

## Minutes of the AHSS (UG) College Forum

Held on: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 2pm

### PRESENT

#### Staff:

Martin Jephcote	Dean for Education and Students for AHSS
Sian Lewis	AHSS College Education Manager
Hannah Doe	VP Education
Kate Gilliver	Associate Dean for Joint Honours (AHSS)
Paul Jones	IT Services
Martha Ashford	Library Team Leader (AHSS)
Tim Fry	Student Voice Coordinator (AHSS)
Jane Harding	Student Advisor

#### Student Reps:

Jess Adams	LAWPL
Al-Rayan Al Habsi	CARBS
Niamh Arlotte	SOCSI
Angel Balamatsias	MLANG
Alice Baldwin	CARBS
Tanisha Bij	JOMEC
Liam Billingsley	ENCAP
Bhavdeep Bola	LAWPL
Corrie Candlish	LAWPL
Arthur Ddamulira	LAWPL
Jaycie Leigh Dyer	MLANG
Sophie Eardley	MLANG
Alexander Garrett	CARBS
Thomas Harding	GEOPL
Rebecca Hardy	MUSIC
Zac Hayward	LAWPL
Emma Jane Higgins	LAWPL
Lowan James	LAWPL
Theofaneia Koukouraki	CARBS
Erina Kugasa	CARBS
Simona Mahera	MLANG
Charlotte Mallinson	LAWPL
Anna Moller	SHARE
Trinity Myton	CARBS
Faaizaa Nahar	ENCAP
You Xian Ng	LAWPL
Wawuda Osiemo	ENCAP
Leah Otto	GEOPL
Kinga Plata	LAWPL

Chloe Rosedale	SOCSI
Nishika Shibu	LAWPL
Madeline Sladden	ENCAP
Alissa Thiel	CARBS
Hansa Tote	ENCAP
Jennifer van de Weijden	SHARE
Kensa Wilson	ENCAP

**Apologies received by:** *Annabel Hurst (Estates) Sarah Albeson (Careers and Employability), Claire Morgan (Pro Vice Chancellor), Ben Lewis (Student Support and Wellbeing), Madeline Griffiths (CARBS), Sophie Bleaney (CARBS), Majeewan Kaur (ENCAP), India Yeardley (GEOPL), Fran Tute (GEOPL), Ian Hudson (LAWPL), Tara Taylor-Deacon (LAWPL), Matilda Page (MLANG), Jacob Jefferies (MLANG), Oliwia Gapinska (MLANG), Asha Armin (MLANG), Chloe Clancy (MLANG), Keisha Megji (SHARE), Oscar Willis (SHARE), Koki Mwololo (SOCSI), Lia Hadley (SOCSI).*

*HD welcomes everyone to the meeting and asks all staff present to introduce themselves. HD asks PJ for IT update.*

PJ explains there is no update but is happy to answer questions.

In absence of questions, HD asks MA for a libraries update.

MA explains that students can book in for short and long library spaces and that library times have been extended. Postal loans are an option for long distance students. If students are isolating or at home somewhere in England, they should contact the library to talk through options. There is also a scan and deliver option, where book chapters can be converted into pdf files and sent via email. MA then asks for questions.

In the absence of questions, HD asks JH for feedback from Student Advice. HD also comments on the responsiveness of the library to feedback and thanks them for it.

JH explains their role at Student Advice and how the service can be accessed via email and on the website. Specialities include academic and housing advice. The service always does its best to help a student and if they cannot, they signpost to the right place. JH then asks for questions.

In the absence of questions, HD gives a catering services update.

HD says that Annabel Hurst was unable to attend and sends apologies. Then explains that Trevithick Restaurant, Biosciences, IV Lounge and Hadrian Ellis are all open with usual opening hours. There is a Click and Collect service available at the Main building. Also a Click

and Deliver service for students that have residential meals on campus, for example Aberdare Hall. They can deliver to any of the Cardiff University residences and are looking to expand further. Finally, there is the Marketplace, which is the system for students who are isolating in university residences to use their £20 voucher to buy essentials. This happens automatically after a student updates their SIMs. Any queries can be sent to [foodanddrink@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:foodanddrink@cardiff.ac.uk).

HD asks for KG to give an update.

KG explains that they sent a survey to all joint honours students to send information and gather feedback at the end of last term. Key issues such as timetabling, module selection and access to years abroad. Have started a project involving collecting all the information regarding joint honours students and sent to staff to ensure the system runs smoother in the future. Asks for questions.

CC asks that as a student reading an International Relations degree with a Modern Foreign Language, would they contact KG if they encounter issues.

KG explains to CC they are on a single honours course. KG adds that if problems do arise due to conflicts between the two schools then CC could contact them for advice.

HD asks MJ for an update.

MJ mentions that the National Student's Survey goes live from 8<sup>th</sup> February and encourages Reps to spread the word. Explains that the data is invaluable as it allows universities to create action plans to determine areas that need attention. Furthermore, another module evaluation will occur later in the semester. Explains that in the last module evaluation, responses indicate a very positive experience. There were many modules with 100% scores across the college. There were one or two modules that did less well, but this information will be given back to the schools in two weeks time and discussed. Asks SL if they want to add anything.

SL declines adding more and then asks if there are any questions.

CM suggests that module evaluation should be done earlier, as the end of term is very busy, especially for 3<sup>rd</sup> years.

MJ agrees and explains that the module evaluation will not happen in the last week.

SL agrees with MJ and adds that this is so that module leaders can act on feedback quicker.

MJ adds that it will happen between week 6-8 depending on the school and that this data should be made available and discussed with the school at student/staff panel.

TH asks if last year results to the NSS are publicly available.

MJ explains that they are public but there is lots of raw data to look through. He hopes that schools will digest school specific information at the student/staff panel at an appropriate time and take advice to improve areas of weakness.

TH agrees that this is very positive and thanks MJ.

HD also agrees that is important to ask the schools at the student/staff panel to see the NSS responses. HD then provides an update regarding the Students Union. Explains that they are preparing for speak week next week and that it will be online. They then add that they have launched a study hangout on FaceBook for students to study over webcam and motivate themselves. HD then reminds everyone that nominations for sabbatical roles at the SU are open until 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. HD then encourages any attendees to email questions regarding this if they have any.

TF adds that there are also other roles up for grabs other than the VP roles, including scrutiny committee, delegates for the NUS conference, and the 10 campaign officer roles.

*HD asks for updates from chairs.*

JLD asks for confirmation that students will definitely be returning to face to face learning on February 22<sup>nd</sup> or if this date likely to be pushed back again? Also asks about what happens if students are unable to return due to travel restrictions and lack of public transport availability?

MJ explains that the First Minister of Wales will make an announcement tomorrow, and that the University will follow his advice, as well as Public Health advice. He adds that there is a plan in place for most possibilities to help support students, including if students want to continue the remote study policy and their course is eligible.

SL reminds everyone that first year students that do not want to return to halls have the choice to completely move out and claim money back. Also adds that students can request to remote study on SIMS if their course allows it. This means that if face to face teaching returns then students can be sent the link to continue virtually.

MJ adds that on courses such as Music, there are some ensemble modules that are on campus but these do not require you to return to Cardiff. MJ then asks KG if UG SHARE students etc, are required on campus.

KG replies that they do not know. They confirm that there is a lot of provision for teaching online, but do not know if this is 100% for all courses.

SL confirms that all undergraduate courses in AHSS can be taught online apart from conservation students.

CM raises the issue of a poorly worded email a few weeks prior stating that if they do their degrees entirely remotely then they may not count. Explains that it has since been clarified that this only applies to international students and asks for an update pertaining to this.

MJ explains that this is a very complicated issue for Global Opportunities and that it has not been clarified yet for some students from countries such as Malaysia. Explains that it is an ongoing issue. As far as a regulatory body's in the UK most of them have compensated.

CM asks where Reps should direct these enquiries from international students.

MJ directs CM to the Head of School and the Global Opportunities department.

SL adds that this is a country wide issue so many people are working together to find the answer.

HD thanks everyone for their input before mentioning a drop in session that VP Pres and VP Edu are running on Monday regarding Safety Net. HD then asks TM for feedback.

TM asks for clarity regarding the safety net policy and what it means for students in their various years.

MJ explains that there is a Safety Net for everyone but different elements apply for different people. He then adds that the safety net is very complex and different to other universities.

SL agrees, saying that the Safety Net is not a blanket policy, it is a collection of support mechanisms and differs between years and schools. The Safety Net this year includes uncapped resits, amended secondary rule, and change to extenuated circumstances policy and more. Should look on the student intranet for more specific information.

TM asks that if you resit an exam and it is uncapped, does this apply all the modules?

SL explains that it is a very specific. If you fail the assessment and fail the module then you can be uncapped. If you fail the assessment but pass the module then you cannot resit.

HD encourages Reps to give feedback regarding safety net and any other issue during speak week.

TM asks what the outcome was of the investigation into Helen McCarthy in BLS.

MJ says he does not know because it did not happen in AHSS. We can discuss this with BLS and inform students if they are concerned.

HD explains that an apology went to the students on the course.

CM adds that this incident has caused concerns amongst many students regarding staff's attitudes towards extenuating circumstances in other schools, and worry it is similar.

MJ replies saying it was an inappropriate comment and that she does not represent the rest of the staff at the University. Many staff do all they can to support students. It is concerning

that this incident is affecting student confidence in us, as many staff work incredibly hard to ensure the student experience is maintained.

SL adds that a lot of extenuating circumstances processes are automatic this year to benefit students and it does not require evidence initially.

TM states that some students in CARBS feel like their lecturers do not have the best equipment to provide online learning, especially during tutorials.

MJ says he will ask about this during his next meeting with the Head of CARBS. This kind of feedback is best provided to the Head of School directly.

PJ explains that there has been a huge drive to supply staff with equipment for lectures. Normally the main limiting issue is the quality of the local internet. This is hard for us to resolve.

TM asks about the student mentor scheme as they feel like mentees are not very involved and not turning up. We want to be able to provide a more engaging programme to encourage them.

MJ says that they will raise this with Student Support and work out best mode of action.

KW explains that they received information from a student that ENCAP did not have printed readers this year and this has impacted their studies.

MJ responds that there is University wide policy to move away from written materials and move online. Where possible, resources are provided electronically.

HD raises the issue of rebates for those that have left their accommodation in January and moved to remote learning from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb.

SL explains that any student who hands in their keys will get a rebate. Those students that cannot return due to travel restrictions are offered refunds.

JH contributes advice for those that live in private rented accommodation, saying Student Advice are advising students to get into contact with their landlords. Some may give refunds but it is best not to get too optimistic. There is the financial assistance programme available, and can approach Student Support to access it.

MJ adds that if a landlord wants proof of remote study, the university can provide this.

HD now opens the meeting to feedback from all Reps, starting with Business.

TM asks if it is acceptable for lectures to release pre-recorded lectures from previous years or they have to create new recordings.

MJ replies saying it depends on the lecture. Some lecturers have invested lots of time in this older recording.

KG agrees saying that they personally do this because they already have a bank of pre recorded lectures. These lectures are not live but recorded in an appropriate space and with appropriate audio and settings. As long as it seems like the lecturer has thought about it in advance then this should be okay. If it is a recording of last years lecture over Panopto in a lecture hall, this is not ideal.

TM responds saying that one of their modules involved the lecturer backdating old recordings, justifying it by saying the content does not change. Complaints were made because some recordings were incomplete/cut off. Issue has been discussed with the school and resolved - will now receive newly recorded lectures.

MJ thanks TM for bringing this to everyone's attention, as students receiving a lecture from years ago over Panopto is inappropriate.

HD asks for feedback from ENCAP.

LB returns to the issue of the university not providing students with printed materials, explaining it is much easier to annotate the documents on paper than online.

MJ disagrees saying that there are ways to annotate documents on a computer that are not expensive or hard to use. For example, can do it over Teams, etc.

PJ agrees with MJ saying there are many tools that can help with this. If anyone is not sure how to use these platforms then contact the IT desk to find out more. This policy has been put in place because printing is very expensive and not environmentally friendly.

LB asks if a student tries the digital format and does not like it, can they then be provided a printed copy?

MJ states they cannot be provided it by the university because it is their personal choice, so that student will have to meet the costs of printing. The University will print the documents if they have reasonable adjustment.

SL agrees with MJ saying that Covid means that distributing printed papers would be too hard. Staff are also affected by this policy.

HT raises the issue of lack of student support for coursework over the Christmas holidays.

MJ agrees that this was the case and adds that the university was closed for longer than usual and staff were encouraged to take annual leave. There was support for mental health issues but not academic.

MS states that many students in ENCAP are worried about being prepared for exams next year as many modules have been converted to coursework this year.

MJ encourages MS to ask the school to find out if this is how they will structure their programme forever. They may choose to maintain this current strategy. If they do say they are returning to timed exams then say that many students will feel out of practice and see their response.

HD thanks everyone and asks for feedback from GEOPL.

TH confirms everything is going well and that the school is helping to resolve issues about group working. They are trying to implement a standardised scheme to make sure all students contribute to a project, via peer assessments.

MJ responds saying that the school assessment and feedback leads met with Natalie Hughes this week, and she is going to run workshops across the college to solve the issue. Will be a mixture of peer and teacher review.

KG adds that it will go live next week and communication regarding it will be sent soon.

HD thanks everyone and asks for update from SHARE.

JVDW asks for an update regarding strikes.

MJ explains that an indicative ballot took place to see if staff wanted to strike but it did not go to a legal ballot. This means a strike is not immanent.

SL agreed with MJ.

AM explains that they wrote an email to international student support a couple of weeks ago about travel restrictions and it took about 10 days to get an answer. This is too slow to be helpful. AM then asks if there is anywhere else to contact to get quicker advice.

MJ suggests the Government website as travel restrictions change often and this website will have the latest updates.

AM elaborates that they mean more in terms of advice. It feels like international students are being left to decide for themselves.

JH suggests contacting Student Advice. They are not specialists at the SU for international students, but they try and keep up to date and sign post where students should look. The International student department is currently very overwhelmed.

HD thanks everyone and asks for feedback from JOMECE.

TB says that they are happy in JOMECE and that online platforms seem good.

HD thanks for the feedback and asks Law and Politics for feedback.



CM explains that they are receive exam support and mock examples. Then raises the lack of information and support from academic staff over Christmas.

MJ replies saying many staff were on annual leave and the University was closed.

CM suggests that if staff were on holiday, students should be on holiday too and not be given coursework that was due after the holidays. They were left without support.

MJ says it is a fair point, but the alternative is that deadlines will be before Christmas so students will have less time to do it.

CM replies saying it depends on the nature of the coursework and how much it counts toward the degree.

MJ says it is a tricky issue, as staff are contractually obliged to take annual leave at Christmas. He then recommends that CM discusses this with their school.

SL agrees with talking about it with the school, at least at staff/student panel. The university has to plan coursework deadlines accounting for the 2 week extension.

MJ adds that this planning must also account for staff marking the coursework. Ideally want marking done before teaching starts again.

EJH raises the issues of strikes and asks if it would affect all schools at the university.

MJ confirms that a strike is not immanent, but if it were to happen it would be university wide.

HD asks for feedback from Modern Languages.

SM asks for an update regarding exams and graduation and if they will be online.

MJ explains very few exams will be sat in person, but your school will contact you with this information. Graduation is unlikely to be online. The university will likely wait to do it face to face. Perhaps this summer but it may be later.

SM asks how to get books from the library that are 'not available'.

MA recommends that students contact the library with book name and author. Currently the library is only able to purchase eBooks. Hopefully will return to buying print books soon.

MJ asks MA for the process that students can use to request a book purchase.

MA explains that students emails their subject librarian and the library will try to purchase it.

HD asks for an update from Music.

RH explains students are happy that practice rooms are open. Main issue is students wanting instrumental lessons to be face to face as soon as possible as it is hard over Zoom.

MJ acknowledges this and agrees that hopefully it will be possible soon.

HD asks for update from Social Sciences and no response. Then asks for update from Welsh and no response. HD then recommends that students keep an eye on student news for updates and reminds students to fill out the survey from the sabbatical officers regarding their courses.

AB asks if the talk next week regarding the Safety Net is open to all students?

HD confirms that is open to all students.

*HD thanks everyone for their attendance and ends the meeting.*