

Student Staff Forum – Year 2 Town Hall

Tuesday, 31 January 2023

5:00PM

Blackett Lecture Theatre 1

Present: Michele Dougherty (MD), Carl Peterson (CP), David Cullen (DC), Derek Lee (DL), Simon Bland (SM) Yasmin Andrew (YA), Naomi Egbon (NE - Secretary)

Updates:

- SB states the main announcement regarding the first-year project prizes saying that all prize winners will get an amazon voucher which will be sorted in the following week. All videos will be provided.
- SB states the additional announcement regarding the prospective changes to year 2 labs and computing. The lab update is about the idea to still have 3 cycles and continual assessment now more formalised. The computing update is project as before in prior years – marking of code done by waypoints code automatically checked as you write it, report still marked as is, proper 1-2-1 feedback interviews afterwards.

Questions:

Part 1: Labs and Tutorial

Q1. Why the change to one assessment on lab report with 3 working days to complete?

DC: Students should not spend more than 6 hours on labs. The update is taking away pressure from first two terms on students as no longer a mark on lab book. The 3 working days is a suggestion it is not currently fixed – if we give you two weeks you spend two weeks working on it, we are trying to minimize worry on lab.

CP: The idea is to alleviate the high workload on year 2 students due to the number of course assignments that must be submitted throughout the year resulting in students not turning up to lecture. Do we reduce the number of assessments as a result and make the remaining count for more or lots of assessments through the semester?

Q2: SB: What are the biggest worries about moving assessment to term 3 and only 3 days to complete?

Students feedback:

- The change is making exam period more stressful due to if mess up one of them it would make me less stressed.

- It is a good idea to push back assessment but unsure about one assessment.
- A lot of deadlines for various courses and once past exam it is smoothed sailing.
- Put computing back into the cycle.

DC: The period after exam is to decompress.

SB: The old students not keen on exam exam exam, option option option, exam exam exam. The move to term 1 or 2 is to bring exam to start and the time after is to do other things rather options and then exam. We also explored moving cycles to each term to spread it out.

Q3. Why is there no consistency with marking of lab assessment and lack of guidance on report?

DC: The demonstrators are supposed to provide 3 positives and 3 negatives and getting them to keep to that is complicated.

YA: Demonstrator training is being conducted shortly.

SB: We need to issue better guidance to demonstrators and enforcement on following rules.

DC: We go through marker meetings each cycle and go through everybody's script and lab book. If you look on blackboard previous examples are available.

SB: We want to make something that works, we are open to feedback and suggestions from students. We will open forum for feedback and want proper discussions.

Q4. Any scope for increasing numbers for academic tutorials groups?

SB: A lot of students are missing tutorials therefore groups end up being 3-4 students, we've shielded away from larger tutorial groups vs smaller.

Part 2: Strikes

Q1. What is the impact of 18 days of strikes

SB: We know it will affect the courses and seminars/labs may not go ahead. We will keep track to mitigate any disruptions and ensure students keep key physics skills.

Q2. How will you mitigate if lab can't go ahead for strike?

SB: If lab doesn't go ahead, report will be based on part that you did.

Q3. Is financial compensation a possibility due to strikes?

CP: Go to central college for compensation enquiries.

SB: The money that got saved got used for UROP students in previous years.

MD: In the past, the money we get back for college that isn't paid for college staff, we ask student reps how they like it to be used. In previous years, it went through UROP placements and student spaces, hardship funds for students.

Part 4: Other

Q4. Not much guidance on what you are going to learn, especially 1st year.

MD: So much info is thrown to students, so we don't what to throw more, we want ideas on how to do so.

Students: what you are going to learn each term – week ahead meetings aren't compulsory but provides more understanding of what's coming up.

Q5. Timeline of exams from courses.

CP: We start teaching in October and exams are after easter, unsure how to resolve it.

Students: Force students to utilise knowledge throughout the year – CP: that is what comprehensives it.