

Faculty Representatives Termly Report

2017-18

Your Name: Shih-Che Hsu

Your Faculty & Role: Bartlett & Faculty Rep (Postgraduate Research)

Faculty Priorities:

In term one, as a faculty rep for postgraduate research students, I tried to meet with lead department reps both formally and informally, and created a common Facebook message group together for collecting opinions from different departments. I also asked opinions from every department reps before the faculty meetings. I found the space issue is one of the most pressing student needs in the Bartlett. The main building of Bartlett was just moved from Hampstead road to Gordon street in the third term of 2016/17 and there were also some space rearrangements across different departments in the Bartlett in term one, so the research students care about the changes of the space they already had and the rights of using new space. The research students are treasures of university, and they work and live closely and almost the same with staff in the school, so it is absolutely worthwhile to give them a better research environment. A better research environment can bring better research results and efficiency. However, as I know so far students' space in some departments is still limited and decreasing due to the growing student number. Some students don't have a fixed desk or personal space as they want, so they cannot go to school for research or they have to change work location day by day. For those who already had a desk, the shrinking space makes the research environment worse, so they would rather go to the library or stay at home than stay in the allocated desk they have. The uneven space is really a pressing issue for research students. We all know the space is really limited and pricy in central London, but we still can try to seek out a win-win solution to solve the gap between students' expectation and the real situation. No matter from the feedback of students or different students surveys (like PRES 2017 or Student Space Survey), we all can know students care about the space issue including research space, teaching space and common space.

Meetings in the Faculty:

I attended all different level of faculty meetings this term including Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC), Faculty Teaching Committee (FTC), Bartlett Student Experience Committee as a faculty rep, and the department Staff Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) as a department rep within my own department, UCL Energy Institute. (1) In the faculty meetings this term, almost all discussion focused on and based on the results of PRES 2017. We examined the score of different categories in different departments. Focusing on the categories with poor score, we tried to figure out the reasons. All we want to do is to improve

students' learning experience in the Bartlett. We even successfully applied for a Changemakers bid from UCL followed by the conclusion of Bartlett Student Experience Committee, BENFED: Bartlett Feedback Enhancement Drivers, and will run the focus groups discussion in the following months to know how we could improve their students' learning experience. (2) With other faculty reps (undergraduate and postgraduate taught), we also raised some BME discussion with in the FTC meeting, I mentioned sometimes poor learning performance and experience result from they need more support or time to be familiar with using English than English native speakers. Therefore, when discussing BME issues, it is also worthwhile to see the results between English native speakers and non-English native speakers. (3) We also raised different space issues across different departments and different groups (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) like I mentioned in the text of the first box, Faculty Priorities. (4) I also discussed the new Bartlett doctoral blog 2017 and the new Bartlett Doctoral Hub with FRDC members by emails. We discussed different ways of operating them. The Bartlett Doctoral Hub brings together news, events, blogs and publications relating to PhD students at the Bartlett.

Meetings with the Union:

In the term one, I attended one informal Faculty Reps Forum. In this forum I found there are two kind of faculty reps, elected and non-elected (volunteered). The elected faculty reps have the right to vote in the union meetings and are included in the mailing list of formal union/university meeting invitation; however, for those who are volunteered to be the faculty reps like me, we don't have the right to vote in the union meetings and are included in the mailing list. In my opinion, all faculty reps should be in the union meetings invitation circulation no matter whether they are elected or not. Although we don't have the right to vote, at least we can catch up all different discussing issues and express our opinions in the meetings simultaneously rather than replies the emails followed by some union meetings on some specific and important issues. Therefore, we can be the bridge between union and students appropriately. The mental health issue the Union is working on might help research students in their research life to manage their study, time and the social connections with colleagues and supervisors.

Other comments:

I observed in some departments there is no department rep for research students or in some departments the lead department rep is a postgraduate taught student. I also observed there are no separate department SSCC meetings for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students in some departments, but there are in other departments. In my opinion, making the organisation construction same would help students find the right person easily to express opinions and seek help when they need. I believe all student reps are very willing to meet and help students once they know someone needs us.