

Kilmarnock College Students Association within the management and quality systems of Kilmarnock College

In line with the 1994 Education Act, Kilmarnock College actively attempts to involve students to own their learning experience. Prior to the inception of the Kilmarnock College Student Association in 2003, student representation was mainly managed through a Student Liaison Officer and part time Executive Committee.

In 1999 the Board of Management agreed to support two changes to the structure of Kilmarnock College Students Association. The Board of Management agreed to fund a sabbatical student President position and provide dedicated space to allow student activities to take place.

Both changes have meant that from induction through to the awards ceremony, each student at Kilmarnock College knows that there is a dedicated student President who is there to listen and help students at the college.

The president of Kilmarnock College Student Association is elected in April every year by a ballot of all current students. The elected student takes up their position in July. There is a gradual handover of responsibility between April and July, which allows the incoming President time to finish up their course and benefit from the knowledge and experience of the outgoing President. The newly elected student President will also generally meet informally with the senior management team and head of student services during this time.

The student association has a representative, typically the president, on the following committees:

- Board of Management
- Student liaison committee
- Equalities and diversity group
- Health and safety committee

Kilmarnock College Student Association takes an active role in quality enhancement systems by actively supporting the class representative system. When the students return in August, the President works alongside the Returning Officer and Quality Manager to elect the student association Executive Committee along with class representatives.

The class representative system works by allowing students to feed information to their class reps or Executive Committee members, who in turn

raise these issues at their monthly class representative meetings. As a collective voice these issues are usually dealt with informally by the class representatives, Executive Committee member or student President and the appropriate staff member.

Any issues that cannot be dealt with informally are discussed at the Student Liaison Committee meeting which meets regularly and is attended by the College Principal, Senior Management team, Head of Student Services, Board of Management members, class representatives and members from the student association Executive Committee.

The Senior Management team are supportive of the student association and hope to increase involvement of the student President and Executive Committee in more of the college management committees. For example, the student President is currently meeting with members of the curriculum team to find ways of bringing core skills into all classes.

Staff at Kilmarnock College are generally supportive of the student association and class representative structure and have seen the benefits to students by having a full time sabbatical president and a dedicated student space.

Having a sabbatical student President has also meant that Kilmarnock College Student Association has been represented nationally through the following:

- NUS Scotland Executive Committee
- NUS National women's committee
- NUS Scotland Scottish women's committee
- NUS Scotland Scottish mature students observer
- Review of Scotland's Colleges

The student President has fed into work of the Scottish Further Education Unit and HMIe and has also attended and contributed to many conferences on student issues.

In the past year, Kilmarnock College Student Association has helped our students lobby the Scottish parliament; Westminster; and National Blood Donation Service and we have worked with local and national bodies to raise awareness of student issues.

With the help of college staff, the students association recruited and trained (with SPARQS) 52 class representatives in 2005-06. This has meant that almost every class has had a trained class representative who has been able to give input into the college quality structures.

Kilmarnock College staff, management and board all work hand in hand with the student association to ensure that the students at Kilmarnock College receive the best learning experience that the college can offer them.