

Faculty Representatives Termly Report

2017-18

Your Name: Matthew Smith

Your Faculty & Role: Brain Sciences Faculty Representative

Faculty Priorities:

The three issues which I believe ought to be driving the agenda in Brain Sciences are the following:

- The proliferation of Lecturecast Availability.
- Information about how strike action undertaken by staff might affect students' education.
- A more even distribution of deadlines.

My rationale

- The proliferation of Lecturecast Availability.
Even though educators' use of lecturecast facilities is optional, many students have reported to me that their lectures have declared that they abstain from recording sessions because this could trigger a decrease in attendance during teaching time. In my judgement, this view is totally misguided, and a great amount of effort should now be exerted to school staff on the benefits of lecturecast usage.
- Information about how strike action undertaken by staff might affect students' education.
At the tail end of last term students heard of the strike action to which staff may resort over changes to their pension arrangements. While most undergraduates in the faculty are sympathetic, they do feel as if more information about this dispute is owed to them by their tutors since some of those who I represent fear that their tuition might be adversely impacted.
- A more even distribution of deadlines
In certain divisions of the Faculty, modules deadlines continue to be tightly bunched. Firstly, this loads students with an severe burden of intellectual and emotional strain. Secondly, I am not convinced in the slightest that this state of affairs is irreparable in spite of being told so by university officials. I shall continue to push for reform in this regard.

Meetings in the Faculty:

At the latest Faculty Teaching Committee, I raised the feedback stated below. For the reader's convenience, these points have been categorised by department.

PALS

- Learners of Psychology and Language Sciences thoroughly appreciate the *Life After Pals and Where is Psychology Now?* seminars.
- A goal for students in this department is to establish a subject-specific society for themselves.

Psychology

- Most Psychology undergraduates at UCL consider theirs to be an impressive course overall.
- There is a need in this department for variation in modes of assessment within this department because exams are causing exhaustion. More essays and multiple-choice tests would be preferred.
- At present there seems to be a jumble of old and marking standards causing disconcertion for those studying psychology.
- There is much keenness from students reading for a degree in Psychology for the department to use the full scale of marks when grading work.
- It has been alleged that assessors sometimes regard a higher number of references to be more indicative of an outstanding performance on an assignment than an excellent quality of writing.
- On the whole, many in Psychology deem the department's pace of progress to be slow when problems are raised.

Linguistics

- People in the process of completing a three or four-year degree programme in Linguistics have been disgruntled by an uneven distribution of modules between terms 1 and 2.
- In this department, according to some students, there has been a palpable improvement in the area of teaching practice compared to previous years.
- The typical temperature of certain rooms in Chandler House remains extreme. 118 is usually exceedingly cold whereas B02 is frequently comparable to a sauna. This issue has been brought to my attention by numerous individuals.

All of the insights above have been noted by the Faculty. In response to a separate complaint lodged by the undergraduate Linguistic community, the department has extended its deadline for long essay submission by one week.

Meetings with the Union:

At union council assemblies, I have requested and received clarification pertaining to the Union's stance on boycotting the NSS again. I will see to it that this clarification is disseminated to the undergraduate population of the Brain Sciences Faculty forthwith.

Other comments:

A paramount priority of my is to establish a Facebook page for everybody in the Faculty to boost connectivity between the various parts of its student body.