

**Course Rep**

**Training**

**Jade Calder**

**VP Access &  
Academic Affairs**

**Oxford SU**

## **What does a Course Rep do?**



- **Seek out views and opinions of students you represent**
- **Take course level issues to JCC/GJCC meetings**
- **Attend other staff meetings you are invited to**
- **Go prepared to meetings by reading the papers and consult with students on issues**
- **Provide feedback and outcomes of the meetings to the students you represent**
- **Liaise with other course reps to form a picture of the views of the department student body**
- **Work on developing solutions to issues that have been raised**



## **Focus areas**

## **RESOURCES**

Learning spaces, libraries,  
online resources

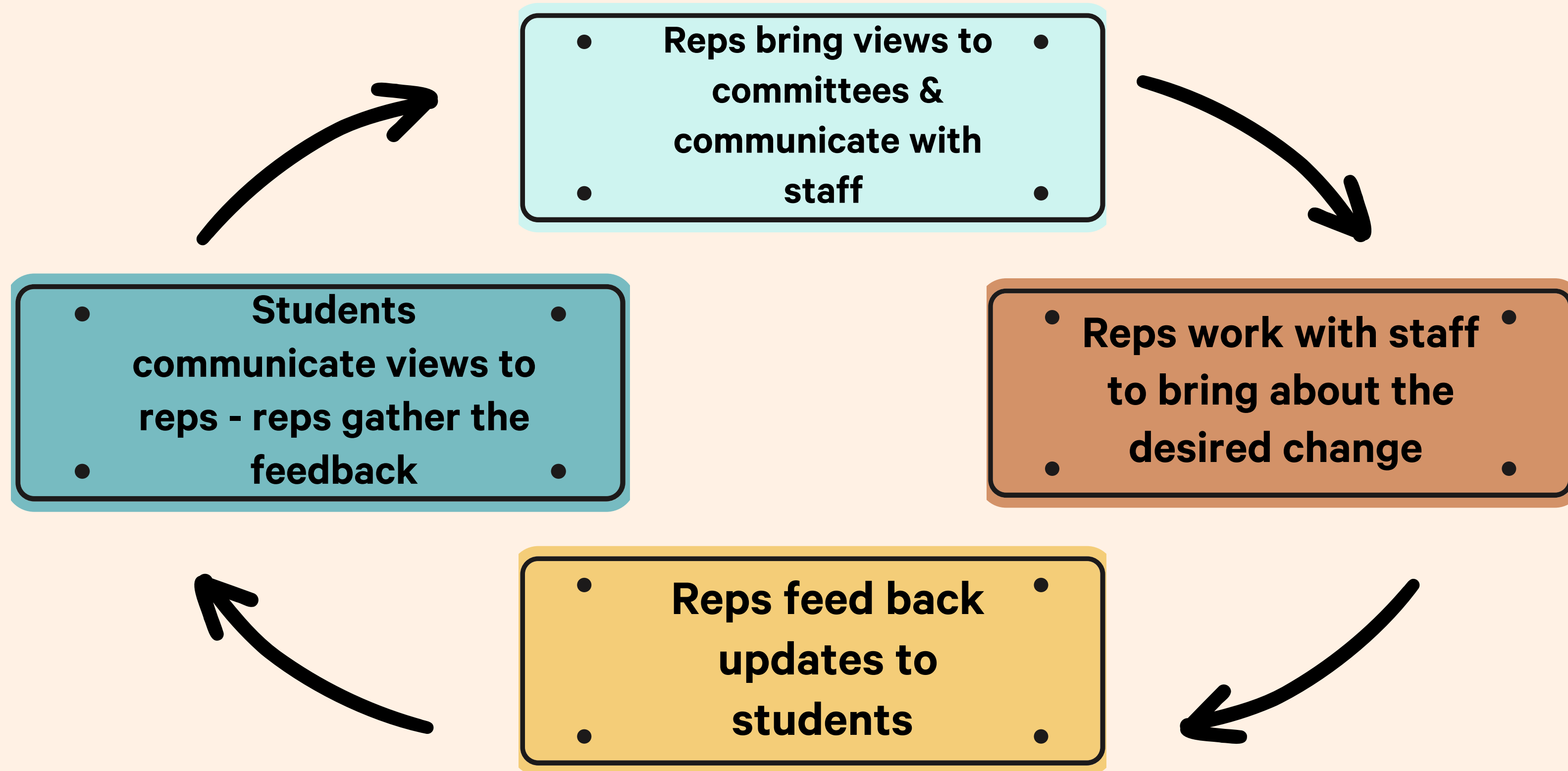
## **ASSESSMENT**

Exams, coursework,  
feedback,  
assessment formats

## **TEACHING**

Supervisors, tutors,  
workload (& welfare!),  
lectures, labs, learning  
support

# Feedback loop - let students know!



# Types of feedback



- **Yourself!** - If you are a course rep it is likely in part because you care about certain issues or have certain experiences
  - However - evidence to substantiate your view is key and considering the views of other students is also important
- **Casual discussion** - conversations and anecdotes from your peers can give you an idea of the issues to have on your radar
  - Warning - again, having a wider sample size with good evidence / data is always appreciated by academic staff, and friends may not want to be quoted for a committee anecdote without permission
- **Consider alternative effective ways to gather student views!**

# Collecting views



**Regularly communicate with students on your course to hear their opinions - but how?**

- **Send out surveys or questionnaires - but get to the point!**
  - **Surveys can give you quantitative and short form text responses, but you can go deeper with focus groups**
    - **You may want the Divisional Rep and / or the SU to help you in arranging focus groups**
    - **A discussion forum is a more casual conversation which students can attend and allows you to have a direct gauge of their views**
    - **Course group chats are also rapid and easy to use**
- **Ensure that you account for the diversity and different views of the student body - have balance!**

# Effective Representation



- **Make sure that you are known and accessible to students**
  - **The department should be able to help when it comes to email communications and introducing you to the cohort**
  - **Giving regular (ish!) updates reminds students of the work you are doing and gives them an idea of the sort of issue which they can come to you with**
- **Be creative with how you seek feedback and do what you feel works for you - different cohorts and courses have their own ways in which they like to engage**
- **Ask your department for previous data / information which has been collected - institutional memory can be helpful!**
  - **E.g. Departmental reviews, student surveys, previous meeting minutes**



**Remember!**

**A GREAT COURSE REP IS BOTH  
REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE**

**You are flexible and able to respond to  
unforeseen issues as they arise**

**&**

**You are conscious of the existing issues  
on your course and think about what can  
be done in your capacity to work on them**



# Divisional Reps

Course reps feed into Divisional reps at a broader level - consider which issues may not just be departmental specific

Div Reps sit on Divisional Boards

## Undergrad

Social Sciences - Zoe Edwards [zoe.edwards@queens.ox.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.edwards@queens.ox.ac.uk)  
Med Sci - Rosie McDonald-Hill [rosalind.mcdonald-hill@trinity.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rosalind.mcdonald-hill@trinity.ox.ac.uk)  
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## Postgrad

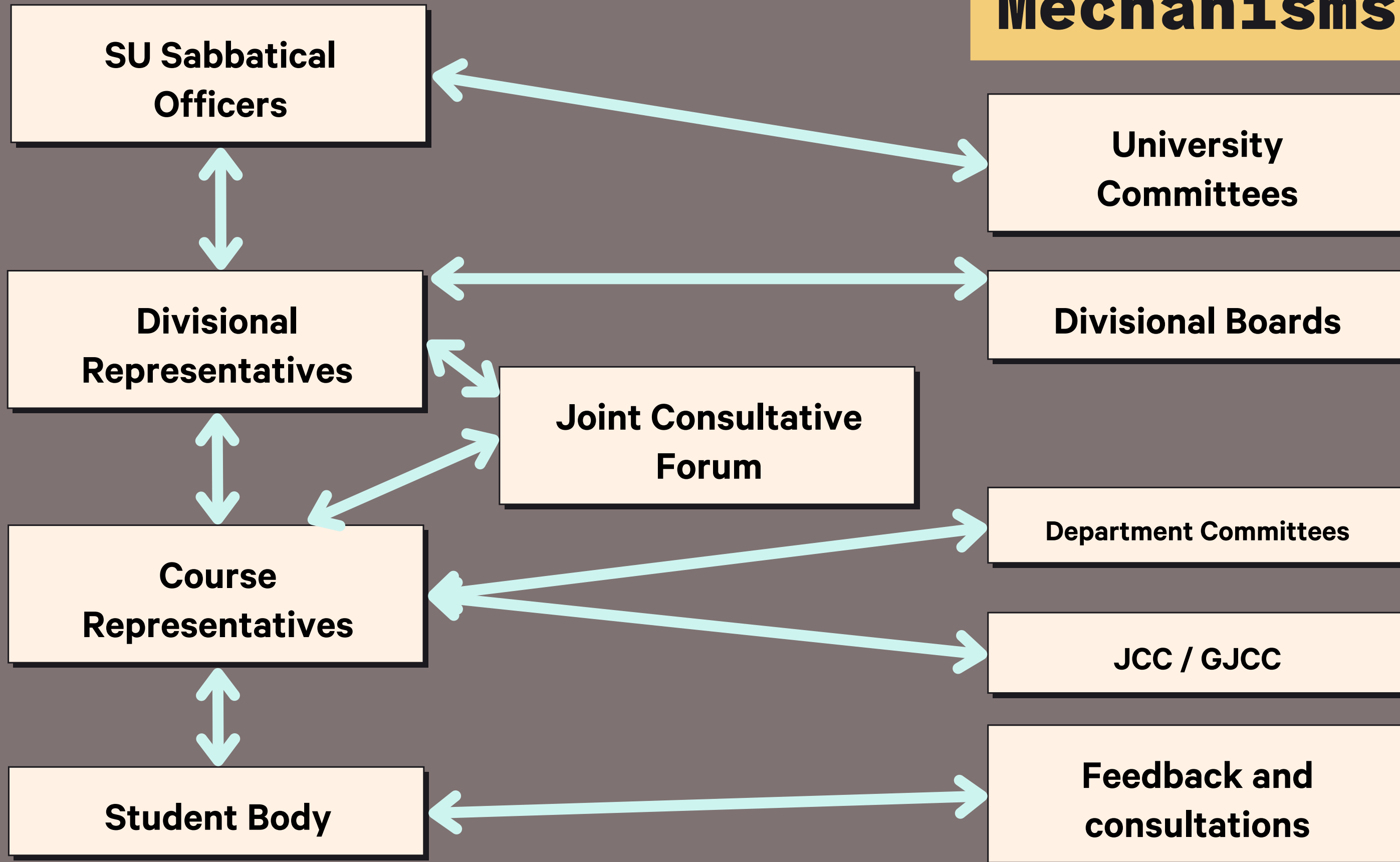
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# Representatives

# Structures & Mechanisms



**Take a minute**

**What are the key  
issues?**

**Would you work on it as  
a course rep or take it  
to a Divisional Joint  
Consultative Committee /  
Forum?**

# Navigating Committees



- **Make sure that you can access, read and understand any committee papers that you should have prior to the meeting**
  - **Ask the secretary if you are not sure about something!**
- **Know who the committee comprises of and what part of their role is relevant to students**
- **Remember that academic staff highly value the student opinion, even if it isn't explicitly shown**
- **Deploy student feedback and data when making points - this always helps you get taken seriously**
- **Talk to other course reps from your department beforehand to get up to speed on what issues they are working on**
- **Don't be afraid to email key staff outside committees to continue conversations about points that were raised**

## How can the SU help?



- **Training and skills development**
- **Policy support**
- **Connection to the wider student representative network & campaigns e.g DisCam**
- **Support with paper writing / reading**
- **Navigating the university structure**
- **Advice Service and Wellbeing Support**

**VP Access &  
Academic Affairs**

**JADE CALDER**

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**VP Graduates**

**SHREYA DUA**

**[vpgraduates@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:vpgraduates@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)**

**Committees - Lobbying - Support - Advice - Community**

# Signposting



Remember - a course rep is an academic representation role. We are not training you to be peer supporters and do not expect you to take on serious welfare / admin / personal issues of other students

Please signpost any student who approaches you with such issues elsewhere, including:

- Departmental administrative staff
  - Ask who the best contacts are for issues relating to mitigating circumstances, welfare, suspensions etc if these are common student question
    - College welfare officers and college advisors / personal tutors / Director of Graduate Studies
- SU Advice Service (helps with academic appeals, mitigating circumstances and much more)
- Nightline
- University Counselling Service
- Disability Advisory Service



**Thank You For**

**Listening**