

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL & FILM STUDIES

PHILOSOPHY STAFF/STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF 24 MARCH 2010

Present:

Katie Allan (Secretary), Sarah Broadie, Ian Church (Student Rep, PhD), Kelly Diepenbrock (Student Rep, 1000 level), Patrick Greenough, Ben Hofmann (Student Rep, Honours), Lisa Jones, Caitlin Leach (Student Rep, 2000 level), Sarah Lohmann (Convenor, Student Rep, Honours), Sophie McIlwraith (Student Rep, Honours), Colin MacIver (Student Rep, MLitt), Tim Mulgan, Simon Prosser, Stephen Read, Emily Salt (Student Rep, 1000 level), John Skorupski, Craig Smith, Jens Timmermann and Thomas Wilson (Student Rep, 1000 level).

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Apologies for Absence

Berys Gaut, Susie Foster (Student Rep, Evening Degree), Niall Hartnett (Student Rep, Honours).

2. Minutes of the Philosophy Staff/Student Liaison Committee meeting held on 18 November 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2009 were approved and adopted.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes

There were no matters arising.

STUDENT BUSINESS

4. Sub Honours Matters

4.1 First Level Modules

The 1000 level student rep reported a concern raised by students about the cost of key textbooks and enquired whether the material could be digitised and made freely available to students. The Director of Teaching responded in detail regarding the requirements of the Copyright Legislation and that it is not possible for large sections of published books to be digitised in this way.

It was also reported that some lecture notes were not being made available via WebCT prior to lectures taking place and that students felt that this was particularly important in the case of logic material as it allowed students to engage with the content of the lecture in more depth.

4.2 Second Level Modules

The 2000 level student rep reported that students felt that the balance of work on the 10-credit modules was better in semester 2 than it had been in semester 1. It was also noted that the

text book for PY2101 Aesthetics was expensive and in demand and the rep requested that additional copies be placed on short-loan in the University Library.

5. Honours Matters

5.1 PY4612 Advanced Logic

It was reported that this was a challenging but successful module. Students went on to request more contact time for this module and compared the contact time with that provided on honours modules in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics. They would like more exercise classes and more worked exercises in lectures. The Director of Teaching advised that the delivery of the module would be reviewed before the next time that it is delivered to consider whether a revised structure was desirable.

5.2 Honours Tutorials

It was reported that students wanted more focus in tutorial sessions, such as discussion of a question provided in advance of the tutorial. This has been employed in module PY3701 Language & Reality and is reported to be popular with students.

The Director of Teaching requested that students raise any issues that they have about tutorials directly with the relevant module co-ordinator so that the issue can be dealt with swiftly.

5.3 Departmental Library

The student rep sought clarification regarding the restricted access books in the Departmental Library and the lack of regular access to certain items. After a short discussion, it was agreed that the Department would consider further solutions to this matter, such as the possibility that access to restricted access books could be granted via the Departmental Office.

5.4 Contact Hours

The student rep reported on general student concerns across the Faculty of Arts about the contact hours at honours level. These concerns have been reported to the Principal's Office by the Students' Association. The student rep sought the views of staff members on this issue.

A number of issues were discussed, including the resource implications of a request for an increase in contact hours which may lead to a reduction in the number of honours modules offered, the desirability of an increase in independent study undertaken by honours students and the importance of self-study and independent reading, flexibility to respond to students of all ability levels (especially on core modules), the categories of staff/postgraduate students who can undertake tutoring at this level and the level of non-attendance recorded currently at classes.

The student rep returned to the issue of focus in tutorials and to concerns about the preparation required and expectations of tutorials. The committee noted that more information could be provided in the Student Handbook on this matter.

6. MLitt Matters

Essay Submission Deadlines

The student rep reported that many students felt that the workload in semester 2 was tougher than in semester 1 with the essay deadlines falling close together and at the same time. In particular, students felt that there was a lack of time to work on the second essay, with many students suggesting that they would have to miss classes in order to have time to work on coursework.

The Head of Department advised that it would not be possible to make any changes to submission deadlines for this year and that the timetable is driven by the academic calendar.

7. Research Postgraduate Matters

There were no research postgraduate matters raised.

8. Evening Degree Matters

There were no evening degree matters raised.

STAFF BUSINESS

9. PAL (*Peer Assisted Learning*)

The Director of Teaching outlined the policy paper recently discussed at the University's Teaching Learning & Assessment Committee (TLA) for the information of the committee and solicited the views of students on these proposals.

The student reps agreed that the existing academic family system worked well, and that SALTIRE provided good general support and advice on academic matters (in particular via sessions in Orientation week) and that the role outlined in the policy paper appeared to be too broadly defined. They felt that some subject specific advice by students would be helpful but had concerns about the desirability of implementing a formal and rigid system. They also noted concerns about the time commitment required of mentors and how this may impact on their own studies, especially as they were adjusting to honours level study as junior honours students.

MATTERS FOR NOTING

10. AOCB

Election of Student Reps for 2010/11

The Director of Teaching reminded the committee that the election for students reps for next session would take place at the start of the session in October and the electronic voting system piloted this year would be used again.

Vote of Thanks

The committee thanked the Convenor for her work on behalf of the committee this year.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is *to be confirmed*.

Katie M Allan
Senior Administrator
29 April 2010