

University of Brighton Students' Union

Academic Forum – School of Education

Held - 25th October 2010 at the Checkland Building, Falmer

Present - 6 students

Chair – Anthony Lewis and Emily-Ann Nash

Secretary – Katrina Mayo

1. The session commenced discussing NSS data for the School of Education. This led to students raising the following points:

1. With some teaching it is not made clear what the purpose of a session is. For example is this a session to show /teach students the curriculum or a lesson on how to teach? Students need more clarity on what they are doing and why.
2. Handouts should be up to date; using old handouts that do not tie in with the teaching session has caused problems.
3. Poor communication between tutors with regards to the planning of sessions has led to students being unable to give presentations when they were initially timetabled to do so, leading to long delays and tutors being absent at the presentations. Absence of tutors at presentations (particularly early on in a course), is not good for students. Though they appreciate that peer feedback can be good they also need quality feedback from tutors to improve their practice. Students are asking that timetables that are given are stuck to and that staff be present when presentations are given.
4. A big gap between 2nd year and 4th year placements means students can 'lose track' and feel deskilled.
5. The teaching in some subjects is 'brilliant' and 'awesome'. Staff have been very responsive to students asking for specific support.
6. There was a feeling that there are great staff but communication and organisation on courses could be improved.

2. The discussion then moved on to what attributes in teachers should be recognised / rewarded by the student body. The following features were identified:

1. Inspirational. Which was felt to include the ability to help students to overcome their fears and feel comfortable
2. Teaching to create a broad base rather than to pass tests
3. Love of subject – transmitting their enthusiasm and love of a subject
4. Clarity – enabling students to know why they are learning something and being encouraged to think about it. The *'Able to Answer Why'* award
5. Being able to think outside the box
6. Being supportive, recognising everyone as individuals who need different amounts of support.
7. Creativity and adaptability – able to make the best of the dynamics in a classroom

3. E-learning and what developments would be useful in this area was then discussed. The following were raised:

1. The ability to share files without having to email them to each other. Clear instructions on whether and how this is currently available
2. Ensuring all relevant information is put up on student central. The staff attitude to student central was raised, they don't seem to fully 'trust it' and it does not do everything they would like it to do.
3. Better mobile phone access to student central. Problems have been experienced accessing and loading student central pages. Would like to see a mobile version of studentcentral, which gives quick access to announcement / calendar and forums.
4. A proper library induction should be given to all students in the first week. A lot of students do not know how to use it and there is a lack of awareness about accessing articles online.

Hello everyone, just a few action points from the academic forum:

Action points for course reps:

- Ensure all relevant information is uploaded onto student central by speaking to your course leaders, or raising at course board.
- Ensuring handouts are relevant and up-to-date by raising with your course leaders.
- At your course boards, comment on the communication and organisation on courses being poor.
- At course board raise the gap between 2nd and 4th year placements

Action points for me:

- Direct to Centre of Learning and Teaching to investigate how to educate and engage students on the purpose of learning
- Direct to information services the issues raised in regards to e-learning
- Pass onto Vice-president Campus and Communications to lobby to improve mobile phone access to student central.
- Collate the information on attributes in teachers for teaching awards and present findings to Academic zone committee.