

GEOGRAPHY DEGREE PROGRAMME

STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

31 OCTOBER 2012

MINUTES

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

1. Welcome

Nick welcomed all members of the committee.

2. Apologies

Rebekah Miller, Lydia Stuart-Kregor, Leah Waterhouse.

3. 4th Years

Researching with People

The student reps provided mixed feedback for this course. Staff support in particular was praised, while students expressed concerns about the course title and the ethics involved in research (and relevance to the dissertation). It was unclear what data was required for the Lab sessions.

Options courses

Student noted that some courses were described in great detail, while others included little information. They felt this made it difficult to make informed choices.

Geography in the Archive

Franklin Ginn had asked students directly for feedback. Students appreciated his active involvement.

Action: Nick to speak with Eric

Beth to update Options descriptions.

4. 1st Years

Human Geography

Some students had asked for weekly instead of fortnightly tutorials. Student Reps were advised that the increased resources required (teaching staff etc.) were not currently available.

The lecture content was praised, but many students felt pressure to take notes for the whole lecture. Dan advised the students that all lectures are recorded for access later. Many also found it difficult to access enough copies of the key reading books in the library, and requested that book chapters are added to Learn.

Action: Nick to speak with Dan

Dan to add resources onto Learn.

5. 2nd Years

Economic and Political Geography

Feedback for this course was largely positive, students were aware of Course Organiser's illness but noted that staff cover was inconsistent (some lectures finished early, others over-ran). Nick responded that the department was aware of the problems with delivering the course, and if any students had concerns this could be referred back to him.

Nick reminded students that there will be a talk about 3rd Year Fieldtrips for current 2nd Years, and there will be Beans/Option discussions run in Semester 2. Nick highlighted the importance of students avoiding booking holidays which might conflict with the Fieldtrips.

The student reps requested that the Options booklet be provided a few weeks before the Options fair.

Action: Nick to discuss with Jan

Beth to set up briefing seminar for 2nd years on the Exchange schemes (tbc).

6. 3rd Years

Fieldtrips- Amsterdam

Students greatly enjoyed this course, but would like their day research project and presentation to count towards final mark e.g. 10%.

Fieldtrips – Bangor

Students were mostly positive about this course but felt they lacked some of the techniques needed for the field course and writing up the report.

The Nature of Geographical Knowledge

There was a great variety of feedback for this course. Students were unsure about the aim of lectures as there was no course assessment (only an exam), and asked for a choice of degree assessment topic. Some students also felt they needed more direction during teaching.

Qualitative Methods

Students felt there was a disproportionate focus on ethnography – with only two non-ethnography options were available for the degree assessment. The tutors and demonstrators on the course were excellent.

Options courses

Student feedback for these courses was mostly positive, although reps did request further guidance and information for courses such as Principles of G.I.S and Remote Sensing and Global Climate Change (on Learn).

The students had enjoyed Frontiers in Physical Geography 2 but didn't feel they had the Maths or Physics knowledge required. It was suggested that the course should have a pre-requisite.

Some student reps asked how they could book the Old Library in Drummond Street for events. Beth advised them that they may be have access to a new system called Web Room Bookings (WRB) in myEd, but if they did not they could send requests by e-mail to her or Judy. Smart phone and timetable access is to be increased over the next semester.

Action: Nick to look at running courses for student training e.g. mapping

Nick to look at Beans system

AOB*Innovative Learning Week*

Dan informed students that Niamh was looking for volunteers to help with the School's activities during ILW (one student from each year). Students interested should e-mail Niamh directly.