

Philosophy SSLC Minutes

Meeting held on Wednesday, 1pm – 2.30pm
S38, 7GS

In attendance: Dr Nick Treanor (SSLC Convener), Dr Aidan McGlynn (Acting Head), Dr David Levy (Exams Convener), Tsengelsaikhan Enkhbat, Jo-Anna Schuller Hagen, Harriet Jennifer Hendersen, Michael Awdankiewicz, Louis Norman, Phillipe Bawa

Minutes: Sarah Nicol, Student Support Officer

Apologies: Antonina Bargielowska Johnsen, John Massey,

Minutes of Previous Meeting – Outstanding Year 1 description. **Action:** NT/Y1 Rep will email information.

Convener's Report

NT updated the committee from an action point from last SSLC meeting; the Logic tutorial set up, which he confirmed he is still looking into the logistics to whether it is workable. He reported that a tutorial for Logic 1 'how to use software' would be going ahead for next academic year, as suggested at the last meeting.

NT confirmed the Teaching Plan should be finalised in a few weeks. He also updated that he will be having a meeting with Moira Avraam, Head of UG administration and Sue Richards, Honours Philosophy Teaching Secretary, regarding processes, including 'How to sign up honours courses'. In this meeting they will be addressing the mechanics of how this works and how it can be improved. The process for administration and students needs to be reviewed. DL stated that it can be an issue that students don't get their first choices. Year 3 Reps are going to speak to NT about experience of selecting course choices at a separate meeting. Year 3 suggested doing it via a survey format, to figure about the popularity of courses. DL confirmed the department have data about what is popular, but the survey would be good to get an early indication about what courses, especially new ones, are going to be popular. NT questioned if survey would be robust in figuring out this as it depends on how students come to this decision. Students raised concerns that fellow students may ignore a survey as they get so many survey requests as it is. The timeline about when to ask student was discussed, AM advised that department are looking at the courses now, so it can't be something done after May exams. Students asked if courses could be selected earlier in the semester. NT confirm that students can't be ask too early as students haven't covered various topics in Year 2 courses to decide. It was suggested that the survey be released on Learn. Discussion took place about the value of just having the names of the courses for the survey, however concerns were raised about having time to read the course descriptions of 42 courses. DL wondered how reflective and representative would the information be from a survey. Student suggested it would be better to help deciding what courses to

double up. The group has a discussion with regards to popularity, timetabling, availability of rooms and numbers of students. It was also brought to the committee's attention that doubling up a course also means that an academic has to teach it, therefore something else will have to be given less priority – does this mean they don't teach a less popular course, which gives fewer options or only teach a course and then don't do research/admin role. NT explained the way it works on how to decide how the department deals with doubling up a course, using feminism as an example. Rep raised potential issue about what if someone signs up for a course and someone else is teaching it, it may cause disappointment. AM confirmed they are looking to have more honours courses and what is popular. DL suggested that the department is definitely listening and adding more courses from feedback from students. DL stated that academics teach what interests them, which adds a benefit and specialist knowledge to the teaching. The students confirmed they are excited about Philosophy of Food, Dr Anders J Schoubye new course in 2016/17.

NT explained how the allocation worked this year, and gave an example of how that affects a Year 3 joint honours student if they put their options as the most popular courses but all of those go to the priority year 4 students. It was suggested that perhaps the department could manage students' expectations with regards to letting them know what is popular and most likely to go to Year 4 students. NT going to talk to the Year 3 reps at a further meeting.

NT confirmed that course guide should be available 6 weeks before term starts. Semester 2 courses included. As there was new member of staff in semester 2, Dr Martin Smith, the guide for his course may not have been finalised until January, therefore why it may have been delayed. Students reported that some course guides didn't have the reading lists until later. **ACTION: NT** to investigate with Sue Richards if information was passed on late for the course guides as should be completed for S1 and 2 in August.

Year 4 Report

The reps reported most students are getting on with their dissertations and looking forward to getting all their hand in's in.

Year 3 Report

No issues with regards to courses to report. Feedback in semester 2 was given back on time. However, a concern was raised that students are not sure how to access feedback for their coursework on 'Turn it in'. It was suggested a link for students to click on to take them back to their essay submission would be helpful. **ACTION: NT** check with Nick Daniels/Sue Richards if it's possible to have a link. Students requested link be sent with the notification to say marks are ready. DL reminded students that academics can go through feedback with a student, this can help students who have used to have good grades in Year 1 and 2, and lower marks in Year 3 – as sometimes there is a dip when a student first enters honours.

Reps asked if they can get course feedback on paper again as have been getting online and no-one is filling them in. NT confirmed it is University wide policy that all

course evaluations have to be done online. Students requesting paper feedback as students don't want to do it online. All reps agreed that paper would have a higher return rate.

NT asked the students whether they receive too much email from the University. Joint honours students felt like they do as have emailed from both schools they are studying in. Students suggested the titles of message were more specific it would be helpful to know what is important.

Year 2 Report

The reps reported similar issues regarding access to feedback on time. Students have given positive feedback with regards to Knowledge and Reality (K&R), but a lot of negative feedback about one member to staff's lectures. Seems to be an issue with the person's teaching as it was the same in Mind, Matter and Language (MML). Issues were that lectures were spent reading out PowerPoint, and it's not coming across like the person is passionate about the subject. DL said the department can support new staff, and help them develop teaching and make it engaging for students. Year 2 rep suggested that is that the case, students could just stay at home and read the slides. It was confirmed that next academic year only faculty members will teach at sub honours. Students are generally satisfied in Year 2, and Philosophy of Science 1 has had positive responses.

Year 1 Report

The Students have fed back they are enjoying the courses this semester. The only issues are with the teaching of Plato and Aristotle in Greats; From Plato to the Enlightenment, as no power point is being used. It was felt that this section has had less attendance during this time but it can't be sure that this is the reason, as it may be other factors. Although comparing to outside course lectures, this is not the case for them so it could be related to the content and teaching of these sections. It was suggested that it could be the 10am start causing the issue. It was suggested it would be helpful if Greats tutorial could cover exam in tutorials. Accessing essay feedback was also an issue for Year 1 students.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed early next academic year 2016/17.