

Case Study: Student Staff Committee in BMS

Lead: Lauren Buck (l.buck@shef.ac.uk)

Committee Membership/Roles

- Students
 - SSC Chair
 - SSC Vice Chair
 - Secretary
 - Digital Tech
 - Level 1,2,3,4 email rep role + PGT (if possible)
- Staff members (should send apologies and delegate)
 - Staff Chair
 - HoD (invited)
 - Director of UG studies
 - Level Tutors
 - Examinations officer
 - Head of Laboratory Teaching advice
 - Departmental Manager
 - Ex officio members (e.g. module Coordinators, I.T. support, library representative, as relevant)
- Admin team: Kristina Booth (SSC admin) and Dawn Bramham (timetable)

Key Communication strategies

SSC Email address (bms-ssc@shef.ac.uk)

- Purpose - frontloading of minor issues to free up time to discuss broader topics in SSC, and ability to deal with issues more quickly.
- Email rep role – 1 student per level can all see/ use email account as a delegate
- Staff Chair can also see email account.
- Email reps can email to staff about specific issues raised, and logs issue in google sheet (running documentation of past issues that have been resolved)
- Notice as email signature to make it clear to staff who has sent the email and what will happen to their response

Staff communication

- Relevant updates communicated at academic staff meetings throughout the year
- Expectations for SSC to be spoken about in group tutorials are communicated in the BMS Tutorials section of the staff TEL Hub.

Student Representation Annual Timeline of Activity

Late semester 2

- SSC AGM is held at which elections are held for roles, managed by students, just as a society would.
- Last meeting of semester 2 (May) is a “handover” co-chaired by outgoing and incoming student chairs jointly.
- Staff lead meets with incoming Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss priorities for year and what the students hope to achieve.

Summer vacation

- Current student reps emailed by admin team to check they still want to participate
- SSC Chair maintains line of contact to organise e.g. intro week activities

Intro-week

Organisation and nomination of reps

- Chair and Vice-Chair speak at Intro-week welcome session about SSC
- Staff and level rep/SSC committee member attend level-group meeting for 5 minute shout-out to encourage wide engagement and participation

Case Study: Student Staff Committee in BMS

Lead: Lauren Buck (l.buck@shef.ac.uk)

- 1st tutorial groups are held (12 students per tutorial, approximately 20 groups per year), two students from each group are asked to self-nominate; Tutors note names on register and pass to admin team.
- Admin team member: populates initial list from registers given by tutorial group leaders and contacts students to link to online SU training which accredits reps. Also sends out a more general email to all students that may want to be a representative in addition to reps from tutorial groups, directing them to SU online training. SU generates a database of reps by department. Admin team pull from this list at regular intervals in the year to populate an email list.

e.g. Week 5

Initial Pre-meeting

The purpose of the pre-meetings is to allow the Student Representatives time and space to raise issues without a staff member present and to prioritise the issues raised (deciding which can go to staff as an email and which need more time at SSC). The students in higher years are able to field some student worries and to provide reassurance so this cuts down on issues raised later on. The students themselves are sensible and can judge which issues need to be dealt with. This is also an opportunity to check that the issues haven't been raised and dealt with in previous years. The meetings are also a chance to note areas of good practice/praise specific modules or members of staff.

- Student Representative pre-meeting organised by SSC student leads with support from Department admin team (who find a couple of suitable times and book a room).
- Pre-meetings take place at least 1 week before the main SSC meeting ideally to allow an agenda to be typed and circulated by admin team and to allow any emails sent out to be answered prior to the meeting.
- All student representatives invited, no staff invited.
- For the bigger topics of discussion, the department and student representatives can both table ideas and one of these can be picked at the pre-meeting.

e.g. Week 6

Initial SSC Meeting

The SSC in BMS aims to have a balanced agenda (with some departmental priorities that need student input and some student priorities that need to be raised for staff discussion - usually alternating because of time constraints). The aim is to have a positive and two-way discourse and to focus on broad topics affecting all students or whole year groups and not minutiae that can be dealt with by emails through the SSC email account. At least half the time of SSC is devoted to the broader topic, with the first part being a quick recap of issues already covered by email.

- Admin team book meetings at a time that accommodates students at all levels and invite staff on the list of required attendees. For the first meeting, all academic staff involved in teaching will be invited to attend to get a feel for how SSC works.
- Mix of staff and student priorities
 - Staff priority issues - e.g. consultations about curriculum or assessment change, discussions to strategic or Faculty/University-Led items; workshopping student views on specific concerns (e.g. NSS highlight issues).
 - Student priority issues - e.g. inclusivity, lecture format, VLE
- SSC secretary (student) types up minutes. Admin team circulate to staff, SSC post finalised minutes on student Google+ Community at each year level to close feedback loop
- Reps report back to the student body at next available group tutorial with the key points and actions relevant to the group.

Later in the semester/year

- Cycle of pre-meets and SSCs twice per semester (October, December, March, May) with option for additional 'special SSC meeting' if something important needs student input.
- Ad hoc staff member meetings with any SSC student officer to support their work
- SSC Chair keeps a line of contact in between meetings and monitors email account
- Early semester 2, another push for student representation (recruitment).
- Late semester 2 - *cycle repeats as described at the beginning of the timeline.*

Case Study: Student Staff Committee in BMS

Lead: Lauren Buck (l.buck@shef.ac.uk)

Related student engagement work

- Connecting relationship with student society (BMS Soc) and BMS PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) through Engagement Lead
- Affective actions to encourage positive interactions with staff for example: student-staff fundraising and events with BMS Soc, hoodies for staff and students with BMS Soc, regular meetings between Engagement Lead and BMS Soc/SSC, Engagement Lead acts as conduit for contact (introducing students to the right people to get the job done), positive student stories or advertising events through departmental staff newsletter.
- Regular meetings and affective actions have led to student support and championing of NSS (not pressured into this!), improved participation in project work (e.g. tutorials project) to aid curriculum design, regular voluntary presence of BMS Soc at open days, increased funds raised for students' chosen charity, a more positive tone to SSC meetings, increased number of positive staff-student interactions.