

Staff / Student Consultative Committee

Date: 24 January 2019

Time: 2pm

Location: West Room

Present:

Dr James Vaughan, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Simon French: IP Library Rep

Sam Hall, 1st year Rep

Olly Parry, 1st Year Rep

Sabrina Mangham, 3rd Year Rep

Caoimhe Mallon, Joint Honours Rep

Apologies:

Tony Orme

Haris Efstathopoulos

Huw Lewis

Emily Georgina Shaw

Sarah Lehmkuehler

AGENDA

SECTION A

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

1.1. Reported: the Committee considered and approved the minutes of the SSCC meeting on 21 November 2018

2. Matters arising from the minutes and any additional items by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

2.1. Reported: the Committee considered and discussed the Action Points arising from the previous meeting.

2.2. Reported: DUS briefed the Committee on the Semester 1 MEQ results. It was noted that, with a small number of exceptions for individual modules, the results were extremely encouraging. The Committee noted

ongoing issues with attendance and response rates and considered ideas for responding to low scores on the “learning community” question.

Sabrina and Caoimhe noted that students knew that they would not be chased up unless attendance dropped below 50%. It was suggested that maybe module convenors could do more to chase up students who were not attending seminars.

2.3. Reported: DUS invited views from the Committee on proposals to reform degree scheme core modules at Part 1 (for all single honours schemes) and at Part 2 (for L250 IP and Intelligence Studies, L251 IP and Strategic Studies, and L203 Politics. The Committee unanimously viewed these proposals as positive and expressed support for them.

2.4. Reported: DUS briefed the Committee on the Semester 1 moderation, external examination and exam board process.

2.5. Reported: DUS briefed the Committee on the NSS and its importance to the Department and the University.

3. Matters concerning Careers/Employability (Tony Orme)

3.1. Reported: Apologies had been received from Tony.

3.2. Reported: In general discussion of careers and employability issues, the First Year and Joint Honours Reps commented very positively on the work of the Department's Employability Officer, Dr Jeff Bridoux and the effectiveness with which information about careers and employability events were being communicated to students.

4. Matters concerning the Library (Simon French)

4.1. Reported: Simon had no major issues or problems to inform the Committee about. He briefed the Committee about ongoing Library services and drop-in sessions.

4.2. Reported: Simon informed the Committee that he had been working with new members of academic staff in the Department to ensure that learning resources/ Aspire reading lists etc. would be available on their modules in Semester 2.

4.3 Reported: Caoimhe noted occasional problems with self-service machines in the library. Simon responded that any problems of this kind should be reported immediately to staff on site in the library.

4.4. Reported: DUS invited comments and feedback on provision of learning resources at module level. Caoimhe drew attention to Dr Huw Lewis “Multiculturalism” module as an example of good practice in the organisation and structuring of learning resource provision through Blackboard and Aspire

4.5. Action: DUS to advise staff about good practice in the provision and presentation of online reading lists and learning resources.

SECTION B - Semester 1 Standing Items:

5. Matters raised by First Year Representatives

5.1. Reported: Sam discussed SU training for Academic Reps. It was generally noted that such training was beneficial.

5.2. Reported: Sam raised the issue of Drop-in Sessions for SSCC reps. DUS noted that a room was now available in the building for this purpose.

5.3. Action: DUS to ask Huw Lewis, as Director of Welsh Medium, to assist SSCC reps in matter of Welsh translation for an email notifying students of these drop-in sessions.

5.4. Reported: Sam enquired why exam timetables were not published earlier as this is an inconvenience to students with travel arrangements to finalise.

5.5. Action: DUS noted that the Department had very little influence over either the setting of the exam timetable or its publication, but that he would relay student views to Faculty Academic Affairs Committee.

5.6. Reported: Olly expressed the view that feedback he had received from first year students was, in the main, very positive. There was some sense that IP12420 was pitched a bit high and that students found some

of the academic content very difficulty. Some students had commented on uncertainties about the process for the IP12820 pre-seen exam.

5.7. Action: DUS to initiate review of IP12420 (this is already underway in relation to MEQ Action Plan) and review the content of the exam briefing for IP12820.

5.8. Reported: Olly asked about the process for making use of the general Departmental student email lists. DUS responded that requests to email these lists should be channelled through the Main Office.

6. Matters raised by Second Year Representatives

6.1. Reported Apologies had been received from Emily. No second year reps were present.

7. Matters raised by Third Year Representatives

7.1. Reported: Apologies had been received from Sarah.

7.2. Reported: Sabrina enquired about the possibility of computers and printers being placed in the undergraduate study rooms in the building. DUS noted that policy on printing made the latter unlikely but...

7.3. Action: DUS to enquire about the possibility of computers being made available for Student Study Rooms

7.4. Reported: Sabrina asked if staff could ensure that Panopto lectures could be saved and posted on Blackboard with the lecture title prominent, not merely the default setting (which is the date and time of recording).

7.5. Action: DUS to encourage staff to present Panopto lecture recordings as clearly as possible in this way.

7.6. Reported: Sabrina enquired about the possibility of staff setting module assignments that rewarded consistent engagement and

attendance. DUS noted that some staff already do this (learning logs, seminar performance etc. and that this would continue to be encouraged.

7.7. Reported: Sabrina asked about graduation and when the dates of ceremonies would be announced. DUS noted that this was a similar issue to the exam timetable point.

7.8. Reported: Sabrina asked about arrangements for orientation for second year students in relation to the final year Dissertation module.

7.9. Action: DUS to raise this question with current module convenor (Farrah Hawana) and next year's Dissertation convenor (Patrick Finney) especially in relation to the timing of any briefing session (second week back after Easter?) and inviting current third years to share guidance and advice.

8. Matters raised by Joint Honours Representative

8.1. Reported: Caoimhe asked about graduation in relation to Joint Honours Students, especially the issue of which ceremony a student attends if their two "home" Departments graduate students at different ceremonies.

8.2. Action: DUS to look into this and report back.

8.3. Reported: There are concerns about the functioning of the International Politics Society and that Committee members have been disengaging from the Society as a result of the conduct of other members.

8.4. Action: DUS to ask Student Experience Officer (Lucy Taylor) to invite the IPS Committee to a meeting to discuss these concerns.

9. Matters raised by Welsh Medium Representative

9.1. Action: as there is no current Welsh Medium Rep. Huw Lewis to address this issue in advance of next SSCC meeting.

SECTION C

10. Any other business.

10.1. Reported: Sabrina asked about the possibility of the Department organising some form of Centenary related social event for Undergraduates, especially the graduating cohort.

10.2. Reported: DUS noted that this is already something we do in the context of graduation ceremony reception, but that the possibility of a wider Departmental social event, perhaps linked to a student-led one-day academic conference, is also something that is being considered but that it is something that we wish students to take the lead on.

10.3 Action: Student Experience Officer to encourage students/ societies to make proposals on this issue.

10.4. Reported: next meeting. It was agreed that the committee should reconvene before the end of term, perhaps in either the last week of March or first week of April.

10.5. Action: DUS to consult with Main Office and select a date for next SSCC and communicate this to the Committee

Dr. James Vaughan

26/1/19