

The

**BIGGER**

Plan **2020**

Be part of something...  
**Bigger**



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 **Students'**  
Association



Advice  
Centre



Student  
Leaders  
Programme

Student Reps  
and Volunteers



Sports Clubs



Social & Learning  
Spaces



Campaigns



Societies



Teaching  
Awards



Charity  
Fundraising

Environmental  
Sustainability



Basketball Court,  
Traverse Wall and  
Outside Gym.



Radio  
Caley



The Edit  
Magazine

# What we do

GCU Students' Association is a membership-led organisation. All students studying at Glasgow Caledonian University are automatically members of the Students' Association. Members are involved in our decision making at all levels within the organisation. We run lots of services and activities at our premises on the Glasgow and London campuses.

Our Strategic Plan is called The Bigger Plan 2020 because we are building on the success of The Big Plan 2015, our last Strategic Plan. It sets out what we'll be focussing on over the next four years so that every student at GCU gets the most out of university life and can be **Be part of Something... Bigger**. Read about our previous achievements at [www.GCUstudents.co.uk/thebigplan](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/thebigplan).

We undertook a 18 month comprehensive research exercise with our stakeholders, in particular GCU students, to establish the four key priorities for the next four years. This involved focus groups, surveys, committee scrutiny and consultation events.

93% agreed Belonging

89% agreed Empowerment

92% agreed Partnership

88% agreed Innovation

are the right strategic themes. All the strategic plan research can be found at:

[www.GCUstudents.co.uk/BIGGERplan](http://www.GCUstudents.co.uk/BIGGERplan)





Clubs and Societies was the third most important activity students said we should provide.

# Vision , Mission and Values

## VISION

That GCU students will have an outstanding experience that will live with them forever.

## MISSION

To represent and enable GCU students to enhance all aspects of their student experience.

## VALUES

### DIVERSITY

We are proud of our diverse student body and are dedicated to activities that celebrate this diversity.

### COMMUNITY

We foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, allowing students to form and build upon strong, lasting relationships that contribute to an enjoyable and productive University life.

### PARTICIPATION

We promote and provide the opportunity for widespread involvement in all our activities including sports, societies and volunteering.

### FUN

We are dedicated and passionate about working for students in a professional manner, whilst maintaining a fun and friendly atmosphere.

### SUPPORT

We provide a high level of consistent, reliable, confidential and independent support, ensuring the wellbeing of all of our students.

### LEADERSHIP

Throughout all our activities we encourage students to become leaders, to take pride in their University and respect their fellow students, enabling them to be outstanding graduates.



Over 50% of students thought Advice and Support was the most important activity we should provide.



# Our priorities

These are the key areas we'll be focusing on, both for and together with our members, over the next four years.

## Strategic Theme 1: Where everyone belongs

Regardless of where GCU students, our members, study in the world we want them to have a sense of belonging and feel part of an inclusive and diverse GCU community. We want all our members to **Be part of something... Bigger**. There are lots of commuter students at the Glasgow Campus and we know from our research that whilst almost half of these students feel closest to friends from their home communities, many also engage with our extracurricular activities and with their course, particularly our undergraduate students.

The GCU 2020 Strategy seeks to grow the number of part-time, international, postgraduate, work based education and distance learning students. Each of these student groups brings unique challenges that we want to meet and support. We want to maintain involvement levels from undergraduate students and focus on understanding the needs of postgraduate, part-time and distance learners. We also recognise the transition from college to university can be daunting and this will be an area we will focus on.

### 2020 Objectives

1. Work with GCU to develop activities for all members wherever they study to create a sense of belonging.
2. Support sports clubs and societies to increase the inclusivity of their activities to reach out to students from the full diversity of our membership to build student communities.
3. Students will be supported during difficult times at University through impartial advice, practical guidance and representation.
4. Support explorations of culture, faith and liberation led by the students of those communities but shared by all, so members feel part of a diverse and inclusive community.

### Big Actions

- 🕒 Review our information and events to ensure all students feel welcome in the Students' Association.
- 🕒 Ensure we visit each programme at least once each year.
- 🕒 Undertake research to better understand the needs of articulation, distance learning and postgraduate students.
- 🕒 Create initiatives to better reflect the GCU student population in our student groups.
- 🕒 Achieve the Investors in Diversity Accreditation.





The Student Leaders Programme was in the top five activities that students said we should provide.



## Strategic Theme 2: Where everyone can grow

GCU is the University for the Common Good. The aspiration in the GCU 2020 Strategy is that GCU students will make a positive impact within their communities and transform their lives and the lives of others. This includes as global citizens being responsible for our environment and ensuring its sustainability.

We recognise people are key and we could not achieve as much as we do without our many volunteers and our hard working staff. We will continue to support and develop our current and future student leaders through our Student Leaders Programme, in particular recognising the challenge of bridging the gap for women, black and ethnic minority, LGBT+ and disabled students in leadership. We will also achieve the Investors in People and Investing in Volunteers accreditations to demonstrate our commitment to developing and growing our people.

We know strong student media groups are important for democratic student-led organisations and promoting the positive impact we make as an organisation. Through partnership working we will develop these groups.

### Our Objectives

1. Develop the GCU Common Good attributes in students through our leadership and volunteer opportunities to become socially responsible leaders, transforming their lives and the lives of others.
2. Ensure a strong positive student media presence where students are empowered to showcase their experiences, develop skills and learn more about what is happening at GCU.
3. Empower our members to take positive actions towards sustainability in the local community and as global citizens.
4. Develop staff to ensure we have the right talent and skills to meet future challenges.

### Big Actions

- ☾ Capture the Common Good work undertaken by members and ensure extra-curricular activities are recorded on each students' Higher Education Achievement Report.
- ☾ Implement Common Good attributes and a liberation stream within the Student Leaders Programme.
- ☾ Ensure a strong infrastructure for our student media groups.
- ☾ Achieve Investing in Volunteering and Investors in People accreditations.
- ☾ Maintain the NUS Green Impact Award.



GCU and the Students' Association were highly commended for partnership working in the GCU Enhancement-led Institutional Review.

# Strategic Theme 3: Where everyone can work together

We are proud of our strong partnership working with GCU, as recognised in the last Enhancement-led Institutional Review, and that we are consulted on the GCU student experience. We want to go one step further and always be seen as the natural starting point for the development of GCU's student facing policies and decisions. It's equally important to ensure our own members feel their voice is heard within the Students' Association and in our decision making.

We train and support student reps at all levels within GCU. We will continue to do this but it's important to review the structures and ensure effective partnership working and communication between reps. We want to develop grass root campaigns led by our members and work more in partnership with our Campus Trade Unions.

We want to better understand the GCU student experience, particularly from articulation, postgraduate and distance learning students and want to assist GCU in developing the off-campus and postgraduate student voice.

## Our Objectives

- 1: Empower students to be active partners within the GCU academic community to ensure excellence in learning and teaching.
- 2: Work with GCU to develop specialised approaches to engaging specific groups of students including postgraduate, articulation, international and distance learners to ensure a high quality student experience and that students are at the heart of GCU decision making.
- 3: Work together with students, Campus Trade Unions, NUS and other stakeholders on local and national campaigns and encourage student-led campaigns that make a positive impact on the lives of our members.
- 4: Work with stakeholders to create clear and effective ways of decision making so that members feel empowered to share their views and that there is increased student participation.

## Big Actions

- 🕒 Review the GCU Student Partnership Agreement.
- 🕒 Governance, Democracy and Constitutional Review.
- 🕒 Work on projects with GCU to improve NSS scores and improve the postgraduate and distance learners' student voice.
- 🕒 Ensure the Students' Association and students are the first place for the University to consult on student facing policies and decisions.
- 🕒 Evidence the campaign change that has benefited students.





Through continuous improvement we want to achieve the Very Good Award in the NUS Quality Students' Unions accreditation.

# Strategic Theme 4: Where everyone can try new ideas

The Students' Association, working in partnership with the GCU European Office, secured a €430,000 ERASMUS+ grant for the Strategy for Change project. Working with four European universities the project aims to establish a transnational training programme to enable students to carry out social innovation projects in the local community. We will work to deliver the outcomes from this project and ensure that there is a legacy to this project.

We want to be an organisation that is about continuous improvement and trying new ideas. Quality Students' Unions has been developed by NUS to assure the quality, standards and overall effectiveness of students' associations. We will achieve the Very Good award in Quality Students Union and strive towards the Excellence award.

## Our Objectives

1. Continually innovate and develop our activities and services across the Students' Association to meet students' needs, in particular looking to expand online services.
2. Work with GCU Enactus, Ashoka U and UHatch programmes to develop students' social innovation and social entrepreneurialism to improve local communities.

## Big Actions

- € Deliver the Strategy for Change project outcomes.
- € Ensure sustainability of social innovation training for students after the Strategy for Change Project.
- € Achieve Quality Students' Unions at Very Good and aspire towards Excellent.

## Strategic Enablers

# 1

### Financial Sustainability

We will continue to ensure that we are financially stable in order to carry out our charitable purposes.

# 2

### Marketing and Communications

We will ensure effective communication that is tailored to the needs of our diverse student body.

# 3

### Premises and Infrastructure

We will ensure the Students' Association premises are welcoming and relevant to students' needs.

30% of students said they wanted to be more involved in the Students' Association.





# Measuring Success

We understand that the needs of GCU students, our members, today will be different from those tomorrow. This is why we will continue to MONITOR, EVALUATE and REPORT on our performance each year to ensure we are truly delivering on our Vision.

We have set ourselves sixteen ambitious Key Performance Indicators to demonstrate our achievements. This includes measuring members' satisfaction and involvement, and volunteer and staff engagement. We will evidence our Impact and the campaign change that has benefited GCU students.

	Key Performance Indicators
Belonging	Students feel we contribute positively to their experience at GCU.
	Numbers involved in Volunteering and Student Groups.
	Students know that we run an Advice Centre.
Empowerment	Numbers completing the Student Leaders Programme.
	Engagement Index Score within Staff Survey.
	Engagement Index Score within Volunteer Survey.
Partnership	Students feel we represent them.
	Students feel informed about the work of student representatives.
	Election Turnout.
Innovation	Number of Ideas submitted.
Financial Sustainability	Meeting our Reserves Policy to strengthen our Balance Sheet.
Marketing and Communications	Students feel the information from the Students' Association is relevant.
	Students' feel they know what the Students' Association is doing.
	Bounce rate on website.
	Facebook and Twitter Reach.
Premises and Infrastructure	Satisfaction scores for Students' Association Building.

Our credibility as a Students' Association will continue to be evidenced when we achieve the Very Good award in the NUS Quality Students' Union accreditation. We will also achieve the Investing in Volunteers, Investors in People and Investors in Diversity accreditations and maintain the NUS Green Impact award. Through continuous improvement we will aspire towards the Excellent award in Quality Students' Unions.

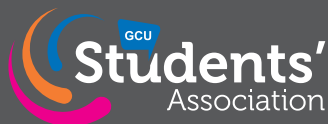
Thank you to each and every one of the hundreds of GCU students who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan through focus groups, surveys and consultation events and to the many University staff, Trustees, Students' Association staff and Committee Members for their input, scrutiny and support to help shape this plan every step of the way.

Follow our progress and celebrate our success

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Scottish Charity No. SC022887