

Council Report: 26th November 2009-27th January 2010

Academic Affairs Officer

OPRs and Periodic Reviews

There have been no OPRs since the last Council meeting, except for the Museum and Gallery, but there will be follow-up OPRs concentrating on certain Schools in the next few weeks. I have organised meetings with reps from these Schools so that I know what the issues are before I go in.

In terms of periodic reviews, I sat on the panel for the review of Combined Studies and led the discussions with students, as well as feeding into the recommendations.

The Student Services Centre is being reviewed, and I have helped promote student consultations as well as sitting on the review group.

Course Reps

Charlotte and I have recruited 3 of our 5 Union Links: we have one for Law, one for Pharmacy and one for Life Sciences. We interviewed candidates for the position where more than one came forward. I also met with most of the rep coordinators in each School to discuss the scheme.

I held an event which was aimed primarily at course reps but was in fact attended by a range of students, where Colin Stirling came to answer questions about feedback and academic support. The event was fairly poorly attended (30-40) despite extensive publicity and personal invitations to all of Council. I have decided as a result of this that further events are not worth the time I put into promoting this one, and will not be holding further meetings of this kind.

General Representation

I have continued to represent the student voice on a number of committees:

TLG (Teaching & Learning Group) – passes academic policy before official seal at Senate. I attended the December and January meetings.

TLG subgroups – there are 5 working groups that I sit on which have been recently set up to look at various issues:

- **Assessment & Feedback** – looking at implementing a university-wide feedback policy, as well as a review of the marking system (e.g. should we mark in percentages or bands?)
 - In response to staff concerns that the feedback policy did not apply to EPS or PGT students, I circulated the policy amongst EPS and PGT course reps for consultation. I collated these responses and forwarded them to the group. I have also had numerous meetings with Chris Davies to discuss progress and strategy, as well as reading the policy and submitting a detailed critique and drafting a Union submission to Senate.

- **Attendance Monitoring** – looking at whether certain portions of courses should be compulsory and attendance monitored, and looking at implementing a university policy
- **Credit Framework** – looking at the structure of credits and how they build up into courses, with a view to making the credit framework more flexible
- **Degree Regulations** – how a final degree classification is awarded/calculated – level of flexibility to permit, as well as looking at the appropriateness of the current classification system
- **Portfolio Review** – looking at the appropriateness of the portfolio of degrees offered by the University

Faculty T&L Committees (4) – keep me updated on changes being made in each Faculty with regard to teaching and learning. I frequently suggest amendments to proposals and participate in discussions to ensure that the student voice is listened to. I also meet frequently with the Associate Deans for T&L (especially in EPS and Humanities) to give input on proposed changes or problems.

Student Services Centre Review Group – looking at how effective the SSC is currently and how it could be restructured to better meet students’ needs. I will be helping the university to run a survey of students in the next few weeks.

Learning Commons Core Group – looking at the design of the Learning Commons, the facilities within it and the space available for students. I haven’t attended one of these in this timescale but I have attended consultations on the design of the café and placing of printers and scanners.

SUEI

I have attended the SUEI conference, as well as leading on three areas and producing reports on them. I also attend fortnightly steering group meetings to check progress.

Internal relations – the university

Outside of formal committee structures, I have regular meetings with key university staff to stay updated on various issues and flag up concerns from the student body. Recently I have met with:

Fiona Devine, Head of Social Sciences – following up issues I’ve heard from reps and rant boards, as well as progress on issues raised in the OPR.

Paul Harness & Mohammed Din, IT Services – I passed on a student complaint about the computers in Blue 1 being broken for weeks at a time.

EPS New Academics Programme – I delivered a lecture on “The Student Voice” to encourage new academics to consider students’ feedback, as well as a greater understanding of the pressures on the modern student.

General Assembly – I attended a formal dinner with various stakeholders of the University and local community.

External relations – NUS etc

I attended NUS' Strategic Conversation on 25th January, which looked at developing a strategic response to the changes faced by the student movement. I contributed to a KCL-Warwick survey on employability in research-led institutions. By the time you read this I will also have attended an Aldwych Group convention on research-led teaching.

In response to an item brought up at TLG I sent an email enquiry to other Aldwych Group unions about student-led teaching awards, and have been collating information on this.

Other stuff

I wrote an article for Student Direct about the NSS, and one for Union Propaganda about my role and what I've been doing.

I organised to have NSS promotion week the same week as Rant Week, and sorted bar staff, laptops, banners, etc for this.

I went on a tour of the refurbished ground floor of the library, and was inspired by this to start a "More Books" campaign!

I organised a Debt Doctors event with Laura and Reclaim the Uni society to raise awareness of tuition fees, as well as writing a letter to the Browne committee (which I gained 981 signatures for via an online campaign) and meeting them on 28th January. This took a lot of time to organise and promote and will hopefully be successful. It also involved updating the education part of the website.

I met with the Chair of ISoc and various university staff to discuss tackling extremism on campus and better multifaith integration.

I have followed up various queries from students and sorted a few individual issues.