



Strategic Plan



2010 – 2014

Our Vision...

Empowering students to shape, enhance and enjoy their Strathclyde experience.

Our Mission...

Representative Voice

Develop a culture of equal partnership in the design and delivery of our students' educational experience.

Advice & Support

Provide leading welfare and advice services to support our students through their Strathclyde experience.

Involvement

Enable personal development and community engagement by providing access to a diverse range of opportunities.

Social Environment

To provide independent space and services which are shaped and shared by students.

Our Values...

Our values as laid out in the Constitution are reflected in the ethos below:

Student led – Students are empowered to make decisions, implement policy and drive change.

Representative – Our Association reflects the diverse make-up and needs of the student population.

Open to all – Creating a positive and safe environment for our members.

For students, not profit – Our members are our shareholders so any financial gains made are reinvested in the services provided.

Responsible – We encourage ethical practice in everything we do.

Community friendly – We encourage our students to positively engage with the wider community.

Representative Voice

1. *USSA as a Strong and Active Union*

USSA will continue to be a champion of students' rights through a combination of activism and lobbying. We seek to empower students to take control of their own academic journey, as well as providing them with a voice at every level of university decision making.

We aim to have an underpinning culture of campaigns; campaigns which speak and work on behalf of the student and for them.

We will defend and protect the academic integrity of all degree programmes and ensure provision is maintained throughout.

We will achieve this through:

- ✓ Strong and Active Representation
 - USSA owned, designed and delivered course representation structure
 - We will actively work within departments to deliver a model which works for all and benefits all
 - Which provides for debate and discussion between academics and students
 - Which provides a means of grassroots collectivism through Student Congress and other such policy shaping bodies

- ✓ Strong and Active advocacy
 - We seek to be the first point of contact for students who are experiencing difficulties or concerns within their degree programme
 - We will provide arbitration between aggrieved students and the university
 - We will only campaign and lobby on those issues which students have highlighted through various means as being of critical importance to them

- ✓ Strong and active policy making
 - We seek to influence all areas of relevant policy making at a local and national level
 - We will engage with council and parliamentary legislators in order to ensure student centric policy is at the forefront
 - We will set the agenda for academic policy within the university, at all levels, and ensure the student voice is maintained and strengthened

2. Access and Inclusion

USSA seeks to be a key contributor to the economic and social well-being of the local community. We will encourage a diverse and inclusive environment where access is based on academic potential and every student has the appropriate guidance and support to reach their highest levels of achievement.

We view the university as having a civic responsibility to the local community and all potential applicants from the area, and we will work to ensure that this responsibility is born out in tangible and practical ways.

We realise that there currently exist great barriers to entry to higher education and we are committed to working with local and national partners to eradicate these and ensure higher education is accessible and inclusive to all.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ Working towards a fairer model of funding and support
 - Nationally we will work with NUS to ensure the Scottish Government respond to student needs and take account of personal circumstances via a fair and progressive means of student funding and support
 - We will work with the university to increase transparency of and access to the various discretionary funds available – regardless of background, circumstances and level and mode of study
 - We will ensure student carers are clearly identifiable in order to provide targeted support – we will lobby for adequate support for such students

- ✓ Ensuring, Sharing and Raising Aspirations
 - We will lobby the university for the introduction of the use of contextual data in the admissions process
 - We will develop and deliver an alternative prospectus, placing the student voice at the forefront of opinion forming for potential applicants
 - We will work with local partners and schools to provide a programme of targeted outreach and with the university in the implementation of an effective and deliverable widening access strategy

- ✓ Involved – Engaged – Active
 - We will ensure we engage with all relevant local and national partners within the community, sharing resources and research for the betterment of all
 - We will work to embed volunteering opportunities within the curriculum, offering up practical examples of shared aspirations

3. Critical Friendship

USSA maintains a special relationship with the university via a number of mechanisms, ensuring autonomy and independence from the university, whilst also being viewed as a valuable partner. As the main funder of USSA, it is important that the university feels that public money is being utilised by USSA in a worthy manner, and this is achieved most importantly through USSA being the foremost “critical friend” to the university.

Due to its arms length membership of University Senate, USSA is free to play an important role in forming and shaping the student agenda, whilst also being free to pursue alternative policy initiatives.

Similarly, whilst being able to benefit from initiatives such as university wide survey, USSA will often undertake its own market research, surveying students on specific issues, as well as their wider student experience.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ Securing a “curriculum for excellence”
 - We will ensure that all students benefit from ground breaking academic work through a research informed curriculum – this requires students to be viewed as partners in their curriculum; a curriculum driven by process over content
 - Ensure robust quality assurance processes are in place – processes which are clear and identifiable
 - Work with the university to deliver a revised and renewed curriculum which places students at the forefront in its design and delivery
 - Ensure teaching spaces and resources are suitable for modern learning

- ✓ A student centric university
 - Ensure that all students are afforded the opportunity to fully feedback on their learning and teaching, in fora that are open and purposeful
 - Ensure students are afforded the ability to input into their academic experience
 - We will continue to develop and deliver unique initiatives which provide students and staff alike to engage positively in discussions around teaching quality
 - We will continue to provide an alternative opinion on university matters to the press, ensuring that we increase our reach and coverage of pertinent issues

Advice and Support

Student wellbeing is integral to ensuring our members can shape, enhance and enjoy their Strathclyde experience throughout their time at Strathclyde.

By ensuring USSA runs an independent, accessible and growing Advice & Support service the Association can fulfil its aim of providing a safety network to the 22,000 students that attend Strathclyde University.

We will achieve this through:

- ✓ Promoting Advice
 - Develop and increase awareness of advice & support services to our members, university and relevant external bodies

- ✓ Pro- active Support
 - Take an innovative approach to campaign delivery
 - Flexible delivery of quality advice & support services
 - Establish ASK as the first point of contact for student advice & support services

- ✓ Enhancing Impact
 - Expand our use of electronic and interactive services for member benefit
 - Work in partnership with external bodies to make better use of links and resources

Involvement

By encouraging students to be actively involved and engaged with their Association and to take ownership to drive USSA forward we can ensure we are member led; truly an organisation that is at its heart 'by students, for students'.

We will provide a platform for personal development and informal learning out with the classic learning environment of the classroom. We will ensure that our graduates enter their chosen field with not only a degree but also an edge on their counterparts from other institutions through their increased involvement.

We will ensure that our students leave university equipped with enhanced experiences; affording them the opportunity to be successful in the wider world whilst feeling a sense of responsibility to local and global communities.

We will achieve this through:

- ✓ Personal Development through Volunteering
 - Encourage students to take ownership and responsibility in order to identify areas in which they feel personal development is needed and to take the appropriate steps to achieve this
 - Work in partnership with the University and external bodies to ensure the opportunities provided by the Association are advantageous for future prospects
 - Provide relevant internal and external training opportunities to enable students to reach their full potential whilst providing support to ensure student activities run effectively

- ✓ Active Involvement
 - Provide a platform for students to engage in the coproduction of extra and co curricular activities, led by students themselves
 - Encourage bottom up approach of grass roots activity allowing students to take ownership of, drive and shape their Association
 - Offer a platform where students learn by doing within a safe, recreational supported environment

- ✓ Community Involvement
 - Identify and recognise the skills and talents of individual students and apply these to the mutual benefit of all parties
 - Promote active involvement in the community by supporting students to research, identify and implement projects in areas where current resources are not adequate or do not exist

Social Environment

Aiming to provide an environment that is unique to the one which is provided by the university, USSA will provide services, entertainment and flexible space that is informed by student feedback and is fitting to the diverse student dynamic.

By giving students real ownership of the Association premises, events and facilities and by ensuring a commitment to providing this responsibly, (guaranteeing student safety and wellbeing) we aim to create a friendly environment where all students feel welcome.

We will achieve this through:

- ✓ Student focused services
 - To provide a diverse range of services that are geared to the evolving dynamic of students
 - Ensure that services provided are affordable and are good value for money

- ✓ Student focused entertainment
 - Provide a wide range of entertainment which appeals to different groups of students at varying times during the week
 - Provide resources, support and space for students to organise their own events

- ✓ Multipurpose student spaces
 - Provide accessible social space for students before, between and after classes
 - Encourage the use of space by students for clubs, societies and sports as well as for social activities
 - Provide multi-functional space for individual study, group work and discussion