

## FACULTY OF CLASSICS

### STUDENT-STAFF JOINT COMMITTEE

**There was a meeting of the Committee at 1.10 p.m. on Monday  
2nd November 2009 in Room 1.04 of the Faculty of Classics.**

Present: Dr Naoise MacSweeney (Chair), Mr James Addison, Ms Belinda Crerar, Dr Rebecca Flemming, Professor Simon Goldhill, Mr Stephen Howe, Dr Holly Kinnear, Ms Maeve O'Dwyer, Dr Paul Millett, Ms Frances Smith, Mrs Carolyn Bartley (Secretary)

Apologies: None

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of 18 May 2009 were **approved** taking into consideration a correction to item 6. (i) (b) the Computer Officer (not the Assistant Librarian) will assess the cost of another scanner in the library.

2. Matters arising

(i) National Student Survey

The Administrative Officer **reported** that she had done a comparison between 2008 and 2009 and there were no new issues. The common trend is assessment and feedback – Q.5 'The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance'. Just over 50% agreed with this statement as in 2008.

With regard to the Optional Bank of Questions, again feedback generated a number of comments.

It was **agreed** that Caucus committees would remind supervisors at the start of each year to remind students that the marking criteria are available in the undergraduate handbook.

(ii) Global Questionnaire

The Administrative Officer **confirmed** that due to a computer problem during the office move she had lost all her emails for the period January 2008 to June 2009 and therefore had no undergraduate responses to circulate. However, the 15 questionnaires received do not represent a good statistical sample. With regard to Graduates only 2 replies had been received and the overriding issues were printing and the student community.

(iii) Transition to University

James Addison, Undergraduate Representative, **reported** that he had attended a very interesting workshop at King's College, London on how they handle the transition to university for their students. They look after their first years very well through a series of group time and mentors which is very similar to the 'parenting' system at his College.

The Academic Secretary for Undergraduates **reported** that much is said about the step up to University at the Fresher's Welcome session so there should be no surprises and that it is a positive and not a daunting experience.

The Assistant Librarian **reported** that library staff arranged tours for 108 undergraduates and they found a distinction between those with a scholarly background and those with little or none. Reading lists proved problematic because of an unexplained abbreviation, or a vague or elusive reference. A significant minority felt the faculty is assuming knowledge that the students don't have. It was **agreed** that this would be brought to the attention of the CCR DoS meeting.

(iv) Examiner's Reports

It was **agreed** that the Chair and External Examiners reports are the most crucial.

It was **suggested** that DoSes remind their students in the exam term to look at these reports.

(v) Elections for new student representatives

The Administrative Officer **reported** that a letter had been received from the Academic Division confirming that the election will take place on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December and the deadline for nominations will be Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November.

It was **agreed** that one lunch time during the week before the close of nominations existing representatives will be available to talk to students to offer a brief overview of the job of student rep and the importance of student representation on faculty committees.

James Addison **confirmed** that he will be standing again for one of the Undergraduate Rep positions.

The Graduate Rep **reported** that one MPhil student is very keen to stand but is aware that their leaving in June may be an issue.

- (vi) Oxbridge Open Day  
This is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and both current Undergraduate Reps agreed to be available.

It was **agreed** that this is an undergraduate matter.

### 3. Undergraduate Matters

- (i) Status and Support Systems for first-year MML Latin students  
The Undergraduate Representative **reported** a number of issues from MML students: (a) they feel hard done by and not sure what is expected of them (b) they miss classes because they don't know where to look (c) they are contacted very late about things.

The Academic Secretary for Undergraduate Affairs **confirmed** that a detailed letter is sent to MML students and their DoS in which is the advice to contact either himself or David Holton at MML if they experience any problems. The Academic Secretary for Undergraduate Affairs **agreed** to contact each DoS to ask them to liaise more often with these students.

- (ii) Arrangements for giving feedback on lectures  
The Academic Secretary for Undergraduate Affairs reiterated that lecture questionnaires are handed out midway through a course and that lecturers should leave the room to ensure anonymity and honesty in answering questions.

The Administrative Officer **agreed** that the whole process must be clear in the undergraduate handbook and faculty website *i.e.* questionnaires are completed by students - to the lecturer - to the Chair and Administrative Officer - to the Teaching Committee, and that the Chair will speak to a lecturer if there is a consistent problem.

On the suggestion of the Undergraduate Representatives, the Administrative Officer **agreed** to send lecturers the questionnaire electronically so that they may create a bespoke questionnaire for their students.

### 4. Graduate Matters

- (a) The Administrative Officer **requested** that any graduate student wishing to use the scanner in room 1.14 must ask their supervisor to send her an email supporting their case.
- (b) The Computer Officer **confirmed** that he is looking at Lapwing to provide the facility of printing from the internet.

5. Extension Project

The Administrative Officer **reported** that the building project is on schedule, she had not received any negative feedback from FAMES, that noise problems during lectures had been resolved and that no problems had been reported to her about using the computing facility in the basement at FAMES or the shared common room.

The Administrative Officer **agreed** to send another email to students reminding them how to reach the FAMES basement and that a code number for the room is available from either herself, the Computing Officer or the Custodian.

6. Any Other Business

(i) Electronic Handouts Online

The Administrative Officer **confirmed** that the general consensus is that it is up to each individual lecturer if they put their handouts online.

(ii) Supervisions fitting with lectures

The Graduate Representative **requested** that there be a rough breakdown of lecture topics online to assist graduates with tuning their supervisions. It was **agreed** that Caucuses be asked to bring this up at their next meeting.

(iii) Heating

The Administrative Officer **reported** that the heating is now on and that it is thermostatically controlled which has unfortunate consequences for Stage 1 as the thermostat is in a sun trap. The Administrative Officer **confirmed** that she is in daily contact with EMBS to provide heating.

7. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010, 1.10pm.

// -- //