

Minutes of the City College Academic Forum Held on 17th November 2010 at City College

Present:

10 Students

Emily-Ann Nash (Chair)

(EAN)

Vice President Academic

Gregory Bortkiewicz

(GB)

Assistant to the Board (Minutes)

Academic Forum

EAN started by asking **how studying at City College was different to a University campus**. Students' responses were

There were lots more mature students than expected and that **it would be nice to integrate more** with other campuses.

It was different to a college degree, and so far better at City College, due to better tutors who are more friendly and helpful.

It felt segregated here and that it doesn't feel as if you are at University.

There is an issue with **space restrictions** - why can't students at City College go to other campuses to use the facilities there? A student responded that on his course they can use computers at any campus.

The library was the next topic; with everyone agreeing that it was quite poor at City College due to few resources. It was stated that books can be ordered from Aldrich library, but can only be sent to St Peters or Grand Parade and not City College. Everyone was happy with the opening hours, but said it was very difficult to get on a computer, especially during the day. The HE room has computers but they are rarely used because people don't know about the room.

The issue of **studio opening times** on Wilson Avenue was raised. Currently the studio doesn't open late enough, and for people with other commitments outside of studying it can be very difficult to find the time to use the studio. Even if it stayed open until 9pm just a couple of days a week it would help a lot of people. EAN stated that this issue had been raised before but nothing had happened because of extra security costs if the studio stayed open later.

AP: Explore possibility of studio opening times changing

An example was given of one poor module on a course that lacked structure and had no clear objectives. The teacher was not of a good standard, a lot of the work seemed rushed and the students were put into groups and stuck with them. However this issue had been raised with the necessary people and the module has since been removed.

A problem was highlighted with **feedback on written work**, stating that the feedback was very poor or even non-existent. EAN was shown a recent piece of coursework with the feedback attached. The feedback was extremely limited and EAN stated that this level of feedback was unacceptable. EAN asked what the best way to receive feedback was. Students said they were happy to have it in written form but suggested that one-to-one feedback would be good. It was acknowledged that time constraints might mean that this may not be a viable option, tutors free time is often during lectures or when students have days off, so it can be hard to arrange a meeting with them.

AP: Raise issue of feedback with suitable people

Two students raised an issue with one of their lecturers, a PHD student. They said the teaching level is poor, with the PHD student having limited knowledge on the subject area and often unable to answer questions. At first they gave the lecturer the benefit of the doubt but now they want this to change and asked 'Why can't we have a proper lecturer?'

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EAN explained about an awards scheme that the SU was looking into, and asked **what attributes students would like to see lecturers rewarded for**. The attributes suggested by everyone present included an enthusiasm for the subject; good engagement in lessons, someone who puts in extra time, such as willing to stay after lectures to talk to students; someone who can use modern and real examples to make a dull subject more interesting; intelligence; interactive and inspirational; and very important is someone who is approachable.

The final subject was about the **possible increase in tuition fees**.

It was asked how you can decide that one subject is more important than another upon hearing that creative and social courses may have fees cut by 100%, whereas other courses, such as maths and engineering, will have no cuts. The question was raised as to whether the quality of a degree is worth 7k.

EAN asked the forum what they would expect if fees were to increase. Answers included Better facilities, with modern hardware so that when you go into the job market you have experience with the most updated systems.

A guaranteed job in the industry, or at least a placement, as well as extra support during the degree.

Professional lecturers but thinks that the quality of a degree is unlikely to change.

Another separate Mac room for music,

Only one students said he would be prepared to pay 9k for the degree he is currently studying for.

Students went back to the point that the only real issue is the teaching standard with their PHD student - everyone in class is quiet and not engaged in the lesson.

AP: EAN to email Head of School re PHD teacher

At this point the forum came to an end, with EAN thanking everyone for their time and contributions.