



Academic Council 2

Minutes

28.11.24

Attending: Jay Brown, Student President- Academic Life (JB), Julie Read, Student Support Coordinator (JR), Sacha Forbes, S.U. Deputy Manager (SF) + 41 reps

Apologies received: 45

1. President – AL – update

- Finished Class Rep training – We conducted 9 training sessions both face to face and online. Any rep who has not yet completed the training quiz on Canvas is asked to do so asap and no later than the end of this semester.
- Update on university SEAP (Self Evaluation Action Plan) – if you have any feedback on how the university runs in general (what it offers students) then please pass this on to JB. This does not need to be Academic focused.
- Update on funding for BSL (British Sign Language) classes – original bid for funding was rejected but, more recently, JB received notice that £1.8k has been allocated for basic training in BSL. If you are interested in signing up for this, then please let JB know. This training will help to make the campus feel more community based and allow better communications between hearing impaired students and others. It is hoped classes will begin early next semester. More details will follow.
- Autism-support micro site for prospective/current QMU students – Autism and the University is a new project. This will consist of a toolkit with resources and videos for neurodivergent students to access before and during their time at university. This will include such information as what services are available in the uni and navigation videos to help students familiarize themselves with the layout of the university. We would also like this to include student stories of their experiences as neurodivergent students here. Please share with JB.
- Extraordinary meeting of Court to discuss university loan – The university is proposing to switch to a new lender. Many students have shown great interest in this issue and, although JB is not yet allowed to reveal who the new lender, he felt it would be good news. Sir Pual Grice will make an announcement in the next few weeks.
- TGIT: Festive Edition – TGIT (Thank Goodness it's Thursday) was initially introduced to aid students with the cost-of-living crisis as well as loneliness, and consisted of weekly free meals and groceries. Although this has not continued into this Academic Year, there will be a one-off Festive TGIT on Thursday 5th December from 16.45 – 18.00 All are welcome, and Sir Paul may make an appearance at the serving counters. Come along with a group

of friends, enjoy a free meal (Vegan, Vegetarian, Halal and GF catered for) and relax a bit before the assessment period. The S.U. is still working with the university to explore other ways to ease the cost of living for students. One possibility would be funding for the Food Pantry.

2. **Question of the Semester:** Does the newly refurbished LRC meet your needs as a student? – The question has already been distributed to students and a lot of feedback has already been received, mainly around the issue of quiet study spaces being too small and noisy, no doors contributing to noise and a lack of books, computers, electrical outlets or charging points. There is still time to respond to this so please encourage your fellow students to do so by 19th December. Every response is a voice that has to be listened to.
3. **Student Experience Forum:** This has previously been referred to in Academic Council. It is a large committee which holds 3-hour meetings. It is supposed to be student focussed but often the focus turns to staff. With this in mind, there will be a forum, led by students, giving you the opportunity to speak directly to the Principal and other members of the Senior Leadership team.
 - New provisional date/time = Thursday 30th January 12-1:30pm – open to all
 - Open to topic suggestions – What would you want to know from SLT? – Reps mentioned the following.
 - Lack of sports facilities
 - Paramedic Science cohorts are too big, which is causing huge problems in placements with very late confirmation of allocations and shifts. What can be done going forward?
 - Placement costs – how can the university mitigate against these as much as possible? Some students have already raised this with the School Academic Boards. Students not in receipt of SAAS do not receive help with this and even those who do can find the wait for reimbursement very difficult.
 - Timetabling issues – what is the university response? This seems to be a perpetual issue, but little is done. JB replied that the university is starting a Strategic Response and Investigation, but this will not be a quick fix.
4. **Class Rep Feedback –** JB opened the floor to reps for discussion
 - Hannah (MSc 2 SPL) in class, specific resources are not always posted 24 hours in advance and those students with ILP's are unable to focus in class as they are trying to take these in. In addition, students are not always given the required breaks. Two other SPL reps agreed this was an issue (MSc1 and UG). The UG rep added that there seem to be two version of slides and the ones for students don't follow the same format or content and those used in the lecture. This causes further confusion.

Reps from Radiography and Theatre & Film agreed this was an issue for them too, with some Film classes having no information on Canvas or no meaningful content on slides.

Rep from Nursing confirmed this is not an issue in this programme where slides are made available one week in advance.

Action: JB advised to raise this at SSCC but he also emailed Head of Division on this topic.

- Abbie (Level 4 Business Management) reported that for a number of classes there had been no notes available for the note-takers. In addition there were no breaks, but this situation improved after this was fed back to staff.
- Tracey (Paramedic Science) stated that they have a 7-hour class timetabled from 0900-1600 on a Friday. Sometimes this is in a seminar room where chairs are so uncomfortable that students end up sitting on the floor. This needs to be in a lecture hall. It is difficult for students to take in any more by lunchtime. They are given 3 breaks during this time, ranging from 30-45 minutes (never an hour). They have been assured this will be remedied for next semester but the 7-hour class will remain. JB asked for updates if this does not happen.
- Psychology reps reported that in some classes, students are locked out of the room if they are late. The consequence of this is that the doors are locked, and students are locked in. If students arrive late they are publicly humiliated and berated. If students in class wish to leave for a toilet break, they are unable to re-enter the room. Some students have stopped turning up if they think they are going to be 10 mins late as that is the point when the doors are locked.

Action: JB to email Heads of Division

- Ashlynn (Nursing) stated that the cost of living is having a negative effect on students with travel expenses for placement. Many can't wait for reimbursement from SAAS and some do not receive any additional aid at all. Feels that there needs to be somewhere (Moderator) where students can access information on what subject-specific aid is available to students in the form of Hardship Funds etc. A list of all available support would be helpful. JB recommended speaking to the Programme team as they would have all that information available to share.
- Another student from Northern Ireland reported that one third of the class are from N.I. and they had been unaware that uniform costs would be an additional expense and they received an invoice for £220 out of the blue. It may be assumed that students will have this paid for by SAAS and that is why it is not explicitly stated. Student suggested that an information sheet setting out the likely costs and expenditure that a student will incur, would be useful.

- Angelina also reported that Allied Health Practitioners are unable to pay for accommodation placements as far afield as Inverness and Aberdeen whilst also paying rent at home. JB reported that staff members have also approached the S.U. over this issue as a concern and he has spoken with them.
- Joe (Paramedic Science) highlighted the recent bike theft on campus. Although this is not an academic issue, JB advised students to utilise heavier 'D' locks when storing their bikes on campus and to speak to security should they have any concerns.
- Samantha (Radiography) stated that students have been struggling with their module "Finding Your Academic Voice" for around 10 weeks. This has been raised with staff. Some students have stopped attending the 2-hour lecture and have asked for this to be posted online but staff have refused. JB suggested an open letter from all students (with their consent) would be useful and recommended cc'ing the S.U./JB
- Philippa (Therapeutic Radiography) reported that the lack of charging points in seminar rooms is an issue. In a poll conducted with her cohort, half of students agreed this was a problem. Some needs their laptops to be plugged in in order to use them and many charging points are either locked or broken. JB recommended referring this to the HelpDesk and to ask for areas to be unlocked.