

## Foundation Year Student Representative meeting

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

Present: Laura Green, Agnes Akele, Malachi Daniel, Davin Sidhu, Mari-Paz Balibrea Enriquez

Apologies: Shay Wilson

### Minutes

- LG welcomed the representatives. All those present confirmed there were no actions to discuss from the last meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

LG invites the student representatives to raise any issues and/or concerns since the last meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024. These are listed below:

- DS informs that herself and other students studying Mathematics and Business modules within the Business School had not received clear instructions regarding timed assessments. DS informs that information hadn't been conveyed that the assessment would be two hours but that they would have 48 hours to complete this from the time the submission link opened.
- DS informs she experienced a technical issue when submitting two minutes before an assessment deadline (11.58pm) This consequently meant her assessment wasn't uploaded until the following day and will be capped at 10%. DS informs that it wasn't clear if the programme administrator should be contacted, or an ASK enquiry should be raised. RC asks if any other students experienced this issue, DS informed she isn't aware of any other students that experienced this issue.

MD suggested that it may be useful for students to be provided instructions on how to submit ASK enquiries and/or how the ASK system should be used for procedural things such as, Turnitin issues. LG responds to DS and discusses the importance of trying to submit at least half an hour before an assessment deadline to allow for any technical issues. However, LG queries what time the assessment link opened as it may be useful to have a standardised deadline on Turnitin of 2pm, as this is procedure for other FY modules. LG agrees with MD that it would be useful to have further clarification on how to use the ASK enquiry for procedural items and suggests a 'How to' guide for the ASK system.

SUGGESTION: LG, MP and RC discuss the possibility of proposing a standardised deadline of 2pm with other schools. RC suggests putting this as an agenda item for the next FY lead meeting. RC to investigate producing an ASK 'How to' guide for 2024/25 which can be circulated amongst staff and students.

- DS informs that it has been frustrating that lecturers aren't aware of the procedures for attendance and MC processes. MD adds that there has been a delay with attendance being corrected. LG informs that discussions regarding attendance and MC are had with lecturers on the FY modules Fundamentals of Study and Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge but is unsure as to how this is approached college wide.

SUGGESTION: LG, MP and RC to raise the issue of tutor's awareness of attendance and MC procedures at the next FY lead meeting. RC can possibly share the CCPU 'How to' guides used for Centralised FY modules relating to

attendance and MC with the other schools, which can then be cascaded by admin staff to teaching staff prior to the academic year starting.

- MD, DS, AA feedback that there are some students who continually turn up to seminars unprepared and without intent to engage. AA proposes that 10% of the weighting of a module be awarded to students based on their engagement in seminars. MD supports this and adds that if someone is continually contributing to seminars it seems fair that this be taken into consideration as part of the overall module grade awarded. DS and AA support MD's comment and discuss how this would encourage engagement in seminars which would be of benefit to their peers. MD raises the point that engagement in seminars should really be determined by degree programme i.e. for the school of law speaking publicly is a 'core skill'.

LG, MP and RC respond to the comments from the student representatives and discuss potential issues relating to the suggestion of a 10% assessment weighting for engagement in seminars being actioned. For example, those who are engaging will take something away from the course i.e. gaining more than those who aren't participating however, it's a very difficult matter to tackle as the students also must consider that there are other aspects such as, neurodiversity(s) and other complex reasons that might be discouraging the students from participating.

LG, MP and RC feedback that it's not that the 10% weighting hasn't been considered in the past but it's that the 10% requirement may advantage some students and disadvantage others. Therefore, in the interest of providing an equal learning environment for everybody it's not as straight forward to action. LG, MP and RC inform that in the first instance, other approaches are preferable such as lecturers encouraging students to engage, rather than enforcing it upon the classroom.

SUGGESTION: If students feel their learning experience is being impacted by the lack of participation in seminar groups they should approach their lecturers. If the lecturers don't take on board the feedback, then this should be escalated to their home schools/programme admin.

- MD raises a concern that the Euston Rd building study area is being misused for sexual activity. MD and other students have witnessed sexual activity in the pods when these pods are meant to be used for study and sometimes private prayer. LG informs MD in any instance this occurs to take immediate action i.e. approach a member of security or any other member of staff they feel comfortable talking too and inform them what is happening.

ACTION: LG and RC to contact Birkbeck Security Team and request that a message be circulated to students that reads something along the lines of 'if students feel unsafe or as though their space is being disrespected to approach security immediately or any other member of staff that they feel comfortable talking too'.

- AA raises concern that students aren't informed they need to reapply for student finance by the college towards the end of the academic year. RC and LG explain to provide communications regarding this may cause confusion as students financial situations may vary. However, RC informs, that if students are in doubt regarding any fees and finance, they can contact the Student Advice Team and/or Student Finance.

**AOB**

- MD informs the School of Law are now finished with in-person teaching until October. MD informs he will still feedback and remain student rep up until the next academic year.
- Next meeting to be scheduled for the first week of July
- RC and LG will pass notes from today's meeting to Student Union