

## Case Study: Class Rep 'Away Day'

Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI held their first joint Class Rep 'Away Day' with their class rep cohorts in 2016/17. Due to its success the 'Away Day' is now a firm fixture in the annual calendar with the second event held in late January 2018.

The Class Rep 'Away Day' is held over 2 days and links into the Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) Regional Council. As much as possible the 'Away Day' is planned to happen prior to HISA Regional Council so that students can prepare for the agenda of the Regional Council and discuss matters collectively as a group.

The idea of the Class Rep 'Away Day' had been initiated by students and come about through there not being enough time in meetings to discuss the big issues and set action plans. The 'Away Day' also provides a great opportunity for students to meet and get to know each other better.

At the first 'Away Day' in February 2017 students discussed and produced a Student Agreement and Action Plan where clear agreement was reached on future priorities in relation to the student voice. The agreement was then signed by the Principal. The aim of the second and all future 'Away Days' is for students to review the existing Student Agreement and Action Plan, and use it along with the planned work discussed to create a yearly Local Partnership Agreement between HISA and Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI.

One feature of the 'Away Day' is a Q&A session with senior management from the colleges, where students get the opportunity to ask anything they wish to know about. There is also time allocated where staff are not present to allow students to hold their own discussion and speak openly without staff involvement.

Experience suggests that the 'Away Days' are best held during the week within college hours and lunch is provided free of charge as an incentive for students to attend. The second 'Away Day' held in January 2018 also included a social event at the end of the first day as an optional extra to encourage further interaction between students from both colleges.

HISA provide support to the 'Away Day' which is important to the success of the event. The local HISA officers for the colleges lead the staff free session along with support from HISA

staff member(s) and regional officer(s) if available. Following the decision at the first 'Away Day' to combine the colleges' primary HISA representative officer positions, this session helps encourage reps to work together to improve the student experience at both colleges collectively. This also gives the opportunity for the HISA NAFC Officer and the HISA Shetland College Officer to feedback on the work they've been doing over the year and get class rep input into planning the next stages of their work.

At the second 'Away Day' students worked together to shape a plan for improving transport for students in Shetland, as well as developing plans to improve sustainability, raise mental health and liberation awareness and creating more recreational activity for students in Shetland.

Ciaran Boyd, HISA NAFC Officer commented: "I think the Class Rep 'Away Day' is beneficial for a few reasons: it is a really good platform to chat and share ideas with people from a diverse range of courses from art to engineering; class reps also need events like this to bring them into the fold and to feed into their HISA Officer on issues affecting them, which works both ways because I think that this is one of the best ways HISA can reach out further to students as well as gaining valuable information from these events".

For further information about the Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI Class Rep 'Away Day' contact:

Jacqui Clark, Shetland College UHI,  
Caroline Hepburn, NAFC Marine Centre UHI  
Helen Doyle, HISA

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