

Glasgow Caledonian University Students' Association Evaluation – research findings (Mar 2010)

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Background, Objectives & Methodology

- The GCU Students' Association is constantly aiming to optimise the service they deliver to students
- As part of this research was carried out to establish the following:
 - Awareness of the association and it's offering
 - Engagement with SA activities
 - Communications from the association
 - Improvements for moving forward
- An online survey was undertaken with a random sample of 584 students
 - Proportion of total students: 4%
 - This gives a confidence interval of +/- 3.98% at the 95% confidence level

Sample profile

Gender	Sample	GCU
Male	38%	42%
Female	62%	58%

Status	Sample	GCU
Full-time	88%	75%
Part-time	12%	25%

Nationality	Sample	GCU
Domestic	86%	89%
EU	4%	3%
Outside EU	10%	8%

Level of study	Sample	GCU
Level 1	21%	27%
Level 2	22%	20%
Level 3	26%	22%
Level 4/Final	16%	16%
Post Graduate	15%	15%

Mature*	Sample	GCU
Yes	49%	N/A
No	51%	N/A

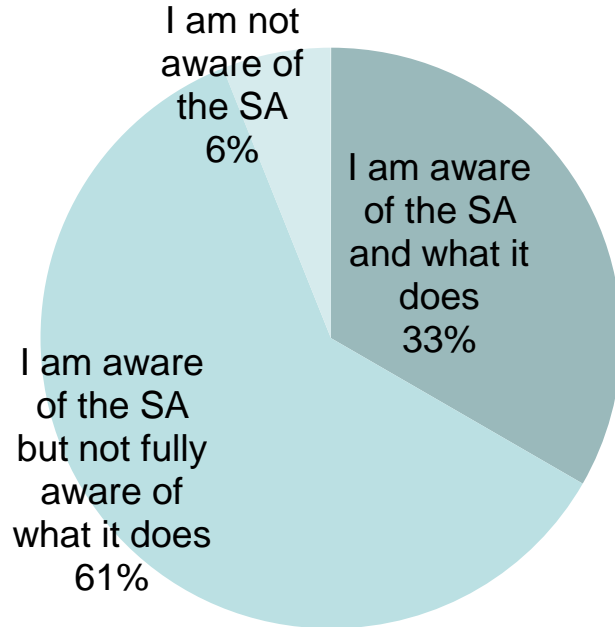
* Defined as over 21 at start of course

- In most areas the sample reflects the wider student profile well
- The sample is slightly over-representative of full-time students and under-representative of part-time students

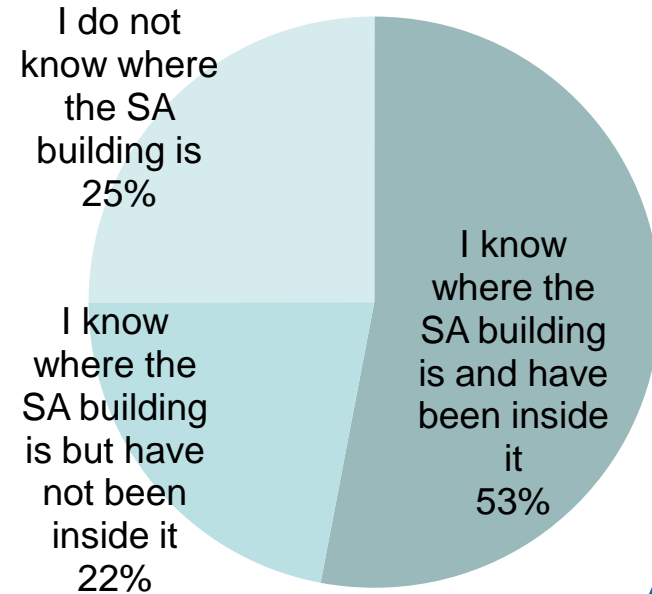
Key findings

Awareness of the Students' Association

**Awareness of the Students' Association
(Base:584)**



Awareness & usage of the Students' Association building (Base:513)

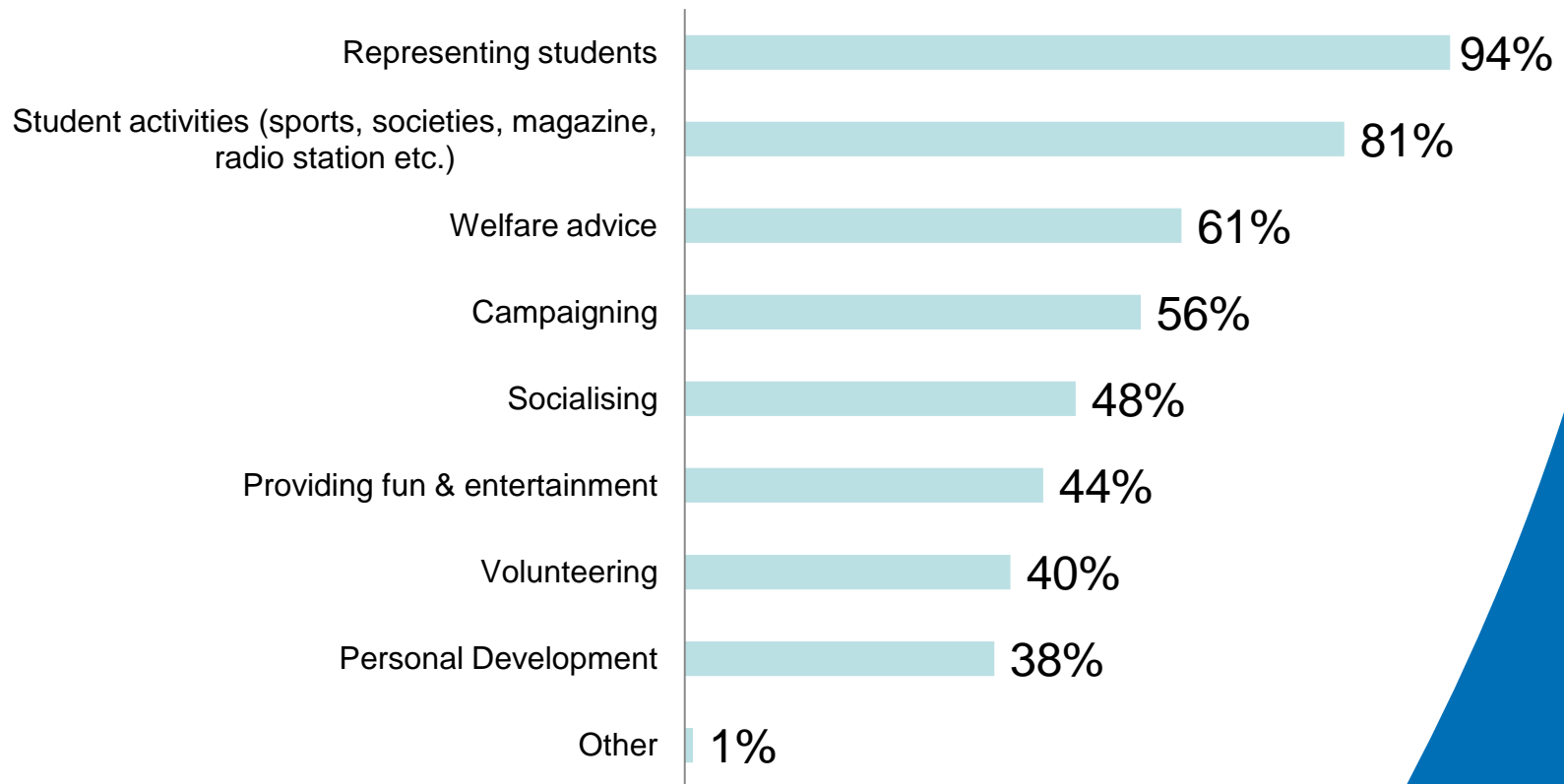


- Full awareness of the SA and its remit is not as high as it could be
 - One-third fully aware, almost two-thirds (61%) not fully aware of what it does
- One quarter unaware of where the SA building is; around one-fifth (22%) are aware but have not been in it
- Not surprisingly, those with greater awareness are more likely to have been in the building: av. (53%) – aware (74%) vs. not fully aware (42%)
- Greater awareness amongst students is required

- Note: likelihood to know where the SA building is and go inside it is significantly lower amongst part-time students: FT (57%) vs. PT (28%)
- Not surprising, yet, likelihood not to know where it is at all is significantly higher amongst part-time students (52%) vs. FT (21%) - point for attention?

Awareness of the Students' Association's purpose

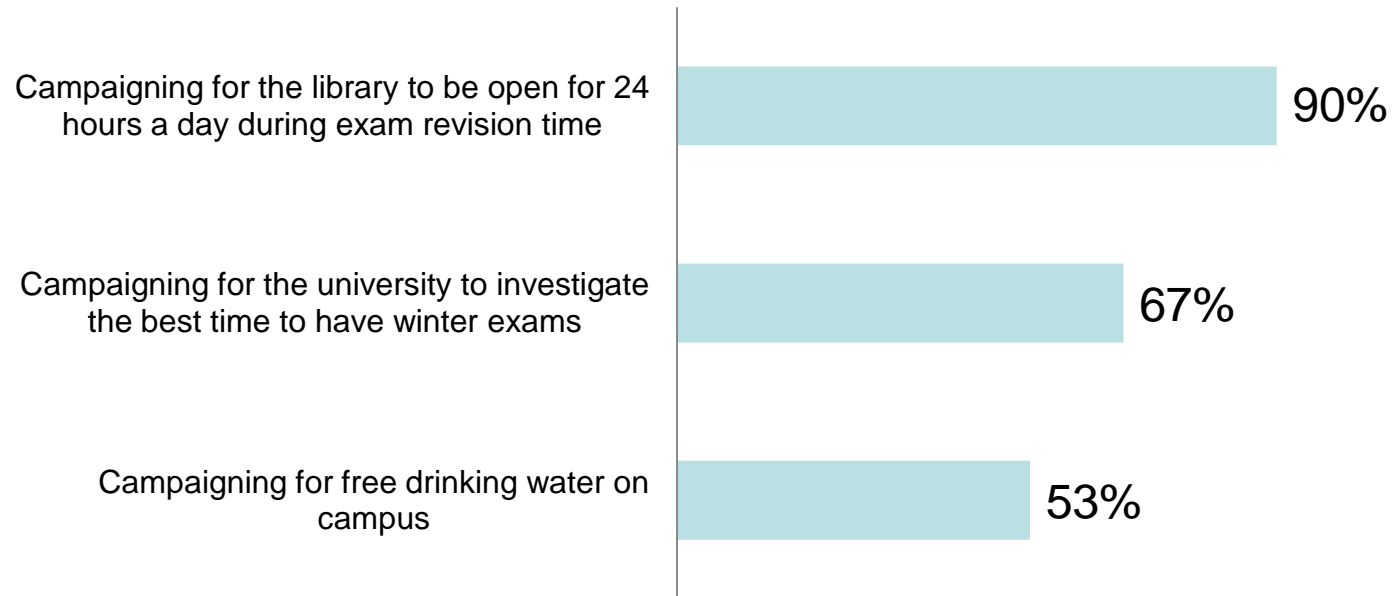
Perceived purposes of the Students' Association – prompted (Base:513)



- Awareness of the specific purposes of the SA vary considerably
- Awareness of representing students and provision of activities is positive – are these promoted/ talked about to a greater extent?
- Perhaps a requirement for greater prominence for the rest?

Awareness of SA's campaigns

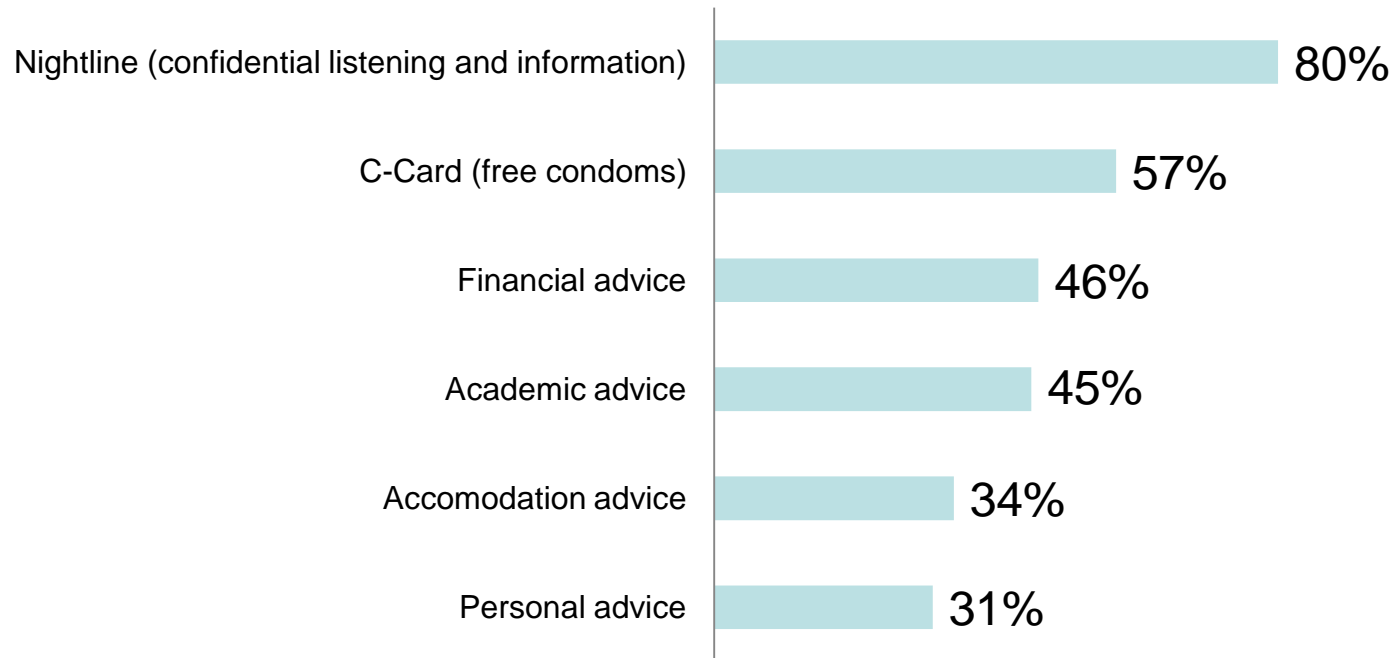
Prompted awareness of SA's campaigns (Base:473)



- Campaigning had 56% prompted awareness
- However, prompted awareness of specific campaigns is positive in some cases – particularly 24hr opening of the library
 - Were they aware of the campaign but not that the SA orchestrated it?
- The best time to have winter exams and free drinking water campaigns not as prevalent – but reasonable

Awareness of the SA Welfare Department's services

Prompted awareness of SA Welfare Department's services (Base:478)



- Prompted awareness of the Welfare Department's services varies considerably
- Nightline is quite well recognised – does it enjoy greater exposure?
- Awareness that some forms of advice are offered could perhaps be better

Awareness of SA's Executive Committee

Awareness that the SA is run by an Executive Committee made up of elected students (Base:508)

Yes	82%
No	18%

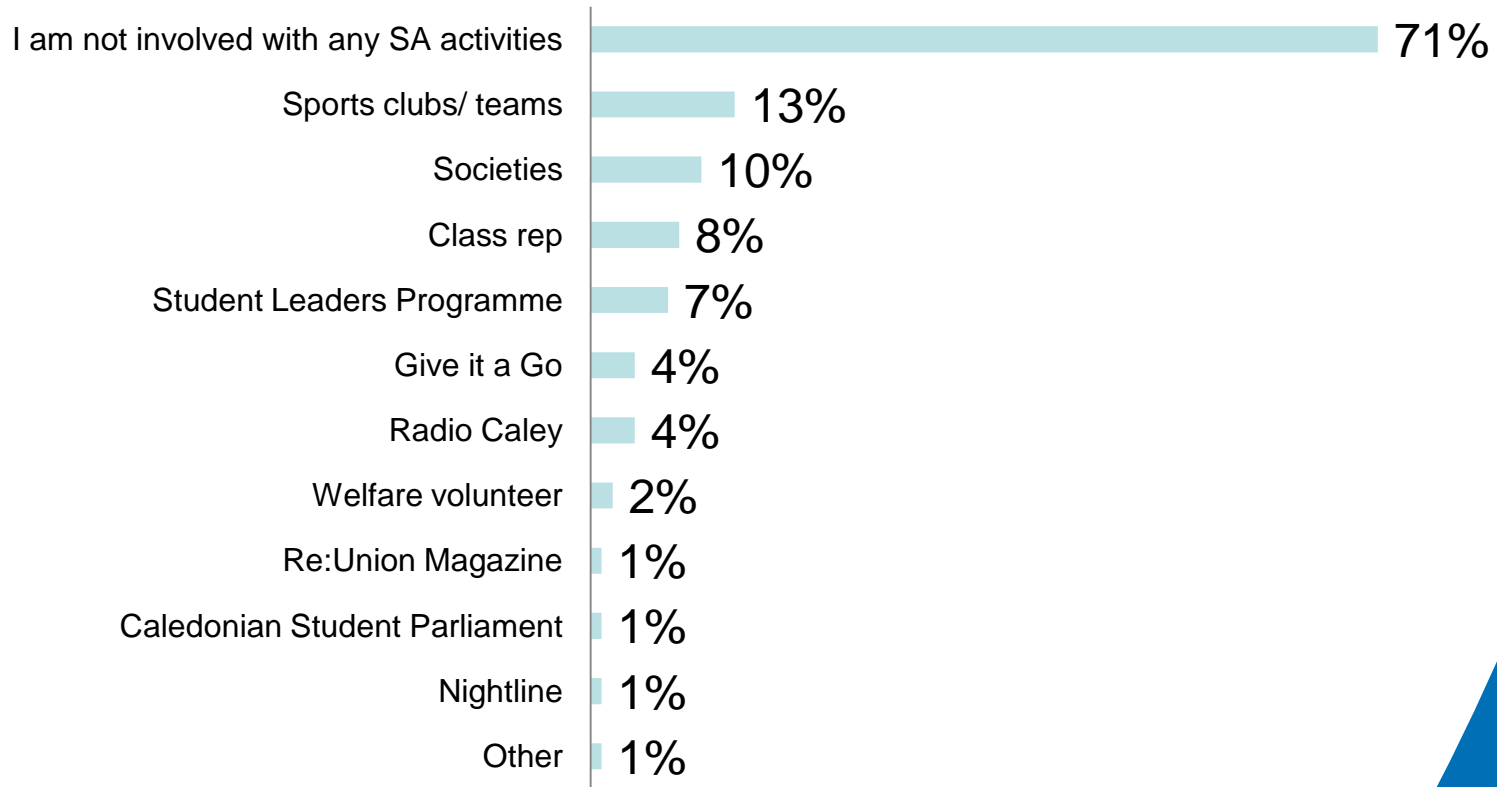
Awareness of who the current members of the Executive Committee are (Base: 422)

Yes	26%
No	74%

- Awareness of the fact that the SA is run by an Executive Committee is reasonable; note: around one-fifth (18%) unaware
- That said, awareness of who they are could be improved – three-quarters (74%) unaware

Involvement with Students' Association activities

Involvement with following activities – prompted (Base:493)



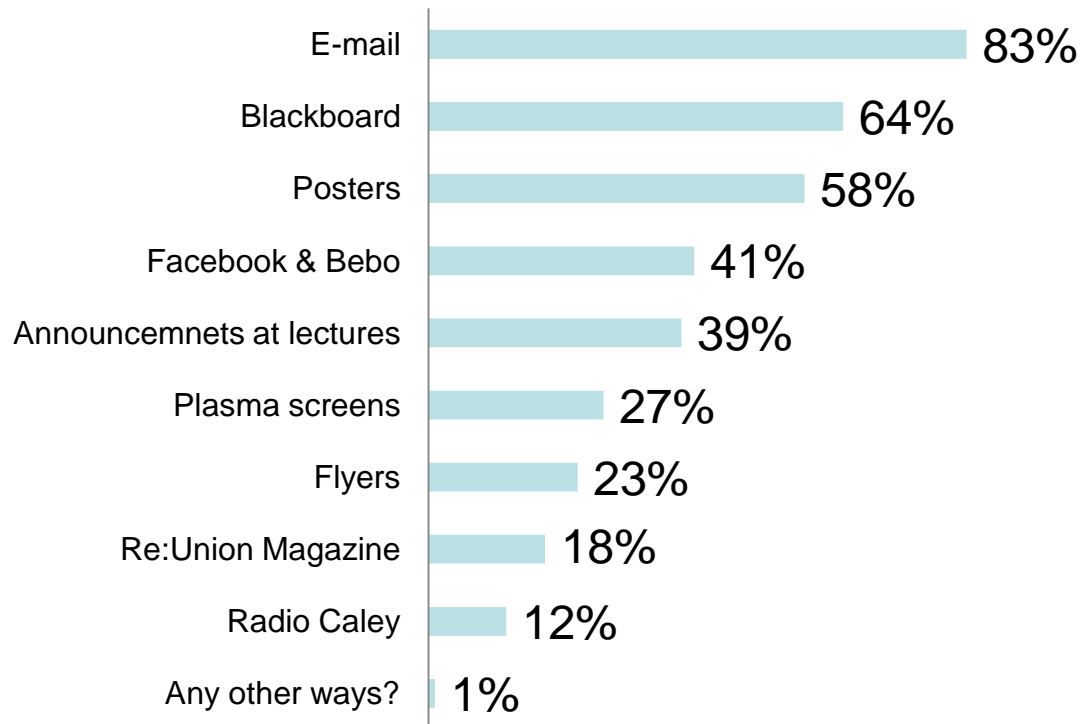
- Most (71%) of the sample are not involved in any activities
- How do these compare to attendance figures?
- Not surprisingly, those with greater involvement had – in general – greater knowledge of the SA and its remit
- Domestic students (72%) are more likely not to be involved than international (non-EU) students (62%) – surprising?
- Note: as would be expected, likelihood not to be involved was higher amongst part-time students (88%) than full-time students (69%)

Awareness and engagement – summary

- Overall, awareness of the Student Association's is positive
- However full awareness of what it does could be improved (61% not fully aware)
- General roles like representing students and providing activities enjoy greater awareness than campaigning and social aspects
 - That said, awareness of specific campaigns can be strong – perhaps suggesting that some are unaware that it is the SA that conducts the campaigns
 - Awareness of the Welfare Dept's roles varies, with Nightline considerably better recognised than the rest
 - Awareness of the running of the Association is reasonable, however, only one quarter know who is running it
- Could engagement with the SA's activities be improved – 53% been inside the SA building?
 - Need to ensure that part-time students are aware it is just as much for them

Effectiveness of the Students' Association communications

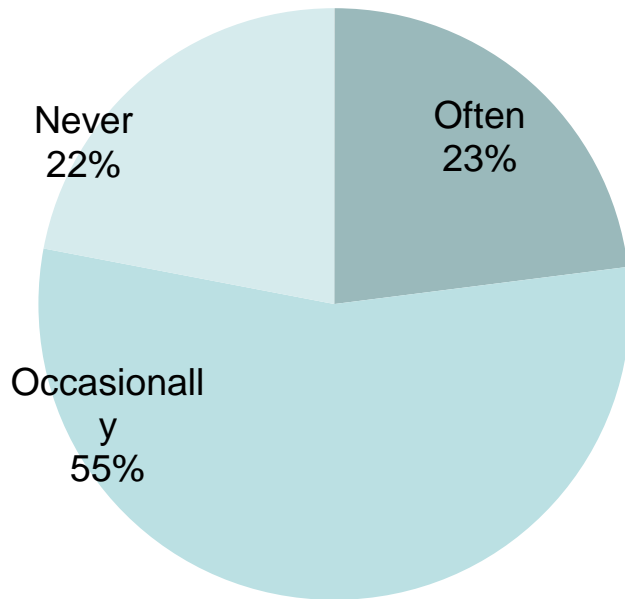
Most effective ways for SA to communicate with students – prompted (Base:509)



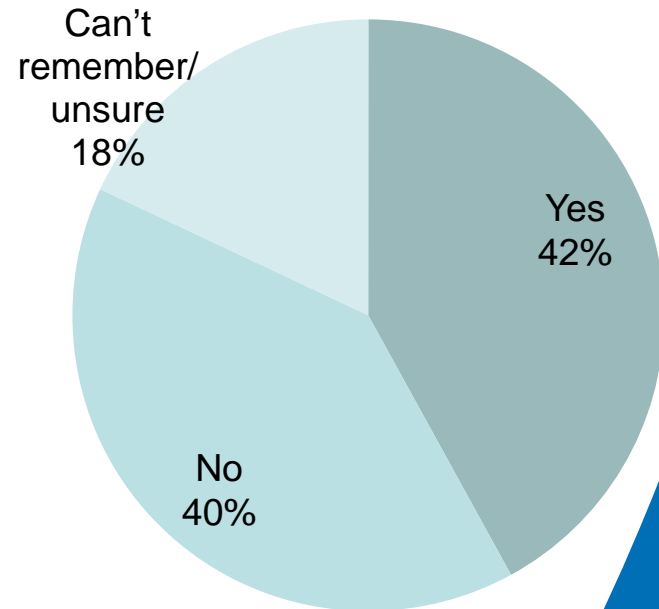
- A range of communications desired, yet e-mail a clear winner
- Other electronic still requested – social media has a lot of potential
- Paper elements still desired by some – posters and less so, flyers
- Face-to-face also desired by some

Effectiveness of the Students' Association communications

Regularity of reading SA's bi-monthly e-mail (Base:510)



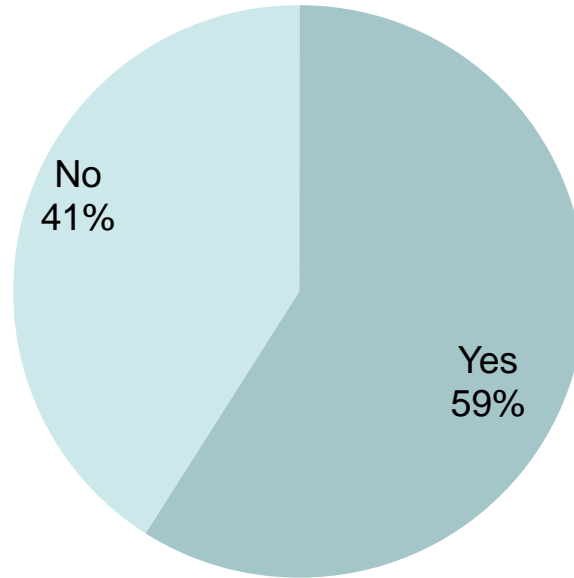
Visited www.caledonianstudent.com? (Base:510)



- Engagement with the bi-monthly e-mail is reasonable – 78% reading, 23% often
- Perhaps accessing the website is not as popular – yes (42%); it certainly did not make an impression with around one-fifth (18%)
- Summary – there is a place for most of the range of communications used, however, electronic versions (e-mail & Blackboard) are most important

Impact of the Students' Association

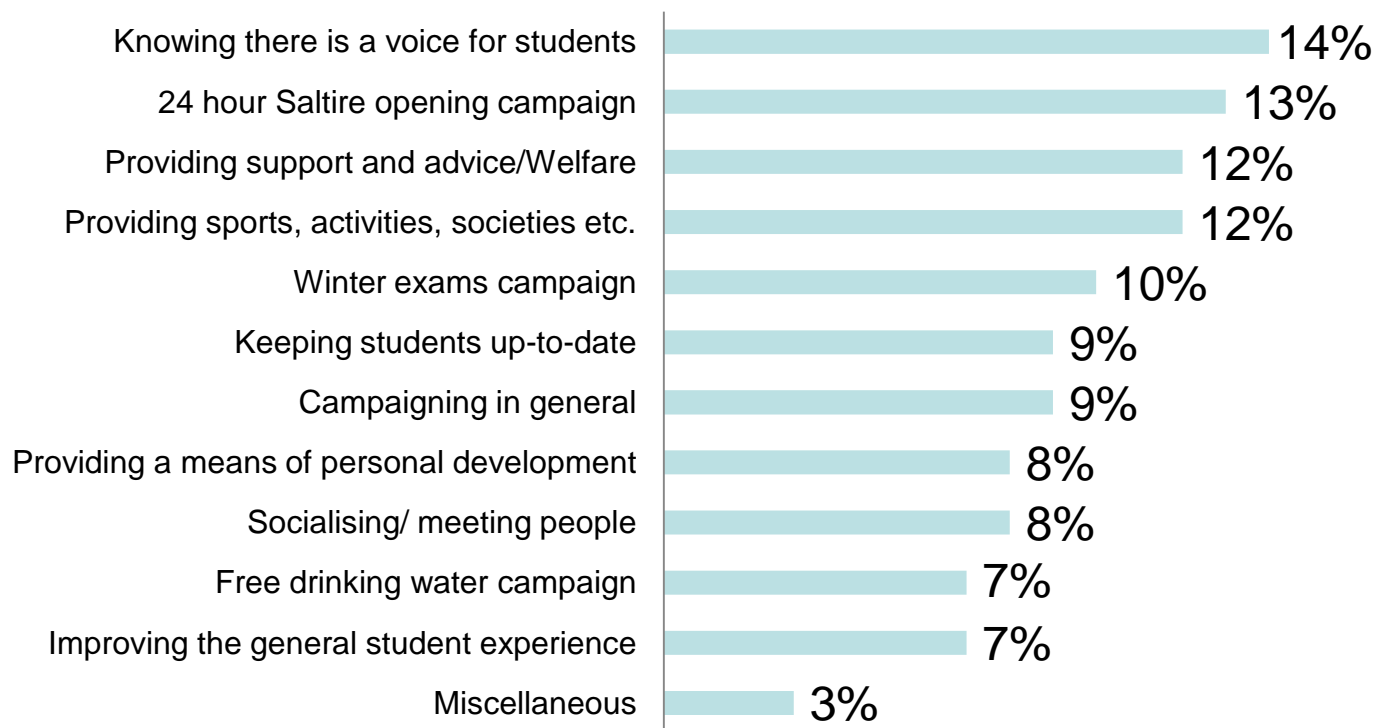
Is the SA making a positive impact on your life as a student at GCU? (Base:510)



- 59% feel the SA has made a positive impact – surprising?
- Around two-fifths (41%) have not seen a positive impact
 - Note: this does not necessarily mean a negative impact
- How does this compare to the benchmark?
- The impact was significantly greater amongst full time (62%) than part-time students (43%) – reflecting their involvement?
- It was also greater amongst international (non-EU) students (80%) than domestic students (57%) – again, reflecting their involvement?

Reasons for the SA making a positive impact

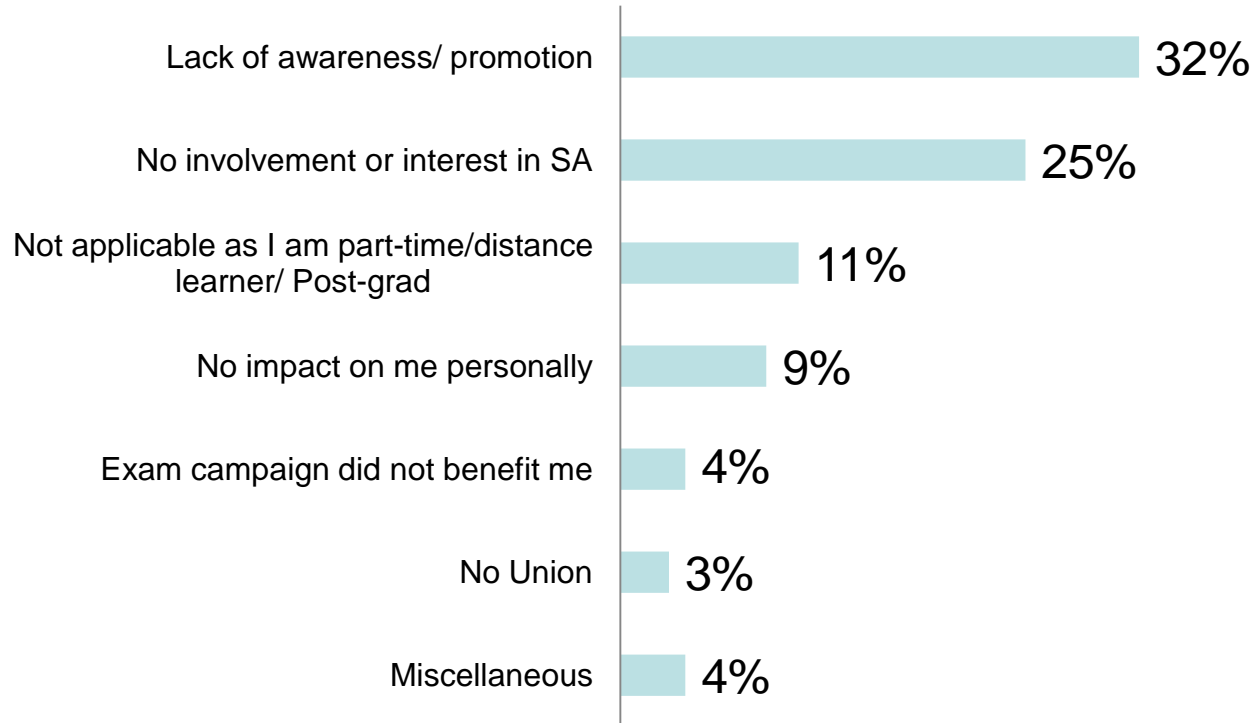
Reasons for a positive impact (Base:301)



- Whilst low numbers, a reasonable range of reasons given
- Biggest impact is provided by ensuring students that their voice is heard and someone is speaking on their behalf
- 39% of those who felt a positive impact was made said it was through some sort of campaign

Reasons for the SA NOT making a positive impact

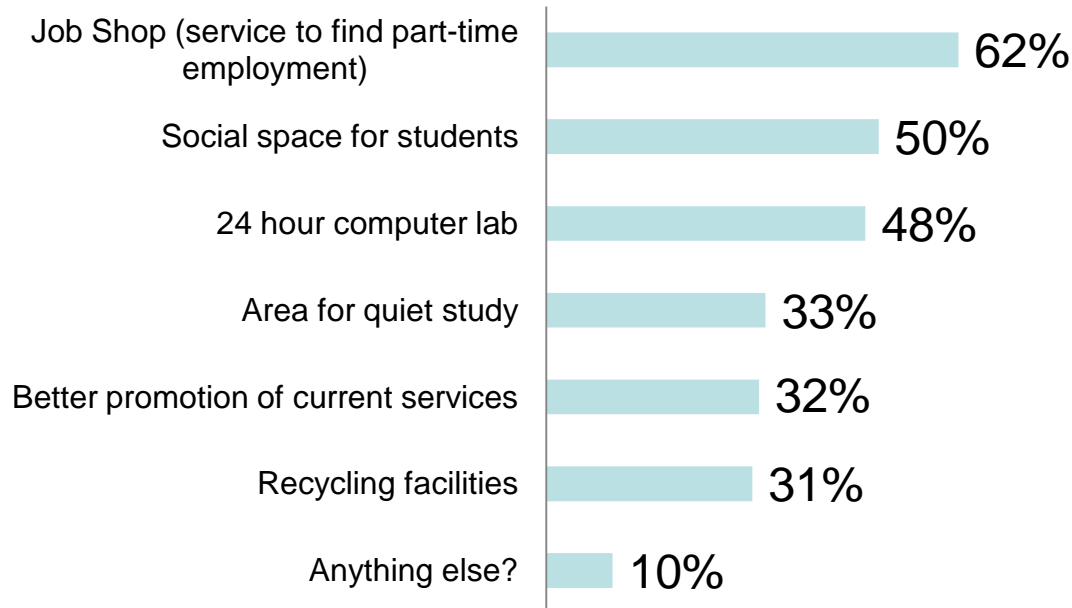
Reasons for NO positive impact (Base:209)



- Again, quite low numbers
- However, this further endorses the need for greater awareness building
- 57% of those who feel that no positive impact was made are either not engaging with or not aware of the actions and subsequent benefits of the SA
- One-tenth claiming they do not feel it belongs to them because they are not full time has to be addressed
- Low mention of the Union – surprising given Student Barometer findings

Moving forward – desired Students' Association activities

Desired offerings from the SA – prompted (Base:498)



- Demand for the suggested services varies
- Assistance in finding part-time employment is reasonably popular, with social space and a 24hr computer lab desired by around half
- Consideration of cross-over/replication with other departments is needed
- Others included: a bar (18 responses)& more computers (3 responses)

Moving forward – comments/suggestions for the future

- Unsurprisingly, many comments revolved around making people more aware of what is on offer

More advertising for where exactly the SA is... a lot of people have no idea what building it is in

Advertise, do more promotion for the SA because much of the uni does not know what a great service is available

People should be made more aware of what is available to them

More direct promotion of how they can help individuals

To maximise coverage of the activities and events the Students' Association are involved in

Publicity about the SA needs to be improved upon as I've met a good number of students who are not aware of the SA. I must also confess I don't know every programme the SA is doing and I don't know the executives and can't tell if I run into them.

Conduct a social evening so that every one know the importance of students association. Interact with the fellow students better than the you had did in the past .I think if you conduct some extracurricular activities along with some information on students association then it will be far more better.

Moving forward – comments/suggestions for the future (continued)

- Some other comments revolved around general student demands

I would like more computers, I have to go in before 10am to get a computer

I would like them to campaign for more healthy food options at the university

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campaign to get sports facilities free, so we don't have to fundraise to maintain a club

The Student's Association building used to be home to the union until it shut down, now the space seems to be lying empty...as a social space it is very spacious and inviting and need not necessarily be a bar

Return of a social space for students

Summary & recommendations

- Overall, the Students Association whilst making a positive impact on some students (59%), could perhaps have greater recognition and involvement amongst the greater student population
- Those who have been positively affected are glad to have someone speaking and campaigning on their behalf
 - Furthermore, future offers – such as the job shop – look promising
- Amongst those that have not been impacted, the issue appears to be one of lack of awareness and engagement, rather than poor performance
- Subsequently there is a need to inform all students of the role of the SA and its value to every student...

- Inform on what the SA is there for and its benefits
 - Valuable representation and campaigning
 - It's relevance, value and effect on all sub-groups
 - The fact that you have a 'finger on the pulse' and will keep them informed
 - Activities/ socialising/ volunteering
 - The complete range
 - Friends beyond classmates
 - Experiences beyond the lecture halls
 - Involvement for enjoyment and personal development
 - Benefits to the CV
 - Extra curricular skills development
 - Networking
 - Advice and support, welfare etc.
 - Full range: accommodation, finance
 - Skilled listeners
 - Who the Executive Committee is and how it got there
 - Ensure this is as personal and interactive as possible
 - Where you're based and an open-door – get people into the SA building

- Important: this is for everyone. All sub-groups – e.g. part-time students – should be aware that the SA is as much for them as anyone else
- Getting the message across:
 - Communicating to students has to be predominantly electronic (e-mail, Blackboard, social media) however not exclusively – posters and face-to-face still have a role
 - Most existing forms are utilised, the bi-monthly e-mail being well received
 - Can we direct more traffic to the website?
 - Is there greater scope for the use of: YouthWire? mobile?

Thank you