

News brought to you by the Student Engagement Team

## Contents

Update from Connel, your Vice President Education	1	"Celebrate good times, come on"	7
Update from Heather, your Representation and Democracy Coordinator	2	Big up our volunteers	8
Election results	3	Big plan, little plan (no cardboard box)	9
Introduction to Holly McAdams, your incoming Vice President Academic	4	Overview of the Big 6 surveys	10 – 11
Could you be the next ... Department Officer Facilitator of Student Parliament School MP	4 5 5	A Careers sessions for Class Reps	12
In the words of Heather Small...		How can you help us	12
Decisions, decisions, decisions...		All the best	12



### Update from Connel Greenhorn, Your Vice President Education

Over the last academic year, as your VP Education, I have achieved a series of improvements to your learning and teaching experience. So, to try and summarise in as little words as I can, let's go!

With support from Georgia, Vice President Wellbeing, I led on establishing a Mitigating Circumstances and Temporary Suspension of Studies Committee, which is formally recognised and accountable to the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee. Previously, there was no student representation involved in making sure this support mechanism was fit for purpose, and now monthly meetings happen to discuss this.

- We changed our name from School Officers to Department Officers, with new introductions for AY2024/25 to expand to Sport Science and Global College.
- I worked with the Academic Integrity Report to review, update and improve guidance related to Turn-it-in, and on different forms of academic misconduct, ensuring they are clear and easy to understand.
- During Freshers Week, I led and facilitated the most successful series of School Mixers seen by the Student Union in recent years, seeing over 400 students come along and make new friendships, across Edinburgh and Galashiels. Similarly, in 'ReFreshers', just short of 90 students attended.
- Debut of the 'Class Rep Celebration Event: You're a Rep!', which saw Class Representatives receive an induction pack, short talk from sparqs (student partnership in quality Scotland) and an introduction to the role of what a Student Representative is.
- I hosted and facilitated two separate events of Academic Congress, inviting along Student Representatives and key university staff to discuss key topics on a range of topics related to the student experience. Insight and student voice was provided on Assessment and Feedback, student partnership, active wellbeing, etc.
- I supported the renewal and revision of the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) policy, which was dropped during COVID-19 and picked back up to ensure the process and outcomes of organising SSLCs were streamlined and more consistent across schools.
- I helped to finalise and conclude the three-year long campaign on 'Making the Most of Feedback', which released and provided a plethora of feedback tips, resources, and guidance for students on how to learn and apply feedback received from assessment.
- I appointed to sector-level committees, in QAA and sparqs, helping to provide advice and guidance on the work that they do on the learning and teaching experience of students, which filter down in the form of expectations to institutions such as Heriot-Watt University on how to enhance aspects of the student experience.
- I worked with the Associate Principal for the Student Learning Experience to improve the mechanism and time in the release of marks controlled by Academic Operations.
- I participated in a pan-university, institutional wide review on the 'HWU Your Voice' platform, executing an internal and external consultation into student voice, what platforms are used across the sector, what student representatives needed to feel empowered in their role and what recommendations are needed to move this forward. Coordinated effort across Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia, with 70 Reps participating.
- I helped to lead the 'Academic' Zone of the Student Partnership Agreement, ensuring that the focus this year will be on the empowerment of student voice and Student Representatives.

- I was a key member of the Student Experience and Satisfaction Group, where I emphasised the importance of resource availability to support academic communities and societies. An allocation of £50,000 was put against this, to help reduce student isolation.
- Alongside Scott, your Student President, I helped organise and host the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Learning and Teaching Oscars, which seen the celebration of shortlisted academic and non-academic staff on their achievements to improving the student experience. Fantastic feedback was provided, being one of the best hits of the year.
- Working with Wellbeing and Disability Services, Information Services and VP Wellbeing, we improved and streamlined current processes to ensure that there are more accurate measures of understanding where reasonable adjustments are being applied and not applied across the university.
- I was appointed to the Digital Student Experience Programme Board and Design Authority, where I advocated for the prioritisation of personalised timetables to ensure that they continue to be easy, simple, and relevant to each student's programme and course of study as the system currently being used is difficult and confusing to read and use.
- I supported and engaged in an Institutional Led Review for the Combined Studies programme, helping to provide advice and recommendations to improve student voice, partnership and representation on the programme and connections with the Student Union.
- I helped to facilitate the 'Community Meals' events, which intended to support students in relieving financial pressure by providing free meals, securing, and forming a safe, community space for students to come together.

It has been an amazing experience and whilst I'm sad to be leaving I know Holly will make a great VP Academic.



### **Update from Heather Innes, Representation and Democracy Coordinator**

A quick overview of what I do in my role!

A key element of my role is to enhance the student voice at Heriot-Watt University, ensuring that undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives are supported to champion the student voice, helping them to navigate university regulations, meetings, and networks.

This means I am involved in the recruitment, training and support of Class Reps, Department Officers and Members of Parliament.

What does this look like?

Well, this includes organising the annual main elections (around February-March) and any required by-elections to elect your Full-Time Officers and Members of Parliament. It includes recruiting Class Reps and Department Officers and ensuring they are trained to be able to contribute at the highest level on undergraduate and postgraduate matters.

I also organise and support Rep meetings, like the Department Officer meetings, Academic Congress, Student Parliament and support the organisation of the annual Student Meeting. I encourage student-led ideas and policies to become realised / embedded.

Another part of my role is ensuring our representative structures are the best they can be. This means working with our Reps to gather feedback, brainstorm new ideas and try new methods. With your support, Holly and I hope to introduce a "Question of the Month" initiative, enabling the voices of students on your courses to be heard and actioned. We would like to provide opportunities to speak directly to the University decision makers on matters of important to you.

If you have any questions or issues throughout the year, please contact me on [h.innes@hw.ac.uk](mailto:h.innes@hw.ac.uk), I might not have the answers but will support you in receiving them. I can be found on the first floor of the Student Union, the door is always open – between Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 ... unless of course it's not!

## Election results

Voting for the incoming representatives, both full time and part time, took place in March. There were 1735 individual voters that cast a total of 9208 votes which is great so thank you if you took the time to vote.

### The following students were elected:

Members of Parliament:

- Mira Sivaprasad (School of Engineering and Physical Sciences)
- Yash Gur (School of Social Science and Edinburgh Business School)
- Nicole Matthews (School of Textiles and Design)
- Joshua Eseigbe (PGR Rep)  
Muhammad Umer (PGT Rep)

Student MPs:

- Dilip Govind
- Krisha Shah
- Meng Wu
- Megha Sivashankar
- Shagbaor Amool

There are still vacancies for the School of Energy, Geosciences, Infrastructure and Society and the School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, see page 5 for more details.

### Your incoming Officers for 2024-25 are:



#### **Cameron Fields, President**

Tackle the rise of sexual misconduct  
A safer, more inclusive campus  
Addressing student housing issues

#### **Holly McAdams, Vice President Academic**

Offering valuable feedback and student support  
Student influence over education  
Communication and transparency

#### **Sebi Merino, Vice President Community**

More free events  
Campaigning on things students actually care about  
Ensure Galashiels is not swept under the rug

#### **Rachel Poole, Vice President Wellbeing**

Diversity empowerment  
Equal access  
Mental Health action

Please get in touch if you'd like further information about any of their manifestos and ideas of how you could get involved but in the meantime here's Holly...



## Introduction to Holly McAdams, your incoming Vice President Education

As many of you may be aware from seeing the visuals on university screens, but if not, I was recently elected to be your next Vice President Academic in the March elections. For those unaware, this role is the same as Connel's, your current Vice President Education. The slight name change is to align our officer positions along with our other campuses – Dubai and Malaysia.

During election week, my manifesto was made up with three key points; feedback + support, communication and student voice. Below, I plan on diving a little deeper into what these points mean to me.

### Feedback and support

These two components are vital aspects for students to help improve for future academic assessments. I plan to investigate the current feedback structures in place and understand the aspects of this which are working and where it can be improved to ensure feedback is much more streamlined. As a result, this should offer additional support systems by providing resources on how best to use feedback.

### Communication

Over the past year Connel has worked on enhancing current communication channels in place for students. As I enter office, I plan on continuing this project. As a result this should foster a transparent dialogue and promote engagement.

### Student Voice

The empowerment of Class Reps, Department Officers and MPs helps ensure students voices are represented. As a result by ensuring students are heard, it should promote an inclusive and safe environment for all.

Overall, my aim in office is to work alongside my other colleagues to help enhance and improve the experience whilst offering opportunities to all students within Heriot-Watt.

I'm looking forward to being your representative next year...

## Could you be the next ...

### The Department Officer for your area?

We are looking for individuals willing to take on additional responsibilities by representing the following Departments as Department Officers:

<b>School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society</b>	<b>School of Engineering and Physical Science</b>	<b>School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences</b>
Architectural Engineering Biology Civil Engineering Construction Management and Surveying Geography Sports and Exercise Science Urban Studies	Brewing and Distilling Chemical Engineering Chemistry Electrical Engineering Mechanical Engineering Physics	Actuarial Science Computer Science Maths
<b>School of Social Sciences</b>	<b>School of Textiles and Design</b>	
Accounting and Finance Economics Language and Intercultural Studies Management Marketing Psychology	Communication and Design Creative Environments Fashion and Textiles	

Amongst other things, Department Officers are required to:

- Work in collaboration with your School Staff Representative to enhance the student experience
- Attend fortnightly meetings organised by the Union with your School Member of Parliament to update on issues presented by Class Reps or that you are experiencing
- Encourage students to complete University / Union surveys as and when applicable, including but not limited to, course level feedback, the National Student Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), the Big 6, Question of the Month.
- Participate in training for periodic reviews, the training is for all Department Officers although not all courses will be reviewed in any one year.
- Attend Academic Congress meetings, the annual Student Meeting and other meetings led by the Union

Department Officers will receive a stipend (payment) of £300 per year, paid in two instalments (c. February and May)

Interested students will need to submit a short application ([www.hwunion.com/be-represented/academic/school-officers/be-a-school-officer/](http://www.hwunion.com/be-represented/academic/school-officers/be-a-school-officer/)). Candidates will be shortlisted and successful candidates will be invited to participate in a short interview with Student Union staff and representative from the appropriate Department.

Applications are currently open and shortlisted candidates will be advised of the interview schedule.

### **Facilitator of Student Parliament?**

We are also looking for a Facilitator for Student Parliament. This is a voluntary role. This person would work with Heather to chair the Parliament meetings of which there are currently six during the academic year.

Parliament is a student led body, responsible to the students, that discuss issues of importance to students, attended by the Democracy and Representation Coordinator, the Student Union CEO and the Student Engagement Manager.

It is an exciting time as we review the effectiveness of Parliament and consider how to improve this, including presentations for external groups / organisations as well as University departments that the Committee would like to invite.

- They hold the Officers to account, receiving and questioning their activities.
- As well as the Student Meeting, Parliament can discuss and approve policies and ideas.
- Parliament should provide an update at the annual Student Meeting and to the Trustee Board on its activities over the year and should hear from the Board too.

### **School MP for the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society and the School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences**

In addition to the other roles mentioned, we are also looking for students that would be interested in representing EGIS and MACS as School MPs.

These roles are slightly different as they are elected and so interested students would need to write a short manifesto outlining why you think you are the most suitable candidate for the role.

This would take place in October and would have an immediate start, ending in June 2025

This role involves meeting regularly with Class Reps and respective staff Representatives within your department, School MPs and the Vice President Academic as well as attendance at monthly Parliament meetings. You would also be expected to attend the annual Student Meeting.

This role is paid a stipend of £500 per year, paid in two instalments (c. February and May)

For further information about any of these roles, please contact Heather.



### In the words of Heather Small...

“What have you done [today] to make you feel proud?”

Class Reps are amazing and achieve so many things to assist with their current studies but that also help future cohorts of students. As a Union we realise you don't do enough to acknowledge your achievements or to thank you or share good practice amongst the other Reps so could you please email us with things that you have done as a Class Rep so that we can share them.

### Decisions, decisions, decisions...

During the Student Meeting a number of policies were discussed, the full policies can be found on our website, [www.hwunion.com](http://www.hwunion.com), however the overview of the discussion is below.

POLICY NAME	STATUS	REASON
Erasmus (2020, Feb)	Lapsed	Erasmus being replaced with Erasmus+, work is required to determine Heriot-Watt University's position
Sustainable development in the Union (2021, Feb)	Lapsed	Embedded within the role of the Vice President Community
Introduction of Well-being Reps (2021, Oct)	Lapsed	Decision taken to provide additional training in the areas to roles that already exist
Reduction in tuition fees (2021, Nov)	Referred to Parliament	Further discussion required
Nestle boycott (2022, Feb)	Referred to Parliament	Whilst the policy has been re-approved on at least two occasions, it has not been re-written so the contents needs reviewing to ensure it is factually correct
Fossil free Heriot-Watt (2022, Feb)	Referred to Parliament	Work is required to determine Heriot-Watt University's position
Supporting the upcoming UCU strikes (2022, Feb)	Referred to Parliament	Work is required to determine the semantics: have the "upcoming strikes" already take place UCU undertake a ballot with their membership each time they engage in strike action; the Union should be permitted to do so Timings of the strike / a student's year of study affect people's willingness to support it
Ending all endorsements of PBSAs (2022, Mar)	Referred to Parliament	Work is required to determine the current position
Restructuring Oriam membership (2022, Mar)	Lapsed	Oriam have made changes to the membership fees; the Union are required to communicate these changes to the membership
Update the Union's zero-tolerance policy (2022, Mar)	Lapsed	This is a legal requirement and as such under the remit of the Trustee Board; this was also the case with the sexual harassment policy which has been embedded into a revised zero-tolerance policy
Anti-Prevent (2024, Mar)	This was withdrawn from the agenda	This was re-presented based on a previous version; work is required to determine Heriot-Watt University's position
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy	Lapsed	Whilst the actions outlined with the policy were completed, this is a legal requirement and as such under the remit of the Trustee Board

## **“Celebrate good times, come on!”**

Is there anything that you'd like to share, if so, drop us a message and we'll see what we can do!

However...

We celebrated the Learning and Teaching Awards (the Oscars) on the 4 April, we received over 230 nominations and wanted to thank the students that participated, acknowledging support from academic and professional services staff as well as students.

And the winner is...

For further information about the nominations, please visit <https://www.hwunion.com/news/article/hwunion/A-NIGHT-AT-THE-OSCAR/>

The **Most Supportive Staff award** was won by **Sandy Kerr, EGIS**

The **Innovation in Teaching award** was won by **Richard McCracken, EPS**

The **Outstanding Support award** was won by **Caroline West, Registry and Academic Support**

The **Personal Tutor award** was won by **Arno Kraft, EPS**

The **Best Undergraduate Supervisor award** was won by **Bruce Roberts, SoTD**

The **Best Postgraduate Supervisor award** was won by **Michael Lones, MACS**

The **Best Postgraduate Research Supervisor award** was won by **Richard McCracken, EPS**

The **Student Voice award** was won by **Farnaz Mohsenpour, EPS**

The **Academic Community award** was won by **Andrew Maclaren, SoSS**

The **Graduate Teaching Awards** were won by:

**Andrew Moore, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

**Yvonne Caldwell, Hayley Blair, Lucy Welsh and Jane Robertson, School of Textiles and Design**

**Swapnesh Masrani, School of Social Sciences**

**Demitrios Cotsovos, School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society**

There were several **Special Recognition awards** throughout the evening, these were won by **The Academic Quality Team, The VLE Team, The Sustainability Team and The Development Alumni Office**

We would also like to acknowledge winners in our Volunteering Awards, held of the 5 April, further information about this event can be found at <https://www.hwunion.com/news/article/hwunion/WATT-WENT-DOWN-AT-OUR-VOLUNTEER-AWARDS-2024/>

The **Principal's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community** was won by **Jil Sheth**

The **Principal's Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Student Community** was won by **Swathi Talzim**

The **Deputy Principal's Award for Leadership** was won by **Harshita Chhabra**

- The **Open Door award** was won by **Krishna Shah**
- The **Undergraduate Representative of the Year** was won by **Lucca Browning**
- The **Postgraduate Taught Representative of the Year** was won by **Aashima Poudhar**
- The **Postgraduate Research Representative of the Year** was won by **Sarah Goulding**
- The **Department Officer / School MP of the Year** was won by **Holly McAdams**
- The **Academic Enhancement award** was won by **Megan Ongley and Rachel Poole**
- The **Strive for Sustainability award** as won by **the NetZero Society**
- The **Social Media Presence of the Year award** was won by **the Indian Society**
- The **Event of the Year award** was won by **the Disabled Students' Society Accessible Club Night**
- The **New Society of the Year award** was won by **the International Cultural Society**
- The **Society of the Year award** was won by **The Indian Society**
- The **Society Leader of the Year award** was won by **Elise Brunsdan**
- The **Stefan Kay Volunteer of the Year award** was won by **Sara Masajdkova**
- There were several **Special Recognition awards** throughout the evening, these were won by **Jone Hernandez Gardeazabal, Lucie Stewart, Roksana Stepniewska and Matea Mandaric**

## Big up our volunteers...

Every year our volunteers work tirelessly not only spending countless hours helping others, but also loads of admin behind the scenes. Each volunteer activity is logged with us, and the Volunteering Hours Awards are a recognition of the extraordinary number of hours dedicated to volunteering roles by our students. These are accumulated over the duration of their studies.

The following students achieved a **Bronze award** for logging at least **50 hours** of volunteering:

**Zainab Abbas, Naomi Andrada, Bashir Ayvazian Kassis, Libby Barber, Robert Basake, Poppy Baxter, Jack Birt, Shannon Chan, Paula Crichton, Nicole Gear, Nagarith Gogisetti, Henny Gunawan, Sayanima Kisku, Jia Kong, Murray Legge, Cathal Lindsey, Patrice Little, Emma Livingston, Luize Luse, Shanika Madigan, Holly McAdams, Terri McGrath, Yukan Perumal, Aliyah Pike, Raksha Rajan, Lauren Sandison, Ewan Sneddon, Lucie Stewart, Jennifer Tennant, Samruddhi Tidke and Comfort Williams**

The following students achieved a **Silver award** for logging at least **100 hours** of volunteering:

**Mohammed Rabbani, Archi Agrawal, Zenab Akhtar, Keanu Annan, Harry Beall, Artemis Eales, Ryan Farish, Bhavi Gandhi, Tim Hayes, Omair Khalid, Shays Khalid, Molly Knight, Vignesh Kumar, Maisa Lacevic, Giulia Malusa, Sara Masojdkova, Khanyiso Mtwana, Anula Narasimhan, Eshveer Notta, Maja Pearson, Andreas Polycarpou, Elisa Ramil Black, Isabel Slater, Ethan Smyth, Mansh (Prakash) Suthar, Calum Thow, Aril Wan Nazaruddin Shah and Sadie Worrall**

The following students received a **Gold award** for logging at least **200 hours** of volunteering:

**Alannah Barreto, Bhavana Bonthala, Bradley Borland, Pey Yiing Chen, Kristine Cherian, Georgia Collins, Lucy Cruickshank, Carlos Fitzpatrick, Nicola Glasgow, Sara Hendry, Rhys Iddon, David Ingleby, Boluwatife Julius, Charlie Otter, Vincent Pemberton, Katia Piscina, Aadil Sayed and Krisha Ketan Shah**

The following students received a **Platinum award** for logging at least **300 hours** of volunteering:

**Cade Brown, Elise de Backer, Jake Douglas, Claudia Garcia Mendoza, Liza Masson, Megan Ongley and Bruce Wilson**

The following students received a **Ruby award** for logging at least **400 hours** of volunteering:

**Mario Fuente Rodriguez, Rachel Poole and Kate Sinclair**

The following students received a **Diamond award** for logging at least **500 hours** of volunteering:

**Cameron Fields, Vatsan Karunanithi, Zafeer Khan, Charlotte-Ann Oragani-Esamal, Jil Sheth, Blair Smyth, Andrew Wiseman and Ashween Virdee**

A massive congratulations to all of our volunteers, your efforts are impressive and your contribution to society does not go unnoticed.



## Big plan, little plan ... no cardboard box...

So, what do you know about the Student Union?

Our mission is "students first, always". Our core values help us to achieve this. These are:

- Fun
- Brave
- Empowering
- Welcoming and
- Student focused

Our Big Plan (commonly referred to as a strategic plan) was launched in 2022 after consultation with students, staff and Officers. It runs until 2030 and outlines our long term goals, aspirations and objectives to achieve our purpose of putting students first, always.

Our Big Plan has five priorities:

**Connections:** By 2030 the Union will be a relevant place (physically and digitally) that allows students to study, relax and connect with others.

**Opportunities:** By 2030 we will have an unrivalled choice of opportunities for students to get involved in new experiences to help their future plans.

**Representation:** By 2030 we will have shaped our representation across the Union, widening our insight ability and amplifying the student voice.

**Services:** By 2030 we will have a range of services students can use, with digital options as a focus

**Advice:** By 2030 we will be the 'go -to' place for advice health and support for all things health, wealth and happiness.

However, having a target of 2030 does not mean that we are not delivering now. To secure our long term objectives the Union has an annual **Little Plan** detailing actions to be taken in a 12 month period.

Developed and delivered by the Full Time Officers and staff team, working with others our two **little plans**, to date have:

- Delivered two full Fresher weeks with numerous activities taking place in person, following the reduced fairs during the pandemic
  - Increased the number of new members to societies with over 2000 new sign ups in 2022
  - Created new student employment opportunities in our trading areas: shop, bar and cafe, marketing, Communications, Representation and at Galashiels
  - Developed and delivered new social space in Galashiels in addition to an increased presence and activity schedule
  - Increased our operational capability in the Advice Hub to meet the growing demand for support in relation to academic, financial and wellbeing needs
  - Identified specific limitations with our current building and engaged with the University re options
  - Launched regular events e.g. pub quizzes, badminton sessions and community meals to support new friendships
  - Delivered Community meals (over 400 plates) to members
  - Distributed over 6,500 items from the community larder
- Commenced a full review of our Student Engagement and Representation structure and activities.

## A brief overview of the Big 6 survey results

The Big 6 is the Student Union's annual data insight exercise that helps us better understand how our students live, interact, study, and feel during their time at Heriot-Watt.

This provides us with a temperature check from our students lived experiences, feelings, and behaviours.

This year the full-time officer team were keen to gather useful data that would help us work on three of our four Global Priorities:

- Limiting student confusion
- Relieving financial pressure and
- Reducing student isolation

1048 students completed at least one survey.

### Why do students come to Heriot-Watt?

The multi-cultural experience of studying here was applauded and valued but did not seem to be a deciding factor when choosing to study here. Students described our diverse culture as being exciting and opened opportunities for friendships from a multitude of backgrounds.

### What were the main reasons for students deciding to go to university in the first place?

Unsurprisingly, the most common answer was to get a better job or earn a higher salary.

The next most popular response (about a quarter) said their main reason for going to university was just to have a great experience and make friends.

7% of respondents stated they do not have any friends since coming to Heriot-Watt. This is not due to an unwillingness to form friendships, as the same group also indicated they feel less sociable since coming to Heriot-Watt than they did prior to attending.

**As Class Reps is this something you can pursue? Can you identify some of those students and help us help them make more of their time at university?**

### What do students mean by community?

Despite this common view of community, it is not "one-size fits all". Similarly, not all communities that students identify with need to be owned by the University or the Union.

Students are seeing University and co-curricular activities as a paid-for service. Students are keen (where time allows) to take part in co-curriculars but there is an absence of students willing to create / provide / lead these opportunities. This is a shift from previous years.

### What they were looking for in the social spaces on campus?

The most popular response was a space to meet friends and have a good time without thinking about uni work, closely followed by a space to do uni work and meet friends in a relaxed setting

There is a desire from students to be able to switch off from their studies whilst on-campus in non-study social spaces.

Students living in Halls have space they can retreat to and unwind, but those that don't are directed towards studying at every turn as there is very little social space that is not designed to support learning as most social spaces are functional furniture, brightly lit, filled with IT equipment etc other than the Student Union. The Student Union is limited in the social space we have outside of the bar and café.

### Processes, Support and Communications

A very small minority of students found the University's processes difficult to understand, with the majority of students responding said they found it either easy or neither easy nor difficult.

The majority of students going through university processes had received answers/outcomes within a week. However, around 10% said it took at least a month to get an outcome with some saying more than 3 months. This shows we are going in the right direction but work still needs to be done and it also reaffirms the University's decision to reallocate resource into some student facing teams.

Students are happy with the level of face-to-face support that is currently provided. This does not necessarily mean that there is enough, however work is being done to re-introduce and streamline face-to-face support.

Self-help is still a wish for students, including step-by-step guides to assist through particular processes for a faster, empowered resolution. However, it is essential that if the student hits a problem with that process that they can quickly, and easily, get support from a person. Self-help is not a replacement for actual people.

Students identify their Heriot-Watt email address as their expected (and preferred) method of hearing from the University. Other streams (such as social media) are not seen as preferable, trusted methods of receiving information about anything Heriot-Watt related. These social media platforms may be useful to celebrate and highlight past events, activities and achievements but are not as useful when disseminating information.

---

### Students' basic needs

Students have stated that saving money for the future is a higher priority than socialising; their priorities have changed. They are no longer partying every night. Socialising has changed and can take place very cheaply / for free such as staying in with friends and watching streamed movies rather than going to the cinema etc.

However, students are more likely to drop basic amenity needs (such as food) to save money first. This can lead to a diminished daily life thus impacting their ability to study

Saving for the future further confirms concerns around the volatility of the future job market and the need to prepare for the future.

Cost of Living initiatives to support students have been very well received. Free Soup Thursdays and the Chaplaincy's Wednesday meals are highlighted as the most used of our CoL support services provided on campus.

---

### Accommodation

There is still an accommodation crisis occurring. Around half of our students have said that accommodation was more expensive than they expected and there is a small amount (16) who still had not found accommodation at the time of filling in the survey (late November!). Clearer support routes for students in accommodation crisis may be needed.

### How do students prioritise their time?

Time is highlighted as a reason for various experience-limiting barriers, including taking part in co-curricular activities.

The majority of students stated that studying was their number one priority, but this does not lead to a confirmed great experience (nor relieve the anxiety of the job market).

**As Class Reps, what do you think the Union could do to provide assistance on how to better manage time, including non-academic time?**

### Employment and social

Over half of students are in some form of paid employment whilst studying, and most are working 16-20 hours per week. This evidently reduces the amount of time available for anything other than studying or working.

Nearly 60% of students said they haven't been able to take part in some activities on campus that they would like to because they haven't been able to afford to. This doesn't directly mean events are too expensive, but they might be on at a time where students are deciding to work.

### Pride / Sense of belonging

Students felt a sense of pride by being a student at Heriot-Watt and said that they were likely to recommend the University to a friend or family member. The majority of students also said that they would volunteer to help at an Open Day to encourage new students to study here.

If you have any questions related to the Big 6, please contact Connel.

### **“A Careers session for Class Reps”**

The Careers Service have agreed to schedule 2 specific sessions for Class Reps to help you articulate the skills that you have developed within this role and apply them to your CV and interviews.

We are currently identifying availability and the most suitable time to arrange these given your commitment to coursework and exams, however we think these provide an fantastic opportunity to encourage you to view this role holistically and consider everything you’ve undertaken as a result but how to use this to your advantage in applications and interviews. It’s not good enough to say you were a Class Rep (or Department Officer), what does that mean and how can this help you stand out from the crowd.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Heather.

---

### **How can you help us?**

There were a few interactive activities that took place at the Student Meeting that we would like more student feedback on. Could you take a few minutes to complete these and share the details with your class mates.

### **Dear Richard**

We would like to ask you to complete this form for Richard Williams, our Principal, <https://forms.office.com/e/rRFGjaJpAX>

We’d like you to tell him what you want to know / ask about and we will collate your responses and present them to him and appropriate members of the University Senior Leadership Team, providing you with a response in due course.

### **What three words...**

Essentially we would like to know what your university experience has been like so far in three words. Please add your words to this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/6q3KfmhY2C>

### **What would you do...**

If you were given £200 to put an an activities / series of events that would enhance the student experience, what might you do. Please use this link to tell us.

---

### **All the best for whatever comes next...**

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for being Class Reps over the year. If you would like a certificate, please get in touch with Heather.

We also wanted to wish you luck for your upcoming coursework and exams, it is a difficult time but remember help is available through the Advice Service (contact). There will also be the (fruit campaign in the library?)

We hope that if you are continuing with your studies in the following year, you’ll consider being a Rep again. If you are leaving, we wish you every success for your exciting futures.