

## Student Voice Committee Minutes

### SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & LINGUISTICS

Wednesday 30 October 2019

**Time and location:** 13:00, Percy Building G.10.

**STAFF ATTENDEES:** James Annesley, Kate Errington, Helen Freshwater, Tina Gharavi, Lars Iyer, Jennifer Orr, Lucy Pearson, William van der Wurff, Martha Young-Scholten

**APOLOGIES:** Lesley Lant, Jos Harrison, Lucy Keating, Lucy Lillystone, Ellie Simmonite, Geoff Poole, Ian Birthwistle

**STUDENT ATTENDEES:** Jamie Mounsey (Chair), Victoria Mezzetto (School Rep), Elli Brown (President of English Society), Lucy Rimmer (attendee) *Course Reps & Secretary not elected.*

#### 1. Minutes of previous meeting (DOC A)

- The minutes were approved.

#### 2. Matters arising

**Attendance** – The Head of School (HoS) emphasised that ideally the committee should be attended by more students than staff

- **Action** – To encourage attendance, we agreed lunch would be served at future meetings
- **Action** – EngSoc would Encourage members to attend SVC committee
- We discussed replicating what other other Schools are doing – embedding SVC call in induction
- **Action** - SVC Reps to consider how to promote SVC further, perhaps along the lines of Combined Honours' mentoring system of peer reviewing essays, with the possibility of visibility in the Percy rotunda.

**Timetabling** – the issue of the organisation of the teaching timetable was raised, following a piece of research that Geoff Poole is undertaking on his module using OMBEA polls. It is estimated that 55% of the cohort would choose to miss 1-2 lectures a week because of large gaps between scheduled teaching activities.

- It was explained that the University timetable system is centrally controlled and based on accommodating student choice, room availability etc. but there are alternative systems at other Universities. The HoS also pointed out that campus estates renovations would hopefully ease some of the pressure on timetable as far as room bookings go.

#### Module clashes

- SELLL Students have not raised issues with hard clashes with student reps, though one of our reps on QV31 had experienced a clash between a History and English module;

- The shortcomings of the Timetabling App were discussed where the desktop version must be used to check clashes. Kate Errington has flagged with IT but has been advised that it is not possible to fix

### 3. Student Reports

#### Careers Blog & Social Media update

- Kate Errington reported that the blog is up and running but not sure about engagement level; Student Leaders have been recruited to work on blog and promote it
- 'International internships in the US' was most popular post
- School Instagram – features café; call for events and EngSoc content; student bloggers; discussions as to whether one single Instagram for the School and EngSoc would be preferable

#### Café Update

- Jamie reported 10 volunteers have been recruited and all days are covered; machine is current not functioning
- Discussion of renaming the café along lines of Bert's in Fine Art
- We can create an additional suggestion box if the current two are not visible enough

**Action** - Student Reps encouraged to think about other recruitment initiatives

### 4. Staff Reports

**The SVC Committee Annual Report** (Document B) was received.

**NSS Results:** Kate reported on the NSS results (Document C) noting a large improvement in Organisation and Management scores but that Assessment and Feedback is still a perennial site of dissatisfaction among students, in line with other Universities across the UK.

- James pointed out the considerable effort among staff to ensure that feedback is helpful and timely but that we are keen to get ideas from students about how we could improve this.
- There is still some lack of visibility on the School's considerable Employability initiatives including the February annual Employability Event for Stage 2 which is the only one of its kind in the University. There is also a 'wash up' event with Careers staff and the DELT to follow up this event in the 'Doing the Degree' sessions for Stage 2. Student Reps were also reminded of the Stage 1 Careers Fest hosted by the Careers Service. Elli suggested that we might run an event in Semester 1 to prepare students to make the most of the Employability event, teaching networking skills.
- On Wellbeing, Kate reminded student reps of the series of events that we are running this year: on 4 Dec a 'Chill in' featuring film screenings, a visit from Bessie the dog and in Semester 2, a Mindfulness/Tai Chi sessions; Wellbeing info in downstairs rotunda; and online chats are also part of this.

### 2019/20 Projects

- James invited reps to think about a range of student-led projects that students could be paid to produce, particularly around promoting Student Voice. Kate suggested that one of the projects might be digitally rebranding the café and student voice, generally. Other suggestions included making a film and running focus groups on assessment, with help from the DELT.

#### **Proposed Assessment tariff**

- Jennifer explained that the University has proposed a new Assessment Tariff, coming out of relatively poor NSS scores on Assessment and Feedback. This Tariff would effectively limit each 20 credit module to a maximum of 2 assessments (including a formative) and a maximum word count appropriate to each stage (this being 3500 words at Stage 3 across all assessment components).
- Students expressed concern that these would be undesirable and overly-prescriptive changes; that both multiple smaller components and diversity of assessment are highly valuable and that any lowering of the word count would be problematic.
- It was suggested that the staggering of assessment deadlines would be a better route to consider.
- Jennifer to feed this back to Faculty Education Committee.

#### **5. Library and IT Update**

- Lucy Keating and Ian Birtwistle were unable to be present.
- Lucy forwarded the latest details on the library's acquisitions, including access a number of excellent new resources, outlined in their newsletter:  
<https://sway.office.com/yUCYVrwCpxG88BGv?ref=Link>

#### **6. Date and time of next meeting**

It was proposed that we move the meeting back by half an hour. The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 4 December from 12.30-13.30 in KGV1 2.19 (King George VI Building).**

Jennifer Orr 31.10.2019