City, University of London Students' Union Programme Representation Report

Summary

This paper is a summary of the Students' Union's activity in regards to Programme Representation. It outlines the following:

- Number of programme representatives
- Training
- Feedback

One action required.

Recommended Action

Senate is asked to **discuss** the report.

Publication: Open

Programme Representatives Training Report
Academic Year 2017-18

1.0 Total Number of Programme Representatives

School	Reps 2017-18	Reps 2016-17	Reps 2015-16	Reps 2014-15
Cass Business School	169	159	163	160
School of Arts & Social Sciences	214	202	186	190
School of Health Sciences	173	153	156	149
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering	63	100	87	92
The City Law School	108	87	62	79
Total Number Elected	**727**	**701**	**654**	**670**

This is a year on year comparison to show the continued growth of Programme Representatives (Reps) across the University, notably in The City Law School and School of Arts and Social Sciences. There has been a significant decrease of School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering Reps, which could be as a result of some course closures, however, it has been noted that there has been less interest from students to take the roles.

We have recently culled 6 inactive Reps who no longer wished to participate in the scheme.

2.0 Training Statistics

As of 8th January 2018, the Training Statistics for 2017-18 are:

School	Number of Reps	Number Trained In Person	Number Trained Online	Total	Percent
Cass Business School	169	105	22	127	75%
School of Arts & Social Sciences	217	34	74	108	49%
School of Health Sciences	154	37	40	77	48%
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering	63	17	21	38	60%
The City Law School	108	17	27	44	40%
Total	711	210	184	394	55%

3.0 Training Delivery

Training was delivered between 3 trainers over the course of October and November 2017. There was a total of 35 in person sessions delivered, covering Northampton Square, Gray's Inn Place and Bunhill Row.

From the feedback received at last year's training, we decided to open up all sessions to all students, but to look to host them in locations relevant to each of the Schools for accessibility.

From 1st November, an online training option was made available via Moodle, which was targeted towards returning Reps, distance-learners and placement students. This gave the option for Reps to read through the materials at their leisure and undertake a quiz to identify that they understood the information within the slides.

The blended learning delivery has proven popular with students, as it means that they have the choice over in person or online training that can fit around their studies.

The Union has created an online Staff Resource Hub to support Staff who are responsible for Reps, which is available here: https://www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/programmereps/staffresources/
We have also continued to run Staff Briefing Sessions across the different Schools, to demonstrate the importance of Reps and how staff can make the most out of them.

4.0 Positive Feedback

Programme Reps were asked what they liked about the training session. We put their comments into a word cloud to display the most commonly received feedback:
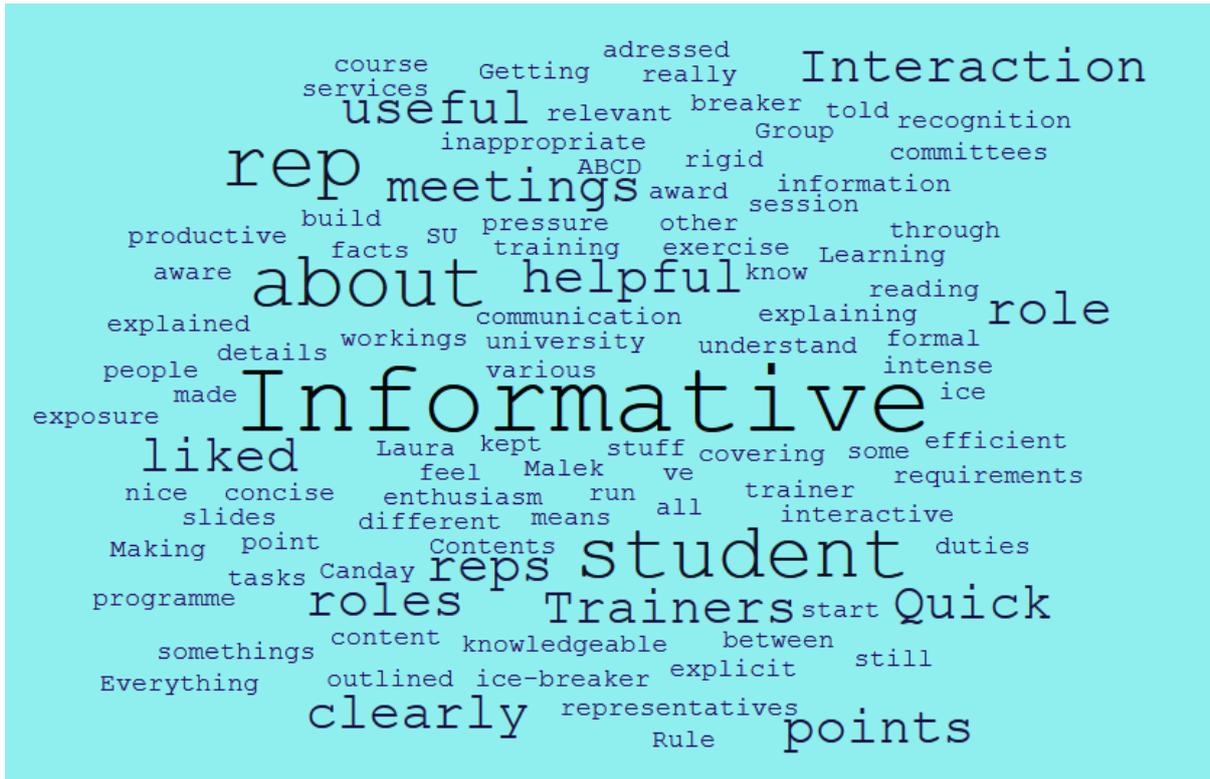
There was a lot of positive feedback around the **Group Exercise**, which was a new addition to the training, and it was noted that it was a good way to interact with other Reps and build confidence. It was also fed back that the addition of Starburst and the initial icebreaker was a positive way to meet other Reps and learn a bit more about them.

There was a general feeling that the training had helped Reps to understand what their role is, and what meetings they will be attending. The training had been re-written extensively in 2016-17 to try and direct it further towards explaining the role and requirements, and this had been updated further for this academic year.

The style of the training was praised – with feedback stating that it felt informal but informative, covering enough of the points concisely with enthusiastic trainers.

Reps also commented that they enjoyed learning about the Leadership Award and other awards run by the Union, and that it was good to know what else they could gain from undertaking the role.

"The exposure of the role of course rep has been explained clearly and in details."

"Laura and Malek were very helpful in covering all points with the SU and I liked the interaction exercise and ice breaker to build confidence for some people."

"I liked the ABCD Rule and the ice-breaker at the start."

"It addressed relevant points explaining our roles as student reps, made explicit the workings of various university committees and meetings, the trainer was clearly knowledgeable and not just reading off slides."

<u>**Statistics**</u>

- **91%** rated their training overall as Excellent or Good, with the remaining **9%** noting it as Average.
- **93%** rated their training structure as Excellent or Good, with the remaining **7%** noting it as Average.
- **93%** rated their training content as Excellent or Good, with the remaining **7%** noting it as Average.
- **70%** rated the training handouts as Excellent or Good, **20%** rated the handouts as Average, with the remaining **10%** noting it as Poor.
- **77%** rated the training session length as Excellent or Good, **19%** rated the length as Average, with the remaining **4%** noting it as Poor.
- **88%** rated the trainers as Excellent or Good, with the remaining **12%** noting them as Average.
- **80%** rated the training pace as Excellent or Good, **15%** rated the pace as Average and **5%** noting it as Poor.
- **60%** rated the Groupwork as Excellent or Good, **30%** rated the Groupwork as Average and **10%** noted it was Poor.
- **79%** agreed that they were glad to have attended the training, with **21%** noting indifference.

From the feedback, **90%** of those who answered said that they feel ready for their position, whereas **10%** said they did not. We can look to work with those who said they did not, by offering further sessions to support them.

5.0 Improvements

Programme Reps were asked what improvements could be made to the training session.

The key points were:
Length and Pace of Training – Reps felt that the length of training should decrease and that there could be fewer slides and repetition of key points. Some were already aware of the different things the Students' Union does, and the relationship with the University.

Meetings – Reps felt that they would like further explanation as to the structure of meetings

Group Work – Feedback was positive for the group exercise that was introduced this year, but reps felt that there could be more group work that would offer them the chance to work with other reps across the room.

Communication – There was a variance for how Reps had found out about the training – with some finding out towards the end of the training period meaning they had less choice for sessions to attend.

Acronyms – Reps reported that they would like to see less acronyms used.

In Person/Online – There was mixed feedback received upon the preferences for receiving training. Some Reps stated that they did not see a need for an in person training, whereas others reported that they liked this as it gave them the opportunity to meet other Reps.

Handouts – It was noted that additional handouts would be appreciated, to further clarify the role.

Content – Some Postgraduates felt that the content was too much tailored to Undergraduates, whereas others thought the information was concise and relevant. Some Reps wanted to further explore the role of a Programme Rep within the training.

The Union will look to incorporate the feedback when it comes to reviewing the training sessions at the end of the year.

It is understood that at present, each School is running its system slightly differently; in terms of the meetings it expects students to attend, when meetings are scheduled to take place and whether meetings are catered. The Union will look to take this feedback on board to see if a solution can be rectified to make all training relevant to all students, or whether this is something that requires developing tailored training to each School and Undergraduate and Postgraduate degree schemes.

6.0 Additional Training Needs

Programme Reps were asked if they had any additional training needs. Here we have aimed to address how we look to respond to requests.

The responses received were:

"About the meeting? And I hope there could be a meeting for Accounting and Finance because the timetable really crushed and I really can't go to the class reception."

Union response:
We have introduced Coffee Mornings, hosted by the School Representative Officer, for each School so that reps can meet each other and share the issues students have been bringing to them. We can look to offer to arrange meetings for reps who are on the same programme, if they are struggling to engage with each other or are on large programmes.

"How to get course-mates to engage with giving feedback."

Union response:
We will be running a session specifically on 'How to Collect Feedback' to help those who are struggling to engage students. A session has been scheduled for March 2018.

"I have a problem remembering all my responsibilities."

Our response:
We will look to develop a guide for Programme Reps, so that they can have a quick reference to understand their responsibilities. We make the slides available via Moodle but appreciate there is a lot of information to take in. A session to refresh Reps on their responsibilities has been scheduled for March 2018.

"I guess additional training can be given on how to approach the lecturers when there is a problem."

Our response:
We are developing a Who's Who guide for each School, so that reps know who they bring different issues and ideas to.

We can also look to incorporate this particular point in our 'How to Collect Feedback' training, which will run in March 2018.

"More about the kind of events we can organise for our fellow students as a Programme Rep."

Our response:
We can look to link up with Student Activities in their Events Planning Training, but also look to develop this as an area of training. This is something that we can look to work on with Academic Societies and each School, in terms of support that can be offered.