NOTES FROM SEP MEETINGS 2022/23

Academic Culture(s) at LSE

STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC CULTURE



These are some words that students from different departments and level of degree programs used to describe the academic culture(s) at LSE

DEFINING SUCCESS AS LSE STUDENTS

Students' definitions of success both contribute to, and are impacted by, different academic culture(s). Students experience success in dynamic and distinct ways depending on their backgrounds, courses and other conditions. We classify here some of the elements that can be important to come up with concrete action points.

Personal Success

- Mental Health
- Networking both professional and socially
- Cultural exchange
- Promoting self-reflection
- Learning life skills, more open sessions in natural settings, promoting the holistic and spiritual welfare
- Developing soft and interpersonal skills

Action points LSE can consider:

- Mental health initiatives
- Social cross-departmental events

Academic Success

- Grades
- Empirical skills
- Positive feedback from professors, peers, family etc.
- Interdisciplinary skills and knowledge
- Finding a job
- Finding a relevant internship
- Gain transferable skills

Action points LSE can consider:

- Career events specific to what is wanted and needed from the relevant department
- Explicit and transparent mechanisms on how to challenge received feedback

Culture defines success

As can be seen above, how students perceive academic culture is reflected in their definitions of success. Therefore there is a need to broaden definitions of success beyond purely quantifiable elements.

MECHANISM TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC CULTURE AT LSE

During the SEP meeting, it became clear that the departments are a big contributor to how academic culture is shaped at LSE. Further, they provide a critical entry point to making effective and positive alternations to the existing culture. it was underlined by students that there exists an imbalance between the departments, which is reflected in available funding for social events, career events being organised, and the resources available for the department to function independently. This has a significant impact as it shapes the experience of students and the way they interact with the broader academic community at LSE.

Within the departments, the academic mentor seemed to be a significant contributor to the academic culture. Students seem to be concerned with the quality and frequency of contact with their academic mentors. The broader topic of academic mentors and their role in students' academic experience at LSE was put forward on multiple occasions during the SEP meetings. Therefore, we believe proactive initiatives in this regard might be very beneficial for the student community.

Action points LSE can target

- Transparency in the dispersal of department funds
- Interdepartmental initiatives (in order to increase interdisciplinary learning)
- Consistent standards that mentors need to uphold in terms of number and length of meetings (explore alternatives: e.g. collective meetings)

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO POSITIVE ACADEMIC CULTURE

It's just not the university and the curriculum that has a bearing on the academic culture. even students are an important stakeholder to foster a great academic culture at LSE.

BEYOND THE CLASS ROOM:

- A) INDULGE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
- B) PARTICIPATE IN NETWORKING ACTIVTIES
- C) BUILD AN ANTI-PRESSURE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE
- D) PARTIPATE IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES
- E) BE AS AUTHENTIC AS POSSIBLE AND BE PROUD OF YOUR ROOTS
- F) TAKE UP INITIATIVES AND ORGANISE ACTIVITIES
- G) PARTIPATE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING ACTIVITIES
- H) BE OPEN MINDED AND RECEPTIVE TO CHANGE
- I) BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER AND LEARNER

