



UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN STUDENTS' UNION Vice President Academic Affairs Report February

SUggestions

Since my previous report I have been working on 2 Suggestion's. The first have been working on is getting more computing in the AAD building. There needs to be more university computers available in the AAD west building for CAD and printing purposes. Currently there is only one computer suite on the third floor with 18 computers. This is for both Architecture and Interior architecture students to use. When it comes to deadlines this is an issue as students are unable to print from laptops, so 18 computers have to be shared between around 250/300 students. Considering there are also scheduled sessions in this room, the computers are sometimes completely unavailable, having an impact on our work. After speaking with Drew Cook, Director of ICT, the ICT Team will explore the AAD building for potential spaces to place more computers to work on.

The Second idea I have been working on is a suggestion to install F.lux on the library computers. F.lux is a program that adjusts a display's colour temperature according to location and time of day. The program was designed to reduce eye strain during night-time use and reduce disruption of sleep patterns, but can be customised or turned off should the user not wish to use it. As Student Leaders, we support this idea, as we feel it would only be of benefit to the students. This programme is already installed on machines for computer science students. For this reason, this SUGesstion was fast – tracked. After speaking to Drew Cook, Director of ICT and Ian Snowley, University Librarian this would be explored by the ICT team.

The Next Virtual Learning Environment

As part of my manifesto, I ran to work with the University to work on improving our Virtual Learning Environment, BlackBoard. Despite a period of outage at the start of the academic year, BlackBoard has already seen some improvements in the form of an update that occurred over the summer. With this, a new BlackBoard App was released which allows students to view modules, grades, announcements and lecture materials all from a mobile device!

As part of this pledge, discussions have now been opened as to what the future of our Virtual Learning Environment may look like. Since my last report, a set of principles have been developed.

1. **Collaborative Learning:** We believe in collaborating across disciplines to support the co-creation of new knowledge and the exploration of new ideas between staff and students. *We will deliver a digital environment that encourages collaboration, fosters respectful debate, nurtures creativity and enables active learning within and outside the University.*
2. **Whole Student Journey:** We believe all students should have equal opportunities to succeed at every point of their academic career. *We will create a personalised environment that supports each student's whole learning journey and enables them to fulfil their potential.*
3. **Global Outlook:** We believe learning should not be limited and *we will guide our students to navigate all relevant and appropriate emerging knowledge gateways both internally and externally.*
4. **Flexible Learning Journeys:** We believe learning is most effective when it is flexible and responds to the individual needs of the student. *We will offer targeted and personalised learning opportunities to encourage our students to develop and grow.*
5. **Anytime and Anywhere Access:** We believe learning is the most effective without boundaries and borders. *We will use the latest technological advances to deliver accessible learning for all wherever and whenever, anytime, anywhere.*
6. **Professional-Practice Informed Education:** We believe in professional practice informing education and *we will collaborate closely with employers to understand employment needs of today and critically the future to ensure our students have the (digital) skills needed to manage their careers successfully.*

Undergraduate Regulations

I have been working with the university to review the universities regulations for undergraduate studies, as shown below. If you have any comments, please feel free to get in touch!

- The potential to allow undergraduate students to retake their final Level
- The potential to allow undergraduate students to 'fail and trail' a certain number of credits on movement from Level 1 to Level 2 and Level 2 to Level 3 (possibly removing the Ordinary degree route)
- The potential to allow undergraduate students to resit up to 120 credits

These issues will be discussed with relevant stakeholders in Colleges, professional services and the Students' Union with a view to mandating the Head of Governance to draft new regulations if desirable which will be submitted to the Standing Regulations Oversight Group in the first instance.

BACKGROUND

The University's Undergraduate Regulations have remained static for a number of years.

There is currently no right to retake failed final level modules (as distinguished from the right to resit)

The only 'fail and trail' provision is on movement from Level 2 to Level 3 when a student has taken resits (on a first sit basis) and achieved at least 40% in 90 credits but less than 35% in the remaining modules. In this case a student may progress to Level 3 as a candidate for an Ordinary degree (i.e. Unclassified) unless pre-requisite requirements preclude it. The Level 2 failed modules carry over into Level 3 with resits taken during Level 3. If a student successfully redeems the failed Level 2 credits during Level 3 they may be considered for the award of an Honours degree.

Students may resit up to a certain number of credits of failure depending on their Level (section 5.3.3).

Students who are currently required, at Levels 1 and 2, to Retake Failed Units may only be retaking one 15 credit module without attendance or teaching. Engagement may, therefore, be minimal. These students are effectively required to take a year out and when they do return they are not joining the same cohort that they left. There is a possibility that changing the regulations to be more flexible will encourage retention and completion.

On the other hand, it may be that allowing students to take up to 120 credits of resit is too much of a burden and this can similarly extend to fail and trail. The question of how such students can be effectively supported to succeed will need to be addressed as well as the practicalities of taking that number of resits (perhaps extending the resit period by one week) and how the timetable will operate effectively. The requirements of PSRBs will also need to be taken into consideration which means that any proposed changes may not be able to be implemented for all undergraduate programmes.

It is unknown how many other HEIs allow this level of flex within their regulations and this research will also need to be undertaken.