

End of Year Impact Report

From ECSA's inception, we have taken great pride in our job of representing students and bringing their interests to the centre of all that happens in our college. Much work has been done on creating the ECSA identity as well as intensifying and creating new partnerships with internal and external stakeholders. From challenging beginnings, ECSA has developed into a truly professional organisation.

ECSA's exists to represent and empower students. This year ECSA have worked for & with students across all campuses to engage them on the issues that matter to them. From organising and facilitating discussion on the independence referendum to campaigning on the shortfall in bursaries and taking their views to the corridors of power at the heart of Holyrood.



ECSA must continue to advocate for students locally and nationally on the issues that affect them. To ensure the best deal and opportunities for our students.

A successful year in which ECSA through its continued partnership has represented the student voice across many aspects of the college from the work on Recruitment, Applications & Admissions to having student representatives attend focus groups on the colleges Outcome Agreement & meet with Education Scotland.

Through a continued relationship based on respect, partnership and a shared vision, we are fully confident that both Edinburgh College and ECSA will continue to work together and ensure that both the college and its students are able to achieve the very best.

'Education is all a matter of building bridges'

- Ralph Ellison

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeroen van Herk'.

Jeroen van Herk
President
Edinburgh College Students' Association

Executive Summary

This year ECSA created its first ever Operational Plan. After implementing a new staff & sabbatical structure. The Operational plan was devised to ensure the correct resources and support was put in place to achieve the goals set by officer manifestos. As well as the outcomes agreed through the Partnership Agreement with the college. This meant that a clear plan of activity that could measure ECSA's impact was needed.

This led to an Operational Plan containing 87 key measures across 4 key strategic aims that were defined by ECSA's 2014/15 funding. These Strategic Aims are:

Partnership & Representation

Engagement and Inclusion

Accountability

Sustainability

As we reach the end of this year ECSA are pleased to report that from our initial 87 Key measures

- 68 have been **completed**
- 19 are still on track for the end of June
- 3 are marked as **incomplete**

Of the 3 incomplete one of these relates to not hiring an admin assistant. Through redistributing the work of this role amongst the current staff team. The savings from this have been used to pay for a case log system which will ensure greater sustainability for ECSA and be more effective for students in the long term. The other relates to a joint project with Edinburgh University on a student support service that neither of association is able to commit to at the moment in time. Lastly our ethical divestment plan does exist but needs extensive work and input from other contributors outside of ECSA before it is fit for purpose.

ECSA have achieved much this year shown by the extent in which our Operational Plan has been completed to a large degree. As each year passes ECSA will grow and develop as an organisation and take that experience to deliver even more going forward. Lessons have been learned and they will carry forward into the summer planning period.

A full breakdown of all the Key Measures for the year can be found in the attached appendix labelled 'Key Measure - June update'

Highlights:

Particular highlights from this year include ECSA's highest ever number of recruited & trained class reps, 615 and 255 respectively. As well as a 38% increase in voter turnout in the elections, coupled with 100% of our sabbatical positions being contested and a total voter turnout of 5.8%.

Engaging students is what ECSA are here to do and throughout the year ECSA have ran numerous events on a wide variety of issues including across liberation. Events such as Purple Friday & Equal Marriage Rally for Ireland, and work on tackling inequality with International Women's day shows ECSA continued commitment to engage with its students on creating a safe inclusive campus for all.

This report looks to provide some context to demonstrate the impact ECSA has had. This is a reflection on ECSA's work this year and as previously mentioned will help shape a new Operational Plan for 2015/16 that will be developed based on the aspirations of the new team during the summer months. Building on the success of this year.

Partnership & Representation:

This strategic aim looks at the representation of students and ties mostly into our democratic representation and supporting the development of the student voice.

Class reps:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
1	An increase in class rep recruitment & training on last academic year. Reps Elected = 523 Reps Trained = 130	Reps Elected = 614 Reps Trained = 255	30.01.2015

The key measure for ECSA was an increase in class rep recruitment & training on previous years (KM 1) and to have as many engaged students involved in the work of ECSA. Engaged being defined as representing their class through attending class rep meetings, becoming involved in ECSA events, contacting us with issues, and using their class rep training delivered by ECSA's student class rep trainers to improve the student experience of themselves and their class.

The aim was to develop a cohort of students that not only engaged with ECSA, but also with other reps organically and continually throughout the academic year. ECSA are very happy to demonstrate we have recruited and trained more reps than ever before, including a significant increase in class reps with Additional Support Needs (ASN), ensuring we are giving representation and a voice to students who historically don't actively engage with Students' Associations - increasing the breadth and depth of the student voice that ECSA communicates with.

Elections:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
-------------	------------	-------------	--------------------------

6	Joint Edinburgh wide elections for sabbatical positions take place at the same time.	The “Big Student Elections” took place in March. Three university associations and ECSA worked together to successfully deliver them.	13.03.2015
7	Elections turnout to be 5% of all students eligible to vote.	1173 students voted in elections representing 5.8% of current student population	13.03.2015
8	75% of sabbatical positions to be contested.	17 candidates ran for the 4 positions. 100% positions contested.	27.02.2015
9	75% of executive elections to be contested	35 candidates ran for 17 positions. 82% contested.	19.11.2015
10	Students to be able to vote online externally	Students were able to vote online from home for first time in sabbatical elections	09.03.2015

ECSA view elections as a key part of engagement with students, actively taking part in the democratic process of the association from standing as a candidate, challenging the candidates on the campaign trail and the act of voting itself is the sign of a an aware & engaged student body. The Key measure was to have 50% of all sabbatical positions contested (KM 8) and a turnout of 5% (KM 7) These two KM’s where comfortably smashed, recording 1173 votes that represents 5.8% off all eligible student voters and a 38% increase in turnout on the previous year. 17 candidates standing for 4 positions against incumbent sabbatical officers was great to see. This shows that many students feel passionately about ECSA and the work it does and want to have a greater say.

The growth in student turnout would indicate that the work of ECSA in increasing the accessibility and visibility of Elections and their importance as a standard part of our activity for the year and given the appropriate organisational resources to ensure elections can include as many students as possible. The addition of students being able to vote externally, combined with a marketing campaign under the Edinburgh wide ‘Big Student Elections’ helped drive an increased awareness amongst students (KM 6).

Student reviews:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
11	Hire new Student Reviewers for 2 nd pilot review	2 Student reviewers were hired	09.01.2015
12	Second Pilot Review carried out & feedback gathered	Pilot project took place in Catering and Engineering with full reports written	19.12.2014

13	Hire new Student Reviewers for 2 nd term	10 Student reviewers were hired	09.01.2015
14	8 full scale Reviews in 2 nd term carried out.	2 reviews have taken place. Others have been postponed/cancelled due to EIS grievance	30.05.2015
15	Student reviewer program used to analyse quality of provision	Dependent on resolution of EIS grievance	30.06.2015

Student reviewers are at the heart of what ECSA exists to do - facilitating the involvement of students in the quality cycle of Edinburgh College. This is a key example of students working in partnership to improve the experience for all students within the college which highlights the great work that goes on within individual courses and encourages the sharing of best practise. In partnership with the Quality team, ECSA hired 10 reviewers for our 2nd review however due to difficulties with EIS only achieved 2 reports bringing our total for the year up to 4.

ECSA selection panel:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
18	If a senior management position becomes available ECSA to be involved in the recruitment & appointment process	ECSA interviewed candidates for vacant College Principal position	N.A

ECSA and the College are equal partners and as such they would have a joint say on who take on the college's most senior roles. In the recruitment of the new Principal, ECSA were given an opportunity to interview all candidates and the recommendations from the ECSA officers were keenly considered by the college when making their decisions. This allowed student views and concerns to be put directly to potential Principal. This further showed the importance and gravity of ECSA's work in representing the student voice in the highest levels of College meetings and committees.

Engagement & Inclusion:

ECSA believes that a strong student voice comes from engaging as many students as possible. This means working on improving the experiences of often underrepresented groups within the institution - reaching out to as many students as possible while creating a positive, inclusive college for all. This includes with students who define within Liberation groups (Women, LGBT

students, BME students, and disabled students) to tackle liberation issues as well as embedding in process engagement with groups such as care leavers and also international students.

ECSA has worked on several projects and initiatives to tackle these very issues, including changing our structures and policies whilst encouraging the college where applicable to do the same.

Throughout the year we have sought to ensure that our members have the best possible experience over their time at college. To that end, we have worked with groups of students to hold some fantastic events - Purple Friday, the Live CD project, Freshers' week and Refreshers, World Aids Day, International Women's Day, educational trips, and many more. While it is hard to quantify these events in terms of KPIs, they are one of our key successes and should be considered as part of our holistic effect on student life.

Engagement videos & class talks:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
24	Minimum of 10% of all FT classes receive an 'ECSA Talks' in first 3 weeks of term.	ECSA talked to 129 classes representing 16.6% of all FT classes (714)	01.09.2014
28	ECSA to create 6 videos for 'engagement' purposes before end of the academic year.	Four videos have been recorded and published on YouTube and ECSA social media VP Women verbal blog & ECSA end of term wrap up planned for end of the month.	30.06.2015

Another key measure was the creation of 6 videos throughout the year at various points to communicate with students about the work ECSA does. These videos were created to be fun and easily accessible means to deliver information to students that would be best communicated visually rather than by email or in print.

Currently ECSA has four videos uploaded and is on track to create another two before the end of academic term. Another approach to increase engagement was having sabbatical officers give class talks on 'who & what is ECSA?' in the first few weeks of term with a target of 10% of all fulltime classes to be spoken with (KM 24).

Care Leavers:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
33	ECSA involvement in Care Leavers summer school	ECSA delivered a presentation to Care Leavers as part of their summer school induction	30.07.2014

ECSA has committed to a continued partnership during the College's summer program for induction of Care Leavers, through a student led presentation ensuring students understand the role of ECSA, how they can get involved and how we can help them during their time at Edinburgh College. This has seen several students from a Care Leaving background becoming class reps and taking on volunteer roles within the association

Zero Tolerance:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
42	ECSA pass zero tolerance policy in Executive	Policy passed at first Executive meeting of the year	19.01.2015
43	Action plan to improve women's participation in STEM	Outcome Agreement Workshop held in November and working group formed	30.06.2015

ECSA has passed a zero tolerance policy to further its commitment to creating an inclusive campus. The creation of this policy ensures all ECSA events meet the accepted expectations and rules surrounding zero tolerance around unwanted sexual advances both physical and verbal. This also includes all ECSA training for staff and students to have zero tolerance embedded into these processes.

Our VP Women is working with schools and external organisations on a workshop to be delivered to primary school children engaging them on encouraging more women into STEM, using students from within the sector and the college who can act as role models - providing training and opportunities for students and a positive impact on the community.

Outcome agreement:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
54	ECSA & students invited to engage in Outcome Agreement meetings	ECSA and College held joint workshop with SFC in November	30.06.2015
55	Evidence the student body has been consulted & informed re Outcome Agreement progress	Report written on workshop and distributed to students	30.06.2015

ECSA's partnership agreement with the College states that they would work together on a range of issues and projects to as equal partners to improve the student experience - this included the Outcome Agreement.

To facilitate student engagement in this process, students were invited to sit as equals with college management and staff to develop the priorities and actions going forward for both ECSA & the College. These meetings were highly positive, and ECSA and students felt as included in the process. The work that has developed out of this will help improve the experiences of our current and future students.

Unmarked registers:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
57	Clear reduction in Students impacted by unsigned Registers	Unmarked registers down from 600+ to consistently below 10 from February onwards	30.06.2015

Many students at the college could not attend if they weren't in receipt of their bursary payments. When ECSA was made aware that the long standing issue of unmarked registers had surged, this resulted in large groups of students repeatedly missing multiple payments due to no fault of their own.

ECSA worked with the college to mitigate the impact as quickly as possible seeking both a short and long term solution. Unmarked registers have come down from a high of 600+ at beginning of semester two to now regularly being less than 10 since February. This was a huge win that allows students to carry on with their studies without worrying about whether they will receive their bursary or not from week to week.

College funding:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
58	ECSA to lobby National Union of Students (NUS) to prioritise college Bursary Funding	ECSA submitted motion to NUS Scottish conference stating that "FE Student Support" should be priority for NUS Scotland next year	31.10.2014
59	ECSA to organise and attend meetings with stakeholders that can influence college Bursary funding policy	President met with 8 MSPs during "Stop Student Poverty" campaign	31.01.2014

Nationally, college funding has seen a real-terms drop of 23% over the last 5 years. ECSA feel strongly that colleges should be appropriately funded so they can effectively meet the aspirations of our students. ECSA campaigned locally and nationally under the NUS' 'Stop Student Poverty' banner to lobby the government to fund students during their studies and end the postcode lottery that comes with funding, and to argue for an entitlement system similar to that which HE students have access too. This campaign had over 1200 signatures from Edinburgh College students - over a 1/3rd of what was collected across the whole of Scotland.

Many of our volunteers got behind the campaign and really drove it, alongside a large buzz around campus and on social media. Our President had 8 meetings with MSP's, raising the profile of ECSA on a national level. The Campaign concluded with the announcement of an additional £7 million of funds for student support.

ECSA attended NUS Scotland National conference where a motion was brought forward by ECSA and passed by conference to mandate NUS to make its priority campaign for the next academic year focus around an entitlement system for FE and to mitigate cuts to teaching budgets.

Independence Referendum:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
29	Run voter registration program for Independence debate	Independence registration drive resulted in over 150 students registering to vote	30.04.2015
30	Referendum debate facilitated by ECSA	ECSA debate held in Sighthill Music Box on September 10 th with three MSPs	01.09.2014

The Independence Referendum represented an opportunity to engage students on the kind of Scotland they wanted to live in. ECSA facilitated a debate inviting all sides to take part and to allow students to question the campaigns. High-profile MSP's attended including Kenny MacAskill, Kezia Dugdale, again increasing our national profile. This event was also streamed live and made available online. This event was well-attended and an excellent way to engage students in something that goes far beyond their experiences of college.

Freshers & Refreshers:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
65	ECSA hosts a Fresher's fair on all four main campuses	Fresher's fair held events held at four main campuses in September	05.09.2015

Freshers' week is a key opportunity for ECSA to make itself known to students in an informal setting. This consists of a week of activities and external organisations appearing on a different campus each day. The emphasis of this week is provide opportunities for students to access informational and most importantly, to have fun. Is is a key opportunity for us to encourage students to find out who and what ECSA is and encourage them to get involved. In September 2014, ECSA held its largest and most successful Fresher's fair yet, with a record number of external organisations attending all campuses.

Freshers' week creates a positive impression on of ECSA in the mind of many students and is for many the first time students have contact. It is clear that it does lead to students becoming more involved with ECSA in different capacities throughout the year.

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
66	ECSA hosts a refreshers week in 2 nd term	Refreshers fair held events held at four main campuses in February	14.02.2015

Much Like Freshers' week, Refreshers is a chance for us to engage with students who do not get the chance to experience the early Freshers' week due to their circumstances - including January starts and block release students. This was the first year a Refreshers week was held, and was a great success a chance for many of our volunteers to sit on the other side of the table and meet with students who come to College and never engage with ECSA due to the time restraints around their course. This event will be further developed but created a positive atmosphere coming into the 2nd term.

College Surveys:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
67	Work with College to improve accessibility of College surveys	ECSA consulted on all three main surveys and changes made as a result	28.02.2015

ECSA took the views of students through its Class Rep Meetings around the survey and its accessibility. ECSA took these views forward to discussions with the Quality department and as a result the survey has changed to be a much more student friendly engagement tool. This data from this will be of better use to ECSA and the college, and there will be an increase in student participation due to the survey being much clearer.

Accountability:

There are several different forms of accountability. Firstly the sabbatical officers are accountable to students due to them being elected on their manifestos. There is ECSA's accountability to the Board of Management. Through financial statements, reports such as this and monthly engagement meeting with senior management, ECSA are also working towards the NUS Quality Mark as a benchmark for defining what a good students' association should be.

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
69	Class rep meetings will occur on each campus on a monthly basis	Class Rep meetings held every month since October on 4 main campuses	30.06.2015
70	A register will be taken to track attendance levels	Attendance tracked and reported at Engagement meetings	30.06.2015
71	A report will be written up of all issues brought to the class rep meetings & published by ECSA	Report plan written in conjunction with Quality Team and sparqs. Report will also include student review feedback and tie into Education Scotland recommendations	30.06.2015
72	Creation of monthly class rep issue report	Reports created for each set of Rep meeting post October	30.06.2015
73	An end of year L&T report with analysis and notes of improvements & ongoing concerns.	Report plan written in conjunction with Quality Team and sparqs. Report will also include student review feedback and tie into Education Scotland recommendations. Linked directly to Class rep report	30.06.2015

To demonstrate ECSA's impact and engagement with students and tracking our class rep meetings to measure the year on year growth and development of Class Reps. Regular reports emanating from the class rep meetings are key to show how ECSA is developing the student voice and resolving both immediate issues facing students as well as drawing out overarching themes from conversations with class reps.

During these class rep meetings there are accountability sessions where officers can be and are held to account by students. These are marked as yellow as the completion date is the end of academic term, however ECSA is currently on track to meet these Key Measures.

Sustainability:

ECSA must ensure the organisation can function year to year and continue to adapt to the needs of our students. This means the creation of policy and developing formal processes to ensure that ECSA works continuously through the year and towards long term strategic goals as well as day to day operational goals. Sustainability is a key strategic aim of the organisation and is one of the foci of the creation of both strategic and operational documentation.

Trustee Board:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
77	All ECSA policy & protocol comply with charity law	Independently audited ECSA accounts and constitution submitted to OSCR on time	30.06.2015
78	Start ECSA Trustee Board appointment process	First external ECSA trustee (Antony Blackshaw) appointed as Vice Chair	30.06.2015
79	New Trustee board in place before end of academic term 14/15	Recruitment panel in place	30.06.2015
80	Trustee board to meet before end of academic term	Interim Trustee Board met in February. Further meetings to take place when further externals appointed	30.06.2015

A trustee board is the common ‘best practise’ approach to ensuring sustainability of a charity organisation. It allows a level of scrutiny from external experienced persons to analyse the decisions of the organisation. The Trustee board will have both student and non-student trustees. They will attend regular meetings and be presented with updates from the sabbatical team and association manager. This is key to ensure that in the future ECSA is serving its function of representing students.

Staff appointments:

Key Measure	Descriptor	Context/KPI	Expected Completion date
81	ECSA Caseworker staff member appointed	Samantha Mucha employed	01.09.2014
82	ECSA Engagement & Policy Coordinator appointed	Conor Murray-Gauld employed	01.09.2014
83	ECSA Communications & Events Coordinator appointed	Graham Smith employed	01.09.2014

To allow sabbatical officers the capacity to engage with students and pursue their remits to the fullest extent, it is important to free them from much of the operational work that goes on behind the scenes. The creation and hiring of the 3 positions was to do exactly this. It allows for officers to set the strategic vision of the organisation and spend their time engaging with students and staff whilst not being tied down with operational issues like such as documentation and extensive report writing.

The hiring of staff ensures the work of the organisation provides organisational continuity and memory year on year - long after sabbatical officers leave the association. This means the organisation will not reboot each year, but instead will grow and develop. Creating relationships and gaining experiences and embedding processes that allow new incoming officers the ability to achieve their full potential. This allows ECSA to gain the most value out of its resources over the long term.

Summary:

This report demonstrates the positive year ECSA has had and the many successes it has delivered. Both the association and staff have been nominated for and won several top awards from across the sector- including NUS' Inspirational Woman of the Year award for Zoe Croy (VP Women), and the College Development Network award for The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award highlighting the great work being done in tackling inequality on campus. Also ECSA won The Changing Colleges Award at the CDN awards, for the excellent partnership it has with Edinburgh College.

Not only have ECSA achieved recognition outside the College, but within the College the officers and staff have worked hard to continue to professionalise the association and build stronger partnerships with College staff & departments whilst growing and developing the engagement with the student body it represents.

The creation of an operational plan and the processes being embedded have allowed ECSA to deliver greater impact and output through a more-considered approach to using its resources, much clearer systems to demonstrate that impact, and most importantly to continuously monitor and evaluate its work. Providing clear goals and actions to the team has allowed ECSA to fully-utilise its strengths and grow the areas for development.

Our engagement with students has never been stronger. Evidenced by the increase in class rep recruitment and training, as well as a record breaking election turnout. ECSA do not plan to stop here - this is just another step on the journey. With a new officer team coming into effect plans are already under way to lay the groundwork for an even bigger year in academic term 2015/16. Highlights include Wider Educational Achievement Record and the Learner Engagement Framework.

ECSA will be in its strongest position ever to continue to be sector-leading and the best college Students' Association in Scotland.