

**Academic Sub-Committee**

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| **Meeting details** |
| **Meeting name** | **Academic Sub-Committee**  |
| **Date** | **Monday 12th December 2022** | **Time** | **18:00 – 19:00** |
| **Location** | Rolle 001, Students’ Union, Plymouth Campus  |

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| **Minutes** |
| **1.** **Welcome** | VP Education Tonari Arikekpar (TA) welcomed attendees and introduced the format of the academic sub-committee. |
| **2.** **Attendance / Apologies** | Attendance:Louis Wilson- SR Society & CultureRobert Dyson- SR Art Design and ArchitectureMya Symister-SR SECaM Adam Holt -SR SoGEESOlly Moody -Students with Disabilities Officer Tonari Arikekpar- VP Education 3 Course Reps Stephanie Burrell - Head of Library Learning Strategy & Student Engagement  |
| **3.** **Minutes of last meeting** | The minutes were accepted a true and accurate record of the meeting  |
| **4. Notification of any other business** | None  |
| **5a.** **Library Services** | Feedback from the previous meeting was passed on to the Library Services team and Stephanie Burrell attended to answer the questions raised last time. Q – Students are able to make unlimited bookings for private study space, is the system not set up to limit this?A – Thank you for raising, this was the first the library team had heard about this. When it was investigated, the ‘rules’ for the booking had expired so the system allowed multiple bookings. This has now been fixed. Q – Is there something that can be done about overcrowding?A – Stephanie explained that there are 1,200 seats in the library and that at peak occupancy, just over 600 were occupied. However, they are aware that it looks busy when you walk in so there is an understandable perception that there is overcrowding. If there are not enough spaces of the type that students need, then that needs to be fed back so that it can be changed. Stephanie explained that for years, students preferred social learning space so that was prioritised, but that is shifting back to personal study space. Stephanie explained that her team also have a responsibility for the shared learning space across campus but that each school also has their own which remains the responsibility of the school. Tonari suggested that it would be helpful to have the availability of other learning spaces on the app. Stephanie noted that it would be very expensive to do that, but they do so in the library as it is easy to control that information. Rob noted that some of the software on certain machines is out of date. Stephanie noted that the machine in question came under the remit of the school and advised that all these issues be reported so they can be addressed. Q - Staff seem uninformed about the support in the library for neurodiverse students, including services such as coloured paper for Dyslexic students. A – Stephanie had checked with staff about this before the meeting. As there were no further details in the previous minutes, she was unable to give any more specific information but noted that since this question, staff training about support for neurodiverse students had been refreshed. The library ensure that coloured paper is readily available, this can be found in the tray next to the printer on the 1st floor. Olly noted that there had been some issues with disabled access in the library. Stephanie explained that the barrier is working, and staff can help students use it. If it is left on free flow then everyone else uses it. Q. Computers with eco stickers seem to run on a lower processing power which is not able to cope with coursework projects. As these computers seem to be random it is not possible in a busy session to ask someone not using the processing capacity to swop but there is no option to un-limit the eco mode.A. Of 200+ machines, 30 are high spec to be able to run certain software e.g., packages used for engineering projects. These are identifiable by the processor being on the desk. The library is looking at increasing the number of these machines, but for the majority of students doing work, the usual machines are sufficient. All machines are in eco mode, and this should not impact performance. Stephanie explained that there is currently a digital skills survey open, please complete it as it helps decide what to focus resources on. Students report high confidence levels in digital skills but there is a discrepancy in what students and employers feel are necessary digital skills.Rob asked what kind of skills were expressed by employers as useful and what support was on offer. Stephanie explained that things like using productivity software, searching and researching literacy, referencing skills, use of end note, and Microsoft office suite were current support topics but the team are open to suggestions. Q. Tonari asked about the use of headphones and when students can connect devicesA. with so many PC’s in close proximity, the signals for wireless headphones would create a lot of interference. There is a USB plugin that can be used to stop this and the purchase of those could be promoted but it is not really possible for these to be provided. Library website [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/library](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.plymouth.ac.uk%2Fstudent-life%2Fyour-studies%2Flibrary&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805680876%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=j4x%2FvW%2F7tEIARRP5%2FYQnTno7l0%2BNellt9ndDiACb9tA%3D&reserved=0)Library Induction Pages [https://plymouth.libguides.com/libraryinduction](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fplymouth.libguides.com%2Flibraryinduction&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805680876%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=NQCH8KvwZUtDJLU4b2P3li9kw7j0xZ7ZOZVI2hboq5E%3D&reserved=0)Information Skills [https://plymouth.libguides.com/skills](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fplymouth.libguides.com%2Fskills&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805680876%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=r0kVWq46LLtOCDpFPzEU%2FR7UbyB%2B3dLf9cAEIWssea8%3D&reserved=0)Your Study (Student IT Getting Started) [https://dle.plymouth.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=37758](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdle.plymouth.ac.uk%2Fcourse%2Fview.php%3Fid%3D37758&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805837099%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2tWZHpE5ZRf49yoem0Qchbbhvq2L2mG3eX9xEeMfPWg%3D&reserved=0)Your Study (Student Digital Skills *lower part of page*) [https://dle.plymouth.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=37758](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdle.plymouth.ac.uk%2Fcourse%2Fview.php%3Fid%3D37758&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805837099%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2tWZHpE5ZRf49yoem0Qchbbhvq2L2mG3eX9xEeMfPWg%3D&reserved=0)Library & IT Self-Help [https://plymouth.libguides.com/LibandITSelfHelp](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fplymouth.libguides.com%2FLibandITSelfHelp&data=05%7C01%7Ctracy.priestman%40su.plymouth.ac.uk%7Ccc977a8f392e4d787ece08dadeaf8d0f%7C5437e7eb83fb4d1abfd3bb247e061bf1%7C1%7C0%7C638067142805837099%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MD0IB7alW6UZ%2FEXsYLE1X9eS9zEFvkxIYSyJHO9EtUw%3D&reserved=0)Stephanie left the meeting  |
| **7.** **Sabbatical Officer Report Q&A** | Tonari reported that the President is currently off sick and will not be returning to work until after the new year. The VP Activities is working with student groups to collate a map of student safety. The night bus has been reduced to £5Rob noted that he had been in discussion with the school about releasing a statement to students impacted by safety issues, explaining what support is available. Tonari explained that the university are working with the Police and night Patrol on this.Tonari has an update on the SU website. In this she explained that students are reporting a delay in appeal decisions and process. Tonari is discussing this with the university and the number of staff working on appeals had increased. The community larder has launched and the SU are looking for food donations and for volunteers to help manage it. Please complete the Digital Engagement Survey which is open until the end of term.  |
| **8.****School Rep Reports Q&A** | Rob Dyson - Art, Design and Architecture Rep Rob explained that they are working on progressing Course Rep feedback with staff. They are chasing up software updates within the school and are looking at planning a minorities in construction event at the end of March.Louis Wilson – Society and CultureElected a Deputy and had received a lot of feedback for STLQC. They have now set up an Instagram page and are looking to use that as a ‘newsletter’.Rob and Louis have set up a LinkedIn page and are just waiting for approval from the Faculty Mya Symister – Computing, Engineering and Maths Working with Course Reps and supporting a student with a specific issue. They are attending the EDI committee for the school and have set up a what’s app group for course reps.Adam Holt - Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences Just elected at the last meeting so still getting to grips with the role.  |
| **9. Any other business** | Rob noted that some coursework is not being returned within the set timeframes. Rob to message Tonari about this |
| **10. Dates for the diary** | TBC |
|  | **End of meeting** |

Academic Sub Committee Feedback

Assessment

* Not enough time between assessment deadlines, staff need to liase in order to make assignments more handelble for students - Creative Writing, Marketing, Law , Psychology Msc
* Lecturers have not made requirements/marking criteria accessible within a reasonable time period
* Feedback tutorials the day before dedlines is leaving students without enough time to make amendments- Architecture
* Feedback for 1st submission was not provided until after the 2nd submission date had past.- Msc Internationsal logistics and supply chain management

Content delivery

* Breaks between 2 hour lectures
* Breaks in lectures to discuss content
* Find ways to get more people involved in seminars – solutions maybe ask specific people rather than on a volunteering basis
* Library
* Library should either provide headsets or allow Bluetooth connection as not everyone has wired headphones anymore to use on library computers
* Library induction didn’t include info on how to take out laptops
* No information about the availability of coloured paper

SU

* Gym should be free
* Student representative meetings should be held in a more quiet place like RLB Hall
* Better venue for meetings like this for example a lecture theatre
* Free food in student meetings

Writing support

* Ongoing support for paper writing, not just in year one
* A number of students have expressed a lack of confidence in their academic writing capabilities. Whilst support like the writing café exists, it would be beneficial for an academic writing element in first year of course

IT and Learning Resources

* Shared school resources- eg film software/editing software is beneficial for everyone or green screen use for business school – Marketing
* Provide Headphones or allow Bluetooth device connection
* More accessible info on different resources and support
* Eco computers in library sometimes have reduced computing power or do not work
* The mics in lecture spaces not picking up the audio or making a static/echoing sound makes it difficult to hear the course content
* Maybe consider reading pens like city college for SEND benefit
* Optional training or re-cap on initial IT skilles
* Lecture audio/ video recording available to students
* Student support for new software in lectures
* Making software readily available to undergrads eg spss, thomson reuters
* Smarthub is glitch
* CAD lessons for architecture students, some people find it hard to learn software without guidance

University Cards

* Don’t always scan
* Don’t open doors for some rooms
* Solutions – making it clear on card design how to use It properly
* Be clear where students can access rooms/ buildings only by card

Module feedback

* Make module handbooks the same across a course so that it is easier to see gaps

Labs and practical sessions

* Smeaton building especially, Access hours – get locked out at 5pm is not enough time to do uni work after lectures are done
* Can only access software and hardware in labs so can't do coursework in the library it has to be in labs
* Lab machines not having access for students to work on
* Lack of technicians for IT help
* Software not up to date – Game development
* Davy building difficult to get into lab, door is blocked due to unauthorised access
* Lack of space for groups to use chart room –Navigation
* Prefer in class lab and practicals- EE Foundation
* Bigger space/separate groups into 3 or more- Physio stage 1
* Practical results update on DLE should follow what happened in the sessions
* ‘Take the helm’- the uni yacht used to be accessible to navigation students to go out on Wednesday afternoons with a uni provided skipper, this is now not available and many are disappointed as our course fees cover its costs

SOB&MS

* Difficult to do assessments/reports when data is only given 4 days before
* Face to face learning is preferable
* Many students had issues with having too little time to do the end of module assessments (only a week) as well as starting new modules
* Careers
* Careers sessions later in the year- too overwhelming at the beginning
* Would prefer smaller spread out sessions to one 2 hour block

PALS

* Would like PALS sessions where second and third year students help out first years

Student services

* Not supporting and signposting enough for international students with issues such as financial aid, information about foodbanks, or access to sanitation like washing machines while in the process of getting a bank account

Inclusivity

* Recordable / prevision of lectures
* Paremy has made us well aware though services
* Why aren’t we moving towards accessibility?
* Accessibility & wheelchair users have been made to feel a spectacle due to seating plans for them to be sat at the front of lecture halls
* Colour overlay systems not made accessible for dyslexic students
* Disabled / chronically ill students are placed in a position of unreasonable responsibility for their own advocacy.

Online Lectures

* Course reps miss representing their course
* IT issues
* Lack of space for groups to use chat room (new)
* Lectures and students preferred zoom setup over Panopto – easier to rewatch and record
* Virtual appearance (have a zoom meeting on and students who can turn up can ask the lecturer to attend it)
* Transcripts not matching the lectures
* Have online lectures at later times (5-6pm)
* Have email notifications in Plymouth’s app
* Exam content not being covered in lectures -> lack of communication between lectures when are went of ill long term

Recorded Materials

* Possibly have regular checklists that have clear outcomes
* No recorded lectures, ever & it would be helpful to have documents/presentations uploaded before the lecture start so we know what we are doing
* When there are presentations half the lecture topic is not in the presentation, you only hear it – this + recorded lectures = stubbed
* Bring back zoom for individuals w/ chronic illness + train strikes

Accommodation

* No non-recycling waste bins in Mary Newman Accommodation
* Everyday “lectures” not accepted
* Sports for postgraduate students
* Home at halls is not working effectively

Labs + Practical Sessions

* Practical results update on DLE should follow what we did in the practical sessions

Emdeck

* Half of course being expected to write our report as though we actually got to go which isn't helpful or fair
* Being turned down by lecturer for being slightly behind / struggling (CAT Emdeck)
* Financial help w it
* Sessions so confusing
* Some lecturers don’t upload Panopto videos
* Group work – could be good to choose a friend or 2 to go with
* They don’t record them because they say its interactive and they go around however to use excel and them failing through it is helpful they should still record
* More places for left-handed students! Agreed from marketing

Lectures:

* There appears to be a lack of engagement with certain lecturers due to a lack of directions when carrying out teaching
* Language barriers to some extent limit engagement
* Marketing

Seminars:

* Rushed
* Majority only last 1h30m/1h
* Not much assessment to ensure students are on track
* Tutors do not seem extreme well versed on their curriculum / content
* Based off feedback
* Marketing

Course Specifics

PHYSIO

* Bigger space / separate groups into 3 or more – PHYSIO. Stage 1

Navigation

* ‘Take the helm’ - the uni Yacht used to be accessable to Navigation students to go out on wednesday afternoons with a uni provided skipper, this is not not available and many are disapointed as our course fees cover its costs. - NAVIGATION
* Lack of space for groups to use chart room – NAVIGATION ALL STAGES

Game Development

* LACK of IT help in Smeaton – GAME DEVELOPMENT STAGE 4

EE Found.

* Prefer in class lab + practical – EE Foundation.

Robotics

* Access hours: cant access labs (specifically Smeaton 303) after 5pm. This is the only lab with all the software + hardware we need. Therefore cant do work after hours (9-5pm is also when we have lectures!) Used to be open until 10pm before covid. This gave much more flexibility for people who work / have class etc. Also student cards don’t always open the door during 9-5 anyway - ROBOTICS 4TH STAGE

Law

* My cohort are very argumentative, please send help! - Law
* No recorded materials, difficult for people who cannot make it such as ill or train strikes. Sometimes lectures move too quickly or a need to review a difficult topic is there. Powepoints are sometimes unclear. - LAW

CREATIVE WRITING

* Many members of the cohort have complained about attendance to lectures / seminars being mandatory – some students have to commute in which is often difficult for 9am starts – CREATIVE WRITING

ECONOMICS

* Recordings with tawer (projector thingy) sometimes do not appear on Panopto and sound quality is not always good. Also tutorials should be recorded. Writings on the smart board sometimes don’t show