

**Meeting:** Academic Council  
**Place:** CB 2.06  
**Date and Time:** 28 October 2016, 12.15 – 14.05

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**Present:** Ben Davies Students' Union Education Officer

**Attending:** Amy Young Representation and Engagement Manager  
Annika Theilgaard Academic Representation Co-ordinator  
David Woolley Departmental Representation Co-ordinator  
Suzanne Snook Representation Administrator  
Cheryl Ang Representation Assistant (Minutes)

**Apologies:** *Available as an appendix to minutes.*

### Action

#### 1. Register of Attendance

Attendance register available as an appendix to minutes.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

Academic Reps were informed to send their apologies to [academicreps@bath.ac.uk](mailto:academicreps@bath.ac.uk) should they not be able to attend Academic Council meetings.

#### 3. Matters arising

None

#### 4. Notice of any other business (A.O.B.)

NUS Debate

## 5. Report from Students' Union Education Officer

The SU Education Officer introduced himself and congratulated Academic Reps on being elected. He gave a brief overview of Academic Council before addressing the key points and progress since last academic year:

Learning zones: Due to the limited capacity of the library, the University has set aside learning zones as additional study spaces. These include 6E 2.8, 6WS, Norwood House (2<sup>nd</sup> semester) and Manvers Street (2<sup>nd</sup> semester).

Anonymous marking: The University completed a trial on anonymous marking. It is now University protocol to have anonymous marking across all departments if possible. Academic Reps are advised to get in touch with the SU Education Officer if this is not in place in their department.

Manvers Street: The building should be ready for use from the start of Semester 2.

Placement Hub: The Placement Hub is designed to provide more information and support for students going on placements or currently doing a placement. It is hosted on bathstudent. There is a map with the placement locations of students to facilitate student contact across departments. With the student's consent, their placement location will be added to the Placement Hub. Academic Reps of the relevant year groups are recommended to promote the Placement Hub to their course mates.

Panopto: Lecturers will be able to use Panopto next year with an improved system. The system will have the option to employ Panopto when they book a room, instead of having separate systems for Panopto and room booking. The SU Education Officer urged Academic Reps to encourage the use of Panopto during SSLCs.

Interaction between Reps and Exec: There are 16 Faculty Reps who are part of the Academic Exec. There will be more interaction between the Academic Reps and the Exec this year.

## 6. Feedback on teaching rooms

Some teaching rooms have undergone refurbishments over the summer. The SU Education Officer would like to gather feedback on teaching rooms that students like and dislike.

Rooms which students like:

- **CB Group Study Spaces**

Rooms which students dislike:

- **CB Large Lecture Theatres:** Desks are too far away from the seats and are very small
- **CB 1.11:** A chair is missing from the lecture theatre
- **East Building:** Rooms tend to be very filthy towards the end of the day
- **3E:** Desks are too far away from the seats
- **4E 3.5:** Very warm
- **4E 3.38:** The microphone constantly produces feedback sounds. The position of the windows produces glare on the screen and the blinds are not helping.
- **6E 2.2:** It is hard to see the lecturer or the screen
- **1WN:** Long rooms which are flat, making it hard to see the lecturer and screen. The building is constantly damp and cold.
- **1W 2.03:** Near recording studio which makes it distracting during lectures
- **5W 2.4:** Room is very steep
- **8W 3.22:** Timetabled for lectures with insufficient seats for students
- **8W 2.1:** The lighting makes it such that when lights are switched on, it is too bright; but it is too dark when lights are switched off.
- **8W:** Projector slides don't stay down.

The SU Education Officer asked if there are any facilities or equipment that students would like across all teaching rooms

- Plug sockets should be at a good distance for students to plug in their laptops.
- The digital document cameras allowing lectures to write and simultaneously project the image on the screen is useful.
- Reps from the Department of Psychology stated that lecturers used Socrative for quizzes and responses during lectures. However, the University has advised the Department not to use it this year. The Reps thought Socrative was a good idea as it made lectures more interactive.

## **7. Drop-in sessions**

The SU Education Officer and the Academic Representation Co-ordinator will be having drop-in sessions. Academic Reps are encouraged to drop by for an informal chat, any problems they may have, to find out more on how to bring up issues in their department, any success stories in departments, to get involved in campaigns, or anything in general.

The next drop-in session is on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, from 12 to 2pm at 8W 2.28.

## **8. Disciplinary Appeals Panel**

The SU Education Officer explained that the SU President gives a disciplinary action for student misbehaviour. However, there are times when the student appeals against the decision by the SU President. A Disciplinary Appeals Panel will be called to review the appeal. The SU Education Officer chairs the panel and would require some Academic Reps to volunteer to be part of the panel. There will not be regular meetings for the panel – it is called only when an appeal is made. Interested Academic Reps are to register their interest at the end of the meeting.

## **9. SSLC Template**

The SSLC Template is designed to close the feedback loop between SSLC and students. The template will be filled in by one of the Reps of each year group after a SSLC and circulated to the rest of the cohort.

## 10. Top Ten

1. *Campaign for sustainable student recruitment policies in relation to housing availability*

Bath is at full capacity in terms of city and campus accommodation. Last year, the SU has lobbied for a freeze in undergraduate student numbers. However, the University is still seeking to increase postgraduate numbers. They are looking at Trowbridge and Chippenham for postgraduate accommodation. The SU would be lobbying to increase student numbers at a sustainable pace.

2. *Make it easier for students to locate available study space*

Learning zones have been set aside for students, but not many students are aware of them. The SU would publicise the learning zones and lobby for students' access to free rooms which are not scheduled for lessons.

3. *Improve University and Students' Union provision for students outside of term time*

There is currently limited provision of services out of term time for postgraduate students and international students. The SU seeks to improve provision (e.g. eateries, SU bar, Fresh) throughout the year.

4. *Secure a physical expansion of the gym*

The gym is operating at full capacity in terms of both student members and public members. The refurbishment over the summer did not expand the gym. The University is currently limiting the number of public memberships but the SU hopes to secure a physical expansion of the gym.

5. *Ensure that students receive constructive assessment feedback that helps them learn*

On the National Student Survey, the University fares poorly on assessment feedback. The SU would push for constructive assessment feedback across departments.

6. *Campaign for the curricula to reflect the diversity of the student body*

The SU would promote for role models that represent the diversity of the student body.

## 7. *Reduce waste across campus*

The SU strives to reduce waste across campus, such as food waste and plastic bottles. Last year, Lime Tree produced 70 tons of food waste. The SU is looking into working with eateries to perhaps adopt a cook-to-order system.

## 8. *Ensure the personal tutoring system is effective for students and staff*

The University guidance states that personal tutors should meet students 3 times in the first semester of first year. Subsequently, students should have one meeting with their personal tutors every semester. However, many personal tutors do not follow the guidance. The SU seeks to improve the personal tutoring system such that it is effective for students and staff.

## 9. *Tackle postgraduate isolation*

The SU intends to minimise postgraduate isolation and improve their university experience.

## 10. *Secure an extension of the Library*

The library is built for 8000 students. It is unable to cope with the current student numbers. The SU hopes to secure an extension of the library.

## 11. **Academic Reps Conference**

All Academic Reps should have received information about the conference via email. It will be held on Saturday, 5 November, from 9:15 to 16:00. Some speakers on the day include SU President (Lucy Woodcock), returning officers (ex-SU President Jordan Kenny and ex-SU Education Officer Paul Goodstadt), as well as the Vice-President of NUS. Registration is currently live. Academic Reps are reminded to inform the co-ordinator should they have signed up but are no longer able to attend.

Academic Reps who are unable to attend the conference would need to complete training on the Moodle page. This would allow them to obtain a hoodie. Returning Academic Reps have a separate training stream on the Moodle page. Academic Reps who are not enrolled on the Moodle are to contact [academicreps@bath.ac.uk](mailto:academicreps@bath.ac.uk)

## 12. **Academic Constitution**

The Academic Constitution needs to be approved by Academic Council every year. It has been sent out to Academic Reps prior to the meeting. Academic Reps are happy to approve the Academic Constitution.

### 13. Unit Descriptions

The SU Education Officer explained that the University's plan to make unit descriptions more general. This is to minimise changes to the unit descriptions when content changes. The University is obliged to commit to what they advertised as per Competition and Markets Authority guidelines. The SU Education Officer would like to know what information should be provided in unit descriptions. The following suggestions were provided by Academic Reps:

- Assessment breakdown (percentage of coursework and exams)
- Key topics covered in the unit
- Capacity of the module in terms of students numbers
- Recommended readings (to facilitate purchase of books beforehand)
- Estimate of the number of contact hours (number of hours of lectures and seminars)
- Estimate of independent study time – particularly useful for postgraduates
- Option to enrol into Moodle
- Feedback from previous years
- Period of examinations – some units are year-long units but have examinations in January
- Lecturer/Tutor taking the unit
- Average marks from previous years

## 14. Personal Tutoring

The SU Education Officer invited Academic Reps to share their views on what they expect from personal tutors. The following points were noted:

Initiating Contact: Personal tutors should email their tutees occasionally instead of students having to initiate all contact with them. Departments should have guidelines on when personal tutors need to contact students during the year.

Timetabled Sessions: Most departments do not schedule personal tutor sessions in timetables. Some exceptions include the Department of Chemical Engineering. The Department of Physics does not schedule sessions in the timetable but requires personal tutors to meet their tutees as a group once a week. Academic Reps suggested that timetabled sessions are not necessary. However, drop-in sessions during the week would be useful.

Understanding of Personal Tutor Role: Personal tutors should have an understanding of their role. They should be available to support the students for academic help, placement support and pastoral help. Personal tutors should also be able to signpost students to other services in the University, such as Student Services, the Students' Union and learning zones. Ideas such as training, welcome pack and checklist were raised to aid personal tutors in their role.

- Departments should clarify the role of personal tutors to students as well.

Pastoral Care Team: Academic Reps highlighted that there are instances when the Personal Tutor is not around. Having the flexibility to contact other lecturers would be helpful.

Individual or Group Sessions: Academic Reps mentioned that group sessions are useful to get to know other students in the tutor group and to discuss academic work. However, individual sessions allow the tutor to provide individual feedback and discuss personal issues. A mixture of both would be preferred.

Guidance on Academic Content: Having personal tutor sessions to explain complicated concepts is beneficial. However, assignment guidance given by personal tutors should be consistent in the department. There are often disparity in the level of support provided by personal tutors which gives some students an advantage.

Academic Reps also noted that having the same personal tutor throughout the degree (instead of changing it every year) would allow personal tutors to know their students more personally. Also, it was highlighted that personal tutors for Languages tend to not speak in English, which made it daunting for students.



## 15. Any other business

NUS Debate: A debate is held tonight (28 October 2016) at 7.15pm. The topic is on whether University of Bath should continue to be affiliated with the NUS. Academic Reps are welcome to attend the debate.

## 16. Next meeting

Date: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November

Time: 12.15pm and 1.15pm

Location: CB 2.6

