

# Speak Week Insight Report 2025

## Harper Adams Students' Union

Speak Week is an annual campaign run by the Students' Union to communicate survey results to students and gain additional insight into the responses. We also aim for greater stakeholder engagement by requesting feedback on the proposed student voice priorities which we feel have emerged from the results.

The week was comprised of a HASU General Meeting, an inaugural Student Experience Group meeting between the Department Reps and key university staff, presentation of the Student Voice Survey at the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, and the Student Voice Fair.

### **HASU General Meeting**

HASU's General Meeting was an important part of Speak Week as it allowed students to engage with their union and vote on important structural changes.

We explained our proposal for altering the Student Sabbatical roles in a way that we believe will improve the student experience.

Within the current structure, Harper students democratically elect eleven Part Time Officers (Student Executives), two Full Time Officers (the President and Vice President) and two Student Trustees, for a total of 13 Officers. We believe that Harper students would be better served with fewer Part Time Officers who are paid a bursary for their work.

We suggested the following: 2 Community Officers or Underrepresented Group Officers, and 1 Welfare and Wellbeing Officer.

At the General Meeting, we successfully passed the motion to adjust the Sabbatical structure. We also successfully passed a motion to lengthen the term of Student Trustee from one to two years.

Following the votes, we also presented the results of the Student Voice Survey, focusing on the three proposed Student Voice Priorities that emerged from the responses:

## HASU'S 2024/2025 Voice **Priorities** Based on Student Feedback

- 1** Hold the university accountable to their policy on minimising Wednesday afternoon academic commitments
- 2** Work with our security staff to improve student experiences
- 3** Lobby Student Services to do an inspection of mould growth in student accommodation

The students present at the General Meeting pledged their support to the proposed priorities.

### **Department Reps Attend the Student Experience Group**

This year, HASU appointed four students as Department Reps to be organisers and communicators of student feedback. Their role is to listen carefully to the Course Reps and encourage them as they gather feedback while bringing non-course specific feedback to the correct university department.

The Student Experience Group is a key component of this process. At these meetings, Department Reps relate Course Rep feedback to key members of Harper staff.

At our very first Student Experience Group during this year's Speak Week, our four Department Reps spoke to the Head of IT, the Director of Estates and Facilities, and the Director of Student Experience. They put forth student concerns and had a productive conversation on the possibilities for, and challenges of, improving the student experience at Harper.

The Department Reps are currently reviewing the minutes. They will create a report that communicates areas in which the university has agreed to support improvements for students. Our goal is to use this report to follow up with staff and effectively communicate progress with the rest of the student body.

### **Student Voice Survey Results at LTSEC**

Each year, the HASU team presents the key results of the Student Voice Survey at the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee meeting.

The committee membership includes both Pro Vice Chancellors and many additional Harper Adams staff. It is an important space for discussion of the student experience and areas for improvement.

Following each of the Student Voice Surveys, the committee values a summary of the results and a report on the union's priorities.

Six students were present at the meeting to share their unique experiences and loan student perspective to the discussion. The union's President, Daisy Douglas, and Vice President, Tiff Owen, were also present.

A lively debate was had on the wording of several questions, the use of professional analytics to the data, and suggestions for additional questions in future surveys.

### **Student Voice Fair**

Finally, Speak Week concluded with the Student Voice Fair in the foyer of the Bamford Library. The goal of the Fair was to engage with students face to face by meeting them in an easily accessible location. The library serves as an ideal location for this and we are indebted to Lisa Hough and her team for their hospitality.

Our aim was to make interactions short, to the point, and of direct interest and value to the students. We also wanted to allow students to question our progress, feedback on HASU's choices, and ask for accountability. It is, we believe, a crucial component in the relationship between students and their union. We want students to feel free to speak to us, to tell us what they need, what they'd like, and how they think we can achieve those aims.

At the event we had approximately 300 in-person student engagements.

Elements of the fair included,

- Ask us what we've done about...



HASU is working hard for students and the photo above allowed for conversation about our progress. In the past year we have...

- Introduced a QuidsIn band to make drinks more affordable in our venues. Prices were lowered to the following with a QuidsIn band:
  - Coors £2.80
  - Thatcher's Gold £2.50
  - Vodka £2.00

- Prioritised work with our security team.

Last academic year, following concerns from students, we hired a new security team. We are committed to working with this new team to improve the student experience.

We will begin this commitment with a training session in which we read aloud all security related student comments from the survey.

We believe this is important for transparency and for taking student comments seriously. We are committed to continuous improvement in student/security interactions and will keep students up to date on how we progress.

- Successfully lobbied for additional plug sockets.

The creation of necessary, additional plug sockets remains a priority for HASU because we know it remains a priority for students. We have pushed for additional sockets for the past three years and will continue lobbying the university to provide this necessary infrastructure.

Progress to date is the addition of sockets in locations easily accessible – including from the ceiling in Teaching Block, and along some back and side walls in other buildings.

Estates are aware that these additional sockets are not enough. They have committed to the next phase of the plan – to begin the expensive process of putting sockets in more difficult locations.

Due to financial realities, this work will be done in piecemeal.

For our part and on behalf of students, we will keep pushing for work to be done. We will also consult students regarding the best place to prioritise additional sockets.

- Worked alongside the university to implement a new parking policy.

We know that parking is a contentious issue among students. While there is technically enough parking for each student, we believe that there is room for improvement. The following has been achieved:

- A new parking policy to be implemented in March 2025, with a Parking Warden to ensure that vehicles are parked safely and fairly.
  - A University promise that parking will not cost students in 2024/2025, and that there is no current plan to implement paid parking.
  - A commitment from Estates and Facilities to repair the soil hall overflow parking which currently floods, limiting additional parking. Work to be completed in Summer 2025.
- Altered our Student Officer structure to allow for greater campus inclusion.

We have worked hard to alter our Student Officer structure to allow for paid Part Time Officers. As of next year, we will have two paid Community Officers focusing on underrepresented students. We look forward to working alongside these students while creating ways to improve the student experience for *everyone* at Harper.

- Worked with Timetabling and the University to improve timetabling concerns.

This year in the Student Voice Survey, students reported significant improvements in timetabling issues. HASU's commitment to inform the university of student timetabling difficulties, and our lobbying for improvement has seen results.

However, according to survey results, there is regular scheduling of lectures and tutorials during Wednesday afternoons. We will dive deeper into an explanation for this. We have also made it a priority to insist that Harper keep to its own policy that Wednesday afternoons are free of academics for all students.

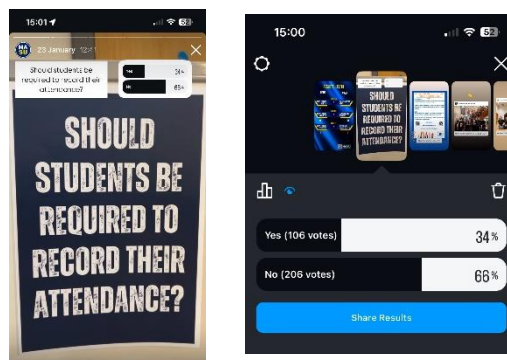
The fair also included,



- A Ball Pit Controversy

We asked students to weigh in on a question that would spark conversation. The question was, “Should students be required to record their attendance?” Students chose a ball, either white for yes, or blue for no.

We also polled the question online.



The results show a leaning toward no. This is an interesting result to explore further.

## Conclusion

Speak Week 2025 gave students an opportunity to hear about the Union’s plans, weight in on survey results and priorities, and hear about the work being done on their behalf.

At HASU, we want to improve communications with students and ensure that they are actively involved in the creation of our priorities. The Student Voice Surveys are an important component of voice gathering – but the presentation of results, a discussion on the resulting priorities, and an agreement on how to best achieve those goals, most follow the collection of data.

Speak Week was a fun and useful way to work toward these aims. With our voice priorities set, we can now focus on marching forward in the direction of a better student experience at Harper Adams, while finding ways to involve students every step of the way.