

rgu:union

# IMPACTREPORT

2018/19

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## OUR YEAR 2018/19

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# OUR TEAM 2018/19

**Michael Ife**  
President (Communication & Democracy)

**Adam Johnston**  
President (Education & Welfare)

**Gavin Rittoo**  
President (Sport & Physical Activity)

**Emmanuel Akerele**  
Vice President (Community)

**Osama Irfan**  
Vice President (Entertainment & Events)

**Otto Jutila**  
Vice President (Environment & Ethics)

**Dugabtey Teye**  
Vice President (International)

**Martha Gilmore**  
Vice President (Societies)

**Kieran Matthews**  
Vice President (Sport)

**Ivan Okoli-Ojike**  
Vice President (Student Affairs)

**Sam Thiesen**  
Vice President (Wellbeing & Equal Opps)

**Kai Rough**  
RAG Chair

**Michele Collie**  
General Manager

**Stephen Fiddes**  
Advice & Administration Co-ordinator

**Euan Walker**  
Student Development & Volunteering Co-ordinator

**Jo Taylor**  
Union Administrator

**Graeme Clark**  
Finance Co-ordinator

**Debbie Booth**  
PA / Admin

**Gregor Mailer**  
Design & Marketing Manager

**Polina Lukiyanova**  
Design & Marketing Assistant

**Charley Jamieson**  
Meida Placement

**Norma Polson**  
Deeview Student Store Supervisor

**Lynne Fraser**  
Deeview Student Store Supervisor

# WELCOME

Welcome to the RGU Students' Union Impact Report for 2018/19. It is our pleasure to present this document on behalf of the entire team at the Union, as we continue work to achieve our strategic aims and enhance the student experience for our members at Robert Gordon University

This has been a challenging year for the organisation as we worked to deliver a balanced budget against a backdrop of instability in the local economy and financial uncertainty in the sector which, alongside the loss of vital Government funding, provided us with a number of significant obstacles to overcome. However, in spite of this, we have continued to see encouraging growth and development across a number of our key strategic themes, and have enabled investment where possible towards our extra-curricular student opportunities as well as our welfare initiatives.

Following on from our January 2018 referendum, this year's Student Elections were the first to feature the Union's new look Executive Committee structure, which aims to better support our volunteer Student Vice Presidents by simplifying the reporting structure and closely aligning them with a relevant Student President. However, prior to the implementation of this amendment, we were delighted to complete the final year under our former structure with a fully occupied Executive Committee. This was made especially pleasing as we also achieved a record-breaking turnout of 826 voters during our November 2018 Student By-election, which for the first time included a number of Academic Council Representative positions. These newly introduced roles act on behalf of a specific cross-section of the student community (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Research, and Union Sabbatical) and provide additional representation on one of the University's highest committees, further strengthening the student voice across all levels.

As we move towards the conclusion of our current Strategic Plan, the coming months will focus on working with our team to lay the foundations for the development of a new plan, which will set the organisation's direction for the next three to five years. In line

with this, we began a series of student feedback projects, with the first focusing on the topic of social space. We were pleased to receive over one thousand responses from student members as well as staff from across the RGU community, which has provided us with a constructive and clear picture of current opinions alongside desires and suggestions regarding a future home for the Students' Union. We are enthusiastic about the ongoing development of the charity and continue to invest in our current spaces on the University campus. Most recently this saw a redecoration project undertaken in our meeting space on Union Way and in our Student Hub in the Sir Ian Wood Building. This has allowed us to introduce signage which outlines the history of our organisation, highlights former Student President and Vice Presidents and their headline achievements, and most importantly provides a student-friendly setting for meetings, group work and team collaboration.

We continued to focus on welfare initiatives throughout the year and are proud to have introduced an in-house mental health first aider, which will allow us to deliver vital training sessions on a regular basis to our staff and student team, and also to society members, sports clubs and student groups. This compliments the introduction of our new student-led Peer Support Group, which provides our members with a safe platform to normalise the conversation around mental health with their fellow students. The group's committee, alongside members of the Union management, have received training in the Oxford model regarding peer support, which will enable them to provide a strong and trustworthy service to users of the group.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the development of the Peer Support Group, which we hope will compliment our existing Nightline out-of-hours service, and also our own Advice & Support Department, allowing us to offer a wide range of student listening and welfare services across the University. On the representation side, we aim to focus on the strengthening of the Class Rep structure across the campus and are hopeful that the introduction of a new Vice President (Education) role on our Executive Committee will assist with this. At board level, we have recently welcomed a new External Trustee, David Strachan, who as a former Governor at Robert Gordon University brings with him a vast array of experience and knowledge, and we look forward to working with him and the rest of the board members to set a positive future direction for our organisation.

Finally, we would like to use this opportunity to thank our team of staff, elected officers and student volunteers for their continued efforts and hard work in making this another successful year for the Students' Union at RGU!



**MICHAEL IFE**  
PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATION  
& DEMOCRACY 2018/19

**MICHELE COLLIE**  
STUDENTS' UNION  
GENERAL MANAGER

# BIG WINS

2018/19

REGISTERED OVER  
**FOURTY THOUSAND**  
VOLUNTEERING HOURS



INTRODUCED  
**PEER SUPPORT**  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

HIGHEST NUMBER EVER OF  
**EQUALITY CHAMPIONS**



INTRODUCED THE FIRST  
**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

CREATED THE FREE-TO-JOIN  
**LGBT+ STUDENT NETWORK**



  
GRADUATION  
**FEEES**  
CANCELLED  
FROM JULY 2019 ONWARDS  


24H AVAILABILITY ON  
**iMACS**  
DURING EXAM TIME



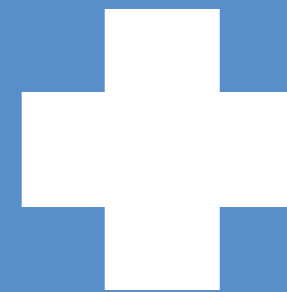
NUS SCOTLAND NOMINEES FOR  
**CAMPAIGN, STUDENT, &  
UNION OF THE YEAR**



INCREASED  
LATE NIGHT  
BUS SERVICE



IN-HOUSE  
**MENTAL HEALTH  
FIRST AIDER**  
TRAINED & INTRODUCED



LAUNCHED A NEW SYSTEM  
**REPORT & SUPPORT**  
AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

rgu:union



RAISED OVER  
**EIGHT THOUSAND**

POUNDS FOR THE  
MOVEMBER  
FOUNDATION





## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Union's AGM took place in February and was attended by 79 members. Business included the screening of video to give members an update on the activity of the Executive Committee in the 2018/19 term. The following motions were also passed:

**IMPROVE STUDENT PREPARATION FOR STUDY ABROAD**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY TAKEN PLACE

**ROLL LECTURE CAPTURE OUT ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS, ON A FORMAT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY TAKEN PLACE

**MORE COURSE OPTIONS FOR 4TH YEAR STUDENTS**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH RELEVANT HEAD OF SCHOOL TAKEN PLACE

**RELEASE EXAM DATES EARLIER**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY TAKEN PLACE

**MAKE FIRST SEMESTER ONE WEEK LONGER**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY TAKEN PLACE

**FREE TO PEE! (REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT SIGNAGE ON DISABLED TOILETS TO READ 'ACCESSIBLE TOILET' OR 'NOT EVERY DISABILITY IS VISIBLE')**  
**IN PROGRESS** DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY TAKEN PLACE WITH ESTATES AND PROPERTY SERVICES

**NEED FOR AN AFFORDABLE TIMETABLING MOBILE APPLICATION, WITH ALERTS INTRODUCED DURING DEVELOPMENT**  
**ACHIEVED** TO BE RELEASED IN SEPTEMBER

# VOTING



# CARD

## STUDENT VOICE FORUM

The Student Voice Forum is our primary student feedback event. Held four times throughout the academic year the forum provides our members with an opportunity to discuss a number of developments and projects taking place throughout the Union and University, and also to present any issues which they feel the Union could provide support with.

This year we were delighted to see a number of senior University officials attend forums and engage directly with the student body, including Mike Fleming, Chair of the Board of Governors, and John Harper, RGU Principal.

Topics of discussion this year have included:

- Student-facing support services
- Counselling service appointment times
- Enhancement of the Student Partnership Agreement
- Car parking permit allocations
- On campus catering options

## 24H LIBRARY, MAC ACCESS, & BUS SERVICE

The University once again operated a 24 hour library service during peak study times close to December and May assessments, this year with the addition of extended access to Mac machines and specialist software.

This positive change was triggered by student feedback, originally raised at our Annual General Meeting in 2018 and followed up by the Union. To compliment this, First Bus repeated their late night bus service for the duration of the extended library hours.

This free bus offering ensured that students spending time on campus throughout the night could safely make their way back to the city centre.

## INTRODUCTION OF NETWORKS

This year saw the introduction of the Network system to be used as an extension of the Equality Champion roles to further the representation of those who self-identify with a protected characteristic.

The Networks differ from our Societies as they have no membership fee and no formal membership list, students can engage with a Network as often or as little as they choose with a focus on socials and campaigns.

# SCHOOL OFFICERS, STUDENT REPS & EQUALITY CHAMPIONS

This year we have re-designed the Class Rep and School Officer training packages, based on feedback from previous reps to focus more on the key areas of the role.

Key achievements from our School Officers in 2018/19 have included gathering feedback from class reps and students on matters concerning the 'online submission and marking of feedback', and the 'academic calendar' adjustment. The results show that 94% of 160 respondents showed positive attitude toward the online marking, and 73% of 160 respondents were in favour of the new calendar change.

Our Equality Champions initiative expanded this year, increasing from 3 registered champions to over 17. It was also the first year multiple students could occupy the same role, to recognise the different approaches and backgrounds our students had. Both our 'Sexual Orientation', and 'Trans' Champions worked to set up a new free-to-join LGBT+ Student Network, and ran several events throughout the year

Our 'Disability and Inclusion' Champions have worked closely with the Union, and the Inclusion centre, to ensure all steps around campus are fitted with the high-visibility yellow strip for those with visual impairments, as well as reaching out to our student body with posters and social media pages.

Also this year, we introduced the role of 'Mental Health' Champions, recognising that everyone can suffer from poor mental health, and to give more focus to depression, anxiety, and other disorders that are protected under the Equality Act of 2010.

Our most contested role, the Mental Health Champions assisted with the development of the new Peer Support Group, helped organise a Hopewalk on World Mental Health Day, and more.



NUMBER OF REGISTERED CLASS REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVES FULLY TRAINED BY THE UNION & SPAROS



NUMBER OF SCHOOL OFFICERS APPOINTED



# WINNERS



URSULA OJJI  
PRESIDENT COMMUNICATION & DEMOCRACY



EMMANUEL AKERELE  
PRESIDENT EDUCATION & WELFARE



KIERAN MATTHEWS  
PRESIDENT SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



MEGAN KERR  
VICE PRESIDENT SOCIETIES



DAMI YUSUF  
VICE PRESIDENT INTERNATIONAL



ROSS LEVEN  
VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION



EMMANUELA JENUWARI  
VICE PRESIDENT WELFARE



JORDAN MOORE  
VICE PRESIDENT SPORT



TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION



NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL VOTERS



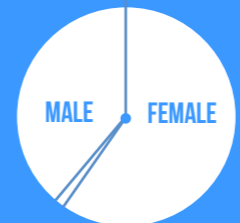
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES RUNNING ACROSS ALL FULL TIME AND PART TIME POSITIONS



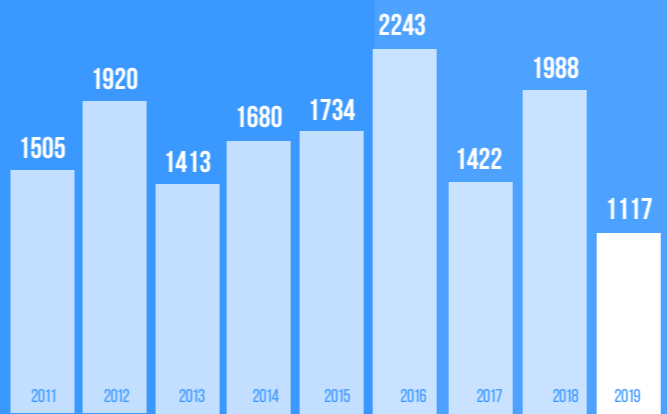
VOTER TURNOUT PERCENTAGE



VOTER BREAKDOWN: YEAR OF STUDY



VOTER BREAKDOWN: GENDER



STUDENT ELECTION TURNOUT FIGURES SINCE 2011

# WHERE THE VOTES CAME FROM

## SCHOOL

Aberdeen Business School	21.1 %
School of Pharmacy & Life Sciences	12.4 %
School of Creative & Cultural Business	10.4 %
School of Engineering	9.9 %
School of Health Sciences	9.4 %
School of Computing Science & Digital Media	8.3 %
Law School	7.8 %
Scott Sutherland School of Architecture & Built Env	6.1 %
Gray's School of Art	5.7 %
School of Nursing & Midwifery	4.3 %
School of Applied Social Studies	3.9 %

## COURSE

Pharmacy	7.25 %
Accounting and Finance	5.19 %
International Business Management	3.67 %
LLB	3.67 %
Architecture	3.13 %
Management with Marketing	2.60 %
Management	2.24 %
Events Management	2.06 %
Painting	1.97 %
Oil and Gas Engineering	1.88 %
Journalism	1.88 %
Computer Science	1.79 %
Architectural Technology	1.79 %
Social Work	1.79 %
Nursing (Adult Nursing)	1.79 %
Applied Social Sciences	1.79 %
Occupational Therapy	1.70 %
Media	1.70 %
Mechanical Engineering	1.70 %
Occupational Therapy	1.61 %

\*top 20 schools displayed

## STUDENT TYPE

Undergraduate	80.5 %
Postgraduate	19.5 %



# YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

## GO GREEN

It was another productive year for the Union's Go Green initiatives, with the LivEco Community Café, Kaim Shop, Organic VegBag Scheme and BikePad Hire & Maintenance Workshop operating thanks to the hard work and commitment of a dedicated team of volunteers.

Steps were taken to improve the accessibility of both the bike hire and vegbag schemes, with online bookings introduced for both through the Union's website. Around 20 bikes were refurbished and hired to RGU students throughout the year, with the vegbag online ordering system operating for the duration of the second semester.

The LivEco Café continued its run of providing weekly organic, vegan, and waste-free meals for students and community members, and hosted a number of collaborative and themed events, including Halloween Café nights and working with the Creative & Cultural Business Society to promote an International Food Night and movie screenings.

On campus, the team from Kaim Shop arranged a number of workshops throughout the year, including denim décor and jewellery making, and arranged pop-up events in Aberdeen Business School and at halls of residence sites.

## STUDENT MEDIA

Our student media outlets continued to develop and expand their offerings throughout the academic year. Radar Magazine became the first team to win back-to-back awards as, for the second year running, they were presented with the trophy for Media Group of the Year at our Student Achievement Awards Ball, while the weekly Purple Wednesdays sports club update show consistently clocks up hundreds of views across RGU TV online. The team at RGU Radio continue their move to a more podcast-focused product by making more on-demand content available through the Union website, allowing listeners to engage at a time convenient to them.



## WELFARE SQUAD

The Freshers Welfare Squad operated successfully again for a third year. This was the first year in which the Welfare Squad members were paid rather than being volunteers, reflecting the important and delicate role they have in the Freshers Week experience. 6 students were recruited for the Squad, allowing for a team of 3 to be on duty at our partner nightclub each night of Freshers Week. In the venue they ran a stall distributing water, condoms, Freshers Guides, keyrings and details of Nightline, the Advice & Support service and the Safe Taxi Scheme. They also looked after Freshers until they could receive specialist attention, helped others get home safely, and made sure no Freshers were stranded at the end of the night.



## FRESHERS TEAM & WELFARE SQUAD

26

FRESHERS TEAM  
VOLUNTEERS

6

WELFARE SQUAD  
TEAM MEMBERS

80

OVER 80 EVENTS  
TOOK PLACE DURING  
FRESHERS WEEK



## SPORTING SUCCESS

- 4 RGU Sports Clubs represented the university at Scottish Conference Cup Finals Day held at St Andrews in March 2019. Tennis, Women's Football, Badminton, and Women's Volleyball all reached the national final of their respective sports.
- Both the GAA (Gaelic Football) men's and women's team won the premier division in Scotland and were British Cup runners-up.
- Women's Hockey won division 3A. Men's Football second team won division 3A.
- Cheerleading achieved 1st place at Scottish Cheerleading Championships and 1st place at level 2 British Cheerleading Association University Nationals.
- Dance has been crowned Scottish Intermediate Hip Hop Champions
- Most improved club: RGU Boxing, which doubled their membership numbers from 35 in 17/18 to 71 in 18/19.

1132

TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS

473

MALE MEMBERS

657

FEMALE MEMBERS

## EXECUTIVE TRAINING

The students who were elected to President and Vice President positions in March 2019 and who will form the Executive Committee in 2019/20 received their training and induction to the Union at the end of May.

As part of this, they worked with Union staff and incumbent Presidents to develop action plans for achieving their manifesto objectives, and they presented these plans to RGU senior management. The training week also involved a road trip to other student unions to learn how their elected officers had achieved their objectives, share ideas with incoming officers teams, and see how each union used their social space.

As part of this, the team visited Aberdeen University Students' Association, Edinburgh Napier Students' Association, Heriot-Watt University Student Union, Stirling University Students' Union, NUS Scotland and spargqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland).

THE TRAINING WEEK WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND GET TO KNOW THE INCOMING EXEC TEAM AND UNION STAFF.

WE LEARNED ABOUT HOW THE UNION OPERATES, ITS ROLE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE RELATIONSHIP IT HAS WITH THE UNIVERSITY'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT.

IT ALSO GAVE US A CHANCE TO DEVELOP OUR MANIFESTO PROMISES INTO ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR AND UNDERSTAND HOW THE EXEC CAN WORK TOGETHER TO REPRESENT THE WIDER STUDENT BODY.

ROSS LEVEN  
INCOMING VICE PRESIDENT (EDUCATION)



## VOLUNTEERING

384

TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS

2454

VOLUNTEERING HOURS SUBMITTED BY RGU GO GREEN

2012

VOLUNTEERING HOURS SUBMITTED BY STUDENT REPS

47,965

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERING HOURS SUBMITTED BY RGU STUDENTS 2018/19



## RAISING AND GIVING



Our Raising And Giving group again continued to assist societies and sports clubs with their fundraising activities throughout the year. After a highly successful Movember campaign, which saw a combined total of over £8000 raised by students and staff from across the university, a newly elected RAG Chair joined the team in late November as part of our Student By-election and worked with the Union to assemble and structure a new committee, laying the foundations for a number of exciting activities in the 2019/20 academic year.

£17,571

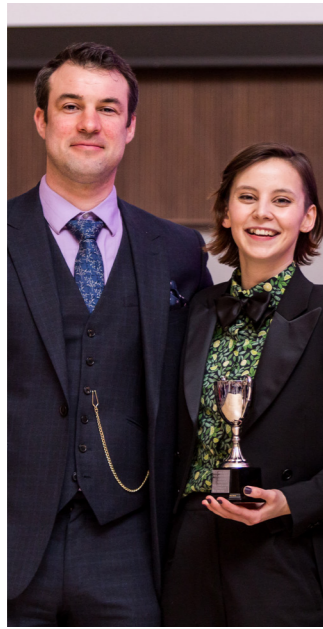
INTERNAL FUNDRAISING BY SPORTS CLUBS

£14,254

TOTAL RAISED BY SOCIETIES



## SOCIETY QUALITY MARK



Society members receive their Student Achievement Awards from John Barr (RGU:Union Trustee Board Chair) and John Harper (RGU Principal)



PHYSIOTHERAPY SOCIETY



LAW SOCIETY  
FILM SOCIETY  
PHOTOGRAPHY SOCIETY  
IPE SOCIETY  
IHI SOCIETY  
RGU GO GREEN  
FEEL GOOD SOCIETY  
DUMBLEDORE'S ARMY  
DRAMA SOCIETY  
CREATIVE & CULTURAL BUSINESS SOCIETY  
COMPUTING SOCIETY  
57'10 SOCIETY



ICE SKATING SOCIETY  
GENDER EQUALITY & FEMINISM SOCIETY  
CREATIVE WRITING & POETRY SOCIETY  
CHRISTIAN UNION

### Full Scarlet Award

Kristian Karban  
Charlotte Little  
Mark Dunphy

### Half Scarlet Award

#### with Distinction

Christie Bren  
Eilidh Southren  
Zainab Olatunji

Michele Kee  
Eilis Cusack  
Barbara Kellie

Maria Popescu  
Lauren Taylor  
Irina-Cristina Bogdan

Laura Watchman

### Half Scarlet Award with

#### Continued Excellence

Alessandro Favaro  
Rebecca Anderson

### Half Scarlet Award

Iona Grant  
Laura McMillan  
Sarah Jack

Kirstin Tait  
Kai Rough

### Ifechukwu Okwuosa

Philip Tremmel  
Emily Glencorse  
Jamie McGovern

Fabio Rondina  
Ryan Johnson  
Kyle Henderson

Evgenii Zorin  
Stephanie Cullen  
Shona Elder

Mhairi Black  
Sin Ping Choy  
Victoria Saint

Katrine Knudsen  
Rebecca Noble  
Kelsey Drummond

Mhairi McLellan  
Matthieu O'Reilly  
Sam Thiesen

Stephannie Mather  
Iona Proud  
Erin Gilmour

Genavieve Jones-Purdie  
Stuart Campbell

Hugh Fish  
Dale Leith  
Erin Wyness  
Rebecca Hewison  
Lauren Kyle  
Jonathan May (Honorary)

### Recognition Award

#### (Societies)

Amartya Yadav  
Antoine Sebert  
Celeste Saji Kallookalam

Jolan Hegedus  
Kene Okafor  
Ben McFarlane

Fionnghal Caldwell  
Bibo Keeley  
Chloe Spence

Jamie Henderson  
Katherine Ronning  
Nina Dave

Gemma Henderson  
Laura Simons  
Raya Kovacheva

Tom Paterson  
Chloe Carberry  
Areej Rahmani

Sarah Millar  
Nyameye Otoo  
Jennifer Laffan

Ross Leven  
Rasmus Tolonen  
Annalisa Brigo

Niamh Bunyan  
Saoirse Brennan  
Sara Torre

Helena Paterson  
Jai Yi Nerissa Leong  
Gabi Uzunova

Linzi Reekie  
Kerrie Johnston  
Cameron Taylor

Hollie Smith  
Amberley Greensmith  
Edvard Enekes

Megan Kerr  
Monika Lis  
Val Forbes

Rory Barclay  
Kiera Johns  
Vivien Yu

Tom Tie-Gill (Honorary)

# AWARD WINNERS 2019

### Full Blue Award

Robbie Farquhar  
Ewan Davidson  
Hamish Macleod

Abigael McBeath  
Chris Knowles  
Ester Laiho

Erin Moore  
David Mcauley  
Robin Shand

Ethan Rebert  
Gregor Pittendreigh  
Mairi Stewart

Laura Pilkington  
Zhangda Luo

### Half Blue Award

Hannah Goldie  
Lisa Aspel  
Marcus Archer

Ellen O'Brien  
Eilidh Sinclair  
Christopher Johnson

Jill McLachlan  
Anna Forbes  
Samantha Thomson

### Recognition Award

#### (Sport)

Hannah Cameron  
Sarah Brady  
Holly Bourne

Andy Harrison  
Holly Robertson  
Cian Clinton

Beth Lauder  
Craig Mitchell  
Erin Cornwell

Cara Low  
Chloe Nicolson  
Andrew Davies

Chloe Hannant  
Maedbh Smyth  
Joanne Kennedy

Ruth Horkan  
Ali Crichton  
Stuart Adams

Lindsey Williamson

### Pride in Partnership Award

Eilidh Southren  
Irina-Cristina Bogdan  
Kim Brodie

### Engagement Award

Niklas Bals  
Nicola Goodall  
Zainab Olatunji

Chloe Pearson

### Society of the Year

57'10 Society

### Academic Society

#### of the Year

Physiotherpahy Society

### Student Group of the Year

RGU:Nightline

### Special Recognition Award

RGU Go Green

### New Society of the Year

EngON Society

### Most Improved Society

Ice Skating Society

### Most Improved Student

#### Group

RGU:Radio

### Volunteering Project of the

#### Year

Physiotherapy Conference

### Media Group of the Year

Radar Magazine

### Student Leadership Award

Computing Society

### Student Engagement Award

Midwifery Society

### Student Voice Award

Chinese New Year

### Community Ambassador

#### Award

RGU:Film Society

### Award for Continued

#### Excellence and Consistency

IPE Society

### Society Person of the Year

Eilidh Southren

### Volunteer of the Year

#### (Societies and

#### Student Groups)

Maria Popescu

### Freshers Team Member of

#### the Year

Laura McMillan

### Duke of Edinburgh's Gold

#### Award

Kirstin Tait

### Club of the Year

Netball

### Team of the Year

Ladies Gaelic Football

### Most Improved Club

Boxing

### Performance of the Year

Cheerleading Level 2 British

Champs

### Fresher of the Year (Sport)

Robbie Farquhar

### Volunteer of the Year

#### (Sport)

Jamie Duncan

### Sports Person of the Year

Douglas Green

### SAA Certificates

Becky Fidock  
Caitlin Reid  
Emily Heron

Katherine Jarvis  
Luke Rodgers  
Rose Wakeman

Shannon McManus  
Ella May Carter  
Sanna Rafiq

Joanna Ross  
Rachel McLaughlin  
Madlena Uzunova

Bernadett Sike  
Joy Kennedy  
Kiran Sandhu

Anca Elena Tomescu  
Rose Ross  
Gioia Brogioni

Diana Halifa  
Nicola Will  
Megan Wilson

Maciej Rembiasz  
Claire Vigot  
Rebecca Carnegie

Federica Vitale  
Sani Kempainen  
Shun Wong

Patryk Switaj  
Beth Lauder  
Erin Cornwell

Emmanuel Obasi Ogar  
Lizzie Buchan



# YOUR WELLBEING



## ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The service experienced another busy year, providing advice and support to students on approximately 530 occasions, an increase of 14% on 2017/18

The most common issues that advice was given on were Academic Appeals (41% of cases - up from 37% last year), Student Misconduct (19% of cases) and Coursework Extension/Deferral Request (15%).

The Advice service has received positive feedback from the survey given out to students who have accessed it:

100% stated the Advice service was able to provide help or advice regarding their issue, or was able to refer to another service for help. 92% rated their interaction with the Advice service as "Very helpful". 100% of users would use the service again or recommend it to other students.

“ I WASN'T EXPECTING MUCH WHEN I APPROACHED RGU UNION FOR THE FIRST TIME. HOWEVER, THE STUDENT ADVICE COORDINATOR WAS AMAZING IN HIS ABILITY TO LISTEN, UNDERSTAND AND FORMULATE HIS VERY HELPFUL ADVICE IN A WAY THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE FOR ME. A BIG THANK YOU! ”

“ QUICK RESPONSE, WHEN I NEEDED THE SUPPORT THE MOST IT WAS THERE FOR ME. THANKS TO THE ADVICE & SUPPORT SERVICE MY UNIVERSITY LIFE HAS IMPROVED TENFOLD ”

“ THE STUDENT ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE WAS OF IMMENSE HELP AT A TIME WHEN I WAS UNSURE IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO CONTINUE MY STUDIES AT RGU. AN INVALUABLE SERVICE FOR STUDENTS THAT I FEEL ASSURED THAT I CAN TURN TO IF I EVER NEED TO IN THE FUTURE. THE ADVICE PROVIDED A 'LIGHT AT THE END OF A TUNNEL' AND I AM NOW ABLE TO CONTINUE WITH MY STUDIES AT RGU ”



## SPEAK UP SPEAK OUT & REPORT AND SUPPORT

The campaign was proposed by the President of Education & Welfare during his election campaign, and upon taking office it went forward 'In Partnership' with the University and Union, and 'Speak Up Speak Out' was born. The campaign promotes our zero tolerance policy towards sexual violence, and all forms of Gender-Based Violence, as well as promoted our new online support/reporting system 'Report and Support'. Under this umbrella campaign, we also had Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis deliver 'GBV First Responders' training for 19 staff, which is soon to be delivered to 150 Personal Tutors.

In November, the Union invited NUS Women's Officer to deliver GBV training to Societies and Sport's Clubs.

Since the campaigns launch, more than half of our students are now aware of the campaign, and 71% of respondents said they would be comfortable reporting a case of GBV through the University.

**70%** OF STUDENTS ARE NOW COMFORTABLE REPORTING A CASE OF GBV TO THE UNIVERSITY

## WELLBEING FAYRE

Our first ever RGU Wellbeing Fayre was held during Freshers at Woolmanhill Flats, where information and representatives from all our student support services could be found, to ensure all new students know they're supported at RGU. There was also plenty of free water, fruit, pizza, and giveaways from the various groups.

Services including Nightline, Reslife, Counselling, Study Skills, Mental Wellbeing Society, the developing Peer Support Group, and more all attended.

## MENTAL HEALTH AGREEMENT

The first 'Wellbeing Action Group' was founded by our President of Education and Welfare, and Student Life. This group houses different departments such as Sport, Union, Counselling, Nursing and Midwifery School, Reslife, and more, all to share their work on wellbeing, and collectively progress the work done around 'Healthy Universities', our 'Student Mental Health Agreement' and welfare related projects.





## ANTI-INITIATION TRAINING

All RGU Sports clubs undertook GoodLAD training - aimed at tackling and eradicating stereotypical lad culture within sports clubs. The training covered a wide variety of important topics including gender based violence, mental health, gender equality, positive attitudes and behaviours - all aimed at changing the culture within universities. All 32 clubs had at least one representative on the training.

RGU Rugby club took part in BUCS new initiative: CHANGES intervention training. This training addressed the stigma behind initiation and hazing behaviour and the effects that it can have on students.

The training encouraged our sports clubs to be more inclusive and change their attitudes towards welcome events - in order to be more inclusive and welcoming to new students.

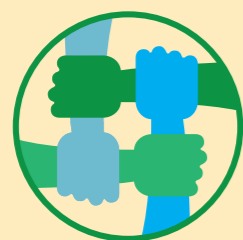
## PEER SUPPORT GROUP

This is our new student-led group, soon to be offering group sessions for those experiencing low-wellbeing and poor mental health. These 'Peer-to-Peer' sessions, along with workshops on self-help, aim to normalise the conversation around mental health, act as early intervention, and create a confidential, causal, and safe environment for those in need.

Whilst not a replacement for counselling, it helps to tackle all 5 strands of our Student Mental Health Agreement, and assist other services by filling a much-needed gap.

So far, we have 90+ Students on the mailing list, with more being gathered by the newly elected committee. They will work alongside staff to engrain Peer Support in the Universities strategy, and promote it across campus.

This year, Peer Support helped run the Therapets events, and held their first recruitment event after launching on University Mental Health Day.



rgu:union  
**RGU PEER SUPPORT**



## LGBT NETWORK

The first group to implement the new Network format was the former LGBT+ Society, with a leadership committee containing both the Orientation Champions and the Trans Champions. This transition was achieved with support from the VP of Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities who volunteered countless hours to the constitutional developments needed to run the group effectively.

The LGBT+ Network has worked closely with the staff equivalent and have joined them for multiple events since their inception including Grampian Pride in May.



## NIGHTLINE

In the academic year of 2018-2019, RGU: Nightline continued to provide students with a valuable 'out of hours' peer-to-peer, listening service. Using active listening techniques, RGU: Nightline offered students a person to talk to about their issues and anonymously and without judgement through the platforms of online messenger, email and telephone.

Due to a substantial recruitment drive, there was a fourfold increase in volunteers from 12 active members in September 2018 to 32 by April 2019. The increase in volunteer numbers allowed for the completion of 6080 volunteering hours, a rise of 4008 volunteering hours from 2018, allowing RGU: Nightline to open for 86 nights from 8pm-8am.

A primary focus for 2018-19 was increasing the quality and variety of volunteering training. The training officers provided training to all current volunteers and recruits, both in the first and second semester, allowing for 150 calls, emails and online messages to be answered since September 2018.

Furthermore, RGU: Nightline were able to provide their volunteers with the opportunity to attend the regional Nightline Association conference in Dundee and the national Nightline Association conference in Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire. Our volunteers gained insight and training in a variety of areas such as setting boundaries and dealing with distressing calls to assist in listening to issues faced by students at RGU.



## SAFE TAXI SCHEME

16

PEOPLE USED THE SCHEME

28.1

MILES TRAVELLED

1H 43MIN

CUMULATED TIME SPENT IN TAXIS



# YOUR COMMUNITY



## BBC RADIO 1

As part of our Freshers Week 2018 events line-up we had the opportunity to work with BBC Radio 1 to bring a day of activities to the University campus as part of their annual 'Student Tour'. Daytime activities saw the introduction of the BBC Radio 1 tour bus to the Sir Ian Wood Building's external plaza space, giving students the opportunity to win tickets to the station's flagship Big Weekend music festival, plus an exclusive live Q&A with DJ Charlie Sloth in the building's Amphitheatre. Later that evening we teamed up with local venue, Revolution, to host a special live RGU Freshers edition of Sloth's daily show 'The 8th', which was broadcast live on BBC Radio 1.



## RGU'S GOT TALENT

Our RGU's Got Talent series of events took place once again, providing students from across the campus with a platform to showcase their talents to a live audience and a team of student and staff judges. This year's finalists, musicians El Duetto, The Flat Three, and dance act Cherry Bomb all received cash prizes and an invitation to perform live for attendees at the Student Achievement Awards Ball.



22

COMMERCIAL  
FRESHERS FAYRE  
EXHIBITORS

3000

OVER 3000 STUDENTS  
ATTENDED THIS YEAR'S  
FRESHERS FAYRE EVENT

THIRD

THIS YEAR WE HELD  
THE THIRD ANNUAL  
FRESHFEST EVENT

## FRESHFEST

For the third year running we arranged and promoted a FreshFest event, taking place at the city's famous Beach Ballroom. This has become a fixture in our annual Freshers Week line-ups, and sees the Union provide a high profile variety event which is open to all ages, allowing our under 18 students the opportunity to socialise

Stand-up comedy once again proved successful with the audience, as the notorious Lee Nelson headlined, and Beric Livingston from the popular 'HQ Trivia' quizzing app entertained as he hosted the Big Student Pub Quiz, both packing out the main ballroom. Live traditional band Iron Broo hosted a ceilidh room with dancing throughout the night, and live DJs performed as part of a silent disco elsewhere throughout the venue.



## FRESHERS FAYRE

Our annual Freshers Fayre continues to see impressive growth, and we once again welcomed well over 100 exhibitors to the University campus, including student societies, clubs, groups, affiliated organisations, plus many local and national businesses.

Non-commercial exhibitors once again made use of Union Way and the Aberdeen Business School to advertise RGU departments, external support services, volunteering opportunities and other third sector organisations to a large number of new and returning students. It is particularly important that support services, such as RGU's Student Life department, are amongst those represented at the Freshers Fayre so that as many aspects of the Freshers experience - which can sometimes be daunting as well as fun - are supported as much as possible.





## GRADUATION BALL

Our ever-popular Graduation Ball event once again took place during July at the city's Beach Ballroom. Demand for tickets was strong, with students camping out from sunrise to ensure they secured their space at the prestigious event. Once again two identical nights were hosted, as we attempt to deal with the challenge of allowing as many students as possible to attend the event(s), with a four course meal provided and entertainment from live local musicians, DJ and a traditional Scottish ceilidh with live band Iron Broo.

## LIVE RIGHT HOUSING FAIR

The Live Right Housing Fair was held for the fourth time in March 2019. The Fair allowed students to peruse offerings from a variety of private student accommodation providers and leasing agents, to find somewhere to securely store their belongings over the summer, and to learn more about safe deposit schemes.

Holding it in March in the foyer area of the Sir Ian Wood Building allowed for significant student exposure at a time when many would be coming to the end of their leases and beginning to think about accommodation for the next academic year.



## STAR AWARDS

The annual student-led awards for staff was held in SIWB amphitheatre on May 14th. Here we recognised the valuable contribution our staff make, from lecturers to support staff. All awards were based on your nominations, so thank you to all who ensured their staff members received the appreciation they deserved.

“ IT IS MY OPINION THAT IN ORDER TO BE A GOOD TEACHER YOU MUST **BE ABLE TO INSPIRE YOUR PUPILS TO WANT TO LEARN AND TO DO BETTER**. THESE ARE QUALITIES THAT THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN EVERY ONE OF THEIR CLASSES. ”

“ SHE IS A **FANTASTIC TEACHER AND MENTOR** AND HER COMBINED KNOWLEDGE AND COMMITMENT **MAKE HER A REAL TREASURE WITHIN RGU** AND I THINK IT WOULD BE GREAT IF THAT COULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED. ”

“ HE IS **ALWAYS WILLING TO LISTEN** AND HELP WHEREVER POSSIBLE AND HAS THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STUDENTS AT HEART. HE HAS BEEN **COMPASSIONATE, UNDERSTANDING AND JUST SO SUPPORTIVE**. AND IT IS THANKS SO HIM I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES I WAS FACED WITH. ”

## SOCIAL SPACE SURVEY

The topic of student social space has been raised with the Union on many occasions in recent years through a number of different channels, including Student Voice forums, Society forums, and at our Annual General Meeting. This was followed up by members of our Student Executive Committee, who initiated a Social Space Survey, which ran throughout the second semester of the 2018/19 academic year. Responses were gathered from over 1000 students and staff members across the campus, and a series of discussions are currently underway between the Union and the University.





## GRADUATION FEES

As part of the National Union of Students' "Free To Graduate" campaign, which revealed that some students across Scotland could be out of pocket by up to £225 for attending their graduation ceremony, the Union lobbied Senior Management at the University to review the policy on graduation fees at RGU.

After positive discussions, it was agreed that from Summer 2019 onwards, Robert Gordon University would abolish all graduation fees, resulting in a significant win for the student voice at RGU and reinforcing the importance of a positive partnership between Union and University.

## LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

We continue to take steps towards the creation of our Leadership Programme, which will provide new and existing volunteers with a platform to log and track additional activities and development opportunities with the aim of enhancing skill sets and boosting employability.

The recent launch of the University's online eHub platform as part of the RGU Employability and Professional Enrichment Department has introduced a number of collaboration opportunities which are currently being explored as we work to develop a robust and comprehensive system which will provide further incentive for students to engage with the Union as a volunteer.

## PLACEMENT STUDENTS

We continue to provide a variety of development opportunities to students across the campus, including through the University's placement programme.

Working with the School of Creative and Cultural Business we annually recruit a student from the BA Media course to work full-time with our team, assisting with video production and the creation of content for social media. This is particularly helpful towards the beginning of the second semester, which is a peak time for the Union with the Student Election process, Annual General Meeting and Student Achievement Awards Ball taking place.

The addition of a student placement to the team allows us to build on the strong partnership between the Union and the University, whilst providing opportunities for students to gain on-the-job experience and also further engaging our members with the Union's democratic processes.

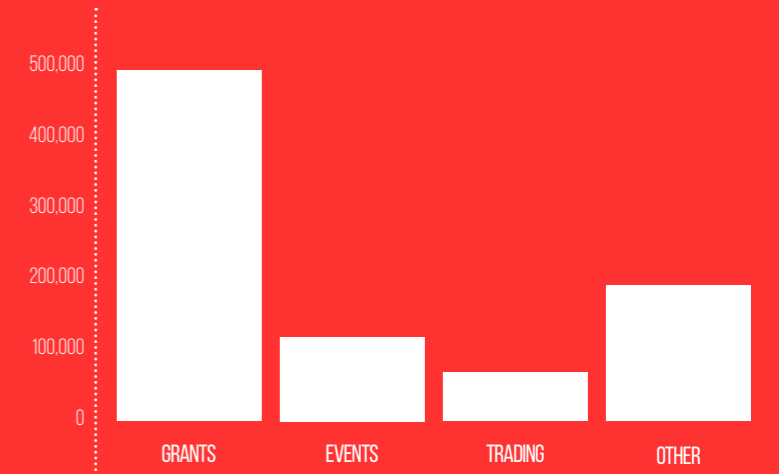
## UNION FINANCE SUMMARY

The Union has enjoyed a good year with all operations returning a positive result, despite the local economic challenges. In addition to the continuing increase of the pension obligations year by year which is having an adverse effect on the overall Union expenditure. To this end a robust management of Union finances will remain a top priority in the coming years ahead.

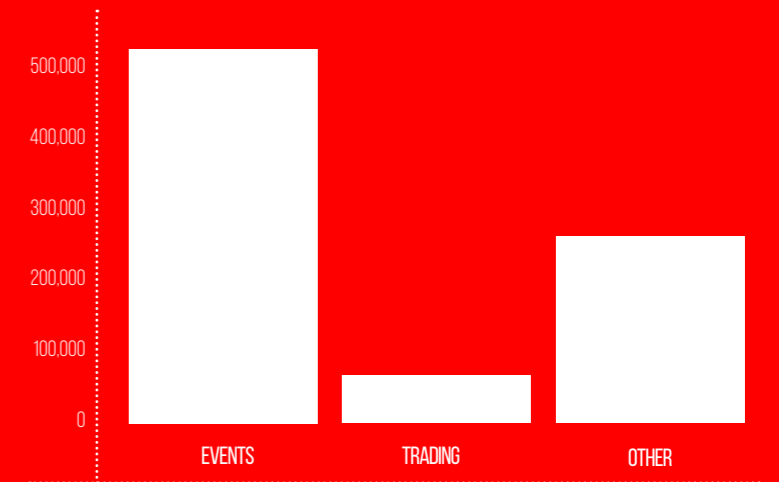
The total income generated by the Union for the year 18/19 was £871k and this includes £493k of a grant from the university. The Union experienced a drop in income following the end of the Go Green project in March 2018, however other sources of revenue received by trading activities included 23% from RGU Sport and 8% from Deevview Shop.

Overall total expenditure amounted to £850k in 18/19 which was in line with budgetary projections and the resultant surplus of £21k surpassed the Budgeted break even figure as approved by the Trustees and the Board of Governors. These monies will be utilised to further develop the Student Union through projects and initiatives.

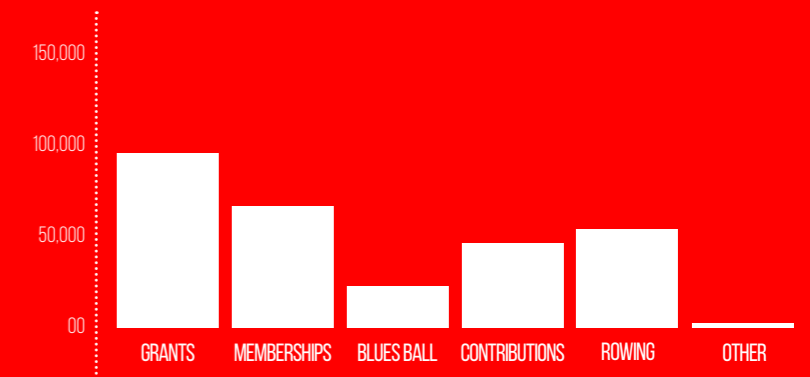
The Student Union continues to pursue new commercial opportunities and develop more new events in order to maximise revenues for the charity. To view our most recent published accounts, visit [www.rguunion.co.uk](http://www.rguunion.co.uk)



UNION INCOME SOURCES 2018/19



UNION EXPENDITURE 2018/19



SPORTS CLUB INCOME 2018/19

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