# Student Representatives Assembly

## 28.10.2026

## Agenda:

- Introductions
- Intro to Student Representatives Assembly
- Q&A for the Full-Time Officer Team
- Representation Update
- Campaigns & Democracy Update
- Nominate a Rep for University Research Ethics committee
- Any other business

## Intro to Student Representatives Assembly

- Chiara is Democracy Coordinator
- Hafren is Senior Academic Rep Coordinator
- Student Representatives Assembly (SRA)
    - Space for accountability, collaboration, to raise issues that are happening across student communities, as well as across Faculties and share information
    - A space to allow reps to connect to one another both personally and in terms of the work reps are doing
    - Made up of: Council Chair, Full Time Officers, Faculty Reps, Student Community Organisers, Democratic Standards Committee, Student Union Student Trustees
- Structure of the meeting
    - Full-time officer updates, sent in advance in full, they'll give brief verbal updates
    - Reps can ask questions, and keep the full-time officers accountable
        - Reminder that they're full time paid staff – so it's important to keep them accountable to students
- Representation Updates
    - A space for sharing common difficulties and shared solutions and ideas
    - It's different to Faculty Academic Rep Forums because it's looking at broader issues or successes that are less specific to your faculty – useful to share across faculties.
    - Looking at the issues that are faced by both taught and research students
    - Wider issues that impact all students across faculties/courses/communities
    - Discussing the shared barriers that students are facing – can ask the officers how they might be addressing these barriers
    - Example of bringing up issues around alternative exam arrangements
- Ideas Board

    - Student has an idea for change, and has a variety of ways that they might communicate this to student representatives
    - Ideas must meet a 30 vote threshold, to ensure that it's an idea that impacts the wider student community
    - At Democratic Standards Committee, a decision is then made about how this idea is best addressed:
        - Can be immediately implemented by SU staff/Full-time Officers
        - Can be brought to Student Representatives Assembly (SRA)
        - Can be brought to Student Council/Annual Members' Meeting as a motion (of the motion passes, it becomes policy and is active for at least 3 years)
- Actioning Ideas at SRA
    - A mandate (an idea that comes to SRA)
    - The proposer will attend SRA (virtually) to discuss why their idea is important
    - There will be a discussion of how best to work on this mandate, and actions assigned
    - There will be an update on progress in a following SRA meeting
- Bids
    - After an idea has come in, a bid can be submitted to get money to enable work on this idea to happen
    - Bids must be relevant to an idea or a campaign
    - Bids are not intended for putting on an event or funding catering (unless specifically in the service of achieving the aims of a mandate or campaign)
- Q: how has bidding been used in the past?
    - A: Last year a mandate came to SRA to facilitate collaboration between students who were either for or against removing arms companies from careers fairs. The bid was made to enable an event to hold this discussion, both for catering and to bring in an external facilitator.
    - Another example: changes to sick leave for PGR students mandate: a bid was made to purchase campaigning assets such as flyers.
- Agenda
    - A typical Agenda will include:
        - FTO Updates
        - Representation Updates
        - Campaigns and Bids
        - Any Other Business

## Q&A for the Full-Time Officer Team

### *Jordan – Undergraduate Education Officer*

- Commuter students lockers – between 4th and 5th floor of senate house, will be promoted on social media
- Confirmation of opening times of Merchant Venture Building will remain the same as opening times across campus
- Looking at long-term shaping of assessments to make them more accessible for students

Q: assessment design – is this related to AI?

A: yes – taking AI into consideration, and with a focus on course work.

*Jasper – Equality, Liberation and Access Officer*

- Student involvement with Reparative Futures Programme
- Launching research around mental disability with the university
- Working on decolonising curriculum work – if FReps know of work happening on this, please share this with Jasper and Jessie

*Elliot – Student Living Officer*

- Working with Fair Share to distribute unsold supermarket food to swap shop
- University Executive Board (UEB) agreement: secured £10k to keep their guarantor scheme going. Working with the SU to get our own guarantor scheme set up, more accessible
- Working with National Union of Students around student loans, so that maintenance reflects students' actual costs of living

*Sharan – Postgraduate Education*

- Launched PG Explore events, starting with indoor climbing and pub quiz – please promote in PG networks!
- Feedback engagement fellows programme enters its second year – recruiting PGT students and looking at plans for the year
- Student Academic Representative Network next week – professional university staff, academic staff, and student representatives get together to talk about student voice. Academic reps welcome to come along!

Q: Was the PGT trip organised by you?

A: No, organised by the university, but we are looking at running our own trips.

*Varenya - Union Affairs Officer*

- Launched Society Ambassadors, to improve representation in this area. Forums will be happening next week, counts towards accreditation, an opportunity to share feedback and socialise
- UEB agreement: lobbying university to open a new living room in the Richmond Building, in light of Balloon Bar being closed in the evenings. This would be especially useful for students using the Richmond Building for group activities
- Commitment from university that the Hawthorns Hatch cheap meals will be continuing.

*Becky – Sport and Student Development*

- Club Captains Forum hosted this month.
- In conversations about planning Derby Day for March
- Launch of Comeback Community (previously injury support group) training club captains to enable them to support their teams

- Social Sec Hub launched – sharing ideas and challenges, especially around sports socials. Aiming to improve the perception of sports socials and create more sober socials
- Movember next month, working on that campaign.

*Jessie – International Students Officer*

- Working on the Arms Company campaign, university increasing transparency around connections to arms companies. Working on respectful debate facilitation around this
- International Students' Week – focus on migration as a human right. Fundraising for Sanctuary Scholar legal fund
- Please signpost students with problems around visas to support from the SU. Secured more support from the university in the visa advice team.

Question for the room, do you find this a useful way to receive FTO updates and information? How can we make it accessible?

- Says you need an account to access the airtable of updates – students should be able to access this without an account so we need to ensure that it's allowing access.
- Could we use a google doc or microsoft doc maybe?
- Google docs are collaborative to allow people to ask questions as well
- FTO updates are also available under 'Meet the FTO Team' on the SU website, in between SRA meetings
- we just had the training, so everything feels very new and overwhelming. We created a WhatsApp group for the faculty, but unsure how to use this so far:
    - Hafren: we can book a 1:1 that we can use to support you with the WhatsApp group.
- Maybe we need explainers of language or terms.

## Representation Update

*Sharan, Postgraduate Education Officer*

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) assessment workshops are happening, keen for representation in these spaces to include students. Not many students have been able to attend – would be good to create our own workshops or research, so that we can feed students thoughts into these workshops. Working with Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching
    - Q: Implementing AI in assessments – what does this mean?
        - Jordan: There's a scale from 'No AI Allowed' to 'Full AI Integration' – looking at how this is implemented
    - Q: When managing different levels of AI – how is this adjusted across faculties/exams/coursework - who makes these decisions?
        - Sharan: decisions being made at different levels throughout the uni. It's up to lecturers who will be delivering courses. We need to ensure that diverse student voices are present in these spaces as these decisions are made. EG if AI is being allowed to be used in essays, that they're supplemented by

'mini-vivas' to talk through process. At the moment it's academic staff with a few student reps

- Q: What about when people are accused of using AI – the impact of the fear that this creates in students.
    - Sharan: the SU Academic Advice team dealt with several cases of this. Students being unsure on what AI usage is acceptable – it's important to ensure that guidance is clear. The key things to bring to the Uni: AI in assessments, AI literacy for students, AI in general student life (eg equitable access to tools)
- [Student rep]: Against avoiding AI completely: I feel we should be able to use it for coursework, but not for exams.
    - Sharan: academics broadly agree with this approach. It's a completely new challenge for the institution and academic staff.
- Jordan: senior management are trying to design assessments that are sustainable based on how AI will continue to change.
- [Student rep]: if the uni is trying to have assessments which prevents AI from impacting results; why would we move away from using exams? The benefit of exams is they prevent AI use.
    - Sharan: issue around spaces to hold exams. Also been a push for 'authentic assessments' which prepare students for the world beyond university – idea that there aren't many examples in life where you're isolated as in an exam.
    - Varenya: personal reflection – my assessments weren't in-person exams, as they aren't reflective of what it would be like working in law beyond university.
- Sharan: we are keen to get more student input into these workshops and decisions.
- Jordan: you can influence the shape of assessments by attending
- Q: is there anything re accessibility for PGRs?
    - Sharan: working with Doctoral College – report on PGR use of AI indicated that 81% of PGRs are using AI in some way. Focus is ensuring that supervisor guidance for PGRs is consistent. Different levels of familiarity with AI across PGRs. Re accessibility, bring any concerns to me so that I can feed these back.
- [Student rep]: how to get students to give feedback – we had a specific assessment where some students were asked for feedback. Idea that students will use AI anyway, but adding additional sections which ask students to talk through their working, and how AI was used. The reward of a voucher for participation in feedback was helpful, and good to feed back directly to the staff influencing these assessments. The person who sought this feedback had been attending SARF meetings and hearing student feedback there.
- Sharan: there are different viewpoints from academics which conflict with each other.
- Programme directors asked for feedback on the shape of the course and assessment, although unsure where the outcomes of these surveys went.

*Faculty Rep Updates*

- Sophia: would like to create posters to promote the ideas board around faculties. To enable students to submit their ideas – would other faculty reps be interested in doing the same?
    - It would be good to advertise this definitely
    - Plus in the PGR hub
- Some communities of students (eg Chinese students) don't feel comfortable to speak up with criticisms so it's hard to get feedback. How do we engage less proactive students?
    - Hafren: important that feedback can be framed as being positive – what new things would you like to see? Or things that are going well and can be continued. Something we could work on at a future SRA meeting as well.

## Campaigns & Democracy Update

- No updates for this first meeting from SCOs
- Varenya (Union Affairs): showers at Richmond Building motion - have met with the university and have an additional follow up meeting on Thursday. Feeling among performing arts students about the Balloon Bar closing in evenings as well, so the SU has been working on making Anson Rooms Bar accessible for these groups
- Wendy (Student Community Organiser): uni student inclusion team global majority belonging and community fund – we could propose a project to apply for this fund to get £750, deadline end of Nov. If you're interested info is on careers service website, if you have any ideas for how we could use this fund, please contact Wendy.

## Nominate a Rep for University Research Ethics committee

Note: further context available below*

- UREC evaluates proposed research plans to ensure that research that is carried out is ethical and protects its participants. The position on this committee wouldn't make decisions on specific research proposals, but rather inputting on how the committee works and how decisions are made. An elected Faculty Rep can be proposed for this role, ideally someone with research experience.
- Jessie can provide further information and context if that's helpful.
- Q: this is related to the UEB priority – how would the research committee fulfil the ask around transparency
    - A: the reason is because they've realised that they should have a student representative on this committee. This rep wouldn't be involved in specific decisions on research, but rather on principles that guide these decisions. The purpose of this committee is to ensure consistency of research ethics approval across the university.
- Q: what would the responsibilities of the role be, eg frequency of meetings?
    - A: don't have a specific answer, info is in the paper, but it's not super clear. I imagine at most once a month, more likely around 4 times a year.
- Q: is it a paid position?

    - A: no.
        - Then we should ask for it to be a paid position
    - Jessie: FReps are already paid via honorarium, so this responsibility will likely fall under that paid criteria. But if we can't get anyone to volunteer we can ask the university.
- Sharan: maybe a co-opted option, rather than a faculty rep, so that it's not adding responsibility to a FRep, but allowing a development opportunity for another student.
- Jessie: it would be a great opportunity to learn how uni governance works, gain insight on how uni and research ethics committees work, so could gain skills and experience that will be valuable.
- It's difficult to ask people on the spot to decide, please email Jessie by 5pm next Wednesday if you'd like to take on the role, or to ask any questions about the role? We could then hold a vote among FReps.

## Any Other Business

- Jordan: exam season. Received news that Ivy Gate building won't be used for study spaces during assessment.
    - Q: can they give an alternative?
        - A: they're promoting 3rd floor of Richmond Building, as the innovation centre has been moved to Temple Quarter.
        - A: the Richmond Building will hopefully be more accessible and have sensory spaces.
- Common concern across courses about how inaccessible sports socs are for international students – super expensive, and hardship fund hasn't been accessible to everyone. Particular concern around tennis societies where slots were filled before people heard back about hardship fund outcomes.
    - Becky (SSD): we are looking at this as an SU – how to engage internationl and postgraduate students in sports. Would love collaboration on ideas for doing this! Hardship fund: there are three different rounds that it opens for – sometimes it doesn't line up well with society deadlines – I'll feed this back to the development team.
    - Involving more international students in sport – interest is there, it's the financial barriers that prevent engagement.
    - Becky: it's possible to pay for the membership and then use the hardship fund to reimburse this. The BeActive programme is a free programme from Sport Exercise Health (SEH) which allows access to a wide range of sports and activities, and allows students to try lots of different sports without committing to a membership – through UoB sports app.
    - Intramural sport is less intense version of access to sports competition.
    - Jessie: resources shared in the event chat.

MEETING END

***Nominate a Rep for University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)**

Background: Each year, Bristol SU Officers and the University's Executive Board (UEB) agree a set of shared priorities to help improve the student experience. These commitments are developed through collaboration between your elected officer team and University leaders. Read more about UEB agreement here:

https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/ueb-agreement

One of them (number 11) is about increasing the transparency of the partnership/research work that the university do with defence companies. As a result of this, we decided to re-establish representation on University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). We (the SU) will nominate a representative to sit on UREC.

Student representation on UREC has been a long standing tradition. It was discontinued 25/26 for unknown reason, but no one brought it up until now.

Read more about UREC here: University Research Ethics Committee information | Research and Innovation Services | University of …

More details about the membership and responsibility of this committee here: https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/red/documents/research-ethcis/Restructuring%20Research%20Ethics%20Paper.pdf

DECISION NEEDED: FREP to vote amongst themselves to nominate one of you to sit on UREC