STUDENTS' UNION UCL

Academic Representatives

Academic Representation

Annual Report
2020-21

Introduction

Academic representation at UCL is crucial and important for the improvement of the student experience across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Students' Union UCL works in partnership with UCL, Course Reps, Lead Department Reps and Faculty Reps to continuously advocate for changes and initiatives that would benefit the student body. The role of Academic Representatives is key for bridging the gap between academic staff and the student cohort. Academic Reps are the voice of students, they interact with staff, they are involved in local decision-making, policy creation, and more. Although we operated online this year due to the pandemic and following our Temporary Operating Model, this role still provided a great developmental opportunity for those involved. The 1896 Reps who have worked tirelessly this year have provided the Union with valuable insight and feedback, which helps us to further improve the support we offer students and ensures that education at our institution remains a transformative opportunity for all.

Throughout the academic year, the Union supports and monitors the work of Academic Representatives. An end-of-year handover and reflection form is used to summarise the feedback and recommendations of Reps, the results of which are given in this report. The lack of in-person interaction this year has provided unforeseen challenges, but our Academic Reps have successfully overcome these challenges and promptly created solutions to any issues faced across their departments and faculties. Some of the successes achieved by our Academic Reps include extending assessment deadlines, establishing online journal clubs, organising virtual social events, improving mental health support services and adding subtitles to lecture recordings. This clearly shows the level of dedication, time and effort our Reps put into this role, which in turn created a better learning environment for students. Despite the virtual setting, Academic Reps have been excellent at communicating with their peers, other Reps and academic staff. This has ensured that online teaching was delivered smoothly and was tailored to students' wants and needs.

While the positive impact Academic Reps have on the student body is obvious, taking on this role is also an opportunity for development for the Reps themselves. Many of our Academic Reps have reported that taking on this role has helped them improve their communication, teamwork, organisation and time management skills, while also boosting their confidence. The reflection and feedback we gather from Rep show that they are truly proud of the work they have done this year and that they have made significant achievements. Our Rep of the Month and Rep of the Year awards serve as a form of recognition to our Reps, in conjunction with a certificate at the end of the academic year.

Although this year was far from ordinary, Academic Reps managed to make sure that students' needs were met, and that online learning did not take away from the traditional UCL experience. All 1896 of them were vital in achieving this, and they have considerably helped my job as the Education Officer. Their quick problem-solving skills and reliability made working during this unusual year much smoother. This report proves that Academic Reps have contributed tremendously to the re-shaping of education at UCL, and that operating online has opened many doors for future improvements. While in-person interaction was greatly missed, the connections we made online through our Academic Reps network is just as valuable and just as strong.

Ayman Benmati
Education Officer 2020-21
Students' Union UCL

Key Figures

This year we had **1896** Academic Representatives.

We worked with Academic Reps for **155** of 168 SSCCs **(92%)**.

74% of SSCCs appointed a Lead Department Rep.

100% of Faculty Rep Roles were filled and they were more active than ever before.

1086 Academic Reps completed a handover document for their successor, up from 831 in 2019-20 **(+30%)**.

1008 Academic Reps received recognition certificates, more than ever before.

1682 Academic Reps were trained this year **(89%)**.

Developing Academic Representation

For the past four years, our work has been guided by the 2020 Vision for Student Academic Representation, overseen by the Student Engagement Steering Group. Our ambition is captured in the 2020 Vision: students to be partners in their education; through their Student Academic Representatives all students should be able to drive change for a world class academic experience at UCL.

The 2020 Vision provided thirteen priorities for improving Academic Representation, as listed below. After tracking the progress of key objectives, we can assess how these priorities have been met.

1: Developing regulations, policy and a shared agreement on student representation and engagement provision across UCL.
We had developed and adopted a new section on [Student Academic Representation](#) in the UCL Academic Manual.

2: Building a strong and supportive community of student academic representatives across UCL, with enhanced opportunities to share common interests within and across subject disciplines and levels of study.
We were in an increasing trajectory with the NSS results around student feeling of being part of a community of staff and students, however this has declined by 7.1% in the most recent results which may be largely affected by COVID0-19.

3: Strengthening the link between representatives in departments and faculty representatives, cultivating a mutually beneficial relationship to effect change at the departmental and faculty level; and scope for a new role of lead department representative, to play a crucial role in championing staff-student partnership.
Understanding amongst Course/Research Reps from 2017/18 to 2020/21 of the roles of both Lead and Faculty Reps increased by 10 and 20 percentage points respectively.

4: Reforming formal committees such as Staff Student Consultative Committees to be transformational spaces, which provide an accessible platform for staff and students to build on good practice as well as co-create and effect change to enhance the student experience.
Our Annual Survey of Academic Reps indicates consistently high satisfaction with SSCCs – from 76.6% in 2017/18, to 77.3% in 2020/21, with a peak of 80% in 2018/19.

5: Identifying and addressing barriers to participation for potentially marginalised student groups such as Black & Minority Ethnic students.
We have held targeted leadership events for BME students and other marginalised groups, attracting good numbers of students who engage. We have more work to do on monitoring of the diversity of Academic Reps and are working on this in tandem with the recommendations of the recent Race Equity Implementation Group.

6: Enhancing our system for monitoring, analysing and reporting issues arising in departments, and the outcomes of students and staff working in partnership to resolve these issues.
We have published an annual report on the student priorities for education which is largely informed by the work of academic reps and what they have been working on with their departments.

7: Ensuring that the value of democracy, accountability and citizenship is enshrined in the role of student academic representatives.

We have developed further guidance for departments to conduct more rigorous elections. There has also been an increase in students being elected rather than appointed unopposed, from 25% to 48.6%.

8: Continuing to assess and grow the support provided to student academic representatives throughout their lifecycle to ensure they are inducted, trained, supported and recognised to provide an effective voice for students.
97% of Academic Reps would recommend the induction and training to others, with nearly 90% responding that the training was helpful for their role (less 2% felt it was not). We have also in recent years introduced further thematic workshops and masterclasses to help Academic Reps develop more skills and knowledge around emerging institutional priorities.

9: Developing support and resources to enable staff to champion and harness a partnership approach towards engagement with students.
We have continuously developed resources for our colleagues to support them in working with their Academic Reps. We continue to work with other areas of UCL, such as the Arena Centre, to develop and offer workshops for colleagues in faculties and departments.

10: Identifying and supporting departments with little evidence of effective student engagement practices.
We have worked with the Office of the Vice Provost (Education & Student Experience) to meet with departments who had low student voice scores in the NSS, to offer support and assist with reflection.

11: Assessing the impact and effectiveness of representation for postgraduate research students.
We have continued to discuss this with the Doctoral School and continue to monitor the experience of our Research Student Reps.

12: Reviewing the branding and key messages for student academic representation to ensure the scheme's values are understood by staff and students.
The old StARs brand was retired and we relaunched a clearer and more inclusive Academic Reps brand. This has gone from strength to strength, with much greater awareness and use amongst the student body and staff community.

13: Undertaking a review of the scheme's operating processes, to ensure these remain fit for purpose, efficient and have the confidence of staff and students.
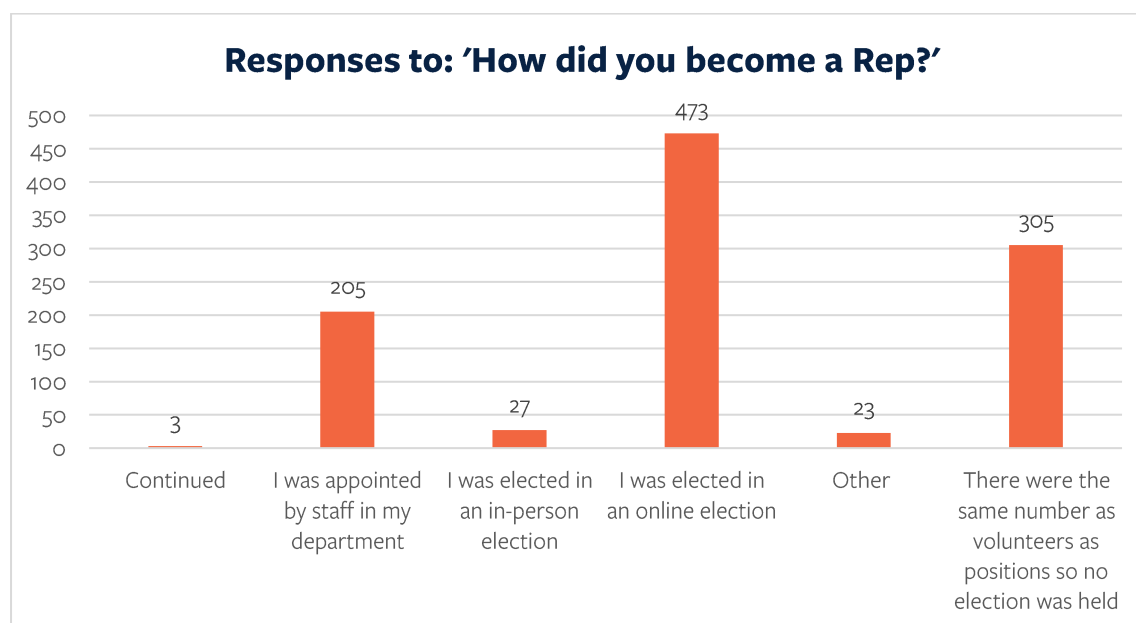**We had undertaken a full root and branch review of the operating processes and transformed these to be more efficient for all parties whilst remaining fit for purpose. An example of this is through our online rep returns portal which has eliminated much administration and duplication of labour when returning rep details to us.**

The Academic Rep Experience

In 2020-21 there were 1896 Academic Representatives on record, compared to 1960 for 2019-20. Each year through an Annual Survey of Academic Reps we establish the Rep's perspective on how their year has been and identify how we can improve what we offer in future.

Recruitment

Our survey results show that 49% of students who responded were elected by students on their programme in a competitive election, which is up from 38% in 2019-20. The vast majority (94%) of these elections took place online due to the temporary operating model of remote learning. A further 29% of students stated that they would have been appointed by an election, but that there were the same number of volunteers as positions available, with an additional 20% stating that they were appointed by their department's staff. In the future we want to continue to work on embedding a culture of electing students to fill these positions as this is the best practice in giving students the choice as to who represents their views and strengthens the accountability to those they represent.

Responses to: 'How did you become a Rep?'

Category	Value
Continued	3
I was appointed by staff in my department	205
I was elected in an in-person election	27
I was elected in an online election	473
Other	23
There were the same number as volunteers as positions so no election was held	305

Induction, Training and Support

Training for new Course and Research Student Representatives provides these students with an introduction to the important elements of their role and asks them to consider the strategies they will utilise to fulfil their necessary responsibilities. This role-based training encourages Academic Reps to understand students' priorities, and to think about how they can work with staff to take action that will improve students' education, whilst also providing an introduction to how the Union works and interacts with UCL.

**Reps Trained (Number and Proportion)**
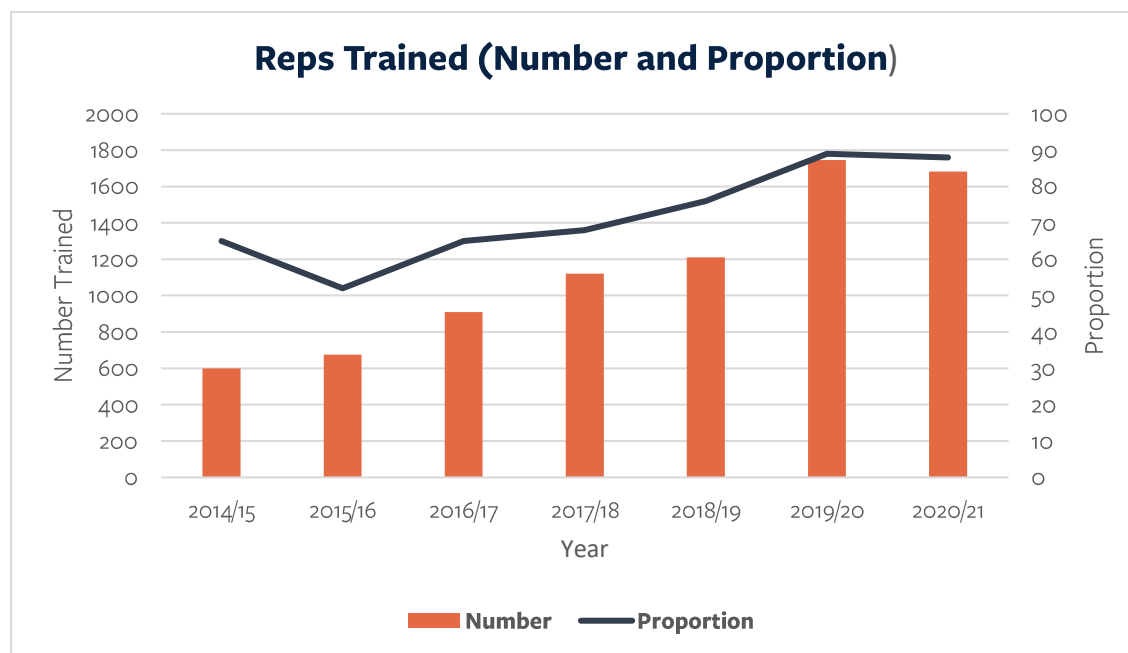
In addition to the core training, an additional workshop and masterclass programme were developed and delivered, some of the topics covered were: Making the Most of your Virtual Common Rooms, Improving Access and Participation of BAME Students in Postgraduate Research, Making the Curriculum More Inclusive and Taking Forward Race Equity, Improving Support for Students with Disabilities, Improving Sustainability at UCL and Using Data and Evidence to Make Change. The feedback received on the new training programme was very positive overall, and take up on the additional programme is shown below:

We are particularly pleased that there have been positive increases in reported satisfaction with the training, with 89% of respondents in agreement with the phrase 'the online training helped me to carry out my role as an Academic Rep' and less than 2% disagreeing with the statement. This is up slightly from 84% in 2019-20. Most Reps also responded that they would recommend the training to the future cohort, with 97% responding with this answer. Again, this is an increase on the previous year, where 94% of reps said that they would recommend the training. 1682 (89%) Academic Reps were trained in 2020-21, consistent with the previous year.

Reps were invited to offer suggestions on how training could be improved in the future and what additional training could be added. Whilst the vast majority (68%) indicated no further suggestions, some frequent responses included requests for more information on topics such as the day-to-day activities of Reps and case studies from previous years' Reps. Some issues were also flagged with the formatting of the Moodle module and other technical problems.

Reps were asked as part of the survey to rate the support which they have received from the Union in four key areas: online training, email updates, individual support and online resources. Generally, these

areas were all well rated, with email updates receiving the highest proportion of Very Good/Good responses (87%). Individual support was the lowest rated of these categories, which can likely be attributed to the difficulties in providing a support programme virtually, as well as the difficulties in providing full support for the large number of Reps active in 2020-21.
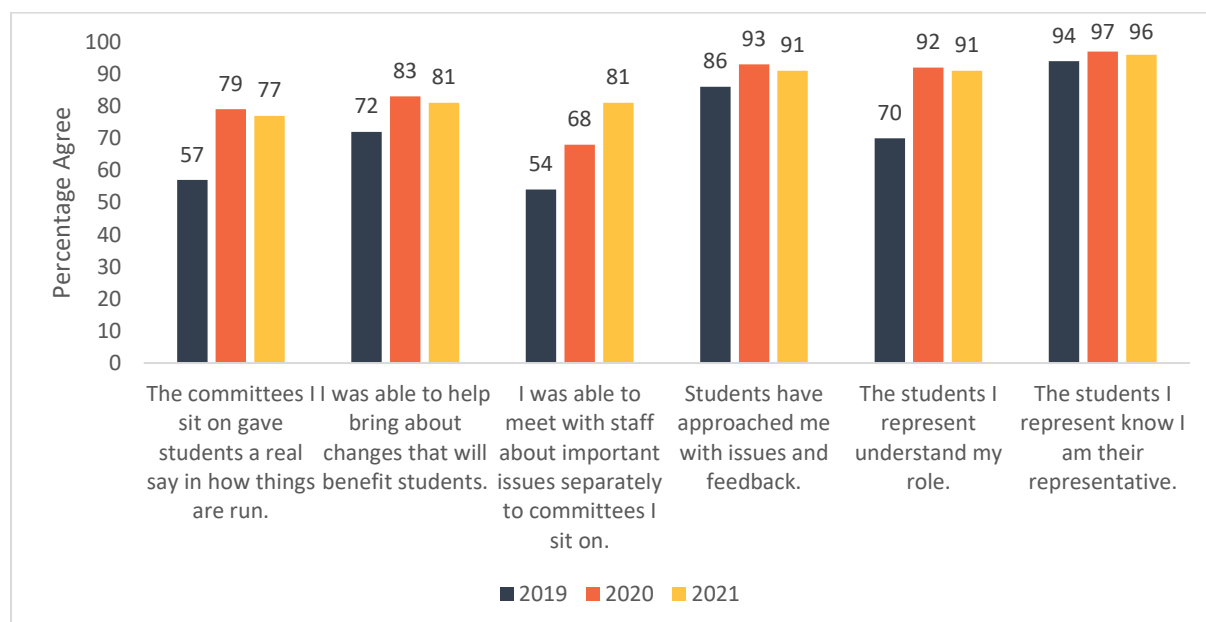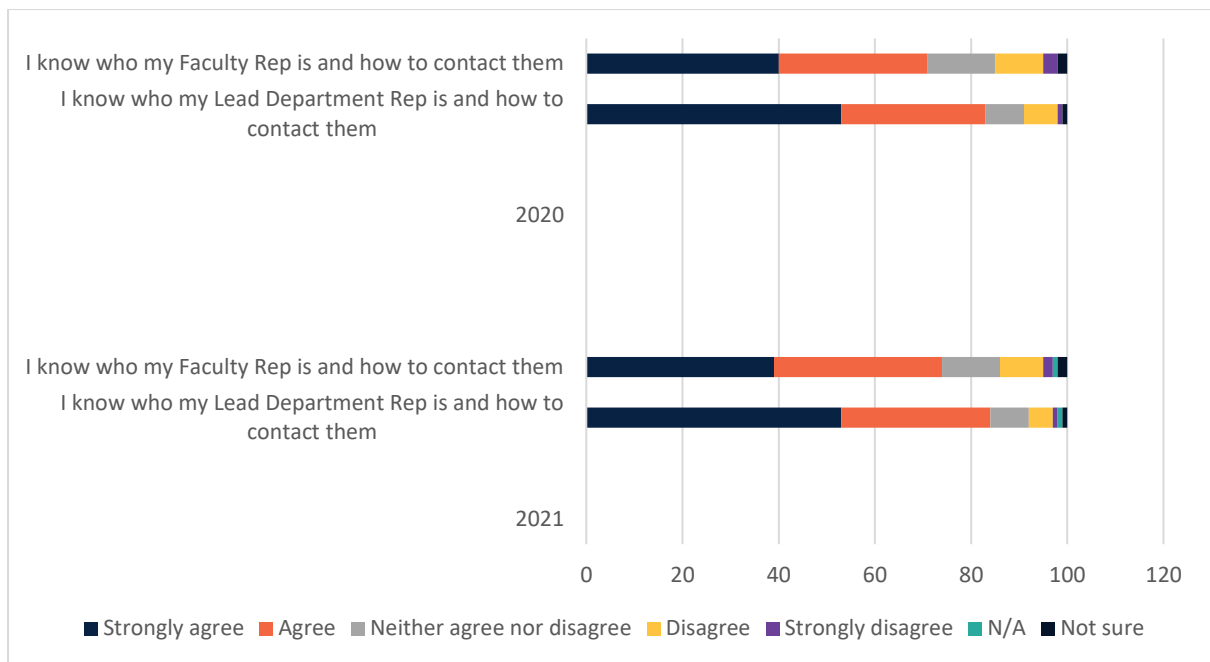
How would you rate the support you received from the Students' Union in the following areas:
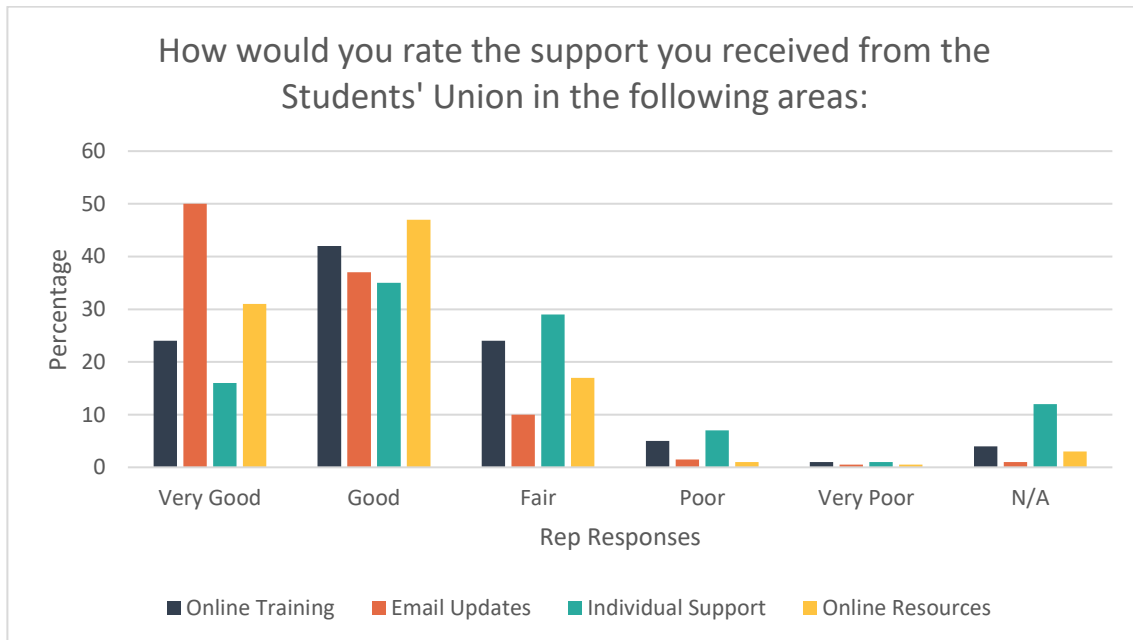
Thoughts and Feelings

Course & Research Student Representatives

There was relatively little change in the feedback from Reps regarding their satisfaction with the key aspects of their roles. The 2019-20 year saw increases in satisfaction across all points, which remained relatively stable in 2020-21, with only slight dips across all points except for 'I was able to meet with staff about important issues separately to committees I sit on,' which saw a large increase of 13 percentage points. In general, it would appear that satisfaction with making change and interacting with staff and committees remains high, and we can surmise that interactions between students and Reps remain productive.

84% (+1) of Course and Research Student Reps were aware of who their Lead Department Rep was, while 74% (+3) were aware of who their Faculty Rep was. These figures have slightly increased over last year, but there is still work that can be done in this area to increase the number of Course and Research Students Reps who know how the other Reps can support them in their roles.

Chart legend: Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ N/A ■ Not sure

Lead Department Representatives

Lead Department Reps were asked a similar set of questions and the majority reported a positive experience. Although the questions were slightly different to the ones asked in previous years, we can still conclude that the overall feedback is positive. This role was established in 2017-18, so this was the fourth year it has been a part of the academic representation structure.

The number of Lead Department Reps who felt able to contribute effectively at committee meetings with UCL staff rose significantly, while the number who felt they could set the agenda of the SSCC meetings decreased slightly. The percentage who stated that the students they represented understood the role of the Lead Department Rep and knew who they were remained stable in comparison to the previous year.

One area which saw a lower percentage in satisfaction were in how useful Lead Department Reps felt their training was.. Compared to the 72% from 2019-20, this year63% of Lead Department Reps felt that the training provided helped them in their role. The reason for this decrease could be that we moved this training from in-person to online this year, and the opportunity to connect with and learn from other reps in their faculty had been more challenging. Similarly, although this was only the second year the Education Zone has been running, it is apparent that there is more work to be done in promoting it.. Less than 40% of Lead Reps felt comfortable in attending and contributing to the discussions in the Zone meetings or that the work done in the zones would have an impact. However, as they are not members of the Zone, it is positive to see that almost half of Lead Reps feel they can join the discussions and have seen the results of their work.

> **Lead Department Rep wins:**
> » "We have worked to help change the way that revision is conducted in the department, promoting the use of exam questions, and providing further clarification on the amnesty programme for illegal materials used for cheating on exams, and the availability of those resources.
> » "We created a departmental collaborative playlist on Spotify and had weekly happy hours and study sessions on Teams."
> » "The programme director and I submitted a ChangeMakers application and received funding to improve academic skills provision in Linguistics."

Faculty Representatives

Faculty Reps were also asked to reflect on similar questions, with overall satisfaction also increasing. The percentage of Faculty Reps who felt able to influence UCL-wide decision-making rose from 77% to 82% in comparison to last year. As opposed to the high percentage of Lead Department Reps, only 65% of Faculty Reps have agreed that the students they represent understand their role, which is a slight decrease from 2019-20. However, the percentage of Faculty Reps who felt able to contribute effectively at faculty committee meetings has increased significantly, from 77% to 87%. In comparison to Lead Department Reps, Faculty Reps were also more satisfied with the training provided (78%) and the Education Zone as a whole, with 78% feeling they could join in discussions and 70% agreeing that they were making an impact through being a member of the Zone. As Faculty Representatives are members of the Education Zone,this may be why they felt more able to join discussions and view the work done in Zone meetings as more impactful.

Faculty Rep wins:

» "I created, organised and executed the first ever PGR Student Conference in the Faculty of Brain Sciences, a successful long-day conference with 59 research talks supported by a ChangeMakers grant."

» "I was able to solve many PGTA related issues, including acquiring back-pay for all PhD students in the Division of Biosciences. I was able to influence UCL-wide policy on the creation of a COVID Impact statements for PhD students attending their viva."

» "I focused my role on improving the mental health support services available at UCL. Through campaigning, we increased the capacity of UCL psychological services, reducing waiting times. I also was given the opportunity to work in a ChangeMakers project, introducing a mental health peer-to-peer support service for students in IMS."

How did Reps benefit?

1008 Academic Reps received a certificate in recognition of their role this year, up from 828 certificates issued in 2019-20. Our certificate requirements map onto the requirements for HEAR recognition, and undergraduate students also receive this recognition alongside their certificate.

Students were required to complete the online induction training with a pass mark of 80%, attend two SSCC meetings, complete a reflection on their development and experience as well as complete a handover document to qualify for a certificate. As with previous years, we gave students who were not able to attend two SSCC meetings the option to provide a staff members' details who could confirm they had been active in their role.

When asked to what extent they had developed certain key skills through their role, 86% of respondents felt they had developed their communication skills 'very much' or 'quite a bit'. 73% felt they had developed their organisation and time management skills, 74% said the same for teamwork skills, 88% said the same for confidence, and 58% said the same for campaigning and activism. See the full breakdown of results below, as well as results from 2020. All points received a greater proportion of positive responses than the previous year except for communication, which remained the same. Despite an increase over the two years, campaigning/activism has had a consistently lower satisfaction than the other categories, which suggests that more work can be done to enable Reps to develop these skills.

To what extent has your experience as a Rep allowed you to develop the following skills? (2021)
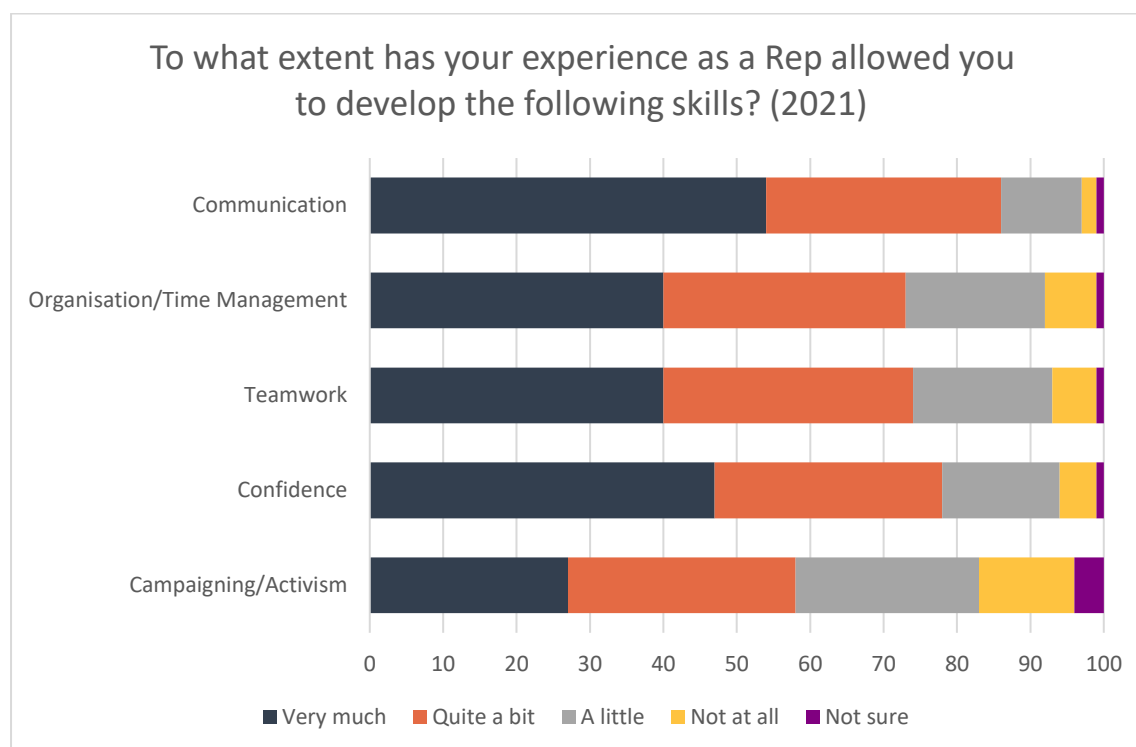
Of the 1086 Reps who responded, 91% said that they would be an Academic Rep again and/or recommend the role to others. This is a slight decrease from 2019/20, where 94% of Reps responded positively to this question. However, there was only a 1 percentage point increase in Reps responding 'No' to this question, with the other 8% indicating that they were 'Not Sure,' which may be due to additional challenges and differences in being a Rep this year as opposed to in previous years.

In the comments explaining why they wouldn't undertake the role again or were unsure, the following reasons were cited:
- Have been a Rep for more than one year already.
- Differences in group sizes which may make being a Rep for a larger cohort too difficult.
- Stressful alongside studying.
- Difficulties relating to COVID-19, including poor student engagement and not fully understanding how to carry out the role online.
- Felt that they were unable to achieve much in their role.
- Enjoyed the role itself but feel discouraged by the lack of support from peers.
- Clashes with department staff over feedback.
- Did not gain a lot from it.

These insights give us an awareness of the areas where Reps may need the more support in the future and issues which we should work on for the 2021-22 academic session.

What did Reps achieve?

Academic Rep of the Year Awards

The Academic Rep of the Year awards were established in 2017-18 and continued successfully in 2020-21. This year, we continued with the same process of recognising one winner for each faculty, and one overall UCL Academic Rep of the Year. Nominations were received from a mix of staff and students. These nominations were based on criteria focussed on the impact that Academic Reps have had on education and the wider experience of the students they represent.

Overall Winner

Aishwarya Shaji represents students within the UCL Faculty of Laws and is considered a supportive representative of he peers. Some of her successes include securing funding to increase support for student mental health and securing workload adjustments based on student feedback.

Aishwarya Shaji
Undergraduate Faculty Rep, Laws
Overall Winner Academic Rep of the Year 2021

"Being a student representative this year has been challenging, but absolutely worth it. Above all, this year more than ever before, we have realised that mental health is a vital part of our overall wellbeing. Hence, the change that I am happiest about is securing the highest funding from UCL Changemakers to implement and improve mental health and wellbeing support in my faculty. However, a student Rep is only one link in a massive chain which needs to work together in order to create positive impact. I have been able to create several short-term and long-term changes in my incredible faculty – the Faculty of Law – because of the wonderful staff, and students, who have made my experience incredible. This recognition surely means a lot to me, and I would like to dedicate this to all of them. Thank you so much."

Find out more at https://studentsunionucl.org/report/education-awards-2021

The Academic Rep of the Year Faculty winners 2021 were:

» Faculty of Arts and Humanities: **Charlotte Pattinson-Boulton,** Course Rep, UCL Department of Greek and Latin.

» Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment: **Ritwika Deb,** Course Rep, UCL Development Planning Unit.

» Faculty of Brain Sciences: **Javier Bautista,** PGR Faculty Rep, UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences.

» Faculty of Engineering Sciences: **Sonal Gupta,** Course Rep, UCL School of Management.

» Institute of Education: **Zedong Qin,** Course Rep, UCL Department of Learning and Leadership.

» Faculty of Laws: **Aishwarya Shaji**, Course Rep, UCL Laws.

» Faculty of Life Sciences: **Yanna Pusica,** Course Rep, UCL Division of Biosciences.

» Faculty of Mathematical & Physical Sciences: **Myra Farooqi,** Lead Department Rep, UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction.

» Faculty of Medical Sciences: **Somar Albani, Anika Koithara, Fady Kamel**, Lead Reps, UCL Medical School.

» Faculty of Population Health Sciences: **Claudiu Cozmescu,** Lead Research Student Rep at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health.

» Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences: **Ed Collins,** Course Rep, UCL Department of Economics.

Rep of the Year Reflections
"I have developed my experience presenting, in public speaking and chairing. As well as further improving my teamwork and communication."

"I developed time management, communication, stakeholder management."

Reflective Statements

As part of the recognition process, Academic Reps submit details about what changes they felt they have been able to make that have benefited students. 1086 Academic Reps completed a handover document for their successor, up from 828 in 2019-20. Handovers are collated manually over the summer and made available to Academic Reps through Moodle at the beginning of their time in the role. The handover documents are also a useful way for Lead Department Reps and Faculty Reps to increase their understanding of student priorities amongst the broader groups of students they represent. A few sample of the reflections:

> I was able to communicate with the department to push very important deadlines (presentations, reports, project deadline) and even change their teaching style in labs. Students felt confident confiding their very personal issues with me and that feels like I was able to fulfil my role.
> **Safir Kaya, Lead Rep, UCL Department of Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering**

> We found that students were struggling to submit the work they were given to do over the holidays, given how disruptive the holidays were in terms of travel restrictions, quarantines and covid scares. We wrote a letter and asked all students who felt they had been affected to sign it and sent it to the Institute. The staff were understanding and gave a blanket week extension on all assignments.
> **Katherine O'Kelly, Course Rep, Institute of the Americas**

> The best example where I have felt I made a significant positive impact to my course was getting a piece of coursework cancelled. There was a lack of communication from this module leader and as a result, a piece of coursework was set in term 3, with 2 weeks' notice. I called an immediate SSCC meeting, liaised with the Dean and the chair of the board of examiners and eventually got this coursework cancelled as it was causing each student on my course unnecessary stress and anxiety. Successfully making this change was very rewarding as the lead rep.
> **Daisy Gresham, Course Rep, Division of Biosciences**

> As I haven't met most of my course mates, I had to do my best to find the way how to speak to them so that they don't feel shy or embarrassed to speak out about their problems. I tried to support them if they had bad days or things didn't go smoothly. To make things nicer, I asked about their birthdays at the beginning of our course and sent every student a note and wishes on their birthdays (and other students sent their wishes too). This helped us feel more bonded with each other.
> **Malika Khodjaeva, Course Rep, UCL Division of Medical Sciences**

Tell Us About Your Work

Academic Reps are enrolled on a Moodle course, where they receive announcements about opportunities available to them, can consult a myriad of resources to support their work and are able tell the Students' Union what they are doing in their roles in the "Tell Us About Your Work" section. This provides insights into particular areas of concern across UCL and positive changes that are occurring.

This tool has been very good in highlighting some of the "small" or quick wins that our Academic Reps achieve in their roles. We look forward to continuing to use the "Tell Us About Your Work" submissions in 2021-22 and hope to share examples of good practice and trends with the wider student body. These submissions also feed into our online database of wins that our Academic Reps have recently achieved. Furthermore, in 2021-22, we will migrate this section to our website so that it is open to staff and students to celebrate the work of Academic Reps in their departments.

> "It has been really fulfilling trying to improve the situation for distance students and I have received a lot of positive feedback – which has been great. It has been especially great to work on issues which have been raised. I hope my work will encourage others to work as reps from a distance or part-time."

Academic Rep of the Month

Based on the submissions to the "Tell Us About Your Work" section on Moodle, an Academic Rep of the Month is selected and showcased on our website and in our communications every month. This is a great way for Reps to be recognised for their contribution to improving the student experience within their course, department or faculty. During 2020-21 we showcased the Academic Reps of the Month in our all-student newsletter to increase the visibility of our Academic Reps and the work they do amongst the wider student body, which we will continue going forward.

Miroslava Katsur
Course Representative (PGR), Population Health Sciences
Academic Rep of the Month (February 2021)

"In the second term, I read UCL Disability Report, and identified 30+ issues I can work on. After discussing this with other reps, we focused on two and we got funding for implementing them (ChangeMakers). One of them is enhancement of induction for new students. Another rep prepared slides to be incorporated into the induction presentation with info on where to get support at UCL. I prepared a 2-page doc which explains what visible and invisible disabilities are, examples of help UCL can provide, and where to turn to for help with contact details. This is meant to be given as a handout and emailed to students. The second thing we worked on is providing training to staff about how to talk about disability, how to provide informal solutions to student, and how to make office/lab an attractive place for disabled students to come. We will tailor this training together with Enhance the UK, a charity run by disabled people."

Find out more at studentsunionucl.org/tags/academic-rep-of-month

Wider UCL Impact – Student Priorities for Education

Over the course of the academic year, almost 1900 Academic Representatives attended around 150 Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs) to provide feedback from the views of over 48,170 students. Through an analysis of the feedback received at these Staff-Student Consultative Committees, the most positive and negative aspects of the student experience at UCL were determined and a number of recommendations were made as a result. The Student Priorities for Education Report 2021 can be found on our website. The recommendations from the report are as follows:

1. Assessment and Feedback

As has been highlighted for a number of years, there are concerns regarding the timing, quality and style of assessment that many students undertake. Work needs to continue to focus on coordinating the timing of assessment across programmes to avoid clustering, ensuring programme level consistency for summative assessment workload and ensuring the service standards for feedback are implemented.

2. Student Support and Skills

From research conducted by Students' Union UCL, it is clear that many UCL students have been struggling with burnout, isolation and fatigue, with many requiring the use of extenuating circumstances during the academic year but being met with confusion at how they are able to do so. Considering this, it is vital that UCL ensures all students receive the support they require. This can be done through reviewing the extenuating circumstances procedure, ensuring Student Advisors in faculties are in regular communication with students and monitoring students who have missed out on previous experiences of assessment or other academic skills as a result of disruptions caused by the pandemic. In order to excel, students need to feel supported and it is important that we provide them with an environment that is built on this foundation of support.

Looking ahead

2020-21 has been a difficult year for all but we have seen our Academic Reps shine through and put in a significant amount of work to support their peers and future students. In 2021-22 we will be continuing to develop and evolve our support for Reps and look forward to seeing them continue to do excellent work.

Building Learning Communities
One comment regularly received from students in 2020-21 was that they felt isolated or lacking a sense of community. This was echoed by our Reps who often felt they could not reach out to other Reps across UCL due to the physical barrier of distance between them. In 2021-22 we are establishing a Microsoft Teams hub for all of our Reps to run alongside our Moodle hub. This will feature channels for each Faculty as well as other themed groups for Reps to join based on their interests. Utilising a platform that students are familiar with will allow them to feel at ease when they join and we envision that this group will promote a sense of community amongst the Reps. As we return to campus, we will also be planning on running termly networking events for Academic Reps to celebrate and thank them for their hard work, as well as to give them an opportunity to come together. Our training sessions for Faculty Reps and Lead Department Reps will also resume in person for this academic year which will provide a space for Reps to get to know one another and set out action plans to work together on.

Developing Skills
In 2020-21, we offered some new bespoke training sessions to our Reps across a wide range of topics. We want to further build on this for the coming academic year by establishing a year long training programme from the beginning which will entail a range of training sessions that will aim to develop Reps both professionally and personally. We have used the feedback gathered from our Academic Reps to create this training programme and ensure it is tailored to their needs as Reps. We have also made some changes to the core training that we offer to place a greater focus on what Reps have specified they would like to gain from their training and we have produced a Reps handbook for them to be able to refer back to upon successful completion of the training.

Increasing Support
We have revamped our Moodle hub for the coming academic year to ensure it is more accessible and user friendly. We have added several new resources and will continue to build on these throughout the year to provide our Reps with all of the information they need in order to achieve the aims they set out at the beginning of their term.

We are also keen to secure additional funding to be able to roll our a business partnering model of support to Faculties and Departments, which will transform the support and effectiveness of Faculty Reps and Lead Department Reps.

**STUDENTS'
UNION** UCL