

Minutes

Philosophy Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) 2017/2018

Meeting held Wednesday 22 November
12:30pm-2pm S38, 7 George Square

Student Representation: Year 1: Aydin Simsek, Alfie Young, Year 2: Rebecca Joyce & Meyra Coban, Year 3: Violet Tinnion Year 4: Sophie Charalambous, Alessandra Fassio

Staff Representation: Dr Bryan Pickel Teaching Director, Dr Matthew Chrisman (Head of Department), Dr Alistair Isaac, Dr Jesper Kallstrup, Dr Michael Ridge, Dr Wolfgang Schwartz, Dr Anders Schoubye Neil Fox, Teaching Secretary, Ani Cowe, Teaching Support Senior Administrator, DD Moran SSO

SSLC Convenor: Bryan Pickel, Teaching Director

Minutes: David Moran, Student Support Officer

Apologies: no apologies

1. Review of Academic Aims Outlined:

BP announces that for the following academic year a review of academic aims, timeframes and procedures will be undertaken by faculty. Student involvement is requested and heavily encouraged. BP asks student representatives to take lead with this. The representatives agree, all agree. A reflective report and review is to follow and key dates will be outlined for participation. A sense of community and reviewing degree structures are two major areas of focus. The student cohort like the idea of further reviews in order to improve the structure of study. A discussion takes place.

2. Announcement of Two Academic Posts:

BP and M Chrisman announce two new academic posts will be filled for the coming academic year. MC requests student presence for candidate (s) presentations. More news to follow. The students tentatively agree to be in attendance.

JK follows up on issues relating to essay deadlines being staggered. BP asks student representatives for feedback regarding this matter. SR's say the response from student cohort was conflicted, as many are in favour and many are against more staggered deadlines. It is remarked that one student conceded that regardless of deadline: they will panic anyway. It is agreed there are positives and negatives and that hard deadlines or staggered deadlines would not appease a majority cohort. BP assures further guidance for coursework dissertations will be offered in new academic year, and agrees to speak with course organizers regarding this matter. It is also highlighted

training is now being given and undertaken for personal tutors, regarding such matters as tutoring.

3. Year 1 Report from Student Representatives:

Both student representatives highlight that it is challenging to access general PPLS information on the website. Another representative counters to say that as the semester progresses this becomes more simplistic to do, as terminology and general degree structures feel more natural. It is suggested yearly email lists would be beneficial for cohorts. The room agrees this can be a useful way of sending out information. The SSO agrees to contact Jo-Anna Hagen and ask she make these available to representatives or send accordingly. A moderation takes place when mlists are sent out.

Recorded lectures are again a hot topic of discussion. A representative mentions having spoken with students and the opinion being divided. They also mention a student saying they pay a lot of money to go to university so want the lectures recorded. A discussion relating to the impact on expression and student participation then ensues. BP, MC, JK, AS, AI, MR and all present student cohort all participate in discussion. Tutorial participation is raised as a genuine concern. A tutorial participation mark is requested by student representatives. One obstacle highlighted in tutorial participation marking is the difficulty in assessing the mark. The discussion moves on.

4. Year 2 Report from Student Representatives:

Positive feedback is given by student representatives in relation to: Philosophy of the Mind. The cohort feel very engaged and find the lecturer to be very engaging. Dr Wilson is remarked on as being excellent in their role. Philosophy of Language is also seen as an engaging course; the lecturer is also complimented.

An improvement of hearing in lectures for partially hearing students would be seen as valuable. A microphone pillow is suggested, and a general increase in sound seen as beneficial.

Tutors attending lectures is seen as a very positive thing by students. The attendance of tutors helps to build knowledge of student experience and general study. Tutorial feedback is good, however, essay questions are seen as being too broad. It is then highlighted that some of the Philosophy of Language primary readings are not available to students online. The autonomous learning service is not being utilized by students. The representatives concede this is an issue, but value the service on offer.

5. Year 3 Report from Student Representatives:

The jump from 2nd year to 3rd year and the effect of grading is seen as a concern. Students feel the grading is lower and harsher, more severe. BP, AI and MC counter to say that the standard does increase when entering honours, and grading becomes more competitive as students generally improve. Also, the content is seen to be more

challenging in honours and is given as a reason as to why grades may not be as high. However, it is agreed all is to play for in that regard.

The presence of MSc students is seen as an issue for third year students. They feel their further learning experience and use of alien language as disruptive in class, making it difficult to participate. As previously mentioned MSc students are to be exempt from 3rd year courses moving forward.

JK mentions that setting up a social for end of mid-terms would be possible. This is requested by a student representative. MC does however highlight the lack of attendance at the last philosophy social, despite it being free. It is suggested *Eventbrite* is used to book tickets for future events, in order to increase attendance and lower financial losses incurred by non-attendance of free events. It is agreed.

6. Year 4 Report from Student Representatives:

The dissertation deadline in April is raised as an area of concern due to other deadline at this time. MC says he will talk to David Levy regarding this matter. Explanations on how to format the dissertation is requested via *Learn*. Both staff members present from the Teaching Office agree to look in to this. AI suggests also highlighting any communication keys on *Learn* when requesting communication from instructors.

7. Any Other Business:

JK enquires about students reasoning in relation to course choices as a topic of interest. Students highlight a lack of course content prior to selection as hindering choices. AS suggests an amazon review style blurb in relation to course content. Academics will chat to colleagues and feedback in due course; the student representatives like the idea of a review styled course outline.

Action Points:

- Follow up with student leaders and representatives on issues discussed
- Address coursework issues and add them to *Learn* if deemed possible
- Encourage Teaching Assistants conduct presentations
- Discuss further tutorial participation and marking at honours level between academic cohort
- Dissertation deadline date

BP thanks the room for attending. The meeting ends.

Next SSLC Meeting: 13 February, 12.30 – 2pm, DBS Room 7.01