Academic Representatives

Term 1 Report

December 2022

Executive Summary

The Representation and Democracy Team have compiled a report to provide an overview of activity for the Academic Rep Network for the first term of the 2022-23 academic year. This report focuses on three key areas: the support and training of Academic Reps, policymaking, and things to consider in term two. Throughout this report are comments from Academic Reps about the successes they have achieved in Term One.

Thank you for all your efforts over the course of Term One, we are excited to see what the Academic Rep Network can achieve next Term!

> *'With my co-rep I organised an in-person feedback session for first years where it was only students present. It was very successful with everyone discussing their concerns a lot more openly than they would on Mentimeter or with the lecturers present. We were able to decide on the most important issues and offer constructive feedback and solutions. This was then sent to our departments teaching lead to be discussed at the next SSCC meeting.'*
> **Earth Sciences Academic Rep**

Statistics for Reps Appointed

As of 8th December 2022, the number of Academic Reps appointed is 1,837. By the end of the 2021-22 academic year we had 1,930 Academic Reps. As a result, we are well on track to have a similar number of Academic Reps compared to the previous academic year.
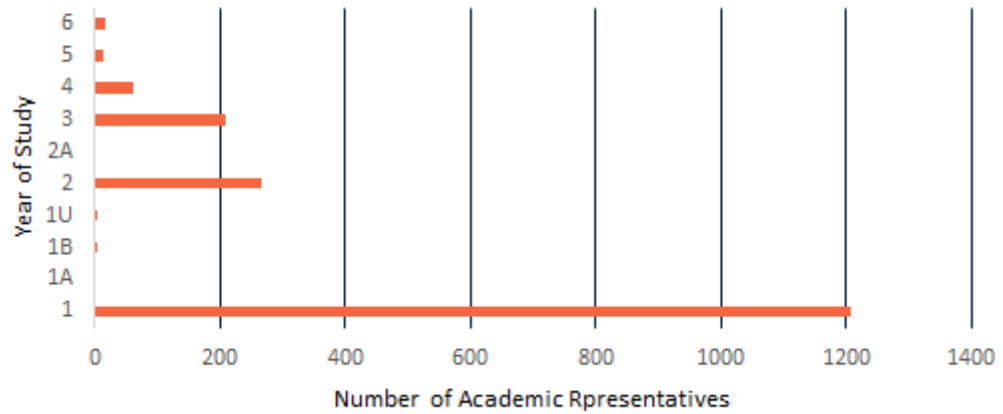
Key Statistics:

- The ratio of reps appointed to students is 1:26.
- The majority of Academic Reps at 46% are Postgraduate Taught students, followed closely by Undergraduate students at 42%.
- 68% of all Academic Reps are first year students. This is comparable to the previous academic year where 60% of Academic Reps were first year students. This is unsurprising given that the majority of Academic Reps are Postgraduate Taught students on year long programmes.
- The top three faculties with the largest number of Academic Reps are: Social & Historical Sciences (245), Institute of Education (241), and Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment (240).
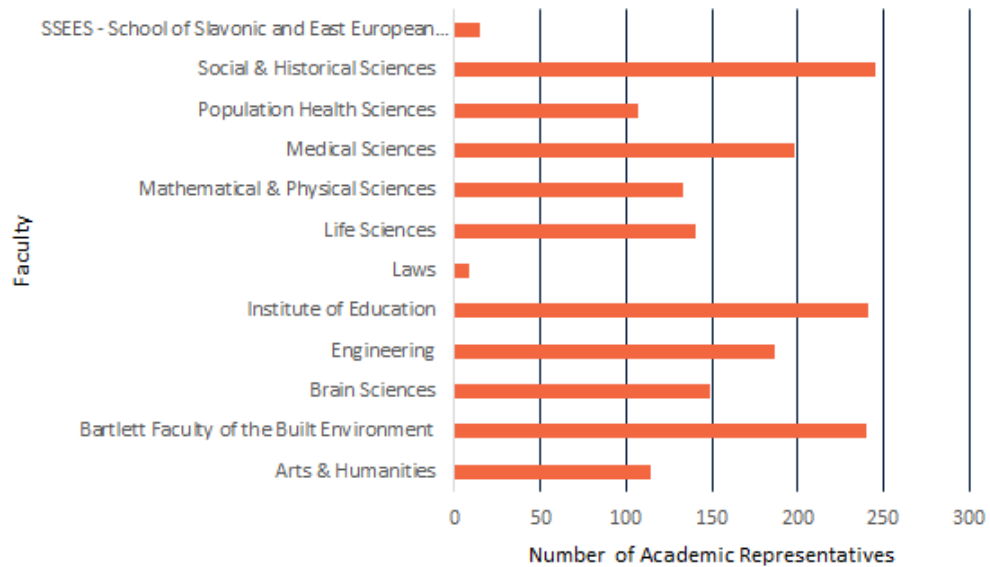
A thorough breakdown of number of Academic Representatives and their level of study, year of study, and faculty group is seen below:
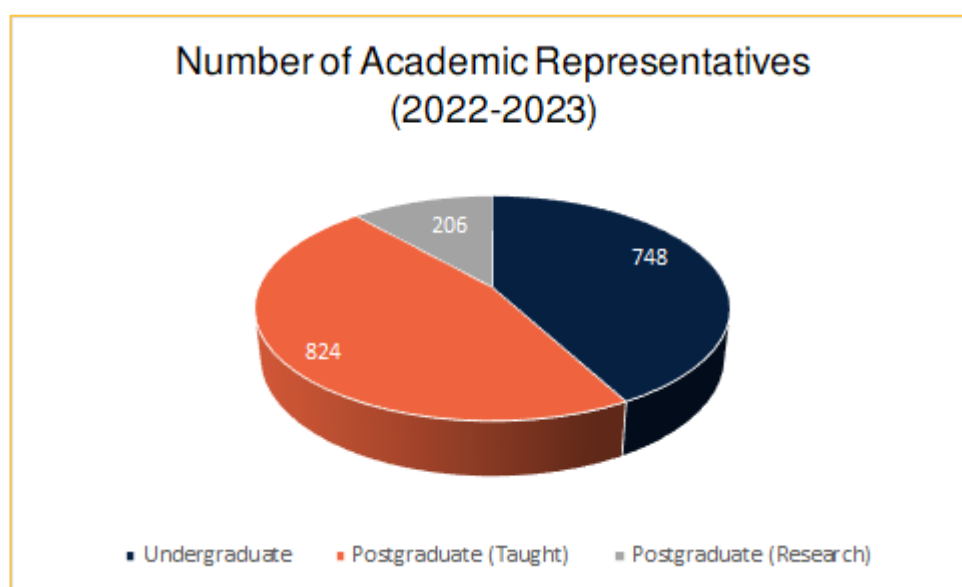
Number of Academic Representatives in each year of study (2022 -2023)

Horizontal bar chart. Y-axis: Year of Study (1A, 1B, 1U, 1, 2, 2A, 3, 4, 5, 6). X-axis: Number of Academic Representatives (0 to 1400).

- 6: ~20
- 5: ~15
- 4: ~60
- 3: ~200
- 2A: 0
- 2: ~270
- 1U: small
- 1B: small
- 1A: 0
- 1: ~1200

Number of Academic Representatives in each Faculty (2022 -2023)

Horizontal bar chart. Y-axis: Faculty. X-axis: Number of Academic Representatives (0 to 300).

- SSEES - School of Slavonic and East European...: ~20
- Social & Historical Sciences: ~245
- Population Health Sciences: ~110
- Medical Sciences: ~195
- Mathematical & Physical Sciences: ~135
- Life Sciences: ~140
- Laws: ~10
- Institute of Education: ~240
- Engineering: ~185
- Brain Sciences: ~150
- Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment: ~240
- Arts & Humanities: ~115

'W is for Wednesday wins -sharing a win achieved every Wednesday on a platform outside of our groups but it is not only subjected to Wednesday. It can be added to at any given point during the week to remind students that no matter how big or small theirs is, it is still an accomplishment that they should be proud of and should be celebrated.'
UCL EGA Institute for Women's Health Academic Rep

Statistics for Training Completed

All Academic Reps are required to take an online induction training course on Moodle. The aim of the training is to prepare Academic Reps for their role by providing them with the following information:

- Introduction to the Student Union

- How to effectively gather feedback

- How to work with staff to drive positive change

- How to 'feedback' to students

- What's in store for the year ahead

812 out of which 799 Academic Reps who started the training have successfully passed it. We are actively taking steps to raise these numbers so that all Academic Representatives undergo training by the end of the academic year.
These results also include Returning Academic Reps who do not have to complete the training if they have completed the training previously.

> 'I completed courses on academic representatives on Moodle and learned about the responsibility of academic representatives to be a voice for students and to promote a better academic experience for them, and gained a better understanding of how to gather general opinions and how to better express them and communicate with other representatives before, during, and after meetings'
> **CMII Academic Rep**

Feedback from Faculty & Lead Department Representatives (LDR) Catch-Up sessions

The Faculty & LDR Catch-Up sessions are held to gain further insight into issues Academic Representatives are facing to knowing how we can further support them. Key common issues faced:

- Students are being sent too many emails
- External speakers and events are being scheduled close to assessment periods
- Societies are feeling constrained and unsupported with limited funding
- Hear East programmes feel isolated from events held by UCL main campus

Support we can offer

- Provide more information on Shape UCL
- Provide more information on UCL's structure and acronyms

The Representation and Democracy Team, have already detailed action items for they key issues faced and ideas for the support we can offer. This is because we believe it is imperative that these issues and suggestions are addressed to ensure students feel included, informed, and supported. As excess communication may lead students missing out on key information whilst limited funding for societies to students feeling left out of events will reduce student morale. Properly, informing students with the structure of UCL and its acronyms will assist students to integrate better and feel part of the UCL community.

> *'As a rep, I have been busy ensuring that my classes; needs and thoughts are heard and addressed. I have been listening to fellow classmates; problems, ideas for improvement and thoughts about the program. I firmly believe that action is a key aspect of leadership, and in the short month and a half that I have been in this role, I have been able to address most of our class's concerns.'*
> IOE - Culture, Communication & Media Academic Rep

Faculty Welcome Events

Each Faculty hosted a Welcome Event in collaboration with the Students' Union in November 2022 for Course Reps, Research Student Reps, Lead Department Reps and Faculty Reps. Attendance was generally very good, with around 600 Academic Reps attending these events despite only recently being elected to the role. The vast majority of Welcome Events took place in person, although booking rooms was certainly a challenge.

The Representation and Democracy Team highlighted the following areas of good practice which Faculties could consider incorporating into their own Welcome Events in future years:

- Introduction from the Union and an overview from a staff member from the Faculty
- An overview of what to expect from this year including who Academic Reps are likely to receive communication from
- Key projects and priorities for the Faculty e.g., EDI work, assessment, and feedback etc.
- Breakout groups and time allocated for social interactions

> *'The teaching staff has left with food for thought about how they can better cater to flexible and part-time learners.'*
> IOE - Culture, Communication & Media Academic Rep

Masterclasses/Workshops

The Representation and Democracy Team facilitates Masterclasses and Workshops to enhance the skills of Academic Representatives. This supplements the additional resources regarding Sustainability, Shape UCL and EDI which can be found on the Academic Reps Moodle page. Three different categories of sessions were held in Term One:

- Departmental Societies masterclass
  - 10 attendees
  - Introducing Academic Reps to Departmental Societies and encouraging departments without one to affiliate
  - Contributed towards 1,000 extra students joining Departmental Societies compared to last year

- Public Speaking Workshop hosted by the Communications Society
  - 30 attendees
  - Focusing on how to be an effective negotiator in meetings, particularly SSCCs

- Wellbeing Workshops hosted by Rethink Mental Illness
  - Hosted two different types of workshops - 'You've got a friend in me' and 'Mt brain has too many tabs open'
  - Both were hosted online and in-person (4 sessions overall)
  - 60 attendees across all sessions
  - Positive feedback received from participants: 'It was a really informative workshop' and 'Very clear, very helpful and a friendly environment. Enjoyed it!'

> *'I am then working with the course administrator to bring Shape UCL to the department so that all student voices can be heard in a safe environment, and action can be promptly taken.'*
> The Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction Academic Rep

Policymaking

Our Faculty Reps are members of Education Zone. Where the Union sets out its vision for Education at UCL. We held two Education Zones in Term 1 with key discussion points regarding Postgraduate Research Students been considered as members of staff, Careers, study space and assessment.

The papers and minutes from those meetings can be found here:

- EZ2201

- EZ2202

We also held three Union Executive meetings and one emergency meeting in Term 1. Union Executive is the forum where policy proposals from Zone Meetings are confirmed and ratified.

The following proposals have been ratified:

- Student Leaders completing Active Bystander training after being elected
- Produce posters with links to emergency services and support services to be put in Union toilet cubicles
- The Union's commitment to harm reduction

Union Executive also facilitated a referendum regarding the Union's stance on UCU industrial action. Students voted in favour of supporting industrial action as indicated by this article.

> *"We give out a survey about scenario group allocations and have received about 90 responses from 200 students so I would say that is pretty successful and raised their feedback in the SSCC meeting which I co-hosted.*
> **Dept of Chemical Engineering Academic Rep**

Feedback from Faculty and Lead Department Rep Training

We held in-person Faculty and Lead Department Rep for all the Faculties, as well as an additional 'wash up' session for any reps who could not attend their original training. 44 Lead Department and 21 Faculty Reps attending the training with 39 (60%) completing the post-training feedback form. 81% of respondents found the training either 'extremely' useful or 'somewhat useful' with the section on Educational Priorities perceived as the most useful.

One third of respondents believed that the training did not help them connect with other Reps within their Faculty, this is something we will look to address in future training sessions and in Term Two events. Respondents also indicated that they would value more opportunity to interact with Faculty and Lead Department Reps from other Faculties. For example, one respondent stated that: 'It would have been nice to have all reps of a particular faculty in one training session. It would have enabled better interaction and communication.'

> *"We are leading a team with 11 student rep helpers. Recently, our student rep team successfully hosted the first iMS Year 1 social. During this, 60 students partook in team building exercises and other activities that laid the foundations for a Year 1 iMS community.*
> **Division of Medicine Academic Rep**

Looking Ahead

A significant proportion of training and on-boarding has taken place in Term One, illustrated by the Sections above. Based on the Representation and Democracy Team's priorities and feedback received by Academic Reps, our priorities for Term Two can be found below:

- **Increasing training completion:** Around 65% of Academic Reps were fully trained in the 2021-22. We will send frequent reminders so that at least 70% of our Academic Reps are trained this academic year.

- **Social events:** We have received plentiful feedback to indicate that Academic Reps want to network with their peers. As a result, we will facilitate and organise social events for Academic Reps in Term Two.

- **Education Officer priorities:** Share Hamza's priorities in Newsletters so that Academic Reps can feed back directly to him.

- **Advertise Rep of the Month:** Continue to promote RoTM in order for Representation and Democracy Team to better understand what our Academic Reps have achieved.

- **Leadership Race promotion:** Promote the Leadership Race to keen and engaged Academic Reps so that they can take the next step in their leadership journey. Education Officer, Postgraduate Officer and Research Students' Officer are the most relevant officer positions for the Academic Rep Network.