

Student Dean Forum Term: CCW Design School, Term 1, 2024-25			
Date & Time: 27.11.2024	UAL Staff: Simon Maidment Sam Elliott	Arts SU Officer: Charmaine Chikiwa	Arts SU Staff: Rachel Wornell
Number of students in attendance: 17			

Action Log for School Dean and Students' Union

Actions for School Dean	Update on Progress	Response to students
SM to speak to teams about signposting staff changes to students earlier		
SE to feedback student's experience of having an authorised absence during welcome to the welcome team. Ensure that students can still access information after welcome has officially ended.	we are conducting a review of welcome to make some improvements, this feedback has been discussed and an item added to the scheme of work that will enable access to information after welcome has ended	
SM to raise good practice for project launches this with SMT. Tutors should be outlining what students are being asked to do, why they are being asked to do it and how it is being assessed at the start of a unit		
Actions for Students' Union	Update on Progress	Response to students
SU to discuss forum format with SM and SE for term 2		

Minutes

Discussion points submitted by Deans

Welcome and the start of term

SE and SM: clarified “welcome” refers to week 0 – 3 of term. Asking for feedback to improve for next year. They especially want to look at improving community across the School, which is the biggest at CCW.

BAPFD Year 2: speaking as a rep who transferred from LCC, shared that welcome was really good. A highlight was the first lecture which brought together the whole staff teams and students across all years. This was good as students met each other, allowed students the chance to recognise staff, and heard about what alumni had gone on to after graduation.

SM: would like to implement something similar across the school. Highlighted the key issue is around space. CCW doesn't have a space large enough to accommodate some courses.

BA Textile Design Year 1: Positive aspects: met at least one technician from each specialism, met tutors, went on campus tours. Ideas for improvement: introduce students to other years of the course; find opportunities for students in C block to interact with the rest of the campus as students can feel sectioned off.

BAPFD Year 3: Students have had some difficulty transitioning into third year as there is a whole new staff team. Although the new tutors are great and they were introduced to the cohort early in the term, they do things differently to the previous team.

SM: Acknowledges the difficulty of a staff change and how that impacts students.

Action: SM if course changes are known about in advance, changes should be signposted to students earlier to reassure and ease the transition.

BA Textile Design Year 1: Highlighted the difficulties for international students who started late and missed welcome. On an art course with over 100 students, it is hard to catch up and settle in. Students didn't know what tutors to approach and tutors can be dismissive if they aren't the “right” staff member for a question.

SE: Asked if students had come across the later wayfinding project running this year.

Students had not.

GD Interior Design: Student needed to return to home country at the start of the year and informed the necessary staff of this. UAL did not communicate this to the other staff and did not set up support for them on their return. Student reached out to lots of staff for information and support on return and either didn't get responses or didn't get useful information. Had to ask other students for tours to catch up.

SM: This needs to be addressed – clarified it should be the responsibility of the student’s year leader. If it is known that a student will be absent, then that should be communicated to relevant staff and they should be supported to catch up on their return.

Action: SE to feedback student’s experience of having an authorised absence during welcome to the welcome team. Ensure that students can still access information after welcome has officially ended.

SE: Asked reps what the most effective method of communication is.

Responses:

- students tune out digital screens as it is often the same content
- Newsletter content can easier be missed as it is a small part of a larger piece of communication
- Posterboards get covered up quickly
- Blackboard is good.
- The “unknown unknowns” difficulty was raised – if you don’t know exactly what you are looking for, it can be hard to find information as there is such an abundance of it.

Structure of Unit 1: Has the extension of Unit 1 to 8 weeks supported your learning?

CC: Clarified that the change from 5 – 8 weeks is to support late enrollers.

SE: Invited feedback on the pace, content, and experience of unit 1. Highlighted some new aspects of the unit e.g. embedding an event into week 5/8 of undergrad courses, some courses running units 1 and 2 parallel for a short period.

BA Graphic Design (Camberwell) Year 1: The breakdown of unit 1 into three projects was unexpected. The first project was on exhibitions which was tricky – students were new to the city and had to find exhibitions on their own, and didn’t know others on their course to travel together. A significant challenge for students was the assessment – students were not told they had to complete a 15 page submission until they rotated onto their third project.

BA Graphic Design (Camberwell) Year 1: Agrees with the rep. Students found unit 1 to have quite an abstract brief. Fundamentals (such as an InDesign workshop) were also taught to different groups at different times. That meant some students didn’t have basic knowledge and resources (such as an understanding of the software they would use for the submission) until late in the unit. Suggestion: staff should share a clearer outline of what the assessment will be at the beginning of the unit. Workshops for fundamental techniques should be early on in the unit.

Action: SM to raise good practice for project launches this with SMT. Tutors should be outlining what students are being asked to do, why they are being asked to do it and how it is being assessed at the start of a unit.

BA Interior Design Year 2: Change to a longer unit sounds positive as with the previous model students had three weeks to complete a unit, not five (as the first week was introductions and hand-in was at the beginning of week five).

SM: Acknowledged that this was why the unit was extended, so late starters didn’t miss out on so much of the unit. Also acknowledged that these are formative assessments so even if they feel rushed, they are chances to quickly learn and receive feedback.

BA Interior Design Year 3: Agreed with the above. As an ID student you have to spend at least a week downloading all the necessary software to be able to do the work. Also, as ID is such a big course, students don't know each other. As such, it is nice to start the year with group work to allow students to get to know each other before focussing on individual work. Unit 6 was great as it allowed students to get to know and work with students on other courses.

SM: Acknowledged it is difficult on large courses and agreed it would be good for groups to be mixed frequently to ensure students are meeting each other.

BAPFD Year 3: Highlighted first year students' exhibition in the library. Students start doing work in groups of two – three and that allows students to develop quickly. Noted the first years' work developed using this model is much better than first years' work two years ago!

Interior Design Chelsea: Highlighted the need for staff to effectively collaborate and communicate during unit 6. Some staffing teams (like graphic design and textiles) have been great e.g. jointly presenting the brief to all students on the collaborative unit so everyone understands the project, the staff involved, and the resources available. Interior Design at Chelsea staff didn't do this for the second part of the unit. Product and Textiles students didn't know the tutors in the interior design studios, students were expecting to meet staff but they weren't there and didn't let students know they weren't coming. Students then didn't understand who the staff team were or how to navigate their studio spaces.

Action: SM to discuss this with the Interior Design team to improve communication and ensure students are adequately inducted into all parts of unit 6.

3. Discussion points from students

Academic Support sessions

Graphic Design year 2: Students find these sessions ok.

BA Interior Design Year 2: Students find academic support sessions a bit basic, such as sessions on collaboration. Students would prefer to use this time at use workshops or do other work instead.

Graphic Design Chelsea Year 1: Students are unclear on what sessions are optional. Sessions are labelled as optional but then staff question why students are not attending them, making them feel compulsory.

SE: Some sessions will be compulsory and embedded into timetables initially so that students understand what academic support sessions offer. Following these sessions, students can opt-in more sessions if they need them.

SM: highlighted that he and SE cannot address all these issues directly, but that a report on what was discussed in the forum will be taken forward to Executive Board to report back on these topics.

CC: Agreed that staff will try and offer as many solutions as possible in this meeting, or try to take the feedback to the relevant staff member if there is nobody in attendance who can address it directly.

Access to space and equipment

Graphic design year 3: - The makers space is missing basic tools such as pliers. – Students would like more material options in workshops. There is currently only pine. Understands there is a cost

implication if other materials were provided by UAL, but if students could purchase through the workshop, delivery times and costs could be reduced. – Workshops closed on Wednesday morning. – The ceramics studio was closed for two days due to staff sickness. This is understandable, but closure wasn't well communicated to students. This has put out ceramics students project timelines – could the studios stay open a little later for a short time to make up for this closure? – Lockers were thrown away, which was disappointing for students, as there is not enough storage space for work.

SM: Recognises these challenges. - On ceramics: agree that if a workshop is closed, there needs to be clear, multichannel comms about it. Especially as ceramics requires significant lead times. – Wednesday mornings are held for inductions. – There are ongoing discussions about storage space vs workspace.

Action: SM to speak with technical teams to see if ceramics studios could have extended opening hours for a short period to mitigate the studio's closure.

Action: SM to talk to Jason and Karen about potential storage solutions (which can be put in place both long and short term).

Student: print, knit and stitch have been closed all week without information – important as students can't get yarn anywhere else at UAL.

SM: This would be good feedback to raise at course committee as Course Leaders can action it right away

Feedback from tutors

BA Interior Design Year 1: - There is a lack of storage and students have to make a lot of models. This means students are having to commute with their models. The shelves in the studio are filled with scraps. – students would appreciate equipment lists earlier. Some students only learn what they need to purchase days before they need to use it, and some only learned they needed a certain spec. laptop in week 3.

SE: Kit lists will soon be listed on courses' web pages, so that students will be able to see what equipment they need before term starts.

Action: SM to speak to Adrian and Tomris about housekeeping in the studios. Shelves need to be emptied at the end of each term so there is space for current student work.

SE: Suggested that scraps can go into the reuse units.

Digital sessions in units 5 and 6 were difficult as the cohort was so big they had to be split across two rooms. Sessions were run in spaces that were hard to learn in, and the teaching varied from room to room.

MA Textile Design: Students haven't been able to start their samples as the block C workshop is full of BA inductions.

Any other business

SM: Forums should be hosted in person to allow for better engagement. Suggests changes to this forum going forward as the Design School is so large and discussions are being rushed. Suggestion: split out

undergraduate and postgraduate forums, split out Chelsea and Camberwell courses, potentially extend to 90 mins.

Action: SU to discuss forum format with SM and SE for term 2.