

Minutes of the BLS College Forum Held on: Wednesday the 3rd of February at 2pm

PRESENT

Members:

Jane Chukwu (JC) - VP Postgraduate

Tim Fry (TF) - Student Voice Coordinator

Hannah Fatkin (HF) – Student Voice Coordinator

Sebastian Ripley (SR) - VP Heath Park

Emma Kidd (EK) - Dean of Postgraduate Studies (BLS)

Aylin Mooren (AM) - PSYCH

Philip Butler (PB) - PSYCH

Hannah Hereward (HH) - BIOSI

Sean Ashworth (SA) – OPTOM

Julia Marshall (JM) - MEDIC

JC thanked everyone for coming before commencing the session.

JC – Any issues that anyone wants to mention to start us off?

HH – Some issues with the progress monitoring forms in our department. People cannot submit them because previous ones have not been processed so students are not able to get them done.

EK – Can you clarify the problem a little more, why are they not able to submit?

HH – Basically there is a backlog issue where there are some forms still pending approval and when you have 3 pending you cannot add any more so people are unable to add any more until some are processed.

EK – Definitely chase your DPGRS because there really is a need for that and it should be done. This is a school level admin issues, but I will make sure to chase them for you so that it can hopefully get done.

JC – Yes thank you for that feedback we will look into it. Anyone other issues?

AM – We are having problems with the first monitoring review. Most of the courses were booked out or wait listed and we wanted to know if there were other options especially regarding linked in learning.

EK – Contact them directly, because often they can run them again if they know there is interest. University of East Anglia also has some very useful webinars etc. I also recommend you utilise LinkedIn learning it is very useful.

PB – The only thing about LinkedIn Learning is that it is very Americanised so be careful.

JC – Awesome suggestions thank you. Anyone else?

AM – A second issue we have is that a lot of PGR students don't really know how to contact each other. Thought about making a shared document to let them communicate or even a virtual coffee meeting especially for 1st year PGR students. Cause I think there is a definite want for student to engage with their peers and to be able to ask each other questions. Basically, looking for ways to create a shared PGR student community.

PB – Just so you are aware, we have a weekly coffee meeting for mature students' group so you can join that on Teams if you want and by joining the teams you will automatically get that invite.

EK – This is honestly a great idea; the school should be able to provide you with a list of other PGR students in your department for you to reach out to and set something up if you want.

HH – We have a Slack page up so students can speak to each other and stuff. Its quite useful I can share that slack link with you.

JC – Awesome yes, that is really helpful. Anything else?

PB – The dispersal of student locations makes it more challenging to get feedback from students and to being able to know about the issues they are having.

JC – Yes, I completely understand sometimes it is hard. We just want to be as aware as possible of everything that is going on.

SA – I have some feedback about online doctorate accrediting courses. Especially with students just starting they are often struggling to get onto some courses and the DA courses are definitely better than the linked in learning ones.

AM – I agree I think for sure the LiL is more personal development and the DA is more professional development.

EK – Again definitely just get into contact with them if you want to join because they will run multiple versions and multiple times. Also contact your subject librarian they can help with resources for sure.

JC – UEA also offers good training and courses. We have had great feedback about those things and encourage you to take a look. Anyone else?

SA – It is quite hard to organise coffee mornings etc. Are there any initiatives you know of to help encourage participation in the student PGR community?

PB – No it is definitely quite difficult no matter the turnout so just keep on keeping on. It is hard ut you just have to persevere. No one solution. My advice would be to try and time it when you think most students will be least busy.

JC – Can you send me the invitation to your coffee meeting I would love to attend it and be there.

PB – Yes of course, if anyone else wants to join please let me know.

JC – Thank you, anyone else?

HH – Any updates with the PG Covid funding?

EK – UKRI information has gone out and uni money has also gone out and will have funding applications to follow with the UKRI one. There will be a panel to make those decisions based on personal circumstances and mitigation and funding will be looked at based on all those things. Guidance for this will come out shortly.

JC – Yes so the university definitely has some information on that and are updating it regularly so keep an eye on it.

EK – Yes and students will be emailed about it as well. There is going to be some cons about the application as it had to be extended so the process can carry on. We are also working on guidance for supervisors, so we are making sure lots of information and training is available to them.

AM – That sounds awesome.

JC – Any more feedback?

SR – Just wanted to ask you guys to please promote speak week. It is really important for student feedback and the links are on social media. It so helpful so please engage and encourage others to engage.

TF – An email will go out to all PGRs for speak week. PGR typically do not respond much as we would love some support and feedback from them.

JC – Yes, thank you so much! If there are any other issues, please reach out.

EK – Just to let you guys know to there is a hardship fund, we are currently trying to promote it to PGR students. The Welsh Government gave us money to put into this fund so if there are any students struggling definitely look into it, it is means tested but it is useful, and we will be sending specific communications about it. We are also looking at developing a better communications strategy for PGR students. Looking at doing a newsletter to send specifically targeted at you guys which will include more regular useful information. That will start in a little bit so please keep an eye out for that.

JC – Thank you so much everyone for coming. Hope you all keep well and take breaks, so you do not drain yourself. If you need anything, please do get in touch we are here to support you. Thanks again.

END