



Glasgow Caledonian University
Students' Association
Scottish Charity No. SC022887

Glasgow Caledonian University Students' Association

Three Year Strategic Plan

vision:

what we aspire to

That GCU students will have an outstanding experience that will live with them forever

mission:

what we exist for

To represent and enable GCU students to enhance all aspects of their student experience

values:

how we behave

Diversity
Fun
Community
Support
Participation
Leadership

strategic themes:

*what will focus us to
move towards our vision
in the next 3 years*

Effectively representing our members
Communicating effectively with our members
Developing a fun and supportive community for all our members
Developing our members employability

strategic enablers:

*what underpins our
ability to function*

Financial and Environmental Sustainability
People Management
Partnership Working

Strategic Themes

Effectively representing our members

The main reason that the Students' Association exists in law and in our charitable purposes is to represent the needs of our members and to ensure that students at GCU have excellence in education and enhancement of the student experience. Whilst completing the Student Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI) we have established that we need to be more effective at representing our members within GCU but also externally.

Over the next 3 years we need to refocus on representing students. We need to review and better utilise our representative structures, better identify the needs of GCU students, improve our campaigning function, be evidence based, involve hard to reach student groups, work more closely with the academic schools and support departments, be more accountable and responsible to our membership and continue the SUEI journey. This will make us a strong, legitimate, trusted and representative body.

Communicating effectively with our members

Our students tell us that they don't always know what we are doing, can feel overwhelmed with the level of communications that they receive and are contacted on issues that do not affect them. We must therefore improve our connections with our members and ensure we are effective at providing information, consultation and seeking participation.

Students have told us that email is their preferred method of communication but that they need to be more targeted, less frequent and more engaging. Students wish us to develop a Blackboard Community and build on the immediacy of social networking. We must support the development of our website as a central hub of information and support for members and facilitate the growth of the Radio Station through providing GCU specific news. We have also been told more lecture announcements and face to face contact should take place. Communication is a two way process and we must develop mechanisms to listen to what our members are saying and communicate how we have acted upon this feedback.

Developing a fun and supportive community for all our members

Students have told us socialising, attending events and having fun is important to their time at GCU. We have been told that it can be difficult to feel part of something that is so big and our part time, mature and postgraduate students in particular feel that the Students' Association is not for them.

We therefore must better promote the diverse range of activities and services we currently provide, develop a more varied, fun and inclusive welcome and events programme to engage with different types of students, encourage integration through socialisation, obtain higher levels of participation in sports, societies and volunteering and develop vibrant and high quality Students' Association facilities for students to socialise in. We need to make membership fun and exciting, be supportive, build one community for all, develop global citizens, improve the wellbeing of our students and provide students with an outstanding student experience.

Developing our members employability

The CBI (2009) tell us that outside of academic programmes Students' Associations offer a variety of ways for students to find out what employers are looking for, gain relevant experience and many students report they get a significant amount of help in increasing their employability. However we recognise that competition in the current job market is fierce.

We must make it easy for members to grow their skills and experiences through life changing opportunities such as the Student Leaders Programme and other work related learning volunteer programme and increase the number that can benefit. We must push building skills and experiences from day one, that will enhance employment prospects in a fun and engaging way. Getting involved in the Students' Association adds real value to the CV, develops graduates attributes and helps our members compete in the job market. We will develop leaders, with life skills, that will contribute to the GCU community and the wider community for the common good.

Strategic Enablers

Financial and Environmental Sustainability

It is crucial that we think long term and ensure that we think about the future needs of our members. Being sustainable is about being innovative and creative and ensuring that providing an outstanding student experience is at the heart of the Students' Association.

Our financial sustainability will be led by continually reviewing and demonstrating the value and outcomes of the Students' Association to GCU (our main funders) and maintain our university support. On top of this our financial sustainability will be led by prudent budgeting, being more efficient, creative and innovative in delivery, investigate new avenues for sales, increase sponsorship opportunities and start to build reserves. This will ensure new resources for growth.

We have made good progress with environmental sustainability but we know that we can achieve more. We have achieved and must maintain the Green Impact Accreditation at Silver Level and worked with GCU to achieve Fair Trade status. We must maintain and build upon our environmental commitment through educating our members, measuring and managing our impact on the environment and save energy, recycle and minimise waste. We will continue to assist GCU in their work too, providing ideas and being a test-bed for new initiatives. We also will need to keep a watch on our decision making, promoting the ethical and sustainable choice internally and when we work with other organisations and suppliers.

People Management

We are privileged to have so many great people working for us that meet our values and therefore we need check to ensure that we are constantly renewing and growing our team. We will link staff learning and development opportunities to effective performance management so that our staff feel supported and able to deliver their very best for our members and to fulfil their own potential. Our staff will continue to be involved in determining how their specific area operates, feel they have a voice and have good access to the Senior Management Team. It is very important that staff have the value of their work recognised. Every member of our staff team should know how they make a difference and contribute to our vision. We will develop ways to ensure that our staff are aware of their impact for students, celebrating achievements and develop ways of sharing best practice across the organisation. We will continue to strive to have good people management policies in place and ensure these are effectively communicated. We will maintain our Investors in People and Healthy Working Lives Accreditation and continue to encourage staff to engage with health promotion and wellbeing through Healthy Working Lives, as well as attending social events and to spend time together.

Partnership Working

The Students' Association prides itself on working in partnership and having effective relationships with our various stakeholders. However, relationships can change over time and so it is therefore important that we constantly review who we work with, how we work together and how we can better work together in the future.

Mutually beneficial partnerships are important in virtually every aspect of our activity. We need to continue to build strategic partnerships and multidimensional relationships with key stakeholder groups at a local, regional and national level. They allow us to provide increase opportunities for our members, enhance our services and activities, enable our voice to be heard and strengthen our reputation. We will continue to build upon current partnerships and explore new partnerships and collaboration with external bodies to provide activities where we are unable to provide them ourselves. The Students' Association acts as gatekeeper to the student market. We have a pivotal role to play in helping organisations access the student market, and we are committed to developing this role further. We must also build our links within the student movement through NUS, spangs, SUS and BUCS and share good practice with other Students' Associations.

It is critical to ensure that we continue to work in partnership with our members, GCU (University Court, Executive Board, Academic Schools, Support Functions and Campus Trade Unions), funders, sponsors and local community to meet our vision.