Department of Government

UG Student Staff Liaison Committee Meeting

Wednesday 27th April 2016, 1-2pm in Room 5B.303

Minutes

Attendees:

Chair: Natasha Ezrow [Undergraduate Director]

Present: Theresa Crowley [Senior Advisor], Daniel Gobbitt [Operations Coordinator], Becky Fray [First Year Administrator], Sallyann West [2, 3 and Final Year Administrator], Merel Ypinga, Gro Martinussen, Ioana Voina, Ignacio Martin, Dorotea Nemcic and Velma Loh

1. Apologies: Fadli Haji Awang Zaini and Rowan Daniels

2. To approve minutes of the last meeting and discuss any matters arising from those minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2016 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Update of previous meeting action points

   • Engagement via Moodle – development of our Moodle platform is being continuously improved and so engagement is ongoing.
   • Stata Mentors – to be raised at further meetings [Education Committee, Departmental Meeting etc.]
   • Mini Open Day – arrangements already in the planning stages for eNROL Information Sessions as part of Welcome Week for new UG and PGT students.

4. Student Engagement

   The Operations Coordinator gave a brief update on the process of putting together an events schedule for 2016/17 and invited ideas from students on how to improve student engagement and events as well as feedback from previous events. This can be sent to dgobbitt@essex.ac.uk.

   Students suggest that departmental Book Sales are a really good idea and would help them academically as well as a social occasion. Notification via email was agreed as the preferable method, although a few students were unaware of these event notification emails. The Operations Coordinator suggested that we could address this by making these emails more distinctive and easily recognisable as a department event.
The Undergraduate Director gave her congratulations to the Student Conference team for a hugely successful fifth annual Government student conference. The Undergraduate Director also suggested we could improve the running of this event by removing evening speakers from the schedule and making it clearer that delegates can freely move from panel to panel. The Undergraduate Director welcomed further feedback and comments from students via govconf@essex.ac.uk.

5. Welcome Week

The First Year Administrator introduced the initial plans for Welcome Week 2016/17 and invited feedback and suggestions from students on how to improve WW for future cohorts. The Operations Coordinator clarified that the schedule of events during WW has not been confirmed and can therefore be informed by suggestions from students which can be sent to rfray@essex.ac.uk.

The Operations Coordinator asked which of the First Years in attendance still had their hard-copy of the Student Handbook and many said they did and had found it useful when first starting at the University.

6. Chair’s report on Undergraduate Periodic Review

On behalf of the Education Director, the Undergraduate Director introduced the information presented in the report on the recommendations from the recent Undergraduate Periodic Review. The main points include the quality and amount of formative feedback from coursework is to be standardised as well as a more robust Personal Tutor System will be put into place.

7. Update on Capstone

The Undergraduate Director reiterated the main structure which Capstone will take over the next few years as per the detailed email sent out by the Education Director a few weeks ago. The Undergraduate Director invited comments and suggestions from students on how the implementation of Capstone could be improved to form a strong element in a course of study.

Students suggested that the First and Second year marks for Capstone could be a Pass/Fail format similar to the Career Portfolio [GV711] which could act as an incentive for students.

8. Identify issues to take forward to the Departmental Meeting in May

It was suggested that information about the Dissertation process could be made clearer with an information session for details on how to complete the Project Proposal Form.
The Undergraduate Director, as the Project module coordinator, stated that this was run in previous years with very poor attendance. If there is strong feedback for its return then this could be re-considered.

9. Student Surveys

The Operations Coordinator gave a brief reminder that the Student Satisfaction Surveys and the National Student Surveys are open until Friday 29 April and encouraged student to engage with them.

10. Student Matters

Employability and Careers events and information should be shared by the departmental Twitter and Facebook pages.

**ACTION:** This will be passed on to the departmental Social Media contact.

Students would like to see more of a practical element as part of the course of teaching for modules. There could also be more summer internship and practical/field opportunities as part of taught modules.

**ACTION:** This will be put forward at the next meeting of the Education Committee.

Final Year students are keen to have some information about Postgraduate study opportunities at the University of Essex.

**ACTION:** The 2, 3 and Final Year Administrator will work with the PG Administrators and look into contacting current Final Year students with information on PG study opportunities at the University. In the meantime, students can view the PG webpages or contact govgradadmin@essex.ac.uk for further information.

Final Year module outlines should include more information on what types of Postgraduate courses they would be relate to.

**ACTION:** The 2, 3 and Final Year Administrator will look into this when updating the Final Year module outlines.

11. Any Other Business

None

**Date of next meeting:** TBC