

School of Economics and Finance
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
Monday 16th March 2020
1pm - GC 315

Staff members present:

Guglielmo Volpe	Chair and Senior Tutor
Rachel Male (Skype)	Director of Education
Philippa Costello	Secretary and Undergraduate Student Support Officer

Students present:

Austeja Krivickaite	Economics and Finance	Year 1
Cameron Storey	Economics and Politics	Year 3
Masoud Darvish	Economics and Politics	

Apologies:

Nick Vriend	Director of Undergraduate Studies
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Part 1- Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and Introduction for new members
2020.01	Guglielmo apologised for the hasty arrangement of meeting, due to unforeseen current circumstances.
1(b)	Apologies for absence
2020.02	The meeting noted express apologies of members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2020.03	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 th November 2019.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and action taken
2020.04	<p>Guglielmo has given feedback to Careers module. Careers will work on correcting how they deliver the module and how information is communicated to students.</p> <p>Guglielmo confirmed that Poppy put notices up in the computer labs.</p> <p>Regarding the Year 1 maths support offered for international students, Guglielmo noted that students have a diverse background in terms of education in home country. He noted that perhaps this was something to address at the beginning of the next academic year. He confirmed that all students should have equivalent maths qualifications.</p>

	<p>Guglielmo confirmed that it is possible for joint honours student to join a different school for graduation.</p> <p>Cameron asked 2020 graduation is going ahead. Rachel confirmed that all students due to receive an award will do so.</p> <p>Sarah Riley will send the periodic review report to students who were involved – soon.</p> <p>It was noted that joint students will have a more considered Welcome Week programme. There will also be more structured Welcome Week events for Year 2 and 3 students.</p> <p>It was noted that the title of the advisor events will change.</p>
1(e)	Terms of Reference and Membership
2020.05	Philippa Costello replaces Poppy Brooks as Undergraduate Student Support Officer and Secretary to the SSLC.
1(f)	Admissions, Induction and enrolment
2020.06	<p>Guglielmo updated the committee that regarding admissions, the School was currently 3% up on applications when compared with last year. Most applications are coming from abroad. Home applications are similar to that of last year. It is not yet known how applications will transfer to acceptance of places.</p> <p>Planning for Welcome Week 2020 As mentioned, we will incorporate better structure for joint honours students.</p> <p>Guglielmo reported the School will plan an Introduction to master’s applications session for Year 3 students. He noted there are a large volume of requests for information about master’s courses and applications. A dedicated session would give indication about the process of making an application.</p> <p>Cameron reported that he had met with Prof. Matthew Hilton, Vice-Principal for HSS. It was noted that in terms of Welcome Week, there are faculty-wide plans in place for a better experience for joint degree students, in terms of events not clashing.</p> <p>Guglielmo noted that the School had worked closely with Maths and Politics last year and the outcome was positive. In future, SEF would like to have representation from both schools at their Welcome events.</p> <p>Guglielmo suggested providing a session for Year 2 students on internship applications, where support could be offered from the Careers team.</p> <p>Cameron suggested specific sessions designed specifically for joint honours students, as there is a new joint honours programme in the pipeline. This would ensure students know each other earlier on in the programme. A specific session could offer</p>

	bespoke information for JH students, which could remedy receiving conflicting information if you are going to multiple sessions in different schools.
Part 2- Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2020.07	<p>Rachel reported that the BSc Finance degree will start in September 2020. Recruitment numbers are currently good.</p> <p>Guglielmo reported that no modules are currently in development, but that new modules will be created as BSc finance begins.</p> <p>Masoud asked if the School had capacity for new modules/courses in terms of staffing. Guglielmo reported that the School was currently recruiting. Guglielmo explained that Visiting Lecturers are those covering sabbatical leave of other staff. Guglielmo noted that there had been some issues with recruiting individuals with a finance background.</p> <p>Cameron asked about the diversity of new staff and asked if diverse recruiting was a priority for the school.</p> <p>Guglielmo noted that the School had diversified over the past few years and is diverse in terms of gender. He reported that the Chair of the EDI group sits on recruitment panels.</p> <p>Rachel noted that historic figures will be in available to view in periodic review paperwork.</p> <p>Action: Look into current staffing diversity numbers.</p>
2(b)	Learning, teaching and assessment matters
2020.08	<p>Guglielmo reported that registration on Mathematical modelling using maple, Mathematica & MATLAB had been low. The module had been set up as students has told the School they wanted more computing/programming activity.</p> <p>Cameron suggested speaking about the module in lectures where it links to module content.</p> <p>Masoud suggested that mode coding modules (statistical or econometric coding) should be offered in 3rd year. He suggested that low uptake was due to students not wanting to take a risk in third year with unknown content. He also suggested changing the format of the assessment.</p> <p>Action: GV to speak to module organiser about potential for computer-based exam.</p> <p>Cameron suggested holding the first week of term for ‘taster’ sessions.</p> <p>Guglielmo noted that this was in place historically, but few final year students engaged.</p> <p>Masoud suggested releasing some lecture slides, past papers, and problem sets of each module for students to look at before registering on a module.</p> <p>Action: GV to discuss this with UG team at UGS.</p>

	<p>Austeja mentioned that joint-degree students were struggling in ECN121 with use of excel.</p> <p>Guglielmo noted that in the past, all students took ECN126 and that perhaps the module organised hadn't acknowledged this.</p> <p>Masoud asked what was going to happen if the University decided to close, and how exams would take place online.</p> <p>Rachel responded that the College Working Group was looking at what to do with assessment and looking at what technological alternatives are possible. She noted that midterms would be say online via QMPlus</p> <p>Guglielmo reiterated the 'fixed points' already communicated by the University: that no student will be disadvantaged, that all finalists will graduate, and that there will be some form of alternative assessment.</p> <p>Masoud noted that students would be working in different time zones and students should be given difference exam times based on that.</p> <p>Masoud asked if lectures and seminars would be going online.</p> <p>Guglielmo details the ways in which lectures and classes would be recorded, and how students could interact.</p> <p>Cameron noted that students are asking about the logistics of engaging with bad/no internet connection.</p> <p>Guglielmo reiterated that recorded class will be available for everyone to watch at any time and that students will still be able to engage with contact hours. Students should discuss with their advisor/module organiser how they would like to communicate.</p> <p>Masoud asked if there would be any change to exam timetable.</p> <p>Guglielmo and Rachel explained that both students and staff would have to wait for the Working Group response for a framework.</p> <p>Masoud asked if students can see past exam scripts.</p> <p>Rachel explained that the policy is to request feedback through academic advisor.</p> <p>Cameron asked when students would be able to see data showing the difference between exam success since the move to January exams.</p> <p>Rachel noted that those results have not yet been the exam board yet, but that analysis would take place after.</p>
2(c)	Academic Support
2020.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advisor feedback <p>Guglielmo noted that there were plans to introduce Academic Advisor feedback after being approached by students who had wanted to give their Advisor positive feedback. There will be an online evaluation form where students can express their views anonymously about academic support received during the academic year. Feedback would give Advisors a sense of what students feel about their experience</p>

	<p>with their Advisor and sense of whether the School need to start working more closely with some Advisors to provide them with more support/training. Masoud asked how students can give feedback if they have not met with their Advisor very often.</p> <p>Guglielmo explained that there would be questions about how many times you met and why a student felt they didn't need to meet regularly to give a sense of how students engage with their Advisors in general.</p> <p>Cameron asked about the recent advice that was given by the School regarding Extenuating Circumstances and that forms no longer need a signature from an Advisor. He wondered how the credibility of an EC would be assessed. He noted that students are sure how their personal circumstances may change</p> <p>Guglielmo explained the process of submitting an EC form and that all claims would be considered fairly given individual circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master application support <p>Masoud asked how master's places may be affected if a student has to take assessment during the resit period.</p> <p>Rachel explained that if a student took an exam during the later summer resit period, they would have their result by the beginning of September.</p> <p>Guglielmo reiterated that students should discuss such circumstances with the University that has offered them a place.</p>
2(d)	Organisation and communication
2020.12	<p>Guglielmo noted that at the time of the meeting, the University remains open.</p> <p>Cameron noted that there was a lack of direct communication between academic staff and course reps.</p> <p>Guglielmo said he was happy to take feedback and action it.</p> <p>Action: Cameron to contact Guglielmo to let him know what issues he is aware of.</p> <p>Philippa asked the reps to ensure that when students are coming to them with questions re: developments to current situation, that they encourage students to double check communications that have already gone out.</p> <p>Guglielmo requested that reps' feedback to students what we have discuss today.</p> <p>Cameron noted that in his manifesto, he had pledged to send SSLC minutes/actions directly to students to increase transparency and trust between students and the school.</p> <p>Rachel responded that she felt it was a good idea. She noted that students may pay more attention if the communication comes from a course rep.</p> <p>Cameron agreed that it would help students to be able to identify their reps.</p> <p>Rachel suggested creating a short video to put on the UG info zone.</p> <p>Masoud suggested highlighting wins for students in more prominent places, e.g. the beginning of lectures or on QMPlus module pages.</p>

	Rachel suggested that the reps discuss this with students and share ideas at the next SSLC.
2(e)	Learning Resources
2020.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Semester A Teaching Evaluation Questionnaires <p>Guglielmo noted that this year there has been a drop-in satisfaction in terms of learning resources in the library.</p> <p>Cameron noted that sometimes there is a lack of hard copies for compulsory texts.</p> <p>Action: Masoud to share a list of resources which are not accessible off of campus.</p> <p>Guglielmo reminded students that they can make use of resources in the libraries of other universities.</p> <p>Action: GV to remind academics that anything they recommend on their reading list must be available in the library.</p>
2(f)	Consideration of the draft Annual Programme Review
2020.14	Guglielmo asked reps to read the Annual Programme Review and to let the committee know if they have any questions.
2(g)	Student feedback
2020.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSS 2020 <p>Guglielmo asked reps to continue to promote the NSS as SEF has a lower response rate when compared with last year.</p> <p>Cameron noted concern with how UCU strikes and coronavirus will affect NSS scores.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKES 2020 <p>Guglielmo reminded the reps that this survey is open to Year 1 and 2 students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module evaluations and responses to results <p>Guglielmo noted that Sem A evaluations should become available at some stage.</p> <p>Cameron noted that one lecturer had emailed students on their module post-results to ask for feedback and suggestions for next year. Students appreciated the acknowledgement from person who taught the class that there is room for improvement as it shows that they care about the module and want to see it improve.</p> <p>Rachel asked if students would be happy to receive such a request from lecturers on all of their modules.</p> <p>Cameron suggested he felt it would be fine if the emails weren't extensive.</p> <p>Masoud questioned how a module organiser leading a large module would be able to read all of the feedback?</p> <p>Action: To be discussed at UCD.</p>
Part 3- Any Other Business	
2020.16	Guglielmo offered his congratulations on behalf of SEF to Cameron for being elected VP HSS at QMSU.

	<p>Cameron noted that the QMUL Academic Registry page hosts SSLC minutes but is rarely updated. Action: Philippa to check and update SEF information.</p> <p>Cameron suggested having an elected co-chair in SSLC meetings. Rachel noted that this was discussed in the past and thought it was a good idea. Action: Discuss at UGS and plan for next academic year.</p>
Part 4- Date of the next meeting	
2020.18	No plan for another formal meeting this year.

Action Sheet- Student Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Progress
2020.07	Look into current staffing diversity numbers.	GV	
2020.08	GV to speak to module organiser about potential for computer-based exam.	GV	
2020.08	GV to discuss taster sessions/release of old material with UG team at UGS.	GV	
2020.12	Cameron to contact Guglielmo to let him know what issues he is aware of re: lack of communication	CS	
2020.13	Masoud to share a list of resources which are not accessible off of campus.	MD	
2020.13	GV to remind academics that anything they recommend on their reading list must be available in the library.	GV	
2020.15	Module evaluations to be discussed at UCD.	GV	
2020.16	Philippa to check and update SEF information.	PC	
2020.16	Discuss student co-chair at UGS and plan for next academic year.	GV	
2019.07	Raise feedback on non-credit bearing careers module with the careers team	GV	Pending
2019.14	Contact course reps Zlata and Austeja for more information about which nationalities of students seem	GV	Pending

	to struggle with Year 1 maths content		
2019.17	Send the Periodic Review report through to the SEF students that took part.	SR	Pending