

**Faculty: FASS**

**Department: International Politics**

**Date/Time: 2 pm, 2nd March 2022**

**Reps in Attendance:** 1st year rep, Ben Smith; 2nd year Rep – Poppy Allen; Joints Hons Rep – Edward Buxton; 3rd year Reps – Zuzanna Komosinska, Flora Stanbridge; International Students Rep – Huda Ighna ur Rehman

**Staff in Attendance:** Dr Elin Royles, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Dr Lucy Taylor, Student Experience Officer and Donia Richards, Academic Registry Officer.

**Apologies/Absent:** Welsh Medium Rep – Aaron Jones. Samantha Glennie, Student Support and Tim Morrissey, Students Union.

**Agenda**

1. **Previous Minutes:** Approved
2. **Matters arising from previous minutes:**

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| **Action Number:** | **Action:** | **Action Status and Outcome:** | **Whose Action:** |
| **2** | This is still being planned and is to be arrange towards the end of March, when fewer covid restrictions are in place. | **on-going** | LT/ER |
| **All action to be put forward to the L&T Dept Committee** | These items were put forward to the Dept L&T Committee and discussed accordingly. | **Completed** | n/a |
| **9** | Coffee Vending Machine – will be installed opposite the Steve Critcher Room, room has been cleared as are awaiting the contractors to install the machine. The Dept are also considering introducing a social area nearby. | **On-going** | Dept |

1. **Student Matters**

**Year 1 / Module / Rep Role**

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|  | **Comments/Feedback:** | **Action  (where applicable):** | **Whose Action:** |
| **1** | Semester 2 First Year Module – delivery difficult to understand at times, hard, a bit boring. Praise for another Part One, semester two Module and the use of murals etc. | Dept | ER/LT |
| **2** | Personal Tutor System – no issues | n/a |  |
| **3** | Student Group Chats/Culture – was discussed, Department has concerns. | Dept | ER/LT |
| **4** | International Politics Society – was discussed, Department has concerns. | Dept | ER/LT |

**Year 2 / Module / Rep Role**

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|  | **Comments/Feedback:** | **Action  (where applicable):** | **Whose Action:** |
| **1** | Attendance during storms – some concerns of these not being recorded, due to being on-line, due to Campus being closed. | Students to contact MCs if this is the case | Reps |
| **2** | Sense of Isolation and loneliness was discussed, it was suggested that the Student Reps of the SSCC organise a non-alcohol event, such as a quiz. Dept also due to organize quiz shortly. | Reps to organise | Reps |
| **3** | Group Chat/Cultural Issues (see above) – this is a concern for the Department. | Dept | LT/ER |
| **4** | Knowing the Department – short videos were suggested with guided tours of the Department, showing the study rooms, lecture rooms etc, for directions around the building. | Dept | LT/ER |
| **5** | Written Examinations in Examination Halls – concerns were raised about having to go back to sit down written examinations. | Dept | ER |
| **6** | Concerned that terminology needs to be addressed in seminars on sensitive topics and parameters clearly set out at the start of the module. | Dept | ER/LT |

**Year 3 / Module / Rep Role**

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|  | **Comments/Feedback:** | **Action  (where applicable):** | **Whose Action:** |
| **1** | Microphone – no further issues on this matter. | n/a | n/a |
| **2** | Essay/Dissertation Deadlines – not enough time allowed after submitting the dissertation to write essays. It was explained that more time had been given beforehand for all work. | Dept | LT/ER |
| **3** | Evidence for Special Case/Extensions – was discussed and suggestions on how to obtain evidence and what evidence to provide with Extensions and Special Case information was provided | n/a | n/a |
| **4** | % of Attendance on Record – this information has been removed for the student record. | n/a | n/a |
| **5** | Seminar Feedback – if a Seminar is assessed then students will receive feedback on this. Explained that some modules have a semi-formal feedback system mid-term; all students can ask for feedback on their seminar performance from staff in office hours etc. | n/a | n/a |
| **6** | Seminar Group Size – some seminars felt too big, 15/16 in one seminar and this was discussed. | Dept | ER |
| **7** | Library – no issues were raised. Reps were told that students can request to buy books on primo as required. Simon French, our Library Rep can be contacted if more information is required. | n/a |  |
| **8** | Lack of Official Statement on Aber Page on Ukraine situation | Uni/Dept | LT |
| **9** | Ukraine Situation – this was discussed in detail, to respect others and to be aware of the fake news that is out there. More information and events on the matter would be useful. Discussion event scheduled for the following week – more sure to follow. | Uni/Dept | ER/LT |

**Welsh Medium / Module / Rep Role**

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|  | **Comments/Feedback:** | **Action  (where applicable):** | **Whose Action:** |
| **1** | GW/GQ version of a module, not emailed when Lecture had to be cancelled, at short notice, only the IP/IQ version, and therefore, the Welsh Medium student had turned up as normal. | Dept | CE (DWM) |
| **2** | Aber Careers Web Site – this was brought up in the last meeting, it hasn’t yet been updated, login is not fully bilingual. | Careers | CE (DWM) |
| **3** | Nos da and Groceries – some Welsh on the website, headings have been directly translated, none of the individual items of food are listed in Welsh, screen shots provided. | Dept/Uni | CE (Dirof WM) |
| **4** | Graduate Career and Professional Development Module – concerns with the need for the module, lecture content and length of assignments were raised | Careers Dept | ER |

**International Student’s Role/ Module / Rep Role**

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|  | **Comments/Feedback:** | **Action  (where applicable):** | **Whose Action:** |
| **1.** | Essay Writing Skills – gap in this area?  (Skills are covered within our First Year Module IP12420 and courses are arranged by the University IEC). | Contact International English Centre, to improve signposting of these courses, dept to circulate information on these courses to students.  Set up a focus group in May for further discussion on this | LT  LT/ER |
| **2** | Timetabling and Panopto – no issues | n/a |  |
| **3** | Seminars – found to be helpful | n/a |  |
| **4** | Careers Department - more information was requested on Careers.  (Information is provided on their web site and the Dept provide info in What not to Miss, and in workshops where they can)  More info on Working in the UK – students can contact Rosa, within the Compliance Office on this matter | Discuss better sign posting, mini videos/workshops with Careers Dept | LT/ER |
| **5** | Student Welfare – Discussion of experiences, especially of the initial form. The service feels inaccessible and the form very clunky and cumbersome and insensitive to people who are in a vulnerable state. Once seen in person it is a much better and more personal service. Problem because students know that if they tick all the boxes e.g. ‘yes I am feeling suicidal’ then they will get an appointment more quickly. Also concerns raised about the 5 week delay – this is too much. The service is seen as remote. Discussion of the lack of a middle ground service (i.e. between hospital and student support). Discussion about Gorwelion. | Contact Samantha Glennie | LT/ER |

4. **Chair’s Business**

4.1 **New Initiative** - a new initiative this Academic Year has been introduced, 21-22, to invite a member of staff from the Students Union and Student Support Department, alternatively with, Careers and the Library who have attended over the years. Unfortunately, neither Tom Morrisey from the SU not Samantha Glennie from Student Support attended the meeting.

4.2 **Study Rooms** – the Departments previously refurbished study rooms, have been closed due to covid restrictions, but the hope is that these will re-open for student use as soon as possible, once covid regulations ease further. There are 2 rooms available, one is a lounge area and the other a desk area.

4.3 **National Student’s Survey** – This year’s NSS has now been completed and the results will be known in July/August. Many thanks to Flora Stanbridge for her help with the NSS!

4.4 **Student Support** – Student Support facilities were discussed it was felt that the system was very long and repetitive and the questions were hard/difficult to answer. It would be preferred to speak to a person rather than on-line/through email. A maximum of 6 appointments per year was not enough – it made people feel nervous of ‘using up’ noe of their appointments that thy might need later on.

4.5 **Learning Support –** no concerns on this matter, student were seen within 10 days for Dyslexia Screening.

4.6 **Hardship Fund –** some concerns were raised, and that there was lack of awareness on this matter and that it was found hard to prove and to provide evidence, **a Video on this was suggested.**

4.7 **Thanks** - The Director of Undergraduate Studies (ER) was thanked by the Chair, for all her efforts, steering us through the pandemic last year.

5. **Any other** **Business**

5.1 **Departmental Video on on-line bullying.**

The Department is currently organising a video on on-line bullying, and this will be circulated to students as soon as it is finalised.