

UoG SU AGM

MEETING OF AGM: 13 MAY 2025

Title	<i>Kit's Report to AGM 2025</i>
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Status	<i>Open</i>
Purpose	<i>Update of my Officer Activities for the Academic Year Presented at the Annual General Meeting</i>
Discussion	<i>Standard</i>
Recommendations	<i>N/A</i>
<p>My Annual General Meeting Report for 2025 provides a comprehensive overview of my performance across multiple domains including academic innovation, partnership development, student engagement, and institutional advocacy. This report captures key successes, challenges, and future priorities in a structured format.</p> <p>I began the year with five major campaign goals, completing three. These included launching a framework for Mental Health, subsidies for food accountability surveys, establishing provisions for alumni access to libraries and SU spaces, and securing extenuating circumstances (ECs) for religious observance. The surveys demonstrated record-breaking response rates, thanks to a co-creation approach with students, staff teams and support services that underscored the potential of collaborative governance.</p> <p>However, the campaign to subsidise food failed due to limited funding. Efforts in the mental health domain saw partial success, with engagement from a local MP to review counselling provisions. Despite this, no additional long-term support was secured, and the responsibility now shifts to future sabbatical officers.</p> <p>On the academic front, learning analytics were deployed to identify and support students at risk of disengagement. This data-driven approach fed into the university's Curriculum Transformation Project, a particularly important initiative given the university's high neurodiversity/carers/ethnicity rates. Furthermore, the concept of students as co-founders of their education was championed at institutional meetings which, according to academics, is now being taken more seriously. This mindset is now embedded within both the university infrastructure and SU operations.</p> <p>Efforts to improve the academic experience of international students progressed, with transitional sessions in UK academic writing led by Stewart Dove moving towards pilot stage and hopefully broad implementation. Additionally, I helped redefine the recruitment model for Student Voice Assistants (SVAs), by asking academics to nominate suitable candidates. This approach fostered stronger</p>	

connections between staff and students and has built a diverse, capable SVA network.

Despite these gains, the SU faced backlash over discussions to potentially remove the SVA structure without prior consultation. This incident highlights a gap between the SU's principles of representation and its internal communication processes – this could be a weakness and show a potential authoritarian streak which is not within our values.

The SU also revitalised the previously dormant relationship with Student Futures, ensuring continuity for incoming officers. Career development pathways were broadened through third-sector partnerships and high-profile networking events, contributing to the council's vision of transforming Gloucester into a University City. The Council has since allocated £20,000 to support this initiative.

Externally, I was elected Vice-Chair of the Gloucestershire VCSE Alliance, positioning the SU to advocate more effectively for student employment opportunities. Active participation in Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and LGBTQIA partnership meetings reinforced SU commitment to inclusive advocacy, not only will students be in the forefront of these organisations' minds, but with plans for smooth handovers to successors can be furthered.

In health and community engagement, the I led focus groups for refugee support charities, NHS Our Future Health, and the School House café. I introduced a new, innovative method of completing graduation speeches—a first in university history. SHAG Week, co-created with the LGBTQIA society, became the only major SU-led event this year and is expected to recur.

Efforts to support neurodiverse students included the co-founding of a local Neurodiverse Group in Cheltenham, offering informal meet-ups and activities that promote inclusion. I also supported student mental health nationally through NUS and Lead & Change events.

Advocacy extended into transport and infrastructure, my involvement in Jon Harris's urban transport project, resulting in student placements and a travel induction session. Attention to affordability increased as canteen costs became a central issue during Speak Week and were later addressed in a formal report delivered to the catering board. Students also commented a raise in diversity food, especially for Gluten Free options – this may be seen as an additional success.

Other notable contributions include raising awareness of the Financial Assistance Fund, collaborating with academics and senior leadership early on, and helping facilitate university partnerships with organisations like Galliford, a construction engineering firm.

New initiatives introduced to the Student Council include a participatory fund and more flexible democratic processes for electing course representatives, addressing concerns around democratic inclusivity.

To support teaching and course quality, I provided informal guidance to students raising course concerns and assisted new lecturers in integrating into their roles. This

also built strong relationships with often-overlooked university staff like course administrators, reinforcing internal communications.

I engaged in community safety through St Giles exploitation training, represented student voices at the Student-Led Staff Awards, participated in course rep training, and supported Estrangement Solidarity Week in partnership with Susanna Franklyn.

A critical development this year was the focus on improving clarity and diversity in assessment, particularly regarding student portfolios. Recognising that portfolios are often poorly understood by students, I recommended the development of a plain-language guide outlining their purpose, structure, and assessment criteria. This should be complemented by interactive lectures to provide a robust curriculum.

To further support assessment clarity, I propose the use of transparent rubrics and the integration of diverse modalities such as video, oral presentations, and creative outputs alongside traditional essays. The adoption would allow students to showcase their learning in multiple formats.

Additionally, the SU encouraged the implementation of an introductory questionnaire for Personal Tutors to use in their first meeting with students. This initiative is currently under review and is aimed at personalising support from the outset of a student's academic journey. Re-doing this every year also allows metrics.

Recommendations going forward include securing innovative funding streams to support student needs, especially for food and mental health; formalising communication processes around SVA roles; completing the portfolio support framework; and institutionalising successful community engagement projects.

In conclusion, the SU has made significant progress in student representation, academic innovation, and community collaboration. Sustaining this momentum and implementing the proposed recommendations—especially around portfolios and assessment—will be crucial in empowering students and enhancing their educational experiences in the years to come.