



Highlands and Islands Students' Association

UHI Shetland End of Year Report 2024/25

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Depute President's Foreword

This academic year marks the completion of my 1st term as the Shetland Depute President. As with last year it has been another challenging and busy year. With the start of the planning for the future campus project, ensuring students know that the Lerwick campus isn't going to be closed the following day but will close in the near future, the start of the UHI Transformation project, various HISA events and endless number of committee and catch-up meetings with staff and students each week has been very busy. However, since being in post as the officer, I have cared very much for the future of the collage and is the reason why in the HISA elections 2025 I decided to re-run for the Shetland Depute President role and would like to thank all the voters who voted for me this year and to also achieve 100% of the vote! Despite being busy I have been able to ensure I complete my studies and also learnt how to prioritise and manage my time effectively.

This year I was able to plan the annual HISA Freshers events in which I decided to hold a Freshers fair on the Lerwick campus with JK Mainland and Mr Stripey in attendance due to the canteen short-staffed and a lack of food on campus for students in which everyone on campus loved the idea of having an ice cream truck on campus! In which I am looking forward to hopefully re-invite Mr Stripey and build on the success from the 2024 freshers to the 2025 events.

Other events that I am looking to redo is hiding Vikings around Lerwick, Scalloway and Mareel campus and hopefully look to do an RNLI event and promote the awareness of sea safety.

I look forward to 25/26 and to hopefully improve the student experience and continue to sit on the various committees and Board meetings.

Harley Green

Operational Staffing Updates

Senior Leadership Team

This year has seen a return to stability within HISA's senior leadership team. Mark Stanley, Communications and Commercial Development Senior Manager resigned in November 2024. To streamline the organisation further and reduce salary costs, Dr. Emma Miller moved from Community and Engagement Senior Manager to Director of Communications and Community Engagement. This has created one tier of leadership under Rachel Burn CEO, with Emma joining Wendy Day, Director of Operations and Simon Varwell, Director of Student Engagement and Representation.

Local Coordinator – Islands

Following Francesca Meneghetti's resignation as Local Coordinator for Shetland and Orkney as she left to pursue her Masters at Cambridge, a full-time replacement was successfully recruited in December 2024. This member of staff left shortly after elections in March 2025 after deciding the role was not for them. A decision has been made not to recruit a full-time replacement. Recruitment will commence in the coming weeks for a part-time student intern for Orkney and a part-time student intern for Shetland. It is envisaged that this post will provide in-person support for student voice representation work and local activities and events, in conjunction with the local officers and managed and supported by the Development Manager.

Student Representation

Elections

Harley Green was duly elected in the Spring elections and will continue in his officer post until 31st May 2026.

Holly Pearce, current Inverness Depute President and Xander McDade, current Perth President, were successfully elected as Vice President Education and President respectively for AY 2025/26.

A full elections report will be provided by Insight and Democracy Coordinator Paul Stalker and Director of Student Engagement and Representation Simon Varwell.

Board, Committees and SMG

Harley has an impeccable record of attendance for all UHI Shetland Board, committees and SMG meetings, offering student representation at governance level throughout the year.

Despite compelling conversations with three different students over the space of the academic year, no students were able to take on the commitment of student director.

Student Voice Representatives

This year saw a welcome increase in SVR numbers, with students from across the curriculum of HE and FE stepping up to represent their classes. Meeting attendance remained low, as did training numbers. These areas will be prioritised for improvement in 2025/26.

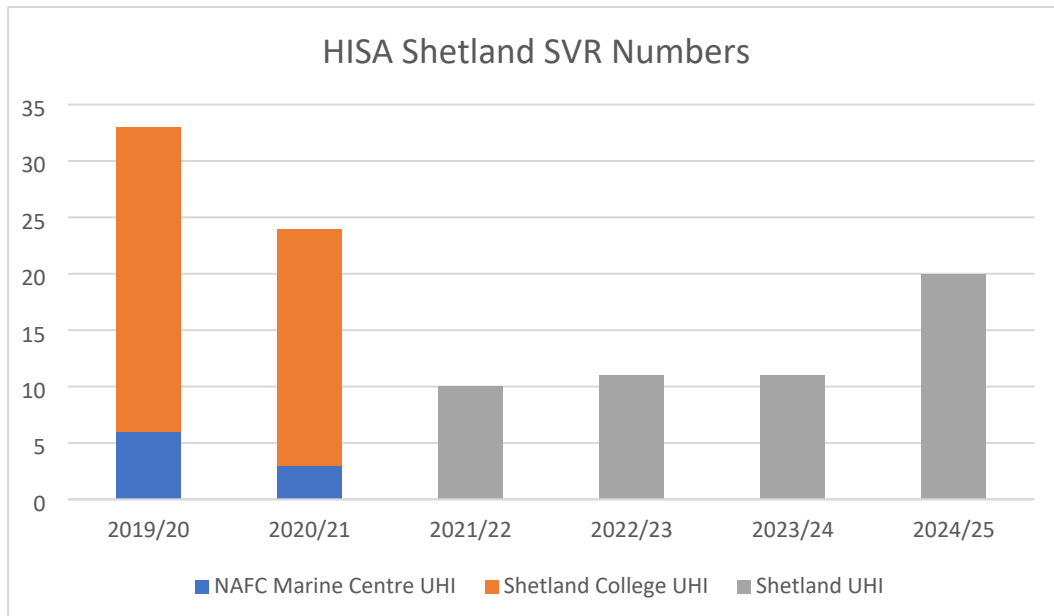


Fig. 1 HISA Shetland SVR Figures

Student Engagement Activities and Events

Freshers Week

Freshers' events were focussed on mainly campus-based activities. A local business fair welcomed students to the hustle and bustle of busy campus life at Lerwick, with Scalloway and Mareel based students permitted and supported to travel to Lerwick campus to participate. A variety of local businesses and organisations, from RNLI and NHS to a local art supplies store and Boots, came laden with freebies and student discount rates to showcase the local benefits available through their businesses. Around 80 to 100 students came through the fair over the course of the day, and the inclusion of a burger van and Mr Stripey the local ice cream van proved a hit with staff and students alike.



Fig. 2 Freshers Fair

A tour of Mareel, home of UHI Shetland Film and Media students, and the islands premiere music venue, complete with behind-the-scenes access to all the technology used to provide immersive experiences to music and film events was offered free of charge to all students. This included time for leisurely tea and cake, however, due to extreme weather conditions this event was unfortunately cancelled.

A bingo night at the Lerwick Boating Club was poorly attended with only a few students in attendance, however, those present had good fun and walked away with their choice of prizes. Extreme weather conditions more than likely impacted the event.

Winter Wellbeing Sessions

Over 40 students at Lerwick campus, and 20 students at Scalloway campus, were treated to luxury hot chocolate and pastries and the opportunity to sit and chat with fellow students, HISA local teams, and UHI Shetland student support team while making some Christmas crafts to decorate the local campuses. These were excellent examples of partnership working between HISA and the student support team with students engaging well with the activities.



Fig. 3 Winter Wellbeing Sessions

Christmas Fair

To enable students to do some last-minute Christmas shopping during their busy schedules, HISA invited members of the Shetland Craft Association to set up a Christmas Craft Fair at Lerwick Campus. Our own UHI Shetland Art students had their own stall selling handmade crafts and prints to raise money for a trip associated

with their course, so we were delighted to be able to have such a beneficial impact on this group of students. Around 50 students participated throughout the day.

Student Night at Mareel

HISA are delighted to be able to continue to support UHI Shetland Film, Music and Media students by providing transport from their learning base at Mareel, to Lerwick campus. These students perform a live gig in Briggistanes, bringing a fun and lively atmosphere to the lunch period for the 50+ students on campus, and benefitting the student performers by enabling them to have a practice performance before their community student showcase event.

Student 121 Open Surgeries

Being visibly available to support students has been front and centre of Shetland Depute President Harley Green's objectives and Harley has held weekly officer surgeries across all UHI Shetland campuses, and also online to ensure all students, no matter how they study, are felt to be included and seen as important as any other group or campus. Over the course of semester one Harley has given 1 on 1, focussed time to students to come forward with any issues relating to their student experience and offer accountability for his own position. Due to constraints on Harley's hours and the additional workload of the Future Campus, these meetings could not be held during semester 2.

One Campus Briefings

HISA officers and staff ensured there was always a HISA presence at all one campus briefings held by UHI Shetland to brief students on the proposed closure of one of the campuses.

Board Accountability Session

HISA Shetland facilitated a meeting between UHI Shetland Board of Management and students following last year's protest against the cuts to staff and courses. This meeting was very well attended with over 25 students participating.

Vikings Event

Similar to the Trows event last year, peerie Vikings were hidden across Lerwick and Scalloway campuses and Mareel over the Up Helly A' period. These Vikings could then be returned to HISA to be swapped for a gift voucher for a local business. 18 vouchers for local businesses including Venture Chiropractic, LHD and Boots were handed out to students to help with the cost-of-living crisis and promote local businesses who offer student discounts.

Feel Fab February

Throughout February, HISA created events aimed at improving and highlighting the importance of mental health and wellbeing of UHI students. Events took place at

every AP including online yoga open to all students across the partnership. Locally, we mirrored the Winter Wellbeing sessions as these proved popular with students.

Student Voice Rep led initiatives

One of our student reps, Marie Kuntz, led on some wellbeing events including hiding easter eggs with motivational messages across Lerwick and Scalloway campus and Mareel. Marie and Harley also held some wellbeing drop-in sessions with mindful activities, helpful wellbeing tips and some self-care freebies including bath bombs, face masks and mini crochet and lego kits to reduce stress during exam and assessment periods.

Newsletter

Our HISA newsletter has continued to be well received and allows all UHI students to receive information relevant to both UHI-wide and local AP issues, activities and events.

Shetland Students Society

The Shetland Students Society was successfully created to allow any UHI Shetland student to create events and activities without the need for a specific club, as these clubs suffered from recruitment and retention and ultimately folded. There are 2 current offshoots of this – The Poetry Club and The Twisty Puzzle Appreciation Society.

Following feedback from a UHI staff member that students wished to play football and wear their own UHI strips, the Shetland Students Society successfully applied for funding of £500 toward the cost of hiring the 60:40 pitch and the purchase of UHI sporting strips. Unfortunately, no students have come forward to play football at this time and so the amount remains in the society's bank account.

Online Clubs, Societies and Networks

UHI Shetland Students have access to 5 online UHI-wide clubs and societies and 7 student networks for under represented groups.