

Union President (Student Voice) 2025–26 AGM Report

Introduction

As Union President (Student Voice), my role is to represent the academic interests of students and ensure that student perspectives influence decision-making across the university. Throughout the year, I have worked closely with university leadership, Students' Union staff, and student representatives to advocate for improvements to the academic experience, student opportunities, and financial accessibility.

This report outlines the key initiatives, campaigns, and representation work undertaken during my tenure, focusing on strengthening student voice, improving employability opportunities, expanding academic support, and addressing financial challenges faced by students.

Welcome Week and Student Engagement

At the beginning of the academic year, I actively supported Welcome Week activities to help new students settle into university life. As part of the induction programme, I delivered presentations introducing the Students' Union, explaining the support services available and encouraging students to engage with societies, representation opportunities, and SU events.

During Freshers' Week, I participated in a range of activities including arts and crafts sessions, sports activities, and the Boom Battle Bar Freshers' Party. These events provided opportunities to connect with students and help them feel welcomed into the university community.

The Freshers' Fair saw over 3,500 students engaging with student societies, businesses, and university support services. In addition, the Refreshers' Fair attracted 864 attendees, demonstrating strong student engagement throughout the academic year. A two-week "Give It A Go" campaign was also delivered to encourage students to explore new activities and connect with different communities on campus. I attended these events to gather more student engagement and feedback.

Strengthening Student Voice and Representation

A core part of my role has been ensuring students have strong representation within university decision-making processes. Throughout the year, I represented students across several university committees and governance groups:

University Committees:

- Board of Governors
- Academic Board
- Education Committee
- Student Experience Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Safeguarding Committee
- Student Fees and Financial Aid Group
- Solent Future Learning Governance Group

Students' Union Committees and Working Groups:

- Board of Trustees
- Student Council
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Academic Representation Working Group
- Campaigns Working Group
- Equality, Diversity and Liberation Working Group
- Survey and Feedback Working Group

Through these committees, I raised student feedback on academic communication, access to facilities, financial challenges, and the future direction of learning at the university. Within the Students' Union, I contributed to governance and campaign development, ensuring students had clear channels to share feedback and influence improvements.

Strengthening the Course Representative system was a key focus. During Semester 1, 74% of Course Representative roles were successfully filled, an improvement on the previous year. The Students' Union attended 36 Course Committee meetings, where students raised issues such as communication consistency, the use of Microsoft Teams, and access to specialist facilities. Improving training and engagement with course representatives remains a priority to ensure effective student feedback.

Alumni Mentorship Programme

Improving student employability opportunities has been one of my key manifesto priorities. To support this, I began developing an Alumni Mentorship Programme designed to connect current students with graduates working across different industries.

I worked closely with the Solent Careers Team and the Peer Mentoring Team to explore how a mentorship scheme could complement existing employability initiatives. A draft structure has been developed to match students with alumni mentors based on their career interests and professional goals, and several alumni have already expressed interest in participating in a pilot programme. I participated in getting more student engagement for Solent Careers team.

Financial Accessibility and Support for Students

Addressing financial challenges faced by students, particularly international students, has been another major focus of my work this year.

The Hardship Fund application portal was launched on the Solent website in September 2025, providing financial support for students experiencing financial difficulties. The current fund allocation is £10,000, allowing approximately 25 students to receive £400 in support. Applications are currently being reviewed to assess the level of demand and consider future expansion of the fund.

In addition, I have worked with the university's Finance and International Support Teams to explore improvements to tuition fee payment structures. Discussions have included proposals to allow students to pay tuition fees in five instalments instead of the current three, helping to reduce financial pressure throughout the academic year.

Inter School Learning Community– Peer Learning Initiative

To promote collaborative learning and knowledge sharing among students, I have been working on the development of an Inter-School Learning Community.

The aim of this initiative is to create a collaborative platform where students from different schools can come together to present their learning, exchange ideas, and explore topics that spark curiosity. By encouraging students to actively share their knowledge and interests, the project supports a culture of open learning and peer engagement.

The initiative is designed as a weekly learning space where students can interact in an informal yet supportive environment. Through presentations, discussions, and creative exchanges, students are encouraged to learn from one another while building confidence and communication skills.

Peer learning environments such as this help foster academic curiosity, cross-school collaboration, and a strong sense of community among young learners.

Key Issues Resolved

Throughout the year, I have worked to address several practical issues raised by students. One example involved Level 6 QAHE students, where student discounts had been removed without prior communication. After raising the issue with the relevant university teams, I successfully advocated for the reinstatement of these student discounts.

Another issue involved accessibility concerns with the lift in the JM Building, which affected students and staff who rely on lift access. I raised this concern across several committees until the issue was addressed, demonstrating the importance of consistent student advocacy in resolving campus issues.

Conclusion

Serving as Union President (Student Voice), I worked to strengthen student representation, expand employability and peer-learning initiatives, enhance student engagement, and improve financial accessibility through measures such as the Hardship Fund, increased scholarships, and fairer fee policies.

While several initiatives will continue to develop over the coming months, my priority remains to strengthen student voice, expand opportunities for students, and ensure that every student at Solent University has access to the support they need to succeed.