



Introduction

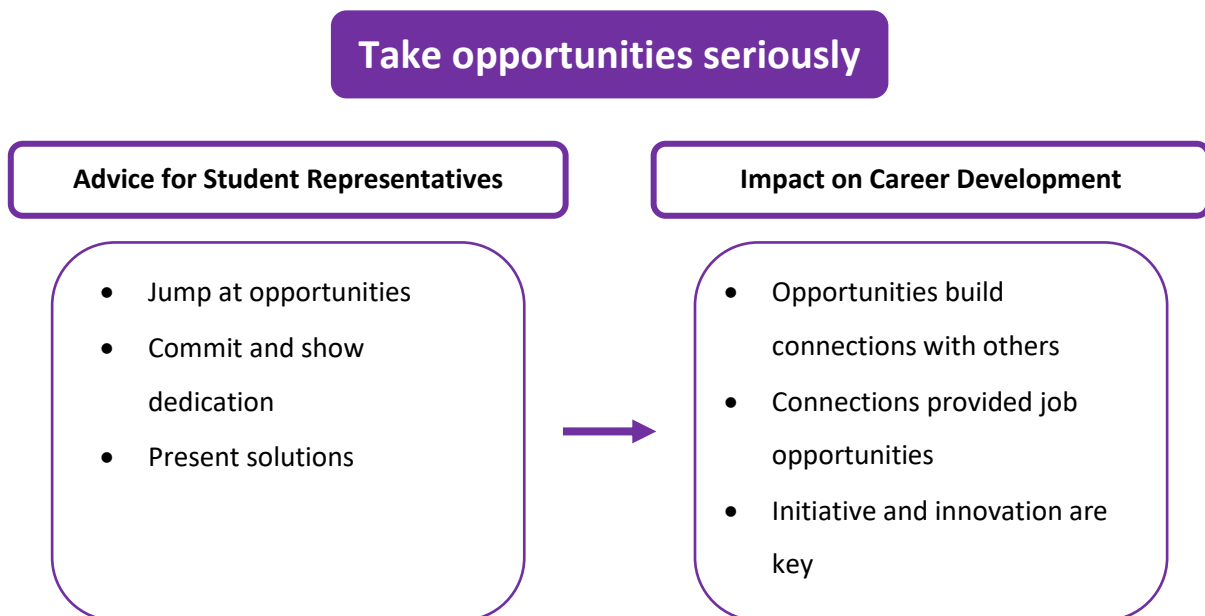
During a recent RGU:Union run conference for Robert Gordon University's student representatives, a session was delivered by one of RGU's staff members on the journey from a student and student representative to a career with Robert Gordon University. Through his presentation, he reflected on his experiences of his various roles, provided valuable advice for current student representatives and inspired reflection on what information would be useful for their successors to the roles.

Opportunities

The first piece of advice for student representatives was – ***take opportunities seriously***.

A key motivation for many representatives applying for the role is the opportunity to develop themselves and improve the student learning experience. Once a student representative, there are many other opportunities to show commitment and dedication to being part of the university community. Presenting solutions to issues raised through feedback from other students shows reflection on the problem and using initiative to think the problem through.

Taking opportunities seriously when they become available within the university community allows students to build connections with other students and staff. Our speaker highlighted that it was these connections that gave him opportunities when he came to start applying for work.



Resilience

The second lesson was one of resilience – a lesson that has become more important than ever over the last year.

The advice from this segment was to **be resilient to losses and failures**. You don't always win. When applying for roles within the university, not everyone gets the position they have applied for, but this teaches an important lesson for entering the job market. Remembering that rejection is not personal promotes resilience within students that is very beneficial for the future.

You don't always win. Be resilient to losses and failures

Advice for Student Representatives

- Continue to push forward – even if you didn't win
- Don't take rejection personally



Impact on Career Development

- Failure helps make you better
- Trust in yourself and stay strong against job losses

Communication

Lesson three asked student representatives to consider how they communicate with students and with University staff. The importance on trying to **be transparent and a good communicator** was highlighted through examples within Robert Gordon University where communication was vital in completing projects achieved in partnership with staff and students. Without clear communication, the projects wouldn't have progressed effectively and successfully.

Part of communication as a student representative is communicating the achievements and sharing success stories with others. Closing the feedback loop is essential for both university staff to student representative and student representative to student body.

Strong communication skills are important in the workplace and honing these skills through a role in the university community provides a record of achievements and examples for students to draw on during future interview processes.

Be transparent, communicate and celebrate success

Advice for Student Representatives

- Find ways to feedback on what you achieved
- Be transparent in your decisions



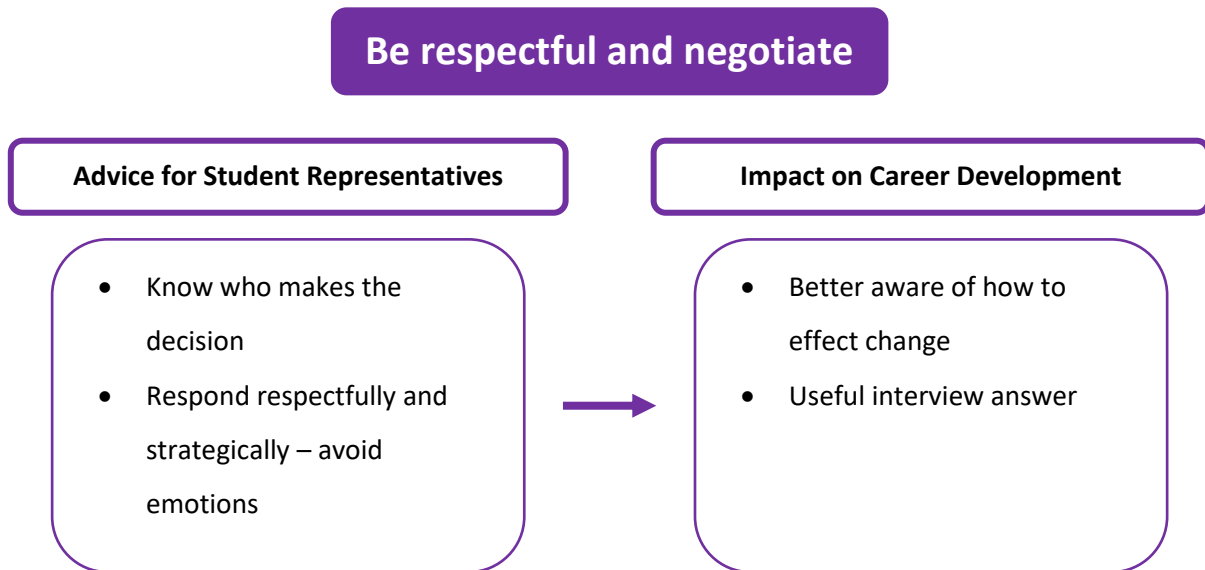
Impact on Career Development

- Enhance your communication skills
- Provide a record of achievements

Respect

The next piece of advice was to always **be respectful and negotiate with the right people**. Communicating respectfully with those around you and avoiding overly emotive language is beneficial to all – as student representatives and in employment.

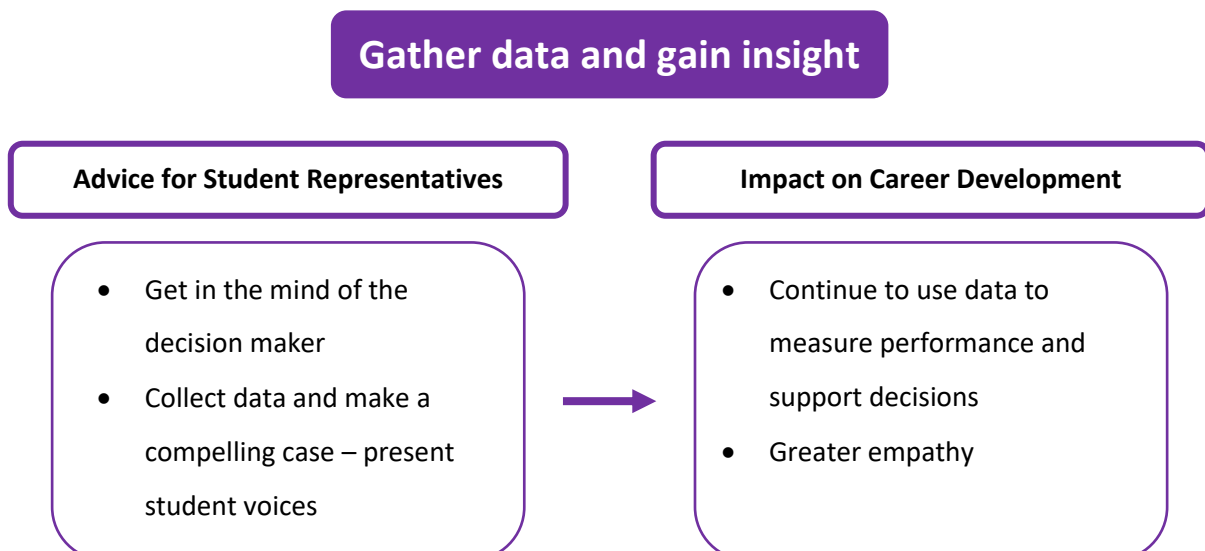
During the session it was highlighted that an effective way of creating change was to know who can make and implement decisions and starting a respectful dialogue with them. By demonstrating respectful communication in the university community, students are able to develop examples of problem solving and negotiation skills for responses to future interview questions.



Gather Data

The final lesson was – **gather the data**. By gathering information on your topic, you gain a greater insight into the subject. For student representatives this allows for a deeper understanding of the student voice and a stronger case for change to present with staff. Having insight into the benefits and limitations to a project generates empathy with others and their role in the process of completing a project.

Using data to support decisions is an advantageous skill to develop before entering the workplace, and members of the university community are in a key position to acquire these skills.



Conclusion

The session provided some very useful points for the student representatives to take away:

- Take opportunities seriously
- You don't always win. Be resilient to losses and failures
- Be transparent, communicate and celebrate success
- Be respectful and negotiate
- Gather data and gain insight

However, the session also provided an opportunity for reflection from all student representatives involved. It allowed them to consider what they wanted to pass on to the next group of representatives and what they would have benefited from hearing when they started their role.