**Research Academic Representative Forum (RARF)**

**Date: Thursday 6th February 2025**

**Time:** 18:00- 20:00
**Location:** Online

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|  | Welcome and objectives11 attendees ONLINEEmina Hogas (Deputy President Education)Charlotte Baker (Representation Coordinator)EH welcomed all reps to the second RARF of the year. To get an idea of departments represented all reps introduced themselves and stated what programmes they were from. * Biomedical Research (DS) Data Science Stream
* Aeronautics
* PGR Academic & Welfare Officer for FoM
* Experimental Neuroscience
* Biomedical Research (BMR) Mainstream
* MRes Biostematics
* Biomedical Research (RCVS) Respiratory and Cardiovascular Science Stream
* Biomedical Research (MHD) Microbiome in Health and Disease Stream
* NHLI
* Clinical Research Human Nutrition
 | No actionsSlidedeck |
|  | Update on objectives* EH updated on her work on mitigating circumstances to lobby the university for centralised processes.
* Regarding assessment & feedback, EH noted there hadn’t been a lot of progression in this area but that there are teams working to review workload with student focus groups.
* EH updated on her work on UKRI and UROP. A survey is coming soon to gain London wide data, it will be live in March.
* The inclusivity page is coming along, currently it is in english & mandarin with 8 more languages coming soon.
 | No actionsslidedeck |
|  | Updates from the Representation Committee* CB updated on the PGR Representation Committee. Currently there is no PGR Rep Chair due to them being removed and stepping down as well as no PGR AWO for FoNS due to them also stepping down. This position is currently being filled by EH and is meeting with department reps to gain feedback. Roles for next academic year will be filled in LE25 and roleholders in current vacant positions will be asked if they would like to take up the position earlier.
* CB promoted leadership elections, the positions available for PGR Representation & wider positions such as Officer Trustess, Council Chair, Student Trustee etc as well as the nominations period.
 | No actions |
|  | Updates on last meetings actions* A welcome PGR lunch will be taking place in Welcome Week in the next academic year.
* Regarding the lack of communication surrounding Welcome Fair, this was checked, and communication was sent out.
* Shuttle bus to White City increase in frequency, is not possible currently due to capacity.
* Regarding space, this has been fed back to library services and general conversation around space provision. Overtime space will shift from South Kensington to other campuses and so more space will be available. ICU are going to do some surveying and focused messaging on study spaces.
 | No actions |
|  | General Feedback from reps* Overall reps felt that they sometimes struggle with the lack of engagement from fellow reps & students.
* Reps shared best practice is having more of them per cohort and department as it helps with getting a good spread amongst students
* Overall reps felt in the room that PG FoM doesn’t reflect other practice in the university. Meet the reps (online open meetings) that are currently taking place are not very helpful or useful.
* Aeronautics reps shared that their termly SSC meetings are extremely helpful at a department level. They did advertise a lunch with reps but got little attendance, now they advertise free doughnuts and take away the emphasis on the reps being there and they have a lot more interest.
* CB updated on meetings currently happening with PG FoM, and that there appears to be mixed practice. Staff highlighted that there is a high-level faculty level committee that receives student feedback. RM stated this is very bureaucratic, not the appropriate space and brings 4 departments into one which is confusing and doesn’t allow for department focused feedback.
* Reps raised that the UG student population is rising, and a lot of pressure is being put on PGR students to teach or cover teaching, although they are paid it's hard to balance with own workload.
* Reps continued to raise the lack of space available to them as PGR students.
* Aeronautics reps have been fighting and investigating the casual teaching rate vs the teaching rate for PGR students. They are lobbying to increase awareness and transparency of what people are getting paid and how this is justified as it's different in different places and across the university. For example, they are paid £13 an hour for invigilation but in other pockets of the institution it's £24 depending on how the guidance has been interpreted.
* Some reps felt that there is a slight personal bias with research projects and feedback and that they are only offered ones that supervisors want to do.
 | Action: EH & RM to find out more about department SSCs for FoM and why these are not taking place. EH to meet with JV to see what we could introduce. EH to send RM notes on meeting. EH to raise with LL regarding study/teaching balance with increase in UG students. EH to talk to Charlie and Katya to discuss next steps with PGR teaching pay.  |
|  | PGR events* Off the back of the Taught Academic Representation Report, CB asked what rep's students would like to see. Overall arts and crafts would be appreciated and awareness of parents & carers timings.
 | No actions |
|  | Best practice * RM shared that she has been working with LL to amend PGR reasonable adjustments & this has just been approved with DAS. EH asked if there are any planned communications, RM to ask LL.
 | No actions |