

SOCIOLOGY: STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

21/11/08

PRESENT

Hannah Brown, Tirion Seymour, Ksenia Panjinskaia, Sam Barber, Louise Boyd, Nick Prior (convenor)

APOLOGIES

Lyndsay Stephen, Kirsty Yau, Anne Miller

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Taken as accurate

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

CONVENOR ISSUES

1) Opinions were solicited about the new Crystal Macmillan Building, particularly its functionality from a student's perspective.

-Generally positive views were received about the "bright and airy rooms", the common rooms and facilities.

-Suggested improvements: some courses had overflowing classrooms in the first few weeks of Semester 1; wider publicity was needed about the UG reading room; all computers in the labs are Macs and this disadvantages PC users; tables were needed for student's to lean on when completing essay handing in forms; some students liked the idea of water fountains and/or coffee machines in the public areas.

Action: NP to communicate these issues to School Administrator.

2) The issue of feedback was discussed in relation to a School and University-wide drive to improve feedback practices. There had already been some discussion and modifications to how student's received feedback in relation to WebCT and marksheets, but more information was needed from students to move the debate forward. A special SSLC would be set up in Semester 2 dedicated to feedback and students would attempt to garner information from their peers.

YEAR BY YEAR FEEDBACK

Year 1

Mainly very positive feedback on first year (Soc1a) unit; tutorials were highlighted in particular as providing a useful space for interaction and discussion; the "Out of Your Head" unit was considered too short; praise for

WebCT as a communicative device for marks, but students stressed enduring need for face-to-face input.

A couple of technical issues were raised: 1) a disparity between the CPU power / RAM needed to run WebCT properly and the average computer owned by a student; lots of students don't own printers. 2) Email is now considered the official means of communication between University and students, but this has not been properly communicated to students; students are also receiving lots of junk mail alongside official communications.

Action: NP to communicate these issues to the relevant committees and bodies.

Year 2

No representative present

Year 3

Social Theory: lectures praised as difficult but rewarding; students highlighted strategic attendance at lectures as a problem caused by the structure of assessment of this course, an end of term essay that can feasibly be chosen at the start; the merits of a split assessment were discussed, as was the idea of grading participation in tutorials.

Project: a proportion of students stated that they had no knowledge that the sociology project began in the third year. Notwithstanding information in handbooks, students stated that they would prefer the DoS to communicate this at the first meeting of the third year or an email be sent around to all junior hons students.

Designing and Doing Social Research: some students pointed to a disparity between the time/labour invested in class presentations and the fact the presentations are not assessed.

Fourth Year

General praise allocated to all classes. Special mention to Intimate Relations, considered to be a well structured course; some students would like extra clarity about where feedback may be available to them and where they can collect essays, especially with Doing SR, where there are no tutors.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6th February 2009.