

Education Zone meeting 13/05/2019
FAH Faculty Officer report – Ben Dolbear

I'd be so pleased to report to everyone that the Avenue Academic Roadshow in March was a roaring success and really underlines the keenness among the student body for further support with academic skills, particularly with the transition into higher education - I'd be interested to know if this feeling is shared among students of different faculties. This transition is something that I have been talking with Jane Stephenson from the library, particularly in the area of organising (maybe timetabled??) structured library activities in 'initiation' week of first year to make sure everyone is comfortable and confident with the facilities we provide (and Jane, I'd be keen to talk further on this). Sarah Pearce in Humanities has also been keen on working with us on the idea of an undergraduate common room at Avenue Campus - we expressed that the PGT room is barely used, but we would be keen not to be seen to taking away one of their spaces, so there is a bit of a dilemma (but I believe voices in SUSU are making active progress on this). Progress has been made with timetabling, with Clare and Tarrant promising to keep up efforts to reduce and hopefully avoid back-to-back contact hours between avenue and highfield. Finally, I'm in talks with staff about how to improve the extenuating circumstances process - students have fed back to me that the process is complicated and nobody seems quite sure of who to go to (I've heard of PATs directing students to doctors, who direct them to PATs - or something similarly unhelpful). I'd like to know if this is a university-wide problem. Maybe if students could be clearly directed to a step-by-step list of what to do when it is needed problems could be avoided, but there is of course a fine line to tread between making sure support is available, and not making the system open to abuse. Some feedback from students (struggling to get specifics but clear there is a problem) is as follows:

'I find that the pressure to do well within a certain time frame is not lifted from people who are experiencing extenuating circumstances at the time of the deadlines'

'I know you kinda need evidence but when someone's died, the last thing you want to do is ask for a medical certificate'

Again, my apologies for not being available for the meeting