student matters
2013/2014 EDITION

How student representation works
What is DUSA?

Dundee University Students’ Association (DUSA) is the legal representative and charitable organisation for matriculated students of the University of Dundee.

But what is an “association”? Quite simply, associations are groups of people with common interests who find strength in numbers. In DUSA’s case the commonality is that we are all studying at the University of Dundee.

Principal’s Message
Pete Downes

It’s a pleasure to give my support to the 2013-14 edition of Students Matter. It exemplifies something all staff at our University feel passionate about – connecting with our students. One of the reasons that Dundee consistently achieves high ratings in externally-organised surveys is our approach to student engagement. We take note of what our students think at all times – through informal interactions, formal feedback, student-staff committees and representation at all levels, including University Senate and Court. What we hear helps us improve the learning environment at Dundee. I hope you will consider becoming involved in representation and telling us what you think. You can make a difference!

Deputy President’s Message
Jade Rea

Welcome to Dundee University! This is a very exciting time for all of you and as your Deputy President of DUSA I want to make sure you enjoy your time here. One of the most important elements of my role is to make sure that all your suggestions or concerns are being heard, and the best way to do this is to make sure you are represented within both the University and DUSA. Here at Dundee we have a structured representation system that links class representatives to your DUSA executive.

This booklet serves to explain our representation structures and who you can talk to if a problem ever arises. Furthermore, it shows you all the ways that YOU can get involved. Engaging with other students and staff is a great way to enhance your university experience so have a read and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. My office is on the 4th floor of the DUSA building.

Email: deputypresident@dusa.co.uk
Phone number: 01382 386007

You can also get more information from:
www.dusa.co.uk and
www.dundee.ac.uk/qf/studentengagement/studentrepresentation
Here at DUSA we have seven elected students that form the Executive. Four of these students are full-time sabbatical officers and three are non-sabbatical officers who study at the same time as working for you! Our collective aim is to support you in having the best student experience possible. On an individual level we all have distinctive roles in helping to achieve this.

For more information on all of our roles, please read about us on dusa.co.uk.

Iain MacKinnon
President
Iain is the President of DUSA. This means that he is the spokesperson for Dundee students at a local, national and international level. Iain also sits on many University committees, including University Court, the highest governing body on campus.

Jade Rea
Deputy President
Alongside ensuring the representation of students, Jade oversees academic quality issues. Jade works with the University to promote the enhancement of the student experience and is also responsible for promoting student involvement and running DUSA elections.

Zuchaela Smylie
Vice President of Communications and Campaigns
Zuchaela deals with the communications and campaign elements of DUSA. She has a close working relationship with the DUSA media outlets. She also runs a number of political and cultural events, giving students the opportunity to engage in topical issues.

Stefan Tomov
Vice President of Engagement
Stefan is responsible for promoting various ways of engaging the student body with DUSA. He deals with raising awareness of the SRC, the Executive and DUSA’s services.

Katie Jowett
Vice President of Student Welfare
Katie is the lead officer on all student welfare related issues. Katie works with the University’s Student Services to give support, guidance and advice on health and welfare to students. Katie also leads welfare campaigns throughout the year.

Tim Hustler
Honorary Secretary
Tim is responsible for DUSA’s disciplinary procedures. If you are naughty in The Union, it will be Tim who will deal with you in his role as Chair of DUSA’s disciplinary panel. Tim also convenes the Student Representative Council (SRC), which is the forum for voicing your suggestions or concerns.

Douglas Schreiber
Vice President of Student Activities
Doug is your “go-to” guy for all things related to student societies or general activities. He will ensure that your activities with DUSA are enhanced and that you get as much of the available support and help that you need.
REPRESENTATIVES

DUSA Executive

Student Representative Council

School Presidents

Class/Module Representatives

The Student Body

STRUCTURES

Court, Senate and their Committees

College Boards

School Boards

School Staff-Staff Student Liaison Committees

Informal feedback to staff Module Feedback Surveys National Student Survey Programme Review Panels
The Student Representative Council is an elected body of students and is an integral part of student representation within both DUSA and the University. The SRC represents the views and aspirations of the student body on a wide range of issues that will influence your student experience both directly and indirectly.

With around 50 elected councillors, who meet once every three weeks, students can be assured that whatever their concern at University, there will be a representative on the SRC they can turn to for help. Whether you have an issue relating to your time spent in Halls of Residence, have concerns with something going on with your School, or feel your tutors could be doing more to help you, the SRC are there to represent your voice. The SRC is not just about dealing with issues and concerns. It plays an important role in quality enhancement by sharing areas of good practice, as well as contributing to University developments to enhance the student experience.

As we have a diverse range of people making up our student population DUSA takes equal representation very seriously. As such the SRC includes a number of home, international, undergraduate and post graduate representatives so that everyone’s voice is heard. Whatever your suggestion or issue there is a representative for you. For example, there are representatives for First Year Learning and Teaching, Services and Facilities, International Students and Postgraduate Students.

The SRC is responsible for setting DUSA policy and holding the Student Executive and Board of Trustees to account, making sure that your students’ association is run for your benefit. In recent years this has included a campaign for extended library opening hours and consultation during the library’s refurbishment. During 2012-13 members of the SRC worked tirelessly to improve the service provided by the University with regard to timetables and reading lists. This work should, hopefully see great improvements in these areas.

Do you want to get a better idea of what the SRC actually talk about? SRC meetings, which take place on level 4 of the Union building, are open to all students so you can sit in on a meeting as an observer. Or better still, run for a position on the Council. Being part of the SRC gives you the opportunity to become involved in important University decisions and gives invaluable experience. This year’s nominations take place from the 2nd September - 13th September and the election will be held on the 19th and 20th September.

For more information about the SRC email: honsec@dusa.co.uk or alternatively visit the SRC’s page on the DUSA website at http://www.dusa.co.uk/get-involved/src/

Students also elect a School President who serves as a figurehead for those in their School. This role has become more prominent in recent years as School Presidents liaise with key figures within the School, such as the Dean and School Secretary. During these meetings it is the President’s responsibility to represent the views of the students, including suggestions or concerns. These can range from module choices to assessment and feedback or reading lists.

The School President not only sits on the School Student-Staff Liaison Committee but the SRC, ensuring that you are represented at every level. Presidents regularly communicate with their Class Representatives in order to create a culture of feedback and information exchange on the student representation system within their School.

The work they do has been widely commended and accordingly the School President of the Year Award has been reintroduced, to reflect the increased responsibilities and work put in by this group of very talented individuals.

Finally as School Presidents are now elected as part of the SRC elections you have the opportunity to engage whether you are in your 1st year of university or your last.

The position of School President is not just a title bestowed, but rather is recognition of your capabilities as a leader, one who can take control and champion the rights of contemporaries; steering the school you represent in a direction which most favours your fellow students. By actively participating in a forum for dialogue, ever striving to build upon past successes, great things can be achieved for the benefit of you and your fellow students; only with you leading from the front.

Alan MacPherson, Law School President 2012-2013

For more information please contact your School Secretary or Deputy President at deputypresident@dusa.co.uk
Within each school there are a number of students, elected on an annual basis, who take on the role of Class Representatives. The role is a very important one as Class Representatives are your first point of contact should you have an issue or concern regarding your course. Class Representatives receive in-house training that gives them the tools to fulfil their role and are awarded with a certificate once they have completed this. They also receive a certificate from the University at the end of their period of office in recognition of their contributions to the representation system.

Not only will they be in the same class as you, and therefore are available to discuss any concerns directly; they can bring these concerns to either the School President or to the Student-Staff Liaison Committees that they attend. During these committee meetings Class Representatives have the opportunity to raise issues or make suggestions which are relevant to the subject or module in order to contribute towards the continuous improvement of the quality of your course. Feedback should also be made available to you from your Class Representatives subsequent to any meetings held.

DUSA holds a series of Elections each year to appoint your new student representatives. Elections for the SRC, which includes School Presidents, will be held in September. Becoming a councillor is a great way to become actively involved on campus. It allows you to meet new people and gives you the opportunity to create actual positive change on campus.

In March campus becomes even more vibrant and colourful as the Executive Elections are held. With four full time positions available why not take an education break to run for one of these positions? Alternatively if you are graduating this year why not run for a position now that your studies have finished? If neither of these options appeal to you then you could try your hand at one of our non-sabbatical or elected Independent Student Member of Court positions. The Executive Elections run from 24th February - 7th March and both elections are held online, with voting days publicised throughout campus.

For more information contact the Deputy President or visit dusa.co.uk.
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 Secretaries 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 My Dundee discussion boards or formal feedback routes (as detailed in your module or programme handbook).** The feedback will be considered by relevant staff and may be discussed during Student-Staff Liaison Committee 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.

5. **As a last resort, raise a formal complaint.** If you feel like 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.