

ECSA Annual Report 12/13



The Edinburgh College Students' Association is a result of the newly merged Edinburgh College on the 1st October 2012. The organization is a registered charity that works to defend, extend and promote the rights of Edinburgh College students.

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Foreword

Hi and welcome to our end of year report!

The very first year of Edinburgh College Students' Association (ECSA) has been momentous for College students and staff. Merging three Colleges into one is never going to be an easy task, but happily, the merging of three Students' Associations has gone well. Securing the funding for an autonomous, charitable ECSA for students at Edinburgh College was the first step momentous step in an epic journey that is already changing lives for the better and will continue to do so for many years to come. Of course we have had minor stumbling blocks along the way, but each of these was turned into a valuable learning experience and each has made ECSA stronger.

Times are very challenging for Colleges just now, with unprecedented cuts being inflicted and mergers happening at a lightning pace, but a Colleges role through times of crisis like this, and that of ECSA as well, is to insulate students as much as possible from the negative effects of these and I am immensely proud to have been working alongside so many committed and talented students and staff at the College who have worked hard to maintain the quality of education for students and enhance their welfare.

Ensuring a parity of experience for students wherever they are is something we are fully committed to and we have developed a new structure for ECSA next year that will reap immense benefits. Each Vice-President will have a specific College-wide remit instead of being a campus representative allowing them to develop their speciality effectively and represent students in a more focused way.

We have many firsts to our name already and I thank everyone involved for the passion and commitment to students that have created these. This year we have laid the foundations for a charity of immeasurable value to students but also to society as a whole. I hope you will agree that the students of Edinburgh College constantly amaze with their knowledge and abilities, their commitment to education and their passion to see a better future for us all. I am immensely proud to have had the opportunity to represent us and delighted knowing that going forward, ECSA is in the capable hands of the newly elected officers that I was honoured and humbled to have worked with this year. I know they and ECSA will go from strength to strength and continue to lead the way for democratic student representation in Scotland and I hope that if not now, by the end of this report you will share my enthusiasm for the future.

John Martin

Student President 2012-2013

Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision, mission and values are at the core of everything ECSA does and form the basis of our charitable status. They were formed from workshops and consultation with students throughout AC 2011/12 and the three strands of our mission statement form the titles of three chapters in this report.

Vision

'To Champion a life changing, education experience at Edinburgh College.'

Mission

We will work with the College to have:

- * Well-resourced and independent student representation and engagement
- * Exciting, innovative and developmental student opportunities.
- * A supportive and diverse environment, where the rights of all students are celebrated.

Values

- * Democracy
- * Empowerment
- * Equality
- * Partnership

Who we are

Our Staff

Just 22 days after the founding sabbatical officers took office, we put in place 3 fantastic staff whose effort to build an association from scratch has had a huge impact. The three Student Liaison Officer's (SLO's) Karen Booth, Julie Lough-Dennell and Graham Smith were selected BY students to work FOR students, work in fantastically close relationship with staff at the College and are the glue that holds ECSA together.

Each SLO has had to be a jack of all trades this year, being campus based, although different skill sets have come to the fore and the SLO's are now specialising more in different areas.

The SLO's have been working very hard to ensure that the transition from three colleges and different ways of working to one college with integrated systems has been as smooth as possible for students. They have ensured that our offices are open when officers can't be there, organised fantastic events throughout the year and helped thousands of students enjoy their time at College. They have supported hundreds of class reps in their roles representing students and provided invaluable training to students from how to design a poster to how to represent students in the most effective way and Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training.

Elected officers are transitional by their nature and it is crucial for the success of ECSA that there is continuity and this is what the SLO's provide. They have built up a huge amount of knowledge about the College, the students and everything about the running of ECSA.

They deserve very special thanks for their work this year, they have been a constant pleasure to work with evidenced by the praise given to them by students, staff and external organisations including NUS throughout the year.

We have also been very lucky to have been supported by many College staff that has helped us build a dynamic and successful partnership with the College. There are too many we have worked with this year to list them all but staff we have worked with closer than most are Wendy Groom-Vine at Milton Road and Midlothian, Karyn Smith and John McCran at Sighthill and Samantha Lamond and Myra McCabe at Granton. They have all put in many hours of their time working on partnership activities with us and we would have had a greater struggle to achieve many things this year without the huge effort put in by them.

The power of partnership has been shown by many successes this year and is a theme throughout this report but focused on more in a later section.

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Karen Booth based at **Milton Road/Midlothian** will work closely with the VP Education to make sure our representative structures are effective from class reps all the way up to our executive team and consistent across all campuses. Karen will also develop a robust, year round, training strategy for the ECSA team and its respective representatives.

Graham Smith based at **Granton** will work closely with the President to ensure our communication strategy provides exceptional access for students. He will also provide support for the Vice Presidents in terms of marketing, web maintenance, event organising and publishing of our new monthly, whole college, newsletter.

Julie Lough-Dennell based at **Sighthill**, will work closely with VP Women's to ensure that liberation is at the heart of what ECSA and Edinburgh College do. Welfare across all our campuses will also be coordinated by Julie to ensure that all students have access to information and services relating to mental health, sexual health etc.

Our Sabbatical team

This year we had campus based Vice-Presidents as an interim structure for the year before moving towards what we think will be a much more efficient structure with each VP having a specific remit. Although the Vice-Presidents have remits, much of the work they will be involved in will be as a direct result of their 'Plan of Work' which we aim to have produced by mid-July. Drawing on their own manifestos and ideas and in consultation with students, the sabbatical officers will set out the aims and goals for the year alongside key performance indicators so that we can remain as accountable and democratic as possible to students. Key performance indicators will also help us to set future targets, track success, identify areas for improvement and provide tangible value for money for our stakeholders.

We would like to thank this year's sabbatical team for all their hard work in establishing ECSA as a leading, ground breaking association.

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VP Education, James Moohan, will focus on the quality of student's education and will develop and utilize the capabilities of class representatives and centre representatives to do this. The new whole college approach will ensure consistency across campuses for meetings and messages to students as well as providing feedback that can be addressed in more operationally efficient manner.

VP Women's, Katy Nixon, will focus on ensuring equality and empowerment for the majority of our student population, women. However Katy's work will be to benefit *all* Edinburgh College students, and we recognize the aims of the remit can only be carried out by working across campuses with all genders to ensure that we are not only raising awareness of issues to women but also changing attitudes and mindsets of both men and women. VP Women's also incorporates the need to provide direct support to all four liberation groups who this year will also operate under financial autonomy.

VP Welfare and Activities, Raphael Lehmann, will focus on ensuring internal welfare services such as C:Card services and college run welfare services are promoted and accessible as well as promoting external

welfare services where appropriate. VP Welfare will also ensure that clubs and societies are active on all campus and organize external social events for students.

President, Kelly Parry, will focus on building a sustainable Student Association that will fulfill the aims of all its stakeholders. The President's role will also focus on income generation, brand awareness, campaigns and regional coordination. The role will also ensure that feedback and communication to Edinburgh College is efficient and enables us to work in partnership effectively.

Sabbatical officers will retain some campus elements on a day to day capacity but will be expected to work across campuses.

Executive Officers

The Executive Officers this year have been truly trailblazing and ECSA would not have been able to operate as it has without the efforts of the inaugural Executive Officers to which we owe a huge amount of thanks for getting us through the year. They should all be extremely proud of everything that they have achieved this year and we hope that they took away something valuable from the experience. Most importantly, in years to come, when they read about ECSA in the news and see amazing things being done, they can look back and know with certainty that they built the foundations of Edinburgh College Students' Association.

Below are listed the Executive Officers of ECSA for 2012/13

Granton Executive Officers

Karen White - Events and Societies

James McLeod - LGBT Officer (Open Place)

Emily Aitken - LGBT Officer (Women's Place)

Rachel Anderson - Students with Disabilities Officer

Ellidh White - Welfare Officer

Kat Hogg - Women's Officer

Mirage Nepal - International Officer

Romus Uprety - BME Officer

Tao MacLeod - Sports and Fitness Officer

Joel McDiarmid - Open position

Carina Cairns - Open position

Rowena Martin - Open position

Milton Road and Midlothian Executive Officers

Mark Skinner - Sports and Fitness Officer

John Hein - Students with Disabilities Officer

Sam Johnston - Womens Officer

Kyle Weighand - LGBT Officer (Open Place)

Claire Wright - LGBT Officer (Women's Place)

Vicente Noviello - International Officer

Piera Heras Rodriguez-Palancas - Welfare Officer

Shemika Thomas - BME Officer

Neil Hansen - Ethics and Sustainability Officer

Jamie Roy - Events and Societies Officer

Kerry Lewis - Open Position (Womens remit)

Eryka Anglika Bianchowicz - Open Position (International events remit)

Kieran Alexander - Open Position (Graphic design remit)

Sighthill Executive Officers

Jan Irvine - LGBT Officer

Adam Gatherer - Events & Societies Officer

Denise Gayle - BME Officer

James MacLeod - Welfare Officer

Manoelito Nunes - International Officer

Margaret Johnstone - Womens' Officer

Raphael Lehmann - Ethics & Sustainability

Samantha Stewart - Sports & Fitness Officer

Sue Loumgair - Students with Disabilities Officer

Ada Pagan - Open Position

Kieran Menzies - Open Position

Claire Haswell - Open Position

Well-resourced and independent student representation and engagement.

Democracy

The 2012/13 sabbatical elections saw students from all campuses elect three campus Vice-Presidents that were elected from the 3 legacy Colleges to be based at different campuses but represent all students in the College. This allowed the extensive knowledge built up by each Vice President about their own campuses to be retained so we could bring together the best practices from the previous Associations.

Elected by Sighthill students was Sandra Colburn, Kelly Parry was elected by Milton Road and Midlothian students and James Moohan, elected by Granton students and by a cross campus vote, John Martin, Student President.

Elections were held for campus executives with both specific roles and open positions being created later in the year. Thirteen executive positions were created at each of the campuses bringing a huge array of talents and experience to the heart of ECSA to help us build a diverse and representative union. The largest democratic action in ECSA, the election of class reps to represent their classmates across the College was a huge success and a robust baseline to be building upon in the years ahead. Reps have been meeting within their campuses monthly and within their departments to focus specifically on learning and teaching issues.

The promotion and development of the class rep system has continued through the year and more and more buy-in from staff is building up. This is crucial to the success of the rep system and also to Edinburgh College as the system is the most crucial part of engaging students in democratising their education.

External democracy

ECSA has also taken part in the democratic processes of NUS UK and NUS Scotland with Kelly Parry being elected as one of two NUS Scotland (NUSS) Priority Campaign Convenors and James Moohan as one of two NUSS Education Campaign Convenors, both positions on the NUSS Scottish Executive Committee for 2013/14.

Katy Nixon has been elected onto the NUSS Womens campaign committee, Sue Loumgair to the NUSS Disabled Students Committee and John Hein to the NUSS Democratic Procedures Committee for AC 2013/14

James Moohan was also elected to the NUS UK Further Education Committee and John Martin to the NUS UK Union Development Committee, positions that they hold until October 2013.

Class Representation

Student inductions.

All student inductions were attended by a representative of the Students' Association this year in order to introduce students to the SA and to raise its profile over all campuses. Many students benefited from a class room visit from members of the association to highlight the benefits of the SA and get students involved. Stalls were set up in all campuses to engage students, and it was fantastic to meet and talk to all students about the kind of students' association they wanted on their campuses and what we could do for them.

The positive results from this activity were well attended SRC and learning and teaching meetings, bigger, better and more varied student events on and cross campus, the recruitment of work placement volunteers tailored to students' courses and more elected student executives with lively contested student elections held on all campuses. Thank you and well done to everyone who got involved, it was a fantastic first year!

Class reps/centre reps and training.

Class reps were elected in September and given full training from Sparqs in order that they had the tools necessary to carry out their roles successfully. Students received a full session on how to positively perform in their role as class rep and how the students' association supports them in it. Feedback has been extremely positive this year with many student issues being brought to the SA through SRC which has resulted in positive changes for students. Student rep councils were held on all campuses and were well attended this year by reps, with most college issues raised dealt with positively.

Best practice from last year's Partners in Learning group was utilized to create learning and teaching meetings between key staff of the college, heads of centre, Idt's, class reps and the SA. This was done to provide a solid framework of commitment to students that all learning and teaching issues could be quickly resolved through working in partnership, and to provide the highest level of engagement for our students.

A monthly calendar was created to ensure reps could meet key staff every month. This year, due to communication and space issues, some centres/hubs were more effective at providing a high level of representation for students than others. In spite of this, many reps from all campuses had the opportunity to meet regularly with their key staff to resolve course related issues and make improvements to the quality of their education.

Evaluation from this year's involvement in the colleges' quality system and feedback from the centre/hub meetings has given the students' association an invaluable, informative and clear route in how to improve the quality of our representation for our students into next year and beyond.

The future of class representation.

One of the major tasks for ECSA this year is to align the College Outcome Agreement to a Student Outcome and Partnership Agreement using best practice and common aims. A working group has been set up between ECSA, the student body and Sparqs to create a workable student partnership agreement. This will be complete by December.

In order that we achieve our aims, we will provide a full calendar of class rep meetings, learning and teaching meetings, and class rep training by summer 2013. We will also work on providing workshops for staff, and refresher training for reps throughout the year. Class Rep training will be tailored to meet the needs of different groups.

ECSA is committed to continue to deliver tailored, quality class rep training going forward, and this year, we are currently recruiting our own in house class rep trainers. This will bring numerous benefits to our students, as it shows we can demonstrate strong peer led training for all reps, provide and monitor the quality of the training for a strong student voice, provide student employment opportunities and provide a strong and supportive students' association where all reps are fully represented. As well as this, all class reps will have the opportunity meet in their working groups monthly to ensure issues are dealt with promptly and positively.

Exciting, innovative and developmental student opportunities

Activities

Fresher's Week

Fresher's week was of a record breaking size and a huge success with fun provided by gaming, bouncy castles, free pizza and more drawing students to the event where many organisations provided welfare advice. We also tempted students with free pizza and the chance to win cash prizes and Kindles. It was hard work getting Fresher's week organised but the ECSA team, despite forming just weeks before pulled off a fantastic week of events that welcomed students to ECSA and was the first time many had engaged with a College Students' Association. We also developed stronger links with many organisations that we hope will continue to benefit students for many years. This saw an absolute record breaking amount of stalls and freebies for students and made Fresher's fair the biggest that there has ever been! Not content with being record breaking we also threw in free pizza, bouncy castles, games, cash prizes and a few lucky students even won kindles and a free lunch for a year!

De-stress the Distress

This event, carried on from 2011/12 was such a success that this year, seventeen organisations held stalls at the De-stress the Distress event organised jointly with Edinburgh College. This one day event focused on mental well-being in students with organisations such as Penumbra, the self-harm charity, the Scottish Association for Mental Health and the National Union of Students attending and making the event a huge success with over a thousand students engaging with the event.

Sports

ECSA have provided support to students wishing to attend boxing training at Sparta Gym in Portobello, to a constituted hockey society and to a football team who have been sponsored by our Healthy Body, Healthy Mind campaign. The biggest success has been the fair trade football tournaments organised through the year with eight teams taking part in our fair trade promoting football tournament, eight in our first inter-college tournament and also two mixed staff and student teams attending a tournament in Glasgow with the aim of promoting mental well-being. One of the Fairtrade 5 a Side football involved over 100 students from all campuses of Edinburgh College. The Fairtrade 5 a Side football involved over 100 students from all campuses at Edinburgh College. The event was supported by Street Soccer Scotland who officiated all matches. The proceeds from the event went to Fairtrade Foundation, who support farmers in developing countries to get a fair price for the food and other products they produce. The event also had its first ever women's team with players from Hibernian and the Scotland Youth Team. They were unfortunate not to proceed to the final losing 2-1 against a well-prepared Granton star team. Students from Milton Road were the eventual victors after putting on a stellar performance. We had a follow up to this event at the Power League in Portobello in which teams from Heriot-Watt and Napier Universities also competed in what was a great day for everyone involved.

ECSA Football Society is a mixed gendered 11 a side society that trains at the Spartans academy on Tuesday evenings. The team is trained by Marc Wood who is a Civil Engineering Student at Granton Campus. The team as with all ECSA clubs and societies support one of the Associations key' campaigns. Think Positive about mental health and Healthy body Healthy Minds campaigns aim to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and raise awareness. ECSA Football Society is an inclusive and supportive peer led safe space environment where you can meet new people, get involved in competitive matches and help support important campaigns.

The Students' Association Hockey Society first started in 2011 as part of Telford College Students union. Current Hockey Society President and Sport and Fitness officer at Granton campus Tao McLeod has worked tirelessly to build participation. The hockey society received a boost in 2012 when we made additional funding available to them. And they recently participated in the NUS Think Positive about Mental Health campaign and have adopted the campaign as their sponsor. They also take part in competitive matches and put on social events for students.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is an important day, using resources from the 'The EQUALS' coalition who are a group of charities and membership organisations, supported by a range of partners in arts and entertainment. We held an event in the foyer area of Sighthill. Student reps and officers put the debate starters on the walls and positively challenged students on their opinions of the debate starters. The event was a great success with lots of students engaging in positive dialogue. We also asked students to fill a speech bubble with their thoughts on gender equality. We took pictures of the students and their bubbles and added them to facebook. This was a very positive and engaging event

One Billion Rising

Katy Nixon and her HNC counselling class held a one day event promoting the campaign One Billion Rising that raises awareness of the fact that one in three women in the world will be subjected to abuse at some time in their lives and this event led to Katy winning the NUS Scotland 'Most Inspirational Women of the Year' award. The one Billion Rising Even was to bring an end to gender based violence. The event succeeded in creating visibility and understanding of the interconnection between issues such as poverty, corruption, greed, environmental plunder, imperialism, religious marginalization, immigration, labour, and political repression, and violence against women not just at Edinburgh College but in society also. The campaign was hugely successful at educating men on why they should join Women and call for an end to violence and Gender Inequality. Katy Nixon Vice-President Women's for 2013/14 spearheaded this event and was joined by President Elect Kelly Parry and Stacey Devine, the NUS Women's Officer at the Scottish Government. If you would like to know more about this and many other events contact Katy at knixon@ecsaonline.co.uk or visit the One Billion Rising website <http://onebillionrising.org>.

One Scotland, Many Cultures

One Scotland Many cultures on January 30th 2013 was a celebration of multiculturalism at Edinburgh College. Students were treated to a diverse range of food and drinks, performers and workshops. This began with a performance from a Scottish piper who belted out Flower of Scotland amongst other traditional Scottish Songs. We had the South Asian Bhangra Society from Edinburgh University who treated students through song and dance. We also had performances from Bollywood performers and belly dancing. The day was concluded with several workshops on African Tabla drumming. Students young and old learned the history of Tabla drums and food was provided free by the students association. The students association also informed students of the NUS national campaign Fund Scotland's Future to protect college funding. Hundreds of Students signed up to the campaign.

Aye or Naw Independence Debate

ECSA felt that it was important that the views of our students were heard by those seeking to influence our decision in The Aye or Naw Scottish independence debate held at Milton road campus and it was hugely successful. Our guest panellists were Labour MSP Neil Findlay and Scottish National Party MSP Marco Biaggio. The chair was NUS Scotland Women's Officer Stacey Devine. Students asked the panellists about their vision for Scotland's future and whether we should become Independent or remain part of the 2014 referendum. The

students in attendance learned more about the Yes Campaign and The Better Together Campaigns. Our hope is when 2014 comes, students at Edinburgh College will be able to make a more informed decision as to how our country should be governed.

Fairtrade Week

We launched our Fairtrade campaign during Fairtrade week where we sold ethically sourced produce to students, promoted Fairtrade goods and companies and showed off our new 'Smoothie Bike' which is a push bike on a stand that has been specially converted for us to power a smoothie blender when peddled. This was jointly funded by our Healthy Body, Healthy Mind fund and makes the link between physical exercise, healthy eating and the importance of using ethically sourced produce. In partnership with the One World shop we also sold a selection of Fairtrade goods on campus, further raising awareness of the products available.

Educational Trips

ECSA was delighted this year to be able to facilitate two groups of students to go on educational trips to Scottish landmarks. Most of the students were from a country of origin other than Britain and went to monuments such as the Wallace monument and Linlithgow Palace. Friend were made and a lot learnt about Scottish history which is very beneficial to students not from Scotland integrating more happily. It was also an opportunity for a current Travel and Tourism student to gain experience in tour guiding, for which he was in training for externally.

Halloween

We cackled our way through Halloween on our broomsticks raising, money for breast cancer awareness through dressing up and encouraging students and staff to take part in spooky Halloween games. Never one to miss an opportunity to get dressed up, our Children in Need event was massively successful. Many of you got involved and came to college in your onesie, baked cakes and got your piggy banks out to raise around £2000 for an amazing cause! A massive thanks to you all for that, again we ripped up the record book and raised 5 times what we raised the year before.

Potterrow club night

With Christmas chasing our tails we were busy as little elves organising the first ever Edinburgh College Student Association club night which took place a week before Christmas in one of the biggest club venues in Scotland, Potterrow. We showcased the very best music talent and students spent an awesome night being entertained by the beats of Hostile Takeover, a music production group from Milton Road.

Healthy Body Healthy Mind - Scottish Triple Challenge

Students at Sighthill campus tried their hardest to beat Scotland by 'Hiking' up Ben Nevis (10.5 miles) using only the steps in their campus, 'Rowing' the width of Scotland (62 miles) using only the rowing machines on their campus and finally 'cycling' the length of Scotland (691 miles). This was a huge challenge to highlight that a healthy body contributes to a healthy mind and the event was a great awareness raising challenge and one participant raised approximately £350 for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf!

Campaigns

Mental Well-Being

Students have a lot of stressors at College and it is crucial that advice and support is offered to them as much as possible. We are delighted to be supporting College staff that deal with welfare by promoting mental well-being. A plethora of leaflets and other advice is available across campuses for students with any concerns around their mental health or that of someone they know. Although we are primarily a signposting service to other well established sources of help both within and out with the College, We have this year invested in training one of our SLO's to deliver Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) training. SMHFA is a two day course that equips participants with the skills to help in a crisis such as a panic attack or suicidal thoughts and feelings, ask questions that will help the person, listen without judgment and give the person space to talk about how they feel and give relevant information about help that is available.

We have also provided, in conjunction with the national campaign to reduce suicide 'Choose Life', Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) to staff and students which is for for caregivers who want to feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. Completers of the two day course are also then qualified to deliver Suicide Talk which is a short, three hour course for anyone over the age of fifteen encouraging people to talk openly and safely about suicide and thus reduce the stigma around the subject which compounds research into suicide and make it more difficult for someone with suicidal thoughts to talk about them

Sexual Health

ECSA is now providing the free condom service C:Card across campuses with many thousands of condoms being given out through the year. We also act as a signposting service to other well established sexual health organisations such as the NHS for students that have any questions or issues around sexual health and we stock a wide variety of leaflets and maintain a comprehensive contact list so that we are able to get students the advice they need as effectively as possible.

College catering

The pricing and quality of food available to students varied considerably at the beginning of the year but successful evidence gathering and lobbying by ECSA has seen prices and quality becoming more similar across the College. Although some prices have gone up, overall the prices have come down although there is still a lot of room for improvement and we look forward to the catering across all Colleges becoming of the same quality and value as the catering in Granton.

Fairtrade

We have a strong desire to work in partnership with the College to become a Fairtrade college and association. The Fairtrade campaign promotes ethical sourcing of products and guarantees a fair income for producers of food and other products. We have drafted a Fairtrade policy for ECSA and joined the Edinburgh Fairtrade Steering Group. The UK Fairtrade Foundation approved a grant of £500 to ECSA and the Scottish Fair Trade Forum has facilitated a partnership link between the College and the University of Edinburgh, which achieved Fairtrade status in 2004. The University of Edinburgh has been sharing its experience of Fairtrade and mentoring the Association regarding the steps to achieving Fairtrade status.

Fund Scotland Future

This was a national NUS-led campaign that fought successfully for a reduction in the cut to College budgets. It won an amazing total of £14.6 million back from the government, £1.9 million for additional student support through bursaries and childcare, £2.1 million targeted for some college regions to meet increased demand, so no

student loses out, £6.6 million for additional places, focused on women returning to study and part time students and £4 million to support regionalisation and mergers, with a requirement that colleges are supporting the creation of strong, autonomous, sustainable and appropriately funded students' associations. Edinburgh College students were one of the leading lobbyists of the Scottish Government for this campaign which has won huge benefits for students across Scotland

Multi-Culturalism

Promoting acceptance and understanding within a richly diverse multicultural society is something that we believe is crucial to a safe and successful Scotland. The event 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' at Granton further opened students eyes to the beauty of multiculturalism and spearheaded our promotion of it this year and ECSA has also been very proactive in leading demonstrations against fascists such as the Scottish Defence League, English Defence League and British National Party. Throughout the year we have showed these groups that they are not welcome in Scotland and sent them home to resounding cheers and media acclaim. We also secured huge acclaim by our support of the demonstration against the United Kingdom Independence Party leader Nigel Farage who is vehemently against a multicultural society.

Zero Tolerance

ECSA is an Association with zero tolerance for sexual harassment and is putting in place a policy that requires all members, staff and also venues that ECSA uses to adhere to our Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment Policy. The defining characteristics of sexual harassment are that it is unwanted, persistent and of a sexual nature. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Unwanted sexual comments (including comments about your body or private life)
- Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendoes, and offensive gestures
- Wolf whistling, catcalling or offensive sexual noises
- Groping, pinching or smacking of your body, such as your bottom or breasts
- Having your skirt or top lifted without agreeing
- Someone exposing their sexual organs to you without consent
- The above list is not exhaustive however and harassment

White Ribbon

ECSA supports the White Ribbon campaign which is a male led campaign that gets men to commit never to commit, condone or remain silent about men's violence against women. We have been asking men to sign up to that pledge and distributing materials promoting the campaign. We have also taken the first steps in becoming a White Ribbon accredited College and helped them with facilitating an enlightening focus group on male attitudes towards violence to women. We hope to be

Defending local and quality Education

Hundreds of emails have been sent to senior management by students angry at the lack of consultation over course moves and other curriculum changes. Defending local access to courses is something students feel very strongly about, in line with the College commitment during the merger process to maintain local provision of access level courses. ECSA has been very active in lobbying the College to stick to that commitment and also to maintain the amount of contact time that students will have with lecturers next year.

ECSA sent a coach load of students to support the national demonstration for education called by the NUS. This was the first national demonstration held for education since 2010 and the turnout was in the region of 10,000. We were proud to be at the very front of the demonstration leading the way and students became much more involved in ECSA campaigns after attending. The overall impact of the demonstration is hard to quantify but it has definitely focused minds on the need for free, fair and funded education and built a solid base to work from over the next couple of years.

There has also been a huge amount of casework carried out this year by ECSA that has led to improvements in education for students. Students have come to us from help from every curriculum area and from every mode of attendance. We've helped students stay on courses, get assistance they need and won huge refunds of fees for students as well. We have tackled student disciplinaries, fought for better and fairer access into university, worked with you to help out issues with bursaries and delays with SAAS funding and worked tirelessly in partnership with the college to make sure your college and learning experience is the very best it can be.

Housing

Housing is often the largest single expense for college students and it is extremely important that students have access to comfortable and affordable housing. The coalition government have implemented a policy called 'the Bedroom Tax' that is directly affecting tens of thousands of people and pushing them into a poverty trap. Students are being affected by this and there are a disproportionate amount of disabled students being affected. The tax means a reduction in welfare payments to anyone with a spare room in their house. These spare rooms are often used by students with carers and students who have children stay for a few days a week so are absolutely essential for many yet being made unaffordable. This is an ideologically driven policy that attacks the provision of social housing and is unacceptable to us. There is not enough one-bedroomed accommodation to house all those affected and many people may become homeless because of this policy. ECSA has formed a cross-college working group to co-ordinate the campaign against the bedroom tax and has supported a demonstration outside the Scottish Parliament where Kelly Parry gave a rousing speech to hundreds of protesters as well as the national demonstration in Glasgow and is forming links with local and national anti-bedroom tax groups

A supportive and diverse environment, where the rights of all students are celebrated

Sticks and stones may break your bones but names will forever hurt you.

Being part of a minority group means you are at increased risk of physical, sexual or verbal attacks for simply not fitting into the stereotypical norms of society. Or in the case of women, despite being a majority in the population,

At Edinburgh College Students' Association we strive to remove stigma and discrimination from all the liberation groups; Black and Ethnic Minorities, Women, LGBT and Disabled students.

This year we have done this by raising awareness and making sure that all publications, events and campaigns is accessible and representative of students studying at Edinburgh College.

LGBT

There are LGBT Safe Spaces on all campuses of Edinburgh College, run and attended by LGBT people and allies. The groups have staff support and volunteer and access to a budget for events. There are LGBT Officers on all campuses who support LGBT people, making sure that the college reflects their life in all publications and curriculum.

Events that the LGBT Officers have supported:

World Aids Day;

- We marked World Aids day by inviting key organisations such as Waverley Care, LGBT Youth Scotland and Crew. Together with these organisations, ECSA are committed to provide comprehensive Sexual Health information and resources and to reducing the stigma of AIDS and HIV.

LGBT History Month

LGBT history month events was another huge success! James McLeod organised an arts event for students of Edinburgh College to express themselves through art. He organised workshops to develop the 2013 History month theme of Family.

Anti-bullying week

A week generally celebrated in the United States, the LGBT Officer in Sighthill thought she would bring the awareness to Edinburgh College. We held a quiz with a Tesco discount card as a prize. Students were also asked to confess their bullying sins in anonymous confession boxes. This allowed students feel better and increase their confidence as a confession no matter how small can be a weight lifted from their shoulders.

Women's

Achievements

ECSA are immensely proud to have put forward solid arguments to ensure that this year Edinburgh College has a full time sabbatical women's officer as part of how the association is structured. This ensures firstly that at least one of our four sabbatical officers is a woman and can represent the issues that our 52% women students face. It also leads the way for more women standing in elections in Edinburgh College Students' Association and will hopefully inspire and encourage a new generation of women to self-promote themselves in positions of power. This also

means we can continue to lobby Edinburgh College and its Board of Management to have a fairer structure in terms of how many women sit on our regional board and executive management teams.

Having achieved the amazing step of implementing a sabbatical women's officer this year means that the student association will have a nominated full time officer that can sufficiently deal with the needs of disabled students, LGBTQ students, black students and women students and ensure that every student has an equal experience at Edinburgh college.

Campaigns

ECSA has also been at the forefront of leading the way in terms of campaigns for women's liberation that involved all students, regardless of gender; having run events that raised awareness of violence towards women, sexual objectification and exploitation through campaigns and external agencies such as:

- One Billion Rising
- No More Page 3
- White Ribbon
- Engender
- NUS Scotland Zero Tolerance Campaign
- NUS Fair representation
- Get Savi in Partnership with NUS Scotland and Women's Aid



Students have been actively involved in all our campaigns with One Billion Rising Organiser progressing through engagement to become a full time sabbatical officer.

Internal Focus:

One of the biggest issues facing our women students at the beginning of the year was undoubtedly childcare access and payments. We successfully worked in partnership with Edinburgh College to find quick resolutions, ensuring that we halt the trend of women leaving courses early due to this common problem. Taking this even further ECSA successfully lobbied the Scottish Government to re-examine funding for vulnerable groups with a heavy emphasis on women's need to access better resourced childcare. The Government has recently announced they are going to redistribute some funding to address exactly this need which is highly welcomed from ECSA and its members.

Recognition:

ECSA were also leading the way nationally in terms of women's representation, with a whole host of awards and successful recognition of our hard work:

- Kelly Parry, Vice President was shortlisted for Student Officer of the year at NUS Scotland Conference 13' and was elected to serve on the Scottish Executive Committee, boosting representation of women from Edinburgh College significantly. Kelly was also shortlisted for inspirational woman of the year at NUS Scotland Women's Conference 13'.
- Sandra Colburn, Vice President was shortlisted for Inspirational Woman of the year at NUS Scotland Women's Conference 13
- Katy Nixon, incoming Vice President was the winner of Inspirational Woman of the year at NUS Scotland Women's Conference 13 and elected to serve on NUS Scotland Women's Committee.
- Sue Loughmair, Sighthill Executive Officer was elected to serve on the NUS Scotland Disabled Students Committee.
- ECSA were also the very proud winners of NUS Scotland Women's Campaign Awards 'Achievement of the Year' in recognition of our work.

BME

Nationally young people from BME communities in the current political climate are disproportionately represented, especially in the groups of young people who are at risk of being disenfranchised from society and are often the target of religious hatred. The students' Association has always represented minority and liberation groups through social activities and campaigns that encouraged all students to come together in celebration and to participate in social and academic activities. We made a strategic decision to alter the type of support and campaigns we ran for our BME students in response to their concerns. The strategy for supporting students from a minority ethnic background consisted of Culture Campaigns and Community Campaigns. We also promoted active participation in our events and societies by making them accessible and socially inclusive by design. We increased the number of cultural activities that we ran, these included a partnership with the Scottish Football Association and the Edinburgh Cricket team as well as providing BME students with the opportunity to travel to Glasgow to participate in the BME football league.

Campaigns

The students Association made a collective decision to be more proactive in our opposition to Right Wing Fascists who were actively promoting hatred in Edinburgh and the Lothian's. Students at Milton road campus founded the Edinburgh College UAF group who regularly met with students over all campuses and attended anti fascism marches with the sabbatical officers.

James Moohan Vice President for Granton campus spoke at the Edinburgh UAF Rally inviting racist groups to use education to transform their lives and urged them to stop promoting hatred and start living a peaceful and positive life.

- Kelly Parry spoke at the UAF Berwick Rally urging the people of Berwick to oppose racism and fascism.
- Our presence at a recent UKIP demonstration was convened after students concerns that a political party who promotes the end of multiculturalism within Britain was gaining a foothold in constituencies in which they live and throughout Scotland. James Moohan appeared on BBC Newsnight debating with Roger Helmer UKIP MEP. James reiterated our belief that UKIP policies are inherently racist. Our students are deeply concerned about their political beliefs and history of candidates who have made racist and homophobic remarks. Our students feel that because they are from an Ethnic background they are being asked by UKIP to abandon their religion and their culture by and assimilate to their brand of Britain and accept their imperialistic ideology.
- The purpose of our One Scotland Many cultures event on January 30th in addition to the September 11th remembrance day celebration which we did in partnership with college demonstrated that Edinburgh college embraces multiculturalism and welcomes students from all over the world.
- We have also campaigned for improved facilities for BME students at Edinburgh College. We lobbied the college to ensure that there is an accessible prayer rooms on all campuses.
- The most successful campaign that we have ran with students this year focused on the college improving the catering service and facilities on all campuses. We lobbied the college to ensure that there were fully accessible prayer rooms. We were glad that the college responded immediately and appropriately as we expected. We also lobbied the college to provide catering for students who for religious reasons could only eat specially prepared meat (halal). The students' Association along with Mandy Purdy who is newly appointed catering manager agreed a calendar where we would provide an international menu for students on a regular basis. Mandy also ensured that there was a menu item that was available for students weekly.

Community

We have many students from BME groups that travel from their homeland to study in Edinburgh, we found that many struggle with being so far from home.

- We provided students with the opportunity to engage in the wider BME community by creating contacts cross the city to help students acclimatise to their new environment. We achieved this by establishing a close network of groups and by creating partnerships with the south Asian society at Edinburgh University, the Nepalese students association, the Leith Sikh community temple and the Edinburgh central Mosque. Throughout the year we have arranged meals with students at the Ghurka Café of which we established a close partnership. We also took students from Sighthill campus on an excursion to a whiskey distiller.
- In 2012 we redeveloped the BME Boys group that had ran the previous year. 'MBE boy's' was a campus-community-based project that was run in conjunction with fast forward. Students and young people from the wider community would meet weekly at Granton campus and participate in workshops, social excursions and projects that were mainly based on sexual education and substance abuse.
- The BME Mission possible campaign was launched in late 2012 along with fast forward. We decided to use the sponsorship money that we had obtained from the previous year to build a web based campaign warning students about the dangers of smoking sheesa in addition to a community based sexual health outreach program for our female Bme students. Granton student Faraz Mughal who spearheaded the project felt that young students needed to be educated on the health risks that are associated with the Sheesha pipe. Faraz along with Bme executive officer Romus Uprety and International executive officer Mirage Nepal also took to the streets, speaking with local businesses that promoted the use of sheesha pipes in order to persuade them to restrict their usage to people over the age of 21 or advertise the associated dangers of smoking Sheesha. The campaign was hugely successful in raising awareness of an issue that is prevalent within the Bme community. We hope to continue to build upon our strong community relations that have benefited many students at Edinburgh College.

Disabled

ECSA took the commitment to raise awareness for hidden and visible disabilities at the heart of what we do and together with SPARQS have spearheaded accessible Class Rep training for students with learning difficulties and their inclusion in the Class Rep system.

Events and campaigns

- Healthy Body Healthy Mind which is promoting the link between physical exercise and mental well-being and has a very positive impact on students we engaged with.
- No Name Calling Week, a campaign to stop verbal bullying
- See-ME, the national campaign to reduce stigma around mental health

Community Campaigns

ECSA has also been active in lobbying Edinburgh Council to reverse its decision to close The Engine Shed and other facilities that provide employment training to students with additional support needs. The council has been reviewing the provision of these facilities over AC12/13 and we believe it is absolutely essential that these services are not cut as they have already suffered in the previous two years with companies that provided training and employment to people with disabilities across Edinburgh ceasing to operate. A large community campaign is building up behind us and we look forward to supporting the continued provision of these facilities in coming years.

Internal Campaigns

This year ECSA was excited and honoured to support Sue Loumgair in raising awareness for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Sue lost her hearing later in life and was paired with a lovely dog called Gerry. When Sue was elected as Disabilities Officer at Sighthill she was proactive in making herself visible and known to the Additional Support Needs Students. Sue has become very popular with the ASN students and they are becoming more involved with the student association as a result with several of them expressing an interest in becoming class reps next term.

A class for students with additional support needs contacted the Students' Association after a walk round their local campus highlighted a serious cause for concern after one of the students was almost run over. The class found that the main entrance for the college was dangerous for disabled students as there was no pedestrian crossing or traffic island. As a result of the Students' Association raising this issue, and working in partnership with Edinburgh College, the Council's Roads department agree that they will extend the pavement at the entrance and improve the street lighting. This work will take place when the tram works at the bottom of Bankhead Avenue are complete to minimise disruption.

Our partnerships

It is appropriate for an association with such a strong record in women's rights to be opening this section with the following quote from the ever inspirational Helen Keller

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

Helen Keller was not just a renowned feminist and pacifist but also embodied the idea of partnership. Without partnership she would have struggled to achieve what she did

It is with the ethos contained within the quote above in mind that we decided that partnership had to be one of the key values of the Association. Partnerships between students, classes and campuses and partnerships between ECSA and the College at all levels will be crucial to the continued success of the College and the Association as whatever accomplishments have been created within tertiary education in Scotland already have been accomplished collectively.

Internal Partnerships

Many within the College share a vision common with ECSA of a life changing educational experience at Edinburgh College and fortunately or not, we have worked with too many to list! Our deepening partnership with LDT's and all the support staff is the first to be touched on here though. With LDT's continued and expanding support of the democratic processes of ECSA by helping us elect reps and cascade information when needed will be a key link in our success going forward. Without reps and staff to help us elect them, the feedback loop that is crucial in engaging students in creating their own education would fall apart.

The support staff at the College have done a lot of amazing work this year and it has been an absolute pleasure to work in partnership with them improving students' welfare and getting them more involved in the life and work of the College. They have not just been student support but also association support and have put in a huge amount of work helping us get events off the ground and running successfully. Our SLO's were supported through our sabbatical election process by staff that brought their wide range of experience and knowledge to the table. We have developed a very close relationship with the staff that look after ASN students at Sighthill and their representation within the Association this year has been very visible and beneficial for everyone. We have also worked with support staff to assist students in need of funding and through constructive feedback got extra resources put into processing childcare applications that were taking a long time to process.

Our relationship with lecturing staff and their union EIS-FELA has flourished this year and we have continuously built on the solid foundations of students before us to create a community of students and staff who want the same thing from the College. We want to maintain and improve the quality of education as much as the lecturing staff does and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they fight against the damage being done to education through repeated savage cuts.

We have also built up strong partnerships with the Board of Management and its sub-committees. We have been influential in the choosing of new Board of Management members for Edinburgh College through the Nominations Committee and are delighted that the Board will be balanced in respects of gender from July.

We are also very pleased with the direction the Academic Council is taking and are encouraged by the fact that more than half of the members of the Council have been democratically elected from students and staff. That is a great model that we hope others will look at and emulate.

External partnerships

We have developed numerous external partnerships this year as well, including local community campaigning for a better society, whether that is through combating extremism in fascist groups or combating extreme welfare

reform policies. We have also built a healthy relationship with local and national media as shown by continued coverage of our campaigns throughout the year culminating in VP James Moohan taking on UKIP on Newsnight. A very special relationship has also been built with the National Union of Students and its' staff and constituent members across Britain. Many Colleges have been in touch this year to share and to seek advice on developing their unions as successfully as we have been developing ours.

As we have grown in experience and wisdom, we have learnt that we cannot choose what life will deliver to us but can choose how we respond. Through critical reflection on the events of the year we have begun to build an entirely new framework built on the power of partnership for what students want ECSA to be.

This framework will evolve over years and the most crucial key to our success will be the power of partnership and focusing on the unity in our community for individually, we are one drop but together, we are an ocean.

Results of Student Engagement Survey and recommendations for 13/14

Method

On the 29th and 30th May 2013, the ECSA current sabbatical team, aided by its Student Liaison Officers and student volunteers, met with students in all campuses in order to collect their views on where the Edinburgh College Students' Associations priorities should lie and what direction our work in the coming year should take.

The Survey was available to students electronically and in paper format and contained eleven questions that were considered user friendly but likely to yield high amounts of useful data.

At the engagement days the team were highly visible in ECSA branded 'hoodies'. The team engaged students by incentivising participation with a prize draw element of completing the survey and confectionery on the day.

Participation and engagement was successful and the survey generated a sample size of 337 students from across all campuses.

The questions to students were formulated to give a mix of qualitative and quantitative feedback and the results will form the Students' Association 'Plan of Work' for 13/14.

Analysis

- It is clear that above all students rate representing their views and improving their education most highly; as our primary objective we welcome that students regard us highly in this role.
- Although students rated representation so highly, students rated welfare priorities as mostly financial advice and mental wellbeing above academic advice. This suggests that students do not always equate representation to academia, but rather take a holistic approach to their education.
- That the Students' Association are rated highly in community campaigns, with a number of recommendations given about where ECSA could do this work.
- Students have overwhelmingly expressed that whole-college, large events and clubs such as Fresher's, Job Fairs and Sports Clubs should be given priority. Students also rated social events highly with charity fundraisers also rating highly.
- The word analysis found that sports and social activities rated almost equally, displaying the real need for established sports clubs cross campus.
- Students have a significant desire for access to advice, specifically round issues such as childcare and health.

Recommendations

- That ECSA should provide representation as the highest priority of what we do, and that this should be holistic approach that supports students in their wellbeing as well as academic representation.
- That ECSA should liaise with Student Services and share these findings in order to ascertain where cross overs and gaps can be harmonized for efficiency and to avoid duplication.
- That ECSA should use their 'clout' to take part in community campaigns when there is a strong mandate to do so.

- That ECSA should focus on social events and clubs that run cross-campus and should incorporate social, physical and employability factors.
- That ECSA prioritises significant resources into sports, clubs and social events.
- That ECSA run well communicated, visible drop in sessions to allow students direct access to advice on welfare issues.