

**GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**

**Academic Board – 6 February 2026**

**Student Association SPARQS Framework Evaluation**

**Report by the Head of Enhancement & Assurance and the Student Association  
President**

## **1. Introduction**

This paper is to provide the Academic Board with an update on a recent exercise in mapping current Students' Association practice, and the College's approach to student engagement and valuing the student voice as a whole. Activity against the SPARQS *Features of Effective Student Engagement* framework. This activity was completed in preparation for the forthcoming TQER review, with the intention of identifying strengths, gaps, and areas for development. It was conducted by the Head of Enhancement & Assurance, the Student President and the Student Engagement Officer, with further contributions by the Head of Student Services.

The full details of the mapping exercise are available in Appendix A: SPARQS Framework Mapping. However, a summary follows.

## **2. Summary of Findings**

### **Overview**

Responsibility for coordinating and monitoring student engagement is clear, with the Head of Student Services and Student Engagement Officer leading direct student representation and enrichment activities, and the Head of Enhancement & Assurance overseeing learner feedback activity through survey analysis, learner focus groups, and evaluation of f SCM and CM reporting, both of which include analysis of learner feedback. Some aspects of the SPARQS framework relate to faculty and classroom practice in creating a positive learning experience for students, rather than focussing directly on student voice and representation. This too can be evidenced and evaluated through SCM and CM reporting.

The College demonstrates strong practice across many elements of the SPARQS framework, though it does not necessarily reflect the specific language of the framework in every case. Student membership is embedded at all levels of institutional governance, with the Student President participating in the Board of Management, Learning & Teaching Committee, Academic Board, and a wide range of quality-related forums. Regular Class Representative feedback, three annual student surveys, and the "Meet the Managers" sessions further strengthen this culture.

However, gaps were identified in two key areas:

- **Recognition of mutual learning between staff and students:** current practice exists but is not formalised or clearly evidenced.
- **A culture of honest learning and sharing between institutions:** this requires further development, particularly regarding external benchmarking and cross-college learning activity.

### **Students As Partners**

Partnership working is strong in areas relating to learning, teaching, and representation. Learners can actively contribute to Individual Learning Plans and scheduled guidance (at FE level), and Class Representatives influence course design and improvements through Course Team Meetings.

The partnership between the College, the SA, and the student body is also positive. Engagement at Springburn is particularly strong, with visible SA presence and active communication. However:

- Face to face SA engagement with the student body is less consistent at Easterhouse and East End campuses. This is partly, though not entirely, as a result of one of the Student Presidents currently being on maternity leave.
- There is no system currently in place to quantify or monitor SA–student interactions, although work is underway to improve monitoring of some activity, e.g. food bank and clothing bank use. It may be possible to introduce a log of direct student interactions subject to capacity.

The College maintains productive relationships with external bodies such as SPARQS and NUS. The Student President, along with the Head of Enhancement & Assurance, represents the college externally on STEP (Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme), which is an SFC requirement, managed by QAA and CDN, that is leading projects to improve student experience across the HE sector in a range of ways. This programme has extensive student representation, including student delegates from every college and university in Scotland.

### **Responding to Diversity**

The College has a range of mechanisms for enabling diverse learners to engage at levels appropriate to their needs, including clubs, societies, volunteering roles, bespoke ESOL representation, simplified training materials, and travel-cost support to reduce barriers to in-person participation. It is the belief of relevant staff that the SA is by nature a diverse body with varied representation. However, areas for development include:

- Closer liaison between Learner Support and Faculty in the implementation and review of Learning Support Plans
- Better understanding of whether diverse groups (e.g. those with protected characteristics or additional learning support needs) are proportionately represented within class rep structures.

- Consideration of approaches to proactively encourage under-represented groups to participate.

### **Valuing the Student Contribution**

Class reps and SA officers receive appropriate support, with expectations outlined clearly in the Class Rep Handbook. Examples of positive changes driven by student voice, such as the Springburn hub, food bank, free breakfasts, and inclusive toilet provision, demonstrate that contributions are valued and acted upon.

Areas requiring attention include:

- Ensuring student officers are not assumed to have the same contextual knowledge as experienced staff members when engaging in high-level committees.

### **Focus on Enhancement & Change**

Students contribute to enhancement of college delivery and enrichment of their learning experience through ILPs, structured guidance where available, and participation in quality systems. However, practice around learner progress review and monitoring, and student representation at Course Team Meetings, is mixed across the College, indicating a need for greater consistency.

### **Next Steps**

- The SPARQS Framework mapping document will be shared with QAA via the Advanced Information Set (AIS) as evidence for the TQER review, to illustrate activity and clarify where College practice may match SPARQS priorities but not use SPARQS language.
- The College will investigate opportunities to develop in weaker areas, such as SA presence across all campuses, improving systems to monitor SA interactions with students, improving consistency college-wide in relation to learner progress review and feedback mechanisms, and reviewing ways of monitoring and encouraging diverse representation in SA and student representation activity.

#### **3. Impact on Students**

Action on the areas for development identified during this mapping process should improve College practice in enhancing learner voice and representation, and as such improve the student experience and learner journeys.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

#### **5. Equality**

There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

#### **6. Risk and Assurance**

There are no specific risk and assurance implications arising directly from this report.

#### **7. Data Protection**

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

**8. Recommendations**

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and the continuing college activity to value and incorporate the learner voice into its operations.

**9. Further Information**

- Appendix A: SPARQS Framework Mapping
- Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this paper from John Clarke, Head of Enhancement & Assurance or Jon Craig, Student President.

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