

HULL UNIVERSITY
UNION

Minutes of Course Rep Forum: 6th/7th November 2017
Meeting Room 1, Hull University Union, 11:00 –12:30

1. Welcome from the Education Officer (Chair)

Salman Anwar introduced himself and informed the course reps of ways to contact him. SA thanked the reps for taking part in the forum. SA informed the reps of the various members of the University at the forum to gain feedback.

2. University Matters

HUU invited guests from the University to engage Course Representatives with projects and plans.

i) Timetabling - Ian Aylett

- Ian Aylett informed the course reps that the timetabling team do not have reps anymore and are also using a different model to create the timetabling trimester by trimester which is all new. IA acknowledged that these new factors have created teething problems.
- The timetabling team receive lots of data from different places. A major issue was some students from the student record system came to the team 2 days before instead of the usual month.
- A rep has found issues on Fridays, being a Muslim, there is a clash with his timetable and the time that the students need to go to prayer. Around 8-10 Muslims from his lecture have to leave and disturb the other students.
- A rep stated that a lot of changes have occurred, the lectures can be very inconsistent, especially for people with children, lecture times changing from week to week.
- A rep brought forward an issue regarding their timetable showing the wrong times, i.e. 9-12pm but it was 1pm. Also extra classes scheduled in the timetable what students turn up for, to find out that the class is not on. IA recommends any reps that are experiencing this to let the teaching staff know so that the timetabling team can solve these issues.

- IA asks academics for sequencing requirements, if they don't say they need a gap, they may go back to back. A rep stated this is an issue when reading needs to occur. IA understands this is not ideal, but it sometimes can happen.
- A rep stated that they are scheduled for a 3 hour lecture instead of 3x1 hour lectures. The rep indicated that the students can't take the information in. IA suggested that someone may have given the timetabling team some information that has been interpreted a different way to what it is meant to come across as. IA recommended to speak out and ask if this can be altered.
- A number of reps stated class sizes can be a problem, sometimes they are in a small lecture theatre. IA replied that all classes would never go over the allocated amount of students, however can understand that some rooms allocated may not be suitable. The rep replied that there are enough chairs but there is not enough desk space. IA indicated difficulties are being highlighted in the Allam Medical Building. IA urged students to ask academics to feedback to the timetabling team.
- A rep voiced that the Allam lecture theatre is too small for a module he attends. There are 290 students in one room. IA responded that the timetabling team planned for 200 students, however, 2 days before the team got the full amount of students due to the issues with student registration. IA reassured the reps that Semester 2 when everyone is registered, it will be a lot more focused. IA advised that just before Christmas, the Semester 2 schedule will be released.
- A rep in their final year voiced some of their seminars have been doubled booked, the students are supposed to attend both seminars. IA replied that this glitch shouldn't happen, IA advised to go to your student Hub or Ask HU. Timetabling also sit in the faculty hubs 2 days a week to answer any questions and help with queries.
- A rep stated that many students complain how the lectures are set up i.e. 1 hour lectures every day, rather than being in 1 or 2 days. IA replied by stating that would not usually happen, a free day is usually given every week and will look into this issue.
- A zoology student stated that a lecture was cancelled without the lecturer being informed, it was on the timetable and now it is not visible at another time.
- A rep voiced that they have a Westminster trip which is on a different day to what is on the timetable, IA stated this can be easily fixed.
- A History student was told to avoid iHull and use the timetabling online. IA advised to use iHull and then go onto the timetabling website.
- IA advised to go to your academic teachers and to your hubs for any problems
- SA asked the students how iHull is working for them, a rep replied stating that sometimes he is sent to an office rather than a lecture theatre.
- A student asked why there is a need to login every time on iHull. IA stated that unfortunately the system is a little outdated, it's not

something that is going to be easy to update but the timetabling team are working hard and appreciate all the feedback.

ii) Lecture Recordings - Mike Ewen

- Mike Ewen stated that this is a new system, working with academics to record lectures. Lecturers record the session and make it available to students afterwards.
- A Poll was created to determine how many reps know of this procedure. The results were; 6 yes, 9 no, and 6 did not know.
- ME listed the benefits; a student may miss a particular part of lecture, childcare issues or English as second language.
- ME asked the reps about the quality of the recordings, no one stated any issues.
- ME advised that it is useful to check against notes made during the lectures. A poll was created to ask the reps when they would use the recordings. The highest responses were for assignments/revision or when you have missed a class.
- A Poll asked the reps if it would affect their attendance. The result was 50/50. Some reps state that they would not go if they knew it would be recorded.
- A rep enquired if there is a reason why some lecturers are not using it. ME replied by stating that they are building an awareness of it and it takes time to train staff. ME stated to enquire with lecturers as to why they are not using it.
- A rep asked whether scanning your ID card at lectures to gain the recordings could solve the issue of some students being lazy. ME expressed that it comes down to trust.
- SA voiced that it is something that he would have valued and urged the reps to push lecturers to ask why they are not using it.
- SA asked the reps how many lectures they have recorded. The reps replied 50/50. A rep stated that some lecturers do not like to be recorded, they like to be open and not worry about what they say. SA replied by stating that any student has the right to record lectures so this should not be an issue.

iii) What do you want from iHull? – Patrick Lynch

- Patrick Lynch stated that exam timetabling will go onto iHull. PL is interested in what else students would like on iHull.
- PL stated a possibility of showing a student's marks on iHull so you can see all of your feedback in one place.
- A rep suggested to receive notifications about timetabling alterations.
- PL stated a possibility of having all your assignment deadlines on iHull which could help students prioritise assignments.

- A rep stated a more cohesive system between canvas and iHull would be helpful.
- PL asked if any reps would be interested in helping with improvements and have an interest in joining the working group to please get in touch.

iv) Feedback on induction

- SA asked reps how they found the induction. One rep stated they felt it was a waste of time for students after 1st year.
- A 1st year rep of music stated that it all went smoothly.
- A rep stated that there was AST communication issues, many people did not get emails on the History course.
- A 2nd year student had a lack of communication and was only told the day before about ASTs.
- A final year student commented on the induction, they had an introductory lecture and found it beneficial and informative.

3. Education Officer Briefing

EO informed the reps of his projects for the semester

i) Education Officer objectives

- SA informed the reps he has prioritised time in his diary to talk to students and to hear directly from students any issues or feedback.
- SA would like to increase the course rep community and promote it as a way to make friends, socialise and gain some sense of recognition for the work that reps do. SA would like more interaction between Course Reps, such as introducing a Facebook Page. SA enquired whether a Course Rep Society would be helpful, this was responded with mixed reactions.
- SA asked students if they have any ideas on how to interact with students. Reps replied by stating to be more interactive with games for an example. A rep advised a social environment instead of formal would feel more relaxed to discuss issues. A rep advised the Student Union building would be the easiest place to gain feedback rather than the library and disturbing students who may need to get on with work.
- International student engagement is to increase and SA would like ideas of events to host.

ii) Officer Team objective

- SA informed the reps which officers are aligned to which Faculties and advised that the officers will be in the faculty hubs to discuss any issues.
- SA asked if any of the reps had seen the student officers in the hubs, few reps replied indicating not much presence.
- A rep enquired why the sports officer is linked to business law and politics, Benedict Greenwood replied by stating it is an added duty of the officers to liaise with a faculty to benefit communication between the University and Union, and the fact that that FLBP's liaison was 'Sports' didn't have any bearing on this.

iii) **SWS recommendations**

- 30 SWS recommendations were received last year. This year has been condensed to four areas to take to the University to gain improvement.
- Assignment feedback is a big issue to be improved upon. Feedback can be inconsistent, a better system across the board would be helpful for students.
- Recruitment for reps is an issue that will be reviewed with the University.
- SA stated that they are looking at the AST provision, for this to be improved upon and advertised more.
- Postgrad and Mature students should be recognised a lot more and work will be implemented to improve their student experience.

4. Course Rep Issues

Space for Course Representatives to raise any central concerns that those they represent have brought forward.

- **Printing** – Students can be paying a lot of money on printing credits such as music sheets which students need a lot of graphs that are needed in colour which makes the cost to 20p a sheet. A rep stated that handouts are not printed anymore, if students want them they need to pay to print them themselves. One rep asked if the printed credits for the 1st year could be spread across the board, SA stated that this is something that he can enquire about.
- **Module Tutor** – A rep stated that their module tutor does not advertise when they are available. Another rep advised that this may be a rare issue as most do advertise their contact details.
- **Parking** – The new car parking facilities, some students have issues. Another rep informed the group that you can pay and display or pay for a parking permit.
- **Feedback on exams.** – A rep asked if students can get exam feedback. SA stated that you can get feedback on exams by filling out a form. SA stated that he could look at getting exam breakdowns on Canvas.
- **Feedback on assignments** - A rep stated that feedback released at the same time is useful and avoids someone being unhappy at getting feedback after a fellow student. A rep stated an issue with the Nutrition course regarding very little feedback on essays, assignments. SA replied that he will chase this issue up. Feedback received can be very unhelpful, such as exclamation marks, general comments such as 'take care'. SA again reassured that this is a problem that will be looked at to gain more consistent feedback. Feedback issues with Artificial Intelligence, a student received no feedback regarding an assignment, the course also had an exam the week after the assignment which was inconvenient. BG stated the Feedback policy to the students, if no feedback is received after 20 working days then a student can make enquiries with the lecturer.

- **Course Organisational Issues** - A rep stated they have organisational issues within Zoology course, such as equipment that has not been PAT tested and not enough resources for everyone in the group. A Primary Teaching Rep stated that their course is very compact with placement, work could be given out during the summer instead of feeling like they are rushing.
- **ASTs** - BG asked the reps whether they were familiar with their ASTs and who has met them, the response was mixed. BG advised they should have had at least one meeting with them by now, these are important. A rep stated that he is a 3rd year student and he has been complaining about his AST since first year, the AST gives extremely unfair treatment in the computer science department. There is a large variation in the quality of ASTs. SA stated that the code of practice amongst ASTs and reassured the reps that he is working on gaining a more consistent approach. A rep stated that some students do not feel there is any benefit in having an AST, some students don't understand the role of ASTs fully. A rep stated their personal experience is very positive, their AST makes a lot of effort.
- **Anonymity** - A language student stated that the department seems to not fully understand how to deal with dyspraxia and dyslexia. Anonymity can become a problem with marking. Anonymity is also an issue in regard to a student having the same surname and received each other's work. To solve this it should be done by student numbers instead. A mathematics student stated that some lecturers want a cover sheet on and others prefer you to have a name on. These are assessed assignments. There is a discrepancy between lectures who prefer anonymity and prefer the students to write their names on work. A student stated that the online cover sheet has disappeared online, they were asked to use one but now there is a confusion as to whether a cover sheet is needed if you don't have a disability. A geology student stated that they now do not use cover sheets so the use of them is unclear.
- **Teaching Time** - A Nutrition student is disgruntled at the level of work in a small amount of time allocated for physiology, more teaching time is needed for the students to understand the module before the exam in January. SA advised that he will raise this issue.
- **Cancelled Modules** - A music student who chose modules in March to then find out that the modules had been cancelled. The student had to rush and think of a different module to study. This is a worry for students who wanted to specialize in a particular field. This issue has been brought up in the SFF but SA will chase this issue.
- **Handbooks** - A Mathematic student had still not received handbooks in November. Another rep replied that some courses have got rid of handbooks, they are on Canvas, and this was due to feedback last year however now many students would prefer handbooks again.
- **Reading Week** - A Nutrition student is concerned that there is not a specific reading week, modules have not co-ordinated with each other. SA acknowledged this issue.
- **Canvas** - On Canvas, academics sets up their own page which can be confusing to find work. If there was a Universal way of lecturers setting it up the same

that would be helpful. A rep stated they are confused how to receive notifications on Canvas.

- **Same Day Assignments** - Film students have set assignments that are due on the same day or the following day. SA stated that this should not be happening and he will follow this issue up.
- **Library Language Area** -Language students who are able to use a specific section of the library for their course are experiencing issues with other students using this area making them unable to access the resources. The head of school is looking at getting a swipe system so this won't happen. The Rep highlighted that the library is checking to make sure the software is getting used, they are worried about losing the software. A rep suggested to inform Open Day staff to specify to prospective students that these computers are just for language students.
- **Events on Campus** – Some of the reps would like a way to find out what events are on campus.
- **Chairs** – Chairs with small tables attached can be problematic with no room for laptops and notepads or people who are left handed. SA will raise the issue to see if anything can be done, especially in the new Allam building.
- **Organised study groups** – Could organised groups happen, SA that is something that students could benefit from if you don't know many people to organise your own.
- **Course issues** – Geology changed to Geography GCSE, attendance has gone down, unsure why this has changed. SA will enquire why this has happened.
- **Placement issues** – A 1st year rep queried as to why the number of tunics provided to 1st years has been cut down. Receiving 5 tunics would help with the cost of cleaning. SA will enquire on behalf of the rep as to why tunics have been cut down.
- **Exam changes** – A rep stated that students were told they had an exam in January, then the students received an email a few weeks ago to state the exam was in November.
- **Teaching room in the Allam Lecture** – A rep stated there is no white board, which causes issues for the lecturer.
- **Security issue** – Bike sheds, a rep stated that his bike had been stolen and would appreciate more bike sheds around the campus.

5. How did you learn about being a Course Rep?

Did HUU's advertising work? E.g. Mirrors, Missing Piece boards, Returning Rep, Word of mouth, Hullstudent.com

What could HUU improve?

- BG stated there will be more Course Rep Training for those that could not attend the recent training.
- BG asked for feedback regarding course rep recruitment. A rep replied that they got a leaflet which encouraged the process. Lecturers and student officers who did shout outs during lectures were the most popular ways of advertising according to the course reps.

6. Breakout groups

a) How do you best communicate with your fellow students?

- A Rep asked lecturer to do a shout out, another rep went around lab groups to communicate and make their presence known of. Facebook chat is another source. Reps also use face to face discussions. A student rep uses post it notes at the end of lectures to gain feedback. A rep advised that variety is key, to mix it up and host informal meeting. A rep stated they have a box in their lecture and in their student hub to gain positive and negative feedback.
- BG suggested a set session for course reps to be available in their student hubs, to be visible to talk to students.

b) What type of reward/recognition would you like to see for course reps?

- BG voiced that the point system last year did not work too well receiving bronze, silver and gold awards. Reps suggested various ways to be rewarded/recognised such as; posters, badges, raffles with prizes to be won for attendance at student staff forums, something to highlight on a CV, membership discount cards, Amazon vouchers or free pizza.
- A Rep stated a point system would work still, reps could gain points to receive awards named after famous people who attended the University.
- SA indicated an awards ceremony would be an option.

7. Any Other Business

- **Student Led Teaching & Support Awards** – This is a way to recognise anyone around the campus and to nominate people for awards. Nominations will open from Monday 13th November. BG asked reps to promote the event, it has been revamped and it is a really good way to thank people who go the extra mile.
- **Recruitment** – SA and BG asked reps to promote and advertise the need to recruit more reps across all areas.
- **School Reps** - A rep indicated they were discouraged from being a school rep due to the advertised hours of 4-6 a week, this seems a lot to ask of a voluntary position. SA stated that faculty reps is possibility to become a part time paid position. However another rep stated that they had yet to encounter any trouble with the hours they have so far committed to.

Online Course Rep Forum: 14th November, 7.30pm, Canvas

**Next meeting: 4th/5th December 2017
11:00-12:30, MR1, HUU**