

BLS UG FORUM 1, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

In attendance:

Staff

Seb Ripley, Vice President Heath Park (SR)
Hannah Doe, Vice President Education (HD)
Jane Chukwu, Vice President Postgraduate (JC)
Tim Fry, Student Voice Coordinator (TF)
Dena Stephens, Executive Support Assistant *Minutes*
Dai John, Dean for Undergraduate Studies (DJ)
Sian Ballard, College Education Manager (SB)
Annabel Hurst, Catering (AH)
Paul Jones, IT (PJ)
Emily Harding, Student Advice (JH)
Lindsay Roberts, Libraries (LR)
Joanne Jenkins, Careers and Employability (JJ)
Allan Theophanides, Learn Tech (AT)

Students

Eleri Howell, DENTL, (EH)
Taylor Youngsmith, MEDIC (TY)
Harpria Bhogal, PHRMY (HB)
Frank Frayne, MEDIC (FF)
Grace Flynn, HCARE (GF)
Lois Barber, MEDIC (LB)
Shloka Santosh Dhareshwar, BIOSI (SSD)
Charlotte Owen, HCARE (CO)
Princess Itohan Musa Braimoh, MEDIC (PMB)

MATTERS ARISING

None

STAFF UPDATE

IT: PJ reported a few wifi issues in halls that are being dealt with, although necessary cases of self-isolation are making access tricky. Cabled connections are available in the meantime. FYI, Zoom facility as provided by the university can be used for calling friends and family in addition to study and is free from any time restrictions.

LIBRARY: As of yesterday, the library is increasing the amount of books that can be requested from six to fifteen. Click & Collect is continuing as normal, but will be paused over the festive period (exact dates TBC). Currently looking at reading lists for spring semester in order to ascertain whether more ebooks are needed.

CATERING: Fairly quiet at the moment. Agreed with the university that outlets can now have four chairs per socially distanced table. If students are using these facilities, it's on the provision that the track & trace QR code on the table is used, so please make everybody aware. IV Lounge: more seats added. It's a catering space, though, so if you could buy a coffee or the like when using it that would be great. Click & Collect can be used to order food up to half an hour before collection. Catering are providing support to those students in halls self-isolating: a marketplace facility that delivers store cupboard essentials. Affected students should register on SIMS to use. This will give them £20 credit for items which will be delivered to their flat door the next day. This

service will be available until June 2021. Additional support will be provided to students staying in Cardiff over the Christmas break; there will be a complimentary Christmas lunch in Trevithick restaurant on Wednesday 23 December – students can register for this via an Eventbrite link which will be sent out soon. Catering are also currently putting together a Welsh-themed hamper, which will be provided to resident students free of charge and can be ordered via Marketplace. Additionally, Marketplace deliveries will also take place on 23 and 30 December, please place your order in the usual way if you can't get your usual supermarket delivery. To qualify for this extended Christmas support (and also support from the university as a whole), affected students need to register their residency on SIMS. Please note, also, that the catering department now has a new e-mail address: foodanddrink@cardiff.ac.uk which is regularly monitored. Feel free to get in touch regarding queries and to provide feedback.

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY: The Careers & Employability pages have been updated on the intranet, this is our gateway to support. We have the Career Account app – this is where you can make an appointment with a career adviser, access work experience/job opportunities and mock interviews, etc. AI CV checker also available, which is a very popular service. We also have 'Your Career Journey' app, a useful resource for students to help build a CV, help with career decisions, personality indicators, etc.

STUDENT SUPPORT & WELLBEING UPDATE

Career pages have been updated on the intranet – this is where you can make an appointment with a career adviser, access work experience/job opportunities and mock interviews, etc. AI CV checker also available, which is a very popular service. The intranet then provides a gateway to 'Your Career Journey', a useful resource for students to help build a CV, help with career decisions, personality indicators, etc.

LEARN TECH UPDATE

Digital education service has been set up to help schools deliver online learning – substantial investment from the university into this. BLS has had the largest investment in learning tech provision. To ensure all working as it should and staff allocation correct, a review is currently underway (report due mid-December). E-mail: DigEdSupport@cardiff.ac.uk if anyone has any issues, but please try to address at college level first.

BLS COLLEGE UPDATE

SB: Christmas support planning underway (e.g. switching to online learning, placement support for the rest of 2020). Also planning for next semester including remote study, which will be available if the course allows. Students will need to apply through SIMS, even if they've studied remotely for the autumn semester.

DJ: Thanks to everyone for your patience and engagement. It's been a major shift in light of events and a big thing to adjust to. People seem to have adapted well overall, so please pass on our thanks to your cohorts. In light of much less face to face contact, you're welcome to address any concerns you have directly; you don't have to wait for these meetings. The university has a fantastic relationship with the SU, which is a great source of information and they will do what they can to help too. We're really proud of the great relationship between students and schools, so would encourage any issues to be addressed at that level first – but please remember that we, or the SU, are able and happy to help if the problem can't be solved at that level. End of term is 18 December but there will still be some buildings open on campus for students staying in the area. Many staff members will be off work for a much-needed break, and you are also very much encouraged, for your wellbeing, to do the same. Please note, though, that as a result of the break, e-mail response times will be extended.

TY asked about Covid testing arrangements for students on clinical placement that finish on the last day of term. This is engendering a high level of anxiety for many students. SB replied that Rhian Goodfellow is working on this issue. Welsh Government will be issuing comms around this issue, but nothing published as yet. From a university point of view, testing in Cardiff will be available and the university is currently investigating all available options for keeping those students leaving on 18 December safe. Rest assured that Rhian is dealing with as a high priority and if she hasn't already communicated with affected students, she soon will. Please make sure that Rhian and her team are aware of any concerns.

STUDENT UNION UPDATE

Student Advice are a free, confidential and independent service based within the Students' Union. We provide advice and guidance to students on any issues that they may be having during their time at University. This year our service spoke to around 6,000 students.

We advise on a wide variety of topics but are predominantly approached for advice on academic issues. The ratio this year for cases we advised on is approximately 80% academic, 15% housing and 5% other.

We categorise academic issues as any issues a student is having with the University and/or their studies. Our independence means that we are uniquely placed to advise students on the University's procedures and we regularly advise on Extenuating Circumstances, Academic Appeals, University Complaints and Fitness to Practise. If any issues escalate to a formal panel stage, we can also support and represent students at the hearing.

Our housing advice covers a very wide range of topics, such as finding accommodation, signing and escaping contracts, housemate disputes, disrepair and damp and mould.

We have had our busiest time on record throughout the initial lockdown and are now working almost entirely remotely. A new theme that has arisen because of the pandemic, is student behaviour linking to breaches of coronavirus rules. Student Behaviour Contracts are being issued by the police, in partnership with the University. The police have also been issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for more serious or repeat breaches. The University will investigate any serious or repeat breaches of coronavirus rules and may refer to a Student Conduct Panel or Fitness to Practise Committee.

In addition to our case work, we have updated all of our webpages, which can be found on the [Advice Section of the Students' Union Website](#) and are a great resource for students. Each page has a web form at the bottom that enables students to ask specific questions, or simply request further information.

We have also been busy ensuring that our social media is delivering useful, evidence based content for our students, which matches the themes that we see through the year. If you are not already following us, you can find us on Instagram @CUSUAdvice

We are still very much open for business and students can get in touch by:

- Calling: 02920 781410, (phones are answered 09:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday);
- Emailing: advice@cardiff.ac.uk;
- Web forms at the bottom of every page;
- Live chat on our website.

SABBATICAL OFFICER UPDATE

JC: Study café available in the SU, 2nd floor, open 9am-3pm Monday to Friday. Please sign in and out in the Welcome Centre in order to use it. SU services still available online, and the Love Cardiff shop (ground floor SU) is currently open. Other shops on the ground floor also open, as is the Taf (all socially distanced). The health library and the library in the Julian Hodge building will be open over the holiday.

HD added that Executive Committees are now up and running, and HD has created an Education Steering Group for students. This provides a useful opportunity for students to feed directly into Executive Committees without a hefty time commitment. **Anyone interested, please contact HD and she'll provide a link to the Facebook group.**

SR provided a brief update on the Heath Park campus.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE FEEDBACK

TY: Student staff panel chaired on 11 November, which went well. All issues sorted in-house thanks to effective communication at all levels.

EH: Regular monthly meetings held with Head of Programme, proven to be very useful. Also, the New Dean has introduced further fortnightly meetings with all students, which is fantastic for communications and ensuring that all issues get dealt with quickly and effectively at school level. EH passed on thanks to school staff; dental work on patients can still be undertaken, which is testament to the hard work put in. Small number of issues to report:

1. Study space – a lack of library space and study space as a whole. Changing sessions in January and this will exacerbate matters. Any provision to extend the current bookable slot? LD replied that the current two hour slots are to allow a full clean, but that bookable session length and available locations are being actively looked at. SR added that much work is going on, looking to extend library opening hours and arrangements are being regularly reviewed. Watch this space.
2. Lost one whole clinic due to lack of wifi. IT are aware, but the issue seems a complex one. PJ acknowledged on behalf of the department.

DJ added that the space for charging issue has been raised by a number of people within the school and acknowledged this as a problem, but that a solution is actively being searched for at several levels.

SR reported on behalf of CO: Town Hall meetings held. Positive feedback, comms great.

FF - SSP last Friday, lots of feedback, both good and bad. Lecture support is good. Access to face to face teaching is valuable, although there have been technical issues with online lectures. These issues have been marked to be sorted as priority. The staff members on the panel took all issues on board enthusiastically. Happy that problems are being listened to.

LB added that as secretary, all minutes from last Friday's SSP have been e-mailed to Student Reps and Module Leaders. No further issues.

HB: Pre-meeting this week, great feedback about the online teaching. Main issue is the state of the building – leaks, aged lecture theatres, but will raise on Friday at SSP meeting.

BIOSCIENCE: SR raised an issue on behalf of the student rep, which had been raised in the SSP but not fully addressed. HD added that the issue is around the exam timetable, but that she is in continuous dialogue with Rhys (3rd year chair) about this. The year 3 bioscience exam is four hours long and is at a set time, which raises difficulties with international students and timezones. Ambiguity around referencing too and a lack of allowance for the different domestic environments in which students will be undertaking their exam. Students in some other schools have experienced this issue too, and HD is acknowledging this. DJ wasn't aware of this issue, but

is in contact with Dr Hefin Jones and Professor Clare Hughes, so will informally follow this up. In terms of issues with quiet space, the hardship fund might be able to help. There will also be some university spaces open that can be used, if a student is in the area. Hopefully lots of ways to explore a solution, and look forward to working with HD and the school in an attempt to resolve.

SS: One SSP taken place. All year 1 issues have been positively dealt with.

PMB: Positive feedback re: lectures. Thanks.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.