



# save our subjects

**On Tuesday 10 May, staff and students in three departments of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) were informed by email that their departments were being proposed for closure. The decision follows a review carried out this year, which itself followed on from discussions last year around the merger of the old faculties of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, and Education.**

Over the next month there will be a period of consultation around the decision and it is absolutely vital that staff and students from across the university – regardless of what you study or teach – unite to defend the value of education, recognise the excellent teaching provision within each department, and moreover, understand that this is simply more of the same from university management who are wildly swinging an axe around and seeing where it hits. It would be nice to say that this is the first time we've seen this – but it isn't. Time and time again we have had management pick out (and on) those subjects who don't conform to a narrow ideology of what education should look like.

Each of the departments earmarked for closure all have an excellent track record in terms of student satisfaction, top quality teaching staff, and contribute greatly to the academic standards of our university. But in today's university setting it seems that this isn't enough – management aren't happy unless they equally contribute to the university's research standing. This completely ignores the fact that the students on any of the courses didn't apply on the basis of the research their lecturers undertake (research they'll never even see), and is also a kick in the teeth for the academics who choose to put their students first.

But even putting aside all that, what is really a kick in the teeth is the fact that students have been informed at a time when they're sitting exams – exams in those same subjects that the university has now deemed not to be important or worthy enough for this university.

Over the next month we'll be working hard to put the case for each of the departments to the university – but we need your help.

**The slash and burn goes on...what's next?**

Facebook [www.facebook.com/StrathclydeUnion](http://www.facebook.com/StrathclydeUnion)  
Twitter [#StrathSOS](https://twitter.com/StrathSOS)  
Website [www.strathstudents.com/sos](http://www.strathstudents.com/sos)  
Email [executive@theunion.strath.ac.uk](mailto:executive@theunion.strath.ac.uk)

## Applied Music

In 2010, the University brought forward proposals to withdraw the music degree – but faced such an intense outpouring of feeling around it, and saw the good it could do, that Senate agreed to keep it on, with a fresh direction. Now, a year later, all this seems forgotten as they target a department which has exceptional musicians, a fantastic reputation, and a committed staff and student body.

In terms of student satisfaction, the course consistently scores higher in all but two sections of the National Student Survey – in some cases by figures well into double digits. Moreover, it does exceptionally well in terms of graduate prospects, with employment rates of 100% – well above the sector average of 88%.

The course remains undoubtedly prestigious and sought after – evidenced by the waiting list for places – and is viewed positively by staff, students, and respected musicians the world over.

## Community Education

The Community Education degree at Strathclyde is undoubtedly excellent – both in terms of what it offers, and what it does. It is one of only a handful of such courses throughout the UK, and one of only two universities in Scotland. The work it does has been praised for a number of reasons, and the university itself boasts on its website “Strathclyde is at the forefront of national and international developments in community education”.

The course ensures it remains relevant, and again the university have acknowledged this by noting that staff have increased their research output, and utilise this in their lecturing specialisms, meaning students learn about current literature from academics in the field – a link between research and teaching the university would ideally have replicated throughout the whole of the university.

The course is absolutely vital in training students to be more proactive citizens, working at the coalface of social deprivation and need – again an aim which is laudable in itself, but even more of value in a socially divided city like Glasgow.



Staff and students show support to the SOS campaign

## Geography

In a recurring theme of courses praised by the university for their quality – Geography is no different. The university leads its entry in the prospectus by proclaiming “[In the NSS] our students recorded an overall satisfaction rating of 91 per cent in 2009 and 93 per cent in 2010. At the last national Teaching Quality Assessment in Scotland, the geography programme was awarded the highest grade for teaching...”; basically, an all round excellent degree.

As with Community Education, it's a degree which is almost unique, in that Strathclyde is one of the few universities which specialises in human geography, rather than physical. This means that students explore real world issues which have impact and cut across various other fields of study – a vital thing in today's global society.

Last year, following the merger which saw the creation of HaSS faculty, the university stated publically that geography would remain an important component in the new faculty – a role upheld by excellence reviews in the department.

## Sociology

Even in an 'International Technological University', Sociology remains an important degree – as the university website states, it “...aspires to be innovative, exciting and relevant. The course has a strong orientation towards understanding real world problems and what can be done about them.”

At a national level, various members of staff within the department are extremely well respected, and sought after for commentary and analysis.

In previous reviews of the department Sociology has been praised for its considerable strengths in teaching, despite seemingly high student : staff ratios, as it remains a relatively small department in terms of staff numbers. Moreover, student feedback was positive about teaching and organisation.

As with Geography, following the merger into HaSS, the original merger implementation group were publically reassuring that due to the strengths Sociology displayed, it would remain an important component in any new faculty.

## your education - your future - your campaign

Whether you're a student on one of the courses, or simply someone who's concerned by course closures in general, we have everything you need to get involved in the campaign on our website at: [www.strathstudents.com/sos](http://www.strathstudents.com/sos)

Take a moment out of your day to...

- Sign the petition against the closures
- Email the university decision makers
- Contact your MSP
- Attend our public consultations, where you can direct comments and questions at the university