**School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences**

**Psychology MA and BSc**

**Student Staff Liaison Committee Meeting**

Thursday 16 March at 12.30pm

Room S.38, 7 George Square

**Present :** Dr Alexa Morcom (Chair – present at 13:05), Dania Abu-Sharkh (Year 3 Rep'), Dr Kasia Banas (Snr Teaching Coordinator), Dr Dave Carmel (Year 4 Course Organiser) Laura Cobban (Co-Chair and Year 4 Rep'), Dr Martin Corley (Head of Department) Robert Dudek (Year 1 Rep'), Taranah Gazder (Year 2 Rep), Dr Michelle Luciano (Year 3 Course Organiser), Megan McDougall (Year 4 Rep'), Alexandra McGregor (Year 3 Rep'), Dr Adam Moore, (Year 1 Course Organiser) Dr Rene Mottus (Year 2 Course Organiser) Dr Eva Murzyn (Teaching Coordinator), Eliina Takala (Year 2 Rep') Aleksandra Tkacz (Year 1 Rep')

**In attendance:** Mrs Tamsin Taylor-Welch (Minute Taker)

M. Corley in lieu of A. Morcom welcomed the meeting and reminded the Committee that it's a shared chairing procedure with Laura Cobban and Megan McDougall co-chairing. A. Morcom is to join the meeting shortly after 1pm.

1.      A request from Quality Assurance Officer Dr Thomas Bak:

   *EVASYS*

   T. Bak reported that there was again an alarmingly low level of feedback from students undertaking the EVASYS questionnaire. Staff had met with the EVASYS Team and it had been made apparent that the number of questions could not be reduced, but that the style of questioning could be changed (within reason). As such, T. Bak is keen to hear from students as to what they'd expect from the questionnaire.

   **Action:** Reps to liaise with their cohort and feed this back to T. Bak.

2.      News from the Chair

   *Psychology Dinner*

   Ninety-nine students have signed up to the 4th year dinner, and there's still time for more to sign up. This is a very healthy number and a good night should be had by all.

## BPS Conference

The British Psychological Society (BPS) Conference is this year to be hosted by Psychology University of Edinburgh. Hons students (4th years in particular, per the BPS request) have been encouraged to go, as it will be beneficial for those working on their dissertations. A careers fair is to also be incorporated, and PsychSoc are holding a social event afterwards.

## Feedback from 4th year students regarding recording in lectures

M. Corley informed the meeting that on speaking with the 4th year cohort there was a general consensus that recording is popular. Current technology does not permit recording in all lecture theatres. With forthcoming technology it should be possible to record more lectures, and Psychology's lecture recording policies will be updated as the technology changes.

## Research Methods and Statistics 2

An issue (undisclosed at the meeting) regarding the above course had been resolved and an apology sent to all affected students. Student Reps for Year 3 confirmed that students had received the apology and that the matter was now settled

3.    Year 1 Reports and Feedback

## Feedback for students

A.Moore informed the meeting that students had received feedback on their Semester 2 essay outlines, and as a result positive feedback had been given by students.

4.    Year 4 Reports and Feedback

## Writing Retreat

D. Carmel reported that so long as sufficient numbers turn up in future, room bookings for this event will be for a longer period, with the sessions commencing at the beginning of the second semester.

K. Banas reported that there had been 28 signups for the Writing Tree, but only 11 students turned up. D. Carmel reiterated the need for greater student feedback before any part of the Writing Retreat is changed.

## Dissertations and Statistics drop-in Sessions

Reps reported that some students had cited the need for statistics drop-in sessions.

D. Carmel informed the meeting that it would be possible to organize, but the main issue would be clarifying *when* the best time to run it would be, as dissertations are so fluid.

M.Corley reminded the Reps that Dissertation Supervisors are supervising a project where they are able to analyse the data, and therefore assist students. As such, the Supervisor should be the first port of call.

However, if they are unavailable, M. Corley  suggested that Year 4 students make use of the Year 3 drop-in sessions that have been organised by Tom Booth and Luna de Ferrari.

## *Request for Year Group Averages to be released*

The Reps reported that there had been a student request to have group averages to be released, so an individual could ascertain where they were cohort-wise. D. Carmel on ascertaining that the request had only come from a few students reminded Reps that for parity's sake nothing can be changed on the say-so of a couple of students within such an enormous student body. Any requests for change needs to come from the majority of the student body.

5.      Year 3 Reports and Feedback

## *Group Project (plus statistics and qualitative analysis)*

There has been negative feedback from students regarding the tight turnaround time between draft feedback and due date of the final submission. It has meant little time for editing. In contrast, the deadlines given for the Literature Review were more measured.

M. Corley reported that the draft feedback on the Group project was instigated in response to to student feedback in last year's SSLC meetings. This was probably the wrong decision, and led to unintended problems with timing.

**Action:** M Luciano and fellow staff to review.

## *RMS 3*

RMS3 course for Y3 was that the students only had 5 weeks to cover two different qualitative approaches, and were feeling rushed and unable to fully master the methodology before being asked to write up a report.

The response was that we were aware of how little time they had, and that our marking expectations were calibrated with this in mind.

**Action:** Year 3 Reps to inform cohort of the marking process.

## *Future Dissertation Guidance*

M Corley informed the meeting that in since 2014 there had been at least 22 dissertations that had been published with the students as co-Authors.

The meeting agreed that Supervisors will be given clearer instructions as to what and how much guidance they can provide.

**Action:** Year 3 Reps to get their cohort to think about what they'd like to be included in dissertation guidance.

It was acknowledged that there is a grey area over what percentage of marks are awarded for self-guided students versus those who've received further advice from the Supervisor. What mark does a Supervisor give to a student who's received guidance/leadership on stats, but has designed the experiment itself? This will be addressed in the guidance notes.

6. Year 2 Reports and Feedback

*Exams – Written Answer Questions*

Requests for sample written answer papers have been made so that students can ascertain the level of detail they need to provide when sitting these examinations. Students were informed by staff that this had been done before (Learning & Memory).

**Action:** R Mottus and E Murzyn will approach lecturers for advice on this with a view to having these ready for the next academic year.

All agreed that caution needed to be applied as some papers could in theory mislead a student.

M.Corley alerted students to Blackwell's free online access; currently "How to Write a Good Essay in Exam Conditions" is available, but will run for a finite period.

The meeting also reminded students to think about who they are writing for; the meeting agreed that when providing samples, they'd provide ones with and without annotation for a clearer guide.

*RMS Query – Are R-Coding-Specific topics going to appear in lectures?*

M Corley informed the meeting that Tom Booth and Alex Doumas are working hard on improving the lectures in this regard, and these take time to iterate. It had been noted by staff that students were unfamiliar with how to make use of datasets, and changes are being made to the RMS courses as a consequence.

7. Any Other Business

Potential for Academic Families to be reinvented

L Cobban reported that the Academic Families had not gone well this year, with negligible response from 1st year students when invited to coffee/ social events by their student 'Parents'. It was agreed that this may have something to do with the fact that Personal Tutors with Year 1 students are also the tutors for Psychology 1; this has meant the academic relationship is far stronger than in previous years and students feel more confident about going to their tutor.

A McGregor and D Abu-Sharkh reported that there had been positive feedback when they spoke with their cohort regarding 4th year students being paired with 3rd year students (although the title 'Parent' will need to be replaced).

M.Corley informed the meeting that they are looking into students retaining the tutor PT system in Psychology is under revision.  One suggestion is that Y3 students receive a new PT in Y3, who then continues with the student until the end of their final year (sabbaticals permitting).  No final decisions have been made regarding this system, however.

A Morcom thanked all for their contribution over the past academic year, wishing the students the best in their exams.