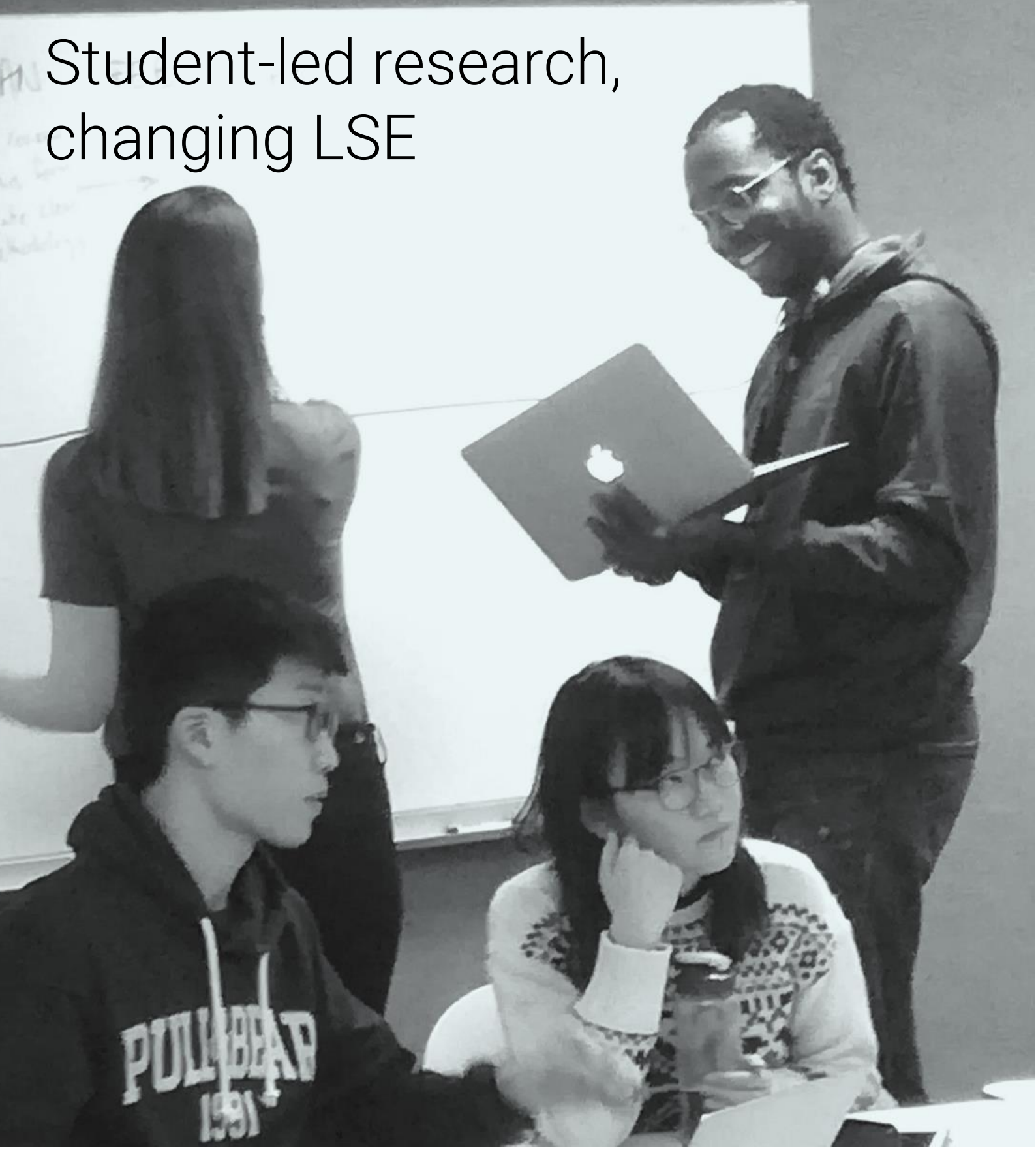




# Change Makers 2018/19

Student-led research,  
changing LSE



# #PARTOFLSE?

## THE NEGLECT OF JOINT HONOURS STUDENTS AT LSE

"LSE has mandated that we eat our broccoli and brussels sprouts first of all. They are necessary. As long as we get to the mashed potatoes in third year I'll be satisfied diner."



# LSE Change Makers 2018/19

Change Makers was piloted at LSE during 2018/19 as a collaboration between the School and the LSE Students' Union. Change Makers funds and supports LSE students to undertake research into the School, to promote positive change and development.

LSE 2030 strategy prioritises education for global impact, and Change Makers is a significant contribution to this. Change Makers both positions our students as change agents within the School, and equips them with the skills and experience to achieve a wider impact.

Student applicants identified an aspect of LSE to investigate, within four suggested themes:

- **community at LSE**
- **inclusive education**
- **assessment and feedback**
- **building connections beyond LSE**

24 projects were funded, from 16 departments and involving 54 students.

This booklet offers a selection of these projects. As far as possible we have sought to retain the voices of the students in the presentation of each of the projects.

More information on Change Makers is available from [lse.ac.uk/changemakers](https://lse.ac.uk/changemakers)

To read any of the full reports and other materials created by these researchers, please contact [lse.changemakers@lse.ac.uk](mailto:lse.changemakers@lse.ac.uk)

# Contents

<b>Is the further introduction of summative class participation a means of improving student engagement and satisfaction with LSE classes?</b> Rory Gillis, Damian Virchow	<b>5</b>
<b>Inclusion Plans for disabled LSE students: What's really happening?</b> Alison Beck, Amanda Nenzén	<b>6</b>
<b>LSE Talks: Audience development and engagement</b> Alice Brazil-Burns, Roman Krawczykowskli, Liza Bondar, Francesca Romanillo, Adiyta Maharaja, Pablo Reneses, Ruoyu Jiang	<b>7</b>
<b>#PartofLSE?</b> <b>How postgraduate students from low socioeconomic backgrounds assimilate into the university community</b> Abby Hennessey, Lara Neervoort, Brian Walker	<b>8</b>
<b>Do I Fit in?</b> <b>Experiences of first-generation students at LSE</b> Maria Gafforio, Zoi Adrianopoulou, Marie-Isabel Theuwis	<b>9</b>
<b>Rethinking Anthropology:</b> <b>Bringing the Alumni Perspective to the Conversation</b> Gabriela Cabaña, Paola Juan, Jasper Luithlen, Emma Soderqvist	<b>10</b>
<b>Comparative Research on Decolonisation Processes</b> Lucilla Lepratti, Chitra Sangtani, Leonie Zeuner	<b>11</b>
<b>#PartofLSE?</b> <b>The neglect of joint honours students at LSE</b> Izzy Colledge, Erica Stanley	<b>12</b>

<b>LSE Ethics Code Strategy for the academic year 2019/20</b> Georgios Syranidis	<b>15</b>
<b>Different departments but one LSE: Unifying the student experience</b> Helena Palma Carvalho	<b>16</b>
<b>Improving Formative and Summative Feedback Processes across Departments</b> Saskia Straub	<b>18</b>
<b>Why is feedback not effective?</b> Ningyuan Jia, Yijiang Wang, Yuhan Liu	<b>19</b>
<b>The relationship between students and food at LSE and the role it can play in building a stronger sense of community</b> Sebastiano Caleffi, Jack Winterton, Lucia Pedrioli	<b>20</b>
<b>Volunteering at LSE: Assessing the implications amongst undergraduate students</b> Arya Gerard, Zaynab Olyabek	<b>22</b>
<b>Community through communication: Understanding the formation of identity and community at LSE</b> Magdalena Parkhurst	<b>24</b>
<b>Defining Inclusivity</b> Aathira Kottapurath, Eve Kraicer	<b>26</b>
<b>Have we been training our class teachers well? Effective training programmes in Economics</b> Yi On Ko, Miaomiao Zhang	<b>27</b>
<b>LSESU Societies: Are they giving our students a sense of community?</b> Mubashshira Rahman	<b>28</b>
<b>Race-based exclusion, bias, and discrimination at LSE</b> Keeyaa Chaurey	<b>30</b>
<b>Exploring Decolonial Praxis at LSE</b> Ramnath Bhat, Kathryn Higgins, Richard Stupart	<b>31</b>

# Is the further introduction of summative class participation a means of improving student engagement and satisfaction with classes?

Rory Gillis, Damian Virchow

## Methodology

We exclusively analysed summative participation in the Philosophy and Accounting departments by investigating the select courses: AC211, PH214 and PH311. We surveyed the experiences of current staff and students. In addition, we used quantitative data to analyse student satisfaction in response to summative participation assessment.



## Findings (extracts)

Our results clearly demonstrate that the wider adoption of summatively assessed participation can be beneficial, however that this introduction needs to be accompanied by a support network suited to dealing with students' stress and to ensure that everyone has the possibility to participate.

“ Summative participation definitely has a big impact ... It made me feel more stressed at first but helped develop a sense of community within the classroom. ”

## Recommendations

**The further introduction of summative class participation should be seriously considered** as a means of improving students' sense of community whilst studying at the school.

That said, we do not believe that the policy should be uniformly implemented, but rather that it should be considered **on a department by department basis**. More precise micro-level panel data needs to be collected on course and student levels.

In addition, we believe it important to undertake a more general survey of stress levels for students studying on different courses.



# Inclusion Plans for disabled LSE students: what's really happening?

Alison Beck, Amanda Nenzén

## Methodology

- Before starting, the researchers spoke to representatives from the Disability and Wellbeing Service and LSE Student Union
- Conducted 18 in-depth interviews across five departments (with a range of master's programme fee levels)
- Analysed data using thematic analysis to identify patterns

## Findings (extracts)

### Students found:

- Lack of awareness that the DWS exists
- Getting an Inclusion Plan (IP) takes time and effort
- Frequently, the IP adjustments simply don't happen
- Students are having to 'manage' the implementation of their IP
- Some staff are less empathetic or understanding

### Professional staff found:

- The process is manual and tedious.

### Staff found:

- Challenges of suggesting to a student that they might benefit from an IP
- IPs add to the sense of email overload
- IPs are too generic – it takes extra work to understand the *'real story'* and what would actually help the student
- Some adjustments are unclear, unhelpful or at odds with their teaching style or best practice
- Some teachers feel hesitant or unsure, especially regarding mental health

## Recommendations (extracts)

- **Increase students' awareness of DWS** and the fantastic support they can provide
- **Enable teachers to understand the 'real story'** behind an IP: Teaching staff could encourage IP students to visit in office hours
- **Provide a space in each IP for students to (optionally) write** something about themselves and their needs, in their own words
- **The circulation problem** – some quick fixes:
  - Make sure IPs are re-circulated at start of each term and year
  - Include key info in body of email (courses, disability, key adjustments) to lessen overload on teachers
- Address the **tension between teaching practices and recommended adjustments** - bring DWS, Teaching and Learning Centre, teachers and disabled students together to devise solutions
- **Better staff training** - especially around mental health issues
- **Add a question to TQARO surveys** to monitor if disabled students received their IP adjustments
- More resources are needed

# 10%

About 10% of LSE students have declared a disability

“ Through my inclusion plan, having the opportunity to work with a mentor has really helped me so much.

I never expected anything like that and it's been **really, really helpful.** ”

“ ...not knowing who to ask for help, what help I'm allowed... I found the inclusion plan **more of a stress than a stress relief.** ”

Friends by Luis Prado  
Globe by Creaticca Creative Agency  
from the Noun Project

## LSE Talks: Audience development and engagement

Alice Brazil-Burns, Roman Krawczykowski,  
Liza Bondar, Francesca Romanillo, Adiyta  
Maharaja, Pablo Reneses, Ruoyu Jiang

### Rationale

The mission of this project was to investigate and extend LSE's analysis of LSE Talk events.

### Methodology

- Interviews with Alan Revel, Head of Events, and Lucy Porter and Jon Hucker, Marketing in the Department of Management
- Survey/questionnaire of audience
- Focus Group of current LSE Students
- LSE website findings

### Findings (extracts)

Most attendees in employment heard about LSE Talks from Twitter



Awareness of LSE Talks before studying increased appeal of LSE to international students

Audience members who answered the survey ranged in age

# 19-73

### Reccomendations (extracts)

Maintain structure and form: duration, topics, high profile speakers, gender balance, Q&A



Investigate methods to attract groups of friends



Promote YouTube videos

Opportunity to engage younger audiences, e.g. school events



# #PartofLSE? How postgraduate students from low socioeconomic backgrounds assimilate into the university community

Abby Hennessey, Lara Neervoort, Brian Walker

## Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 current students from the 2018/19 cohort, on one-year taught programmes, who have received scholarships. This allowed students to tell their stories in a private and comfortable setting. We also conducted two expert interviews with Dr Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology and Professor Paul Dolan, Head of Psychological and Behavioural Science.

## Findings (extracts)

**The institution is still perceived as an elite space**, while the departments foster a sense of belonging.

**Scholarship recipients are not celebrated:** Students on scholarships from LSE lamented they were unaware of other awardees.

**Academics reinforce elitist culture:** Academics bolster the narrative of LSE being only for immensely privileged students.

**Imposter phenomenon** in relation to social and cultural capital: The students are aware of the fact that there are students from privileged backgrounds in their programmes and social class distinctions play out in interactions.

**Social support from flatmates and classmates:** classmates and flatmates provide the necessary social support to navigate the challenges of an intense one-year graduate programme.

**Negative impact of school pressure on mental health:** The complexity of courses and the pressure on scholarship holders to perform were the main stressors respondents highlighted.

“ My parents told me to **“Make friends with everyone**, but understand that there are people that come with a lot more privilege than you have, and so try to not get sucked into that world.” ”

## Recommendations (extracts)

**Recognise and address mental health issues:** Train teaching staff to recognise issues to help scholarship holders manage the extra pressure they feel.

**Celebrate scholarship holders:** Ensure all scholarship holders are invited to events throughout the year.

**Social mobility research:** Follow students' development from before the scholarship and see what opportunities they received.

**Launch an LSE social media campaign to tackle imposter syndrome.**

**Create a network of LSE academics** who have an interest in the integration of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

# Do I Fit in? Experiences of first-generation students at LSE

Maria Gafforio, Zoi Adrianopoulou, Marie-Isabel Theuwis

“ I didn't even know what philosophy was a few years ago. ”

“ ‘Are you sure you don't want to drink?’ To avoid that question I just head home, or just have a walk around... ”

“ My family doesn't know what I am doing but they expect me to do it well. ”

## Recommendations

### For all First-Generation Students:

- Promote asking for help.
- Re-work the “Best of the Best” narrative
- Create a “First-Generation Students” society.
- Assign an LSE Careers consultant for FGS.
- Provide more scholarships based on students' financial situation.

### For undergraduates only:

- Carry out LSE LIFE sessions for expressing ideas.
- Employ more programs like the Alison Wetherfield Programme.

## Methodology

The project used a qualitative approach, with 11 Interviews (six undergraduates and five postgraduates) and one focus group (three participants).

## Findings (extracts)

**First-Generation Students perceive a gap** between their ‘home environment’ and their ‘school environment’; they feel like it is hard to communicate their experience to people from home.

### First-Generation Students experience:

- **Independence as self-reliance:** FGS work part-time, and are used to “figuring things out” on their own.
- **Independence as loneliness:** FGS suffer more when the structure around them is scarcely supportive (e.g. when academic mentors are not very present).

“ I guess there's a lot of support at LSE... I just don't know about it because I'm so used to handling things on my own. ”

# Rethinking Anthropology: Bringing the Alumni Perspective to the Conversation

Gabriela Cabaña, Paola Juan, Jasper Luithlen, Emma Soderqvist

**These two projects were part of a larger process of participating in the decolonising conversation that started in the Anthropology Department during 2018/2019.**

In the context of a burgeoning global debate on decolonising the universities, this research examined the perspective of alumni of the Department of Anthropology on all programmes.

## Methodology

We sent out a quantitative survey to all anthropology alumni having graduated in the past five years (with 91 respondents) and conducted eight interviews with pollsters.

“ The way the program is structured fits a canonical British idea of schooling... it measures how well you fit into that group more than how much you have to offer to the field. ”

Respondents said the Anthropology department does encourage critique and reflection upon the history and production of knowledge of the discipline

## Recommendations (extracts)

### Integration

Create initiatives to make the cultural and institutional codes of the English academia more intelligible to students from diverse backgrounds.

### Reproduction of hierarchical knowledge

Open up the spectrum of people who are considered as experts. Build bridges and collaborate with other spaces: activism, social movements, other spaces where knowledge is being produced, activated and reproduced.

### Fieldwork, methodology and political positioning

Structure the PhD program in a way that can open to methodologies which are actively moving away from individual possession of knowledge and that approach knowledge in its collective dimension.

### Diversity

Inclusion of more diverse voices within the Department: including anthropologists from more diverse academic backgrounds and nationalities, inviting informants to participate to the debates on their communities.

### Discrimination

Introduce measurements that are more flexible and that capture more about what international students and non-native English speakers may offer: diversify types of evaluation  
Create initiatives to raise awareness of racism and sexism among students.  
Promote adequate reactions from professors and seminar leaders reactions when they face situations of sexism, racism, or any other problematic situation between students in the classroom.

# Comparative Research on Decolonisation Processes

Lucilla Lepratti, Chitra Sangtani, Leonie Zeuner

## Methodology

Our project focused on enabling and organizing four events in March 2019. These events acted as spaces of collective learning and provided an exchange of knowledge.

**Film Screening:** screening and discussion of the film titled "Why is My Curriculum White?" produced for the UCL #whitecurriculum campaign in 2014

**Reading Group:** an excerpt of Walter Rodney's famous book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972).

**Connecting Student Struggles:** students from other universities invited to share their experiences with student organising around decolonisation

**Can't Prevent Us:** a discussion about the contemporary conditions that impact on our space (and experiences) of learning and teaching.

“ I am very invested in politics/climate/social justice causes... however, with the strong police presence surrounding these protests I am often deterred as any chance of getting arrested (justified or not) would also result in my deportation. ”

## Recommendations (extracts)

### Student space

Students across the board ranging from undergraduates to research students expressed the desire to have a safe student space that is managed and run by students for the use of students.

### Surveillance awareness

All staff should be aware of the consequences and realities of Home Office surveillance at LSE and should communicate the purpose of surveillance practices to students at the beginning of each year in each course.

### Department initiatives

Students expressed an interest in learning from the initiatives of the department more clearly as they range from the attainment gap to the BME working group.

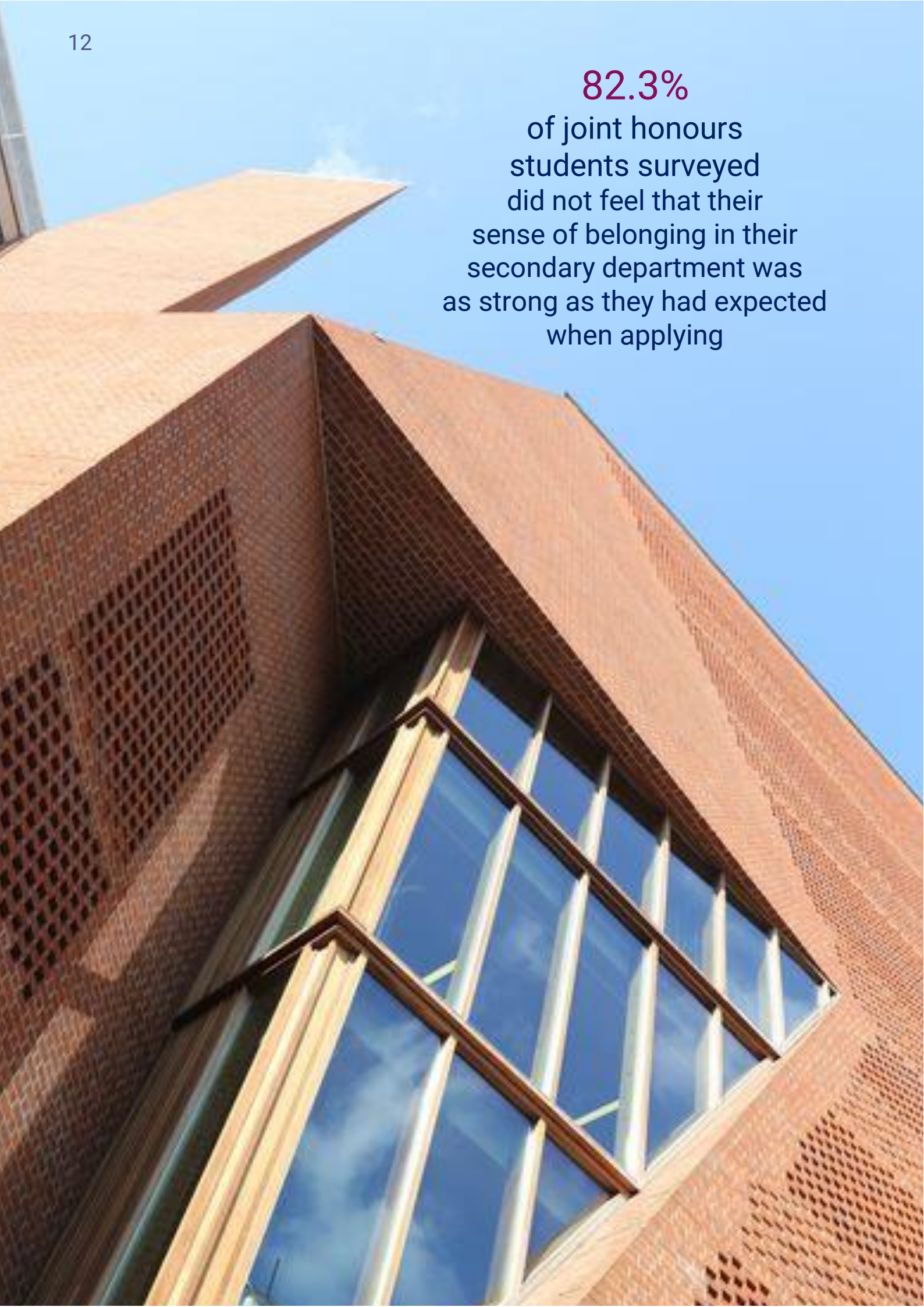
### Renaming the library

Students hope that the Anthropology library may be re-inaugurated through a renaming ceremony in collaboration of the faculty and students.

### Paid mentoring schemes

The importance of paid mentoring schemes was repeatedly talked about, improving (and paying) the labour of support and mentorship to encourage people from less privileged backgrounds to continue their academic work.

Photo background by  
Thomas Heintz on  
Unsplash



**82.3%**  
of joint honours  
students surveyed  
did not feel that their  
sense of belonging in their  
secondary department was  
as strong as they had expected  
when applying

# #PartofLSE? The neglect of joint honours students at LSE

Izzy Colledge, Erica Stanley

## Methodology

We gathered survey responses from 113 undergraduate students at LSE, studying 50/50 joint honours degrees. Our aim was to look at the particular issues raised when students take equally weighted degrees but were administratively filtered into only one department.

## Findings (extracts)

Courses are experienced as two halves of separate degrees with little cohesion academically between departments. Crucially, there is a perception among students that departments are uninterested in joint honours students, viewing them on the same level as outside students, leading to a lack of integration and sense of belonging.

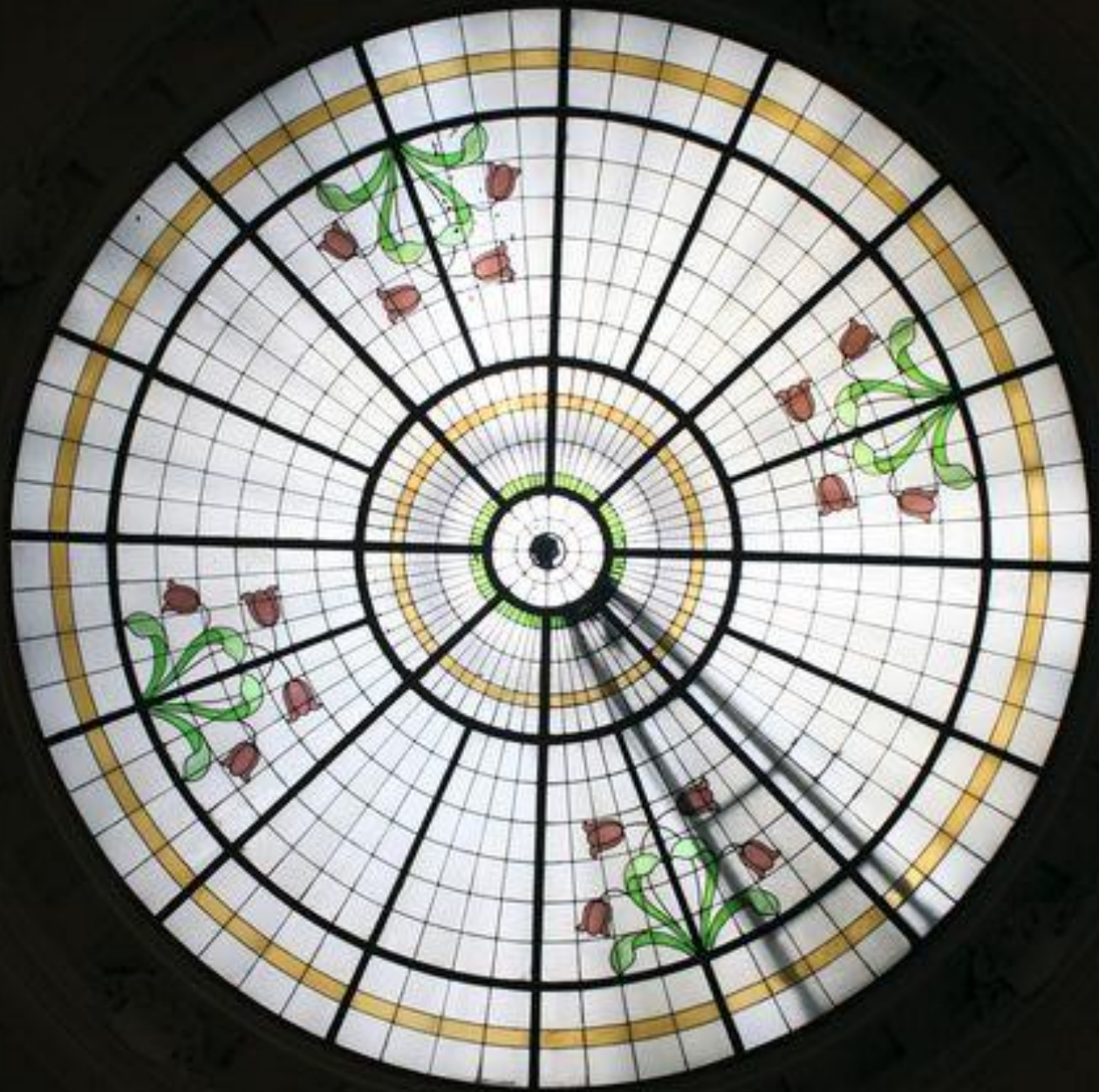
“ We are excluded from certain social events from our secondary department as you have to be studying straight [subject] to be able to attend. ”

## Recommendations (extracts)

**Communication:** Students propose **weekly emails, information sessions** that are more widely advertised and an effort to avoid timetable clashes.

**Academic Support:** Above all else, students suggest a **clear point of contact equivalent to an Academic Mentor** that can provide academic and career advice, as well as act as a vessel for exam feedback. Students also mention limited module choices or a lack of interdisciplinary modules tying together both disciplines.

**Opportunities:** Students ask for **equal or increased opportunities from secondary departments**, in particular, availability of departmental internships and Research Assistant positions, as well as the possibility of taking secondary department dissertations.



# LSE Ethics Code Strategy for the academic year 2019-20

Georgios Syranidis

## Methodology (extracts)

Business environments can provide suggestions about how to promote ethics inside a corporation, including the use of a Code of Conduct and corporate values. This project considered the applicability of business approaches to promoting the LSE Ethics Code.

The areas this project particularly tried to reach were:

- **The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy**, with an emphasis on the "Report It, Stop It" service
- **The Code of Good Practice** for students, with an emphasis on **Plagiarism**
- **The Environmental Sustainability Policy**, with an emphasis on the need for an increased awareness for students

## Recommendations (extracts)

### **Strategy 1: Mini-Lecture Series from LSE Staff and Relevant Student Societies.**

Mini-lectures by the "Report It/Stop it" service during the Welcome Week and first week of the university for academic year 2019/20 - for example, a ten minute presentation at the end/or the beginning of the introductory first lectures of compulsory courses. This will promote the service, how valuable it is and how someone can get in touch if there is a need.

### **Strategy 2: Material gifts give-away to students**

I propose contacting Departments to get to know what each department is giving away to students in the induction week, and whether the materials offer the chance of a slight transformation in order to promote the code. For example the addition of a .pdf of the Code to a USB stick, or an Ethics Code flyer in an induction pack.

### **Strategy 3: Creation of a feedback channel from LSE's Student Societies**

I believe that the Student Societies are the best form of organization within LSE to open up a discussion about ethics.

### **Strategy 4: Short video for induction week**

Societies related to arts may be interested in the creation of a short video about ethics. The idea is to bring the Code to life.



# Different departments but one LSE: Unifying the student experience

Helena Palma Carvalho

## Methodology

In the 2018 National Student Survey, overall student satisfaction at LSE was a record low of 71%. Given how closely linked the scores for Overall Satisfaction and Learning Community are, this study aim was to complement the NSS results with comparative evidence at department level about factors that contribute to students' sense of community. In order to do so, both a survey (directed at the administrative staff responsible for student engagement initiatives at each department) and interviews were used to create a comparative dataset on departments' student engagement initiatives, resources available and channels of communication used.

## Recommendations (extracts)

### Facilities and staff resources

- All departments should have **at least one common room**.
- Allocate **student engagement initiatives** responsibility to a **single member of staff** and make it explicit on the department's webpage.

### Student engagement initiatives

The heterogeneity in terms of the number of social events organized and in terms of off-campus opportunities provided by departments is striking.

- **Introduce minimum requirement for social events** - every single student at LSE should be invited to at least two department social events per term.
- **Review weekend away policy** to make it accessible to the entire student body, not just to students of selected departments.

### Channels of communication

All department use email as the primary form of communicating to students, most use Facebook, some Instagram, and fewer Twitter. The amount of overlap across platforms is very high, the type of content is not always well adjusted to the communication channel used.

- Clear guidelines on the type of content and frequency of communicating for all channels of communication.
- Partner with Alumni Association in an email campaign promoting Department's Social Media pages. This would increase alumni engagement as well as increase the reach of all publications.

## Best Practices: Anthropology Away Day

“The Away-Day is a full day (10.00am to 5.00pm) of off-campus activities that the Anthropology Department organises twice a year for its 1st and 3rd year undergraduate students. The event is conceived as an opportunity for undergraduate students to experience anthropology in a different way and context, privileging alternative styles of communication and more participatory forms of learning. While the format of this event has kept on changing over the years in response to student feedback, an away-day usually comprises a guest lecture, a movie workshop, a career session for third years and a methodology training for first years and a long Q&A session with faculty. Lunch is very well attended by all faculty. This gives the department a great opportunity to know more about their students in a chatty and informal environment. Venue booking and catering come in the region of £18.50 per person.”

*Andrea Pia, Anthropology, Assistant Professor / Student Engagement Officer*



## Best Practices: Geography and Environment Instagram

The LSE Geography & Environment Instagram @lsegeography has 885 followers and 105 posts (as of 12/04/19). The number of likes of the last 6 posts was, on average, 78 likes. Content shared relates to life at the department: posts about field trips abroad featuring students and academics; posts with images of donuts advertising “Friday Treats” in the common room; posts celebrating students’ achievements (from football matches to department awards); posts about the research of academic staff members; amongst other types of content. Overall, the @lsegeography Instagram page portrays very clearly the culture of the department using high quality visuals and interesting descriptions.



# Improving Formative and Summative Feedback Processes across Departments

Saskia Straub

This research focuses on finding the optimal feedback process for both students and markers, through tools and steps which maximize student benefit within the restricted resources of markers.

## Methodology

This research targeted the Undergraduate population of the Geography and Environment department. It was conducted through:

- Interviews with class teachers and professors
- A focus group with 15 student representatives of each degree over the years
- A survey of staff involved with marking (22 respondents)
- A survey of students (42 respondents)

The survey included questions on a variety of LSE cover sheets for assessed work, to explore staff and student preferences.

## Findings (extracts)

A majority of students highly valued verbal descriptions and the detail they provide. So did markers.

While students appreciated numerical categories to weight each criterion, markers showed strong opposition to this.

More than 93% of students believed feedback on their formative work would be enhanced if word comments were combined with a Marking Matrix that shows performance on different categories.

Half of markers responded positively, that they would be willing to present formative feedback through a hybrid model.

## Recommendations (extracts)

**Cover Sheets** should be recommended more explicitly to students, and renamed "Marking Matrix," to draw in students' attention of their importance and usefulness in assessing their own essays and the standards against which they will be assessed.

If expectations for an assignment differ from standard expectations for an essay the marker/teacher should produce **an assignment specific Marking Matrix**, which informs students of the expectations and helps makers access the work.

Using a Cover Sheet or Marking Matrix for formative as well as summative work reassures students that their work is considered objectively and at the same standard, as well as easing comparison of progress from formative to summative work. Additionally, it would aid markers in the evaluation process.

# Why is feedback not effective?

Ningyuan Jia, Yijiang Wang,  
Yuhan Liu

## Methodology

Survey of 243 students from  
Accounting and Finance departments.

## Recommendations

Key areas for improving student  
satisfaction with feedback:



### Career focused

83% of students surveyed believe that the current form of feedback provides information not useful to their future careers.



### Timely

70% of students said that their current feedback is not timely enough. They may have forgotten about the assessment when they receive the feedback.



### Detailed

87% of the students believe that comments given in the feedback form are too general and not enough constructive advice is given.

While individualised feedback remains important, markers need to make a **clear distinction of the comments** that refer to the standard of a student's work judged against objective standards, and comments which evaluate the student's work within their own individual progression.

Marking Matrixes should outline different levels of achievement for each category of marking through **verbal descriptions** as these provide the most detail, and yet usefulness.

Departments should provide **and encourage students to use Self Reflection Forms** orientated around the Marking Matrix, which can be voluntarily used by students and taken to office hours.

A **semi-anonymised system for handing in formatives** should be considered.

“

It is important to have more communal inside spaces for eating, where **all members of the student body can participate socially and in the academic discussions** that often take place in such informal settings. There are almost only commercial spaces for eating... ”



# The relationship between students and food at LSE and the role it can play in building a stronger sense of community

Sebastiano Caleffi, Jack Winterton, Lucia Pedrioli

## Methodology

We circulated a survey (117 valid responses) and hosted a focus group (with 12 participants); we interviewed Jacqui Beazley, Head of LSE Catering.

## Findings (extracts)

**Students buy food on campus more often than members of staff do.** We argue that in part this happens because staff have more access to facilities (fridges, microwaves, sinks, etc.) needed to reheat or prepare food on campus.

More than 80% of respondents said that food is “Extremely important” or “Very important” in **fostering social relationships**.

Eating is arguably the most ubiquitous social practice. At present, students who do it on campus see it as a lonely and costly endeavour, to be conducted in inhospitable spaces.

**Students often eat on their own when on campus.** Students attributed the prevalence of solo eating to the lack of suitable spaces where food can be shared, to time constraints or to cultural factors.

**Students are heavily dissatisfied with the affordability of food** that they can purchase on campus. Younger students, especially International students who come from less privileged backgrounds, often skip meals when on campus because of their limited disposable income.

Historically LSE Catering had been asked to break even, but Jacqui Beazley, Head of LSE Catering told us: “Over the years we have been tasked to become more commercially viable whilst also trying to balance with value for money.”

## Recommendations

We offer a new way forward in which food is used to more efficiently pursue the goal of “*fostering a stronger sense of community*” (LSE 2020)

We argue that this can be achieved by rethinking LSE Catering’s role and mission, and by measuring its success not through profitability but through its contribution to the community at large.

A crucial first step would be for the School as a whole and for individual Departments to improve the availability and quality of spaces and facilities which students can use to prepare/reheat/assemble food. The campus should have more microwaves, kettles, sinks and working surfaces located in central, easily accessible areas of campus, where seating is provided; these should ideally be equipped with tables and chairs designed for eating/socializing and not just for studying.



“  
I will 100%  
do it next year. ”

# Volunteering at LSE: Assessing the implications amongst undergraduate students

Arya Gerard, Zaynab Olyabek

## Methodology

Interviews with students who had never engaged in volunteering, those who had engaged in volunteering on a regular basis whilst at LSE, and staff from the Departments that had recorded the lowest satisfaction levels in the NSS.

## Findings (extracts)

- Lack of a sense of community within certain Departments
- Lack of effective communication between students and Departments
- Low student take-up of Department-run activities
- Stress is the main contributing factor that leads to students not engaging in activities outside the classroom. Students fear having commitments beyond the classroom and find the culture to be pro-competitive which can be overwhelming.
- Departments lack sufficient support in organising their own volunteering events

## Recommendations (extracts)

**Promote volunteering opportunities through halls** by actively posting opportunities on Hall noticeboards or on their social media pages. This would complement the pre-established Halls Cup system that already rewards students for volunteering.

**Encourage staff to get involved with volunteering** alongside students from their Department. This allows students to get to know staff on a more personal level without having the pressure of networking over their heads.

**Establish a clear system of advertising Volunteering opportunities** through a weekly newsletter or integrated into Department Newsletters. Departments could also advertise volunteering opportunities that are course specific such as volunteer Coding, Tutoring and miscellaneous research opportunities.

**Provide greater support for Departments** that want to organize Department-run Volunteering opportunities by equipping them with a tool-kit supplied by the Volunteer Centre. This kit would clearly guide Departments on how to contact different charities.



“

Students identify much more strongly with their individual departments than with the school more widely.”

# Community through communication: Understanding the formation of identity and community at LSE

Magdalena Parkhurst

How do international master's students understand student identity and community through their interactions with academics and Professional Service Staff?

How do LSE academics and Professional Service Staff communicate messages of identity and community to international master's students?

## Methodology

The study began with an exploratory survey which asked questions about identity and community at LSE within Department X. The researcher conducted interviews with 25 individuals, including key members of the wider LSE staff, and academics, Professional Service Staff and students within Department X. Interviews were analyzed using Braum and Clarke's method of thematic analysis (2006).

“ I think the constant emails that emphasized that [the department] are here, or there are these working opportunities for us, or there are networking events, has kind of **helped us all be together.** ”

## Findings (extracts)

**The department was the primary way through which students understood the LSE community and the LSE student identity.**

**Communication of news:** Communication from Professional Service Staff and academics (face-to-face contact, consistent emails, and academic engagement) created a relationship which allowed respondents to identify as students at LSE, and members of a departmental community.

**Communication of norms:** Students reported an unclear understanding of departmental organization, expectation, and goals. There was no consensus that a wider LSE community exists. Students, Professional Service Staff and academics, however, all reported experiencing a culture of competition, political engagement, and economic ambitions. Students often failed to see themselves in these values, although they located other student's experiences within this culture.

**Negotiation of departmental relationships:** Students reported general satisfaction with the experience while also acknowledging a sense of alienation and lack of agency which many assumed was unique to their experience.

Academics and Professional Service Staff reported a need for student engagement as well as a sense that they were bearing the brunt of the emotional labor necessary to create positive working relationships.

# Defining Inclusivity

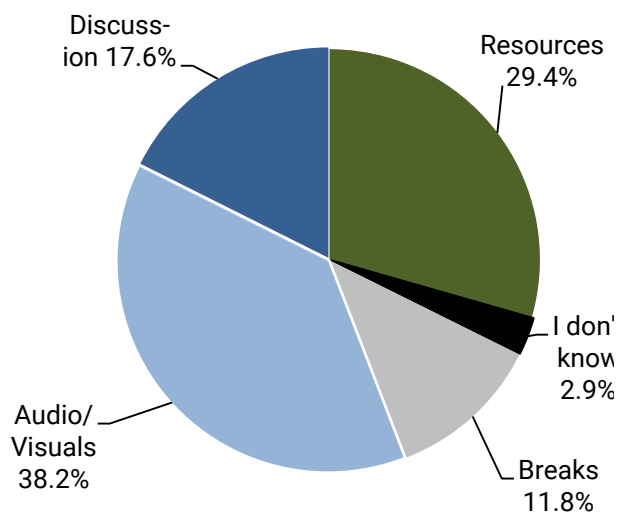
Aathira Kottapurath, Eve Kraicer

What do inclusivity and inclusive education mean to students and lecturers at LSE? We look at the ways these groups conceptualise inclusive pedagogy in terms of syllabus and teaching styles.

## Methodology

Surveys of academics and students in the Law, Gender and Anthropology departments. Two of the student responses are shown below; a full report is available on request.

What are the MOST helpful/supportive/feasible teaching practices?



**DISCUSSION:** There is space during the lecture / seminar for discussion on reasoning for teaching practice

**RESOURCES:** Resources are given for how best to succeed given the teaching practices

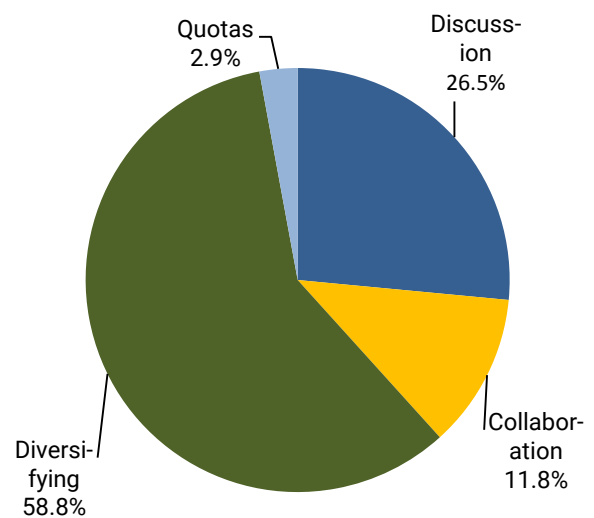
**BREAKS:** lectures / seminars have designated break periods

**AUDIO/VISUAL:** There is an incorporation of different forms of messaging (videos, discussion) in lectures

## Recommendations

- Conduct focus groups based on findings to nuance findings
- Encourage a centralised discussion on what the goals of inclusive practice are at LSE, particularly as they relate to issues of syllabi and teaching style

What are the MOST helpful/supportive/feasible inclusive syllabi approaches?



**DIVERSIFYING:** Your syllabus includes works of authors from different backgrounds (race/gender/nationality/ability/sexuality) in key readings

**QUOTAS:** Your syllabus has 15 non-straight/cis/white men as authors in recommended or further readings

**DISCUSSION:** You are provided with reasoning for how the syllabus is structured, including its shortcomings, context to the authors you are engaging with and the historical periods during which they were writing, in the lectures and course handbook

**COLLABORATION:** You are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the syllabus

# Have we been training our class teachers well? Effective training programmes in Economics

Yi On Ko, Miaomiao Zhang

“ The TLC training was well done but naturally limited in terms of how much subject-specific support could be given. ”

“ Seeing the first problem set of the course and discussing how to deliver [gave] a better understanding of the course-specific expectations prior to the first class. ”



## Methodology

The project used a survey conducted by the Department of Economics of all Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Teaching Fellows (TFs).

## Findings (extracts)

**The project found that GTAs appreciated:**

### Micro-teaching

Training which includes micro-teaching with video filming, provided by the Teaching and Learning Centre, received many good comments.

### Department-/Course-specific

Most GTAs would like the training to be practical, such as walking through a particular question on the problem set.

### Peer observations

Seeking help from other class teachers at the same department during regular meetings were often mentioned.

### Receiving feedback

Feedback from the students and other GTAs is greatly valued. Weekly small-group training sessions would encourage them to discuss and share both academic and classroom challenges.

### Hearing tips

Learning from outstanding and experienced GTAs and hearing their suggestions on both general and particular issues is greatly demanded.

### Communications

GTAs would like to hear constructive recommendations from lecturers, course managers, and peers. Regular meetings help them grow and succeed.



“

I get really really stressed when it's exam season. So I feel like I don't want to commit to anything. ”

# LSESU Societies:

## Are they giving our students a sense of community?

Mubashshira Rahman

### Methodology

The National Student Survey includes the two statements: “I feel part of a community of staff and students” and “Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course”. These are used as the indicators for sense of community and overall satisfaction, respectively. It is possible to see the positive correlation between these two factors. Sense of community ranges from 78% to 31% across departments in LSE.

I created a ratio: number of society memberships in a department by undergrads, to number of total undergrad students in the department. I then used this ratio to compare society involvement in each department. The ratio ranges from around 7.4 to 3.2 across departments.

### Findings (extracts)

There is **no relationship between society membership and community** that could be identified with the data available for this project. This doesn't necessarily mean that societies don't contribute to students' sense of community at LSE.

**Departments with the highest percentage of students feeling a part of the community have a greater proportion of students in Charity, Campaigning and Political societies and Arts and performance societies than Careers societies.**

For most other departments, careers societies are where most of their memberships are concentrated. This could imply that some types of societies are better than others in providing students with a sense of community. But there are no conclusive results; for instance, Sociology also has a high percentage of members in Charity, Campaigning and Political societies, but a relatively low sense of community.

# Race-based exclusion, bias, and discrimination at LSE

Keeyaa Chaurey

The desire to undertake this project has come from my own experiences of marginalisation at LSE as a Third-World woman of colour. This project has been instrumental in unpicking and contextualising my individual encounters with racial discrimination at LSE and my biggest lesson through my research has been that I am not alone.

## Methodology

I conducted two focus groups and four interviews. While people were more than happy to share their encounters with me privately, the idea of being a part of data collection for a project that would be circulated through the university was difficult for many despite the promise of anonymity. The ethnographic refusal I faced has also become part of the data.

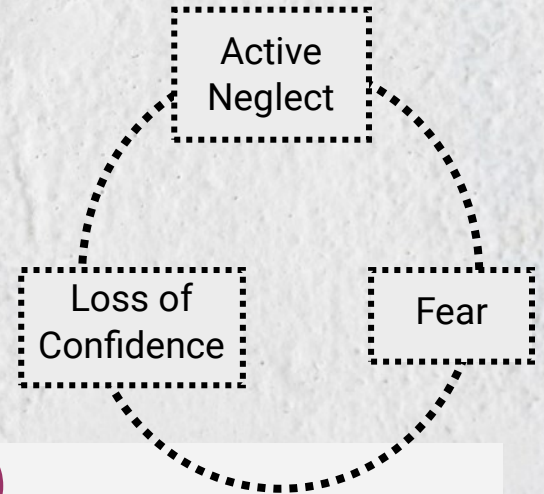
Being able to relate to me has allowed my informants to be straightforward. Further, having my own experiences of racism at LSE has allowed me to ask the right questions thus gaining richer data.

## Findings

My data collection and analysis points to three main affective experiences: fear, loss of confidence, and active neglect. *Active neglect* can be defined as the systematic and conscious ways in which people of colour are neglected by professors, their white and/or Western peers, systems of complaint and justice within the university, and systems of supports such as counsellors and the careers services.

- Chinese students being ignored or spoken over in class because they speak English slower than their peers.
- Many students expressed hesitation at going to class in which their white peers made ignorant or racist statements without being challenged by the professor.
- When complaining, many students were met with pushback: being told that they had misunderstood, or being pushed to name individuals as opposed to looking at how racism is not challenged at a more systemic level.

A loss of confidence and a fear of the classroom are enmeshed into the consequences of active neglect and continue the cycle.



## Recommendations (extracts)

- LSE must urgently invest time and money into **researching itself** and taking seriously the isolation and exclusion of students of colour from all parts of the world.
- **Empathy training for professors**, *if done right*, could help professors notice unintended consequences of racial exclusion.
- Structures of power in the classroom can also be challenged through a **more decolonised and diverse curriculum**. In this way, all students, regardless of race and nationality, will be able to interrogate their positionalities, experiences, opinions, and biases through learning.
- The fear and loss of confidence that students report could potentially be tackled through a **more racially diverse cohort of university counsellors**.
- **Informal groups within departments** could be formed for students of colour so as to create a space of connection and shared experience. Another suggestion would be for departments to hold a **town hall twice a term** where students can express themselves verbally or non-verbally (such as through letters).
- **Combatting active neglect**. Heads of department need to take the lead in **creating warmer environments** for students of colour and Third World students of colour, both in the classroom and in the wider department.

# Exploring Decolonial Praxis at LSE

Ramnath Bhat, Kathryn Higgins, Richard Stupart

This project explored some of the ways the various and often independent decolonising initiatives at LSE understand themselves. We hoped that initiatives can learn from one another and avoid wasting scarce institutional (in terms of money) and personal resources (of time and energy). Work done in certain areas may also make the argument that decolonisation 'has a home' in the institution.

## Methodology

Semi-structured qualitative interviews with individuals identified as being involved in 'decolonising' work either via the common decolonising forum hosted at the PhD Academy during 2018/9 or via snowball-style referral. Four interviews were transcribed and thematically coded in NVivo.

## Findings

### What is to be decolonised?

The focus on **transforming the curriculum** appeared to be in part a result of the reasonable prospects of victory that it offered, and how amenable it was to specific, measurable change.

### How is decolonisation being practiced?

**Creating democratic spaces.** The creation of spaces in which the work of decolonization can be discussed, planned and coordinated. This is intimately bound together with the question of time, and can only be meaningfully addressed through campus-wide structural adjustment. There was a felt need to create new democratic fora on campus, or expand those that already exist.

**Measurement.** The ability to render the problem into data – about reading list authors, student attainment or faculty demographics – is a strategic choice, tied to the felt and objective need to produce evidence if one is to advocate for any structural change in the university. In a social science university, it is perhaps troubling that the presumed supremacy of numbers and measures as objective indicators remains unchallenged.

**Symbolic campaigns.** The decision to publicly target symbolic objects (like a name, or an artwork) forms part of a broader 'consciousness-raising' strategy and occurs alongside, rather than instead of, more direct forms of advocacy and activism.

**Complaint and dissent.** Complaint mechanisms range from raising one's hand in a seminar to challenge coloniality in assigned readings or class discussions, to more substantive or collective measures like triggering formal feedback and/or disciplinary procedures. However, complaint and dissent frequently left respondents feeling drained, discouraged and isolated in their academic community.

“ Is it just about the curriculum? ... it gets stuck a bit and then the question of, for example, representation and who's being hired, things like visa and border regimes, and attendance... ”

“ In this university, you don't have a lunch time, for instance, which for me is super weird... it's just not giving you space to organise to do anything. ”

### Obstacles to practice

**Affective tax.** There is an affective 'tax' to doing decolonial work: the quality of being made to feel you are out of place, your experiences are out of place.

**Complaint and containment.** Complaint gives the university space to respond by re-characterising the nature of the complaint, diverting it, or delaying it until those who are complaining have moved on.

**The discourse of 'quality'.** 'Quality' is set in opposition to whatever decolonial work is trying to achieve - reforming the kinds of papers being included in courses or bringing in staff or students with different perspectives. In the face of decreasing public funding, universities compete through accumulating credibility and desirability. To maintain the brand, the university needs to aspire to 'quality'.





THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



# LSE Change Makers 2018/19

## would like to thank

The Change Makers Advisory Group: Dr Peter Evanson, Dr Bradley Franks, Professor Dilly Fung, Dr Claire Gordon, Jenny Hastings, Martha Ojo, Natalie Paris, Gemma Stansfield, Thomas Watson, Imogen Withers.

Those who worked with Change Makers projects, including: LSE LIFE, LSE Disability and Wellbeing Service, LSE Careers, LSE Events, Stephanie Allison, Professor Paul Dolan, Dr Sam Friedman, Sarah Hagart, Tom Hewlett, Jon Hucker, Dr Dimitra Petropoulou, Lucy Porter, Alan Revel, Cat Todd.

All staff and students who participated in focus groups, surveys or interviews.

Change Makers mentors: Dr Paroj Banerjee, Rana Khazbak, Megnaa Mehtta, Miriam Rahali, Luc Schneider, Branwen Spector, Dr Madeleine Stevens, Dr Yan Wang, Valentina Zagaria.

## #LSEChangeMakers