School of Geography

Minutes of the
Student Staff Liaison Committee held on Wednesday 28th October 2020
at 15.00- 16.00 via MS Teams

Staff Members present

Dr Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Andrew Loveland (AL)	Professional services manager
Emma Shapcott (ES)	Teaching and Learning manager
Dr Regan Koch (RK)	Senior tutor from Jan 2021
Anthea Chou (AC)	Faculty library liaison for HSS
Sam Halvorsen (SH)	Deputy director of Education (BA)
Kate Amis	Minuting meeting

Student members present

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

1. **Welcome** from WR who chaired the meeting.

2. **Apologies** received from Shazia Sadiq, Alastair Owens, Tim Brown and Martin Beeston

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: 39	AO	To investigate plans for charging for food to those locked down on campus	Response from AO complete – see item 5.1 below
2020: 40	AO	To follow up with AR about the specifics of what happened in his test/ quarantining case.	AO had met with AR to discuss his experiences. See report under item 5.2 below
2020: 41	PW and CM	To prepare a short report on data from survey for next SSLC	Complete. See item 6 in minutes
2020:42	TB	Ask module convenors to communicate formal online group work strategies to their students	TB has advised staff to think about online group work. Follow up in later meeting. Carry forward
2020:43	RT	To feedback to Alex **Steel** (correction to previous minutes) regarding time zone/ group work issue in Environmental hazards module.	Sorted by group themselves
2020:44	TB	To find out about students being allowed to use larger rooms on a non-bookable basis.	Students are advised they can use Bancroft building and library for non-silent work, but single person use only. Library has adjusted booking system so rooms can be booked for longer and more frequently.
2020:45	All student reps	Send 100- word biog and photo to CM for their course rep profile	Some student reps still need to do this
2020: 36	PW	Check on making slides available before lectures for masters students (business).	Maria confirmed this has been resolved with business
2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on Teams	SH sought clarification from SSLC regarding what sort of forum this should be. Raise as agenda item in next meeting.

5. Report on matters arising from the previous meeting and action taken

5.1 Further info on AO's report on action point 2020:29:
1)   It is worth stressing that recorded cases of COVID-19 are low: as of today, there are 7 student and 2 staff cases known to the university. This may be an underestimate -- these are the cases that have been reported to studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk and staffhealth@qmul.ac.uk; it is a requirement that cases are reported and important that people do this. However, it is clear that we don't have the outbreaks of cases on campus that other universities have been

experiencing.

Support from the university for COVID cases (from Dessy in Student Health)
In answer to your question about what support students can expect, we signpost students to Queen Mary and external support (e.g. Student Minds, NHS Volunteer Respondents and etc.) and we advise them on the rules of self-isolation and other government/NHS guidelines. The only areas where we cannot provide support are academic matters. For those we would direct students to Schools. We will also tailor our reply and advice to the students on a case-by-case basis, depending on whether the student lives on campus or not and on any questions the student raised with us e.g. need help with food supply or information about self-isolation and etc. We will also ask the students to get in touch with us again if they have any further questions or need any further help/support. We inform the departments about every tested positive student and also we inform the Residence Support team about any student who lives in Queen Mary halls of residence and tested positive for Covid-19 or is in self-isolation. The Residential Support team have a new initiative called 'Covid Companions'. The students should have set up a Covid companion as they have been asked to do that by the Residential Support team. I attached some information about it and have also included some of their guidance on self-isolation. Importantly residential support is available round the clock for students with any concerns at all. The residences reception is contactable 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone or email: Telephone: 020 7882 6470
Email: **residences-reception@qmul.ac.uk**

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.

Support with food provision for students in self-isolation
We have been informed by the Residential Support team that the current food provision arrangements provided to support residents in self-isolation (S/I) is as follows:
·   S/I from Travel Corridor: these students are provided with two weeks' food free of charge to facilitate an immediate start to their self-isolation
·   S/I for Covid-19 Symptoms, Positive Covid-19 Test, NHS Track and Trace S/I Requirement, or member of the same household as someone who has symptoms or a positive test.
   o In the first instance, these students should rely upon the provision they purchased before their self-isolation started;
   o If their existing provision is inadequate, these students should ask their COVID-19 companion – another resident of the same building but a different flat – to provide them with top-up supplied;
   o If they do not have Covid-19 companion, they should be directed to the e-shop to purchase food from QM Catering to be delivered to their room: https://residentialsupport.qmul.ac.uk/queen-mary-food-meals-to-your-door_128255
   o If none of these options are viable, the individual should contact Residential Support (residential-support@qmul.ac.uk). We will consider their unique situation and work with them to agree appropriate support. This is done on a case-by-case basis without a one-size fits all solution.
On Friday 16 October, the Catering Department has delivered a one-off goodie bag to all students who were currently in self-isolation (excluding travel self-isolators). The bags included the following items: a pack of 4 loo rolls, 6 pieces of fruit, 4 chocolate bars and 2 bags of popcorn. They were meant only to make S/I more

bearable and never intended as a substitute for the provision students arranged for themselves.

These goodie bags continue to be delivered daily (Monday – Friday) to anyone who goes into self-isolation for the first time.

If the student who raised the concerns is still in self-isolation and needs support, please let us know and pass us his details or ask the student to contact us on studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk.

5.2 Further info on AO's report on action point 2020:30:

2)   Andrei Roman and I met to discuss his experiences of being in self-isolation and having COVID while on campus. His experiences do not match up with what is claimed above and there were times where he appears not to have been adequately supported. I have raised this matter with Sarah Cowls (Director of Student and Academic Services) expressing particular concern about students who may be forced to self-isolate alone without adequate university support. She is turn is raising it with John Iveson (the Assistant Director of Estates and Facilities). The hope is to address Andrei's concerns and improve things for all moving forward. I believe Andrei is collecting other concerns from among those living in halls. He may wish to speak to the issue

6. The student support survey: Student Environmental and wellbeing survey results October 2020-based on 16.10.20 download

A. 32 students at Level 4 completed the survey.

The majority of first years who answered the survey have reliable WiFi and sole use of a laptop. CM to follow up with students about any concerns and highlight financial assistance fund.

Experience of learning resources/webinars/lectures online rating (out of 5): 3.25

Most engaging aspects?

- Tutorials
- Webinars
- Pre recorded lectures/being able to watch lectures back.

What could be improved?

- Pre recorded lectures are time consuming and cannot ask questions while watching.
- Would like F2F
- More engagement with BBC breakout groups
- Encourage video to be shared
- Alter assessment as too much
- Clearer instructions about what to do after lectures

Workload rating (out of 10): 7.41

- Reading load overwhelming is the general consensus.
- Time it takes to go through pre recorded lectures.

Communication-what works well?

- Email = 84.4%

- MS Teams = 53.1%
- QMplus pages = 18.8%
- QMplus Forums = 3.1%

Communication-what should be optimised more?

- Many saying communication is already good in the school
- Small group tutorials informing students of relevant information
- Social media

Students rating their wellbeing (out of 10): 6.65

Student wellbeing was poor due to:

- Studies and workload (14)
- Worried about making friendships at University (10)
- Worried about employment (6)
- Mental health (5)
- Balancing paid work with studies (3)
- Worried about catching Covid (3)
- Feeling isolated (4)
- Worried about vulnerable family members (4)

Adequate support from Advisor? 84.3% said yes

B. 35 students at Level 5 completed the survey.

Two 2nd years who answered the survey share a laptop with their family and one stated they are using their phone. 25.7% said they did not have reliable WiFi where they were staying.

Experience of learning resources/webinars/lectures online rating (out of 5): 2.83

Most engaging aspects?

- Tutorials (some emphasised F2F)
- BBC Breakout groups
- Webinars and being able to ask questions freely
- Pre recorded lectures.

What could be improved?

- BBC breakout groups-sometimes not engaging and need greater monitoring. Perhaps clearer structure with these.
- More guidance with assessment and there is too much work to prepare
- Pre recorded lectures and slides need to be posted earlier.
- Connectivity issues on lectures end.

Workload rating (out of 10): 7.82

- Falling behind on a lot of work due to various issues e.g. connectivity issues, missing work as unclear what needs to be done, expected to work prior to lectures.
- A lot of readings and don't feel supported.
- Time spent watching pre recorded lectures is much longer than a live lecture.
- Modules very intense and require more support and clearer guidance.

Communication-what works well?

- Email = 88.5%
- MS Teams = 31.4%
- QMplus pages = 20%
- QMplus Forums = 20%

Communication-what should be optimised more?

- Greater communication between Creps and students
- Drop in 2nd year tutorial sessions on the weeks where they are not scheduled in order for students to voice concerns.
- More 1-1 meetings

Students rating their wellbeing (out of 10): 5

Student wellbeing was poor due to:

- Studies and workload (25)
- Mental health (16)
- Worried about employment (15)
- Balancing paid work with studies (8)
- Worried about catching Covid (8)
- Worried about vulnerable family members (8)
- Worried about making friendships at University (7)
- Feeling isolated (6)

Adequate support from Advisor? 91.4% said yes

40 students at Level 6 completed the survey.

Four 3rd years who answered the survey share a laptop/computer with their family. 12.5% said they did not have reliable WiFi where they were staying.

Experience of learning resources/webinars/lectures online rating (out of 5): 3.4

Most engaging aspects?

- BBC breakout groups
- Discussions during lectures
- Talking to peers
- Feeling more confident to ask questions
- Pre recorded lectures and webinar discussions

What could be improved?

- BBC breakout groups are too long, some students don't engage making them in some instances very unengaging.
- Connectivity issues on lecturers ends
- Clearer guidance on what needs to be done.
- Live lectures preferred over pre recorded and breakout groups.
- Much more work since lectures are now online.

Workload rating (out of 10): 7.32

- More work than usual per module rather than just turning up to the live lectures.
- The prep time for each module has massively increased.

- Worried about the work to do on top of dissertation.
- Suggestions that due to current climate workload should be reduced so students can focus on dissertations.

Communication-what works well?

- Email = 95%
- MS Teams = 12.5%
- QMplus pages = 18.2%
- QMplus Forums = 12.5%

Communication-what should be optimised more?

- Teams group chats
- More email updates
- More updates on how students can go better/ improve on their work

Students rating their wellbeing (out of 10): 5.9

Student wellbeing was poor due to:

- Worried about employment (21)
- Studies and workload (19)
- Mental health (14)
- Worried about catching Covid (8)
- Worried about vulnerable family members (10)
- Balancing paid work with studies (5)
- Feeling isolated (3)

Adequate support from Advisor? 87.5% said yes

Follow up action by PW and Cm to the survey: PW found it helpful esp. in relation to challenges around mental health. PW and Cm have followed up with specific students on 'phone regarding issues raised. CM noted that for third years in particular the special worry was about employment going forwards

Action: CM to liaise with Serena from Careers centre and Sydney our academic lead on careers on raising awareness of this and action going forwards

Action; CM to share an anonymous version of the survey with Niall Morrissey, Head of Advice and Counselling Service.

7.Teaching and learning and teaching resources

FK asked what to do when lectures are boring due to lack of activity in the lecture. WR encouraged Creps to give feedback to the lecturer. CM asked if there was a module rep in place in this case and if so, this would be a good person to give the feedback.

IO raised a specific timetabling issue on Mondays on her course where they had back to back lectures for 5 hours giving no time for comfort or refreshment breaks. The continued period created difficulties with concentration and eye strain looking at screen for so long etc. WR suggested they approach the lecturer of the two- hour lecture to ask

for a short break in the middle. CM clarified that a lecture should be 50 mins within the hour and not the whole hour.

Action: PW to 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/ take comfort break etc

AG raised issue that some lecturers are experiencing repeated connectivity issues with their Wi- Fi. In one case a lecturer had taken 15 mins to secure a good enough connection. This is taking time out of learning. RK suggested looking at alternative home fixes for Wi- Fi such as mobile internet boxes.

8. Advising and student support

8.1 The New EC policy. The three main changes are as follows

i) The process is on MYSIS so you can manage it easily

ii) You can self- certify for three instances

iii) You can now apply for extensions to your work up to 5 working days before the deadline.

RT asked if the SOG had the capacity to liaise with other schools to co ordinate ECs with them e.g. business and biology? CM explained that all schools have similar policies and that she would speak to these other schools to get a finalised document from each of them and circulate it

Action: CM to circulate EC docs from Biology and business to all students on joint degrees.

9. Organisation, Communication and Library Report

BN raised concern that he was finding it hard to connect with the people on his course in order to gather their opinions to represent them at meetings etc. RW suggested using Instagram to push messages out and get responses. RW asked if we could set up MS teams for the groups we each represent. There was discussion of how this might work in the group chat.

Action: CM and RW to meet to discuss and action MS teams groups for each course/ year group.

BN introduced himself as a new rep on SSLC – for Year abroad students.

PW advised that a planned social event for the committee had been cancelled but that she would be in touch for new plans for it later in the term.

AC talked about the library search tool and advised students to use ' global search' and apply filters. RT commented that several students had advised her that they were struggling with the online library

Action: AC to send out comms explaining use of 'global search' to all students

Several committee members asked for clarification about the study space in the library and AC confirmed that currently only individual spaces are available though some can be non silent. SH asked her to look in to the possibility of space for group work in the library.

Action: AC to look into possibility of group study spaces in the library

10. AOB

None

11. Date of next meeting. Weds 11th Nov 2-3pm on MS Teams

Actions from this meeting and carried forward from previous meetings

2020:37	SH	Set up open discussion forum for all on decolonising agenda on Teams
2020:42	TB	Ask module convenors to communicate formal online group work strategies to their students
2020:45	All student reps	Send 100- word biog and photo to CM for their course rep profile
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.
2020:47	CM	Liaise with Serena from Careers centre and Sydney Calkin, our academic lead on careers, on raising awareness of this and action going forwards
2020:48	CM	Share an anonymous version of the survey with Niall Morrissey, Head of Advice and Counselling.
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
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.
2020:52	AC	Send out comms explaining use of 'global search' to all geog students
2020:53	AC	To look into possibility of group study spaces in the library