



STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) MEETING MINUTES

Date: 18 November 2025

Start time: 17:30

Chair: Callum McCabe

Location: Dalhousie 1F06 / Hybrid

Recording: Meeting recorded; recording to be uploaded to DUSA website.

Attendees:

Caleb Hunter	School President Dentistry
Tom Christison	VPSA
Caitlin Barr	Vice president of Fundraising
Marcus Flucker	IMC
Anna Melnichenko	International Students Representative
Yana Korenchuk	SLS President
Natalie Sayers	Careers and Employability Councillor
Ramya	VPA
Sarah Ross	President of SSEN
Ivy Gerber	Vice President of Community
Rory La Trobe	Sports Union President
James Douglas	President of Business
Saravana Sekhar	SRC Postgraduate Representatives
Ruby Mugisha	VPSW
Lauretta Egboh	Deputy Councillor (Volunteer)
Nafiso Hassan	EDI Councillor
Tánaiste Custance	DUSA President
Heidi Le	DJCAD Student President
Kyle Gray	VPR

Apologies from Kieran Rhodes, Medicine President; Craig Halley, Health Sciences President.

1. Opening and welcome

Callum opened the meeting and invited Marcus, IMC to give a formal tribute to Maud, the former SRC Chair who tragically passed away recently. Marcus was Maud's Vice Chair on the SRC last year. He described Maud as a person of exceptional kindness, energy and leadership whose commitment to students had been profound and whose absence is deeply

felt across the SRC and wider university community. Marcus recounted Maud's leadership during cost-of-living support work, her readiness to challenge authority when needed, and the compassion with which she carried out her duties. He noted that a small memorial has been set up in the Chaplaincy with space to light a candle or leave messages, and encouraged members to visit and to use available wellbeing support if needed.

2. Housekeeping

Callum welcomed councillors and deputy candidates, noting strong participation this year, with 42 students submitting their interest in becoming a deputy. Callum informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded, that some members were joining online, and thanked subcommittees for meeting earlier in the day. He stressed the importance of councillor participation in subcommittees and meetings and asked all councillors to scan the attendance tracker.

Callum confirmed meeting format, invited everyone to be mindful of time, and advised that online participants were present. He asked councillors to notify in advance if they expected to be absent from future meetings.

3. Guest update - Dejan Stjepanovic (UCU Dundee branch)

Dejan provided an update on the current industrial action and the union's position. He emphasised that strike action is always a last resort and is driven by serious concerns about workload, mental health and employment security among staff. Dejan outlined UCU's concerns about further job cuts: staff had previously been told there would be no cuts beyond the initial 300 voluntary severances, but a later proposal indicated a further 390 job reductions. He summarised the union's view that despite planned savings and some one-off government support, the university should prioritise growth and investment in staff rather than additional cuts, because staff are essential to teaching, research and income generation.

Dejan also referenced figures reported by the university and to Parliament, highlighting recruitment gains and government funding, and argued that those funds should be used to protect jobs and invest in the institution. He closed by underlining the severe mental health impact on staff evidenced by internal exercises and UCU research, thanked students for support, and invited questions.

4. Guest update - Professor Linda Martindale (Vice-Principal Education & Student Experience)

Professor Martindale introduced her role and responsibilities, including oversight of education, academic standards, and aspects of student experience, and explained that she sits on the University Executive Group. Responding to the UCU update, she reiterated that the university respects staff's right to strike while acknowledging communications with students around strike action have sometimes been insufficient; she committed to following up specific instances where communication failed.

Linda clarified aspects of the university's finances: while recruitment outperformed forecasts in some areas, much of that uplift is one-year postgraduate income and cannot be assumed to recur. She stressed that the university still expects a deficit this year and that an ongoing deficit limits the institution's ability to generate the level of surplus required for long-term investment in estate and digital infrastructure. She noted that real-terms funding pressures from government mean the institution must plan for sustainability and that achieving higher operating margins is necessary to protect buildings and services.

Linda provided a brief update on structural changes: the university is appointing four Faculty Vice-Principals who will sit on the University Executive Group, and further work will follow on the supporting structures. She committed to genuine student consultation during this transition and invited students to participate. Linda also signalled a shift in EDI work to include a broader staff-and-student focus, underlined her commitment to student collaboration, and welcomed direct contact from councillors via email (copying in Caroline Hutton as a helpful reminder officer where useful).

Councillors and non-councillors asked questions about the university's financial numbers, recruitment figures, and the recurring nature of new income. Linda reiterated that while recent recruitment figures were positive, they are not necessarily recurrent and the university still faces a structural deficit requiring significant change.

5. Co-options and Vice-Chair election

Callum moved to co-options and the Vice Chair election process. He explained voting logistics: only SRC councillors can vote (including Exec, School Presidents, IMC, SRC Chair), using the circulated form and links. Candidates either spoke live or submitted speeches for reading on their behalf, with any candidates who did not submit a speech or attend in person removed from the ballot. There were brief technical interruptions with Wi-Fi, but voting proceeded and results were announced.

Successful candidates announced were:

- SRC Vice Chair: Natalie Sayers
- Distance Learners: Kieran Harte
- Parent/Carer: Thea Finnie
- Kirkcaldy Campus: Clara Seath
- Housing: James Elliot
- LGBTQIA+: Phoebe Picken
- Trans and non-binary: Rachael Williamson
- Taught Postgraduates: Joe Silvester Goldwin

Callum confirmed that any remaining vacancies will be tried again at the December SRC meeting and, if still unfilled, the co-option process will pause for the remainder of the year.

6. DUSA CEO update

Chris Gourley provided an extended update covering events, societies, advice services, representation reform, student survey and strategic positioning. Chris stated that it is crucial for DUSA to evidence student demand for on-campus services and events in order to secure those activities as part of the organisation's strategy. He reported a strong start to the year: Freshers' Week and Halloween events in Bonar Hall were well attended and created meaningful engagement. He described the Bonar Hall setup as a "school assembly hall" transformed by lighting and curtains; despite its success for one-off events, the venue is licensed only until 1:00am and we cannot rely on routinely extended licences from Dundee City Council. Permanent changes to the venue (notably roof works and structural constraints) would be required to expand provision.

On societies, he highlighted a persistent issue: many students do not fully understand that DUSA is student-led and relies on student volunteers and committees. A small permanent staff team supports student activity, but the organisation continues to emphasise student ownership of societies. Collaboration between staff and societies was described as improving, with weekly activity examples cited.

The DUSA Advice Team remains independent from the university and is experiencing high demand. DUSA is sharing emergent themes with the university and advocating for compassionate, empathetic service provision as staff wellbeing pressures affect service delivery and student outcomes. Representation work has seen several reforms already, and DUSA is considering further changes including aligning election cycles to improve administrative efficiency and candidate experience. Chris noted that doing the same thing repeatedly does not increase engagement; DUSA is committed to piloting new approaches and iterating based on student feedback.

Chris reiterated that the university's faculty restructure is the single biggest change the institution has faced in decades and represents an opportunity to revisit how student representation is embedded in decision-making. He warned against tokenistic inclusion (inviting a student to meetings without parity or supportive conditions) and advocated for meaningful seat-at-the-table reforms such as parity between staff and students in key committees and a supportive environment for student representatives.

The Student Experience Survey was also discussed, and early indicators are more positive than expected, though respondent bias is a risk. A priority is to increase responses from students who are disengaged or critical to understand gaps in provision – this survey closes at the end of November, and everyone was asked to help promote this.

7. Subcommittee updates

Subcommittee leads provided short updates.

The Wellbeing Subcommittee had limited attendance for this meeting and so provided a short verbal update with the intention of fuller updates at the next meeting.

The Engagement Subcommittee reported ongoing planning for increased student participation in elections and more visible hustings and outreach. The Education

Subcommittee discussed race discrimination conversations, support for January intake students, and the establishment of study group structures to improve peer support.

8. Executive updates

Exec officers gave fuller monthly reports and project updates.

Kyle, VPR, noted that class rep training remains a priority; training rollout is progressing well with positive feedback and an aim to increase completion rates over the coming weeks.

Tánaiste, President, reflected on DUSA's funding cut of 34% and ongoing work to build student power, raise awareness with political stakeholders, and challenge consultation processes with university leadership. The President reported active work collecting survey evidence on the effect of cuts and on the impact of industrial action, emphasising collaboration while also signalling robust advocacy.

Ramya, VP Academia, reported successful Academic Skills and Employability Weeks, ongoing work on lecture captioning and AI awareness, and preparation for exam resources ahead of December assessments.

Ruby, VP Wellbeing, highlighted international student engagement, including a successful panel delivered with Abertay, and the run of fortnightly Advice & Support drop-ins in the Global Room with testimonial video projects to raise awareness of advice services.

Ivy, VP Community, described the "Spaces Spotlight" initiative and ongoing social media engagement.

Caitlin, VP Fundraising, outlined plans for RAG (Raising & Giving) Committee recruitment and publicity.

Tom, VP Student Activities, reported three Society Councils with improved attendance since moving meetings to The Liar, committee training with 300+ attendees over eight days, additional training sessions delivered, and the development of an Audio Drama Group to support low-cost creative activity.

9. Independent Member of Court (IMC) update

Marcus, IMC, provided a governance update. University Court has met 10 times since May to address the exceptional circumstances facing the university. The Gillies Report and associated resignations in senior leadership were discussed; the university published its formal response in August. Professor Nigel Seaton is serving as Interim Principal (initial appointment extended to six months) while a permanent Principal recruitment process continues.

Marcus emphasised that despite additional funding and better recruitment figures, the university remains in a deep financial crisis; operational costs are high, and the scale of

savings needed remains significant. Court has appointed new lay members with sector-relevant expertise. Marcus urged students to participate in the Chair of Court election and associated hustings (candidate statements available; hustings scheduled for Friday 21 November in Dalhousie LT4, 17:00-18:30). He highlighted the historically low turnout (2% in the last contested election) and encouraged councillors to drive turnout and awareness.

Marcus reiterated the need for students to feed Court with issues (e.g., architecture and DJCAD concerns) and offered to discuss complex governance matters in one-to-one conversations.

10. Questions and discussion

Attendees asked questions on the Exec's public position on strikes, communications strategy, and the interrelationship between survey timing and public statements. Exec confirmed its current position supports strike action in the context of preventing compulsory redundancies and acknowledged that public communications and press engagement may be considered as further evidence from the strike survey becomes available.

Queries about council structure prompted clarifications: councillors are voting members and have an expectation to attend; deputies are non-voting and have a flexible commitment. Kyle offered to provide individual walkthroughs of arrangements for those who requested them.

11. Any Other Business (AOB)

Two members from the University of Dundee Students Support Strikes group introduced themselves, described the new student group supporting striking staff and campaigning against compulsory redundancies, and invited interested students to connect via their Instagram and directly with group members.

There was a short discussion about the December SRC meeting date. Members agreed to move the meeting from 16 December to 9 December to avoid clashes with exams and other commitments, where possible.

12. Actions/decisions

Actions assigned during the meeting are listed below.

- Action: DUSA to continue to gather and present evidence of student demand for on-campus events and services. All Councillors and Deputies to help with promotional efforts of this. **Owner: All councillors. Timescale: before the end of November.**
- Action: Subcommittee leads to circulate meeting schedules and ensure deputies are informed about expected attendance. **Owner: Subcommittee Chairs. Timescale: immediate.**
- Action: All councillors to promote Chair of Court hustings and vote in the Chair election. **Owner: All councillors. Timescale: before the close of the election.**

- **Decision: Move December SRC meeting to 9 December (agreed by attendees present).**

13. Close

Callum thanked all attendees, speakers and subcommittees for their contributions. He closed the meeting and reminded councillors of next steps and the date of the next SRC meeting (now set for 9 December). The meeting recording will be uploaded to the DUSA website and minutes prepared for approval at the next SRC meeting.