

February 2025 – Rebecca, VP Education and Democracy – Pre-brief Qs

Area 1, Goal 3a – Please can you provide more detail on the PAT Project and what this involves?

The PAT (Personal Academic Tutors) Project is University level project aiming to review, update and support both the student and staff experience of the PAT role. At present, PATs can be highly variable across the university and even within schools, and this is partly due to low oversight of the PAT role and a mismatch of expectations. The group is co-chaired by an academic and professional services member of staff. It is formed of 7 Working Groups (small groups that look in detail at a singular aspect) and the Steering Group (a larger group of people with strategic oversight and pre-liminary approval).

The Working Groups cover: 1) Research and discovery; 2) Role purpose and responsibilities; 3) Communication; 4) Training and induction; 5) PAT allocation; 6) Systems, tools and dashboard; and 7) Senior tutor group. At present the research phase is mostly done - staff have explored different practice across the university, held a student co-design panel and included PAT questions in the Autumn Student Experience Survey. Working group 2 – role purpose and responsibilities is formed of both students and staff to converge on expectations of the PAT role. At present, I sit on working group 4 and the Steering Group, sharing and presenting student feedback and views, and supporting students sitting on working group 2.

Area 2, Goal 4 – More clarity please on “draft lifecycle models of student voice and engagement” and how they can be used in major university projects?

The University is currently very good at engaging in single points of student voice e.g. the co-design panel, and my predecessor did some work around designing a student voice toolkit, but typically projects at the university struggle to engage students consistently and with using the variety of student voice that are available to them. Working with a co-design approach, and building on existing informal feedback from students and staff, I developed a 2 part workshop to create some models for how to engage students along the length of projects, from conception of new projects through delivery and to evaluation and improvement. The result of the first workshop was me designing 2 models of student voice and engagement for the lifecycle of projects – one for new and ‘major’ university projects that have a fixed time span, and a second adaption of the final three steps of it for cyclical processes. Students and staff at the second workshop were then invited to comment, share views and concerns for these to be refined and to consider how the models could work in and be adapted for specific contexts.

Since presenting this at the second workshop, I have received positive feedback and excitement from teams across the university and how they can go about using it for integrated student feedback in the remainder of existing projects, and to use when considering future proposals. Recently, I met with the Successful Futures Project Team, who’s project I used as an example on how student voice could be integrated, and they were really positive about the ideas it provided in terms of understanding feedback and using student voice more effectively – such as having student interns with more focused work on looking at data, to proof of student engagement with timelines, and feedback forms that are open constantly, but are pushed at certain times. Since then, the team have become advocates in other meetings, strongly recommending to other staff around the university to book in a meeting with me to go over how they can use these models to integrate and understand student voice. The cyclical model can also be adopted in Programme Approval and Review (PAR) when reviewing academic

programmes. I would also like to make it available to staff in SUSU to help enable and support more areas to be effectively using and acting on student voice and feedback.

As I work with CHEP to help develop these models into practical resources for the university to use in projects, I would also like to look at how I can support better integration of various student feedback and data that the university and SUSU currently collect. For senators' information and curiosity, I have provided a simple version of the overall model below, but a more functional resource will also include examples of how it could be adapted for different projects or processes, specific questions that could be asked to students and links to various sources of data.

Student Voice Lifecycles Model 1 - Simple draft infographic

