

# University of Brighton Students' Union

## Academic Forum – School of Health Professions

Held – 23rd November 2010 at Greynore 3, Eastbourne

Present – 6 students

Chair –Emily-Ann Nash (EAN)

Secretary – Katrina Mayo

1. The session commenced discussing NSS data for the School of Health Professions. This led to the following discussion points:

- Most of the reps present were first years, so far they have not encountered any major issues and it was therefore hard for them to relate to the NSS data.
- Their experiences so far have been very good. Organisation within Health Professions has been very good and their lecturers have been very keen
- Practice based learning takes a while to adjust to – tutors have been good and supportive. It can be a problem if facilitators change repeatedly. This was brought up at a recent staff-student consultative meeting
- Tutors are good at relating everything back to clinical practice

Several problems emerged during the session that related to students experiences with the admissions department these were

- Delays with CRB checks. The admissions team wait to collect a certain number before they send them of. Delays in processing have resulted in some students missing out on placements
- A student had arranged for a reference to be sent from abroad. Despite it being signed for the admissions team insisted they had not received it and requested that he arranged for another one to be sent. In the end the student went himself to the mailing room and found the missing letter. This was a very frustrating experience
- Before joining the course another student experienced problems with her application. She had missed of something from her application (it had not been indicated it should be included). The admission team did not contact her to tell her it was missing, nor did they process her application, it just sat on a desk. It was only because the student was determined to come to Brighton and followed up to find out what was happening with her application that she discovered this problem and was able to rectify it

- Another student received information about the course on a Saturday indicating there was an open day on the following Monday, which she would need to attend to produce a case study and be able to apply. She went on the Monday, phoning from outside the building to confirm her attendance – she was then told on the phone it was full up and she couldn't go in. This would have meant she would not have been able to apply – so she went in to enquire further and was told that it was fine for her to join in.
- It was commented that it is too easy to get a bad impression early on of the university through these types of poor communication

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

- Staff who motivate you to want to learn their subject
- Passionate, the 'quiet enthusiasm' of one staff member was commented upon
- Understanding of different learning needs
- Go out of their way to assist you
- Approachability – you are not made to feel silly when you ask a question

The students present commented positively on the fact that the staff in Health Professions treat them as colleagues rather than students. Some students have commented on the fact that the support staff are not always as welcoming as the lecturing staff and students can feel uncomfortable when they enter the school office.

3. ICT/ E-learning and the developments that would be useful in these areas were then discussed. The following points were raised:

- Library resources – more books are needed for the MSc in Health through occupation but are fine in other areas
- Opening hours are generally OK but have heard that some students say that computer access in the evenings can be difficult.

4. The final discussion focussed on assessment and feedback

- Students would find it useful to have a timetable for the year that showed in advance when their hand in dates were
- Consistency in marking between markers has been raised on several courses. There are marking criteria but different markers seem to treat these differently. It is not always clear what is expected from the students (for example being given differing advice from two tutors as to whether an assignment should be written in the first person or not)
- The feedback that students have received post assessment has been good

**Action points for course reps:**

Students suggest that their overall learning experience is a positive one and staff are very supportive. This is excellent news. What are the attributes that students really value? Discuss these with your course and consider nominating the staff that you feel deserve it for a Learning & Teaching award.

Administration prior to enrolment / during application. Students comments suggest this could be improved. First year reps (undergraduate and postgraduate) discuss this with your courses. Were these a couple of isolated incidents or is there something more that could be done to support students joining the university or prior to going on placement? Raise your findings now with your course leader.

Assessment and feedback. Students suggested that different markers interpret marking criteria differently. Discuss this with your course and raise your findings with your course leader.