PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Apologies for Absence

Charlotte Beardsworth (Student Rep, Honours), Marcia Baron, Jessica Brown, Dan Cavedon-Taylor, Ephraim Glick, James Harris, Ian Robertson (Student Rep, MLitt)

2. Minutes of the Philosophy Staff/Student Liaison Committee meeting held on 30 October 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2013 were approved and adopted.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes

3.1 Facebook Groups (item 4 refers)

The School President reported that two main facebook groups have been established: one for general issues and another for book sales. The most popular one has proved to be the book sales group. It was noted that a separate group for 2000 level Philosophy has also been set up but it has not been particularly active.

3.2 Third Year Compulsory Module (item 6 refers)

In response to a request for an update on this matter, the Director of Teaching reported that the curriculum review for undergraduate Philosophy remains on-going and any changes will be implemented in session 2015/16.

STAFF BUSINESS

4. Module Evaluation Questionnaires

The Director of Teaching noted that the software used by the University to generate module evaluation questionnaires has been enhanced to allow module or subject specific questions to be added to individual module questionnaires. With effect from the current semester, each module can have one set of module specific questions included on an evaluation.

All teaching staff and tutors have been informed of this development and invited to submit any questions that they would like to see included on their module questionnaires. The Student Reps were invited to consider whether they have specific questions that they would
like to see included on these questionnaires and it was agreed that the School President would liaise with the Student Reps and report back to the Director of Teaching as soon as possible.

5. **Honours Pre-Advising Module Fair**

The Director of Teaching reported that the University is keen for students to receive information about available honours modules at an earlier stage to assist them in making informed choices about which modules to take. To address this, she proposed that the Department hold a new Honours Fair on an afternoon shortly before Pre-Advising opens at which all honours Module Co-ordinators will be available for consultation. It was noted that this was not intended to replace the current practice of individual appointments with the Honours Co-ordinator which will continue to take place during the Pre-Advising period.

The Student Reps were enthusiastic about the proposal and it was agreed to proceed with the Fair on a trial basis this year and then review it subsequently. *(Secretary’s Note: Subsequently it proved impossible to find an available time slot for the Fair in the period before Pre-Advising opens. It was therefore agreed to implement the Honours Fair next session and ensure that it is scheduled into the departmental calendar in advance).*

6. **National Student Survey (NSS) 2014**

The Director of Teaching requested that all teaching staff and student reps encourage 4th year students to participate in the 2014 National Student Survey which requires a high participation rate.

**STUDENT BUSINESS: GENERAL TOPICS**

7. **Careers Event – Thursday 6 March 5pm School III**

The School President confirmed arrangements for the next Careers Event for Philosophy which is due to take place on 6 March. There will be representatives from 4 sectors (Teach First, a law firm, an NGO and an accountancy firm) and the event is organised in collaboration with the Careers Service.

**STUDENT BUSINESS: UNDERGRADUATE MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS**

8. **PY1006 Reasoning and Knowledge**

The Student Rep reported a high level of satisfaction amongst students on this module. Some students felt that the lecture content focussed too closely on the lecture slides and powerpoint presentation but the Module Co-ordinator responded that she felt that the lectures were interactive and dynamic through the questions that she asked throughout. The Student Rep suggested that putting less detailed information onto the slides would help to address this.

9. **PY1106 Society, Authority and Freedom**

The Student Rep reported that there was some concern amongst the students about lectures that were cancelled at the start of the module due to illness, although it was acknowledged that the materials for these lectures were available via MMS so that students could prepare for their tutorials.

The Student Rep also reported that some students felt that the reading for this module was too long, with students being required to read as many as 100 pages per week. The Director of Teaching noted that the module deals with historical texts where students are expected to read the texts. It is intended that students read the historical texts in advance of the relevant
lectures as preparation and then progress to reading secondary sources. It was noted that students felt it would be helpful if the teaching staff could highlight key passages in texts. Finally, it was reported that some students were disappointed that Marx was not included on this module.

10. **PY2103 Rationality and Action**

The Student Rep reported that this module was well received by students. Some students reported that they found the reading list confusing and were unclear about which items should be read in preparation for the lectures and which in preparation for tutorials and also about how they should therefore schedule their reading. The Module Co-ordinator reminded students that they should prepare in advance of both lectures and tutorials and that detailed reading lists, lecture schedule and tutorial schedules are provided in the module booklet and none of this information has been changed since the start of the module.

11. **PY2004 Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant**

The Student Rep reported that this module was very well received by students. Some students had concerns about the extensive reading list and perceived heavy workload and would also like more guidance on the key passages in the required texts. The Module Co-ordinator emphasised that students should be planning ahead and reading in advance of scheduled lectures and tutorials. In addition some students felt that the balance between Locke and Descartes was uneven. Finally, the Student Rep noted that a few students had suggested that Postgraduate Tutors needed to keep their tutorials more closely in line with the lecture content.

12. **PY2101 Aesthetics**

The Student Rep reported that this module was very well received by students who had reported no issues requiring further consideration.

13. **PY3702 Value and Normativity**

The Student Rep reported that student feedback on this module was positive. Some students reported that the lecture material is posted on MMS a few hours in advance of the lecture and they requested that this is posted the day before to allow more time for preparation. During the lectures, students felt that sometimes slides changed too swiftly to allow effective note taking.

The Student Rep also reported that students wished to have more structure in tutorials and students had noted frustration with the lack of participation by some students in tutorials. The Module Co-ordinator responded that he was aware of this issue and is working hard to encourage greater student engagement in tutorials. He noted that the root of the problem is the number of students who have not prepared for tutorials by doing the required reading.

**STUDENT BUSINESS: MLITT MATTERS**

14. **MLitt Report**

No items of business were raised.
MATTERS FOR NOTING

15. AOCB

15.1 School President – Vote of Thanks
The Director of Teaching noted that the School President will be demitting office and is due to graduate at the end of the year. The Council extended its thanks to the School President for her work on behalf of the Philosophy students throughout the year and wished her well for the future.

16. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

Katie M Allan
Senior Administrator
3 April 2014