



Edinburgh College

Students'
Association

ECSAonline.co.uk

End of Year Report

2015-16

Edinburgh College Students' Association
Charity Number SC028544

Foreword from the President



It has been an eventful and exciting 12 months for ECSA. A lot has happened and there have been many successes to celebrate. From the completion of our most ambitious operational plan to date to the development and transition to our strategic objectives.

ECSA's work embedding the student voice within the heart of Learning & Teaching at the college has been recognised and awarded at a national level. A testament to the ongoing work undertaken by the SA to build a quality enhancement culture.

ECSA's motto is to defend, extend and promote the rights of students. An organisation that campaigns and engages with its members to influence and win. From campaigning on national issues such as FE entitlement to local issues centred on catering and child care.

The successes of the organisation are built upon a strong partnership with the college. ECSA would like to recognise the support of the college and the development of partnered approach to solving issues collaboratively. This approach is widely regarded as a best practise across the sector. This partnership is one of the enablers that has allowed the Student' Association to develop into a strong and sector leading organisation that it is today and will continue to benefit the Students' Association and indeed future students.

Lastly, it's left for me to say, that reflecting on the last two years, it has been the greatest honour imaginable to lead an organisation that has and, will continue to, positively transform the lives of its members.

It's a goodbye from me, and a 'see you next time' from ECSA,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jeroen Van Herk', written on a light-colored background.

Jeroen Van Herk
President 2014-16

Our Top 10 for 2015-16!



Freshers' & Refreshers' events on all 4 main campuses with thousands of giveaways!



We spoke to approximately 5000 new students throughout Welcome Events in August



Launch of ECSA Active running student-led competitive sport and recreational physical activities for all students to take part in



Working with College staff & LGBT Youth Scotland in order to create an inclusive campus for all with our LGBT Charter mark



Creating our first full Trustee Board with Elected Officers, Student Trustees and External Trustees



Breaking our previous records for Elections with candidates and voter numbers on the up!



Created the 'ECSA-llence Awards' - our 1st Student-Led Teaching Awards with 267 nominations over 5 categories of awards!



Making ECSA's voice heard through NUS Scotland, gaining national recognition for our work - even winning some awards along the way



Winning the NUS Scotland Education award for our work on the Learner Engagement Framework - students as partners in learning development



Creating an online case management system to better track and engage with students throughout the year

Our Top 10 for 2015-16!

1. Freshers' & Refreshers' Events

ECSA organised its biggest freshers' week to date in 2015. The ECSA team, along with external visitors attended all 4 main campuses during the week of the 1st of September. This was ECSA's first big opportunity to engage with students and show them what ECSA can do for them and how they can be involved.

ECSA secured lots of free giveaways for students through our partnerships with the exhibitors some of these included:

- 1800 portions of cake
- 1136 Skint Nightclub cards
- 1000 Hate Crime leaflets
- 1150 Student Safety leaflets
- 5000 teabags
- 1300 bags of candy floss
- 2061 pens
- 2100 logo bugs
- 1000 Bottle openers
- 3500 Condoms
- 4000 Lubricants
- 287 ECSA Active sign ups
- And much more!



Freshers' was a high-energy event with lots of positive feedback from both the stall holders' and students. ECSA are particularly pleased with the high level of C-Card & ECSA Active sign ups.

We then continued this engagement in Semester 2 and replicated the events across the campuses for the January intake of students. This was the first time ECSA has run events like this in semester 2 and was a positive step in engaging with more students.

ECSA plan to continue to develop our Freshers' week to meet the needs of our students and will be working throughout the summer. We hope to further link the work of Freshers' week into other core activity planned for later in the year in order to benefit the organisation and provide opportunities to our student membership.

2. Welcome Events



ECSA took an active role in the new “Welcome Events” hosted by the college. ECSA did the final presentation of each session giving all the students a talk on how ECSA could help them and how they could participate in ECSA activities over the coming year. In total ECSA presented to around 5000 students across all 4 campuses during a two week period.

These events were an excellent way for ECSA to get to meet the student membership and tell them about the organisation. ECSA also surveyed many of the students at the welcome events on what students want to see from their Students’ Association. The data from this helped shape our offerings and focus on an operational student facing level throughout the academic year.

3. ECSA Active

ECSA have taken over the administration and development of sport & activities within the College under the banner of ‘ECSA Active’. This has led to stronger ties between students & staff from within the sports department working with ECSA as well as increasing participation and awareness for non-competitive student activities. A large focus of this year has been creating sustainable structures and ensuring some governance within individual sport teams and societies.



Successful projects such as ‘Active Women Weekly’ and ECSA’s work in achieving a Healthy Body Healthy Mind accreditation are just some of the positives to come out of our first year.

With the creation of a Full time officer for ‘Sports & Activities’ for the next academic year, this area will continue to grow through partnership with the College, ensuring sports & activities is a student-led activity and providing our members with as many opportunities as possible.

A new framework for student participation through use of the electronic sign up and an online presence for teams & societies will also provide a powerful platform for driving ECSA Active going forward across the campuses.

4. LGBT+ Charter

ECSA has been committed to creating an inclusive campus for all. Part of this work has been working with the College in creating an LGBT+ Charter in collaboration with LGBT Youth Scotland. ECSA has promoted several



LGBT events through the year as well as providing an analysis of the current provision within Edinburgh College through the LGBT+ Charter framework, embedding them into the calendar.

ECSA is incredibly pleased with the work that has gone on through this year and its stance on working to create an inclusive learning environment and welcoming campus. From events to staff training this project has highlighted the important part SA's play in supporting our most marginalised members.

5. Trustee Board

This year marks ECSA completing more of our obligations as a registered Charity by completing recruitment of our first full Trustee board. This includes external recruitment as well as student trustees. ECSA have worked with the



trustees to ensure a more strategic approach to governance. Changes to the constitution as well as the alignment of new full time officer roles to the strategic developments areas for the organisation put ECSA in an incredibly strong position moving forward.

ECSA is the first college in Scotland to develop a full Trustee Board, further highlighting how much further ECSA's development is as an Association compared to the rest of the sector. We will be continuing to develop our structures and our recruitment of student Trustees year-on-year to further strengthen our governance and strategic planning cycles going forward.

6. Elections

ECSA's sabbatical elections for 2016-17 had a total 16 candidates for 3 positions, meaning each position was thoroughly well contested and one of the highest levels of candidacy across Scottish Students' Associations.

This year was the first year ECSA moved to wholly online voting with the inclusion of physical electronic polling stations instead of paper ballots. Polling stations were staffed during the voting period on all 4 campuses and voting was also accessible from home and mobile devices. This was ECSA's most successful year with the highest voter turnout to date of 7.2% beating the previous year's record total of 5.8% - an increase of 1.4%.

Our total number of voters was 1228, again beating the previous record turnout of 1174 votes, and Electronic polling stations accounted for 75% of all votes cast.



ECSA has detailed analytics of polling and will be using the election data along with student and candidate feedback to develop an election strategy for next academic year as well as improve the election process to further build on engagement and look to drive voter turnout to over 10%.

ECSA was involved in the 'Big Student Elections' a joint initiative with Students' Associations across Scotland to hold multiple student elections at the same time in order to drive participation and create a buzz around the elections. This year, the 'East Coast' election results party was held centrally in Edinburgh and attended by Napier, Heriot-Watt, Queen Margaret Universities as well as ECSA. The event was hosted by Emily Beever, NUS Scotland's Women's officer. This project continues to grow in scale and plans are already in motion to ensure even greater success next year, across Edinburgh, the Central belt, and Scotland as a whole.

7. ECSA-llence Awards

ECSA launched its first ever student led teaching awards this year called the 'ECSA-llence Awards'. The purpose of the ECSA-llence awards was to allow students to think critically about their learning and allow them to celebrate the great practice going on within the college. This work tied to our Learner Engagement Framework and was supposed to provide qualitative data to compliment the other quality enhancement work undertaken by the College.

The 5 awards categories were as follows:

- Outstanding Contribution to Learning Award
- Innovation in the Classroom Award
- Feedback Award
- Guiding Hand Award
- Classmate of the Year Award



The target for the first year was to obtain 100 nominations (the national average for student-led teaching awards in their first year). This target was smashed and students nominated a staggering 267 times across the 5 categories.

An award ceremony was held in May on the Granton Campus. The attendees included nominated staff and students, members of the Board of Management and external guests including sparqs and NUS Scotland.

The Event was incredibly successful and positive with Student participation involved in providing the service and entertainment.

Following the awards ceremony ECSA have informed all 110 nominated staff of their nominations along with putting in a place a plan for further development of this project and how it can be used with other quality enhancement processes within the College.

Overall, the ECSA-llence awards have been an overwhelming success and will form a key part of ECSA activity going forward.

8. National Campaigns & Recognition

ECSA continues to shape and push the national agenda, playing a key role within NUS Scotland priority-setting. Ensuring the NUS plan of work included FE Entitlement, and then further helping to secure cross-party support ahead of the Scottish Elections in May.



ECSA officers presented a strong voice representing students nationally both in the Scottish parliament and UK Parliament on a range of issues.

ECSA successfully ran voter registration for elections and mobilised students for the largest student demo in Scotland since the last Holyrood elections, with more Edinburgh College students attending than from any other Students' Association in Scotland.

The newest ministerial appointments have assured a review of student funding across the sector meaning ECSA has worked with other partners to secure wins for students.

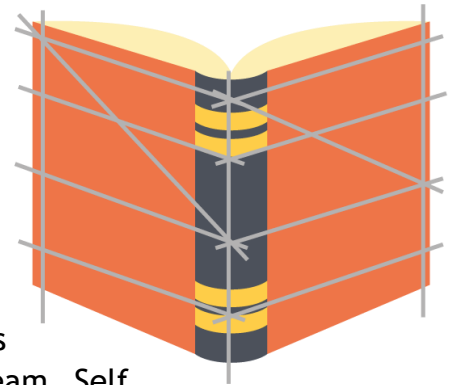
ECSA has been recognised nationally this year and nominated for its work on education and student engagement. ECSA was shortlisted for an award at sparqs National Conference in July last year and was also shortlisted for the College Students' Association of the year award in April 2015.

Furthermore, ECSA was proud to have won the NUS Scotland Education award in April and have now been named as a finalist for the same award at the NUS UK level for our work around the Learner Engagement Framework (keep your fingers crossed for July!).

This is a testament to the work ECSA have put in place by embedding and shaping a Quality Enhancement culture within the college through continued partnership with Edinburgh College. Bringing national praise and recognition to how committed both partners are to putting students at the centre of their learning.

9. Learner Engagement Framework

The LEF was a project developed in tandem with the Quality department to overhaul and organise ECSA's student engagement mechanisms. The aim of the Project was to move ECSA to be proactively developing and growing students as partners in their learning.

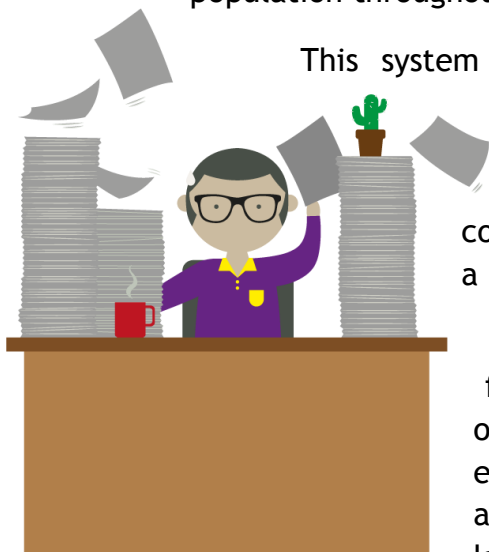


The project's 1st year is coming to completion, with large successes from smaller linked projects such as ECSA-Illence awards and Course Team Self Evaluation days. This has been coupled with huge change in attitudes within the College moving towards a quality enhancement-led approach to Learning & Teaching.

A report on ECSA's findings will be available during the summer break. Much of this work has been embedded into our annual work plans.

10. Case Recording System

ECSA have been working to develop a Case Management System to better deliver a coordinated and targeted service to students by centralising our work. Allowing effective communication across multiple campuses and enable ECSA to identify key patterns and trends within the student population throughout the academic year.



This system allows us a greater control in how we facilitate and manage our structures and events from fresher's to class rep meetings. While also integrating a completely revamped user experience through a modified website design.

The System is implemented with functionality for staff. However current areas of work include single sign on functionality (to ensure compatibility with college profiles) and currently finalising a user interface to launch in time for new student cohort 2016/17

Thank you!

On behalf of everyone involved in ECSA, we would like to thank the huge amount of wonderful people who have contributed to another successful year - colleagues from across the institution including teaching staff, support staff, the leadership team and not least the Board of Management itself. We are grateful and enthused by your ongoing support and want to say a huge thanks for working in partnership with ECSA throughout the year.

To our partners out-with the College, we have had some pretty amazing initiatives, events and support over the past 12 months. We have worked very closely with organisations such as NUS Scotland, sparqs, LGBT Youth Scotland, Scottish Student Sport, and the local Citizen's Advice Bureau. For an organisation as small as ECSA, these links are invaluable and help us to continue to punch above our weight as a developing College Students' Association and for this, we say thanks.

Finally, we have to save the biggest thanks to our phenomenal students. Some have got heavily involved in volunteering with us, being Class Reps, Executive Officers and even running for election to help their fellow students. Some have helped run events and campaigns, some have participated in focus groups, workshops or interacted with us on stalls throughout the year. They are the reason we're all here and we are very proud of every one of them.

The ECSA Team are excited to see what 2016-17 brings and hopes to continue to do everyone proud in the months to come.



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