



End of Year Report.

2021 - 2022

**Powered by students,
Driven by values,
Committed to better.**

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President's Introduction.

ROSE DODGSON

As Student President, it's my pleasure to present our end of year report.

After spending so long working from home, this year has seen the return to campus for most students, as well the ECSA team.


In fact, last July was the first time that myself and my fellow officers were able to meet face to face with our wonderful support staff for the first time after working online for an entire year.

That experience meant that we were able to use the lessons we learnt from online working to continue to deliver our services both online and on campus.

We kicked off the beginning of term with online inductions for our students and creating online clubs and societies for students to join whilst also planning for a gradual return to campus in line with covid restrictions. We continued our work in recruiting Class Reps and delivering Class Rep meetings online. I am particularly proud of our representation work as we were able to increase our class rep numbers by 101 compared to last year!

As a consequence of the easing of restrictions, we were able to deliver our Go Green services on campus such as the Swap Shop and Community fridges. At the time of writing, we have saved 1 metric tonne of clothes from landfill, and 4.4 tonnes of food, despite not being able to open our hubs until the middle of November.

I am particularly proud of winning the first ever Net Zero Award from the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce in recognition of the work of our Go Green team, with the support of Edinburgh College.

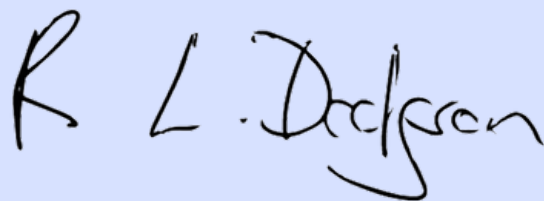


Another highlight of this academic year for me, was that myself and my fellow officers were able to meet up with fellow NUS officers and participate in various demonstrations and rallies outside the Scottish Parliament to advocate for student rights, housing, and climate change.

This gave us an opportunity to get some much-needed vitamin D, raise important issues, and encourage our students to participate in student politics. In fact, your incoming Vice President Welfare was instrumental in organising the Friday for Future protest last October and your incoming Vice President Activities joined myself and Jordan at the NUS Scotland Housing Rally.

Another benefit to hybrid working this year is that we were able to familiarise ourselves with our four campuses and meet our amazing, resilient students on campus. We held a number of stalls on campus such as ECSA on Tour, Coffee and Catch up with Jordan, and on-campus elections.

All of this work would not be possible without the ongoing support of the Board of Management and the ECSA team. So, I would like to thank you all for all of your support and encouragement and wish you all the best of luck for the next academic year.



Rose Dodgson
President 2021-22

Our Top 10 of 2021/2022

Net Zero Champion Award Winners 2022!



First ever Net Zero Award given at the 11th annual Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards.

A result of ECSA & the College working closely over the last 4 years with our Go Green Project.

COP26 Events

During the time of COP26 in Glasgow, ECSA & the Go Green Team ran a number of events including stalls that informed students of swap shops, community fridges & all things sustainable at college. There was also a successful COP26 Q&A discussion panel on the 2nd of November.

2022 ECSA Elections

After a long, hard week of campaigning in March 2022, ECSA announced the new incoming team of officers:

- David Elder, President
- Luna Morrison, VP Activities
- Sky Marriner, VP Welfare

Opening of the Go Green Hubs

In November 2021, the Go Green team opened Hubs on all 4 campuses!

Each campus has a designated area for their Community Fridge and Swap Shop. Lots of students could now pick up free delicious food and free clothing, books & accessories.



Class Rep Meetings

Overall there were 663 Class Reps registered this year, which was an increase of 101 from last year.

353 students attended Class Rep Meetings, all delivered via Microsoft Teams

**CLASS
REP
MEETINGS**



Climate Fringe Week 2021

It was Climate Fringe Week in September 2021, and the Go Green Team had lots of exciting events including:

- Bike Maintenance Sessions
- Protest Banner Making Activities
- Holyrood Climate Strike Protest
- Swap Shops on campuses

Go Green 2022 Walking Challenge!

During a 2-week walking challenge in March, students ended up walking a total of an AMAZING 3.7 MILLION STEPS! This amount of steps is the equivalent amount of steps from Edinburgh to New York!

Celebrating Diversity - BHM & LGBT History

ECSA officers held a Black History Month Walking Tour of Edinburgh in October with Lisa William of Edinburgh Caribbean Association, and were on campus in February with stalls celebrating LGBT+ History Month.



Student Housing Protest

VP Welfare Jordan led a group of Edinburgh College students in the protest outside of Holyrood for the issues facing student housing. This was a result of NUS Scotland's report of "Broke: Scotland is failing its students".



Ukrainian Appeal

The charity OPIR, based in Scotland, collected a large amount of donations from staff and students at Edinburgh College to help with the ongoing Ukrainian crisis.





Education & Representation



Class Reps

Following on from a successful year of delivering Class Rep activities online in 2020/21, we were ready to continue the same success for 2021/22. In addition to recruiting, registering, training and hosting meetings online, we focused on improving the Class Rep uptake and college staff involvement to ensure as many Class Reps as possible were registered and involved.

We hit a record-breaking 663 registered Class Reps, with 193 attending live online training and 251 enrolling in the online Moodle training. In total 353 Class Reps attended Class Rep meetings throughout the year and assuming each Rep represents a class of 15 students that equates to 5295 students. This is a direct result of improved partnership with curriculum areas and other staff in getting Class Reps registered.

To achieve this ECSA ran 3 staff information sessions, delivered presentations to CL forum, attended faculty team meetings, and streamlined the registration process through the ECSA website.



Additionally, we offered support to staff in areas without LDTs to run Class Rep registrations, leading to 26 Class Rep elections delivered directly into classes without LDTs. 3 Class Rep Meetings were hosted throughout the year, with 2 themed sessions in between on Student Mental Health and sustainability.

Through the Class Rep Meetings we have been able to gather student opinion and feedback about important parts of the student journey, for example by identifying the Big 5 Student Concerns as well as consultations on sustainable education and gender-neutral toilets. Continuing our evidence-based approach we have used MentiMeter for our Class Rep Meetings in addition to pre-meeting surveys and following each meeting we have supplied students with a summary to take to their class as well as a written report which is circulated to relevant departments and goes through the college committee cycle. [All Class Rep Reports can be found on our website here.](#)

Edinburgh College Class Reps have been instrumental in shaping the student voice this past year and we are really proud to have such engaged and knowledgeable students. We are pleased to be able to support students to attend focus groups and consultations on top of their normal Class Rep duties of training and meetings, which has included regular meetings with SQA, Education Scotland visits as well as internal student experience groups.

NUS Scotland

ECSCA continue to engage in sector events and meetings especially working with other officers across Scotland and the National Union of Students Scotland. ECSCA officers have been attending the NUS Scotland officer meeting every two weeks where they share experiences between institutions and plan campaigns to improve the student experience. It is through this group that President, Rose and VP Welfare, Jordan have been involved in a number of NUS Scotland campaigns; the Big £££ Student Survey which informed lobbying around the Scottish Budget, the Rally for Education outside Parliament, and pressure on the Scottish Government to offer summer student support.

Following the NUS Scotland national report "Broke: How Scotland is failing its students", ECSCA officers were heavily involved. The officers brought Edinburgh College students along to the NUS Scotland organised protest outside Holyrood to protest the increasing pressures on living costs in addition to the shocking revelations in their report. VP Welfare, Jordan, spoke to the crowds, sharing his experience and that of other students facing homelessness and having nowhere else to turn. [Watch Jordan's speech here.](#)



With recent industrial action taken by the lecturer's union, EIS-FELA, ECSCA have been engaging with NUS Scotland and other partners to support students and ensure they are not negatively impacted. This has involved meetings with EIS-FELA leadership facilitated by NUS Scotland President Matt Crilly as well as open letters from Scotland's full-time officers.

2021-22 finally saw in person events return, giving the outgoing ECSCA officers a chance to attend live NUS Scotland and NUS UK conferences in Dundee and Liverpool offering an excellent opportunity to further network and shape ideas for improving student lives. At NUS Scotland Conference in Dundee we were proud to once again be shortlisted for NUS Scotland College Students' Association of the Year Award.

Elections

Following another year of disruption to on campus student engagement, it was fantastic for the ECSA Team to get back on campus and get students engaged in the annual ECSA Elections.

We saw 5 candidates standing for 3 full-time officer positions with candidates campaigning mostly in person.

Though 40% of students were still studying remotely, ECSA delivered on campus election activities with polling stations open across 4 campuses for a total of 30hrs in addition to 75hrs of polling open on the ECSA website. Combining campaigning from candidates, on campus polling and online election content, 1158 were cast from 483 students.



Education & Representation



Luna Morrison
VP Activities



David Elder
President



Skye Marriner
VP Welfare

ECSA TEAM 2022-23

Student Catering Survey

After we returned from the Easter holidays, we launched our catering survey across the college. Driven by feedback from students that they were dissatisfied with the current catering offer, we drew up the survey to get a picture of how they feel about the catering on offer just now, as well as what students would like to see in the future.

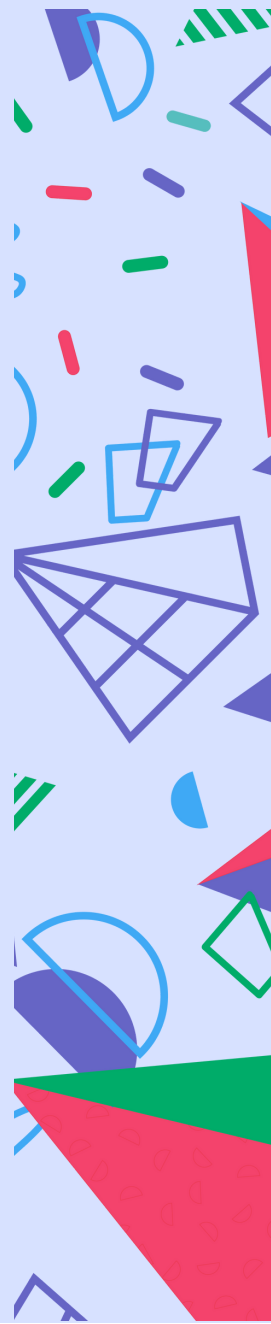
273 students responded to the survey, giving both qualitative and quantitative answers:

- 60% of students had a negative sentiment towards the current catering offer, while only 16% had a positive view
- On the type of offer in the future, 63% of students were keen to have sit-down meals available, rather than the current 'grab and go' offer
- 65% of students want to spend £4 or less for their lunch
- 89% of students want the option of both hot and cold food
- 88% of students want microwaves and hot water available to heat their own food
- On the question of priorities, quality of food, and value for money were the highest ranked priorities





Advice & Support



Student Mental Health Agreement

VP Welfare has led the Student Mental Health Agreement project group (Consisting of academic, support staff, ECSA, Wellbeing and SMT) to set up an updated agreement in partnership between the college and ECSA. This is a government-funded project run by Think Positive and will run for 2 years with the first year focused on student consultation and writing of the objectives and aims of the agreement.

ECSA supported and led workshops offered to LDT's and curriculum areas giving students the opportunity to hear from the SMHA group and take part in a short student consultation on their experience of mental health provision at Edinburgh College. The group also created a resource staff could use to run their own student consultations in class which included information about services available, consultation questions and feedback forms.

53 students took part in an additional Class Rep Mental Health consultation and as part of the wider student consultation workshops 162 students took part in the process.

6 proposed aims have been agreed based on this student feedback. The aims will form part of the Student Mental Health Agreement which will have associated actions to be completed in partnership across the college and implemented as part of year 2 of the project.

Additional mental health activities

Throughout the year, VP Welfare, Jordan has continued to champion student mental health through activities and ways for students to get involved. Jordan has hosted in person mental health check in stalls with tea and coffee for students come have a casual chat about anything and everything. As a lot of students were still studying from home, this was also offered online through Teams calls.

Working with Simon Miller from Health in Mind, Jordan, offered mental health and wellbeing workshops on Teams in December 2021.

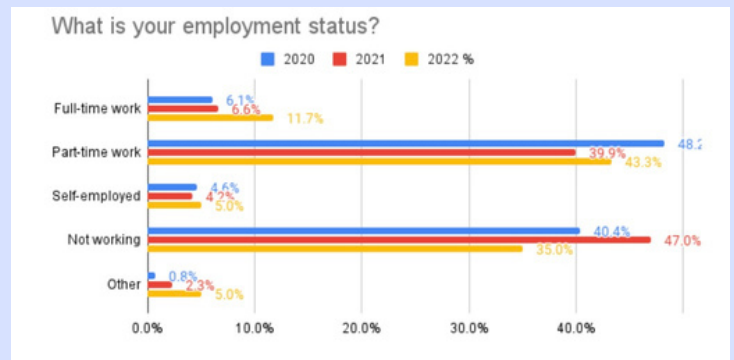


Housing & Finance Survey

Our annual Housing & Finance survey garnered 367 responses and while it isn't a surprise, it showed us that the cost-of-living crisis is being felt by Edinburgh College students. We saw a drop in students who indicated that their housing was affordable (from 61.8% affordable in 2021 to 56.4%), as well as an increase in higher-ranked stress about their personal finances.

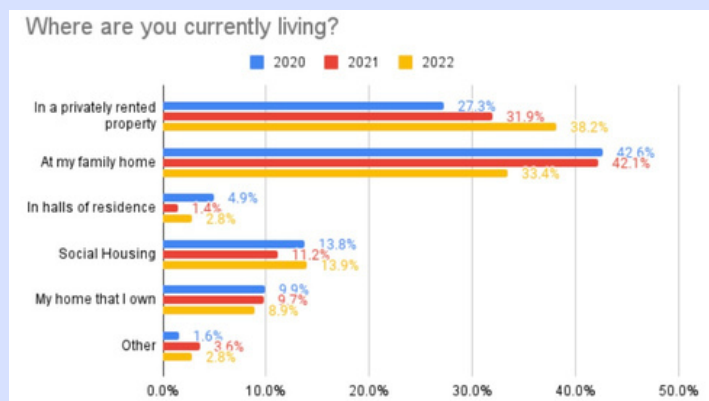
This may be a product of moving out after living at home through lockdown, as we found that when the living situation question was filtered against whether students were happy with their current situation, we saw a large drop in happiness from those living in the family home.

Our survey also found the lowest number of students out of work since we started running it, with an increase in students in both part-time and full-time employment.



Where Students Live

The shift in housing affordability is also reflected in where students are living: this year's survey indicates an increase in the number of respondents who are living in privately rented accommodation, and a decrease in the number of those living at home.



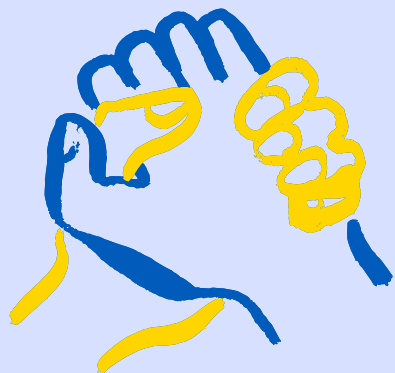
Ukrainian Appeal

We watch in horror the scenes in Ukraine since the Russian invasion and declare our support for the people of Ukraine. As the news came rolling in so did messages from students asking how we could help.

VP Welfare, Jordan organised a donation appeal in partnership with OPIR, an organisation with previous experience of getting aid to those in need. Donation points were set up in all ECSA offices for toiletries, clothing, sleeping bags and other items.

The donations generously collected from Edinburgh College students and staff were added to the convoy that headed to Poland and the Ukrainian border at the end of March 2022. They delivered a total of 10 tonnes of aid, and with financial support were able to add much needed generators as they arrived.

During the college Easter Holidays, ECSA officers and staff helped welcome the Dnipro kids. The team helped build beds and make their temporary homes as comfortable as possible.



Advice & Support

HelpZone Launch

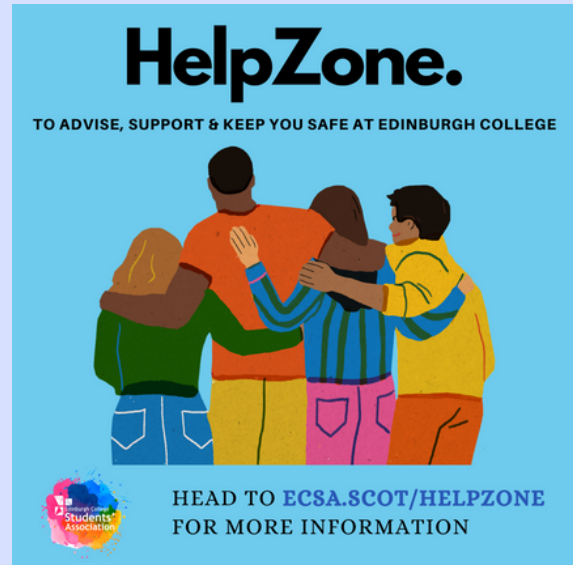
In terms of student cases, we are starting to see a common theme across this academic year. While the cases themselves have been varied and across different departments and about everything from funding to mental health support, it is clear that students have felt a lack of adequate support or more likely being uncertain of who to seek advice from.

While this is mostly from anecdotal evidence, we see students who contact us increasingly feeling uncomfortable pursuing complaints or seeking help from the college directly when something is affecting their student experience. With this in mind, we have begun work to revamp the advice section on our website.

We started with launching a new "Help Zone" which will work alongside a new appointment booking service for students booking a chat directly with a member of staff either online or on-campus. This will compliment the range of support services we already run, including LiveChat, e-mail, phone-line and in-person office drop-in services

HelpZone.

**TO ADVISE, SUPPORT & KEEP YOU SAFE AT
EDINBURGH COLLEGE**



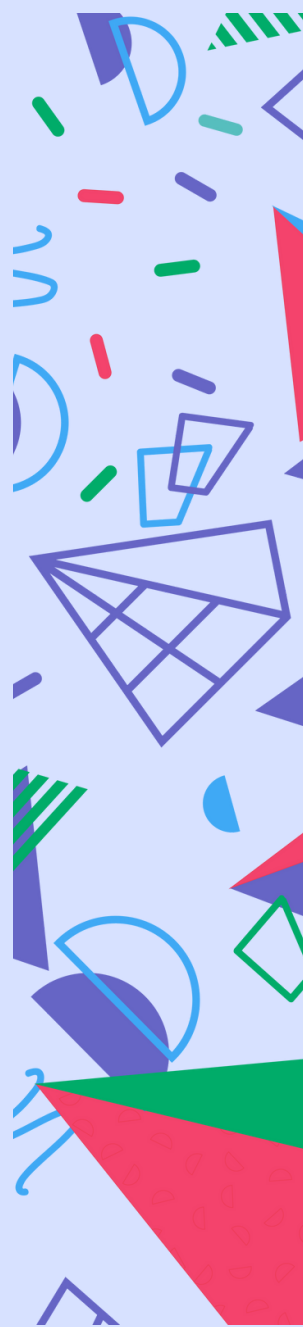
Advice & Support

The new "Help Zone" will aim to get the right information out to the students in an easy and accessible way. It will be split into sections and will cover areas that students tend to need support with the most:

- Common student issues: This will serve in a similar way to an FAQ with common issues and where to get help. Students can also 'Ask ECSA a question' for queries they cannot find answers for.
- Book an appointment: Students can book an appointment through a customised Office 365 booking portal. They will be able to give us details of the meeting purpose, such as disciplinary, mental health support, funding help as well as ask for a specific campus or to meet online.
- Student policies and procedures: This section will contain a brief overview of each student facing policy or procedure and how they affect them
- Support Organisations: A directory of external support organisation's that can be filtered by category such as mental health or housing.



Sustainability & Go Green



Climate Awareness

This year saw the second year of our Go Green project, and the end of our funding from the Scottish Government at the end of March. We're delighted to report that the project delivered 105% of its carbon reduction target, and a significant 187.3% progress to its participant number target – with 2810 students being engaged in the project overall.

This academic year the Go Green team were able to deliver Climate Change 101 workshops in 25 classes, meaning 369 students were able to learn more about climate change, sustainability, and how these topics are relevant to their subject area.

Through feedback gathered at the start and end of the session, we were able to see that the workshop boosted feelings of good and excellent knowledge of climate change and sustainability from 26.2% before the session to 78.5% after the session. Perceived relevance of these topics to their subject area also increased from 45.7% thinking it was directly relevant or that there were many relevant aspects before, to 80.7% after. Now that the project has rounded up, we will be circulating the 16 subject-specific presentations they have with the College's Sustainable Education Group, so LDTs and lecturers can use these resources going forward.

With the United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place just 48 miles away in Glasgow in November 2021, the Go Green team organised and got involved with a range of activities, including a COP26 panel event filmed by Broadcast Media students, an online Ethical Banking Workshop and informative Instagram quizzes that 349 voters took part in.

Throughout the project the team have developed and circulated a wide variety of resources to boost students' awareness of climate change. These included news articles about national and international events, as well as 'guides' about living more sustainably including a '[Sustainability at Home](#)' guide and a '[Beginners Guide to Ethical Consumerism](#)'.



Low Carbon Travel

Throughout the project, we were able to engage 303 students with more sustainable travel methods through bike maintenance sessions, travel related challenges, promoting our Liftshare and myPTP travel planning accounts, and giveaways of bike safety equipment. These activities led to a lifetime carbon saving of 217.2tCO₂e, which reflects 147% progress to our target for the project.

We have run 11 on-campus bike maintenance sessions which are free for students and staff. These sessions were run by The Wee Spoke Hub and allowed 56 bikes to be serviced for free for our college community. We also distributed 5 refurbished bikes to students who otherwise wouldn't have afforded one using an application form and scoring system, as well as 'cycling starter packs', which were equivalent to £43.35.



The Go Green team also ran several engagement activities, including the New Year Travel pledge and Walking Challenges again this year, after a break due to Covid in session 2020–21. The New Year Travel Pledge asked students to swap a regular journey to a more sustainable transport method, which 12 students signed up to do. Of these, 8 successfully stuck to their respective pledges, and earned a gift voucher worth £10 for a local zero-waste shop.



The Walking Challenge asked students to track their step counts for the two challenge weeks, to then input their totals to a leader board on a designated Teams channel. 28 students signed up to the challenge, and 13 went on to complete the whole two weeks. The four students at the end of the two weeks who had taken the most steps won a Fitbit Inspire 2 Fitness Tracker and overall the participants logged an incredible 3.7 million steps over the course of the challenge.

In a feedback survey we sent out to participants, 6 respondents said that they had already switched a regular journey to walking from another mode of transport and another one said they planned to switch to walking. There were also co-benefits to be found, as 8 respondents said they felt healthier after taking part in the challenge, 6 said they had saved money, and 5 said they felt less stressed.

Go Green Hubs: Community Fridges



In November 2021 we opened 'Go Green Hubs' on all four of our campuses, which are home to our Community Fridges and Swap Shops. These public spaces have become a visual focal point for the Students' Association's sustainability activity where we are able to advertise relevant information, events and distribute free cycling and walking equipment.

As many students are still not very familiar with each of the campuses due to lack of on-campus study, one of our student staff members put together videos explaining [where the Go Green Hubs can be found on each campus](#) and [how to use the Swap Shops and Community Fridges](#).

Due to campus closures throughout the pandemic, we have only been operating the Community Fridges for 8 months but have made staggering progress on achieving our food waste saving objective. Our Community Fridges are like small supermarkets but they only stock food that would otherwise have gone to waste. Working with food distribution partners Neighbourly and Fareshare, we stock our fridges via supermarket collections and campus deliveries with food that is on or near its use by date, or would be going to waste for other reasons, such as mislabelling. Each Community Fridge is stocked with store cupboard essentials, fresh produce and treats once a week, and everything can be taken for free!

This year we have saved 4.4 metric tonnes of food from going to waste by redistributing it from local supermarkets and food producers. This equates to 176.26kg of food being saved from going to waste each week and a lifetime carbon saving of 60.7 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent!

Using our remaining Scottish Government funding we have secured a Fareshare membership which we pay for Cyrenians to deliver a set amount of waste food to each Community Fridge once a week. This will ensure that the continuation of this service is less resource intensive and more sustainable moving forwards.

A conservative estimate would project that we will save at least 1 metric tonne of food per month over the coming year. This does not include any additional food donated through local supermarkets or on-site catering operations, or extending our Fareshare membership to more than 1 day per week from potential further funding sources, so the potential saving is significantly higher. In addition, we have already fundraised a further £3500 from First Sentier Investors to pay for the annual Fareshare membership for each Community Fridge until March 2024.



Go Green Hubs: Swap Shops

Much like the Community Fridges, due to campus closures, we were only able to open our physical Swap Shops as a full-time service on all four campuses in late September and early October.



The Swap Shops are stocked with women's, men's and children's clothes, accessories and books that are donated from the college community via our 'donation boxes' located in the Go Green Hubs. Anyone can take items from the Swap Shop, regardless if they donated items themselves, entirely for free, creating our own circular economy within the campuses!

Before donated items are put out on display in the Swap Shops, they are weighed so we can record the number of items being saved from waste and the associated carbon saving from stopping these items entering landfill. In the 9 months that the Swap Shops have been operating, over 1 metric tonne of items have been donated to be reused, 48.5% of our original target within a third of the timeframe. This equates to a lifetime carbon saving of 39.5 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

The funding from the Scottish Government has enabled us to purchase much of the infrastructure to enable the long-term running of the Swap Shops, such as clothes rails and storage units, ensuring that this service will be continue to be accessible to students in the future.

Student feedback:

- "Love this place, saving us from poverty"
- "Really happy we have this on campus"
- "Love the community fridge, so helpful when I'm skint – thank you"
- "The shop is very convenient for students and the environment"
- "It's such a great idea. I love to pick up stuff for dinner when I'm on campus"
- "Thank you for helping save our environment"
- "It's great stuff being given here, especially in these hard times, thank you very much!"

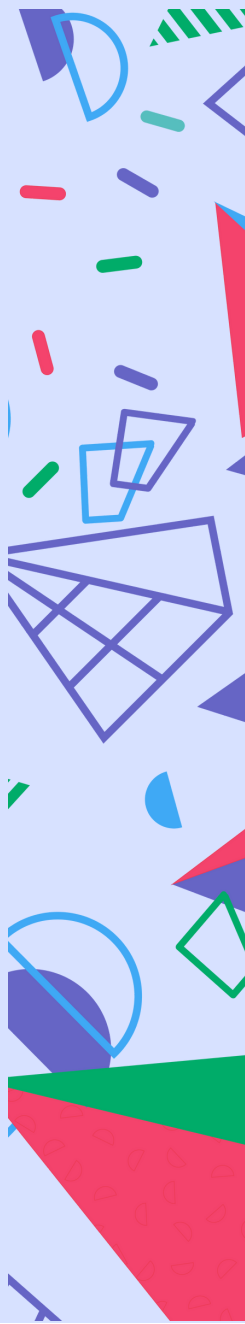
Net Zero Champions:

We were named winners of the first ever Net Zero Champion Award with Edinburgh College at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards on the 24th February 2022. Alongside the College's renewed focus to become carbon neutral by 2030 and 57% reduction in its operational carbon footprint from 2013-14 to 2019-20 (7,271 to 3,126 tonnes CO₂e), our Community Fridges and Swap Shops were particularly cited in our winning submission due to their co-benefits of reducing waste and poverty in the city.





Equalities & Diversity



LGBT+ History Month Pledge



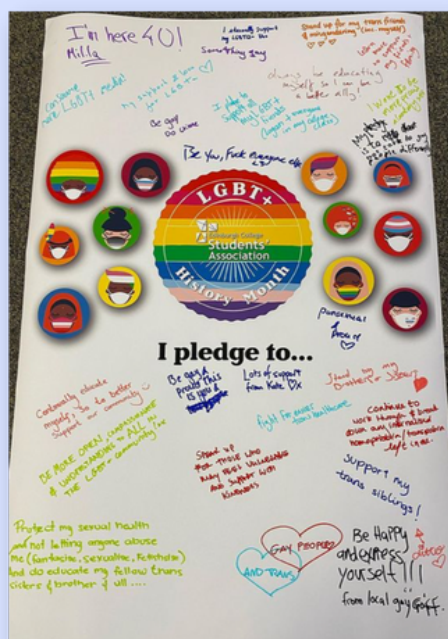
Throughout 2021/22 we have led the way working in partnership with the College Equalities Officer on improving the experience of under-represented groups at Edinburgh College. This has included activities to mark national days and initiatives as well as taking a leading role furthering LGBT inclusion.



We asked students to share their thoughts on Gender Neutral Toilet signage and the potential for a pilot at Granton. Students were incredibly positive about this prospect and we received praise for starting on this journey. We also consulted Class Reps with feedback going through the committee cycles. The hope is to include gender neutral signage on accessible toilet doors as a first step to being an inclusive college.

In the same vein, ECSA has been heavily involved with the Name Change Process Working Group. This involves partners from across the college to evaluate and establish policies and processes to ensure trans students have an inclusive and suitable process for changing their display name on Teams as well as on student cards, funding applications and course work.

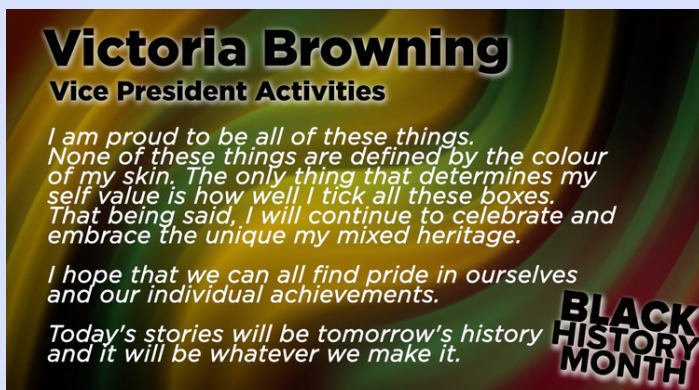
For LGBT+ History Month VP Welfare, Jordan, pulled together a pack of resources to share with students, both about the importance of celebrating LGBT+ people, but also about different types of media we can all engage with. We hosted 2 stalls to raise awareness of LGBT+ History Month as well as engaged students and staff in a number of activities. We displayed a poster with a pledge, encouraging students and staff to sign and pledge support to the LGBT+ community. We offered freebies, C:Card supplies and ran an informal consultation on Gender Neutral Toilets.





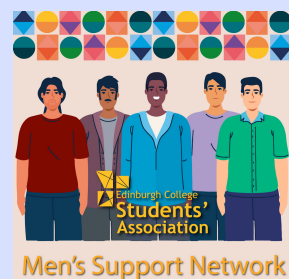
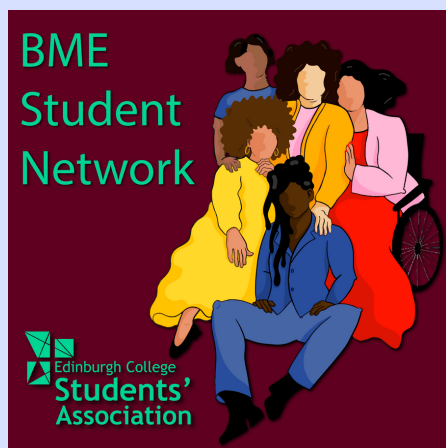
Black History Month Events

Our Equality Diversity activities included officers working with the College Equalities officer to include a student friendly explainer and front page to the reviewed College Equality and Diversity policy. Additionally, for Black History Month VP Activities organised a walking tour of Black and Caribbean History in Edinburgh with 7 students attending.



Equalities & Diversity

ECSA Equalities Groups



VP Activities launched ECSA Equalities groups at the beginning of the academic year to initially run on Teams and grow into truly student-led groups. There are 5 groups in total: Women, BAME, LGBT+, Care-Experienced and Parents & Carers. For the online college induction week students could sign up directly to these groups along with other ECSA societies for taster sessions. Throughout the year, the individual Equalities groups have had meet ups, mostly online due to hybrid learning, and activities even included festive events.



Student Homelessness Project

VP Welfare, Jordan, has led on the work to improve the experience of students facing homelessness. There is currently no valid data in Further Education on how many students have faced homelessness while in full-time education, however in order to improve the support for these students, that needs to change. VP Welfare submitted a research proposal to the Edinburgh College Research Unit which was approved and granted £1000. The research proposal outlines the aims of the Student Homelessness research project as well as the partnership with Cyrenians. This research aims to run a survey of students from across Scotland to identify data about their experience. Access to other institutions will be through partner students' associations and NUS Scotland.

The core aims of the survey is to delve into how deep rooted the issue of student homelessness is across Scotland and build a foundation of data. Looking into the causes and impact of homelessness among the student population would be potentially used as a starting point for more robust support to be put in place. This would hopefully ensure students are not put at such a disadvantage that leaving their course is their only option.

The Student Homelessness research project is a partnership project with not just Cyrenians, but also with support from various places within the Edinburgh College. Cyrenians have also begun reaching out to other partners such as Rock Trust and had discussions with VP Welfare, Jordan about what training can be provided by partners to offer workshops around homeless support awareness among staff and students.

The next step of the project will be to launch the national survey. Promotional materials have been created and the research survey will be shared with other Students' Associations in Scotland.

Equalities & Diversity

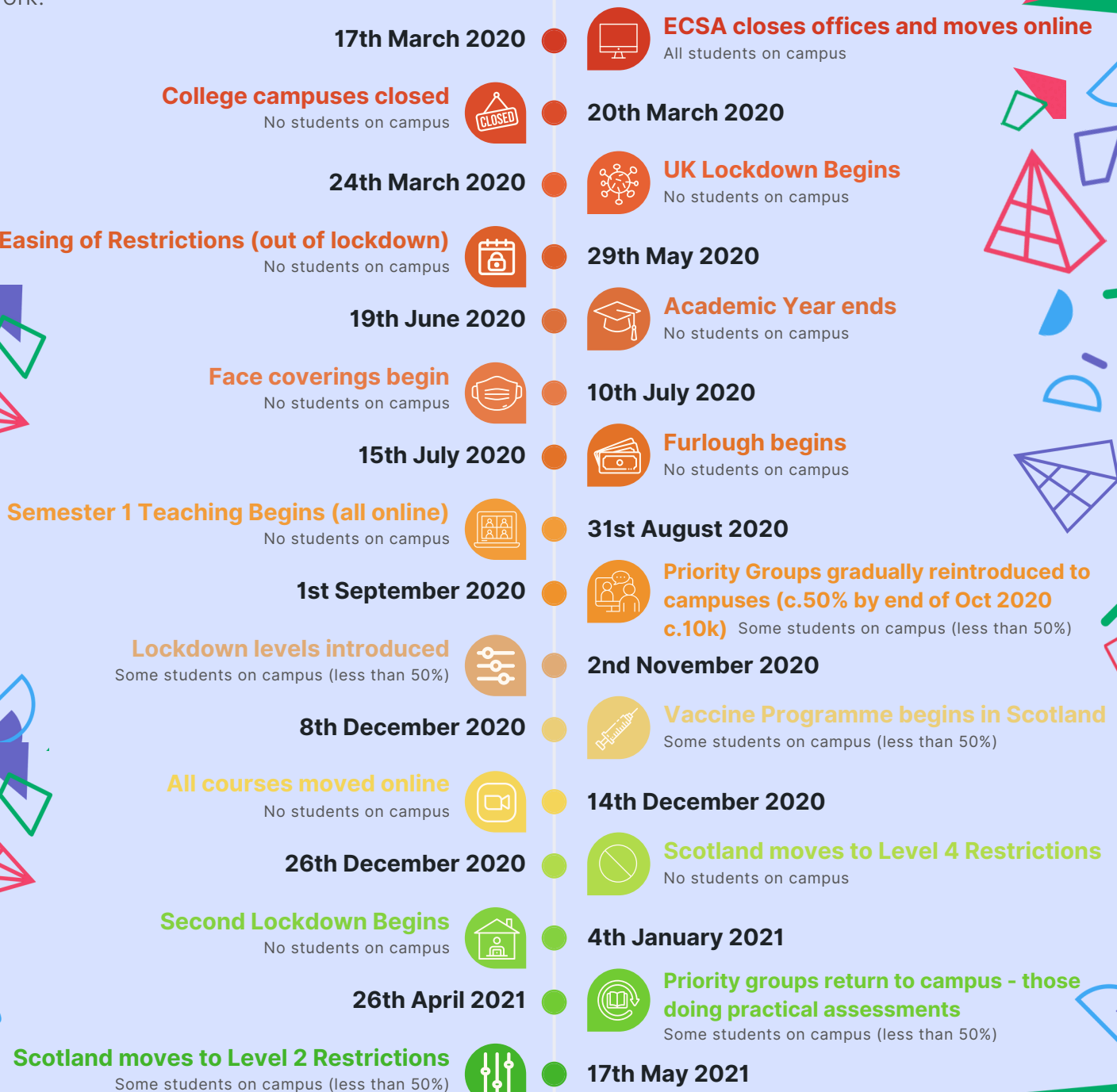
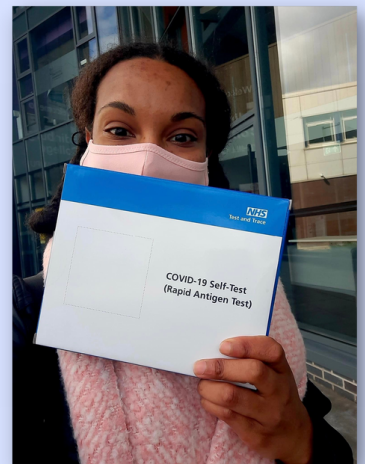


Covid-19 timeline.

MARCH 2020 - MAY 2022

The Covid-19 pandemic has spanned 3 academic years, beginning in March 2020. We reported extensively on how the Association has responded to the pandemic in both our 2020 and 2021 End of Year Reports, but we felt it was important to have a record of how things advanced throughout that period, particularly looking at the student experience of learning online, on campus, or a mixture of both as time went on.

ECSA has been proud to continue to deliver support for students regardless of the situation we have found ourselves in throughout the pandemic. We have developed new and more accessible avenues for students get the support they need, when they need it. As discussed throughout this report, this has meant that a lot of services are now wholly online, with new digital systems in place for LiveChat, virtual drop-ins and online appointment bookings for more complex casework.





The reality of not having students on campus for large parts of the academic year has meant that student engagement has been much more challenging this year, but we have continued to push messages around keeping everyone safe both online and on campus, providing clarity for students in a very confusing and anxious time.



When the academic year began in August 2021, we developed our own online vaccination centre map, updated weekly as vaccine centres moved around the city and beyond to give students the most up to date information and advice that was most relevant to them. We have also developed our own comms relating to hand hygiene, lateral flow test kits, and face coverings on campus to help keep everyone safe and provide reassurance to those students who were anxious to be on campus for the first time in their student lives.



Director's Notes

AL WILSON

2021-22 has been another challenging, but very rewarding year for ECSA as we work our way through the pandemic, and, hopefully, back out to a more familiar student experience.

However, it is important to remember the context that we have been working in throughout this past year, as well as the irreversible impact that has had on the student experience. With constant changes in plans and guidance at both a local and national level throughout, it is not overstating it to say, at times, students have not known how their course was being delivered or how they would interact with their fellow students from one week to the next for large parts of the year. In fact, some student have gone yet another year without setting foot on campus or meeting their classmates in real life.

For ECSA, this has stretched us even further to deliver access and support for students regardless of their course delivery being in-person, online, or a mixture of both. Whilst 2020-21 was very much the year when all students were online for most of the time, there has been a clear, conscious, withdrawal from a lot of students from online forums, preferring to either stay within their own online spaces, or focus on in-person experiences.

This has meant that we have had to double our efforts to keep up engagement levels throughout the year, and ensure that our on-campus events and activities have been attractive and engaging. There is no better example of this than the launch of our Go Green hubs on every campus.

Originally due to be launched in September 2020, we finally got them up and running in November 2021 and they have been nothing short of a huge hit with students. Clothing Swap Shops have been overflowing with donations and the community fridges have delivered literally tonnes of food to students for free across every campus. Although the original impetus and funding for these services was very much from a low-carbon, waste-reduction perspective, they have quickly become a lifeline for students increasingly struggling to survive the cost of living crisis that we all face. Unlike most other parts of society, students will not be receiving any additional financial support to deal with rocketing prices and energy costs, so we are proud that we are able to deliver these services to anyone who needs them. After all, students helping students is what we do.

Our work on sustainability has gone from strength to strength, culminating in the end of 4 years of Climate Challenge Fund projects in April 2022. As the only College Students' Association to ever be funded by the Climate Challenge Fund (twice!), it was fitting that our team were awarded the first ever Net Zero Award at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards in February. Despite most of our target audience living in full lockdown, or, at least partly learning remotely for the entirety of the project, it is even more remarkable that we have exceeded our original carbon reduction target by 5% and our levels of student engagement have surpassed our target by a massive 87%.

These and all the other outcomes that have been exceeded, are testament to the drive of our incredible project staff who have adapted and changed approach in order to continue to deliver. The physical spaces developed on campus are a gateway for daily behaviour change and further sustainability discussions, and the c.50,000 people who have been students at Edinburgh College since 2020 have had at least passive exposure to our work. Sustainability has become a much more prominent and relevant part of their lives because of this project and the massive amount of work delivered by our project staff.

2022 also sees the end of another era as all three of our two-year Officers move on and three new Officers will take their place in July. Rose, Jordan, and Victoria have had an experience like no other, and, on behalf of the Association, I would like to pay special thanks to their dedication, leadership, and commitment to students throughout their terms in office. Their impact at a local and national level has been impressive over the past 2 years, and they leave us having added huge value to the organisation, and to the lives of the students they have represented at Edinburgh College, and beyond.

My final remarks go to highlight the extraordinary efforts made over the last year by our students. They have faced constant and short-notice changes to their learning, severe restrictions to their lives, digital poverty, a cost of living crisis with no additional support, lecturers on strike and not resulting their work, and, generally major disruption to every aspect of their student lives. Despite all of this, they have kept coming back and have achieved. Every student who has completed and passed their course this year is nothing short of remarkable. In an era when students and young people are often questioned about their resilience to life's challenges, it is uplifting to see just how remarkable the students of Edinburgh College have proven themselves to be.

As we reflect on 2021-22 and start to plan for the next academic year, the challenges we face going forward as ECSA are many and varied. The achievements detailed within this report gives me the confidence to say that we are more than capable of overcoming those challenges, and that the culture we have built in the Association will continue to deliver for students.

As Director, I am incredibly proud of the work we have delivered over the past year and thank all of our many stakeholders, within Edinburgh College and beyond, for their support.

Team work does indeed make the dream work.



Al Wilson
ECSA Director





**This report has been created & designed by
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**Powered by students,
Driven by values,
Committed to better.**

