

## GEOGRAPHY DEGREE PROGRAMME

### STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2013

#### MINUTES

**Present:** Faten Adam (Student Support Coordinator), Meredith Adams (1st Year), Lynne Addison (3<sup>rd</sup> Year), Richard Bowman (4<sup>th</sup> Year), Jiajin Chen (2<sup>nd</sup> Year), Connor Ellis (3<sup>rd</sup> Year), Holly Gardner (2<sup>nd</sup> Year), Bridget Holtom (4<sup>th</sup> Year), Nick Hulton (Geography Degree Programme Convenor), Naomi Kennedy (Student Chair), Rona Leese (4<sup>th</sup> Year), Andrew MacLaren (4<sup>th</sup> Year), Ashleigh McGrath (3<sup>rd</sup> Year), Beth Muir (Secretary), Eva Panagiotakopulu (Lecturer), Dan Swanton (Lecturer).

#### 1. Welcome

Nick welcomed the committee.

#### 2. Apologies

Rebekah Miller, Lydia Stuart-Kregor, Leah Waterhouse.

#### 3. T.P.R. (Teaching Programme Review)

Nick introduced the Student Reps to the Teaching Programme Review. This is a review which all schools in the university are required to complete by the S.Q.A. every five years. It is an internally conducted review which will run in November, and will involve staff, students and the teaching office as well as staff from other Schools in the university.

Nick highlighted the importance of student feedback in the review, and asked the Student Reps to consider any general remit areas they would like to raise e.g. more fieldwork is required in the degree, or whether a Geography degree prepares students for a professional life after graduation. It was suggested that the next S.S.L.C. concentrates on T.P.R. remit questions that the Student Reps feel are important, with a subsequent open meeting for the whole student body to reflect and discuss any suggested questions that were put forward.

Nick requested that Student Reps discuss broad ideas with other students to help make them aware of the T.P.R and gather ideas for the next S.S.L.C meeting.

**Action: Beth to provide Student Reps with last Geography T.P.R. report.**

#### 4. 1<sup>st</sup> Years

##### *Human Geography*

Students repeated the positive feedback provided at the last meeting, but highlighted a lack of flexibility with some tutors – it was felt that students often had no time for discussion or questions at the end of tutorials.

#### 5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Years

##### *Options Courses*

There was mixed feedback about students being allowed to swap Options courses this year -some students enjoyed the flexibility while others felt their Beans bids had less value if other students could transfer into the courses which they had bid for. Would there be an option for ranking system for example? Or an eBay style bidding system?

Nick underlined that the Beans system aims to provide an equal opportunity for students to compete for places, but understands the frustration for many students in different positions. Staff are open to discussion of the Beans system.

#### *Course Handbooks*

Students requested that handbooks are made available earlier on Learn. They were advised that problems with Learn and staff's tight teaching schedules meant this had not been possible this year, but every effort would be made to provide handbooks before the start of teaching next semester.

#### *Electives*

Students felt that there is a lack of courses running in 2013/14, courses such as Geography in the Archive are not planned to run next year.

The Research Design practical was useful, but many felt it would be better used in first year.

Some students had found the D.R.P.S. for Geography degrees confusing, and were unaware they could choose outside courses in 4<sup>th</sup> Year.

**Action: Beth to include reminder about outside courses in Beans fair.**

**Nick to discuss Electives with staff.**

**Nick to investigate alternative system to Beans.**

### **6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Years**

#### *Environmental Sensitivity and Change*

Most of the feedback for this course was positive, but some students felt that not all the exam questions had been relevant to the teaching on course and didn't expect the change from the multiple choice format of the Earth Surface Systems exam in their 1<sup>st</sup> year.

#### *Economic and Political Geography Course Teaching*

Students felt that there was a good flow of topics during the first half of the course, but the topics in the second half were more disjointed. They also were unclear about how to select which books and articles to read using the long reading lists supplied for each week.

Eva advised that students need to develop their research skills during pre-honours, but can also bring any questions they have to the relevant tutor or Course Organiser.

#### *Economic and Political Geography Exam*

Many students felt the phrasing of the question on slums made them feel they weren't able to choose it, and if they hadn't studied the specific chapter in one book their choice of questions in the exam was reduced. Nick advised that this issue would be raised with the Exam Board later this year.

**Action: Nick to discuss E.S.S. with Linda.**

### **7. 4<sup>th</sup> Years**

#### *Exam and Course Results*

The Student Reps expressed confusion about when they could expect their results for semester 1. Beth advised that results were only due back to her last week, and that they were being processed as quickly as possible so students could view their own marks on Learn. Beth will send out e-mail announcements for each course to keep students informed, and will clarify the timetable for processing results in the future.

Students were also unclear about final marks and the role of moderation. Nick highlighted the importance of moderation and its function is to ensure marking is accurate and fair.

*Researching with People*

4<sup>th</sup> Years on this course received inconsistent corrections for their draft and final submissions, and contradictory advice from different staff at different stages.

**AOB**

*Volunteer requests*

Beth asked the Student Reps for volunteers to help the School with I.L.W and the Post-Applicant Visit Days – this would include speaking to pre-honours about their own honours experience. Any students interested should contact Judy Adlington.

*Feedback Session*

Beth reminded students that the Semester 1 Feedback sessions were on next Wednesday.