



Interim Annual Report

of Dundee University Students' Association 2023 - 2024

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Introduction



As we reach the DUSA Annual General Meeting and Results Night of the DUSA Elections, it's important we reflect on the year so far and the progress we have made on the manifesto we set at the beginning of our terms in office. Due to the uniqueness of the exec composition, the 23/24 manifesto was partially inspired by the continuation of President Ash's first term in office in year 22/23 and partially inspired by the new incoming exec.

The scope of this report is from the start date of the current student executive which was 01st July 2023 and looks over at their progress in line with their student executive manifesto until 01st March 2024.

The purpose is to help the wider student community engage with the role their elected representatives play within their student experience and transparency of our actions. To update the Board of Trustees, the Student Representative Council and University Court about the activities of the student executives during the period of last 8 months.

As mentioned previously, this manifesto had good guidance of what was important through several documents that already existed and made us confident in the direction we wanted to head in as well as alignment of priorities to avoid duplication. Similarly to every incoming exec, once the elected members started their term in office after handover, the team collaborated on the student executive manifesto which was a collective effort targeting the manifesto points each exec ran their campaigns on.

President Ash wanted to keep similar key priorities for the manifesto themes as they aligned very closely to what the new executive were elected on but also aligned to Ash's original manifesto when elected in 2022, which was also the inspiration of the exec manifesto 22/23.

Embracing the challenges that have been felt in the student experience over the last year as well as the feedback received from students and staff alike; the execs have concentrated on the language and tone used to depict the prioritised themes to effectively set out the vision. We have focused on the meaning of the themes and how all the activities they plan to take will reflected by it.



OUR DUSA EXEC



ASH
PRESIDENT



MANASWI
VICE PRESIDENT
COMMUNITY



MUBARAK
VICE PRESIDENT
ACADEMIA

YOUR DUSA EXEC



ASH
PRESIDENT



MANASWI
VICE PRESIDENT
COMMUNITY



MUBARAK
VICE PRESIDENT
ACADEMIA



YAA
VICE PRESIDENT
FUNDRAISING



BERNARD
VICE PRESIDENT
STUDENT WELLBEING



PARISSA
VICE PRESIDENT
STUDENT ACTIVITIES



NICOLE
VICE PRESIDENT
REPRESENTATION



DUSA EXEC
LINK TREE



BERNARD
VICE PRESIDENT
STUDENT WELLBEING



YAA
VICE PRESIDENT
FUNDRAISING



NICOLE
VICE PRESIDENT
REPRESENTATION



PARISSA
VICE PRESIDENT
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Exec Manifesto



Fostering community → Building Belonging

Rationale: UK-wide evidence showcasing deep-seated challenges within Higher Education around student loneliness, isolation, and mental health challenges. There are industry-leading best practise frameworks that focus on fostering belonging both systemically (within the institution and student unions) and the general culture around campus. 'Belonging' sounds more familiar than 'community' to younger generations, and arguably more appealing. 'Belonging' is in tune with the growing need to meet the multifaceted issues with internationalisation and the disproportionality in support and accessibility. We have easy wins in this space to build upon – including a stronger society support team, a free breakfast 'social' club and some officers looking to create more events, activities, and physical/online spaces for social inclusion. In line with UoD OneDundee themes and our Kinder/Global student community theme.

Championing Academia → Advancing Academic Equity

Rationale: Like last years 'championing academia' agenda, there is a continuing need for greater equity across learning and teaching experiences. The Exec will seek to advance academic equity and ensure every student gets value for money throughout their studies, as well as receive fair treatment and robust representation. With an increasingly diversifying student population, it's clear there have been some challenges in making the system fit for all so therefore the exec are determined to make the campus, as well as school to school, more inclusive and equitable while sharing good practices and fostering innovative problem solving.

Revitalising Representation → Reconnecting Representation

Rationale: After a successful 2022/23 session for representation, this is the year to reconnect students with DUSA and the wider universities representational activity. We have revitalised many aspects of the student voice, but there continues to be a significant disconnect between the SRC and students, School Presidents and their cohorts and the wider student population with DUSA. We will rekindle these relationships, foster more permanent ties with these bodies and make this a landmark period in which students truly reconnect with their representatives, the governing student bodies and DUSA in general.

Innovative City-Wide Partnerships

Rationale: With various external challenges facing DUSA, it is important to remain agile and aspirational as an organisation. This exec wants to expand DUSA and its impact not just across campus, but around the community. DUSA have a power and platform that allows us to foster lasting partnerships with other city stakeholders, HE institutions and businesses like never seen before. Moreover, this new and additional priority will strengthen DUSAs willingness to reach beyond students, showcasing a real commitment to community action projects and raising the wider profile of UoD and DUSA. It also links in quite nicely with the strategic focus UoD has on Social Purpose. We've recently seen how profound the Cost-of-Living initiatives have been especially with the added founding of the volunteering team under DUSA, with this we've become more aware of the increased demand of activities that not only unite the campus but also help the students support and give back to the city they live in.

EXEC MANIFESTO

To invest in cultural education and celebration

To confront systemic Inequality, Diversity and Inclusion challenges within our university community

To nurture students' physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing

BUILDING BELONGING

RECONNECTING REPRESENTATION

To empower the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the academic representation structure

To encourage positive election culture and increased engagement

To protect and amplify the student voice

To promote collaborations with local organisations

To encourage student entrepreneurship

To foster a student-led city-wide volunteering movement

INNOVATIVE CITY-WIDE PARTNERSHIPS

ADVANCING ACADEMIC EQUITY

To facilitate effective post-university preparation

To expose and address learning and teaching disparities

To embed a whole University approach to ensure social and academic integration

Building Belonging

Given the scope of the operational goals, this was a priority in every campaign where we wanted to maximise the ability to be front facing and approachable so we could support students who didn't previously know us before a conversation. University of Dundee is your home away from home and so you shouldn't feel lonely. The building closure became a big challenge, but it also presented an innovative opportunity. This was a space which many students would use, knowing about DUSA or not, many societies would also use the rooms for their own events so was a good engaging space students became familiar with. The opportunity became working with the School Presidents to host stalls around different building which their students use most.

Kirkcaldy Visits

5/7 of the executives travelled to Kirkcaldy's campus alongside VP Education Blair Grubb and Court Chair Amanda Millar to meet the staff and students as well as a tour around the facilities. The half day went very well starting with introductions of each of the execs to both the staff and the students followed by introduction to the manifesto by me. It was a very engaging session with the students where they raised many issues which were noted for review by Blair. Feedback received from both groups proved effective and so this is something that will be applied to all schools in order to build better connections with the different schools individually. Working with the Advice and Support team on this would be beneficial like our drop-in schedule to Ninewells, Kirkcaldy and Global Room.

Black History Month

As an overview on the planning that was done, a range of events were lined up for BHM. This includes passive online campaigns, talks, games and fairs in collaboration with the University public engagement team. The following were the events for BHM 23:

- Show Racism the Red Card Staff vs Students Football Match in partnership with the Sports Union, ISE and UoD.
- Red Card After Party in collaboration with ACS
- Black Businesses Fair a gathering of black owned businesses across Dundee and St Andrews to promote and empower them.

Black excellence through history profiles was a collaboration between the exec and history society, which was posted on Instagram.



Societies Council

Societies are always active, and this year has been no different. They've really come into this year ready to work together not just within their own societies but across societies and with the wider Dundee community. Some notable events that have taken place include the Low Impact Living society, hosting a beach clean-up in collaboration with Plastic Free Broughty Ferry Project. Dundee University Islamic Society Charity Auction dinner that raised £21,304 for Islamic relief; to the Film and History societies celebrating black creators and public figures from movies to directors to stories across many sectors and countries during black history month. African Caribbean society hosting a black hair event to all to teach everyone about the different techniques used to care for black hair. LGBTQ+ society hosting coffee and board games mornings to provide an inclusive space for all and create a sense of belonging where individuals can come as their authentic selves.

As sense of belonging has been a main theme this year, we saw the creation of the Visible & Invisible Disability Society. This society's motto is "accessibility is not a big deal. It is a given." They cater to all disabilities not just physical but also hidden as well emotional and mental disabilities too. They also recently had a charity bake sale where they raised money for Ehlers Danlos Support UK. This condition is inherited and has no cure.

On the admin side of things, we've just completed the training programme for the societies committee members. These training sessions are usually an hour long and specified by the committee role in question. This is just a time for committee members to come together to understand their role and to ask questions and build community across the different societies to help foster belonging. The society council which occurs every last-Wednesday of the month, has been up and running since September. This is a time for at least one committee member from each society to gather to receive updates from DUSA and also invite and discuss their upcoming events with other societies. This year so far has been very active and busy for societies and there is no sign of this slowing down. The upcoming Societies Awards will be a wonderful time to celebrate all the hard work that's been done this year, with 5,500+ students in our societies, it's important for us to continuously foster this relationship. Some of the exec have kept this as a priority by making sure they attend societies council meetings and provide the latest updates or open the floor for any questions.



Building Belonging | Semester One

Staff Engagement Session

The staff engagement session was an interesting activity for all presenters from the different DUSA departments to student staff and any other interested students. This gave an opportunity for the different facets of DUSA to be explored and understood better by the student staff, who act as our ambassadors in their roles student-facing.

The presentation mode was very unique and quite funny because it showed how we could get flustered too. It's clear there's a dehumanising shadow that falls on the staff management and exec, especially the more senior you are. This session was an opportunity to be seen flustered, slightly embarrassed and just human which was eye-opening to the audience because you could see our personalities more through it. Definitely something to think about doing every term and maybe to the wider student community more often.

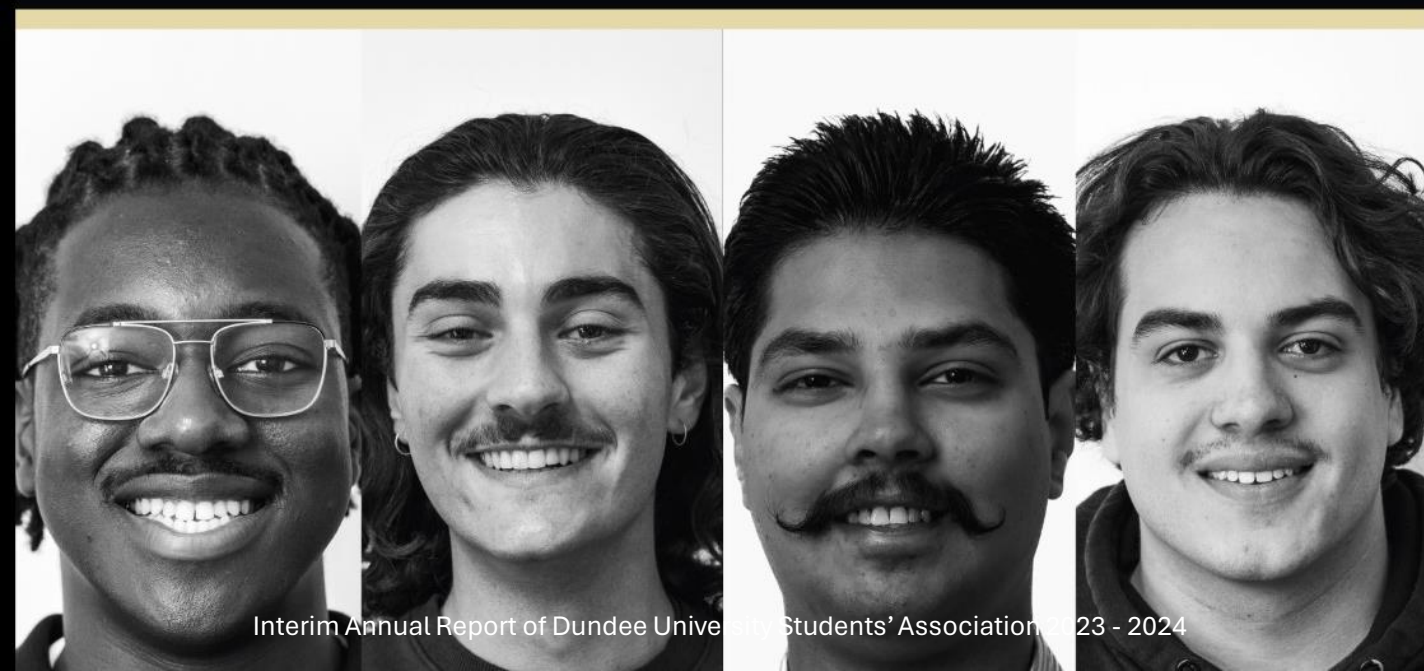
Movember

For the month of November, DUSA raised awareness on men's health issues (suicide, testicular and prostate cancer) with the Movember campaign organised by VPSW Bernard. It is a campaign that aims to bring awareness to men's health issues which include mental health, prostate and testicular cancer. It aims to eradicate the stigma around men speaking up on issues they may be encountering rather than keep them in, following the societal norm of men remaining "strong". Sports clubs of the university usually run this campaign independently but students who are not involved with sports clubs will miss out. We collaborated with Benjamin Barkers Barbers on Perth Road to shave students who wanted to grow their moustaches for the cause, free of charge. We planned other activities like a fundraising challenge for societies and sports clubs interested in participating, a moustache growth competition. As well as a talk delivered by a lecturer at the university on prostate and testicular cancer.

Dundee University Students' Association

MOVEMBER

PUT DOWN YOUR RAZORS 🍷 11 / 2023



Building Belonging | Semester One

Choose Love Campaign

The yearlong 'Choose Love' campaign is an initiation to raise awareness against hate crimes, hate incidents, bullying and any sort of discrimination faced by students on campus and around Dundee city. Collaborations were had with various institutions in the wider Dundee city to contribute to the campaign that was led by VPC Manaswi.

The first session on 'navigating hate crimes' was led by Police Scotland and Dundee International Women's Centre, which helped raise awareness of both organisations and what they can do to support our students. There have been several sessions this semester in collaboration with Dundee Women's Aid, Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (WRASAC) and Police Scotland.

The end goal of this campaign is to raise awareness about ongoing hate crime issues in Dundee and ensure that the student community stands strong against this. In terms of the output, the aim is to come up with a university wide resource pack, accessible to all students to attain instant support.



National Student Money Week Campaign

This is a joint campaign between VPSW Bernard and the University (Funding Unit). A lot of time has been invested into the planning of this campaign which aims to make students more financially literate. A vital skill which will be beneficial for students in and out of university. There have been numerous meetings with various teams, both internal and external to the university, to help make this campaign a success. Some of the various teams and organisations that were involved in this campaign include: YGAM (Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust), Student Support Services, Citizens Advice, Careers, Police Scotland, Gamblers Anonymous, Student Counselling, The Stock Doctor, Barclays Bank, Centre of Entrepreneurship, Res Life. Some societies have also been reached out to be involved in the campaign. Knowing that the cost-of-living crisis has impacted so many students, it was important to build on what we already did with the Breakfast Club and Campus Pantry. So many students came in looking for part time jobs and skills so other than registering to be a volunteer to get more experience, financial literacy is a key to have lessened the financial stress students had.

Disabilities Campaign

In a bid to raise awareness on students with disabilities on campus, the VPSW Bernard, along with the Disabilities rep in SRC recorded a video. The video aims to point out what it is like to be a disabled student. It also aims to spur students and the university to be more considerate and inclusive of people with disabilities. This video will be part of the Disabilities Project, Elise has also written a blog that will accompany the video in following weeks. With a focused aim of this project, this will go under the Choose Love campaign where a survey about discrimination and inequalities will follow, supporting a framework to be built after identifying each School's weaknesses and challenges with its diverse community.

NATIONAL STUDENT MONEY WEEK

EVENTS SCHEDULE

MON 4	10:00 - 12:00	Finance Fair	Bonar
	13:00 - 15:00	Gambling & Gaming Cafe	Bonar
	15:00 - 17:00	Gambling Advice Session with YGAM	Bonar
	18:00 - 20:00	Paint and Sip A snapshot of student financial health at UOD in collaboration with Pentimento	Bonar
TUE 5	11:00 - 12:00	Blackbullion: Financial Wellbeing budgeting & future financial planning	Bonar
	12:30 - 14:00	Managing Money Stress & Anxiety Workshop hosted by student services	Bonar
	14:30 - 15:30	Citizens Advice Presentation & Drop In Session	Bonar
	16:00 - 17:00	Part Time Jobs Workshop with careers services	Bonar
WED 6	18:00 - 20:00	Movie nights: "Get Smart with Money" Hosted by the Film Society	Global
	11:00 - 12:00	Blackbullion: Scams Playbook	Bonar
	13:00 - 14:00	Police Talk - SCAMS	Bonar
	14:00 - 15:00	Blackbullion: Competition MODCONS Game	Bonar
THU 7	15:30 - 17:30	Gamblers Anonymous Presentation & Live Q&A	Bonar
	09:30 - 10:30	Money Procrastination pro-tips hosted by Student Counselling	Online
	13:00 - 14:30	Stocks Sorted with the Stock Doctor	Entrepreneur
	15:00 - 16:30	Start Up Grind Pitch your business idea & access Funding workshop with the Entrepreneurship Centre	Entrepreneur
FRI 8	18:00 - 20:00	Movie nights: "Dumb Money" Hosted by the Film Society	Global
	11:00 - 12:00	Blackbullion: Risk Playbook Session	Bonar
	13:00 - 14:30	Rathbones Investment Workshop	Bonar
	15:00 - 16:00	Barclays Smart Money Management	Bonar
	16:00 - 17:00	Blackbullion "Wants vs Needs" Comp	Bonar
	18:00 - 20:00	buy now, pay later, pay more for longer Flatmates: Speed dates hosted by Res Life	Bonar



A crying sad face.

Building Belonging | Semester Two

Pentimento campaign

‘Pentimento’ campaign was started by the VP Community-Manaswi to encourage emotional expression through creative expression. There have been several events under this campaign:

Brush and Booze

The ‘Brush and Booze’ event was a collaboration between the Contemporary Art Practice Society (CAPSoc), Dundee Electronic Music Society (DEMS), and some amazing art student volunteers. The profits raised went to our Raising and Giving (RAG) charity of the year, CanDu. The VPF amazingly added the fundraising element to this element to get CanDu on board and supported to organize the event with the lead, VPC Manaswi. On the night, we were able to hand out leaflets about the charity and get some dialogue with the students. It was an opportunity for students to get involved with the art community. While student societies are leading and organizing activities both as part of student community to enhance art community and expression on campus.

The National Student Money Week campaign x ‘Pentimento’ campaign:

Paint & Sip’ event was a collaboration with the ‘Pentimento’ campaign and National Student money Week to raise awareness regarding financial wellbeing through creative expression. This was a well-attended event and shows the demand for creative output being part of the events wanted by students.

Gender Expression painting session

Another fusion collaboration was Gender Expression Painting session and Open Mic with the Co-Presidents of the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law (SHSL). This was one of many LGBTQ+ History Month event collaborations. The aim was to promote personal expression, and a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community through creative expression. An extra layer was the SRC Pronouns motion that was passed through the Student Representative Council.



Building Belonging | Semester Two

Student Wellbeing Campaigns

Alongside the Wellbeing Wednesday emails sent to students, the VPSW has tried to remain consistent with a range of activities including the following:

- Dog therapy sessions fortnightly
- Themed Speakeasy sessions (with the Advice and Support Team)
- Chocolate and Chat (with the Advice and Support Team)





Reconnecting Representation

This year's theme for Representation, "Reconnecting Representation," acknowledges a vital need: to bridge the gap between individual student representatives and foster a more unified and collaborative approach. Recognising the Disunity, we observed a lack of cohesive action among student representatives, potentially hindering their ability to effectively advocate for the student body. "Reconnecting Representation" serves as a call to action. It emphasizes the importance of working together and developing a shared vision to represent the student community comprehensively and allows for more impactful advocacy while representing the varied interests and concerns within the student body.

SRC Elections

We've had a successful election period where we've doubled our votes from previous years, however the same challenge is still being faced. The challenge being how to engage students to the positions no one runs for. Because there were 7 empty positions during elections, we had 7 co-options on the 24th of October during the first official SRC Meeting 23/24. The Co-opted positions were as follows:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Representative
- Trans and Non-binary Representative
- Research Postgraduate Representative
- Women's Representative
- Kirkcaldy Representative
- Student Parent Representative
- Facilities Representative

Even since the co-options, not all the roles were filled and so we closed them for this year and hope that the next SRC elections will see these positions filled. This year VPR Nicole focused on integrating the exec into SRC fully, by selecting us as the chairs for the subcommittees which will run separately from the main SRC meetings rather than just before like last year's set up. Utilising the execs as chairs should help groups of councillors feel supported by at least one exec so that when problems arise or solutions are suggested, they have a direct point of contact.

SRC Meeting 01

As a team, we have chosen to leverage DUSA platforms for publishing both the vote and motion of the SRC. This approach aligns with our manifesto's commitment to "empower the SRC, protect, and amplify the student voice" under the broader theme of "reconnecting representation."

The first SRC in October proved very intense with relation to external conflicts impacting students on our campus. Acknowledging student frustrations, we have opted, as a team, to propose tangible actions rather than advocating for a new statement. Recognizing the potential pitfalls of tokenism, we propose the creation of a dedicated working group within the SRC. This group will autonomously devise and implement actions throughout the academic year without requiring board approval beforehand. This includes fundraisers, talks, walks, protests etc

In summary, our recommendations involved a nuanced approach, combining support and adjustment of certain aspects. This approach ensures that our decisions reflect a balanced consideration of the issues at hand and align with our commitment to proactive, impactful action.

ICD Partnerships

We've started having conversation on why the International College Dundee Representatives are not part of the School President Forum or the Student Representative Council. So, to ensure that all schools have a voice and are adequately represented, key stakeholders were contacted, outlining the benefits, and fostering inclusivity within our student body. Especially with the experience of some students being jumping from ICD into year 2 at the University. We wanted to offer a better integration of the students into the University and what we can offer them.

SRC Format Upgrade

The VPR Nicole initiated a series of one-on-one meeting with the councillors. In recognition of the invaluable perceptive of councillors in shaping the student experience.

- **School President One-on-Ones:** Proactively conducted individual meetings with school presidents, focusing on the National Student Survey (NSS). These meetings achieved:
- **Increased Awareness:** Provided presidents with clear understanding of the NSS and its importance.
- **Actionable Strategies:** Collaboratively developed plans to encourage student participation and address potential concerns.
- **Improved Engagement:** fostered positive relationships and a stronger sense of collaboration between presidents and me.



SRC Project Empowerment

In our manifesto, we established the strategic goal of, “Reconnecting Representation.” A key operational goal that has made a pivotal impact is: To empower the SRC and the academic representation structure. The Executive Officers oversee each of the different SRC subcommittees as chairs, to build better working relationships with councillors. This has allowed us to build a rapport which has turned into actionable campaigns, relevant to councillor's remits. Where there haven't been campaigns, councillors have been engaged in steering groups instead. We need to remember empowerment is subjective, and so we understand it doesn't always display as short-term, tangible outputs. It could be the beginning of someone's career in student leadership. By giving the opportunity for these councillors to lead and hold responsibilities, we are encouraging them to use their experiences for the betterment of the student body alongside the student executive. Here are some highlights of the projects we are involved with:

Choose Love: Disabilities Project

The disabilities rep is working on a project that highlights some of the challenges and perspective of students with physical disabilities and how they navigate our university. Shedding light on this is important to our EDI values, and also acts as a sub-campaign under the Choose Love campaign led by our Vice President Community. Innovative content ideas have been discussed to get people speaking about disabilities in general, but also that we shouldn't shy away from the conversation entirely because we are committed to being an inclusive campus. The feedback behind this will feed into the work that will be done alongside the school presidents and executive on building a framework that constructively recommends good practice across campus and also reignites the student commitment on improving EDI in each school, relative to the challenges they face.

Housing Action Project

While the housing crisis is something that is affecting a large number of Universities. We have taken action alongside the Housing representative, who is very passionate about finding accommodation for students. We have built a live survey where the data will be used to improve the outdated Housing Accreditation Scheme. Knowing that there are many student communities actively doing work to support incoming students, we knew this would be a hot topic that could result in a lot of feedback about what students are facing. Inspired by the rep's own experience and some other councillors, we hope to build a framework that can be executed in the new term to offer better support to students in terms of accommodation. We envision developing a new Housing Accreditation Scheme to actively protect the interests of our students by ensuring their safe and warm spaces are of a good standard, preventing any negative impact to their quality of life. We are aware there's a significant increase in students that stay on campus in our buildings, so they don't incur large heating bills and we are engaging with them to find better solutions. This scheme is intended to bring together key high-level stakeholders who can use their voices and networks to contribute to this positive change.

Climate Action Project and Student Climate Conference

The Student Climate Conference is something that has previously been delivered due to student demand, especially in the lead up to COP26 in Glasgow. Knowing we have a lot of interest in general from the student body, we've worked closely with the environmental rep to start thinking about student participation in this year's Student Climate Conference. It is set to take place on the 30 March 2024 with a mix of hybrid presentations and workshops. We have planned and organised with a number of organisations and are set to agree on a panel of UoD and external speakers. The aim of this conference is for our campus to have a conversation about the role we play, especially with the university having an internal dialogue about our Net-Zero Strategy and the school-level specific sustainability action plans. The key priority is to educate and raise awareness about this environmental concern we should have as a campus contributing to our vision of a Kinder, Greener, Diverse, global student community.

Get to know Series

We have started recording the Get to Know Series Podcast! This is an informal way to get the students engaged through short episodes, where we interview various individuals from different student stakeholder groups across Campus. This is a new innovative way we believe we can share and capture the student voice, catching the attention of the student body that doesn't traditionally engage with DUSA directly and maybe those that want to listen in without being expected to do anything. When the student body has a better insight of the roles and positions of their elected reps, they are more likely to become more interested in who represents them and how. Having this regular and consistent dialogue will build a relationship with our audience and foster a surge in interest and engagement with other DUSA.

Representation Awareness

This representation awareness stall with Nicole and the School presidents Ridvan, focusing on the Student Representation, the upcoming Election, and National Student Survey (NSS) highlighting how fostering a sense of student belonging can lead to increased participation in shaping the student community. Motivating the students to engage in the electoral process by understanding how their vote can shape the direction of the student community. As well encouraging students to feel their voice matters, increasing the feasibility of them completing the NSS and providing valuable feedback.




The poster features a light blue background with large, overlapping circles in green, yellow, and blue. The text 'AWARENESS STALL' is prominently displayed in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below this, there are two circular portraits. The first portrait is of a young man with dark hair, smiling, wearing a green t-shirt. Below it, the text reads 'Ridvan Kucuk', 'School of Life Sciences', and 'President'. The second portrait is of a young woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a black and white striped shirt. Below it, the text reads 'Nicole Okoro', 'DUSA Vice President of Representation'. At the bottom right, the text reads 'Dalhousie Foyer', '7th March', and '10am- 12pm'. There are also decorative elements like white dots on the green circle and blue dots on the blue circle.

AWARENESS STALL

Ridvan Kucuk
School of Life Sciences
President

Nicole Okoro
DUSA Vice President of
Representation

Dalhousie Foyer
7th March
10am- 12pm



Advancing Academic Equity

Academic Equity stands as a crucial pillar of our VPA efforts. It's imperative that all students, regardless of their background, are afforded equal opportunities to thrive within the university environment. This encompasses various initiatives, from educating students on academic integrity and the ethical use of AI, to familiarising international students with the UK Academic Culture. One notable project, 'AcadeMix,' was launched with the aim of providing students from diverse backgrounds with improved access to academic and employability skills events. This not only supports their studies within the university but also prepares them for future employment opportunities

Academic Support and Trends

The VPA Mubarak and VPSW Bernard, in collaboration with QAS and the Advice and Support team, are developing academic support materials and initiating a redesign of the DUSA academic support page.

Engaging in ongoing dialogues with the university, contributions have been in discussions on initiatives such as 'fitness to study' as well as support for students affected by ADHD medication shortages and those impacted by the Middle East conflict through measures like mitigating circumstances while advocating for no-detriment policies.

National Level HEI Engagement

Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee

President Ash submitted an application to join a national committee that includes representatives from various university-related stakeholders, including the Scottish Funding Council, NUS, Sparqs, and QAA. She sat with 3 other students from other Scottish institutions in similar roles. By working together as students on this committee, we advocated that the Scottish Higher Education system is always at the forefront of improving student performance and learning opportunities.

Senior colleagues from throughout the sector who are institutionally responsible for learning and teaching represent each Scottish institution on the committee. They play a crucial part in helping their higher education institutions integrate efficient enhancement-led approaches to quality management. VPE Blair Grubb, a member of our university, also sits on similar committees to the President as national ambassadors.

Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group

QAA has been commissioned by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to lead on two key areas of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Project (TQP). The TQP involves the development and delivery of a common approach to assuring and enhancing quality in Scotland's tertiary sector which will be implemented in academic year 2024-25.

Designing, organising, and implementing a multi-year external peer review cycle for colleges and universities to be implemented in the academic year 2024–2025 is known as "external enhancement-led peer review." To make sure the new review system meets the needs of the college sector, QAA will collaborate closely with Education Scotland and leverage their knowledge of the college sector.

President Ash is part of the 2/3 students sitting on this group, where opinions are shared on what is believed to have work or wouldn't and try source further student opinions about how QAA should operate if they want to truly use experience of students.

QAA Scotland Strategic Advisory Committee

President Ash also sits on this student committee. This Committee provides information about the legislative, regulatory, funding and policy environment for Scottish higher education.

While the Student Strategic Advisory Committee (SSAC) meets three times a year to facilitate discussions between students and QAA on developments in the higher education sector. SSAC meetings are attended by QAA's Chief Executive and other members of the QAA Board, and have shaped national student-centred projects with NUS, introduced student reviewers onto QAA review teams, and influenced QAA's overall strategy.

These are spaces which have enabled the exec to think more broadly about students across Scotland and the impact of certain trends across institutions. Most recently, we have had discussions around the Scottish tertiary sector and how it is currently co-creating its new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). Student partnership and the student learning experience will be key components of the framework and so reflections on how Student Partnership Agreements work in each institution were important to share.

As sparqs looks towards building a tertiary quality proposal, discussions focused on the data and evidence to be included in the tertiary approach. An insightful discussion was had about what we mean by student success and how we measure it? I would implore we have this as a focused discussion as success has many definitions, especially in the eyes of different school students in contrast to the university management. And so, this is something we may need to co-create a method to.

AcadeMix

VPA Mubarak introduced a new project, AcadeMix, with the hope that it becomes a cornerstone for hosting engaging events tailored to the academic interests of students. Launched in January, the project has already established collaborations with the Academic Skills Centre and Careers Service, with plans for more partnerships across various university sectors. This initiative aims to be a focal point for academic projects.

A new steering group for the Educational Subcommittee was formed from the members of the Education subcommittee under SRC, that the VPA chairs, to provide a space for School Presidents and SRC Councillors to discuss academic issues, nurture thoughts on academic projects, and enhance transparency in academic endeavours. Monthly academic report were created to be distributed to all students, demonstrating transparency from the VPA and School Presidents on matters related to academic interests.





Innovative City-Wide Partnerships

RAG Quiz

Despite delayed promotion of this event, being an event put on towards the end of Freshers Week 2023, it was a very well attended activity for particularly first year students as they filled the Liar excited for the quiz. This was led by VPF Yaa and supported by most execs who turned up on the night as well as members of the chosen charity of the year CanDu who participated

Drug Crisis Project Update

Through conversations at the Student Experience Executive Committee (SEEC) and with other stakeholders about the Drug Crisis Project report. The was presented last year by a group of students who were passionate about making change in this area. We are continuing to build understanding of what we can do in this space before any major work is done but President Ash touched base with some students to make sure this is something that is still live and relevant. Coming to the end of the year, there must be a continuation of dialogue, as with the pre matriculation module for the incoming student representatives to follow through. This is still a live topic, and students are still passionate about it, but we must discuss this project collectively before acting, to ensure effectiveness.



9 — 16
SEPTEMBER



14th **RAG - QUIZ**

Raise money, get prizes & giveaways

Volunteers Update

In late September 2023, DUSA Volunteers successfully conducted the 3rd Pre-Volunteering Training, attracting the participation of over 50 students. With the addition of these new members, DUSA now boasts a dedicated volunteer community of more than 250 active volunteers who are actively spearheading projects like the Campus Pantry, The Breakfast Club, and the Litter Picking Projects. Additionally, a significant milestone was achieved as DUSA appointed its first-ever Volunteer Exec Committee, consisting of Seven Senior Lead Volunteers, each of whom has contributed over 100 volunteering hours.

Furthermore, DUSA Volunteers have also formed a partnership with Global Room, enabling societies to host events after 5 pm on weekdays, expanding the reach and impact of their volunteer initiatives. As a result, they have already aided over 5 societies in successfully organizing their events during the current semester. This space is still relatively newly established, but it is exciting to see how big it's growing and the range of experiences we can offer, including relationships that are being built. Also, with the guidance of Nicole - SRC Environmental Rep, DUSA Volunteers are planning to grow organic vegetables in the University allotments. They are planning to use the harvest for a community soup for the breakfast club or distribute it using the campus pantry.



16 Days Against GBV

VPSW Bernard and President Ash collaborated with Abertay, WRASAC, Womens Aid and Dundee Council on a huge project that's now been extended to next years 16 Days Campaign. This project is focusing on the bystander theory and looking at how we best support each other as a community by calling out acts before they get worse. This work featured as an exhibition in the town centre at the end of November. We have also made sure to bring our own societies to help support this. We also participated in the Reclaim the Night Walk where we spoke to other student and staff on more work we could do in this area. Since November, we've extended the bystander workshop to the Choose Love campaign.

Emily Test Conference

The gathering served as a rich forum for the exchange of best practices, knowledge dissemination, and collective learning. Notably, there were highlights of the challenges encountered in navigating legal and policy frameworks, shedding light on potential gaps between these systems. Equally compelling was the unveiling of an AI-integrated tool providing tailored GBV advice and guidance. We are exploring novel strategies to enhance the effectiveness and individualised targeting of our pre-matriculation initiatives, particularly around challenging prevailing stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive campus environment.

Kirkcaldy Breakfast Club and Campus Pantry

The VPA spearheaded the extension of the Breakfast Club projects to our Kirkcaldy campus, which was implemented on December 4th. This initiative ensures free breakfast for all Kirkcaldy campus students, aligning with our established schedule on the main campus.

Distance and Part-Time Learners funding

In support of our Innovative City-wide partnerships goal, we discussed a national university campaign with a distance learner from Strathclyde to see how we can contribute as a university when it comes to employment and funding for distance and part-time students. Since we have a large cohort of these types of students, it was important to loop in our distance-learning university staff and see how we can act to improve this for as many students as possible and see how we can better their student experience outside campus. This has since developed into a project and presentation President Ash is doing with QAA on digital poverty and how each community is impacted in a post-covid and hybrid working world.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Pentimento Art Wall

An art wall was set up outside DUSA during the 2nd open day of the university. This was a wholesome session because people drew small hearts, wrote message, names, and signatures in remembrance of someone they have lost from Breast Cancer. This highlights how we can create better ways we can get student engagement because it's tailored to the individual experience of each student walking by.

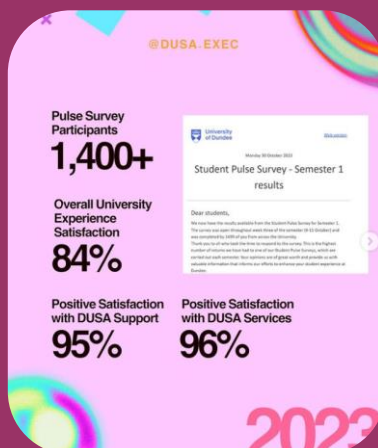
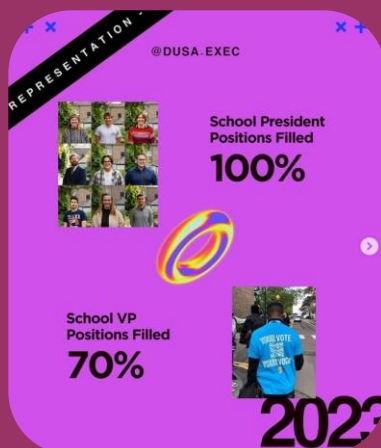
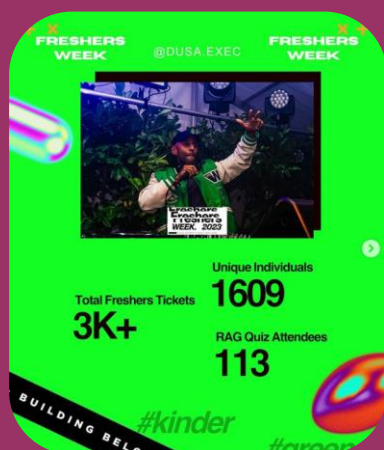
NSS Action Plan + SPA Success

At Student Experience Executive Committee, we spoke about sharing all the good stuff we are up to and that we have successfully change. The discussion even resulted in a campaign name called #DunWELL to be more transparent and louder about cool achievements students have contributed.

#DunWELL

DunWELL is a campaign focused on fostering all the positive impacts on campus and raising

awareness about them, so students know what difference our work is making to them. Following engagement with key stakeholders across campus around the need to improve NSS rating, it was agreed that we needed to ensure we broadcast the positive messages both before the survey opens, and throughout while it is live. We trialled a soft launch of the campaign similar to the “Spotify Wrapped” marketing visuals. This was received very positively by students. We have further developed these messages into different social media content and are also including the messages of other successful spaces like the Sports Union. By showcasing a campus integrated positivity campaign about why we do what we do and how, students can better understand the developments around campus that improve the student experience by using their student voice. In turn, this trust fosters loyalty and a greater affinity to continuously improving our campus, for students by the students. More information on what we have done is available in fridge magazine.



Reflections



As part of the Presidents role, during the start of semester the team get a lot of public speaking invitations across Schools where we explained the work of DUSA and what we can do for them, specific to their stage at university. These rooms enable us to gauge direct interest in DUSA, as well as get feedback. Boosting this visibility makes it easier for students to spot us when they need us. Feedback has been very positive, but engagement is sporadic at best across the schools. On reflection, working closely with the School Presidents to hold engagement sessions and/or stalls to continue this progress of visibility and awareness raising was the best mechanism to target different schools.

Day-to-day, in the background, we are worked very hard to plan relevant and impactful campaigns for semester 2. Influenced by student feedback, we looked at the accessibility of the website and how to engage more students by providing more relevant information to their interest. Students raised the frustration of finding out of date information on the university pages that didn't correspond well to the current structures or work being done. This feedback has been shared by many student communities and work followed in Semester 2 to improve this by working closely with the University comms team, DITL, CITL and the UpD app team utilising the best engagement spaces to push DUSA comms too.



Summary

The interim report is intended to be a very important item on the AGM Agenda due to the involvements of elected officers from the academic year 23/24. In doing so there are other forms of media that would provide students more insight into the activities achieved and promised by the student executive, in a more relatable way. Our @dusa.exec Instagram has been pivotal in reaching out to students and getting better engagement with different communities. This year the exec also decided to use the former campaign pages to show everything through their term in office, which also provided a closed feedback loop on what the exec were elected on.

In a year, from the publishing of the student executive manifesto at the start of their term in office, there are 3 reviews that occur in the academic year, these checkpoints are 100 days , 175 days and 275 days. These review reports offer information on how much of the manifesto is completed. We distribute the manifesto in a student facing leaflet and show Board, SRC, Court and the wider student population mainly through speaking at welcome events like Freshers and Refreshers and giving them out whenever we can.

If you have any questions or feedback to offer the exec please contact through President, Ash, at president@dusa.co.uk

