



Academic Council 1

12.00-13.00

23.10.24

In Attendance: Jay Brown (JB)- Student President (Academic Life), Julie Read – Student Support Coordinator, Sacha Forbes – Deputy Manager, S.U., A. Thomas, H. McDonnell, C. Mahon, A. Grant, A. McKay, J. Cialandroni, E. Balbin, H. Kupperts, B. McKenna, C. Parker, D. Reardon, K. Dobson, A. White, K. Hawker, N. Brophy, M. Simpson, E. Johnson, J Harley

Apologies Received: G Juliano, M Campbell, R Dunne, L Wallace, D Taylor, L Bettison, L Lowney, K Anderson, M Hanna, S Padamada, I Gulliksen, A Ferguson, K Ewen, K Privett, A Munro, R Casey, A McDunphy, R Erskine, L Moore, J Duncan, N Darcy, E Curran, G Delargy, P Thirgood, I Wright, B Grant, G Urquhart, A Tinfina, E Benest, A McPhee, S Barrett, A Phillips, S McNamee, J Mackenzie, M Blazejczyk, S Iqbal, C Adams, M McMeeking, S Neilly,

JB opened the meeting and gave an update on his recent activities:

- WISER funding application submitted to provide free BSL (British Sign Language) taster classes for students on campus to increase belonging at QMU – *hopeful that this will be forthcoming soon. This will give students the opportunity to learn some elements of BSL and be able to communicate better with deaf students and staff.*
- Completed and signed off on the new Student Partnership Agreement – *this is a commitment from the university as well as the students/ Students' Union. More information later.*
- Taken up membership on Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group and QAA's Scottish Strategic Advisory Committee – *Representatives from the Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group will be speaking after this Academic Council meeting ends. JB will also give regular updates at future Academic Councils on his work with the Scottish Strategic Advisory Committee*
- Developing a new Student Experience Forum with the university - *some feel it is not currently fit for purpose with the focus mainly being on staff instead of students. Work ongoing to refocus on students*
- Further EDI work and Class Rep training! – *Class Rep training is ongoing and we will look at feedback from that later. As well as being Student President, JB is heavily involved in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work in the university. Still working on a trans-inclusionary policy. We have a new, part-time student officer (Dr Derrick Abina) representing BME students and one of his first tasks will be promoting Black History Month. A reminder that there will be a lecture on this topic on Monday 28th October in the Halle from 1600- 1730. This is open to all students and previous lectures have been well worth attending. We are sure this will be the same. Students can book free tickets using this link [Black History Month Lecture delivered by Dr. Katucha Bento Tickets, Mon.](#)*

[Oct 28, 2024 at 4:00 PM | Eventbrite](#) or check out the Moderator. *There will also be a fundraiser for Intercultural Youth Scotland in the form of a bake sale in the atrium on the same day from 1130-1530.*

JB is also working with part-time officers Kirsty Lovie (Welfare) and Murrin Huarachi (EDI) on setting up a network for neurodivergent students.

JB then took questions from students.

Q: How will this network for neurodivergent students be set up?

A: It's still in the early stages but there is already one for staff and it is hoped that collaboration with them will lead to better outcomes for neurodivergent students. We will be having a meeting soon and you will hear more about it in due course.

Q: QMU computers are not compatible with hearing aids used by deaf students. There was an expectation/promise that the refresh in the LRC would overcome this issue. Has this been done yet?

A: JB will check and report back

Q: A student in our cohort has reported that room 2156 is difficult for deaf students to connect to the interface

A: Answer from another student – most rooms have the same issue. Lecturers need to be encouraged to use microphones, and deaf students need to sit at the front. Contact Disability for tech support as it should be possible to improve on this.

Q: Do you want contact from neurodivergent students for this new network?

A: Yes please!

JB then went on to summarise the new Student Partnership Agreement;

- ❖ *Commitment to supporting students through cost of living – this is an issue that has not been forgotten. Students are reminded that the weekly Food Pantry (Wednesdays) is a great source of low cost, quality food.*
- ❖ *Safeguarding student mental/physical health and wellbeing, and students' social/recreational activities – Wednesday afternoons are supposed to be kept free from classes to allow students time for social and recreational activities, but it is recognized that this doesn't always happen. The university will crackdown on this to ensure a better work/life balance for students.*
- ❖ *Commitment to enhancing the international student experience and providing equal opportunities for students to engage – Many international students do not have the same positive experiences at QMU as their domestic counterparts. International students are encouraged to give feedback on their experiences to our new part-time International Student Officer, Badri Basnet. Please note that Badri cannot handle enquiries related to welfare/housing issues etc. just feedback on the international student experience.*

- ❖ Commitment to safeguarding academic representation, learning, teaching and assessment, and SU autonomy – *this includes a commitment to having Class Reps and part-time student officers and is signed off by the Principal and the Deputy Principal so all staff should be following it. It is recognized that SU autonomy is key to having a supporting role. The agreement is refreshed every two years, and this one will be published in November and sent to all students.*

Next, JB addressed some of the feedback we received after the recent Class Rep training sessions;

- 100% of reps continue to recommend the training! – *this obviously makes us very happy, thank you.*
- Reps requested a comfort break at the halfway point of training – *agreed and introduced*
- Reps would like more interaction-based activities and case studies – *this was the same feedback received in previous years, and we have tried to introduce more. However, we are also mindful that this is a long course and there is a lot to take in. We don't want it to take more time. We will keep looking at ways to add such activities and if any reps have suggestions, please let us know.*
- One piece of feedback asked that we 'sugarcoat' training content – *we appreciate that some of the content can be quite heavy but it's also incumbent on us to ensure that the importance of the role is understood.*
- Reps requested a QR code for gathering training feedback – *unfortunately, people often don't complete forms on QR codes after they leave the session. We use the paper ones as it's important to us that we receive feedback from all attendees. NB: they are anonymous, and we deliberately ask for them to be placed on a desk when leaving so that we don't see which students have written what comments.*

JB then took issues and questions from the floor;

Katie, Music Therapy: Arts Therapies students are having an issue with timetabling, there are either long gaps between lessons or all classes at the same time.

JB: these issues arise from Room Bookings allocating the spaces. It is recognised that this is a problem. He will be meeting with Richard Butt, Deputy Principal soon to discuss timetabling.

Cassie, Speech and Language: We had similar issues and went to the Programme Leader about this, they were able to get it sorted.

Candy, Applied Arts: We have also had problems with timetabling. In addition, some lecturers don't seem to be able to use Canvas – have they been trained?

JB: All staff have had the opportunity for training. Will feedback that this is an issue.

Emma, Int Hospitality, Tourism & Events Management: it's only a small course but one lecturer is not providing enough detail on the course, or reading etc. They are too slow to

respond to enquiries. This has been brought to the attention of the PL by other students in the class and Reps will take this to the SSCC next week.

JB: It would be a good idea to collate feedback from the other students and present that at the SSCC

Ella, Music Therapy: In the new LRC, how will it be managed with the quiet and social areas being mixed?

JB: the LRC is still an issue. It was not finished on time and there are still things to be done. Will feedback to the Future Spaces committee.

Ashleigh, Diagnostic Radiography: The QMU app is not user friendly and there are issues with being logged out.

JB: Other students have mentioned this. Please collate any comments from fellow students and feedback to me

Blythe, Psychology: Students are concerned that one of our modules, considered to be important by students and at least one member of staff, will be removed from the course for the new first years in the next academic year.

JB: Collate feedback from students and take to the PL or other members of the Programme Team. Come back to JB if more support needed.

Meeting closed 13.00. Thank you to all who attended.