HULL UNIVERSITY UNION

Minutes of Course Rep Forum: 5th/6th February 2018
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 this is their chance to give feedback and raise issues.

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

i) **Chris Turnock – Subject Level TEF**
   - Chris introduced himself as the Interim Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement. CT stated last summer Universities were invited to take part in a 3 year pilot assessment of the quality of teaching activity. Hull received a silver award last year and are on track to receive a silver this year with a hope of gaining a gold.
   - CT gave an overview of the government TEF 3 year subject pilot. There are 35 (27 at hull) subjects which HEFs review, any subjects below a silver will need work around staff development.
   - CT took the course reps through a presentation which detailed the TEF. The presentation is available to view.
   - CT gave an overview of what details the TEF pilot uses. Some of the assessment values include; the national student survey, first year students' continuation data, grade inflation, destinations of leavers in higher education and very high and low absolute values.
   - CT stated that staff to student ratios and contact time is also taken into account.
   - The timeline for this process starts in early November and the outcome will be in June. CT stated that the results from this are confidential. For students this could mean that a subject would be asked to contribute a five page submission.
   - CT would like to take the NSS and the TEF data to a panel including students.
   - Some of the subjects are bronze at Hull, when these results are public it may detriment league tables for those areas that need improving.

- A course rep queried why some students received a link for the NS survey and others didn't. CT will go back to the team who sent the email and find out why some didn't receive the email.
- A course rep questioned whether Universities would 'dumb down' their degrees so that they are more likely to receive higher grades and in turn receive a gold award for that subject. CT hopes that Universities would have more sense than to do that.

ii) **Becky Dennison – Central & Faculty Hub Feedback**
- Becky Dennison introduced herself and her view to looking at the customer service in the hubs and the staff to development to ensure the staff are trained properly.
- BD voiced the student satisfaction surveys came back as everything ok but in other channels the feedback was slightly negative.
- The hubs have had all 5 issues raised from the last course rep forum so it is important to feedback any issues.
- SA to share BD 5 points and feedback from the hubs.
- A course rep stated that at registration they were told that they hadn't registered even though they were. BD is aware of this issue and emails were sent out when they should not have been.
- A course rep made a complaint last year, 3 students sitting an exam with alternative arrangements, 4-5 weeks before the exams the students were trying to find out where the exam would be. Result was that the exam came under a different hub to the student's usual hub. BD gave the student their email of r.dennison@hull.ac.uk to give all details and BD will chase a response to her complaint. BD stated this is a valid issue and emails sent out around exam time should be extremely clear. BD voiced that the aim of the hubs is going to be that you will be able to go to any hub and find out general information such as exam locations, mitigating circumstances.
- A course rep voiced that the computer hub is not signed very well and have heard that students do not know the location of where a hub is.
- A course rep stated that they find it easier to go to a member of staff, if it is a subject specific question. Another rep voiced that they are used to having their own space and go somewhere that they know the hub will not be able to answer. BD stated that ASTs do have a responsibility to answer these questions.
- A course rep highlighted they left some work at their hub, the hub was unaware of what to do with it and responded by saying 'we'll deal with it'. BD responded by saying there is a clear issue of confidence in the hubs knowledge, how can you expect such specific knowledge of each course that the hub look after. BD stated that it can be done, yes it takes a lot of time and a lot of training, the hubs will get better if students keep voicing in these issues.
- **FBLP** - A course rep said the hub is good for business related subjects, but lacks support for the politics related courses; adding that staff have reduced knowledge in this area. BD said similar feedback was provided at the December meeting and has been communicated to the hub. The

course rep suggested having a member of staff from the former politics hub in Wilberforce to assist with some queries. Another student added that politics students are not happy with the service they receive at the hub, with some students facing problems regarding dissertation and module choices. A course rep added that queues are also a problem at the hub, with students queuing for up to an hour to collect forms. BD advised that standard forms are available at all faculty hubs.

- **FACE –** Students in FACE are receiving emails for all FACE subjects; a course rep who is a history student has received communications for language students. BD said ICT are aware of this, amends are being made to Canvas to prevent this.
- **FHS –** A student said that many FHS students are unaware of the hub location and purpose; BD said a relaunch is being discussed to ensure students and staff are aware of hubs.
- **FHS -** A student queried whether there is still a FHS point of contact in the Hardy building, since the opening of the Allam Medical Building (AMB). The rep noted that the hub in AMB is good.
- **FSE –** The science hub for geology sends students elsewhere; BD would expect staff within the hubs to use the phone to resolve queries instead of signposting. Another FSE student said that hub staff often ask the staff member students asked before the hubs were created; BD said this should not happen all of the time.
- **FSE –** Students have had issues submitting assignments due to boxes being kept within the hubs, as many assignments must be submitted both electronically and on paper. There have also been issues regarding boxes for extensions and assignments not being checked or emptied. Another student added that a box was still there two months after the submission deadline.
- **Mitigating Circumstances -** A student queried whether extensions and mitigations are dealt with at faculty hubs; BD said they are. A student who handed a mitigating circumstance in November 2017 has not yet received a date; BD to report this to the team dealing with a review of mitigating circumstances. This review will streamline processes and include the mitigating circumstances form being available online and look at possibly implementing automatic extensions for students with learning needs assessments.
- **Central Hub –** at the start of the year there were large queues at the Central Hub, with many students unaware of what can be dealt with there. Another course rep suggested having student volunteers to help with signposting of hub facilities at the start of the year.
- **iHull –** students having to login each time they view their timetable; SA and BD have reported this to ICT and are awaiting a response.
- **FSE –** A course rep asked where timetabling issues should be reported to, as the FSE hub were unable to deal with timetabling queries; BD advised that faculty hubs have dedicated timetabling teams to resolve timetables issues or clashes.

- BD welcomed any positive or negative feedback regarding student experience of using the Central or Faculty Hubs; feedback can be sent to R.Dennison@hull.ac.uk; BD asked students to provide additional context where possible.

3. Education Officer Briefing
EO informed the reps of his projects for the semester

i) Education Officer objectives
- The Post Graduate book loan limit has been increased to 25 days.
- iHull is still a work in process, the issues that were fed back at the last forum have been listened to.
- SA is lobbying the University to implement automated lecture recordings.

- **Officer team objectives**
- SA and the officer team lobbied the University to provide buses to the Lawns for exams.
- SA expressed that SHAG (Sexual Health & Guidance) week that is taking place.
- The no platform policy is being reviewed.

ii) Other ongoing projects
- Your ideas week, SA and the other officers will be around on campus along with the other officers for students to suggest some ideas.
- SA advised that Elections season is approaching.

4. Course Rep Issues
Space for Course Representatives to raise any central concerns that those they represent have brought forward.
i. Feedback raised on Canvas
ii. Feedback raised in person

- **Timetabling issues** – A course rep asked if there is any plan for timetabling to be on share point. SA voiced that timetabling is on the website and there is no plans for it to be on share point. The course rep voiced the benefit of it being on share point would be that it would automatically change any last minute details in a student's calendar. SA will feedback this request.
- **Lecture issues** – A rep voiced that a lecture that was due to take place was taken off an hour before, 50 students turned up. SA to enquire.
- **iHull** – A course rep would like to know the status of iHull, it is frustrating to log in every time, people are not going to turn up to lectures if there is a change. SA will chase up this issue.
- **Survey for complaints** – A student stated surveys were received to give feedback regarding their course. However it wasn't written well and did not have an area to complain about a specific module. SA will look at the survey.

- **Exams** – A course rep would like to know exam schedules earlier, when booking flights to go home. SA to enquire
- **Library security guard issue** – A library security guard intimidated and told off a group of politics students for discussion the Iraq war for an exam the next day as it may offend International Students. The security guard proceeded to sit next to the students for 45 minutes – 1 hour before leaving. SA will chase this up.
- **Library Security guard issue continued** – A course rep stated that the security guards have changed their uniform in the Library, a course rep asked for some help to diffuse some students watching football loudly, the security guard that attended proceeded to watch the football loudly. SA will report these issues back to the librarian.
- **Library temperature** – A course rep voiced that the heating system, is unsuitable during the evening. On this note, students take in blankets but have been told off for bringing blankets and told to put them away. SA will enquire with the library regarding this issue.
- **Lecture timings** - Lecture timings are now 1 hour long, with this issue when a student has to get to another lecture there is no time to get to the next lecture instead of having the 15 minute allowance. SA will enquire this issue with zoology.
- **Lecture slides** – A course rep voiced a recurring issue of lecture slides not being put online. Lecturers vary in consistency. SA will enquire.
- **Library issue** – The book list for Psychology 2nd year is very inaccessible, with waiting lists and only 1 copy being available of certain books. The course rep is worried that this is going to be a recurring problem. SA will feedback this to the library.
- **Feedback issues** – A course rep questioned the length of time it should take for a lecturer to deliver feedback. SA answered it should be 4 working weeks. SA suggested to email the lecturer, the course rep answered that the lecturer is brushing off the emails. SA then asked for the student to email the details and who the lecturer is to huu-education@hull.ac.uk
- **Feedback issues –** A course rep queried when the results from semester 1 would be released. A fellow course rep answered that they had an email to say 19th February. SA answered that he doesn't know the exact date but mid-February is usually right. SA will check the official date and ask that faculties let students know.
- **Lecture Recording –** A couple of students raised that the Allam Medical Building does not have recording facility in the lecture rooms, with lecturers using their own devices for recordings.
- **Module Specifications** – Previously module specifications, including weightings could be found online using a quick search. SA said this information will be available online soon, the original pages were removed due to being outdated. SA to confirm what date this will go live.
- **SharePoint –** A course rep advised that many students were unaware of the change from Portal to SharePoint until exam timetables were released. Students said accessing exam timetables on SharePoint was a complicated process; SA said further communications are required to ensure students are

aware of the services available on SharePoint. A student suggested having exam timetable access from the main SharePoint page.

- **SharePoint –** A student said some students have had issues logging in and out of SharePoint on library computers.
- **iHull –** Some students have been unable to log in to iHull to view their timetables and have found that the online version does not update. SA recommended that students use the online timetable, as iHull is an hour behind and updated less frequently.
- **Larkin –** A course rep said the audio is extremely poor in Larkin Lecture Theatre G.
- **Academic Complaints –** A course rep said two students on their course who submitted complaints/appeals against unfair feedback in 2017 are still awaiting an outcome; SA will follow this up with the University.
- **Communication –** A course rep said there has been a lack of communication to students regarding changes to online systems, such as the introduction of Canvas and SharePoint to replace E-Bridge and Portal. Students would like to be informed of the changes before they take place; one student said updates are not posted on the University's ICT Twitter account. SA to work on improving communication with students.
- **Exam Venues –** A student raised concerns over the use of St Mary's as an exam venue, with many students unsure where they needed to be. Some course reps noted that an email had been sent around 3 weeks prior to exams advising of the exam venues, including which halls were being used. Another student said that venue information for St Mary's was on SharePoint.
- **Exam Venues -** A student said that the exam hall at St Mary's was cold, with some students wearing several layers to keep warm. SA said the University explored a number of potential venues before deciding to use The Lawns and St Mary's; the existing Sports Hall was unsuitable due to noise from the ongoing redevelopment of the Sports & Fitness Centre.
- **Exam Venues –** A course rep raised concerns over University buses arriving to exams at the Lawns late; the rep drove to the Lawns and had to wait in the exam hall for 15 minutes for buses to arrive. SA said the late buses are a University issue which students would not be penalised for. SA advised that the Lawns is likely to be used for exams in May/June 2018.
- **IHull/Timetabling –** A student was unable to find their exam or teaching timetables; this student also had problems with iHull and having to log in each time the app is used. SA will raise this with the University and is awaiting an update.
- **Exams –** A student queried what the difference is between an exam and a class test; SA had asked the University whether exam students could be put into smaller groups to utilise rooms on campus for exams.
- **Exam Venues –** A course rep noted that students who sit their exams in separate rooms due to disabilities are not being told where these rooms are, so they lose out on the additional time due to arriving late.
- **Email Storage –** A course rep asked whether University email storage could be increased, as mailboxes become full quickly. SA will feed this back to the University, but was unsure whether this is feasible.

- **Module Teaching –** A course rep advised that first year screen students feel a module regarding design for user experience has been inadequately taught, with many students receiving low grades as a result. SA recommended reporting this at Student Staff Forums, SA will also raise this with the University.
- **Lecture Recording –** Lecturers in 'screen' lectures are not able to record lectures; SA recommended asking lecturers why lectures are not being recorded in the first instance; SA is continuing to work with the University to ensure lecture recording takes place.
- **Lecture Recording –** A student queried whether lecture recordings could only be accessed by students who attended the lecture. SA advised that the University are continuing to work alongside the University & College Union (UCU) to ensure lecture recording is used at all times.
- **Exam Results/Feedback –** Politics students have not received their exam marks within the 20 working days specified by the University; adding that results for the Introduction to International Relations (first year) module were not released until a week before the January 2018 exams. The student said this did not allow students time to use the results and feedback when preparing for exams. The course rep advised that only one of the delays to results was communicated to students; with British Political History module exam results released late due to technical difficulties. SA said this is unacceptable and will raise the issue with the University.

iii. Academic Support Tutors (AST) benchmarking tool and feedback. – SA demonstrated a benchmarking tool to the course reps. This form is on canvas, course reps if you could highlight this form to fellow students.

- SA asked course reps for feedback on their experience of using the AST benchmarking and feedback tool. The Student Voice Manager (SVM) advised that the University are keen to gather feedback on the current AST project to ensure it meets student needs. SVM asked students to try using the form, to enable honest feedback to be sought. SVM and SA to run short information sessions to help students complete the forms.
- A course rep asked whether the AST's are for all year groups; SVM said all students should have an AST. The course rep added that they have not seen their AS; SVM said this feedback should be relayed to the University.
- A number of course reps said that second and third year students have less contact with their AST. One student said on their course, students have to proactively seek support from their AST; but would like there to be more information available to students regarding the role and purpose of an AST. Another student said their AST was really supportive, but reiterated that students need to be more aware of ASTs.
- A course rep who has been at the University (FBLP student) for four years has never been aware of who their AST is. It was suggested that AST contact details be available on Canvas.
- A course rep would be happy to hand printed copies of the form to students on their course at the end of lectures, if they were no restricted by printing credits.

- Another course rep noted that their AST is part time, meaning they can only have AST meetings on either Monday or Tuesday.
- Course reps agreed that some staff are better suited to becoming an AST and that not all ASTs are effective.
- One course rep advised that they had no continuity to their AST and was assigned a new AST each year.
- SA asked course reps to email any additional feedback to huu-education@hull.ac.uk.

5. **Any Other Business**
   - **Social ideas** - SA asked the reps for any social ideas to be emailed to him. A games night is coming up on Thursday 8th February in John McCarthy Bar at 6.30pm.
   - **Student Led Teaching Staff Awards 2018 –** Nominations are now open for students to vote on staff members who have made a difference. A number of nomination engagements will be taking place in the coming weeks, with nominations closing on Friday 2nd March 2018. Course reps who would like to be involved in the engagement days should contact SA.
   - **Student Trustee Nominations Open –** Nominations are currently open for the Student Trustee elections in March. The opportunity enables students to gain experience of being a charity trustee and be involved in financial and strategic decisions at HUU. Nominations close on Friday 9th February 2018 at 12pm.

Next meeting: 5th/6th February 2018
11:00-12:30, MR1, HUU