

## Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Nanchang JP

The minutes from meeting on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Time: 6pm Beijing time

Location: NCU JP conference room 301

### Staff Members present:

Dr. Maconochie Chair (QM)

Dr. Zhijun Luo Co-Chair (NCU)

Ms. Yi Yang Vice Dean (NCU)

Ms. Jane Qu Administrator (QM)

Ms. Nancy Wang Administrator (QM)

### Student Members Present:

| Name          | Class | NCU ID     |
|---------------|-------|------------|
| Wang, Yilu    | 202   | 4217120037 |
| Liang, Hanlin | 203   | 4217120185 |
| Liu, Yuxin    | 204   | 4217120077 |
| Liang, Dingfa | 191   | 4202118026 |
| Lv, Zhaoru    | 195   | 4217119180 |
| Yu, Zhengyi   | 196   | 4217119226 |
| Tang, Gan     | 181   | 4217118022 |
| Zhai, Yujia   | 183   | 4217118118 |
| Ling, Yuanyi  | 186   | 4217118221 |

### Part 1: Preliminary Items

#### 1. Welcome

The Chair Dr. Maconochie and Co-Chair Dr. Luo welcomed members to the meeting of the Nanchang JP SSLC on June 1st, 2021. Student representatives introduced themselves to other members.

#### 2. Brief updates on the minutes from the previous meeting December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dr. Maconochie briefly updated on some key questions from the previous meeting.

- a) Dr. Maconochie provided an update on the issue previously raised by year 3 over varying levels of feedback provided on project drafts. Following consultation with other JP staff, project organizers Ben, Mario and Richard have agreed a consensus where students will receive a similar level of feedback to draft reports. There may be individual variation from lecturers but guidance has now been provided as to the level and limits of feedback expected. This has involved a long discussion with QM lecturers to ensure

a consistent level of feedback is provided, although clearly the details of that feedback will be different depending on who is providing feedback.

- b) Update on the QM library, Dr. Maconochie has raised the issue with the library. Dr Maconochie requests that any specific QMUL websites associated with the library that are proving difficult to access should be communicated as soon as possible so this can be raised with the library and a solution found.

The committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting, held December 14th, 2020, as an accurate record of proceedings.

## **Part 2: Programme Delivery and other Matters raised**

Student representatives reported the following issues related to learning and teaching matters:

### **Year 3, Tang, Gan**

Q1, Some teachers would ask questions or ask students to answer questions during class. However, the handheld microphone does not properly magnify the voice to the classroom, meaning only the lecturer can hear the student's answer. Some lecturers use Q&A (students answer the questions) in review sessions and oftentimes the microphone would always be used by just a few students, the rest of class could not hear what they say and thus many students would leave because they were not able to participate and not able to hear the answers. The participation experience was poor.

Dr. Luo explained that he understands students can use 2 microphones when talking to lecturers in the classrooms, in this way both lecturers and the rest of the classroom can hear. He does realize if both microphones are in use at the same time, it might cause some background noise. He has asked Yun He who in charge of the matter to get some improvements in and hopefully the situation will be improved. Dr. Maconochie also suggests to use QM PA system for the students to be heard. Further, staff will be reminded to repeat the elements of the question.

Q2, Some students think the SNU303 workshop used for the presentation assignment is useless.

Dr. Maconochie stated this feedback will be shared not only with the lecturer of SNU303, but also in staff meetings with all the lecturers. Some improvements need to be made in this assignment as workshops appear to be difficult to run remotely.

### **Year 3, Ling, Yuanyi**

Q3, Some students complained that there might be different grading standards between lecturers for students' SNU301 and SNU309 projects. Although there are marking criteria, students think some teachers tend to give higher scores

overall, whereas some teachers tend to give overall lower scores comparatively, which could be a little unfair. Students are wondering whether it's possible to have two lecturers to mark the same report, this is very important to the students as the project counts for 60% of the whole module mark, and they hope from now on all the 301&309 projects can be marked by 2 lecturers.

Dr. Maconochie first explained to the students the marking process for student reports already involves the use of at least 2 markers. He also explained how the marking system works. Normally the first marker gives a provisional mark, then give to the second marker to independently mark. As the two markers may not give exactly the same percentage mark over the report, they will next meet to discuss and reach a consensus mark. In a few cases (normally about 5 or 10 cases) where the 2 markers cannot reach consensus, a 3<sup>rd</sup> independent marker would be involved. Or if the difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> marker and 2<sup>nd</sup> marker is more than 5%, a 3<sup>rd</sup> marker will also get involved at an early stage. Because of this, it is a long process and normally takes a minimum 3 weeks to mark. He mentioned that since final report is worth 60% of the module, it must be marked by 2 markers.

Dr. Luo raised a question on if workload is different between 301 and 309? Dr. Maconochie explained that even though the reports for SNU309 are shorter for SNU309, the overall workload is the same as SNU301 since SNU309 has additional assessments.

### **Year 3, Zhai, Yujia**

Q4, Students hope teachers can announce the exam timetable at the beginning of the semester, so that students can have enough time to make review plans.

Dr. Maconochie stated that it's impossible to give the exact exam dates for individual modules at beginning of the semester. He explained the reason behind this is the exam planning needs to wait for central NCU University planning to decide when university exams are being timetabled , and also need to wait for room availability to become clear and thereby ensure QM exam timetable does not conflict with NCU's university exams as well as NCU delivered QM exams. He confirmed that nevertheless the exam period for QM exams will always fall in last week of the teaching term, and sometimes the preceeding weekend dependent on the above planning difficulties. The one exception is semester A Year 3 exams that are taking place currently before the project work begins. This year, because of the graduation date, one exam date was pulled earlier to Thursday following requests to move to allow participation in graduation. He believed that a one-day difference for this exam should not have a major consequence given the notification period and students are encouraged to continually be working on their understanding of their modules during module teaching to make revision more effective.

### **Year 2, Yu, Zhengyi**

Q5, There seems to be an information delay between admin, lecturers and students on practical assessments. This happened twice, e.g. in SNU204 and

SNU208. Information delay resulted in practical outcomes to be non-useful. Therefore the communication between admin, students and lecturers should be increased. Lecturers can make announcements using QQ groups or emails, or through admins.

Dr. Maconochie stated that the SNU204 delay was caused by a timetable issue that stemmed from students wanting to change the timetable. In the SNU208 case, he stated that assessment is very useful for the students before practicals, and students should learn this because this will stimulate students' thinking. With this said, Dr. Maconochie agreed that communication channels should be better but also including students checking their emails. He also pointed out that students need to take responsibility for their learning and assessments by not booking tickets to travel for holiday periods during days when planned teaching is timetabled.

Q6, For SNU 204, Giulia did not look at the chatbox on VooV when doing office hours, and not sure if the staff has tech issue or just ignoring the chatbox. In either case, this caused some problems for the students who are shy and not good at speaking but only can type in the chatbox.

Dr. Maconochie stated he will check with Giulia, however he also encouraged students to take the opportunity to speak up and improve their English speaking skill in the office hour. Students do need to take every opportunity to practice English.

Q7, For SNU207, the slides still need more text, this issue was raised last year but it has not changed much this year. Many slides consist of figures only without any or much text. Also, there is a problem with the background colors of slides. All the dark blue, black or red lines or text added on the slides make it difficult to see on the big screen.

Dr. Maconochie stated that he will give feedback to the lecturers that the students need more text and to revisit text/background colour combinations.

Q8, The pharmacology class from NCU and the QM pharmacology still have many overlaps. Since the new pharmacology module is extended to a four week course, students want to see some overlapping content reduced.

Dr. Luo explained that due to some miscommunication, there had been no change for this module for the NCU delivered module. He hopes that this issue will be fixed next year. Students will not need to worry about exams on this module.

## **Year 2, Liang, Dingfa**

Q9, On the course review lecture for SNU204: Can students have the review lecture at the end of the module or before the exams? There is so much information that students need to absorb from the slides with limited time. Some

students are wondering if the review sessions can be offered to help students prepare for the exams.

Dr. Maconochie stated that he will check with Giulia to see if there is room to add a review lecture at the end of course, on the topics students would like to cover. Students clarified that one lecturer gave a review lecture but not the other. Dr Maconochie will look into the rationale behind this.

Q10, The students wanted to raise another concern over SNU207, he said there are 5 lecturers teaching the same module, which is sometimes confusing for the students to get used to all, and he think fewer lecturers would be better.

Dr. Maconochie stressed that this might be a problem for the students as students would need to take more time to get used to each lecturer's accent and speaking styles.

## **Year 2, Lyv, Zhaoru**

Q11. The time given for the homework assessment in SNU204: Microbiology is too short. As a result, most of the students did not have enough time to finish as they do not type that fast. A student raised the issue during class, but Giulia thought this was proper way to prepare students for the real exam. However, in the real exam, the time given is lot more than the time given for homework. Student is wondering if a longer duration for homework assessment can be considered by the lecturer.

Dr. Maconochie learned that the students were given 50 MCQs to complete in one hour, and he could understand that 50 MCQs in one hour seems a lot. He will raise the issue with Giulia to see if students can be given more time or fewer questions. However on the other hand, Dr. Maconochie also pointed out if students are given too long to complete assignments, there might be an increased incidence of plagiarism, as some students would try to copy and paste from the internet since the greater the time permitted, the greater the temptation to check answers.

Q12, For the same module SNU204, students are often asked to finish the assessment around 12pm, but most of the Chinese students like to take a nap at noon, added to the fact that there'd be 250+ students getting online in their dorms at the same time, causing internet connectivity slowdown. In this student's case, she spent 30 seconds to upload just one question.

Dr. Maconochie explained that firstly, this is not Giulia's decision on when students take rest. If the issue is related to internet in the dorm, he asked if it is possible to open up the wifi password in the classrooms so students can have wifi access?

Dr. Luo responded that for the moment, students do not have wifi access in the classrooms. When installing internet connection in the classrooms, NCU purposely left no wifi access to prevent students from playing games or the like.

Further discussion ensued as to if this could be possible during timed online assessments. This will be discussed further with Yun He who is in charge of the matter to see if we can increase broadband speed and try to open up wifi access at specific times so students can have wifi access in the classroom to finish the assignments.

The student suggested if Rosemary's method from Techniques last semester can be used. Rosemary allowed students to use morning time to finish one assignment and evening time to finish another, and each assignment takes about half hour. She will time the students in one hour. This could be the solution for the problem with SNU204.

Dr. Maconochie welcomed the proposal and will consider it while discussing the possible solution with Giulia.

Q13, The student also reported that Giulia has not replied to her emails. Dr. Maconochie explained that sometimes staff have had email server issues, and if students cannot get through via email, they can try QQ messages. He will however mention this to Giulia.

Q14, The student also raised concern over missing recordings for SNU207. According to the lecturer it was due to administrators not helping with uploading the recordings. The missing recordings are for lectures 11/12, 19 & 20.

Dr. Maconochie clearly stated that this is not the administrators' fault or responsibility, and it is the lecturer's responsibility to prepare and upload the recordings to QMplus. He will check with the lecturer and chase this for the students.

### **Year 1, Liang, Hanlin**

Q15, Students want to have the same teacher to teach any one part of the module. It might be more fair to students and also reduce the workload for the lecturers, e.g. Choi and Pier Paolo.

Dr. Maconochie explained that Choi will be teaching in year 1 and year 2, and students are not having the same teacher twice. Reason for that is to let students hear different speaking styles. Choi cannot be the only teacher delivering all modules on the programme! If classes have Choi this semester, they will have a different teacher next semester.

Dr. Luo proposed that instead of splitting 2 lecturers between class 1-6, (eg, Choi teaches 3 classes, and another teacher teaches the rest), why not assign one staff to teach the same content e.g. metabolism would be taught by one staff only for all the students, not just some students. The class does not need to be big, and the lecturers can teach multiple times.

Dr. Maconochie stated that the proposal makes sense but from personal experience, teaching the same material twice can cause issues.

Q16, The student also raised a question on the curriculum for next year, she was concerned about a big change that might occur next year.

Dr. Maconochie explained that next year will see some changes for year 3 students with a new module on precision Medical Sciences being introduced but no further changes to Years 1 and 2 as the new curriculum has been introduced..

### **Year 1, Liu, Yuxin**

Q17, The student requested fast feedback on the practical, she expects that the students can have feedback in 3 days after the practical is done, and not wait a month while students would almost forget what the questions were.

Dr. Maconochie stated that normally students would not expect feedback until 3 weeks.

**Minutes submitted by Jane Qu**