

School of Geography

**Minutes of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught
Student Staff Liaison Committee held on Wednesday 24th June 2020
at 14.00- 15.00 via MS Teams**

Staff Members present

Dr Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Prof Alastair Owens (AO)	Head of School
Andrew Loveland (AL)	Professional services manager
Dr Tim Brown (TB)	Director of Education
Dr Stuart Grieve (SG)	Engagement, retention and success academic lead
<i>Kate Amis</i>	<i>Minuting meeting</i>

Student members present

Mima Moyo (MM)	PGT Human Geography
Aminah Ossoman (AYO)	1 st Year Geography with Business Management
Rianno McFarlane Thomas (RM)	2 nd Year BSc Geography

1. **Welcome** from PW who chaired the meeting.
2. **Apologies** received from Joseph Brown.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** were approved

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting and action

Minute	Who?	Details	Action to date as reported Green= complete Orange= in progress and to be reported next meeting Red =Awaiting action/ roll over
2020: 34	PW and RT	Feedback on marks for GIS module	Actioned Item was forwarded to Lisa Belaya for consideration in exam board. Averages for module were found to be in line or higher than previous years .

5. Well- being check and pastoral support

5.1 Welcome week

SG and CM had met with Geog Soc to plan input to welcome week. CM is coordinating live videos, incorporating break -out sessions etc. Planning ongoing over August. CM reported that we have had guidance on platforms for welcome week

TB added that colleagues in SPIR, Eng and drama etc might be keen to work together on events in welcome week.

5.2 Report back on decolonising curriculum and anti -racist teaching initiatives

Mm reported back as follows

- Thanks to AO for his straightforward input and support which sets us apart from other schools
- This is about people wanting to be heard
- Thanks to SSLC for taking steps. This is just the beginning for SOG
- There is only one black counsellor at QMUL and she is inundated with requests for appointments
- MM is writing an open letter to Colin Bailey with requests and issues to be followed up
- MM had been in contact with the Decolonise QMUL Society to find out what they were advising on strategy. She stressed that the approach should not be tokenistic.

TB responded that there is now discussion on immediate changes and that there is already in place a wider curriculum review and, of course, decolonising the curriculum will be central to the changes we make

AO explained that in moving forward the SOG had identified three strands where change would be initiated. These were being taken forward by specific teams, each with a good mix of staff. AO stated that the SOG would be judged by the impact of these changes and that we are in it for the long haul. He thanked MM for her feedback to the committee.

PW thanked MM, RF and Nevroz for their input

5.3 Updates on the learning community, student voice and engagement

TB reported that the education strategy group meets centrally and issues around engagement are raised there. There was frustration that things often move very slowly.

PW proposed that SSLC meetings continue to be held more frequently (every 2 weeks) going forward and the first meeting would be in week 1 or 2 of the new semester. RT (and general consensus) that this was a good idea.

AO suggested that the first SSLC could invite 1st years who might be interested as observers. CM said she was open to inviting wider numbers to SSLC but stressed the need for protocols. PW said she was in favour of widening participation in SSLC and certainly that we should be clear when meetings are going to be so that anyone could register to attend.

TB raised possibility of student participation in other committees. TB chairs the Teaching and Learning Committee and would be open to having a student rep on this committee. This

committee discusses all aspects of our teaching activity. MM stated that the role would need defining. TB stated that having students attending other committees would be a way of getting proper input into discussions. CM suggested that the meeting could be divided into open and closed elements.

6. Teaching and learning and teaching resources

6.1 Information videos: TB reported that TB, AO and RK will be making information videos on what next year will look like. These would be ready and available to students very soon.

6.2 Advanced Geospatial module: RT asked for reassurance about this module and how it would run in semester A as many of her peers had concerns about how this would work. SG responded that the two main issues were

Students having access to computers

Students having access to the software

Using 'Apps Anywhere' will enable students to download free to use software plus Arc GIS. SG was working to replicate the mix of demonstrating /teaching from the front of the room in an online offer but would always be happy to discuss issues with individual students. RT said that students would need to have software well in advance of the module starting. SG agreed that this would happen along with the offer of additional office hours. He reassured that 'Apps anywhere' is now running much better.

6.3 Module registration: CM stated that, as usual, students would be able to change their modules withing the first two weeks of term.

6.4 Module cancellation: RT asked for the reasoning behind which modules were chosen to be cancelled. TB replied that all the readings modules were removed. These all attract low numbers and not running them will give academics more time to resource their other modules.

6.5 Protecting Weds afternoons for sports and other SU activities: RT advised that all sports leagues have been postponed to the 2nd semester. Would Weds afternoons still be protected next year? AO said that Yes, in 2nd Semester Weds afternoons would be protected for sports and societies. TB explained that we had been told to timetable as if it was a normal year and so he would be very surprised if geography had timetabled anything for a Weds afternoon. He would double check with Emma Shapcott

Action: TB to check with ES re the timetabling of anything by geography on Weds afternoons in the coming academic year.

6.6 Proportion of live lectures next year: RT asked what proportion of lectures would be live next year. TB responded that staff are redesigning their courses around a set of principles which will include weekly live interactions. This may or may not be a lecture. The live activity might be a different type of activity and the lecture component could be recorded. It will vary between modules and academics. PW reiterated that there would always be some element of live interaction each week in every module. RT commented that this was positive news.

7. Communication

No specific comments raised but note item 6.1 on forthcoming information videos

8. AOB

PW thanked all the SSLC reps for their amazing time, energy and commitment to the work of the SSLC in this difficult year. Special thanks to Deanna Emeny for Co-chairing the committee and to Joseph Brown, Sophia Fassbender, Rianno Macfarlane-Thomas, Mima Moyo, Dominik Nagel, Aminah Ossman, Sara Shafique, William Robertshaw, Sara Shafique and Tilly Walker-Wood for being such dedicated, organised and generous course reps. And thanks also to Nevroz Fehimli for instrumental contribution in her capacity as the SoG Equality and Diversity Rep.

The SSLC sent their congratulations and best wishes to Emily Lines who is leaving to take up a post at the University of Cambridge.

9. Date of next meeting. TBA - Late September 2020

Actions from this meeting

2020: 35	TB and ES	Check on whether Weds afternoons will continue to be protected time for sports and societies