

STUDENTS MATTER

2011-12 edition



Making connections between students, their representatives and staff at Dundee University to improve the quality of the student experience



STUDENTS MATTER aims to show how student representatives can improve your learning experience by explaining how student representation works within Dundee University and its Students' Association (DUSA).



REPRESENTATION FROM OUR ANGLE

You can also get more information from: www.dusa.co.uk and www.dundee.ac.uk/QAF/studentrepresentationoverview.htm



As Deputy President for this year, I would like to welcome those of you beginning your time at the University; and to those of you continuing your studies here, I hope your experience only improves as time goes by. I oversee representation structures within the University and DUSA. This includes anything from class representatives resolving a minor issue regarding availability of textbooks up to my work in assisting students with academic appeals. This publication will introduce

you to the make-up of student representation and allow you to determine easily where and how any problems can be resolved. I hope that **Students Matter** will give you a clearer understanding of who's who in representation and the potential we all have to make a positive contribution to the University. If you ever have any problems, please contact me at any time. My office is on the 4th floor of The Union building in the offices behind the glass doors; we will always operate an open door policy.

STUART FITZPATRICK, DUSA DEPUTY PRESIDENT 2011-12
01382-386007 • deputypresident@dusa.co.uk



I'm delighted to endorse this 2011-12 edition of **Students Matter**. I hope this publication will prove useful to you. It exemplifies something all staff at this University feel passionate about – connecting with our students. This relationship is most importantly illustrated by the way we try to enthuse you about the subject matter of your degree. We aim to illustrate the curriculum with high-quality research work from Dundee, using up-to-date teaching methods in a modern campus

setting. That's one of the reasons Dundee consistently achieves high ratings in externally organised surveys and reviews. Another is that we take note of what our students think at all times – through informal interactions, formal feedback, staff-student committees and representation at all levels, including the very highest – University Court – and what we hear helps us improve our teaching. I hope **Students Matter** will encourage you to become involved in representation and to tell us what you think. In a nutshell: you can make a difference!

PROFESSOR PETE DOWNES (PRINCIPAL)

DUSA EXECUTIVE 2011-12 AND THEIR ROLES IN REPRESENTATION

The DUSA Executive is comprised of seven elected officers representing your views to the University and ensuring the Students' Association is run by the students and for the students. There are four full-time, paid sabbatical officers (shown here) and three non-sabbaticals: the Vice President Student Welfare, Vice President Campaigns and Honorary Secretary. For more information on all these roles, check out dusa.co.uk.

As well as striving to provide an overall excellent student experience, the Executive have individual remits to help you with any variety of problems you might encounter in your time at the University.



PRESIDENT – Iain Kennedy is the figurehead of the Students' Association. Along with the Rector, he sits on University Court, providing representation for students at the highest and most important level. The DUSA President has a long established influential position within the University and will be involved in many important decision-making processes, all the while representing your views and opinions. As well as sitting on many other University

committees, Iain will represent the University's students at a local and national level, whether that is through media outlets or lobbying government on important issues such as tuition fees and graduate taxes.

president@dusa.co.uk



DEPUTY PRESIDENT – Stuart Fitzpatrick oversees student representation, academic quality issues and other important areas such as international students and minority groups. Stuart will ensure valuable feedback is provided to the University through a range of representational

channels, to promote cultural and social integration on campus. He will liaise with the University to promote the development and improvement of the student experience and equal opportunities policies. Stuart is also responsible for organising all DUSA elections and promoting student involvement in all these areas. You can contact Stuart for a wide range of help and advice, be it for an informal chat or assistance with an academic appeal.

deputypresident@dusa.co.uk

VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT ACTIVITIES

– Rachael Doherty is responsible for DUSA's many student societies, assisting them in operation and organising a fair and responsible funding system.

vpsa@dusa.co.uk



VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

– Navid Gornall organises DUSA's communications strategy. As well as maintaining dusa.co.uk he works with **DUSA TV**, **Discover Radio** and the **Magdalen** student magazine.

vpc@dusa.co.uk



THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) AND ITS ROLE IN REPRESENTATION

The SRC consists of around 40 councillors, each representing their own constituencies and meets every three weeks. It includes the DUSA Executive, Sports Union President, School Presidents and other elected persons such as representatives for Equality and Diversity, Postgraduates, 1st Year and Environmental matters. The SRC is one of the highest levels of student representation and will ensure your voice is heard. It is an entirely democratic body. Elections to the SRC are held in the first few weeks of Semester 1 and this year, the SRC will include an independent chairperson to oversee the operation and procedure of the Council and its two sub-committees. For more information, log onto dusa.co.uk or come to see the Deputy President at any time.



Being a member of SRC presents an interesting, invigorating and insightful experience; you sit on the highest level of non-student union representation of your peers in the University that will guide and craft the future for countless students.

You can exert an influence that can potentially transform any aspect of the student lifestyle. The manner in which it is achieved depends on the group of representatives selected by the students of the University. If you are passionate, motivated and

hard working, you will find a comfortable seat at the SRC that welcomes you regardless of your experience elsewhere.

If you are considering to campaign for the opportunity to sit on the SRC, then you need only ask yourself one question: are you genuine in your desire to better the experience for you and your peers in University? If so, the SRC is a place for you, and I, along with former SRC members and the student union, thoroughly encourage, and implore you, to get involved.

MITAN PATEL - SCR COUNCILLOR WITHOUT PORTFOLIO 2010-11

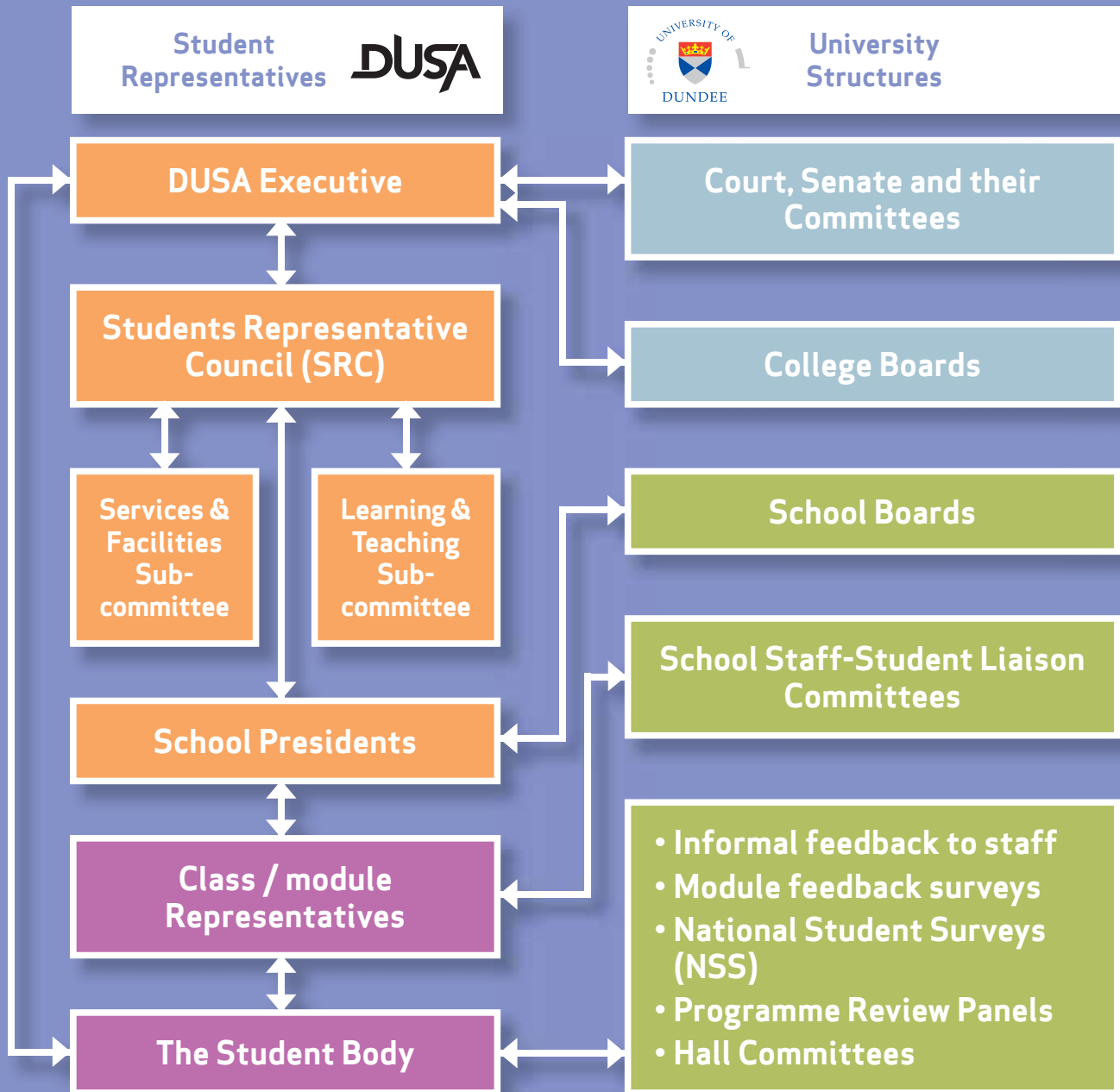


The past few years have seen the SRC move from strength to strength, becoming more open, democratic and capable of fulfilling its role in representing students. For example, as Postgraduate Representative for Services and Facilities, I arranged a survey regarding services and subsequently this has been fed back to the University. Additionally, I proposed the motion for a referendum on membership of the National Union of Students.

Whatever you think of the outcome, this was a fine example of the SRC making policy, bringing about action and giving students a say - in my view, the SRC's main function. If you do want to get involved and make a difference, then please consider standing for election at some point during your time in Dundee.

**SHANE MOCHRIE-COX
POSTGRADUATE SERVICES AND FACILITIES
REPRESENTATIVE 2009-11**

REPRESENTATION & FEEDBACK STRUCTURES



CLASS REPS AND SCHOOL PRESIDENTS AND THEIR ROLES IN REPRESENTATION

Each School within the University elects a number of students to provide representation at class level. Staff Student Liaison Committees meet regularly and are a valuable exercise in student democracy. They give students an important opportunity to sit around the table with staff within the School and air any issues students might be facing. These Representatives are in class with you every day and always available to chat about issues. DUSA offers training to all class representatives and will facilitate their needs every step of the way.

Students also elect a student President who serves as a figurehead for those in their School. This role has become more prominent and important in recent years. School Presidents liaise with key figures within the School, such as the Dean and School Secretary, to represent issues affecting students. The School President not only sits on the Staff Student Liaison Committee and SRC, but also attends School and College Boards and thus has an input in the management of your institution at a high level. Check dusa.co.uk to find out who your School President is, and how they can help.



The role of Humanities School President has been an entirely different experience for me than I had expected. I anticipated a year of attending the odd meeting here or there and not much else; to my delight, it was the opposite. As well as being the 'go-to guy' for any students with queries about their classes, their welfare and how to get involved with the various humanities-related societies on

campus, I established an academic parenting scheme that not only helped new students to settle into Dundee, but also played a central role in the stronger feeling of School unity. One of the best aspects of being School President has been seeing the tangible difference one can make to student life. My experiences of representation have been very rewarding and I cannot recommend getting involved highly enough.

**GARY COCKER: SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL PRESIDENT: 2010-11**



As School President I have been privileged to be a figurehead for all students who felt they had issues needing resolved. Working alongside the School's Vice President, we maintained and built upon the School's mentor programme. I also worked alongside staff to improve the experience for the Junior Honours Students. Finally, working alongside the School's Social Society I helped to not only advertise the social aspect

of psychology life within Dundee University but also to enhance the awareness of the School of Psychology itself. I have gained quite a number of skills and achievements from the role through chairing school meetings and also as a member of the Student Representative Council. This has given me excellent experience for the future, but what I have found most rewarding was knowing that I have made a positive difference to the Undergraduate experience.

**ANDY MACKENZIE: SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
SCHOOL PRESIDENT: 2010-11**

REPRESENTATION FOR POSTGRADUATES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATION

The SRC plays host to three Postgraduate Representatives: Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Rep, Postgraduate Services and Facilities Rep and a School President from the Graduate School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing. Postgraduates sit on Student/Staff Liaison Committees and issues affecting them will be addressed at many committees within the University. These reps should be your first point of contact for a postgraduate issue; their details can be found at dusa.co.uk. Both the President and the Deputy President of DUSA also sit on the Postgraduate Affairs Subcommittee of Senate. Contact the Deputy President at DUSA for any further information.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATION

International students make up a sizeable portion of our campus and bring great vibrancy and diversity to the University. In the recent International Student Barometer survey, DUSA was ranked 1st in the UK and 7th in the world for International student provision! The International Learning and Teaching Rep and International Services and Facilities Rep both sit on the SRC. The International Student Society and the various International Societies also act as a great routes for representation. The many societies affiliated to DUSA include the Kazakhstan Society and the Indian Society; for more information see the **Societies Matters** booklet or contact the VPSA on vpsa@dusa.co.uk



REPRESENTATION AND THE CAREERS SERVICE

Careers Representatives promote the Careers Service within their Schools, providing a valuable link between the Service and their classmates, flatmates and members of their clubs and societies. They promote events such as class talks, lunchtime workshops, careers fairs and employer presentations. They also supply feedback on how the service can be improved. Each representative is supported by their School Careers Adviser and is expected to attend a minimum of two careers representatives' meetings and maintain the School careers notice board. If you are interested in being a Careers Representative, please contact your Careers Adviser, or the Careers Service (careers@dundee.ac.uk).



STUDENT REPRESENTATION IN UNIVERSITY RESIDENCES

Students are encouraged to participate actively in the operation of student residences and a student representation structure has been developed jointly by the University and students to ensure that this happens. At the start of each academic year, each flat is asked to nominate a Flat Representative. His or her role is to represent the residents of their flat. The Flat Representatives meet regularly with the relevant Student Support Assistants and the Student Support Team and at their first meeting each session, the Flat Representatives elect a Residences Representative who becomes a member of the Residences Committee. The Flat Representatives also elect the President of each Residence who leads the Committee for that Residence and represents the residents at meetings with DUSA, the University and Sanctuary Management Services. More detailed information is available from <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/supportworker/hallscommittees.htm>

HOW CAN I PROVIDE FEEDBACK OR DEAL WITH A MATTER THAT CONCERNS ME?

1. **Speak to the staff concerned.** This should always be the first avenue to consider. They won't bite and will often either adapt things immediately or explain in greater detail why things are the way they are. Don't forget to consult the School Secretary too, who may also be able to help.
2. **Speak to your Class Rep or School President.** Details of who they are should be provided by your School, including email contact details. They'll advise you of a recommended procedure and may take your issue up independently (and anonymously, should you wish).
3. **Provide feedback via discussion boards and formal feedback routes (as detailed in your module or programme handbook).** The feedback will be considered by relevant staff and may be discussed during staff-student liaison meetings. The national Student Survey allows final year students to feedback on their time at University.
4. **Speak to a DUSA executive member.** That's why you elected them and why they are supported by the University. They'll be familiar with the University's regulations and support services and will know who can fix most problems. They can raise matters in University committees and during programme reviews.
5. **As a last resort, raise a formal complaint.** If you feel all other routes have failed, you can do this. Look up 'Discipline, Complaints and Appeals (for students)' on the University website A-Z to find out more.

The University's regulations state clearly that no student making a complaint will be disadvantaged by complaining.

I wouldn't be in this job if I didn't enjoy interacting with students. I'm always happy to discuss academic issues and to act on student views on teaching and assessment. I often find I can suggest work-rounds or other ideas to help.

**WILL WHITFIELD,
SENIOR LECTURER,
COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES**



REPRESENTATION FROM THE STAFF ANGLE



Like most staff, I look forward to receiving module feedback. It's always good to see the efforts we put in reflected in appreciative comments and always a salutary lesson when one's defects are pointed out (especially retro dress sense). I've definitely improved my lectures on the basis of past student comments.

**STUART CROSS,
SENIOR LECTURER, SCHOOL OF LAW**

We work closely with the School President and Staff-student Liaison Committee to ensure student feedback is discussed openly. All important points that arise are considered at School Board.

**LAURA MURRAY AND GWEN HUNTER,
SCHOOL SECRETARIES, HUMANITES**



ELECTIONS – YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED



DUSA holds a series of elections each year to return your new student representatives. In March the campus becomes even more colourful and vibrant as candidates canvass students and try to win your vote in the Executive elections.



All elections are held online and voting days are well publicised throughout campus. The activity during campaigns is a great incentive to get involved. For more information consult dusa.co.uk or contact the Deputy President.

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR...

Brian Cox was elected as Rector of the University of Dundee in February 2010 by over 60% of students voting. Brian is a Dundee native and has had an incredibly successful acting career. He is known for his work with the Royal Shakespeare Company and more contemporary films such as the Bourne Identity and X-Men 2.

As your Rector I would like to welcome you to the University. This is an exciting time to be in Dundee; and the University and DUSA have gone from strength to strength in recent years.

One of the most effective ways of protecting student rights at the University is through representation. Valuable structures have been put in place and expanded in the past few years to ensure that your voice is heard and your rights are protected at every stage. I am also your representative to the University and guarantee that I will defend you at every turn. I encourage you to use this publication as a tool in identifying your student representatives and how you might resolve problems. I have great faith in this year's DUSA Executive. I know they will provide great leadership for students and will endeavour to support them whenever necessary. Get to know these people, and the entire student representation structure. It will be important in your time at the University.



Photo: Ryan McGovern

BRIAN COX
RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE
rector@dundee.ac.uk

THE MANIFESTO

The DUSA Manifesto is an important document. It lays out the ideas and priorities of the DUSA Executive for the current academic year, including:

- Raising the profile of SRC and the DUSA executive
- Campaigns, such as Sexual Health Awareness Week and other National Awareness Days
- Improvements in services
- The 'Year of Aspirations' event series
- Rag week

The Executive also aim to represent the student voice regarding such diverse matters as:

- E-Learning
- Exam feedback
- Marking schemes
- Academic advice and support
- Housing

The Manifesto will help the Executive to focus on these key themes and will help the student body to hold it to account.



Copies of the Manifesto are widely available in the DUSA building

sparqs

student participation in quality scotland

sparqs supports students, student representatives and staff across Scotland to develop the ways in which students can shape their learning experiences. We've worked extensively with Dundee University and its students' association over the years to do this. Do speak up with your ideas and feedback, and consider getting involved as a representative.

SIMON VARWELL
Development Advisor
sparqs
www.sparqs.ac.uk



CHECK OUT DUSA MEDIA FOR MORE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS



This booklet has been jointly produced by DUSA and Academic Affairs Directorate.

www.dusa.co.uk
www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/studentrepresentationoverview.htm

For initial enquiries on elections and other representation matters, please contact Stuart Fitzpatrick.

Karen Stulka, Eric Monaghan, Jonathan Weyers, Fiona O'Donnell and Ian Francis are initial points of communication with the University centre regarding representation, elections, quality assurance and complaints. See <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/academic/> for contact details and information and <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/studentrepresentationoverview.htm> for further information on representation.

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