

Stirling Students' Union Annual General Meeting & General Meeting

April 2025, Teams

Annual General Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Attendance
- 2024/25 Annual Report (Union President)
- 2025/26 Plan (VP Communities/Union President Elect)
- Questions
- Date of Next Annual General Meeting: Semester 1 of Academic Year 2025/26
- Close Annual General Meeting

Short Break (5 mins)

General Meeting Agenda

- Minutes Ratification (Chair)
- Challenges to Order Paper (Chair)
- Dates to Note (Chair)
- Elections & Resignations (Chair)
- Reports (Paper A)
 - Union President
 - Sports Union President
 - Vice President Communities
 - Vice President Education
- Motions (Papers B – D)
 - *Democracy Review Final Proposals (Union President)*
 - *Off Campus Accommodation Fund (Mikey Rob Taylor)*
 - *Harm Reduction (Vice President Communities)*
- Any Other Business
- Date of Next Meeting: TBC Academic Year 2025/26

Paper A: Reports

Union President Sabbatical Report, Leen Ali

Hi everyone! I'm Leen, the 24/25 President of the Students' Union. Here are some key highlights from the past couple of months:

- So, February was our election period, We had **17 candidates** running for **9 positions**, and our voter turnout reached **2,455 votes**—surpassing last year's count! Well done to everyone who took part and voted, getting your voice out there is truly valued!
 - I have been attending the *Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice* as an NUS representative. It has been insightful to learn more about and contribute to the approaches and efforts aimed at tackling racism and prejudice, I have been working and feeding back to the NUS Scotland President in regards to any development within.
 - Adelayo and I have also been participating in the *Personal Tutor Task and Finish Group*, where we have been reviewing the role of personal tutors and exploring ways to improve student access to support. It's been great to see the Impact of our efforts in restructuring the personal tutor system, something we have been working toward for the last few years. The group's report will now be discussed in the retention working group.
 - We have also been attending the retention working group, where we have been continuously reviewing student retention essentially and things that hinders that.
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- We have also been actively involved in discussions at the *Progression Boards* have contributed to reviewing the *Student Partnership Agreement*. Currently, we are in the process of reviewing the *Student Charter* to ensure it is well-aligned and easy for both students and staff to understand. We have provided our feedback on the *Education and Student Experience Strategy*.

Special thanks to the DPs of Education and Student Experience for ensuring that we are well-informed and included in this process—it truly reflects how much student voice is valued. We will continue to work to strengthen these collaborative efforts.

- The *Annual Ramadan Iftar* was another series of successful event It was organised by MENA, Ahlullbayt, Islamic and Pakistani Society supported by the Islamic Centre, the Students' Union, and the BeConnected programme. Between 200 and 300 students attended to break their together and participate in group prayers. Different Islamic-based charities were invited to give talks to students, raising funds for important causes such as those displaced within *Gaza*, *Sudan*, and other regions. It was attended by people from a wide range of backgrounds, including members of the Forth Valley community. To mark the ending there wasthe Big eid event, which was also a great success. Big shoutout to these fantastic societies.
- As part of *Women's History Month*, Justine and I have been supporting the *Politics and FEM Society* in hosting a range of events during *Women's Week*. One of the key events is a *Women in Politics* panel, where we have invited MSPs from around the area to participate in the panel, well done to the efforts of these guys!
- In collaboration with BeConnected and the *South Asian Society*, we also supported the *Holi* celebration, which had over 100 students participating. It was heartening to hear students say that events like these make them feel at home and contribute to a sense of belonging within the University community. Thanks again to South Asian society for the efforts and collaboration
- Lastly, I will soon be supporting the interviews for the Deputy Principal of Academics which will be taking place this May.

To find out more about what I have been up to come along to the General meeting! Otherwise please reach out to me through my email which is President.union@stir.ac.uk or through my Instagram @stir_president

Sports Union President Sabbatical Report, Laura Shaw

As Sports President, I look after all of our sports clubs. We currently have 55 clubs and 2613 members. With more than 65 teams competing across SSS and BUCS for the 2024-25 season.

We held another successful Sports Ball this year at the DoubleTree by Hilton with 710 members present! It was a wonderful night celebrating the Sports Union. Congratulations again to our shortlisted nominees, honourable mentions and award winners.

In terms of charitable involvement, the Sports Union has raised over £40,000 for charity this academic year. Some of these achievements include: Marcus Scullion and Sophie Bryson were our Movember ambassadors this year, helping raise a massive £32,195. Scott Christie as Oddballs ambassador has awareness for testicular cancer and over £2000 for the foundation so far this year. Ruby Houstoun and Natalie Tait from Women's Hockey led on a fantastic Green Ribbon campaign, raising over £700. Cheerleading had another successful pink ribbon campaign raising awareness for breast cancer and Netball held a BoobBall tournament with Miss GB raising £160. Dance's 24-hour dance saw £1505 raised for Papyrus, Breast Cancer Now and Team Alexis Rose. Women's Football helped raise awareness for If In Doubt Sit them Out and I look forward to seeing how their charity fundraiser tournament goes later on this month.

A huge thank you to my executive committee for their contributions this year in supporting my projects such as the StirScale, Club of the Month and so much more.

Continuing on with the kit tender project, all club will be wearing Adidas leisure kit for 2025/26 and I will be supporting the remaining clubs to transfer their match kit over to Adidas for the next season. Where possible, I would like to continue club owned kit, moving for greater sustainability within the Sports Union.

During the week of the 14th April, we will be hosting our club committee training for the 2025-26 club committees.

My handover toolkit is being finalised, and this will be sent out to the 2024-25 club presidents to support their handovers during April and May ready for the new committees to begin on the 1st June.

Please use the handover as an opportunity to check in with me for the current status of your club on the StirScale.

You can contact me at sports.union@stir.ac.uk. Please also follow us on Instagram, @stirlingsportsunion, to keep up to date with the Sports Union!

Vice President Communities, Justine Pedussel

Housing Campaign

I have been organizing with Sabbs across Scotland in relation to housing. We are now focusing on Stage 2 of the Housing Bill 2025, and thus the campaign, by lobbying MSPs to propose amendments giving better housing rights to students. I have already met with 9 MSPs, including Graham Simpson, MSP for Central Scotland, and chair of the cross-party group on housing, and Evelyn Tweed, MSP for Stirling.

I have also worked with the Money Advice team to reexamine the Enhancement Fund questions. So please give me feedback on that.

Sustainability

I am continuing to support a number of societies with their sustainability initiatives. We just had Green Week which collaborated with the University and a number of organisations, for which we received a lot of positive feedback for. We are submitting our application to Green Impact.

Societies:

The Society Showcase for February was the Law Society for organising their Internal Mooting Competition. And congratulations to the Feminist and Politics Societies who have hosted a great Women's History Month with a number of events. I had the pleasure of co-hosting a workshop on women's suffrage for one of their organised events.

And of course, the SU Awards Ball was on April 3rd!

Other:

We are also participating in a National Campaign to Ban Conversion Therapy. It's a campaign led by a volunteer officer at UCLan and if you want to support the campaign, please come by the office to sign a postcard which will be sent to relevant politicians.

I organised a Campaign Training for activists to learn/develop their skills in campaign organising and building a campaign.

Most recently, I attended the SOS-UK National Student Drug and Alcohol Conference in Northampton.

I've been working with President and VP Education and the University to re-examine the curriculum structure.

Contact me with questions at communities.union@stir.ac.uk or via my Instagram @stir_communities

Vice President Education, Adelayo Adebayo

Retention Working Group

- Personal Tutor Task and finish group meetings will be meeting one more time, and the group recommendations have been presented to the Retention Working Group to take forward. Thanks to all the students' representatives who were part of the committee.
- The progress board meeting is still ongoing, and this group is working towards ensuring students receive apt and timely communication from the University regarding their progression to the following year.
- Artificial Intelligence Advisory group has been created by the DP for Education which is to work alongside the existing work that has been ongoing with AI and to provide practical advice and guidance for staff and students on appropriate use of AI. Will update as it progresses.

International Women's Day

- As part of the IWD, I was part of the panel session organised by the University of Stirling's careers team and Enterprise Program where we discussed how to accelerate action as this year's theme which was a success.
- I attended and participated in the workshop on women's suffrage and women in politics organised by the Politics and the FEM society which was interesting.

Induction Week

- I'm happy to inform us all that beginning from next academic year, there will be no lectures during induction week for first years and postgrads resuming in September and January. This is to ensure new students are more integrated and are able to fully participate in inductions and welcome week activities.

Papers B – D (Motions)

Motion 1 – Democracy Review Proposals (Appendix at end of this document)

Resolves: To adopt the [Democracy Review Final Proposals](#) as the model for the new Students' Union democratic structure.

Notes: That the Students' Union democratic structures have been the subject of a full-review and consultation process this academic year. These proposals will be integrated into new governing documents for 2025-2026.

Believes: Many students who are active in Student Union (SU) activities still don't feel fully integrated into the SU, highlighting a need to improve their sense of belonging and value. A common perception is that the SU primarily serves as a liaison between students and the university, with students less aware of its role in organising social events, offering skills development, and representing academic interests. This suggests a communication gap regarding the SU's broader influence on student experiences, as students often remain unaware of its impact on enhancing their university life. There is a desire for greater involvement in shaping the SU, alongside the freedom to focus on issues that matter most to them. Students also call for more transparency, clearer communication, and accessible ways to participate, particularly regarding decision-making processes, funding use, and avenues for expressing their views. They value a collaborative approach, especially in electing representatives and being consulted on important issues, and want the SU to address both academic and non-academic concerns with a streamlined, accessible support system and a single point of contact for all their needs.

Motion 2 – Off Campus Accommodation Fund

Resolves - Resolves students who have low incomes to get to pay their rent at a lower cost whilst having the income to keep for themselves and to save money whilst not having the worry of not having the money by the end of the month.

Notes - I was not by the money support team that it is no longer the case that off campus accommodation despite being more expensive is unavailable for the accommodation enhancement fund whereby the lowest income students who are already taking in food banks have to struggle even more because of lack of access to an off campus accommodation enhancement fund.

Believes - This will lower the cost for students in terms of rents and still brings in the money that the university needs for other purposes.

Motion 3 – Harm Reduction

Resolves - This motion mandates the Students' Union to recommit to

- a harm reduction approach and constructively working with harm reduction groups, including the “Help Not Harm” campaign and local experts (Crew), at the University of Stirling.
- the Stirling SU website's statement of intent and will renew the statement if appropriate, and co-produce harm reduction resources on alcohol/drugs with the Help Not Harm Campaign and Crew, or alternatively provide signposts to their external sites where this information can be accessed.
- distributing physical resources containing information on harm reduction and safe drug- and alcohol-use to students who come seeking support, providing a way for students to receive these resources anonymously if needed.
- lobbying the university to provide funding for this initiative and help to distribute these harm reduction resources wherever this may be possible

This motion mandates the Students' Union to provide students with CYD-tests or drink-spike-tests, in addition to the drug testing kits to test your drugs.

Notes - That Scotland is in the midst of a drugs deaths crisis; with the highest rate of drug related deaths in Europe, resulting in three deaths every single day.

The policies of criminalisation, and the war on drugs, have not only failed to cope with this crisis, but have fuelled greater consequences by denying access to drug testing facilities and stigmatising those looking for help.

An NUS Report from 2014 found that 1 in 10 sexual assault victims had been spiked. The Scottish Government found that 1 in 5 female students in higher education experiences sexual harassment, and one in four experiences sexual assault. Additionally, it found that over half of all students who have experienced sexual assault and/or sexual harassment experienced it on campus. The most recent survey by the Scottish Crime and Justice 2019-2020 showed that only 22% of victims/survivors of rape reported it to the police.

During a SOS-UK Conference on Drug and Alcohol Impact, it was highlighted that a number of students who have been spiked and have consumed drugs or alcohol prior to being spiked, will not feel comfortable seeking care and pastoral care.

Building a safer and healthier Scotland must be done by understanding the needs of vulnerable people, and that any responses to social issues faced by our communities must champion principles of non-judgemental support and destigmatisation over retribution.

Believes - A Harm Reduction approach to drug and alcohol usage is vital as it offers non-judgemental support (rather than punishment) to everyone. This motion recognises that the importance of consent for drug and alcohol consumption. Consent meaning that you are fully aware of what you are ingesting.

Thus, to ensure safe practices and safety, this motion believes that the University of Stirling and this Students' Union should actively promote and work towards harm reduction including, anti-spiking practices to ensure that students are safe.

Democracy Review Consultation

- The following proposals were made with the workshop outcomes and challenges identified in the current sector in mind, and the following Destination statement was set to guide the proposals.

"Students are busy, their issues or opinions are too complicated to capture in a one off meeting every four times a year, and as a students' union our role is to support our Officers (and staff) to spend as much time with students as possible and to work on issues that matter to them"

Key

Student Leadership
Team – SLT

Student Experience
Council – SEC

Societies/Sports/
Education – Exec

Action Groups - AG

Student Leadership Team (4 Sabbatical Officers)

Student Experience Council (4 Sabbatical Officers, 14 Volunteer Officers)

Societies Executive (5 Society Presidents, 3 Society Members)

Sports Executive (5 Sports Presidents, 3 Sports Members)

Education Executive (Faculty Officers, PGT Officer, PGR Officer)

PGR
Action
Group

Education
Action
Groups*

Activities
Action
Groups

Inter-
national
Action
Group

Sustain-
ability
Action
Group

Equalities
Action
Group

Housing
Action
Group

Accessibil-
ity Action
Group

*Education Action Groups likely to change name due to relationship with academic rep structure

N.B. These are initial groups and examples – the groups will change over time to fit the needs of the student body and SU

Student Leadership Team (SLT)

- Made up of the 4 Sabbatical Officers
- Meets fortnightly to discuss current and live issues and to set plans based on manifestoes
- Plans and evaluates feedback from student outreach activities
- Discuss political questions and refer them to the relevant body for decision where necessary

Student Experience Council (SEC)

- Made up of the 4 Sabbatical Officers and 14* Volunteer Officers
- Facilitated by an appointed Student Chair and any student can attend
- Meets three times per semester to decide and discuss -
 - Student Ideas
 - Political Policy and Opinion
 - Votes to accept or reject Reports received from Sabbatical Officers
- Also is the main source of accountability for Officers
- Can create online ballots** as needed for political policy/opinion
- *Final number of Voluntary Officers to be determined
- ** SECs would replace General Meetings as the main decision-making space for political policy and opinion – online ballots is proposed as the place to resolve more controversial questions

Voluntary Officers

- Proposed
 - Equalities Officers – 1 each for Women, Sexual Identity, Gender Identity, Disabled, BAME
 - Campaign Officers – 1 each for Commuters, International, Mature, Parents & Carers, Care Experienced, Housing, Sustainability
 - Executive Committees – one rep from Education, Sports and Societies Executives
 - Postgraduate – 1 each for Post-Graduate Taught and Post-Graduate Research students
- Campaign Officers would all be elected in the Spring Elections
- Equalities Officers selected by relevant student groups
- Executive Committee Officers selected at first meeting
- Postgraduate Officers would both be elected in the Autumn Elections
- Where a position is unfilled for two consecutive years, this role will be removed

Executive Committees (EC)

- Sports and Societies Executive Committees made up of 5 Presidents/Chairs and 3 “regular” Sport Team and Society members
- Education Executive Committee made up of Faculty Officers*, the PG Taught and PG Research Voluntary Officers
- Meets monthly to decide and discuss –
 - Funding allocation and new group creation
 - Education Issues and Campaigns
 - Review feedback and data related to student activity
- Chaired by relevant Sabbatical Officer
- *Faculty Officers role being changed as part of Academic Rep structure reforms

Action Groups (AGs)

- Made up of relevant officers (Sabbatical, Voluntary, Faculty) and any interested students
- Facilitated by Students' Union
- Meets twice a semester to discuss and plan –
 - Relevant campaigns and issues on the student experience
 - Student engagement on issues that are relevant to the current student body
 - Send issues that need further attention to Student Leadership Council
- Education Action Groups made up of an Action Group for each Faculty, with attendance expected by Faculty Officers and Academic Reps
 - Additional responsibilities around academic issues