How to effectively close the feedback loop as an Academic Rep

As an Academic Rep you will often be asked to work with your Department or Faculty staff to ‘close the feedback loop’. Below you find some basic guidance explaining how you can accomplish this.

1. What does ‘closing the feedback loop’ mean?

Closing the feedback loop involves taking an agreed action or outcome such as from a meeting and making sure the relevant people this action impacts are informed. For Academic Reps this often comes in the form of actions agreed at Student Staff Committees (SSCs) but it could be other sessions as well.

2. A basic ‘feedback loop’:

As we know Academic Reps are often seen as a ‘bridge’ between students and staff. Students tell you about an idea/issue, this is raised to staff and you let them know the outcome. It looks something like this:
3. Who is responsible for informing students:

There are two key groups who are responsible for informing students of actions agreed within departments that might impact their learning and teaching experience.

3a. Academic Reps
3b. Staff supporting SSCs

Between yourselves and relevant staff you should aim to, as much as you can make sure that students are informed of decisions or outcomes agreed from SSCs or other department wide changes.

4. How to ‘close the loop’:

Whilst every department will be different there are several general ways you can make sure that actions agreed in meetings are shared with students.

4a: SSC minutes – Through MOLE, Physical Notice Boards or Newsletters:

Student Staff Committee minutes should always be shared as widely as is deemed appropriate. Relevant spaces on MOLE or in the department are good starting points.

4b: Groups such as Facebook, Google Communities etc...

Share action points through your regular groups such as Facebook are a good start. Students are likely to check these regularly and notifications to those students can be provided.

4c: Social Media or Direct E-mails:

This is not as likely and will probably only be done to celebrate big successes or topics that require all students to be aware within a department. You could however use your own social media through Twitter/Facebook to get general messages out.

4d: Lectures or Labs:

If you have a small group of students who all share a single class (such as in a lecture) communicating key messages in this space can be very useful!

5. How do you know if you’ve ‘closed the loop’:

There is no clear way to know 100% of students are aware of changes. We don’t expect you to do this either! What is important however is that when asked by staff or other students, you feel confident that you’ve taken appropriate steps to keep students informed of change within your department.