › Volunteering & Employability session with UofG College of Social Sciences Employability Officer, Dickon Copsy.

## GU TOURS

The tours provide an opportunity for University of Glasgow Students to work as tour guides, develop their communication skills and share their pride in the University with visitors from around the world. We continue to promote the tours through local guidebooks and websites such as VisitScotland, though feedback suggests a considerable percentage of visits are spontaneous, in response to campus based promotional material.

As a pilot we extended our tour days from 4 to 6 per week. This proved successful, contributing to an increase in tour participants to 2,422 for the year, against 1,605 in the previous year.

We encourage tour participants to leave feedback which is generally very positive. Less positive comments generally relate to disappointment at the lack of access to internal spaces of the University. Current University space usage levels mean it is no longer possible to access areas such as the historic Bute Hall. We intend to review our marketing materials to manage expectations in this regard.



## STUDENT MEDIA

Glasgow University's student media plays two key roles for students of the University. The first is to provide opportunities to learn new skills and share in common experiences; in this respect the media organisations are similar to clubs and societies in helping to develop graduate attributes. The second function of the media is to provide engaging, informative and entertaining content for students and the wider Glasgow community. This dual role played by the student media highlights its importance to GUSRC, the University and the students. GUSRC continues to support media organisations both with funding and with administrative and developmental assistance. Below is a summary of the achievements of each of GUSRC's media in the academic year 2016/17.

### GLASGOW GUARDIAN

The Glasgow Guardian published five issues of 32 pages over the year, with a print run of 3,000. During the year over two hundred volunteers were involved in the development and production of the Guardian including editors, writers, photographers, illustrators, social media staff, and advertising and business staff. A team of social media helpers was established, which greatly streamlined the process of uploading and disseminating content. Social media output and online readership increased significantly, especially during coverage of the student and rector elections. Work began on the development of a new website but is still a work in progress.

The newspaper continues to train a number of contributors and editors in writing, editing and design. A new session, open to all, focussing on effective news writing, was also added to the training programme.

### GUST

GUST continued a hectic production schedule over the year with original video content developed over a range of genres including entertainment, current affairs and documentary programming. From the Freshers' Welcome video to strong coverage of GUSRC elections, as well as commissioned pieces for the University itself, GUST continues to play a significant role in the University community.

### GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

GUM is the oldest student publication in Scotland and offers a blend of fashion, art and politics in a high quality publication. Over the year three issues were produced with a circulation of 4,000 distributed at the University and throughout the West End.

The editorial team reviewed the way GUM was managed and produced with a view to making it more inclusive; weekly meetings and monthly workshops ensured greater engagement and support for contributors and potential contributors. In the past GUM often had to reject articles due to lack of space, this year the editorial team published three articles weekly online as well as maintaining the three published issues per academic year. A launch was held for every published issue, in various locations around Glasgow that corresponded with each issue's theme. The three issues were as follows: 'Nostalgia' (Winter 2016), 'Space and Place' (Winter 2017), and 'Empathy' (Spring 2017).

The considerable increase in online articles ensured online support for GUM saw a dramatic rise. A brand new section to the magazine (Creative Writing) was added which has now gained great popularity across campus. The design of GUM was also modernised and changed to make for an even more enticing and exciting read. The quality of the product was reflected in a shortlisting for Best Design at the UK wide student media awards.



## SUBCITY

Subcity Radio is GUSRC's student-led radio station, broadcasting from Glasgow to the world via the [subcity.org](http://subcity.org) website. The station is known for its openness, inviting not only students, but members of the local community, to be part of its infrastructure.

Freshers' week saw the station return to 24 hour programming, and running stalls at both Glasgow University and The Glasgow School of Art. The web team, comprising students of Computer Science at Glasgow University, created a minisite for a Subcity Guide to Glasgow, hosting advertisements from local club promoters to generate revenue for the station, and featuring information about food, drink, and places to visit in and around Glasgow for students new to the city. The number of contributors to the station grew, with the station now hosting nearly 100 shows, a full evening schedule, and an average of about 7 hours of new content per day. This year Subcity reached out to progressive community groups in Glasgow to offer them slots in the schedule, and have now been host to Glasgow Women's Library, members of the Unity Centre, and ARC (Autism Resource Centre). This is a trend we hope to keep up in the coming year. As well as local groups and contributors, internationally renowned touring DJs and performers have appeared on shows when they happen to be in Glasgow; e.g. Hesse Audio founder Ben UFO, Call Super, Objekt, Throwing Shade, and the entirety of Evian Christ's Trance Party 6 line up (Total Freedom, Laurel Halo, Evian Christ) amongst many more. The station's international reputation as a progressive freeform online radio station in the underground music scene has grown this year through being featured in a Boiler Room documentary on the influence the station has had on the Glasgow "sound". Subcity was also featured in Siren London zine, and as part of Resident Advisors in Residence series.

Subcity Sessions continue to champion local talent, inviting Glasgow-based bands and artists to perform live on air with a professional recording and PA set up. Highlights of their sessions this year have been sets from local acts Horse Whisperer and Still House Plants of tape label Greater Lanarkshire Auricular Research Council (GLARC), and Ela Orleans.

The events that were held to raise money for the station at The Art School in September, November, and February saw attendance grow with each, hitting capacity at the Valentine's Day party. Building on this success, the team of volunteers held a party at Gourrock outdoor pool in May, the first ever of its kind to be held at the venue and an unprecedented move by any promoter in the city. The pool party sold out in four hours, following huge interest from the station's listenership.

Each of the events featured DJs from the station's shows, and a more concerted effort was made this year than in the past to include female DJs and first time DJs (for the station) on each line up. This year, Subcity also collaborated with Graphic Design Festival Scotland, broadcasting live from their exhibition and workshop space at the Lighthouse in the city centre, for three days in October, sound tracked by DJs from Handpicked, 12th Isle, and station contributors.

Whilst the key object of Subcity's events is to generate revenue, many student volunteers develop a range of skills through active participation in organising the events. Each event required the team to book the venue, manage a PR campaign (designing promotional material, video editing, flyerng students, online promotion), and secure sponsorship.



## CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Clubs and societies are a key part of the student experience, with 318 clubs affiliating to GUSRC in 2016/2017, close to last year's 324. This slight decrease is also reflected in total student membership of affiliated clubs and societies - 14,900, down from 15,500. Affiliated societies continued to benefit from GUSRC support on issues including governance, constitutional frameworks, charity registration, risk assessments, publicity, and event management. GUSRC also provides free minibus hire, as well as free room hire, photocopying and IT access. Through the grant allocation system GUSRC can also offer financial support to clubs and societies.

GUSRC notifies all eligible office bearers about HEAR, collects completed forms and updates student records accordingly. This year 452 office bearers applied to have this activity recorded in their HEAR, almost a hundred more than the previous year. Clubs and societies remain an integral part of GUSRC's Freshers' Week with 148 stalls allocated to clubs and societies each day of Freshers' Fair

The grant allocation system seeks to balance accountability with ease of access. Clubs and societies are required to advise on potential outcomes that grant funding will enable them to achieve and to make a verbal presentation to the members of the C&S committee. The system is one tier and straightforward and there has been a year on year upsurge in applications from clubs.

### GUSRC AFFILIATED CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

2012/13	240
2013/14	265
2014/15	287
2015/16	324
2016/17	318

## VCS AWARDS

Nine years ago we introduced the Volunteer, Clubs and Societies' (VCS) awards with the aim of promoting and celebrating the many UofG student volunteers who work on campus and in the local communities to make people's lives better. The awards event previously had had a fairly low profile due to our financial limitations. This year, with support from the University, we were able to develop a rejuvenated high-profile event in the University's prestigious Kelvin Gallery. With over 300 nominations received, the event caught the imagination of the student body.

The Principal, Senior Vice Principal and Vice Principal (Academic & Educational Innovation) all attended and presented awards; it was clear that the successful nominees placed great value on the awards with emotional and heartfelt speeches.

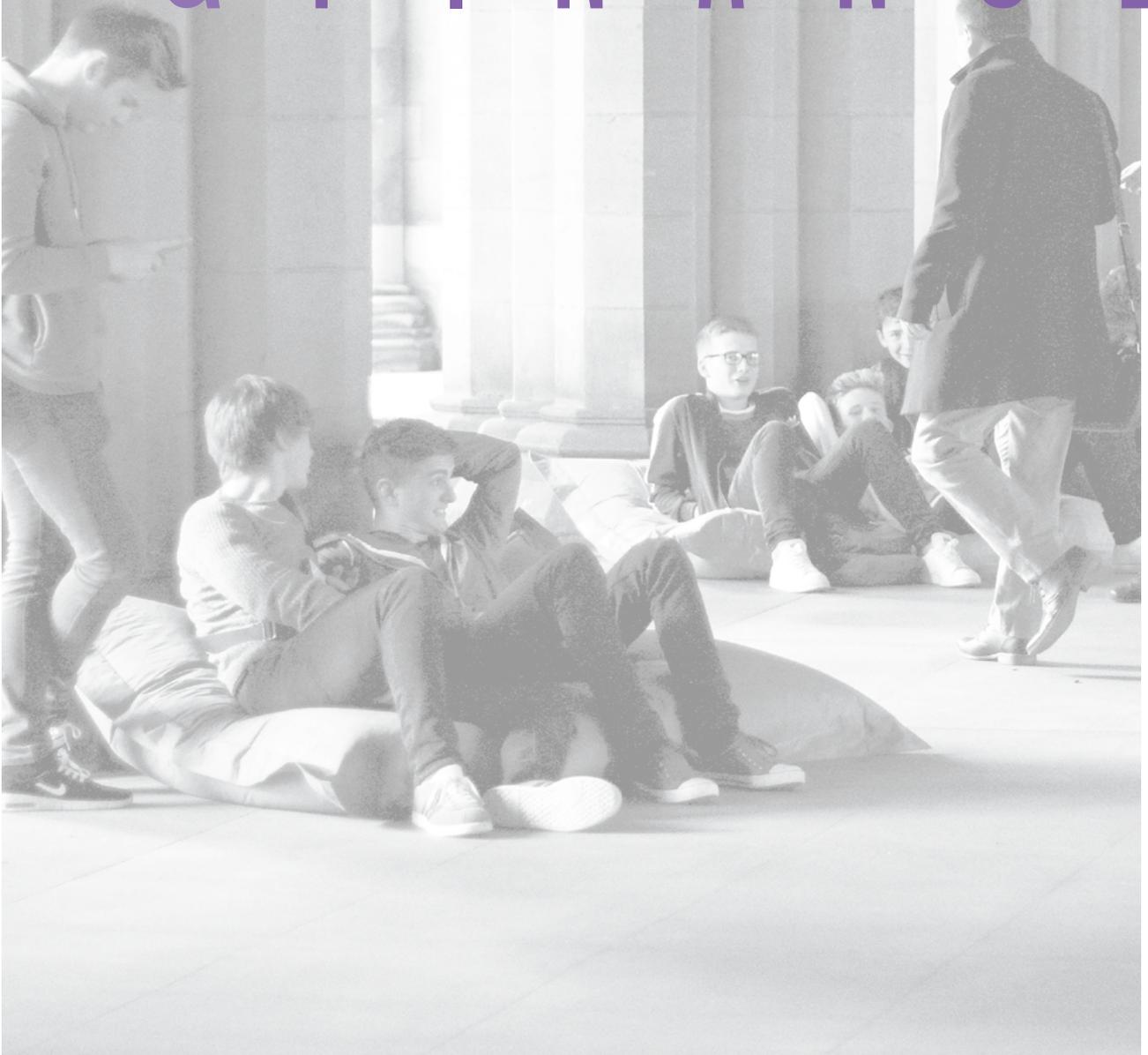
These awards reflect our ambition to continue to build the profile of volunteering on campus and increase the number of students engaging in volunteering whether it be as office bearers of clubs/societies, class representatives, or volunteering in the community.

### VCS AWARD WINNERS 2017

- › Exceptional Campaign Award: Elephant in the Room
- › Fundraising Award: Language4Water
- › Innovative Activity Award: Flow Arts
- › Most Dedicated Member Award: Caitlin Bell
- › New Club/Society Award: Disney Society
- › Showcase Award: Erasmus Student Network
- › Volunteer of the Year: Natalie Mordente
- › World Changer Award: Art Afternoons

PART FIVE:

# POSTWORD & FINANCE





## POSTWORD

Last year was a major success for GUSRC as we continued to increase our engagement with the student body whilst leading a number of new initiatives.

Highlights have included launching our successful sexual violence prevention training, improving recognition for our Volunteering, Clubs and Societies Awards and holding our first ever class representative conference. We continue to highlight the student voice across the university, positively contributing and affecting policy and developments on and off campus.

Over the coming year, we will experience challenges such as Brexit, the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework and an expanding student population. We must continue to adapt and remain flexible, ensuring we engage with key decisions and policy changes in order to represent and support our diverse student population.

We have so many exciting opportunities and developments to come. The Learning and Teaching Hub is under construction and as the first building on our campus development, it will transform the student experience and set the standard for how we engage students in consultation activity.

I feel privileged to be involved at this point in GUSRC's history. We have produced ten annual reports, gone from strength to strength, remained flexible and developed our structures and processes to ensure we move forward as an organisation.

It is going to be another exciting year for GUSRC. We remain a dynamic student-led organisation and with representation at the heart of everything we do, I'm sure next year will be even better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Powell'.

*Kate Powell*  
President 2017/18

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	GENERAL FUNDS (£)	DESIGNATED FUNDS (£)	RESTRICTED FUNDS (£)	2017 TOTAL (£)	2016 TOTAL (£)
<b>INCOME:</b>					
DONATIONS & LEGACIES	596,216	-	-	596,216	585,054
OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES	53,080	-	-	53,080	37,954
INVESTMENTS	4,801	-	-	4,801	5,281
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	255,139	-	9,000	264,139	275,528
<b>TOTAL INCOME &amp; ENDOWMENTS</b>	<b>909,236</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>918,236</b>	<b>903,817</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>					
RAISING FUNDS	15,937	-	-	15,937	17,079
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	849,259	20,789	9,000	879,048	883,949
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>865,196</b>	<b>20,789</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>894,985</b>	<b>901,028</b>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	44,040	(20,789)	-	23,251	2,789
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS	388,182	20,789	-	408,971	406,182
<i>BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARDS AT 1 JULY 2016</i>					
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD AT 30 JUNE 2017</b>	<b>432,222</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>432,222</b>	<b>408,971</b>

## NOTES

GUSRC recorded a surplus this year of £23,251 (2016 - £2,789 surplus).

The block grant from the University was £596,216, an uplift of 2% on 2016 (585,054). This includes £27,000 notional rental charge.

Reserves at 30th June 2017 stand at £408,971 (2016 £406,182) It is the policy of the organisation to maintain free reserves at a level sufficient to maintain current services and activities for a 6 month period and meet all contractual liabilities in the event of a sudden and severe reduction in revenue.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT & COPY

*Bob Hay*

DESIGN, LAYOUT & EDIT

*Iain Smith*

ADDITIONAL COPY

*Helen Speirs, Ameer Ibrahim, Kate Powell, Gina Connor,  
GUSRC Student Media Officers, Iain Smith*

PHOTO

*Gavin Reynolds, Iain Smith,  
University of Glasgow, Glasgow University Beekeeping Society,  
Yuliana Kamenova, Gabriele Bilinskaite,  
Subcity*

PROOF

*Helen Speirs, Markee Rambo-Hood, Gina Connor*

THANKS

*Gavin Reynolds, Abi Smith*





[WWW.GLASGOWSTUDENT.NET](http://WWW.GLASGOWSTUDENT.NET)

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