Faculty Representatives Termly Report
2017-18

Your Name: Shahid Janatmir
Your Faculty & Role: Faculty Representative Engineering (Undergraduate)

Faculty Priorities:

Feedback on coursework and assessment of learning objectives is an area of concern amongst many of the departments in the faculty. It is of no surprise to see that reflected in the previous year's NSS survey. All the departments except for Biomedical and Medical physics and Biochemical department, scored lower than UCL average in this indicator. In fact, the following statement scored extremely low in all the engineering departments compared to the national average "Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand". From speaking to students, it is vividly clear that improvements have been made at a very slow pace. To help tackle this issue, I have started a campaign of meeting teaching fellows to stress the importance of feedback to students across the faculty. The responses have been very positive, with lecturers emphasising their will to ensure that teaching assistants provide feedback that is both detailed and clarifying.

Secondly, students across the faculty feel that seminars and tutorials are an important part of their learning experience. Tutorial numbers are inadequate, with the majority of taught modules having no tutorials in place. Once again, where this is the case, lecturers have been consulted and students' needs stressed in the light of meeting the expectations of the student body.

Meetings in the Faculty:

Inorganisation and lack of student support has persistently been reported by students across the faculty of Engineering, this applies particularly to Mathematical Modelling and Analysis. This module is taken up by first and second year students in most of the departments in the faculty. To bring about reforms within this module, I, in consultation with students across the faculty, proposed an alternative programme structure to the current module coordinator, Dr Abel Nyamapfene. One such proposal is to have smaller tutorial classes, with maximum size of 15 students per tutorial class, as opposed to 70/80 students in a hotel room (which is what's happening now). These tutorial classes should take place in seminar rooms, whereby students can freely express their way of solving workshop questions with their peers and their assigned teaching assistant.

Secondly, feedback on coursework in this module over the last term has been below UCL standards in some departments, which has been relayed to Dr Abel. With the proposal of strict guidelines for teaching assistants, (where a mark(s) is/are deducted, thus a justifying reason should accompany it, which should align with the mark scheme), this proposal will help to resolve the issue of feedback not being detailed and/or clarifying.

Additionally, Matlab, which is part of the learning outcome of the module is not taught in an effective manner. Currently, Matlab aspect is part of the tutorial problems, whereby solutions to the problems are provided. Students expect to learn Matlab within the tutorial sessions, which is not being delivered. An alternative proposal has been made, which will involve the teaching assistants demonstrating how to answer tutorial questions as well as Matlab questions, if needed, together with their assigned class of students.

I and Dr Abel are working towards implementing these reforms in the next month or so, and these should be active very soon.

Other comments:

If anyone wants to speak to me regarding any issue(s) within the department/faculty, drop me a message on my email and we can organise a suitable time to discuss it further. My email is: shahid.janatmir.15@ucl.ac.uk.