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| Meeting: | | **Academic Council** | |
| Location: | | **Claverton Rooms** | |
| Date & Time: | | **23rd February 2022 15:00 – 17:00** | |
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| **Present: [elected reps]** | | | |
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| **In attendance: [any staff or SU Officers present]** | | | |
| Siddharth Singh | | | SU Postgraduate Officer |
| Ryan Lucas | | | SU Education Manager |
| Callie Edwards | | | SU Academic Representation Coordinator |
| Tim Stoneman | | | Student Voice Coordinator Postgraduate |
| Steve Chilcot | | |  |
| Ben Palmer | | | Change and Inclusion Manager |
| Chris Bonfield | | | Head of Centre of Learning and Teaching |
| Ian Blenkharn | | | Head of Education and Student Services |
| Ben Goose | | | Project Officer (Student Experience) |
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| Item |  | | |
|  | **Apologies** | | |
|  | **Notice of Any Other Business (A.O.B)**  None | | |
|  | **Minutes from previous meeting (Date of last meeting)**  N/A | | |
|  | **Actions from the last meeting(s)**  N/A | | |
|  | **Online Unit Evaluations**  In regards to online unit evaluations, all of the table rotations expressed that they saw a value towards unit evaluations. However, they suggested that often unit evaluations would slip under the radar in comparison to the NSS evaluations. Some key remarks that were prevalent across the board was; the timing rollout felt off as it can occur with large amounts of workloads, the success of NSS survey in comparison to online unit evaluations were down to the marketing of the evaluations and the impact that could be made as a whole.  First rotation  When voting on whether the academic reps valued the online unit evaluations, 7 reps voted yes while one voted no. When presented with scenario of unit evaluations stopping, all reps in this group expressed that most people would not notice if unit evaluations stopped and highlighted there needs to be a new avenue for receiving feedback on units. Furthermore, when asked on finding the results of unit evaluations, only a few people knew where to find it on Moodle whilst a handful of academic reps only found where they are posted. Moreover, a comment that washighlighted from this group was the fact the feedback didn’t seem to be genuinely incorporated but rather pressured whilst another rep asked if results were uploaded automatically as it seems that they were uploaded at a relevant time. Finally, when looking at the timing of the unit evaluation, these reps emphasised that it was not easy to understand as a first year. In contrast, the academic reps highlighted that the unit evaluations should be rolled out when the workload has dipped to ensure a high response rate. When compared to the success of the NSS survey, the reps highlighted that it was better as it was reflective of the year and it only occurred once.  Second rotation  In contrast to the first group, this group of academic reps unanimously agreed to the value of online unit evaluations. One rep suggested that they would be disappointed as the evaluations engages with academics well for example, in the school of management there was a unit that was performing low and the students sought to get that module improved. Furthermore, this group expressed that the survey showed that the university valued students opinion and that it felt good to be supporting your academics. When asked about opportunities to give feedback, this group expressed that they have different avenue to provide feedback and the data can be skewed as negative opinions tend to fill out the evaluations compared to students that are happy. Yet, they agreed with the prior group emphasising that the timing felt off for online unit evaluations. When prompted on what continues to the group to finish the evaluation, most of the group agreed that seeing a change was high on their list. One of the reps did suggest to include bi-weekly feedbacks but others disagreed that it was the role of the rep to collect feedback. When asked on the success of NSS, this group highlighted that the marketing was better and since it affects the prestige of the university, students feel as if they have a bigger impact.  Third rotation  Similarly to the second rotation, this group valued unit evaluations however, they were aware that students did not all value them. This group highlighted that feedback from academic reps are important however, there is no incentive for students to fill out online unit evaluations. This group acknowledged that students felt demotivated to do the unit evaluation as it seemed as if their lecturers would not do anything about it. Academic reps in this group really supported the idea of lecturers encouraging students to fill out the survey at the end of their lecture. When asked about what motivates them to do the evaluation, this group felt that the evaluations helps other people and that it can be used as a good tool to praise reps and support the improvement of their lecturers. When compared to NSS survey, this group highlighted that they felt bullied to fill out the NSS survey and that they were constantly reminded.  Fourth rotation  This group was slightly divided about whether they valued the online unit evaluations and expressed that they couldn’t give an accurate response on the module if certain things changed. There was a need to make the window longer. However, when asked about whether they should stop, the academic reps said they would feel guilty about it and that nobody would be held accountable when it came to lectures. Concurrently, this group suggested that there needs to be more effort in regards to informal methods of gaining feedback about unit modules. Furthermore, when consulted on the results of previous OUEs, this group highlighted that it wasn’t useful if feedback was shown at the beginning of the module when students haven’t done the unit. Rather, it would be more beneficial if there was an explanation on how the evaluations impacts and benefits students. One academic rep mentioned that they received an email on their evaluation and that lecturer highlighted where they took initiative to explain where they have made changes based on the feedback. All reps agreed that this would be useful for all. Moreover, this group felt that the evaluation should be open all year round in case opinion changes and that the questions felts generalised thus, students felt inclined to give good feedback rather than accurate feedback. | | |
|  | **What have been the pros/cons of online exams, and what should our future exams approach look like?**  Throughout all rotations of academic reps for this table, there was an overall consensus that in person exams no longer reflected the reality that these students were faced in. Some of the key points that were highlighted throughout was; online exams allow for real application and breadth of content learned rather than memorising for an in-person exam, online exams allowed increased accessibility for students, more transitional support would be needed if in-person exams were to go ahead and online exams suit a variety of student needs.  First rotation  The first group of academic reps discussed that exams felt out of date given that there are entire academic years that have not experienced exams in-person since GCSEs. All academic reps emphasised the lack of transitional support from online exams to in-person exams would increase stress for the students. On academic rep highlighted their lack of agency with in-person exams due to their disability while online exam allowed them to be comfortable in their exam environment. However, when asked additional questions on the alternatives such as Inspera to be done online but on campus or the idea of software monitoring to reduce collusion, the group was divided in their response. While one group of students thought it would be the best alternative, another group of students highlight issues with access such as space, wifi and power issues. Furthermore when asked about the need for monitoring software, most students emphasised that they did not feel that it was necessary and that it would be an invasion of privacy. One issue that an academic rep highlight was how it would affect students of colours especially darker students of colour with motion detection and facial recognition.  Second rotation  This second group of academic reps expressed similar thoughts to those of the first rotation however, this group focussed more on the implications of academic ideas. Most academic reps felt that these online exams allowed for better application of ideas taught and discussed in lectures to the questions asked in online exams. Moreover, one of the reps brought up that there is a divide on campus with the first and second years more likely to lean towards online exams as they have not experienced in person exams in their academic careers whereas third and fourth years have previously experienced exams and would like to have that continuation. However, another rep highlighted that if uni life was to prepare us for the real world, what is the relevancy or purpose that in-person exams prepare us for? Furthermore, this group discussed further for the need for support to aid students for that transition from online open book to in-person closed book exams.  Third rotation  This group discussion focussed on the experience that students face such as accessibility issues for disabled students. There was a general consensus that in-person exams felt like a regurgitation of facts rather than content applied to the questions with creative flare. However, with the discussion of collusion, the point was raised if that is what the exams is testing out as well (how students work well as a team). The academic reps understood the sentiments but disagreed for it to be an aspect of exams. Furthermore, this group questioned the alternative of doing online exams in a room or hall as it would be in person exams.  Fourth rotation  This group highlighted that exams were not reflective of real life and that online exams was testing out application of knowledge and understanding of the content taught in the lectures. However when it came to tackling collusion, reps felt that monitoring software was too invasive to student life and where does it stop. Also, the reps highlight the need for consistency when it came to unit convenors deciding when to do exams in person or online. One academic rep highlight that their lecturer provided a mock exam online to better prepare students in using the software and uploading documents needed for the exam. This group emphasised the open book model as reflective of real life and how students could better apply it during exam time should be guided through. | | |
|  | **Discussing your Bath Academic Experience** | | |
|  | **Engagement Monitoring for Wellbeing**  When looking at engagement monitoring for well-being, the academic reps highlighted that it felt that it can be invasive at times and that students should have a choice when it comes to being included in this monitoring. Key comments that were made was; the language and wording needs to be centered around well-being as it can create unnecessary anxiety, the impact on international students is already seen in a negative gaze and they are singled out with already and there was a strong focus on who this would be pushed by and who would be responsible for it. Moreover, the academic reps highlighted that there needs to be a more personalized and soft approach when contacting the students. | | |
|  | **Strikes** | | |
|  | **Any Other business**  None. | | |
| **The meeting ended at [14:10].** | | | |
| **Item number** | **Action** | | |
|  | Actions to be listed here. | | |
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