

Notes of the StARs Forum - Tuesday 9th February 2016

17:00-18:30

Topic: Library Services and Student Survey

Present:

Lewis Arnold – **LA** (Vice President Education)
Ross Renton – **RR** (Pro Vice-Chancellor Students)
Judith Keene – **JK** (University Librarian)
Carolyn Nisbet – **CN** (Project Manager Student Surveys)
Wesley Hudson – **WH** (President)

StARs and Institute Reps: Jake Corbett, Katie Knight, Terri-Ann Hynes, Madalina Brait, Arran Jenkins, Janna Niemi, Jordanne Wozencroft, Sophie George, Taylor Cornes, Amy Fleming, Jason Trueman, Geoffrey Parsons, Daisy Ward, Abi Coward, Diane Noble, Martin Price, Danny Gregory, Chris Desmond, Becky Davies, Sarah Cook

Also in attendance: Dave Robson – **DR** (StAR Coordinator), Nicola Watson – **NW** (StAR Coordinator), Ruth Christie – **RC** (Membership Services Manager, note-taker)

Welcome and Introductions: LA welcomed everyone to the Forum and invites WH to say a few words about the upcoming SU elections.

WH explained that the SU holds annual elections and that, from next Monday, 15th February until Friday, 26th February, students will be able to nominate themselves for the three full-time officer positions of President, Vice President Education and Vice President Student Activities.

WH is serving a second term as President, so will not be able to stand for office again (the maximum term of office is two years). Currently, students can "Recommend a Friend" if they know someone they think would make a good officer. The SU are also inviting students to nominate themselves to be a delegate to represent Worcester Students' Union at the NUS Conference in Brighton from Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st April 2016. The SU has three delegate places, of which one must be a self-defining woman (to comply with the motion passed at NUS Conference in 2014). Voting will take place from Wednesday 2nd to Friday 4th March.

For further information on the SU elections, see <http://www.worcsu.com/yourvoice/elections/>

Library services

LA invited JK, the University Librarian, to talk about [library services](#). She explained that student satisfaction with library services is very encouraging, but one in six students remain not satisfied. Results of surveys have shown that two areas where there is some dissatisfaction are study space for students, especially at the Hive and resources. Staff have made a number of changes to address students' concerns:

- Self-guided tours are available, which help students to familiarise themselves with the Hive
- Reffie, the mascot, has his own Twitter account (@reffieraptor) and would love more followers!
- Meeting rooms are available exclusively for students to book twice a year (during the lead-up to assessments) and these were very well used in January
- A lot of work has been done with staff to improve and enhance the service for students and manage the environment at the Hive
- The introduction of the resource list should make it easier for students to access resources
- Staff have gone through every reading list and have acquired the books required. Where there is only a single copy of a book that is in demand, more copies will be bought. Student feedback would be very helpful if lists are not available or additional books needed.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of eBooks and last year, a quarter of the budget was dedicated to what students wanted to use and over 1,000 additional eBooks were bought
- There were over 2 million accesses to eBooks last year, which works out at over 250 per student
- Web pages have also been improved

JK then explained some of the key themes of the Library Strategy for [2016-2020](#):

- Service with a heart (building relationships with students and providing a more personalised approach)
- Access to information resources
- Supporting success
- Working in partnership, including with students
- A strong reputation (locally and nationally)

JK said that the University is very proud of the Hive and library services, which are frequently visited and much admired by visitors from other institutions.

JK then introduced her colleagues from the Hive, Student Engagement Coordinators Vee Collins (VC) and Madalene George (MG). VC and MG are employed specifically to talk to students about what they want and very few institutions have staff dedicated to provide this kind of role. VC and MG encouraged StARs and students to come to their meetings to give them feedback on what students want. They also plan to re-establish the Bees (Hive Student Ambassadors).

LA invited questions or comments relating to library services.

- The new intake of nursing students starts next week and Judith confirmed that self-guided tours of the Hive will be available to them from the main door.
- A StAR from the Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts commented that the re-design makes it more difficult to access information such as business journals – the process is more complicated than it was to access resources across institutes. Judith said that staff would see what might be done to simplify this.

Student Surveys

RR introduced himself as the University's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) and asked if StARs and Institute Reps have seen the promotional materials, revealed today, for the National Student Survey and everyone had. There was no-one present who could comment on the visibility of the campaign at City campus. RR explained that the NSS is a national survey of final year students and emphasised that the University is keen to see as high a response rate as possible, as the more students who participate, the greater the amount of feedback the institution has.

RR stressed that issues of concern to students should be raised and addressed as promptly as is practicable throughout the year, whereas the NSS is an opportunity for students to reflect on the whole of their University experience. RR said that StARs could play a key role in encouraging students to participate in the NSS and particularly to complete comment boxes, which provides the University with very useful qualitative data and helps explain students' ratings of their experience much more fully.

RR also told StARs that he plans to invite students to get involved with focus groups during the course of the year so that students have more of a say on the University's plans. He then invited Carolyn to provide StARs with further information about the NSS and the University's student survey.

CN introduced herself as the University's Project Manager for Student Surveys. CN's presentation, which will be useful for StARs, is [here](#). She reiterated how important it is for the University that final year students take the time to complete the NSS. The responses provide valuable feedback and information for the University and for future students and when the data (which excludes individual comments) is published; it can help inform potential students' choices. CN pointed out that all students who complete the survey online before 18th March will receive a £5 'Campus Credit', which can be spent in food outlets and the SU shop or used as print credit or to pay library fines. The University will also donate £5 to the Access to Learning Fund for every survey completed online.

CN went on to explain that the University's own internal student survey and postgraduate survey will be launched on Tuesday 1st March and will run until 30th April. This will provide an opportunity for all first-year and second-year students and those ineligible to take part in the NSS to provide feedback on their University experience. An email will be sent to all students inviting them to take part and the survey will be accessible via Blackboard. The University hopes to see a significant increase in last year's 31% response rate and has committed to award £1,000 to any institutes achieving a response rate of at least 55%. StARs determine how this award is spent. Last year, the Institute of Education was awarded £1,000, which is being used to establish a new academic society.

LA invited questions or comments on the NSS and University surveys.

Q1) One StAR asked whether students completing the University's survey would also be entitled to the £5 credit.

CN said that this was not currently being considered, as the cost would be prohibitive.

Q2) Another StAR asked whether students in partner colleges are given the £5 credit for completing the NSS online.

CN said that they are and that arrangements for how the credit can be used are determined locally. The University will reimburse the institutions the cost of the credit to students.

Q3) An Institute Rep reported that students on the primary teaching course are being briefed by StARs in small seminar groups about the importance of completing the NSS and they are hoping for a high completion rate.

LA suggested that StARs might seek permission from lecturers to take a few minutes to talk to students about the surveys in order to encourage students to participate.

Ross asked for feedback from StARs on whether there is anything else the University could do to promote the NSS.

StARs' responses were that it would be counter-productive to have more promotional material and messages and students would feel overwhelmed. It was pointed out that the materials fail to mention that the NSS is open only to final year students and this is causing some confusion.

One StAR suggested that a computer room might be set aside for survey completion, so that Student Ambassadors based in Main Reception could direct students straight there. CN and RR agreed that this suggestion is worth considering. Another possibility might be to provide laptops, perhaps using "polling booths" for privacy, to encourage students to complete the NSS immediately.

The next StARs Forum will be held on Monday 14th March from 17:00 – 18:30 in EEG162.

The key topics will be the Personal Academic Tutor system and Assessment and Feedback, so there should be lots to talk about with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Students, Ross Renton, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic, Sarah Greer and the University's Director of Quality and Educational Development, Marie Stowell.