

SPEAK WEEK

2021/22



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Introduction from SRUCSA Co-Presidents

Every year, SRUCSA asks SRUC students two questions – *what do you love about SRUC?* and *what would you change if you were in charge?* The answers to these two questions can create so much change.

For example, last Speak Week identified further support is required for students living with mental illness. As a result, SRUCSA is co-leading on the Student Mental Health Strategy with SRUC. It was also recommended that SRUC improve learner voice in curriculum design and review. SRUC have been working on a Student Voice project and SRUCSA have begun a review of their Class Rep system.

Speak Week provides you the opportunity to use your Student Voice and make the changes important to you and your fellow students. At SRUCSA, it gives us so much pride to be able to empower students and help to facilitate change.

As a students' association, we talk a lot about how important it is that we “close the feedback loop” and encourage SRUC teaching staff to do so to. At the end of this report, you can find a section which has details of the recommendations that SRUCSA last took to SRUC in 2021, the actions SRUC and SRUCSA agreed to do, and an update on those actions. We also call for SRUC to provide further updates on these areas.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you. Firstly, to those who continue to take part in Speak Week (welcome to those who are experiencing it for the first time!) - Speak Week simply would not happen without you. Secondly, thank you to SRUC for considering the changes from our previous Speak Week and for acting on the suggested recommendations – we are grateful to be part of an institution which values the voices of our students. We would also like to thank Johnathan Kermath (Data Officer) who undertook the data analysis for this year's Speak Week.

Cara, Roz, and Amy

SRUCSA Co-Presidents 2021/2022

Overview

Our approach to gathering Speak Week feedback reflected the current circumstances of blended learning. We continued with an online form and had Speak Week cards available on-campus.

We received 117 responses from students from these two methods, almost all from the online survey. As with previous years we divide each students' response into individual comments. Divided up by theme and 'love' or 'change' we received 697 comments. This allowed us to complete a data analysis process and get a clear image of what students were telling us. The responses are all valuable and contained lots of detail.

As we often see during Speak Week, Learning and Teaching (24.4% of comments) and Student Experience (24.2% of comments) were the themes students were most likely to comment on. Together, gathering over 40% of all comments. Students mentioned how they appreciate the expertise lecturers provide and how in depth their subject has been taught. The practical elements have also been important to students despite these classes being cut due to restrictions.

Unfortunately, there were more negative comments on course delivery than there was positive. A lot of the reasons to change the course delivery were around assessment timings and practical sessions. Like last year the lack of face-to-face teaching seems to be an issue across the board.

Students expressed their positive outlook on the student experience despite the vast changes due to Covid restrictions. There were comments on how SRUC is the best place to learn outdoor related subjects and skills, and how it has given students the opportunity to study something they are passionate about.

The expression of admiration for staff is always a lovely read. There were so many positive comments around how supportive, knowledgeable, and welcoming staff were which creates a positive and encouraging culture around the college. You can read more on these heart-warming comments further on in this report. There was a specific positive comment on how student support services deserved praise, and students really appreciated how they attended the in-person induction day as it made the services easier to access. It has been another difficult year, so it is always nice to hear how staff have gone above and beyond for the learners of SRUC. This report is anonymous, but don't forget that students will have the opportunity to nominate individual staff for SRUCSA Awards later in the year.

Students have expressed how frustrating communication has been recently especially around timetabling and feedback on coursework. There are comments on communication throughout the report that will provide more details on these issues.

Overall, we received a significant number of responses, and without these we couldn't have known about both the negatives and the positives. It really shows how important every aspect of SRUC is to the student experience and going forward we can hopefully make the changes that students want.

We have included an update of the Speak Week from last year and the COVID Edition of Speak Week 2020. Please note that this is SRUCSA's understanding of the current progress from the recommendations and SRUC may be able to provide a more detailed update or further information on the progress.

How We Collated the Responses

This is the second Speak Week to be affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. In 2020 we had no access to campuses and responses were collected by sending cards to students' homes, and an online survey. This year limited numbers of students were on campus, and we were able to visit. We decided to put response cards (fig.1) and boxes on the six main campuses. We also used an electronic survey as we expected most students to use this option. Students were directed to the online survey by a banner on the landing page of Moodle and a QR Code printed on the posters that were put up on campus.



Figure 1 – Speak Week card design

The online survey was sent to all students via their student email address and was also promoted via SRUCSA social media channels. All Speak Week boxes/cards were on the campus ahead of Speak Week starting and some were left out for a short time after Speak Week. SRUCSA also produced a QR code which directed students to the online survey, this was included in the posters we put-up all-over campus. This was due to the restrictions around working on campus and the fact that SRUCSA officers are currently working from home. This combined approach allowed us to gather student opinion on their learning during this challenging time, in a way that suits them best.

We kept the same two simple questions that we have used for our previous Speak Weeks: 'I love SRUC because...' and 'If I ran SRUC I would change...'.

The data was divided into the same subjects as in previous reports to get response rates. The next step was to read each response and assign them the subcategories which reflected the subject the student was talking about. This was the best approach as the data can be subjective. Some of the themes were expected but the process was not limited to these, and some unexpected themes were

found. Data analysis was undertaken by Johnathan Kermath, Data Officer within the Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching.

As with all qualitative data some bias from the SRUCSA officers must be acknowledged. As elected representatives of the SRUC students, this bias can be considered accurate.

What Students Told Us

We can't thank our students enough for the in-depth comments and the number of responses which has enabled us to produce this detailed report and give SRUC recommendations based on your feedback. Below are the key themes that arose from the analysis. The graph displays the both the love and change side by side per each theme.

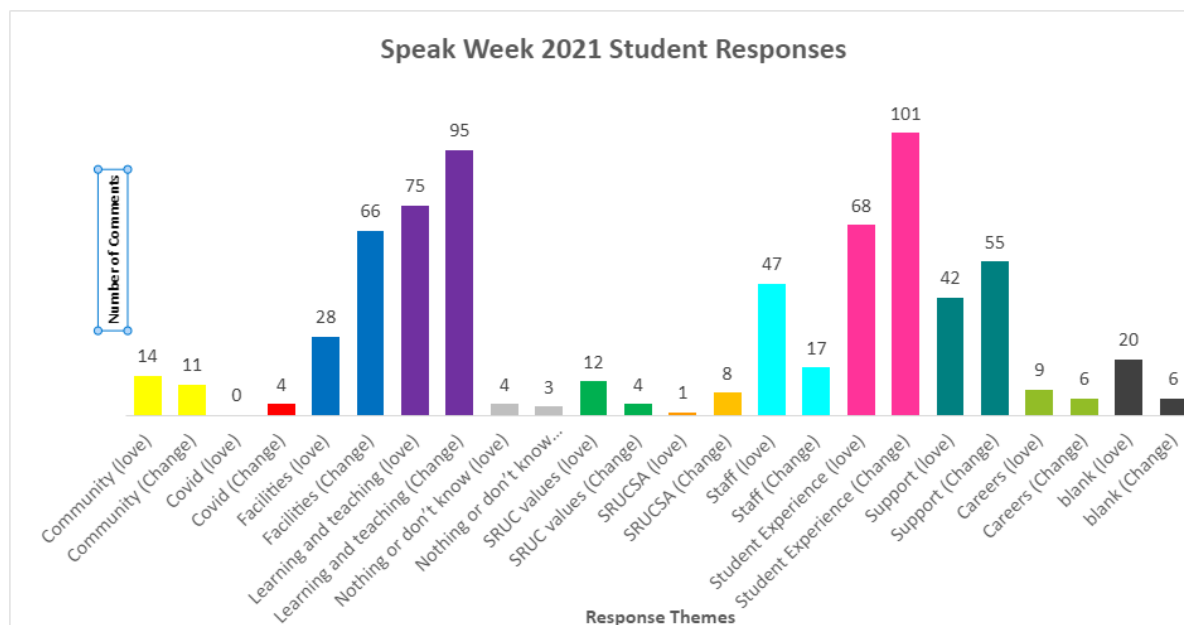


Figure 2 – Number of responses (love and change) per theme which emerged from the feedback

Table 1 – percentage of comments per theme

Theme	% of comments
Learning and Teaching	24.4
Student Experience	24.2
Support	13.9
Facilities	13.5
Staff	9.2
Community	3.6
SRUC Values	2.9
Careers	2.2

Most responses came from Barony and Edinburgh students (fig.3), and the main course area was Animal Care.

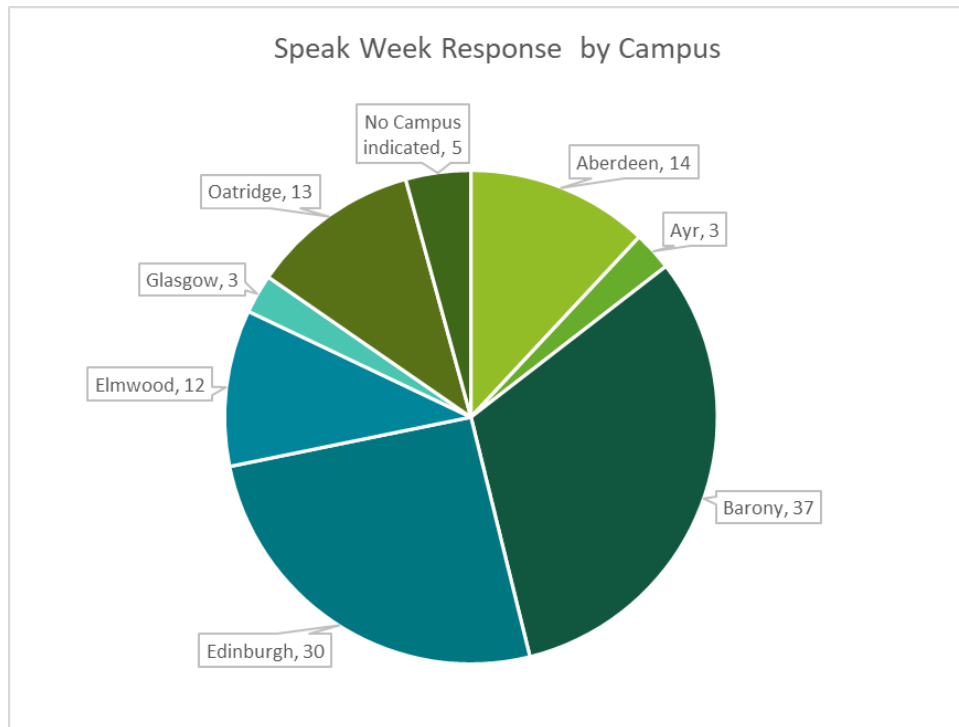



Figure 3 – Summary of campus participation

Careers (2.2%)



Although SRUC has recently launched a new Careers Service across the faculties, comments students made relating to careers were in the context of how their course is relevant to their desired career, or how relevancy could be increased.

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Love)
Student opportunity 67% of comments
Change (of career) 33% of comments
Subtheme (Change)
Student opportunity 100% of comments

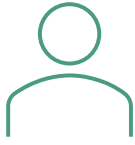
Positive comments relating to careers touched on how SRUC has offered courses which are relevant to the sectors our students will work in:

	“I want to work with animals and having a college to offer more relevant subjects have been excellent”
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SRUC has also helped some students in progressing towards their dream career:

	“It helped me to start my career change that changed my life completely!”
“it’s getting me to the future I want to achieve!”	

Some comments focused on increasing the opportunities available to students to improve their employability:





“I would want SRUC to lead in the organisation of more CPD events - not only in Agri and Food based fields, but in the veterinary sciences and animal welfare areas too”

“Opportunities for more work-based tickets and mandatory for the course pass this would stop the extortionate price of certificates needed to work”





Community (3.6%)

A lot of the comments regarding the community within SRUC were positive. The responses highlighted how class sizes are small and friendly, and that other students are helpful and welcoming. There was mention of the induction week and how tutors were good at making distance learners feel included in college life. It is important for the SRUC community to reach all students at all levels and type of study. Students feel included and welcomed by all who are around them which is a positive outcome.

	“They make you feel included and are part of some awesome research communities”
“Got to meet like-minded people in the other students”	

There were a couple of comments regarding change within the SRUC community.



	“I would also improve the social side of the university as it feels very individualised and not like an organisation where students or lecturers are brought together”
“I would try build better relationship with UWS so that SRUC's don't feel like an outsider”	

Covid (0.6%)

Interestingly, there were fewer comments specifically referring to or related to Covid than would be expected. Unsurprisingly, all these comments were in response to the “what would you change?” question.

Student Response per subtheme
Covid (Change)
Mandatory vaccinations of comments 25%
Lack of practical learning 25% of comments
Online learning facilities 25% of comments
Community 25% of comments

Lack of practical learning has made its way into a few of the categories mentioned, students feel they have missed out on a lot of practical sessions due to the restrictions and implications of Covid guidance. SRUC have implemented a hybrid learning model and we will ensure we feedback how important practical sessions are for students and recommend they are always taken into consideration when reviewing the guidance.

	<p>“I don’t know how things worked for practical work pre covid however we get 4 days of practical a quarter and for my group there was 1 full day and 3 half days. If this is the same as what pre covid it would be better to have more opportunity for practical work”</p>
<p>“I understand COVID-19 has changed the way that classes are run but I don’t necessarily feel like a part of SRUC when I’m on campus – I feel more like an SRUC student online at the moment to be honest. I feel like a reintroduction of societies (such as rural skills club) or other events to get involved with would be great”</p>	

Facilities (13.5%)



Facilities play a unique role in contributing to the quality of education provided here at SRUC. The emotional and physical health of students and staff depend on the quality of the physical location which can include establishing healthy and safe buildings essential.

Student responses per category showed that 28 students commented on what they love about the facilities and 66 students commented on what they would change about the facilities. The amount of student responses by percentage was 9% for what they love about the facilities and 18% of what they would change about the facilities, out of the overall number of students that took part for each question.


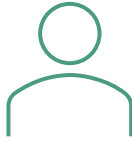
Student Response per subtheme
Facilities (Love)
Campus 50% of comments
Cleanliness 11% of comments
Learning/Teaching Resources 18% of comments
Café/Canteen 7% of comments
Student Entertainment 14% of comments

Student Response per subtheme
Facilities (Change)
Campus 12% of comments
Lack of clubs/ social events 6% of comments
Learning/Teaching Resources 30% of comments
Café/Canteen 12% of comments
Food 21% of comments
Accommodation 2% of comments
Student Wellbeing 11% of comments
Campus Relations 5% of comments

Some of the positive comments included specific areas of each campus that made SRUC an enjoyable place to study. The comments reflect how positively the upgrades have impacted students and their experience at SRUC.

	<p>"I enjoy meeting new people, the elmwood campus facilities are really good"</p>
<p>"The arcade upgrade at kings' buildings has made SRUC a much nicer place to have lunch or study in!"</p>	

There were some negative comments, most of them in relation to the prices of the food in the canteen. SRUCSA recommend that this is reviewed with Baxter Storey, who operate café facilities on most SRUC campuses.

	<p>"More water dispensers around the college grounds"</p>
<p>"Food is too expensive" "Add in more heating always cold"</p>	

Learning and Teaching (24.4%)

Learning and teaching was the theme most commented on by students, making up almost a quarter of all comments received. A variety of subthemes emerged relating to Learning and Teaching:

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (love)
Lecturers 33% of comments
Delivery 27% of comments
Content 37% of comments
Feedback 3% of comments



Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Change)
Lecturers 14% of comments
Delivery 36% of comments
Content 24% of comments
Feedback 9% of comments
Access 17% of comments

Lecturers



Comments around lecturers can be found in the Staff section, below.

Delivery


Most of those commented positively on the variety of courses available, their relevance and the high standards of teaching they receive:

	“The range of courses available is excellent, some of the modules are very well run”
“The practical element of my course is taught to a high standard, and we are always encouraged to give everything a try”	

Students really value the practical learning they receive on their course. Some students believe this should be increased and some comments were specifically related to additional training certificates that students can pay to complete.

	<p>“Lack of practical hands-on lessons for a practical subject, I feel that even if I pass these subjects, I still won't be able to be employed to do the work.”</p>
<p>“It would be better to have more opportunity for practical work”</p>	

Comments regarding online learning varied – some students would like to see this rolled out across all courses, some enjoy the flexibility and the benefits of recording in-person sessions. Others want it removed altogether:




	<p>“I’m currently doing online learning and finding it a really positive experience”</p>
<p>“the flexibility to be online or on campus”</p>	
	<p>“I would have more in person classes but still recorded”</p>
<p>“Online learning for practical courses would be abolished”</p>	

Communication is another important aspect of course delivery and there is a feeling from students



that this area needs a lot of improvement. These comments can be found below under the Staff section.

Content

Course content is an important aspect of the learning and teaching students receive.

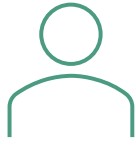
	"There is a mixture of theory and practical based learning"
"Lectures are up to date in their content"	
	"Classes are varied and filled with great information"

More opportunities to expand on their learning:

	"Bring electives back! I was extremely disappointed SRUC decided to make the decision to cancel our electives"
"More recommended books for the classes"	

Feedback

Some students would like to see feedback improved. This included both the quality and timeliness of feedback:



“I would try to encourage lecturers to give better feedback not just e.g., could be better - expand. If, for example, this was the feedback it’s likely the student thought it was good or they wouldn't have submitted it.”

“Quicker turn around for feedback”




SRUCSA (1.3%)



There were very few comments submitted which related to SRUCSA. Most of these were negatives to be improved upon and surrounded the approachability of SRUCSA and the lack of social opportunities available to students.

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Love)
Approachable 100% of comments
Subtheme (Change)
Approachable 100% of comments
Lack of clubs/ social events 88% of comments

One student commented on the helpfulness of SRUCSA representatives, which indicates that they have had positive interactions with the team:

	“student support and SRUCSA reps and leaders are approachable and helpful.”
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Students would like to see social opportunities improved. This could be to enhance the community feel at SRUC, meet other students and to undertake activities that don’t revolve around studying:

	“I would also improve the social side of the university as it feels very individualised and not like an organisation where students or lecturers are brought together”
“More things for student leisure time etc there really is nothing at the Aberdeen Campus, no sports clubs or hobby clubs anything with is really really poor compared to Aberdeen Uni and RGU”	

The Aberdeen campus differs to the Edinburgh and Ayr campuses, where partnerships have been made with neighbouring institutions (University of Edinburgh and University of West of Scotland) to permit SRUC students to access gym facilities. Recently, the SRUCSA team met with the UWS

Student President who has invited SRUC students to get involved in any of their activities – clubs/societies and events. It would be advantageous for further relationships to be established. SRUCSA struggles to maintain clubs and societies, so this may be an opportunity to fill a gap.

The visibility and approachableness of SRUCSA was also touched upon:

<p>“I would make the student association more approachable and more to get involved with. It is virtually non-existent & the student clubs and societies are not there really”</p>	
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This is clearly an area of work for SRUCSA to act upon. Student Associations can experience difficulty in reaching and being relevant to all student groups. Restricted numbers of students on campus and the SRUCSA team working hybridly (with most time being spent in the home office) has likely exacerbated this. The new SRUCSA structure of 3 Co-Presidents means that the officers can't be available at their given campuses all the time (for obvious reasons, they can't be in more than one place at once!) – this may also be a factor. SRUCSA must find ways to improve online approachability and foster “presence” when officers are not on campus.

SRUC Values (2.3%)

The comments in this theme largely reflect the culture of SRUC and the expertise that lecturing staff display. Most of the comments were positive, some of the negative comments were again around communication and the lack of in person teaching.

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Love)
Inclusion 42% of comments
Encouragement 8% of comments
Welcoming 25% of comments
Approach to Education 8% of comments
Supportive 17% of comments

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Change)
Inclusion 25% of comments
Environmental awareness 50% of comments
Approach to education 25% of comments

	<p>“Supportive, understanding environment with knowledgeable tutors”</p>
<p>“Lecturers and their vast knowledge and friendly attitude especially, SRUC embraces diversity and cares for its students, does not judge and treat every person as an individual being, offers opportunities and help develop for better future”</p>	

Communication has been mentioned in a few sections and it is something we will include in the recommendations. There were also comments on promoting sustainability and how adapting student ideas would enable them to contribute and promote SRUC's values.

	<p>“Better communication about timetabling, course outcomes and deadlines”</p>
<p>“I would create competitions with prizes, such as proposing sustainable ideas, etc. I would stress the organisations commitments to sustainability and zero waste both on campus and online, with things like signs that remind people to use their reusable coffee cup and cutlery or to recycle more. I would make the care more sustainable with compostable cutlery and vegan and healthier options”</p>	

We have also included other comments from the responses we have gathered as we feel they reflect excellent examples of the power of education here at SRUC and how they adopt a feeling of community and culture.

‘It is an inclusive and friendly place with staff always on hand to help’
‘I would change it from a college into a university’

‘The practical element of my course is taught to a high standard, and we are always encouraged to give everything a try’

‘Our tutors work very hard to deliver all the info we require to succeed.’

‘Lecturers and their vast knowledge and friendly attitude especially, SRUC embraces diversity and cares for its students, does not judge and treat every person as an individual being’

Staff (9.2%)

Below is a subcategory breakdown of the individual areas that students responded to on each question.





Student Response per subtheme
Staff (Love)
Helpful/ Supportive 64% of comments
Inclusive 9% of comments
Enthusiastic 15% of comments
Knowledgeable 13% of comments

Student Response per subtheme
Staff (Change)
Communication 47% of comments
Delivery 18% of comments
Proficiency 12% of comments
Support 24% of comments



There were a lot of positive comments about staff which largely reflected their dedication to providing a positive learning experience for students. There were references to how welcoming the staff were and how great the support was from all staff. Below are some of the main positive words used to describe the lecturing staff.



There was a particular mention of staff and their vast knowledge relating to their course subject area and this reflects how dedicated staff are in their expertise. Overall, students who mentioned staff spoke of their welcoming attitude, supportiveness, dedication, and the ability to go do more than is required of them.

	<p>“The Lecturers are excellent and go above and beyond for students”</p>
<p>“All the staff are so approachable, supportive and passionate”</p>	
	<p>“Peer support team have been an absolute godsend. they have provided me with support from start to finish”</p>
<p>“Student support services have been excellent and accessing the services was made much easier by having them attend in-person on Induction Day”</p>	

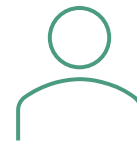
Very few negative comments about staff were received. There were a few comments around communication, some felt they had received good communication while others felt strongly about communication being unsatisfactory. This includes general communication received by students from teaching staff and SRUC, and that relating to key elements of the course – coursework deadlines, assessments, timetables, and changes to the course:

	<p>“There should be clear communication from lecturers, year leaders & college in general”</p>
<p>“Communication has sometimes been poor and could be standardised”</p>	



“I would have a big drive on doing two of the basics very well. Firstly, the quality of teaching, ensuring that lecturers plan their sessions and work on developing the very best teaching skills. Secondly ensuring communication is always timely and efficient including getting results, paying for the course etc.”

“Communication. We can be told different information from different sources, a lack of cohesive communication. Additionally, some of our assessments have different deadline dates on the handouts/assessment submission form/lecture PowerPoints versus Moodle.”



“I was extremely disappointed SRUC decided to make the decision to cancel our electives. We had no warning, and it was not discussed with the students. Communication between staff and students is appalling, that desperately needs to be improved”

Student Experience (24.2%)

Student experience was the second most commented on area. There were many subthemes identified, most of which overlap with areas already covered elsewhere in the report:

Student Response per subtheme
Subthemes (Love)
Clubs/Social events 10% of comments
Facilities 18% of comments
Student wellbeing 12% of comments
Canteen/Food 1% of comments
Campus time 3% of comments
Learning Resources 31% of comments
Information 9% of comments
Student opportunity 12% of comments
Shared values 4% of comments

Student Response per subtheme
Subthemes (Change)
Clubs/Social events 9% of comments
Facilities 8% of comments
Student wellbeing 6% of comments
Canteen/Food 21% of comments
Campus time 12% of comments
Learning Resources 19% of comments
Information 15% of comments
Student Opportunity 11% of comments



Support (13.9%)


Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Love)
Staff Support 81% of comments
Accessibility 2% of comments
Academic Support 5% of comments
Financial support 2% of comments
Student support 10% of comments

Student Response per subtheme
Subtheme (Change)
Staff Support 36% of comments
Accessibility 4% of comments
Academic Support 44% of comments
Financial Support 16% of comments

Academic Support



The majority of positive comments relating to support within SRUC referred to how helpful and encouraging SRUC staff and support teams are. This was captured in the Staff section above. There were some comments about students requiring more support and contact time with staff:

	<p>“Allow for more time with the distance learners to speak with the college and lecturers”</p>
<p>“I would encourage the year tutor to have a 1 on 1 meeting with the students at least once per term”</p>	

	<p>“Some lectures don't provide feedback and support”</p>
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Many of the positive comments surrounding support refer to teaching teams, not explicitly the dedicated student support teams. Of course, the amount of this type of support provided to students will depend on the lecturing teams time and ability to offer this on top of their other responsibilities.



Mental health was a strong theme that emerged from the previous Speak Week. This was not reflected in this year's data, however, there were some comments surrounding the workload and pressure on student's experience:

	<p>“I would allow more time for assignments as some students have to travel and work. Many students on my course do not get support they need when they ask for help, not all lecturers give extra time when students have additional needs, some students have given up asking”</p>
<p>“The workload put in student as it is detrimentally effecting student morale. Academic year start earlier as it feels really crammed in and stressful”</p>	


Financial Support

Although a small number of students commented on the positive side to receiving funding, most comments surrounding financial support were in response to the “change” question. Comments mostly surrounded the expense of food in the cafes (covered above), but also touched upon how expensive it is to travel to campus and the expense to undertake additional certificates:

	<p>“The food at the barony is quite expensive, and for those who don't have an income it makes the week at the barony quite expensive, considering fuel etc.”</p>
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<p>“Transport to and from to college has been a major headache and a huge expense”</p>	
	<p>“The extortionate price of certificates needed to work...which most at a young age cannot afford”</p>

The provision of laptops was also commented on as a great help to students. Providing students devices removes financial pressures to purchase a device and time/money required to access devices on-campus:

	<p>“The laptop loans for last year and this I really wouldn’t have been able to do the work without it or I’d have to spend a fortune driving to the campus library every day”</p>
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Accessibility

Understanding the needs of students better was a theme that emerged:

	<p>“More accessible to students with disabilities”</p>
<p>“Student support. some students may feel uncomfortable with lecturers continuously asking what they can do to help and not just using common sense”</p>	

Recommendations

SRUCSA Will...

1. Improve clubs and societies.
Students told us that they would like to see more clubs and societies on offer from SRUCSA. SRUCSA has an intern currently working on projects relating to clubs and societies. SRUCSA will aim to incorporate the findings of this project into strategic planning which is currently underway. SRUCSA will liaise with SRUC departments and staff to help students know what opportunities are available.
2. Enhance relationships with other students' associations to establish connections between students.
Students told us that they would like to have more opportunities to socialise and attend clubs/societies/leisure activities.
Partnering with other students' associations and establishing where SRUC students can get involved will enhance social opportunities for our students.
3. Find ways to be more approachable.
Students told us that SRUCSA should be more approachable.
SRUCSA officers will commit 20% of their working time to direct student engagement activities like liaising with Class Reps, hosting Student Panels and speaking to individual students. This will be incorporated into our strategic plan.
SRUCSA will investigate ways to foster presence and community feel whilst working in a hybrid setting. This is also being actively investigated by a SRUCSA intern.
4. Once the SRUCSA interns have completed their projects SRUCSA will follow up on all recommendation and actions.

SRUC Should...

1. Improve communication at course and organisational level.
Students told us that communication about courses can be poor (including electives), and experiences vary between courses, campuses, and subject areas.
We recommend SRUC should develop minimum standards for course information (e.g., when timetables should be supplied (as raised by SRUCSA this year), and assessment schedules), and look at courses where communication is going well and develop best practice guidelines to support other courses to achieve the same.
2. Look into improving employability opportunities.
Students told us they need more work experience and more practical skills and knowledge. SRUC has a huge potential to offer students graduate schemes and internships within SAC consulting, veterinary services, and within departments of the institution. It is recommended that SRUC investigate internal graduate and intern opportunities, and update students regularly of opportunities within SRUC.
3. Improve social and leisure opportunities for students.
Students told us they would like more opportunities to socialise with other students and have more opportunities within the residences at each campus.
SRUC should find ways to improve residence social activities for students and ensure all

students have access to a gym. We recommend that SRUC consider appointing or hiring a staff member specifically dedicated to this area to ensure there are changes made and students to get those opportunities, especially considering the changes in the student experience due to COVID.

4. Try where possible to ensure students get the opportunity to do practical sessions when implementing guidance and/or restrictions.
Students told us how much they really value the hands-on, practical learning they receive at SRUC. Continue communications about on campus activity, ensure students on practical courses complete necessary in person activity so they achieve qualification. achieve their qualifications and feel competent in their skills.
5. Liaise with Baxter Story to create affordable student prices.
Students told us that prices in campus cafes were too expensive and, in some cases, added to financial pressures. Introducing a regular dialogue between the catering provider, SRUC and students would allow students to understand pricing and for meals to be set to student's expectation.
6. Improve the support academic staff provide students.
Students told us that they required greater support from their lecturing teams. Staff training and best practice sharing should be used to enhance the capability of lecturing staff in providing support to their students.
7. Update on the progress of previous recommendations from previous Speak Week that we are unaware of the progress on.
We have included in this report a table with the previously agreed steps SRUC and SRUCSA would take from the previous Speak Week reports. We have completed this to our knowledge but would like SRUC to provide updates on projects so we can keep students informed.

Appendix 1 - Speak Week 20/21 Update

Note – SRUCSA’s understanding of progress, SRUC may be able to provide further information on progress

SRUCSA will...	Progress/Comments (DATE)
<p>Prioritise mental health, we will take steps to understand the experiences of our members who live with mental illness. We will push SRUC to offer better support for those students as well as continuing to support the mental wellbeing of all.</p>	<p>SRUCSA is co-leading on the Student Mental Health Strategy. This will allow us to input into the strategy.</p>
<p>Monitor learner experiences of assessment and feedback through Student Panels and report any courses/modules that are having issues to the appropriate SRUC department.</p>	<p>Student Panels continue to be delivered online via Teams, cross faculty. Issues raised in panels and sent directly to SRUCSA are recorded and shared with the relevant staff team.</p>
<p>Train our class reps to be experts in learning and give them the skills needed to be excellent representatives of their class. We will undertake a review of our class rep system and make changes where our reps tell us we should.</p>	<p>As part of a wider Student voice project SRUCSA initiate a class rep review. Conducting interviews with staff in SRUC and at other institutions. The project will continue in the new year</p>

SRUC should...	SRUC will	SRUCSA will	Progress/Comments (December 2021)
<p>Commit to a review of our support for students who live with mental illness. This is in addition to supporting the mental wellbeing of all students. This could be achieved by:</p> <p>1.1. Working with SRUCSA and the student body on a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) project on the topic of students living with mental illness & mental health conditions.</p> <p>1.2. Reviewing the Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) with SRUCSA to ensure there is specific inclusion of mental illness & mental health conditions, and high-level monitoring of the Agreement</p>	<p>Form a cross-institutional working group, working in partnership with SRUCSA, be set up to co-design an effective and robust strategy and implementation plan.</p>	<p>Participate in a cross institutional working group. Officers will lead on and work in partnership with SRUC on delivery of the group's actions.</p>	<p>SRUCSA is co-leading on the Student Mental Health Strategy. This will allow us to input into the strategy.</p>
<p>Share best practice in teaching widely both within teams and across the College.</p>	<p>Add student visibility to their sharing best practice activities. Meet with programme teams in Spring 2021, for dedicated learning and teaching focused conversations.</p>	<p>Attend and take part in best practice activities. Strive to bring students into these activities wherever possible and will take part in sharing information about the outcomes of these activities with students.</p>	<p>SRUCSA - SRUCSA hosts annual awards which recognises staff and students who go above and beyond each year. Unfortunately, publication of this was not undertaken in the 2021 awards, however, for the first year staff/students were able to read the comments written about them in their nomination.</p> <p>Externally, SRUC lecturer, Cath Seeds, was invited to take part in an</p>

			online event looking at Digital Student Communities (part of the Enhancement Themes) via SRUCSA's involvement in the steering group. Cath shared details of Blethery Bothy and virtual Alpaca Sessions.
Continue to provide support and training that is accessible to all staff to help raise the standard of delivery across SRUC. This includes both access to training materials and protected time, allowing staff to engage fully.	Run a Summer development Plan for staff. Continue to fund staff to undertake qualifications.	Take part in the delivery of staff development training relating directly to engaging students in their learning.	SRUCSA - not undertaken
Investigate the experiences of learners on 100% online courses during the pandemic.	Investigate this through Student Liaison Group minutes, Student Panel minutes, End-of-Module Questionnaires and other existing mechanisms. If needed work with SRUCSA to investigate further.	Meet with the students on 100% online course to understand their experiences.	SRUCSA – Not undertaken. More recently, a distance learning student has been in touch about setting up a distance learning rep network which we aim to action in new year 2022.
Improve the learner voice in curriculum design and review. This includes engaging with students throughout the year to gain feedback on content and discuss ideas or proposed changes with them. This can be achieved through structured discussions at Student Liaison Groups (SLGs), informal in-class discussions, and through student representation on Boards of Studies.	Undertake work through the student voice project. A significant part of this will improve Student Liaison Group Meetings.	Take part in the student voice project and lead on direct improvements to SRUCSA and the Class rep system. Continue discussions with the Class Reps and wider student body to ensure they are kept involved in the projects.	SRUCSA – We are currently writing a new strategic plan for SRUCSA that will work to build it into the Students Association SRUC student's need. We had workshops in December and will begin writing up in January to share with students.

Review the use of the term 'blended learning' over the rest of the academic year	It will be made clear to students when a course is using an online model with minimal in person content and when learning will be undertaken in a blended method with some learning carried out online and some in person.	Speak to students about their expectations of a course that is advertised as 'blended learning'.	SRUCSA – SRUCSA co-presidents co-chair Student Liaison Committee meetings with SRUC Board member. Discussions at both the SLC's held at end of 20/21 AY and Nov/Dec 21 focused on the student experience of blended learning.
Provide an update to SRUCSA on the actions taken from Speak Week Covid-19 Edition recommendations	Completed	Continue to monitor the ongoing work listed in Covid – 19 Speak Week Report	

Appendix 2 – COVID Speak Week 2020 Update

Covid Speak Week Special Edition 2020			
Recommendation	Action (July 2020)	Progress (March 2021)	Further progress (December 2021)
Help not Hinder	We commit to look at the policy to explore how and if it can be revised to be fit for purpose in 2020/21. This would be an additional policy in operation only during the pandemic. The usual extenuating circumstances policy should continue to be the main reference point in non-pandemic related circumstances.	The HnH policy cannot be implemented as in 2020/21 owing to its reliance on non-pandemic data. We have implemented a range of measures this year to combat the impact of Covid including changing learning, teaching and assessment practices, updating the mitigating circumstances policy to include shielding and unexpected caring requirements, and adapting progression rules. Further potential mitigations are being explored in collaboration with SRUCSA. Our focus is on balancing evidence, proportionality, compassion and objectivity.	Complete
Communications	The Academic Division are working with our Marketing and Communications team to develop a protocol for and clear guidance about communication. Early in the pandemic a weekly email went out to students. Further updates have been going out from senior management to students.	Communication has been increased since January 2020 due to further lockdown measures, with a re-introduction of the weekly email. Regular check ins with faculty leadership teams enable follow up on student cases. In situations where Covid-19 cases have been reported, the relevant information has been passed to the relevant Co-President.	Regular emails have been going out. SRUSCA have been able to edit and contribute to these emails. We have not seen development of a communications protocol. We have been kept up to date with any Covid cases on campuses.
Check ins	Our Faculty Teams are working on a Contact and Non-Engagement code of practice. It was clear that some teams did this really well, and this code will ensure a SRUC-wide approach to this.	We have adapted attendance monitoring to encompass engagement rather than only attendance. This means that teaching colleagues can see who is joining live sessions, and who is accessing materials outwith these. Non-attendance / engagement is followed up appropriately to ensure students are okay.	We don't know.

Online Platforms	A Use of Teaching Platforms guide is being produced which will highlight which platforms are best used for which activities, aiming for consistency in use.	In addition to the Use of Teaching Platforms guide, Kaltura has now been chosen as the main platform for teaching activities. BigBlueButton, which was introduced as an emergency platform while a more detailed procurement exercise took place, will no longer be used from June. Programme teams still using BBB have been offered bespoke staff development to move to Kaltura.	Kaltura is being used widely now. Some students have mentioned staff struggling with in person recording of lectures.
Digital Assistance	A form in which students identify hardware / connectivity needs has been successfully piloted with our Apprentices and will be sent out to all students as part of the enrolment / induction process. We have invested in laptops for loan purposes to help plug gaps.	The form was rolled out in induction and enrolment, with identified student needs met. Lapsafes were also launched on campus in November 2020. We continue to receive requests for laptops / dongles on a weekly basis, and respond accordingly, sending out either laptops and/or dongles as required.	SRUCSA had asked about funding for students who need some equipment (not a full laptop, e.g. microphone, headset etc), we need to ask what the progress is on this.
Lecture recording	Two classroom capture companies are being reviewed: Panopto and Kaltura. Once reviewed, we will invest in classroom recording software to enable recording of in-person classes once everyone returns to campus.	Recording of virtual classrooms is more common, through use of Kaltura. The virtual learning guidance notes that: "By default, virtual classes should be recorded. Exceptions might include for legal / ethical / privacy reasons and/or because the teaching approaches are not suitable for recording, such as those with a high degree of interactivity. In these instances, it might be more appropriate to pause the parts of the virtual class not to be recorded." A working group is in place to equip on-campus classrooms with recording facilities (again using Kaltura), and to develop appropriate policies and development activities, to enable this to continue once back on campus.	