Academic Representation Semester 1 Summary Report

The following is an outline around the development of TUOS Academic Representation system for semester 1, 2018/19. This will provide an overview of current progress in the following areas:

- Academic Representative Recruitment, Training and Demographic Data
- Faculty Representation Recruitment
- Engagement with the Academic Representation Masterclass Programme
- Brief overview of current achievements by Academic Representatives so far.

1. Number of Academic Representatives Recruited:

A new approach was taken to academic representation recruitment this year. Rather than hosting elections departments were encouraged to allow any student to volunteer for the role if interested. This is outlined in the SU/TUOS agreed Academic Representation Benchmarking Toolkit. Some exceptions were made, dependent on the local needs of individual departments.

Whilst any student could sign up to become an Academic Rep through the Students’ Union website, to confirm their place a basic ‘core online training’ had to be completed in order for the student to officially take up the role. This was to deal with a historical issue around students becoming Academic Reps but not engaging with the role. In other words, the general barrier for entry was reduced but a certain level of commitment still has to be provided.

The numbers for our Semester 1 2018/19 recruitment cycle includes the following:

1a). Overall Recruitment Numbers in New Academic Representation System:

Total number of students registering on the ‘expression of interest’ form: 1,248.
Total number of students confirming their role through online ‘core training’: 934

1b). Overall Recruitment Numbers in Old Academic Representation System:

Total Number of students recruited across entire 2017/18 System: 950
Total Number of students completing 2017/18 ‘core training’: 450

1c). Total number of recruited Academic Reps by Faculty:

Social Science: 334
Science: 214
Engineering: 204
Arts & Humanities: 113
MDH: 65
1d). Total number of recruited Academic Reps by Department:

This will compare the total number of ‘trained’ Academic Reps against the rough total percentage of students which make up an individual department. This percentage is pulled from the total number of students who are eligible to vote in SU elections and is therefore not an entirely accurate figure.

As part of the new Academic Representation system we are interested in seeing how many students an Academic Rep would roughly need to stay in contact with in order to provide effective student voice. You can see the department specific breakdown in a separate document, located here.

1e). Demographic Information:

We also have a demographic breakdown of our trained Academic Representatives, which you can view here.

A couple of key highlights include:

- Over 384 overseas students have become a part of the Academic Rep system.
- Over 138 (12%) of our Academic Rep demographic is Chinese.

1f). Engagement with Academic Rep Online ‘core training’:

In previous years, Academic Representation core training was provided in person. However due to numbers and comments from students regarding accessibility we moved the essential training to online only. Overall, feedback from the training session has been incredibly positive:

- 93% (875) of Academic Reps either agreed or strongly agreed that they knew what was being asked of them in the role after completing the training.

- 91% (855) of Academic Reps either agreed or strongly agreed that the training was useful overall.

2. Faculty Representation Recruitment Numbers:

We have been making a concentrated effort to improve the experience and process of being a Faculty Representative this year for students. In the vast majority of cases, Faculty Reps were elected or nominated from the pool of Academic Reps within a department.

There may be up to 4 Faculty Reps per department with a minimum of 1. Shortly after being selected, the Faculty Representatives were invited to either a in person or online training. The Students’ Union has also been collaborating with Faculty Directors and Faculty staff to ensure the new approach to Faculty Representation is embedded effectively.
2a). Total Number of Faculty Representatives:

There are currently 79 Faculty Representatives. A faculty specific breakdown (i.e: does every department have at least 1 Faculty Representative) can be seen below:

**Arts and Humanities:** 100%
**Engineering:** 100%
**Social Sciences:** 95%
**Sciences:** 85%
**MDH:** 10% (A specific initiative is being ran with the MDH faculty to address this percentage)

3. Current Engagement Levels in the Academic Representation Masterclass Programme:

As part of the new Academic Representation system the Students’ Union has launched a new ‘masterclass’ training programme. These sessions, divided between the areas of leadership, research and campaigning were created to both empower Academic Reps within the role and to develop as individuals. As a new initiative, we want to ensure these sessions are responding to the needs and requests of our student leaders:

- **Total number of sessions within Semester 1 (October - December 2018):** 30 sessions
- **Total number of Individual bookings for a masterclass:** 840
- **Total number of attendees for masterclasses overall:** 426

3a). Sessions with the highest level of engagement:

As can be seen, roughly 50% of the booked spaces were followed up by attendance at a masterclass. However this was not split evenly across the sessions. Most masterclasses ran at a capacity of 30 people. It seems that some classes resonated particularly strongly with Academic Reps and thus we will look to develop these going forward. The following sessions saw attendance of 20+

- How do University structures work
- Building your profile as an Academic Rep
- Developing public speaking skills
- How to chair committee meetings
- Leadership and communication skills
- How to represent other student views effectively
- How to engage other students effectively
- How to make the most of your first year as an Academic Rep
4. Current Achievements by Academic Representatives:

We also wanted to take a moment to highlight some of the successes our Academic Representatives have had so far:

- Improved personal tutorial sessions and guidance provided to students.
- Consultations on assessment/feedback processes through Turnitin.
- Engaging Academic Representatives in programme level approach reviews.
- Changes to credit allocation on particular programmes.
- Reviewing deadlines on result submissions.
- Ensuring slides and information for lectures are shared ahead of time.
- Encouraging communication between other year groups to bring communities together.
- Ensuring relevant support channels are signposted effectively for students.

5. Proposed Changes for the future:

With all of the above now highlighted, we want to briefly outline what we deem to be areas to develop going into Semester 2, 2019:

- Preparing for an effective full implementation of our Semester 2 recruitment cycle.
- Work the MDH faculty to ensure student voice at faculty level is embedded.
- Work with departments on what may be an appropriate number of Academic Reps to create an effective student voice for the 2019/20 Academic Year.
- Support the ongoing development of Faculty Representation.
- Review our masterclass offer and ensure that they are skills based for academic reps.
- Reviewing our less successful masterclasses and how they could be approached to improve engagement.
- Continue to highlight the success of Academic Representatives and share best practice.