

**STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION**

**New
College
Lanarkshire**

2019/2020

CSAO Update February 2020

New College Lanarkshire

Student Association Report February 2020

Class Reps Update

In 2018 – 2019, New College Lanarkshire Learner Engagement Team and Student Association conducted a review of the class-rep system. The review, based on student feedback, concluded that the flat class-rep system was ineffective and did not provide the anticipated level of representation. The review highlighted specific issues within some faculties and the fact that a 'one size fits all' approach was not suitable to some areas, such as Engineering, which required greater flexibility in the implementation of a revised system.

Working with the NUS and SPARQS, a new three-tier class-rep structure was developed rolled-out at the start of the current academic year, with varying forms of responsibility and involvement available to students who wanted to become representatives. The new system consists of Class Reps, Faculty Reps and Curriculum Reps. Each level is aligned with distinct roles and responsibilities, with training delivered by SPARQS to ensure all participants are capable of effectively undertaking their duties.

In addition, through consultation with staff, external agencies and other institutions a bespoke class representation system was developed for the Faculty of Engineering and Automotive. Tailored to the needs of the student and block-timetabling structure, the system allows students to have the option of feeding back regularly, without the onus being on an individual or group of reps.

The new systems have been successfully rolled-out to all students and staff and the Student Association and Learner Engagement Team are currently in the process of gathering feedback through faculty course review meetings. Further training is currently being offered to Faculty and Curriculum Reps.

As a result of this work SPARQS have invited the Student Association and Learner Engagement Team to present a spotlight on the NLC rep system which will be featured on their website as a case study.

Engineering Block Upgrade

The Student Association and Learner Engagement Team are working to upgrade the facilities within the Engineering Block. Construction students and staff have collaborated to build a new student services hub within the current social area on the first floor. The hub will be occupied by a range of professional services staff to ensure students taught within this building have equality of access to support. Redevelopment began in January 2020, with the area currently being painted and rebranded as 'The Steelworks'. Furnishings, new hot-vending machine and games consoles will complete the area. We anticipate this will be ready to launch towards the end of March.

Welcoming Events

The Student Association worked on welcoming events for new and returning students at the start of semester two. The decision was made to move away from a traditional 'refreshers' style event and to drive forward making it a warm, welcoming but informative environment for all students. The main focal point was a visible support hub and staff from Students' Association, Learner Engagement, ICT Helpdesk, Educational Learner Support, Student Advisors, MIS, Equality & Diversity and Student Funding were all in the one place to raise awareness of the support they can offer students throughout their time at college and beyond. This hub combined with external agencies such as NHS and localised charities ensured the day was a success.

Lost & Found

Preparations are almost complete for the Students' Association to launch our first Lost & Found peer-to-peer mental health support group. The group's priorities will align with the objectives of key external partners such as Chris House, SAMH and The NHS. The group will meet on the first and last Thursday of every month. The Student Association have worked closely with SAMH & Think Positive (NUS) to ensure the group offers the best value to our students and users. The group will ultimately be based on shared experience, support awareness, social activities and mentoring groups. All design productions have been complete and are currently within the marketing department at NCL awaiting order.

Student Visitors – Chinese and American Partners

The Students' Association have been proactive in ensuring our Chinese and American guests feel welcome and at home whilst they visit NCL to study. Alongside daily support and guidance whilst attending college the Student Association and Learner Engagement Team have arranged many social, cultural and group activities for our guests to enjoy; helping develop strong international partnerships and create an international mind-set among the student body. The Student Association have arranged and attended the following events with our visitors; Bonfire Night at Strathclyde Park, Christmas Celebrations with carol singing, Taste of Scotland Culture Day, East meets West food tasting event, Chinese New Year Celebration & Chinese Gala Day. We are delighted to be welcoming more visiting American students throughout February and are in the process of creating a social diary to ensure as many students as possible have the opportunity to participate in hosting our international colleagues.

Scottish Mental Health Agreement

The NCL Students' Association are currently working alongside NUS Think Positive campaign to launch our new and revised Student Mental Health Agreement. A student mental health survey was launched online at the start of semester 2 and will run until the 28th of February to allow students to voice their opinion on mental health related issues within college. There are 12 steps in order to complete the process, which we have currently completed and awaiting confirmation on the launch from Think Positive. Once this has been confirmed NCL Principal and CEO Professor Christopher Moore and Students' Association President Calum Smith are required to sign it off ready for launch.

Digital first Aiders

The Student Association are currently working alongside the Faculty of Computing and Creative Industries and are part of a working group to help introduce and train the first group of Digital First Aiders onto our campuses. This is ultimately to enhance the support available to students for their digital health and wellbeing. Working with the University of Stirling we are keen to develop an internal training program to equip first aiders to support individual students should they experience issues such as cyber-bullying, smartphone addiction, online fraud etc.

Be Heard

The first Be Heard event of the academic year was ran successfully at our 3 larger campuses in December 2019. The Student Association and Learner Engagement team worked to ensure all students had the opportunity to ask direct questions to the Senior Management Team. All faculties were represented throughout the 3 days and the students who attended provided great feedback of the event. Student Association representatives presented Be Heard feedback to the NCL senior team in January 2020, with the senior team agreeing to provide an update on identified actions in March 2020.

Rapid Improvement Event

The Students' Association were pleased to be asked to participate in a 3 day Rapid Improvement Event at Kirkintilloch campus. The projects purpose was to create ideas for change and to develop systems, processes and working practices that facilitate the efficient and effective provision of professional services. Members of staff represented every corner of the college in a very meaningful and worthwhile event which provided great insight to dynamics and mechanisms of the college as a whole. The SA felt it hugely beneficial to be representing student voice throughout this event.

Gamification

The Students' Association are working with Learner Engagement team to develop gamified learning within the college. The gamification programme has been successfully developed and implemented in specific target areas, launching at the start of the academic year. Gamification involves competitive social activities, which transforms the students experience into one that rewards individual efforts at regular short bursts in order to motivate and maintain engagement. Pilot activities will be reviewed and evaluated to understand the impact on the individual and faculty performance indicators.

Mentor Program

As outlined in the Student Association Operational Plan, a Peer Aided Learning Support programme (PALS) is currently under development. Facilitated by the Student Association and student volunteers the programme is a mentoring scheme, which aims to create opportunity for further exploration and understanding of students chosen field of study. We hope to create low pressure and informal environments for students of all abilities to ask questions, develop their skills, gain assistance with coursework and build a sense of community within the college. Whilst the programme will not be operational this academic year, the aim is to create a finalised PALS handbook/guide to be part of the handover process for 2020/2021.

Supporting Sports Students

Through raising awareness of the support available, the Students Association has again funded one of our sports students to compete in a UK wide BUCS event. Alexander Thomson will be competing in the 400m & 800m races in Sheffield in May 2020. The Student Association has funded his full entry including travel, stay and new sports equipment, as well as ongoing support prior to the event. He will be sponsored by NCL SA on the day and is currently ranked second highest Paralympian in the UK at his age group. The Student Association regularly make all students aware of the support that is available to them to compete in high level sporting activities throughout their time at the college.

Elections

The Student Association are working alongside Learner Engagement and NUS to create the new round of elections ready for 2020/2021 officers. The elections will be advertised from March onwards and will be finalised by April & May with the new officers in post from June. There is a full handover process in development to ensure continuity within the SA.

Student Association Rebrand

Through on-going discussions with members of the Student Association and Learner Engagement team the decision was made to start the rebranding process of NCL Students Association. Whilst the awareness surrounding the Students Association has raised considerably this year, we feel it would ultimately be beneficial for the new brand to be in place for the end of this academic year. Work is currently on going between both teams and meetings have been set up with Marketing to aid this process.

HND Students

The Student Association are working closely with HND students from Hospitality to deliver student themed events throughout semester 2. Using information gathered from feedback received from students across the college a programme of events has been created, starting with a movie night at our Motherwell campus on Tuesday 18th of February. This has been aligned with the Hospitality student's curriculum work to allow them to experience real life and industry standard situations.

Learner Engagement Group

The format of the Learner Engagement Team meeting has been revised to ensure a stronger and more varied representation of teams engaging with students across the college. Renamed as the Student Experience Group, the membership of the group will now incorporate Student Association reps and staff from all Professional Services and Faculty teams. A Student Experience Group remit and action plan has been developed by the Student Association and Learner Engagement team to ensure that discussion leads to positive outcomes for students such as cross-college initiatives, rolling-out good practice and improving engagement and communication to ensure that students are perceived as partners in NCL processes. The first meeting of the revised group will take place on Friday 14th February at Cumbernauld campus.

Free Breakfast Pilot

Initiated by NCL CEO Principal Professor Christopher Moore, a free breakfast initiative will be trialled at Cumbernauld Campus from Monday 17th February to Friday 13th March, between the hours of 7.45am & 8.30am. The Students Association and Learner Engagement team are central to the team delivering the pilot project and have some responsibility for promotion and evaluation. All NCL students will be entitled to a free breakfast of toast, cereal, porridge and fresh fruit along with a hot or cold drink.

Equality and Diversity Group

The Student Association are currently in the process of establishing a student focused Equality and Diversity group. The ultimate aim of the group is to gather direct student perspective on equality and diversity related issues within the college, whilst promoting an inclusive community, valuing diversity, enabling equality of opportunity and emphasising the importance of dignity and respect. The SA are working with NCL Equality and Diversity advisor Jaz Sandhu to lay the correct foundations to ensure the sustainability, continuity and effectiveness of the group.

Volunteers will have the option of becoming equality officers for specific areas; for example a disability officer, LGBT+ officer, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) officer etc. Further training and development will be available to all volunteers. The final development group meeting will take place on 4th of March and we are aiming to launch the group on April 8th, meetings will follow monthly thereafter.

Other

The Students Association travelled to Birmingham to support all NCL students at our World Skills. New College Lanarkshire won 17 accolades in total in finished top of the leader board overall.

The Students Association will be attending National Education Officers Network delivered by SPARQs at Fife College on Wednesday 19th of February.

The Students' Association, Learner Engagement Team and NUS have worked together to create a proposal for a Student Association restructure in line with the newly formed Student Experience Group. The paper is in its final draft and will be presented to Professor Christopher Moore once complete.

The Students Association & Learner Engagement team will be attending the NUS National Conference to represent NCL.

Alongside Forth Valley & Inverness College, NCL Students Association will be involved in a SPARQS project concerning sharing good practice.

