Present: Prof Ian Colbeck (Chair), Ms Clare Birch, Prof Elena Klenova, Dr Terry McGenity, Dr Gavin Sandercock, Dr Michael Steinke, Ulric Abonie (MSc Cardiac Rehabilitation), Jigysa Arora (MSc Molecular Medicine), Heather Baxter (MSc Tropical Marine Biology), Paul Cook (MSc Biotechnology), Sarah Powell (Masters in Environmental Governance/MSc Environmental Resource Management), Amalia Zervakou (MSc Biotechnology)

In attendance: Miss Nicola Andrews

Apologies: Michael Soltysiak (MMB Tropical Marine Biology)

MINUTES

20/13 The minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2013 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

05/13 Accessing Journals

Dr McGenity confirmed that he had circulated an e-mail to the students explaining how students could access journals and contact authors. Students were advised to speak to their Project Supervisors if they wished to access journals for their Research Projects.

Action: Student Course Representatives

10/13 BS981 Literature Review Module Handbook

Dr Sandercock advised that a BS981 Literature Review Handbook would be produced and it would have its own Moodle site next academic year. The draft literature review assignment would be removed and students would be required to submit a draft plan.

13/13 MEG Single Statistics Class

The Masters in Environmental Governance course would be re-modelled for the 2014/15 academic year. There were no plans to run a single class for students who already had statistics experience however Dr Rachel Bragg would provide those students with additional exercises to undertake.

14/13 Additional Coursework Guidance for Biotechnology Optional Modules

It was noted that the students felt that the coursework assignment for some optional modules did not reflect the full breadth of the modules. Dr McGenity advised that the MSc Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine courses would be re-modelled for the 2014/15 academic year with less optional modules available, however he agreed to look into the issue.

Action: TMcG
16/13 Introduction to BS934 Protein Technology Practical Session

Dr McGenity advised that the BS934 Molecular Medicine practical had already taken place when the issue was raised at the last SSLC meeting and as a result he had been unable to address the issue. He explained that it would not be an issue next academic year as it would be a combined practical session with the MSc Biotechnology students.

17/13 MSc Cardiac Rehabilitation Lectures

Dr Sandercock advised that it was necessary to block teach on the course due to the part time students. He advised that all staff teaching on the modules had been asked to give the students at least one comfort break during the lecture.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF COURSES (ARC) 2012/13

21/13 The Annual Review of Courses (ARC) for 2012/13 was noted by the SSLC members.

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

22/13 The External Examiner reports for the Masters in Environmental Governance/MSc Environmental Resource Management and MSc Marine Biology were noted. The External Examiner for the MSc Marine Biology had been pleased with the course and did not have any issues to address.

23/13 The External Examiner for the Masters in Environmental Governance/MSc Environmental Resource Management raised that on the University’s course finder page there was no subject area drop-down menu for Environment or Sustainability. As a result it made it difficult for a prospective student searching the website to access the Masters in Environmental Governance/MSc Environmental Resource Management course pages easily. Prof Colbeck advised that the course finder was currently in the process of being restructured and he had passed the External Examiner’s comments to the team responsible for the management of the course finder.

24/13 The External Examiner for the Masters in Environmental Governance/MSc Environmental Resource Management had commented about the continued viability of the MSc Environmental Resource Management course which attracted a small number of students. The modules at Essex were extremely disciplinary compared to the modules at Writtle College as the teaching is focused on harder disciplinary biology. In view of this, the exam and coursework marks had always been considerably lower than the marks awarded for the Essex modules. Prof Colbeck advised that this would no longer be a problem as the course would be withdrawn and re-modelled to run in conjunction with Essex Business School. It was hoped that the new Masters in Environment and Resource Management course would be available for the 2014/15 academic year.

PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR 2013/14

25/13 The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) did not run this academic year however the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) was launched on 31st January and would run until Friday 25th April. The Student Representatives were asked to encourage participation from their peers to complete the survey. A variety of prizes including an iPad, annual bus passes and vouchers could be won for those students that completed the survey.

Action: Student Course Representatives
ITEMS FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

MSc Biotechnology

26/13 The MSc Biotechnology students felt they had not been provided with sufficient information about the subject areas available for the Research Project and did not know many of the academics and their research areas to assist them with their project choices. Dr McGenity explained that students were expected to be proactive and examine the School website to look at the research area they were interested in and arrange to meet with the relevant academic member of staff. He advised that if students did not receive a response from the academic they should notify the MSc Course Director. It was agreed that in future Dr McGenity would e-mail explicit instructions explaining how students should find out information about the project areas.

Action: TMcG

Masters in Environmental Governance

27/13 Miss Powell raised that the majority of optional modules were scheduled in the Spring Term which resulted in a lighter workload in the Autumn Term and heavier workload in the Spring Term. Prof Colbeck advised that the course would be remodelled for the 2014/15 academic year with the core modules held in the Autumn Term and the optional modules in the Spring Term to balance the workload.

MSc Tropical Marine Biology

28/13 Miss Baxter commented that the teaching in the autumn term had been particularly heavy in comparison to the spring term. Dr Steinke explained that this was due to an academic member of staff who was leaving at the end of the autumn term and their teaching had been scheduled in the one term. In future the BS706 Tropical Marine Systems module would be delivered over the autumn and spring term.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

29/13 The next meeting would take place in Week 33 of the Summer Term and would be scheduled by Miss Andrews.

Action: NA