

# School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences

## Linguistics & English Language

### Staff Student Liaison Committee Minutes

Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 at 1pm

Room 7.01, Dugald Stewart Building

#### **Present:**

#### **Staff:**

J. Fruehwald (SSLC Convener), P. Ackema, C. Cowie, V. Chondrogianni, P. Iosad

#### **Students:**

A. Zhigareva, N. Markl, E. Kouhi, R. Macy, K. Wilson, I. Youmerski

#### **In Attendance:**

M. Davidson (Minute Taking)

#### **Welcome from SSLC Convenor**

J. Fruehwald welcomed all those present to the first SSLC of semester 2.

#### **Apologies**

G. Trousdale, B. Los, J. Strenger

#### **Discussion of Upcoming Teaching Programme Review (TPR)**

J. Fruehwald explained that there is going to be a TPR in semester 1 in the next academic year around October/November. It is a review of teaching, and how well LEL is delivering, reaching benchmarks and about how things are functioning in general. He would like students to bring some information forward for the TPR as students can submit areas to be looked at during the TPR. For example in 2010 students asked for the TPR to look at the jump between pre-honours and honours, as a result LEL have a more elaborated induction to honours. One query that will be put forward relates to honours courses running in parallel with Postgraduate courses and what Teaching Office should do the administration for these courses.

By the next SSLC in March, the class reps should think about what kind of things relating to their degree/school would be useful for the TPR to have a look at, up to 4 student items can be brought forward. At the review there will be time for the reviewers to meet with students, a good turnout would be favourable, so all the class reps should be available as well as members from the LangSoc society.

### **Discussion of an LEL Writing Clinic**

N. Gisborne would like to introduce a PPLS Writing clinic for the whole school to give support and flexibility in students writing. Writing centres are popular in American universities and they do many things e.g. how to write in a certain discipline. One of the most useful functions are the clinics, students can go to a clinic with an essay that they have started, the tutor can then go through the essay at the clinic so that the student can understand how to improve their essay before submission.

N. Gisborne would like to start a working group to see if it is welcome and how it might be deployed in its most useful way. On that working group there will hopefully be a class rep from each subject area. Therefore feedback is needed from students to understand what staff can do to offer a writing support system that will follow the American model. The class reps should speak to fellow students, and to speak to LangSoc etc. about things that they might want that could contribute to the model. Examples of good practice in student societies will help to mould the model.

The general consensus from the meeting is that the clinics would be very useful as there is nothing like this available in LangSoc for essay writing.

### **Discussion of Electronic Marking**

J. Fruehwald reported that there is a push but no mandate for Course Organisers to use electronic marking if possible. Part of the push is due to student enthusiasm and preference for electronic marking, so it would be useful to understand if this is actually the case in LEL.

I. Youmerski believes that electronic marking is better because from his experience people prefer to look at their feedback at their own pace, and sometimes students feel that they can't go to the person that has marked their essay for feedback.

K. Wilson believes there is an issue about whether you are allowed to keep your essay or return it to the Teaching Office. Sometimes students need to stay at the Teaching Office to read feedback which can be quite intimidating, so in this case electronic marking is better.

R. Macy stated that it is useful to have it electronically because you can refer back to the comments easily online in the future, rather than having to dig out the hardcopy. Many students will just look at the mark and leave the feedback, the electronic copy might make them look at the feedback more.

There is sometimes the issue of handwriting and trying to understand it with hardcopies, it can be a barrier to understanding the feedback.

P. Iosad has electronic marking in his honours class and has not received any negative feedback from any student on that course. The LEL 2D tutors are trying electronic marking, so he is very keen to find out if this works and would appreciate feedback.

On the other hand it can be difficult technically, and when moderating it is easier to have a pile of hardcopies.

The class reps from year 1 stated that some students do not feel that they get enough feedback, so if students can meet markers face to face they can get more information.

K. Wilson believes it is important that students feel confident to approach their tutors/lecturers to discuss feedback, so making it accessible and clear to students that they are within their rights to meet with the marker is perhaps more important.

E. Kouhi suggested having a possible link when viewing your essay online to email your marker.

**Action: J. Fruehwald**

### **Year 1 Reports and Feedback**

Much of the feedback focused on exam and linguistics assignment, most students were quite positive but some students thought it would be good to have a tutorial to discuss the exam. It is understood that in previous years this has happened but this year the tutors went through the exercises for the tutorial group so did not have time to go over the exam.

Some students feel they were not prepared for the exam and assignments, people would like more mock tests prior to the exam. Students understand the content but are unsure about the way that it is asked, so perhaps some extra drop in sessions for students that are still unsure.

C. Cowie explained that LEL 2C now have online tutorials, so some of the questions that are asked in the homework exercises can be marked before the tutorial, this frees up some time and can act as practice questions, this concept might be an option for LEL 1.

### **Year 2 Reports and Feedback**

A tutor has mentioned that it would be good for pre-honours courses to incorporate some corpus linguistics in preparation for honours courses.

In the LEL2A essay students felt the word count was too short, so students couldn't go into depth, there are also questions about when they will be getting the coursework back.

There is positive feedback about lectures but one problem is that many lectures tend to go over time which makes it difficult for students getting to other classes. Also some of the class locations are quite difficult to get to as they are across campus from the previous class.

There are no exam feedback sessions as they are only one semester courses, but students still feel that it would be useful to have the feedback.

R. Macy stated that in Psychology there is a two hour period where the 4/5 Course Organisers gather in a room for students to go and ask questions about the exam.

### **Year 3 Reports and Feedback**

Students are satisfied about the approachability of lectures, they are interesting and useful. But some people felt that they have been unfairly marked, but the exams were reflective of the class.

Class size in First Language Acquisition is too big and some students feel it is affecting their work. Students also felt that the essay questions were too vague.

Students like classes that change the format between seminars and group work.

H. Giegerich had a Q&A session before the exam and allowed people to come into see him before and after the essay.

In Computer for Speech and Language Processing it took too long to get exam feedback and the assessment was due 2 days before the exam.

Students feel that Phonetics and Laboratory Phonology was disjointed and people did not like how it was run.

#### **Year 4 Reports and Feedback**

In Historical Linguistics one of the main texts does not appear online, the copies are also limited in the library. When you have the texts online it is easier to access.

In Celtic, English and Norse there is too much information, however people are not aware that it is the first year that it is running, so it may be due to some teething problems.

Many students feel overwhelmed about the formality of the checkpoints on LEARN for the dissertation. It is too generalised, some students are working at their own pace with their supervisor. Therefore there is a mismatch between what supervisors expected from you and what Bettelou wants you to do. A suggestion is for supervisors to give a monthly report to say everything is on track rather than adhere to the checkpoints. Some students like the checkpoints but a minute after the deadline ends you cannot submit online so it should not close as it is not assessed. Students feel there are too many points of contact for the ethical approval process, and at each meeting students have to discuss the same thing.

The feedback has been mixed for First language Acquisition largely due to its size, whilst the course was being taught everyone found it interesting. But after the exam students felt less confident as the course content was too broad. Students feel that it was trying to pack two semesters into one semester. Some students felt there was inconsistency in the marking perhaps to the size of course. Students did not enjoy the tutorials as they felt that time was spent going over the exercises that they had already done. There have also been complaints that there was an unexpected requirement to talk about the methodology of various studies, so there was too much material to revise in a short time.

V. Chondrogianni commented that the marks were checked across the markers and the average of marks were consistent.

#### **AOB**

In LEL it would make more sense to have Honours reps rather than year 3 & 4 reps. **ACTION: SSO**