



Précis and action points from the Scottish Student Sport Executive Council  
Meeting held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Board Room, Sighthill Campus, Edinburgh College  
Meeting 10:30 – 14:30

### Present

Stew Fowlie (SF)  
Jonny Pearson (JP)  
Ross Simpson (RS)  
Peter Sawkins (PS)  
Molly McHugh (MM)  
Chris Sellar (CS)  
Katherine Corbett (KC)  
Cathy Gallagher (CG)  
Alison Craig (AG)

### In attendance

Eamonn Laird – Z (EL)  
Julia Stenhouse – Z (JS)  
Neal Kingston – Z (NK)  
Murray Bushell – Z (MB)

### Apologies

Ian Gaunt (IG)  
Anna Wallace (AW)

### [Actions](#)

#### 1. Welcome, intro and scene setting

#### 2. Homologation

##### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from IG, AW

##### 2. Conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were noted.

##### 3. Minutes of last meeting(s) & matters arising

The minutes from the previous meeting in November 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate reflection.

Actions were talked through and majority are in hand. Only outstanding action is revisit and refine process for nominating Hon Life VPs which SF is to complete.

[SF/JS](#)

### 3. Context

#### 1. Exec Perspectives - What are the main themes impacting your day job in 23/24?

MB – Operational difficulties regarding SC move from Stirling SU to SSS, as next steps with university not yet clear. Currently trying to increase engagement levels with clubs.

EL – Home student recruitment difficult this year. Coverage of access of international students to the University in media is causing some wider issues.

PS – In planning submission mode at the moment, EUSU has hit an all time high on membership. MB leading on cost of living with Sabbs, but is interesting to see students still engaging with activity.

MM – Slightly down on membership and recruitment of students down too. Difficulty with facility space, after 4pm facility is 95% in use with SU club activity.

CS – Student numbers slightly down but membership numbers are starting to get back to pre-COVID numbers. Tennis facility now open, and working on sport & wellbeing strategy becoming embedded into the University strategy. Good work being done by Jordan Moore regarding students getting active within their actual academic work. Trying to infiltrate 1<sup>st</sup> year student survey with questions regarding sport & active health.

RS – University just launched a new WP strategy, and has generated a re-think around how SU/Sport engage with these groups of people.

CG – Very strong year at Stirling, engagement numbers are up. Narrative is that there are strong headwinds ahead. Challenge will be finding sweet point, as there is change coming, where can we maximise the highs? University released a new strategic plan, active health & sport feature heavily. With the challenges coming for Unis, what's the knock-on effect going to be on SSS/BUCS? Thoughts around students with term-time addresses compared to not, and thinking about actual student demographics on campus & whether current metrics are correct.

[PS](#)

JP – Colleges looking for parity with universities when funding the same courses. At a College if a student doesn't stay for term of the course, the college doesn't receive funding for that student. 60-80 student drop out can cost approx. £250,000. There aren't the same penalties for University, as College is calculated in year course, not across the degree period.

[MG - SF/JS](#)

KC – Reset Active Health space, challenge themselves on what they're actually trying to achieve? Currently reviewing active Lives work and work on data collection.

SF – CW will be departing 16<sup>th</sup> Feb – his job closes on Monday 12<sup>th</sup>. BR has been in Dubai for qualification for the Paralympics. ACN work has been doing really well with 16 positions recruited for with two more to join before Easter. SS Games did well last weekend, over 1200 students taking part. Special Projects on the go with 160 people going through training. SSS Conference happening in June and planning now underway. More on membership calculation in the May meeting.

### 4. Strong Organisation

#### 1. Finance

- **Headline Net Profit Forecast**

JS presented the January Headline Net Profit Forecast. Highlighted reduction in membership fee income and competition entry fees as having an impact on total income, as well as increase in core costs, and increase in Special P spend, influencing the bottom line.

[JS/SF](#)

SF shared comments on fluctuation of staff costs due to turnover, pension changes as well as mid-year UoE salary increases.

[EL/ Comps Team](#)

## **2. Commercial Update**

JS presented on the SSS Commercial Strategy as per paper and highlighted next steps & implementation plan.

Positive feedback received with RS suggesting adding a focus of graduate recruitment companies as well as greater thought into value in kind options.

PS asked about charitable partners, and CG asked about how to check/challenge the plan if things aren't working. JS stated that the plan will be on a 1-year pilot, with look to rethink if strategy is not working as hoped.

## **5. Partner Updates**

### **1. BUCS**

SBM presented on BUCS Nations & Regions update as per paper.

CS asked about BUCS engagement with fitness events. BUCS looking to do some events but is tied by their strategy in what they can deliver, but is something which is on the radar of BUCS. KC stated that UoE have done things on a local level, but haven't moved much into the space.

PS asked about Nationals and media promotion of the event. SBM shared that BUCS have to restrict formal media for safety reasons, but they want students / institutions to cover as much as they can on smaller phones etc.

CG gave a Senior Managers update – affiliation discussions, work on para sport strategy and trans people looking to centralise conversations across the sector.

### **2. Sportscotland**

Annual investment process for 24/25 is live. With SSS investment panel 20<sup>th</sup> of March. 2025 is the final year for the cycle of investment. Sportscotland currently doing budget planning at the moment, but budget looking under significant pressure. Currently a solid promotion of Scottish Student Sport across the landscape at the moment, both with the Winning Students & ACN programme.

CG - Great to hear that student sport is starting to feature, but we need to be really clear on the role that we play within the wider sector – especially in regard to conversations with funding bodies.

### **3. Winning Students**

CG – Formal launch event at Uni of Stirling which was really positive with evidential support for the programme across the day. 106 scholarships awarded this year across 28 sports & 21 institutions. SFC & sportscotland in attendance at the event. Hardship fund also created as part of the programme. The WS100 programme has inaugurated the 'Andre Reibig Medal' in memory of SFC staff member Andre, who for many years was a great champion of sport and physical activity within SFC and who was the relationship manager for both WS and SSS. Reiterated the importance of new partnership with the Scottish Funding Council.

SFC

## **6. SSS Exec Projects 23-24**

## 1. Governance Structure

CS - Have now implemented Managers Forum, Coordinators Forum, Active Health Network, Learning & Inclusion forum. Now more people engaged into SSS groups than ever before. Current structure is that if there is a new event, it goes to Comps committee to get signed off. In new structure, the idea would be sent to comps leads in institutions for feedback rather than a 'vote' situation in a committee group structure. This is so decision can be made more 'in-situ' rather than bound by specific group meetings. Aware that moving to this structure means that there will be some loss of student voice, but there will be more forum opportunities. Potentially need a mini-3-year plan for each forum to provide scope and help make decisions.

[All](#)

[SF](#)

KC – As Dev groups were not required to sign off decisions, this committee has now moved to more of a staff member group rather than being regionalised. Move to more project areas forums as well as functioning managers group.

[SF/JS](#)

RS – questioned whether the SSS staff were happy with not having these formal groups? SF they are as this better reflects how decisions are made in any case. SF also mentioned that staff team should be providing more information, with a suggestion of a review paper from each forum to keep other groups (such as exec) aware of all that is going on.

## 2. Business Continuity

JS shared that the Business Continuity group has met and look to reconvene at the end of February with aim of having results to share with the audit & risk group in April.

## 3. Advocacy

SF presented a plan template to create a matrix of influence across internal / external partners and organisations. PS asked about whether there would be a need for a priority rating scale.

[SF](#)

JP – raised points around how can influence through organisational decision-making bodies (e.g. can we host exec at SFC offices).

[Group](#)

RS - If there was something we could create as pre-set asset to aid conversations.

CG – Maybe need something on here which is a tracker on what other institutions are doing. How to you utilise the rest of us to push this forward as well?

CS said is there a way we can get more info out to select groups etc Director's forum, Sabbs forum. Suggestion of utilising LinkedIn and connecting wider with those alumni of Scottish student sport.

RS – Is there a way we can communicate with Alumni & big advocates of student sport out in these spaces.

## 7. AOCB

CS - Community engagement event went well with HE/FE institutions attending with over 200 high school students across the local communities. Suggest there is more space for SSS to take up more work in that space – suggest a greater involvement from JF at SSS.

Meeting closed 14:15

## ACTION LIST

To invite Waiyin Hatton to next Exec meeting	SF & JS
Create a piece of work on how EUSU managed to calculate the report on dropout rates of general students in comparison to general student drop outs for next meeting	PS
Consider SP fund for spending on external consultation on how to gather anecdotal information on how sport either guides your choice of college / Uni or how it plays a role in attainment.	Management Group – SF/JS
Create three-year budget plan for next Exec	JS & SF
Look at which entries are down and speak to the specific institutions before next Exec	EL & Comps Team
Encourage staff & students to fill out BUCS event feedback	All
Circulate BUCS Awards paper and to feedback to group	JS
Share BUCS Audit doc on internal review of Playwaze/BUCS Play with SSS Exec when possible	SBM
Consider potential for Forums to provide review paper for Exec to consider at quarterly meetings	All
Decision making ‘visuals’ to be created for what the new Governance forums are	SF
Constitutional changes (included voting proposal) drafted for May Exec Meeting	SF/JS
Introduce COOs News feature and look to create more communications to Directors & Sabbs forums	SF
Group to revisit Strategy before Autumn 2025	Exec
CS and JF to link up regarding Community Engagement activities	CS

## Outstanding Actions

	Initials
Revisit and refine process for nominating Hon Life VPs.	SF

## Closed Actions From Previous Meeting

Raise following Qs with BUCS	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of students from satellite campuses eligibility / sportsmanship</li> <li>Timeline for BUCS budgeting process for 24-25 and beyond – with particular focus on SSS~BUCS partnership agreement</li> </ul>	AG & SF
Create a timeline for Governance Re-Structure project	CS
Scale up Governance Restructure Proposal from now 'til February	CS, SF, EL, KC, JP
Investigate on how to become involved in SFC Outcome Manager conversations, to ensure that active health and physical activity are considered	SF & JP
IG to create working group for Business Continuity Stress-Test Project. Work with JS / MM and have feedback for A&R meeting in April.	IG, JS & MM
Meet in Jan to discuss Advocacy plan and to report back for Feb Meeting	MM, JP & SF
IG to host May Meeting	IG
Ensure Exec minutes added to the website.	JS
Group to continue to consider structure and consider which other networks should our framework interact with? Suggest a column for linked networks to be added in to the 'Matrix July'	CS
Committee to also consider additional seats on Exec as appropriate (i.e. to fill gaps in skill, sex or representation)	JP & SF
Before next Exec Committee, smaller groups to meet to work through several examples of key decisions and how these would be made in the new governance structure. Groups to include Competitions meeting (CP,JB, EL, CS) Development meeting (EP, Dev Chair, etc).	CS
SSS is interested to hear from members who are interested to take part in Brit activities in 2024	ALL
Institutions to pass on opportunities for student volunteers to help lead the BUCS Creator Nation TikTok project.	ALL
Host sought for May meeting of Exec	ALL