

Minutes of Academic Council

Held at 5:15pm on Monday 28th April 2014 at University House, Meeting Room 1

Date of meeting	30/10/12	04/12/2013	03/02/2014	11/03/2014	28/04/2014
Number of Attendees	101 Attendees 65 Apologies	73 Attendees 100 Apologies	93 Attendees 66 Apologies	52 Attendees 60 Apologies	54 Attendees 29 Apologies

1. Apologies
Apologies were noted
2. Approval of minutes
Minutes were approved.
3. Approval of actions
Actions were approved
4. Course Rep investigate
 - a) VPE presented the previous strategy documents (2011-2014), and asked how many recognised it, four Course Reps did. For the next strategy (2014 onwards) Course Reps were asked to feedback on several questions relating to the Union.
 - i) **Q1 How could we improve our building for students?**
 - More bean bags or mattresses - nap room
 - More natural lighting
 - More flexible areas
 - Refurbish Sanctuary clubhouse
 - More cash machines
 - A smoothie bar or somewhere to get quick healthy fresh food
 - Better signs for welfare groups
 - Water fountains
 - Earlier opening coffee shops
 - Greater advertisement of career/ support service
 - Games room
 - Solar panels to reduce energy bill
 - Costa coffee in foyer
 - No stairs and faster lifts

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- Sports bar
- Spacious lifts
- Improve the lounge area of the first floor – possibly have a cafe
- Update sports facilities – a swimming pool, an astroturf which does not flood and an additional astroturf
- More outdoor communal areas and seating areas, not just a beer garden
- A statue of Tor – Solid gold
- A place to eat pack lunch – open social area
- Escalators
- Study spaces with wifi
- Accessible printers
- Bigger nightclub
- More reading areas other than the library
- More space for walkway when societies are sat on tables in the foyer

ii) Q2 What services do you think future students will want HUU to provide?

- Better printer allowance and printers in the union
- More student finance support for when they mess you about
- More support on campus for finance – such as with NHS bursaries or grants
- Dissertation binding service over Easter
- First aid training or/and personal safety training
- More engagement with part time/ mature students
- More library computers and study rooms with computers
- Money off local gigs and shows etc
- Staff house style canteen
- CV workshops
- Events related with culture- social – making friends
- Easier to sign up to sports for exchange students
- More links with Scarborough
- Bringing students from all over university together be it from sports, jobs, societies
- More workshops on how to run events successfully, enough of us are trying
- Careers service
- More focus on Jobshop
- More support leaving university
- Integrated employability into courses – more workshops to improve skills
- More help centres for people in general, especially people with special needs

iii) Q3 How could HUU improve to meet future student's needs?

- Subscribe to more online journal article websites
- More of a variety of food in shop
- Digital board showing sabs timetables

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- Support activities/ societies more rather than just focusing on sports
- eBridge – where students can submit their requests
- Healthier food available in Sanctuary
- Online time tables
- Water fountains around campus
- To be more active for students
- Connecting with the local business to provide job opportunities during university/
- Require students to create LinkedIn presence
- More financial help and support for fresher's
- Transparency
- Engage with what is going on in the city more (arts especially)
- Better handovers for societies so they can improve instead of revert back to square one
- More student forums – a place for people to meet at one and discuss different issues not just SSC
- More support for students when they are struggling with their degree/ department
- Make a calendar of all the different events so everyone knows what is going on
- A bigger focus on mental health – also better mental health services, bring back nightline
- Notice board in HUU
- Exam stress relief
- Better/ more rewards for volunteers
- More training for volunteers
- Better advice for first year students living away from home
- More lecturer accountability – less 'school children' attitude
- More help with future employability- more careers fairs with firms representing both the North and the South of the UK

iv) Q4 What do you think future students needs will be different in 2017?

- Digital information
- Extra employability
- Updated technology – university needs to be up to date and needs to help students use the current technology eg mature students
- Possible drop in price of cost of going to university, less people need to get their money's worth
- Loads of people have degrees- more transferrable skills
- More reliance on technology (ie electronic Journals, ebridge should be more user friendly/widely used)
- Mix exchange students with 'local' students
- Will need to be engaged in the city of culture so it is not just a take over
- Cheaper prices
- More ebooks- pdf journals
- Degree quality 'value for money'

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- ebridge more powerful
 - More relevant career advice
 - Tighter budgets
 - Will want more vocational courses
 - Interactive mobile apps
 - Better housing
 - More mobile, requiring brief, efficient communication ie apps text mobiles
- b) Course Reps were asked to let Academic Council know positives and negatives of Academic Council.
- i) Positives
- Regular meeting and a wide range of issues explored
 - Its a nice way to meet people
 - Good variety of issues discussed
 - Break-out groups
 - Concise meetings
 - Varied times
 - Interactivity – everyone can contribute during discussions
 - Community spirit
 - Discussion
 - Very well organised and structured
 - Lots of points put across – productive
 - Communication
 - Making friends
 - Share opinions
 - Better use of time and more effective
 - We get stuff done
 - Free, open opinions
 - People who care about change in education
 - Informal nature of the meetings
 - Easy environment to be able to raise issues in front of everyone
 - Comfortable atmosphere to speak opinions
 - Effective communication
 - Training was effective
 - Being able to contribute to something we can actually change
 - Sense of community
 - How a range of issues are discussed and students get to have a say
 - Everyone is friendly
 - Approachable people
 - Interactive meetings
 - Good timekeeping

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- Laidback environment – confident to air your views
- Course rep bonding time
- Brings different courses together
- Interactive and friendly
- Easy to make your voice heard, while you are not forced to speak if you don't have anything to say
- Informative
- Organised
- Get to voice opinions
- Good control of the room
- Tor has good control of the room and making sure everyone has equal say
- 30 second presentation technique
- We can state students opinions
- Different departments get together
- We promote students needs
- Get to meet other course reps
- Tor is amazing
- The one hour sessions – keeps it concise but detailed
- The interactivity and different ideas
- Good to mix with other course reps
- Timings don't clash with lectures as much this year
- Frequency of meetings
- Feelings of involvement
- Communication via ebridge
- Meeting were brief and relevant
- Effective use of time
- Steve rapidly minuting 😊
- Chance to take things straight to VPE
- See other peoples problems
- Evidence that it makes a difference – great library redevelopment for example
- Chance to meet others from other courses
- Diverse
- You meet and talk with reps from other courses
- Teamwork
- There is always enough people to debate, but not so many it turns into chaos
- Interesting
- Feel confident to express the ideas that you have
- Excellent point of contact in the other course reps and VPE

ii) **Negatives**

- Better turnout
- Sometimes the meeting go on too long

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- More warning a few days before as a reminder/calendar via email
- Practical activities
- Good potential to bring up any potential problems
- Incentives
- Seen changes
- Reference
- Incentives increase engagement?
- Let reps consult with friends before AC
- Meeting schedule conflicted with classes all semester, if they could be allocated on different days it would be better
- Tea and coffee
- Sometimes arguments over things beyond VPE's control
- Not enough notice
- Erratic times
- Course reps who do not attend AC should be named and shamed and struck off
- Tea and coffee and biscuits
- Could communicate through text as well as email
- Tighter schedule so sessions don't over run
- Smaller groups for AC, so sessions don't overrun
- Not much induction for first years (apart from training) we were thrown in the deep end
- Maybe an initial meeting just for first years to get to grips with things
- Tea and biscuits
- More information regarding agenda provided before AC
- Too long sometimes
- Often at inconvenient times
- Lack of tea and biscuits
- Feel disconnected with student-staff
- That people get away with not attending
- Notification at the start of the year – we were not notified of meeting and therefore missed the first one
- Still no room in the library for disabled students, there used to be
- No 9.15 meetings
- Issues raised that could be dealt with at SSC
- Greater detail with regards to additional course rep training and departmental reps
- Tight schedule
- Text to next council
- Better and regular training
- Break the group down to smaller groups
- Consequences for course reps who don't attend academic council
- Sometimes you are put on the spot to think of things, ideas etc
- Better advertising to first years
- Usually inconvenient time

- Text reminders for meetings
- Tighter scheduling – overruns sometimes
- Attendance is low – maybe break AC down to smaller groups
- To be given more information about AC at the start of the year eg strategy
- Lack of awareness regarding changes made by AC
- Lacks tea
- Make sure not all the same people are doing all the talking
- Replace chairs in the meeting room
- Efficiency
- Reference letter
- Incentives
- Incentives
- Reference at end
- Encourage non-attenders to turn up
- Sometimes meetings can go on too long
- Improved awareness of course reps during welcome week
- Some course reps never turn up – unfair!
- Should be more informed at the beginning of the year
- Text service instead of emails
- Greater publicity of who course reps are and what their role is
- Gets too chaotic when a lot of people turn up, especially at the beginning of the year
- Improving attendance
- Might be a bit 'scary' to talk in a big forum
- Some issues raised aren't always relevant, should be raised at SSC
- More open to the students who aren't course reps
- Turn out is poor
- Keep to a schedule because sometimes it overruns a lot
- Official acknowledgement as course rep
- Meeting schedules were unable to accommodate all students schedules
- The same people always turn up, those who don't turn up don't get punished
- Ability to report departmental / course concerns to faculty rep
- Change times/ days for each council, later seems to be better

5. Course Rep Issues

Within teaching spaces, there are only several seats that allow for left-handed students. The majority of teaching areas with seats that come with a small desk attached are primarily for right-handed students, not left-handed students.

Library Issues

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- i) A Course Rep raised an issue with the computers within the library – the screens are unable to turn to accommodate for sunlight and glare. VPE noted that the wrong bracket for these computers was purchased, so this will hopefully be changed.
- ii) A library issue around food and drink was raised, the Course Rep was told that they could go into a certain part of the library with it, but not another section.
- iii) Booking library study rooms, unable to do so on a bank holiday
- iv) Lifts take a long time to travel the floors, this is especially difficult for those with access difficulties

A Rep noted that there is a problem with a member of staff, and that it has been taken to SSCs and the head of department and there had been no change. VPE asked Reps to take it to the Dean of the Business School.

MEQs are inconsistent across the University, some are leaving the forms in the room, some are not. Furthermore, some are not leaving the room when MEQs are being filled out.

A Nursing Course Rep raised the concern that they had a four week term, their lectures take place in the Lesley Down, the microphone would not work during lecturing. VPE made Course Reps aware of the new initiative that means lecturers will be supported with technical queries – the Tech ELTs.

Regarding the HUU Awards a Course Rep noted that there was an error with a nomination – the description said “took a leading role in ISA trips”, in fact she was the only one to led the trip and felt recognition of this should be noted.

Tom Wardman spoke about the Middleton Hall Re-development

-Noted that the development is starting in July and there is currently no communication regarding this

-Tom asked for feedback on publicity

-One rep said that only those departments affected should be communicated to another noted that some departments are not the “general” users of Middleton Hall but still use it, so it should be communicated to all departments across the University.

-Dates of the re-development work to be on billboards

-A Catwalk will also be constructed, here will be another place for promotion

A Rep raised the concern that there are no new additions of books for core modules. VPE said that at SSCs ask the library rep to ask for new books to be brought in.



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Any Other Business

- i) Thank you from VPE and ERC for all of the hard work and dedication of Course Reps
- ii) Strategy is very important