Student representation, engagement and their ability to make change within higher education institutions

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Aims

• Highlight effectiveness of student engagement within HEIs and provide examples
• Raising awareness of and participation in graduate attributes
• Discuss how to engage students and staff in process
Themes

- Developing graduate attributes
- Supporting success with student diversity
- Enhancing the curriculum
- Using technology to support learning
• Over 125 years old
• All students are members
• 4 sabbatical officers, President + welfare, education and communication officers
• Increase of activities since early 2000s
• Largest amount of class reps in Scotland – c600
• Elected council of c45 members
2004 ELIR

• “the team would suggest that enhancement of the partnership between the University and its students might benefit from establishing clear channels of communication in the critical links between the University and the Students’ Representative Council (SRC), and between the SRC and the student body that it represents”
• “the University and the SRC might wish to reflect upon how they could most effectively work together to help sustain a partnership that actively contributes to the development of policy for the enhancement of student learning.”

2010 ELIR

• “clear evidence of a strong and effective partnership between the SRC and the University, which has developed significant developments in policy and provision, all of which contribute positively to the student experience at Glasgow”
• “It is evident that the partnership approach between the University and The SRC has been productive in delivering a range of enhancements to provision and practice. Examples of the successful outcomes of this partnership approach include: work on a Code of Practice on Student Representation and Guidance for the operation of staff; student liaison committees; the review of the Advisors of Studies system; the development of policies on a range of matters, including the late submission of coursework; a harassment policy and maternity, paternity and carer policy for students; and a student diary”
Why participate?

- Student engagement can benefit all
Previous successes

• Late submission policy
  - Widespread inconsistency around penalties for late submission
  - Ensures fairness, consistency and guidance

• Carers policy
  • Follows maternity policy, also developed by GUSRC.
  • Identifies how students with caring responsibilities should be supported
  • Unique in UK, now being adapted across other institutions
Challenges

- Variation in levels of candidates for SRC council positions
- Little connection between class reps and SRC council members
- Lack of PG representation

Problems being missed?
Restructuring

- University restructuring allowed SRC to produce more cohesive structure
- 4 UG and 4 PG convenors
- 19 school reps
- **Class Reps → School reps → Convenors → Sabbaticals**
- More communication, and awareness of who represents them
Impact 2011/12

• More information on areas of university not following guidelines
• Lecture recording
• Increased awareness of areas where class reps not being supported
• More peer support – facebook discussion etc
• More people putting themselves forward for election
• More informed class reps, spreading information amongst classmates
• **Snowball effect – more engagement and awareness**
Graduate Attributes

• More representatives are gaining skills and attributes that will help them in life after university
• SRC reps also engaged in spreading information on graduate attributes, working in partnership with university
• Website, class rep training, HEAR
Hera – College of Social Sciences

Technology

Graduate Attributes

Representation
Representation
Graduate Attributes
Why Technology?
Technology and Learning

- Podcasts
- Alternative routes to job hunting
- Building online resources for students
- Communicating with students through social media
Dave Walker
School of Life Sciences Representative
Representation

• Academic representative – attend GUSRC meetings for Life Sciences

• Responsible for liaising with Class Representatives – first point of contact; CV writing, Careers Fair, laser pointer/background

• Feed information back to College Convenors/GUSRC
Curriculum Enhancement

• Attend School-level Education Committees five times per year - “valuable insight from students” on new courses, changes, feedback

• Staff-Student Liaison Committees – for each course, class reps & course co-ordinator, feedback
Curriculum Enhancement

• Periodic Subject Review – student representative, focus mainly on student-centred issues, recommendations

• Programme Approval Groups – looking at proposals as sole student. Students are co-creators
Discussion

- www.glasgowstudent.net
- www.twitter.com/gusrc
- www.facebook.com/glasgowuniversitysrc