

Education Executive Minutes

Date & time	3 rd November 2020 – 17:30
Location	MS Teams
Attendance	Alissa Chohan (VP Education) – Chair Kate Roberts (President) Ellie Matthews (School Rep - Engineering, Physical & Mathematical Sciences) Tanya Solomon (School Rep – Law & Social Sciences) Grace Waterman (School Rep – Life Sciences & the Environment) Phill Dowler (Democracy Coordinator) – Secretary Natalie Bates (Student Voice Manager)
Apologies	Henn Warwick (VP Wellbeing & Diversity) Maia Jarvis (School Rep – Performing & Digital Arts)

Item	Action	Responsible	Due
2.	Circulate the outcomes of the first Digital Education survey alongside the Digital Education Part 2 for context.	AC	ASAP
2.	Communicate the technology hardship fund.	AC	26 th Jan
2.	AC to meet with GW regarding the experience of joint honour students.	AC	11 th Dec
2.	Investigate Department wide joint honour reps rather than course level	AC	26 th Jan
2.	Incorporate single units in other departments in investigations into joint honours support.	AC	26 th Jan
2.	Discuss the timeline in which Careers host events as they align with dates of some activities outside of Royal Holloway. E.g. Grad schemes.	AC	26 th Jan
2.	Investigate scheduled school specific Careers drop-ins	AC	26 th Jan
2.	Investigate training opportunities that provide experience in communicating and presenting feedback for Academic Reps	AC	26 th Jan
3.	AC to follow up on the in-class assessments with EM	AC	26 th Jan
4.	Feed back to Rapid Response about the mixed communications regarding access to services.	AC	ASAP
4.	Communicate issues with Box of Broadcasts not working in all countries due to licensing as this is excluding international students from taking part in assessments.	AC	ASAP
4.	Follow up on the use of cover sheets for submitting work with TS	AC	26 th Jan
4.	Develop a video providing information about plagiarism and self-plagiarism.	AC	26 th Jan

4.	Revisit communication around blended learning as there is mixed messages and expectations across Departments.	AC	ASAP
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Item	Notes	Action
1. Welcome	AC welcomes members and notes apologies.	
2. Officer Update	<p>AC takes paper as read and leads discussion on questions embedded in the update:</p> <p>Are there themes that have emerged in your role relating to online resources that you think need addressing on a University scale?</p> <p>TS starts by updating on the implementation of school wide moodle templates but highlights that a departmental approach would provide a more beneficial experience.</p> <p>EM agrees and adds that hosting attendance monitoring in a separate place to where teaching is delivered is causing confusion and suggests that it should be brought onto MS Teams or Moodle where existing content and teaching is.</p> <p>There is also little support available to students on how to use MS Teams and have been expected to just know. EM also expressed that there needs to be clearer wellbeing information as it's just getting lost within moodle.</p> <p>TS and EM agree the confusion of the Royal Holloway mobile apps. With there being multiple app releases, official and not official. Also targeting specifically new students and not returning students has led to them missing out on some key information. The issue of inconsistent information on the apps was discussed.</p> <p>EM suggests integration of all systems into one app. For example, the app should be able to take you to your MS Team, your moodle pages and to attendance.</p> <p>EM goes on to ask for an update regarding the digital education survey part 1 as well as technology hardship fund as there has been no follow-up information since the first communication and there are students currently struggling in this area.</p> <p>AC asks:</p>	<p>AC to circulate first digital education survey outcomes.</p> <p>AC to communicate technology hardship fund.</p>

	<p>As a Student Representative, how do you think Joint Honours Students can be supported further? TS responds by highlighting the different experiences of those doing a joint honours across departments within the same school and those across departments in different schools. Those in the same school generally received far better communication, support and assessment scheduling than those not across the same school.</p> <p>GW has gathered feedback on the experiences of those doing joint honours and seeks to meet separately to go over some of these issues.</p> <p>EM highlights a reluctance within some departments to improve the student voice of joint honour experiences when there are so few so rather than having course based joint honour reps, could the SU consider department wide reps that would also include students that take single units elsewhere. KR agrees on the issue of single units having experienced this in the past.</p> <p>AC asks:</p> <p>For the type of students that you represent, are there any careers resources, events or support which you feel would cater specifically for these students?</p> <p>TS starts by discussing a volunteering project set up within LSS and that departments have had to provide support with getting people into work experience and projects. There is a need to review what has been learnt to work with Careers to roll out online activities to improve the experience.</p> <p>EM highlights that there is an employability officer within EPMS that is linked to external networks and will support students to external organisations. They also organise weekly careers sessions. Once issue is that the support in the school is solely focussed on related careers and pigeon holes students right away. A lot of the support that Careers provides us comes too late with activities taking place after application deadlines for grad schemes have already passed.</p> <p>GW is working with the Director of Student Experience within the school to create a career development plan in a global pandemic. It came off the back of a survey that was carried out in the</p>	<p>AC to meet with GW</p> <p>AC to investigate department wide joint honours students</p> <p>AC to include modules outside of own discipline.</p> <p>AC to discuss the timeline in which Careers host events.</p> <p>AC to investigate scheduled Careers drop-ins.</p>
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	<p>school in which students clearly expressed anxiety in this area.</p> <p>EM asks whether there could be a scheduled drop in session that sits within timetables for students to approach Careers as they don't feel like there is time in the day.</p> <p>AC asks:</p> <p>How do you think feedback can be further improved to benefit students?</p> <p>EM discusses that there's issues with providing negative feedback. Some academic reps are struggling to get change making feedback rather than comments that make people angry. There have been occasions where things have bubbled until an SSC takes place at which point people are angry and don't communicate as well. We need to look at ways of facilitating better and more regular communication.</p> <p>GW introduces the idea of having a central hub for feedback on moodle. Similarly to EM, some feedback has been blunt, or even aggressive. There's concern that feedback isn't being provided in a constructive way. More needs to be done to support reps to communicate.</p> <p>EM agrees with more training. Although current training is effective, it doesn't teach them or give practical experience actually communicating in person or via email. It's often nothing, or too far.</p>	<p>AC to investigate further training</p>
<p>3. School Rep Update</p>	<p>GW provides an update on the School of LSE where a careers event is being held. Stickers were created with Department Reps for international pronouns day. Also currently collating feedback with all Department Reps on the first half of this term.</p> <p>EM is working on reaching out to Foundation students within EPMS as there has been some confusion over who has responsibility for them. There is however a good transition and improvement in wellbeing of those that start in foundation before going into year 1. There have also been a lot of in class assessments that weren't there before so is working with reps to gather feedback on that.</p> <p>AC asks whether they had been taught how to carry out in class assessments. EM confirms this has not happened.</p>	<p>AC to follow up on the in-class assessments with EM</p>

	<p>TS explains how within LSS everyone is working in silo and keeping their heads down so is collaborating with Tom staff to rebuild some element of a student experience including quizzes etc. There is a meeting within LSS to progress this further.</p> <p>AC thanks School reps for their hard work so far in the term with all the challenges that have been there, as well as supporting the delivery of training.</p>	
4. COVID-19	<p>AC starts by running through the most recent student update released by the University before running through an activity to discuss what the concerns are in three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library Services - Motivation & Wellbeing - Exams & Assessment <p>Library Services</p> <p>EM starts with the booking system that was being used. Timeslots being odd times and spaces aren't being cleaned between use. The spaces are also being booked out over a week in advance.</p> <p>AC confirms that the booking system is no longer in place and that it was acting as a barrier to using the library.</p> <p>TS adds that the communication about availability is lacking and that there is misinformation being spread regarding the current process. Some academic staff are saying you can't use the library without using track and trace, which not everyone can use if they have an older mobile. If you're not using the track and trace app, you are allowed to give them your student number.</p> <p>AC highlighted that the issue regarding not being able to use the application on all mobile devices within the University rapid response meetings. There is a clear communication issue as the blanket messaging is all correct but when it's being communicated at departmental level, the messaging is different.</p> <p>GW goes on to talk about the introduction of Box of Broadcasts and how it's being used in some assessments but it's not available in all countries so some students haven't been able to carry out assessments.</p>	<p>Feed back to Rapid Response about the mixed communications</p> <p>AC to communicate BoB issue to Library and departments.</p>

	<p>Motivation & Wellbeing</p> <p>AC acknowledges that students are struggling as they aren't used to the current teaching methods. It is expected that there is active engagement with teaching but some are missing out on valuable engagement and learning experiences. There is a growing concern for wellbeing and motivation.</p> <p>TS has identified a growing number of 'ghost' students that attend virtual teaching but don't participate and drop off after a while. TS suggests identifying ways for active engagement and participation rather than lecture style deliveries.</p> <p>EM adds that within EPMS that most sessions have pre-recorded seminars with no follow-up. There are Q&As hosted but there is very little engagement and responses to emails are slow.</p> <p>GW notes there's a campaign being run by the University on the benefits of face to face teaching as some students are attending online only and not the in-person sessions. Academics are getting frustrated at students and then those that for personal reasons are learning online, are being stigmatised against which is having a direct impact on wellbeing. There needs to be more proactive wellbeing support rather than the information just being held somewhere on a website.</p> <p>Exams & Assessments</p> <p>EM starts as there is already a mass of anxiety as there has been no guidance regarding exams or assessments and what rules they need to be following.</p> <p>TS adds that information regarding the change to cover sheets isn't being communicated until after submission deadlines and have since been told that it will now impact their plagiarism scores which could ultimately impact grading. This needed to be communicated significantly earlier. There also needs to be information on how assessments are going to be carried out, regardless of what situation we're in. Students across LSS are already concerned how this is going to work, especially with things coming out so late.</p> <p>EM goes on to talk about the use of quizzes and the lack of consistency. On some occasions they</p>	<p>AC to follow up on the use of cover sheets for submitting work with TS</p>
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	<p>receive one in a week and then the next week they may have five to carry out. This is making allocating study time difficult.</p> <p>GW notes that the issue of plagiarism was bigger after the most recent assessments. The process for carrying out assessments changed, and where students were using their notes from classes, it was showing up as plagiarised work. There are also issues of plagiarism within alternative assessment methods.</p> <p>AC opened up the discussion for further comments to which EM highlights the disparity between courses, departments and schools on how you attend teaching. There have been cases of anxiety with attending in person and were then uncomfortable discussing this with staff. Some staff have enforced that students should only be attending online if they have a medical condition that prevents them attending in person, whereas others have had a more relaxed approach.</p> <p>AC agrees that the flexible learning environment wasn't communicated effectively initially. This needs to be circulated again. Some do have circumstances where they may not want to attend in person, and should never be forced to share that. However, the communication around the benefits of face to face learning should be available. Although people need to feel comfortable, and if they don't, they shouldn't feel forced to engage in certain ways. AC encourages School Reps to respectfully and appropriately challenge where there is variation from guidance.</p>	<p>Develop a video providing information about plagiarism and self-plagiarism.</p> <p>Revisit communication around blended learning as there is mixed messages and expectations across Departments.</p>
5. Digital Education: Part 2	<p>AC notes the relevant paper and reviews questions being planned for the second survey.</p> <p>TS suggests looking into the comparison of resource when you're engaging in different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online and in person - International and UK - Isolating on campus or off campus <p>EM suggests investigating whether students feel they are up to date with their learning, or there is a delay.</p> <p>GW considers a focus on groups of students that traditionally rely on field work and travel, and what alternative assessments and activities have been put in place.</p>	
6. AOB	EM notes that SSCs are being planned very last minute and not much notice is being given	

	<p>because of how long the rep recruitment process has been. NB responds that the issue getting students to training as we have students waiting to go into roles but the process requires them to be trained before they can take up the role.</p> <p>PD asks how the Executive would like to be communicated with, whether that's through MS Teams, a blended approach or email only. Unanimous agreement to keep Executive activity within MS Teams.</p> <p>AC closes the meeting thanking those attending, reflecting on the valuable discussions that have taken place and reminding School Reps to allocate time for self care.</p>	
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