

School of Geography

Minutes of the
Student Staff Liaison Committee held on Wednesday 18th November 2020
at 14.00- 15.00 via MS Teams

Staff Members present

Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Kate Heppell (KH)	Deputy Director of Education (BSc)
Serena Spöndlin (SSp)	Careers consultant, Careers and enterprise Centre
Regan Koch (RK)	Senior tutor from Jan 2021
Anthea Chou (AC)	Faculty library liaison for HSS
Sam Halvorsen (SH)	Deputy director of Education (BA)
Tim Brown (TB)	Director of Education
Alastair Owens (AO)	Head of School
Shazia Sadiq (SS)	PG studies manager
Emma Shapcott (ES)	Teaching and learning manager
Kate Amis	Minuting meeting

Student members present

William Robertshaw (WR) (Co – Chair)	3 rd Year Human Geography
Aminah Ossoman (AYO)	2 nd Year Geography with Business Management
Rianno McFarlane Thomas (RT)	3 rd Year BSc Geography
Alice Mills (AM)	1 st Year Physical Geography
Inayah Oosman (IO)	1 st Year Environmental Science
Andrei Roman (AR)	1 st Year Geography with Business Management
Nadia Iqbal (NI)	1 st Year Human geography
Billy Newman (BN)	Year abroad rep
Albert Newton (AN)	2 nd Year BA Geography
Sara Shafique (SSh)	2 nd Year Environmental Science
Frederic Klein (FK)	2 nd Year Human Geography
Buse Baspinar(BB)	MSc Development and International Business
Marina Ponticelli (MP)	MSc Development and International Business
Hilary Hoxha (HH)	2 nd Year Environmental Science with business management
Ami Gandy (AG)	3 rd Year Geography and business Management

1. **Welcome** from WR who chaired the meeting
2. Apologies received from Martin Beeson, Anthea Chou attended in place.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** were approved

Matters arising from the previous meeting and action			
			Action to date as reported Green= complete Orange= in progress and to be reported next meeting Red =Awaiting action/ roll over
2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on MS Teams	Discussed under item 4b below. Carried forward as action to next meeting.
2020:42	TB	Ask module convenors to communicate formal online group work strategies to their students	TB emailed academics and asked them to do this
2020:45	All CReps	Send 100- word biog and photo to CM for their course rep profile	A few Creps still to do this. CM to report progress at next meeting
2020:46	CM	Action: WR suggested we remind our students to set up a covid buddy and stock up on essentials. Also, a clear communication about what students should do if they have a positive test etc. CM to action.	PW sent email to all students with good advice on this. PW also emailed Sarah Cowles but no response as yet though several pertinent messages have been sent via email to all students in this regard.AO advised that uni will be making 4,000 lateral flow tests available to enable e students to return home safely. Further notes in 4b below
2020:47	CM	Liaise with Serena from Careers centre and Sydney Calkin, our academic lead on careers, on raising awareness of employability support	SS attended this meeting on 18/11. Further notes at 4b below
2020:48	CM	Share an anonymous version of the survey with Niall Morrissey	CM completed however no response from NM.
2020:49	PW	Flag up to geog lecturers to be sure to allow a five min gap at the end of a lecture to allow students to move easily to their subsequent lecture/ comfort break etc	TB completed – email sent to all academics.
2020:50	CM	Circulate EC docs from Biology and business to all our students on joint degrees.	CM still awaiting final versions form the other schools – CM to report back at next meeting
2020:51	CM and RW	Meet to discuss and action MS Teams groups for each course/ year group.	CM and WR met to discuss. This will be just for students, not teaching staff to allow / encourage informal discussion Follow up at next meeting how this will be rolled out. Further Discussion at 4b below

2020:52	AC	Send out comms explaining use of 'global search' to all geog students	AC sent this email out to all students
2020:53	AC	To look into possibility of group study spaces in the library	<p>Due to having to ensure social distancing throughout the library, group study spaces are not available. The library have opened some group study rooms in Mile End library and the Hive for <i>individual</i> non-silent study. This provision is for students who are on campus attending online seminars or classes where they have to discuss a topic, not just listen, so they need a separate room where they can participate without disturbing others. These are now available to book on LibCal. https://qmul.libcal.com/</p>

4b) Additional discussion of action points

ACTION 2020:37

There was discussion about best format for these discussion groups. AYO suggested written format starting off with a survey would be best to give people time to reflect. CM and WR suggested an anonymous drop box added to the UG QMPLUS Zone. AR agreed that a place to leave feedback better than a survey. AO suggested multiple places /channels would enable most inclusive approach. TB advised that SOG working on improvements to UG zone on QMPLUS and this would be an additional channel for discussion on this theme.

Action 2020:37 carried over: SH to liaise with PW and AL on setting up Teams Channel for discussion on decolonialising agenda

ACTION 2020:46

BB asked if the email regarding testing availability could be sent round to students. AO advised that this was hot off the press and email would be coming round shortly to give details. WR asked if advice was to be given re restricted travel and times etc. AO replied that the gov had talked about staggering leaving times, but this would, in reality, be very difficult to manage

Action: AO to check that email re lateral flow testing on campus had been sent round to students

ACTION 20:47

SSp attended the meeting and asked for feedback on how all the current communications from the careers services were being received. The following issues and comments were raised

WR: It would be useful to flag up that Careers and Enterprise can help with masters personal statements

RT: The newsletters are very helpful. Useful to keep in inbox and read as needed

AM: The newsletter is helpful and well laid out.

IO: Peers report that they do read it and find it helpful. Would it be possible to separate out opportunities for Env Sc students please?

WR: Can we specifically advise people of opportunities and challenges of applications and hirings in the current covid situation?

Action: SSp to flag up specific E Sc opportunities as they arise. SSp to investigate possibility of workshop on current hiring situation or communicate in newsletter around current hiring situation.

ACTION 2020:51

SH reported that SOG currently reviewing how teaching staff communicate with students. WR reminded Creps to remind students on their courses to use module forums to enable all course members to get the benefit of the answers to queries etc

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Workload

BB reported that peers had given her feedback that there is too much reading in the PG human modules. For masters there is difficulty in balancing readings with coursework.

AYO reported that although volume of reading expectation is high students have welcomed being given more guidance/ questions/ steers on what to be looking for in readings.

AR reported that business management joint degree peers feel there is too much reading. They prefer more course content and activities. As an aside there are fewer opportunities to get to know each other on business side compared to in geography courses.

AN: The reading workload is to high. We should be spending more time on core module content.

AYO With pre-recorded lectures people are spending double + the time reviewing this content. Though it is helpful to have the content broken down in to 3 smaller 20 - minute chunks

WR: Can we communicate the expectations more clearly? If it can be explained that students don't need to do everything then they would be less stressed.

FK The amount of time as a guide doesn't take account of the learning process for individuals. Students are trying to cram all this in everyday and it is too much.

IO: Right now, we don't have as many pre-recorded lectures. We mainly have live ones, and the content can be very dense. Our note taking skills may not be as good as our lecturers think.

RT: Some peers now saying they don't have time to go to online classes because they have too much other work to do. Can we look at quantity of work for semester B

Response from TB: I am taking away from this that the readings are too much.

Response from PW: We have emailed about expectations and time advising already

The following items were deferred to next meeting

5.2 Engagement monitoring

5.3 IGS/PES Allocation

5.4 Any additional student Teaching and Learning queries

6. Advising and Student support

6.1 Extenuating Circumstances Policy

7.Organisation and Communication

7.1 Communication with Creps and their cohort

7.2 The use of Instagram/social media

CM suggested that BB and AM meet with her before the next meeting to discuss social media possibilities for communicating with students

ACTION: CM to arrange meeting with BB and Am re social media

7.3 Library update

AC reported that the library refurbishment will go ahead in September 2021

8. Date and time of next meeting: Weds 2nd Dec 3.30 – 4.30pm on MS Teams

Summary of new actions from this meeting and those carried forward

2020:54	AO	Check that email re lateral flow testing on campus has been sent round to students
2020:55	SSp	Flag up specific E Sc opportunities as they arise. SS to investigate possibility of workshop on current hiring situation or communicate in newsletter around current hiring situation
2020:56	CM	To arrange meeting with BB and AM re social media
2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on Teams
2020:45	All CReps	Send 100- word biog and photo to CM for their course rep profile
2020:50	CM	Circulate EC docs from Biology and business to all our students on joint degrees.
2020:51	CM and WR	Meet to discuss and action MS Teams groups for each course/ year group.