

University of Brighton Students' Union

Academic Forum – School of Nursing and Midwifery

Held - 11th November 2010 at Westlain, Falmer

Chair – Anthony Lewis

Secretary – Katrina Mayo

The session commenced discussing NSS data for the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Students then raised the following points relating to their current experience:

First year students have expressed concern over their inductions, the following issues being highlighted:

- Poor organisation and communication– Placements have been poorly organised, information was supplied very late and when students called their placements they were often not expected
- Concern over the level of knowledge and skills delivered prior to going into first placements. Students felt poorly prepared. A lot of lectures have been cancelled, significantly shortened or their relevance not made clear. Students want the whole of sessions delivered not curtailed versions. Very little on practical skills such as manual handling, has led to a lack of confidence among students about to go on their first placement.
- They feel the support network provided is not robust. There are long delays or lack of response to emails and queries sent to staff

The following general points were then raised

- There are good lecturers but too often lectures are curtailed or lecturers turn up late
- Students are not seen as being partners and active participants in their learning by the school but rather as products. The SNM seems to see it's relationship being primarily with the Strategic Health Authority. The school seems to be more concerned by the retention rate than the actual student experience.
- Culturally there is a feeling as a nursing student that as you receive a bursary you should accept what you are given. There needs to be a huge shift towards looking at

the quality of the student experience. It should be a 3 year partnership between the school and students.

- What is not made clear to students is what they can reasonably expect from the school. There should be a service level agreement as to what students can actually expect, which incorporates the quality and appraisal of teaching provided.
- The evaluation process is flawed. Students evaluate modules as a whole rather than individual lectures (which can vary hugely in their quality). There should be a route to give feedback on individual lectures. It is not made clear what happens to the feedback students provide– where does it go and how is it acted upon?

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

- A tutor who goes 'above the call of duty'. Is available, answers emails and quickly responds to queries
- Someone who is passionate about their subject

E-learning and the developments that would be useful in this area were then discussed. No particular issues were raised. The access to online journals is very good and it is useful to also have access to the hospital library. Studentcentral is a very useful tool, although sometimes it is not obvious when it has been updated and changes made to timetables (it would help for an announcement to always be made when this has been done)

Students are keen to work with the School of Nursing to make improvements to their courses.

Action / discussion points for course reps:

- Students felt unprepared for placements. First year reps, discuss this with your classmates. What is missing? What would make you feel better prepared?
- Reps from other years – is this reminiscent of your first year? How could your experiences inform better preparation for placements? Discuss with your course and feed back to course teams
- Organisation and communications was deemed to be poor. This concurs with findings from the 2010 National Student Survey. Identify 3 things that would (in the opinion of students) improve the situation. Take these suggestions to your course team and share them with the SU.

- Brighton SU to invite all current SNM reps to nominate themselves to be SNM School Rep.
- Brighton SU to discuss with SNM management issues raised, particularly in relation to preparedness for placement and student perceptions of organisation and communication.