

HULL UNIVERSITY
UNION

Minutes of Course Rep Forum: 12th/13th March 2018
Meeting Room 1, Hull University Union, 11:00 –12:30

1. Welcome from the Education Officer (Chair)

Salman Anwar introduced himself and informed 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) Becky Dennison – Central & Faculty Hubs

- BD is Head of Customer Service and Administration within Student Services and has a remit for the student hubs.
- BD acknowledged some implementation problems within the hubs. The service would like to make sure they are focusing on the needs of the students and request any feedback with issues from course reps.
- BD advised that a number of course reps have provided feedback via email and reminded course reps to email any feedback (positive or negative) to R.Dennison@hull.ac.uk.
- BD informed the reps of a meetings with 15 members of staff in student hubs in direct line service to review customer service, consistency of service, training and development. The overall aim is for students to be able to go to any hub, rather than a specific hub.
- BD discussed the vision with the 4 hub teams and gained feedback on the training needed. BD will be spending time in the hubs to gain first-hand experience to understand the day to day queries.
- BD would like to send out a questionnaire to understand what course reps expect from their student hub, to ensure the service is relevant and meets student needs.
- A course rep questioned whether a hub would be able to view a timetable, this would be helpful when meetings are changed. BD will query this issue.
- A rep suggested to have a library representative at the Student Staff Forums. BD will feedback this suggestion with the library.
- BD expressed that all the feedback from the last forum has been passed onto the relevant departments.

3. Education Officer Briefing

EO informed the reps of his projects for the semester

i) Education Officer objectives

- SA is exploring printing issues raised at previous meetings, with the aim of implementing free or cheaper printing.

- SA spoke with iHull regarding login issues. ICT suggested deleting and reinstalling the iHull app; several course reps confirmed this resolved the problem. A course rep queried whether ICT can communicate this to students via social media. **Action: SA**
- SA advised that automated lecture recording will be implemented ahead of Trimester 3.

ii) Officer team objectives

- JW is running a mental health campaign this week and will be promoting this within Student Central.
- OO is currently on annual leave.

4. Course Rep Issues

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

AST feedback

- A student voiced occasional communication issues with AST using Canvas, sometimes events and messages can get 'lost'. Another student voiced that AST can work for some, however with 3rd year students they may generally prefer to go straight to lecturers.
- Benedict Greenwood queried if students have the same AST throughout their studies, the student replied that they do change through different years, it would be simpler to have the same AST throughout their time at University.
- A midwifery student voiced that it may be helpful to have a routine meeting with an AST rather than whenever you have a problem.
- A student voiced their AST canvas page is really helpful and expressed that every AST should have a canvas page. SA agreed that a uniform system should be applied to create consistency. SA will relay all AST feedback.
- A course rep said their AST experience has not influenced them, as their issues can be resolved via other avenues; another rep added that ASTs are beneficial to some students.
- ASTs can change each year, however some students are not notified of who their replacement AST is until they actively find out. A rep suggested adding students into the Canvas group automatically, instead of students requesting this at their hub. SA agreed the approach to Canvas groups must be consistent in the future.
- A rep recommended having lecturers opt in to become an AST, as some are unengaged and do not fulfil their AST role. Another course rep queried how students are assigned to an AST; SA said it is random and would be unfeasible for students to choose their own AST. SA will speak to the University to identify a targeted and structured approach to improve the AST experience for students.

Strikes

- A course rep asked that students are updated on the strikes via email; SA advised that the Student Officer team have met with the VC and requested an update on the current situation for students. SA and the Officer team will continue to lobby the University regarding strike communications.
- Some student have not had any lectures or tutorials for up to 6 weeks, therefore missing whole modules and have not received any support or advice prior to assessment and exam periods. SA advised that a policy change was passed by University Senate, meaning students will not be assessed on untaught content. SA to liaise with the University to ensure this change is communicated to students.
- A course rep raised concerns over coursework due in 3 weeks' time which has missed teaching; SA said department heads are identifying missed modules and content, assessments will then be amended accordingly.
- A first year computer science module that is taught in 3 parts has been affected due to one lecturer striking; meaning a third of the module has been missed. SA advised that core modules and content required for accreditation will be prioritised by the University.
- A course rep queried whether they would still be assessed on modules within exam papers where questions have already been agreed. SA will ensure that students are not assessed on untaught content; SA to follow up with the University regarding communicating this to students.
- It was recognised that students with lectures at the start of the week are more likely to be impacted by industrial action.
- A course rep highlighted that students on their course had been told they could gain feedback on their presentations before the formal assessment date; however due to strikes not all students have had access to this feedback. SA suggested contacting lecturers on non-strike days. SA to raise with University.
- A rep voiced that they have missed 3 consecutive weeks of the same class meaning they are unable to get on with the work required, there has been no contact with the whole module, the lecture slides have been uploaded however the work is technical and it isn't helpful just reading it. The student voiced that there feels there is no support and that no extra lectures will be put in place. A rep stated due to the strikes, lectures are cancelled but the timetable didn't change until an hour after the seminar was meant to take place at 6pm. Another rep voiced that they have missed nearly half of their seminars, the other half of the module have not missed any which seems unfair. SA to relay all strike impact feedback.
- The officer team have spoken with the VC and support the UCU to go back to the negotiating table. HUU are lobbying the University to offer some form of compensation. SA informed the reps of the University policy regarding untaught lectures, students will not be assessed on them, and there are module forms which you can write down what lectures have been missed. The form then goes to Registry Services. A student voiced that extensions should be in place for the full length of the strike action. SA will feed this back to the Registrar.

Timetabling/Room Issues

- Second year astrophysics students have experienced timetabling issues due to tutorials not being considered as lectures. This has led to students having a 1 hour tutorial, followed by 4 hours of lectures with no breaks between. SA will query this with timetabling.
- Wilberforce LT12 is not appropriate for the teaching of some physics modules due to a lack of tables for students to put laptops on. Some students are also unable to use the chairs with attached tablet table due to their height.
- A rep stated that the short notice of some timetabling changes can be problematic and questioned if changes can be notified sooner. SA to enquire
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Lecturer Issues/Recordings

- One rep asked whether it is possible to download lecture recordings; another rep advised that recordings can be downloaded using the Panopto app.
- SA reminded reps that lecture recording will be automatic via timetabling from Trimester 3, recordings will be auto uploaded within 5 days. SA advised that some lecturers may opt out, but must provide a valid reason to do so.
- Some lectures have a student version and teacher version of the slides. It would be helpful to disclose the answers and give everyone the teacher version and treat the students like adults within anatomy and physiology. Another student voiced the same issue of a lecturer not providing the slides that they have viewed in the lecture. SA to query why students can't have the answers.
- A history rep stated that one module does not allow laptops, however there is a lot of material to print off which can be costly. SA will enquire if this can be changed.

Attendance Monitoring

- A course rep queried the volume of the beep when students tap into lectures, particularly for students arriving late. SA will pass this feedback to the relevant University department.
- Some lecturers (Psychology department) are still distributing paper registers in lectures, some of which cover more than one teaching week which can be confusing for students and lead to inaccurate attendance logs. SA noted that paper registers should no longer be circulated in lectures.
- A couple of course reps said students forget to 'tap in' at the start of lectures and instead do this on their way out, leading to them showing as absent on attendance monitoring systems. A rep suggested maintaining manual sign in for those who are unable to 'tap in'; SA advised that lecturers can manually add students who have been unable to 'tap in'.

- A rep said third years often forget as they are used to paper registers and queues for 'tap in' machines are long. Another rep recommended a member of the attendance monitoring team visits lectures to see the machines being used in practice; SA to provide this feedback.
- Another rep noted that some lecturers tell students not to worry about missing one lecture; SA said this should not happen and that student attendance should be manually added by lecturers.
- A rep queried whether students are notified if their attendance is low, or whether these students will be made to re-sit the year with no notice. SA said students should be notified of any issues regarding low attendance, as international students are required to attend lectures due to visa requirements. SA to circulate the link for students to check their attendance record online.
- A rep asked whether attendance will be tracked for students who do not want to cross the picket line; SA said students are expected to attend any scheduled teaching throughout the strikes.

Mitigating Circumstances/Extensions

- A course rep raised concerns over students applying for extensions due to their mental health, who must submit evidence from a medical profession as part of their application. Students are only signposted to the University Wellbeing services once their application has been rejected; adding that students may be anxious about visiting their GP. SA will provide this feedback to the University.
- A rep queried the timing of meetings for students wishing to defer their exams in extenuating circumstances, who have previously had these meetings at the same time as their exam, meaning if their request is rejected, they have already missed the exam. SA will relay this feedback to the University; SA advised that students can self-certify if they are unable to sit an exam.
- Reps highlighted concerns over the lack of communication and clarity surrounding mitigating circumstances requests, which have seen a number of process changes in recent years.
- A midwifery student voiced mitigating circumstances works differently for them as the work has to be re-entered in May when the students are half way through another module, this is not helpful, only increasing stress. SA responded the University has a policy for mitigating circumstances, if it is approved you can get a resit, however they struggle with the work load with so many mitigating circumstances applications. SA will feedback this information to the head of registry services.

Library Issues

- Students are no longer receiving a reminder email when books are due for return, leading to students accruing fines and having to check their accounts daily. SA to raise with the University Librarian.
- A course rep for Psychology suggested the library invest in more copies of some books, or allow access as an electronic copy to ensure materials can be accessed by those who need them. SA to speak to University Librarian.

- A student voiced they can be long and questioned why they take place on a Saturday. SA replied they do take part during the week also, however he will relay the feedback to the librarian.

Other

- **Staff communications** - A member of Politics staff who was a dissertation supervisor has left their teaching role, however dissertation students were not informed and only discovered their supervisor had left from other students. Whilst the issue has since been resolved, SA agreed to inform the Associate Dean (Student Experience) for the faculty to ensure students are affected communicated with in the future.
- **Building access** - Students who need to access the Fenner building are struggling to gain access and continue to be passed between their student hub and the security department. SA has raised this issue with the University, but will follow up.
- **Emails** – A rep from FACE stated that a number of irrelevant emails received not applicable to their course. SA to enquire.
- **Computer science level 5** – A student voiced the content and structure of the module has meant that the students have only had 1 lab so far instead of 5, possible due to the structure of the module, on occasion the weather. The student understands it is a new module, however it is unacceptable to be so behind in labs. SA to enquire.

5. Any Other Business

- **Elections**

Voting is open till Friday 16th March at 5pm, students can vote for Full and Part Time Officers to represent them in 2018/19. Videos from the Candidate Question Time event can be viewed on Facebook; a results announcement will be made in Sanctuary on Friday 16th March from 7pm.

**Next meeting: 30th April/1st May 2018
11:00-12:30, Meeting Room 1, HUU**