



**Education Committee**  
St Andrews Students Association

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**Meeting date:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (6pm) MS Teams

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**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Amy Gallacher (DoEd), Joseph Horsnell (Arts and Divinity Faculty President), Chloe Fielding (Science and Medicine Faculty President), Abi Whitefield (Postgraduate Academic Convenor)

Hannah Koegler (Art History SP), Camiel Leake (Chemistry SP), Belinda Hawes (Earth Sciences SP), Callum Irvine (English SP), Teo Yarkova (Film Studies SP), Imaan Kotadia (Geography and SD SP), Geraint Morgan (History SP), Murray Whyte (Maths SP), Lucy Matthews (Modern Languages SP), Ursula Goldsmith (Music SP), Rachel Neighbour (Philosophy SP), Sarah Johnston (Physics and Astronomy SP), Lindsay Nielsen (Psychology and Neuroscience SP), Elinor Layne (Social Anthropology SP), Erik Crnkovich (Classics SP), Lowell So (Divinity SP), Orrin McAleer (Medicine SP)

Emma Johnston (Arabic/Persian Convenor), Maddie Lee (Comparative Literature Convenor), Antonia Cahill (French Convenor), Helen Clinton (Italian Convenor), Elodie Phillips (Russian Convenor), Rohan Date (Spanish Convenor)

**Absent with apologies:** Brynne Stewart (Biology SP), Ryan Gibb (Computer Science SP), George Watts (International Relations SP), Eva Halliday (German Convenor), Kushal Tansania (Graduate SP)

## OPEN FORUM

### **Elinor – SA2001 – certain problematic theorists aren't dealt with in the best way**

- Come up at SSCC
- Staff aren't emphasising enough that theories are based on racist things
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year class rep brought this up
- Lecturer said the point is to allow students to contextualise things for themselves and not tell them what to think
- But this is not what the reps were asking for
- Lecturer was standoffish
- EDI Lead was in the meeting too (doing a audit of the curriculum)
- (Rachel) Talking to DoT about this last week and in philosophy, they want students to evaluate the philosopher's arguments, not them as a person
  - o Evaluate later in the semester rather than being a disclaimer
  - o Similar in Social Anthropology
- (Geraint) History doing curriculum audit too
  - o Reading lists
  - o Positive in history
  - o Questions tutors ask in tutorials
  - o Need to look at interaction between figures in history and what they produced
  - o Need to find some sort of balance
  - o Willing to speak to EDI Lead about this, and this will be passed on to us
- (Hannah) Artists can be problematic too
  - o Lots of white artists
  - o Learning and Teaching Committee
  - o Need to incorporate all Art History, otherwise it's not Art History
  - o Just studying European Art History shouldn't be an excuse
  - o Not being a good academic if you aren't moving towards studying all genres of Art History
- (Erik) Has the union done any surveys about how many students would like changes in the curriculum
  - o Might not apply to all departments
  - o (Amy)
    - Involve staff and EDI Lead
    - SPs have a democratic mandate in their School
    - SA hasn't explicitly surveyed on this
    - Association President gets a lot of emails on this, so we know there is an appetite for this
    - Push from the University front, but we need student voices in this
- (Callum) Very slow, tiny steps towards progress
  - o Coming from the University and the students
  - o Performative EDI webpage in English from the EDI Lead
  - o Need to deal with this issue from both sides (staff and students)
  - o Academic representatives need to point out the performativity

- (Lucy) Lots of women in Modern Languages)
- (Geraint)
  - o Need to fully diversify research interests
  - o Need to have lecturers who are fully committed to researching diversity to then teach diversity
- (Elodie) In Modern Languages, Elodie and another student are doing Undergraduate Research Assistantships on diversifying and decolonising curricula to see what they can do in St Andrews
  - o Every Department can have students doing these research projects
  - o It might be worth asking students and staff if they would be interesting in doing a similar thing

### **Murray - Graduate in June**

- Are there any plans for June Graduation?
- People would like this to be in person, but Amy will ask about this

### **Imaan – S-Coding**

- Lots of questions about this recently
- People are panicking and feeling stressed about this
- Need to dispel the rumour that the DoT has put a blanket S-code on a module
- There is still an option to S-code, but this isn't the same as last semester
- Online learning has been difficult
- (Rachel) Also had people asking about S-coding
  - o People feel strongly about this
  - o Students maybe need to be reassured
- (Elinor) had questions about this too
- (Imaan) DoT sent an email to 4<sup>th</sup> years to explain that S-coding and extensions can still be granted
  - o Something may need to come from a central point to say the considerations that have been put in place
- (Amy) Was anticipating this to come up
  - o No blanket policy anymore
  - o University believes strongly that a safe and secure assessment period has been developed
  - o SPF is next week, so we can chat to Clare, Jon and Frank about this
- (Imaan)
  - o It would be good for this to come from the Deans
  - o It might be unfair when Schools and SPs are being blamed for not granting S-coding when it's not their fault or their decision

- (Rachel) Lots of students think they should be eligible for S-coding just because we are online, but forget about the differences between last semester and this semester
- (Amy) More about moving online in such a short period of time
  - o Encourages this to be raised at SPF this week
  - o Will flag this with Frank and Jon in the meantime

## **Geraint – Online lecture attendance**

- Some lectures are only having a small number of views
- Not sure how to encourage people to go to lectures
- (Lucy) Having similar problems
- (Camiel) Having a similar problem, but also with in-person lectures (only 2 people showing up)
- (Antonia) Having similar problems
- (Imaan) Having similar problems
- (Rachel) Strange for DoTs to blame certain modules for this, because it happens every year, so we need an actual strategy to help with this
- (Callum) Is this students' own fault?
- (Joe) Is this a more structural problem?
- (Geraint) These are pre-recorded lectures
  - o What's the point of lectures if students don't have exams? – students are asking this question
- (Murray) Going to a lecture is now just 'hearing information'
- (Lucy) Asked what students thought of pre-recorded lectures and was asked why so few people were watching them
  - o Department got defensive
  - o It shouldn't be SPs' problem to solve this
- (Sarah) Staff members have asked why students weren't going to lectures
  - o Staff thought that a student might know the answer
  - o Staff might genuinely want to know why students aren't coming
- (Sarah) Physics give students a breakdown each week of what they should be doing, even if it isn't something that should be submitted
- (Sarah) The Wobble email
  - o Halfway through semester one
  - o Reiterates why students deserve to be at this University
  - o Gives advice on how to get through the semester
  - o 'The Wobble' is a strange name
- (Rachel) The lecturers think students are being lazy, but this should be treated as a wellbeing issue
  - o This is why SPs shouldn't be dealing with this issue
- (Imaan) Geography had this issue too
  - o Staff have put anonymous feedback forms on every module
  - o Staff members that are struggling to recruit students, they need to re-evaluate what they are doing and should maybe put out a survey themselves and not have SPs doing it

- (Geraint)
  - o Asked Sarah to send an example of the wobble email
  - o Collective responsibility because this will impact students going into honours next year
  - o Doesn't think that we can't tell students that they are wrong
  - o (Antonia) It's not SPs' job to tell students they are wrong
- (Teo)
  - o People are more generally tired at this time of year and things feel effortful

### **Abi – Communication issues**

- Different understandings of policies at the moment
- Staff don't know about some things
- (Sarah) After the last SPF, when the Deans met with the DoTs, things seemed to have been blown out of proportion, and made SPs sound bad
- (Sarah) Concerns about how staff are communicating what SPs do
- (Sarah) Wellbeing list still hasn't been addressed
  - o There will be accountability, as we will follow up on action points next week at SPF
- (Amy) Not surprised that things were misrepresented
  - o Things were extremised and spun into different issues
  - o Looking at feedback loop at Deans level – asked for ideas
- (Lucy) Deans say no to students, and yes to DoTs sometimes
- **Need to raise feedback loop issues with the Deans next week**

### **Callum – students should have a decision to go online, but then DoTs got news that things would change**

- Proctor and Deans changing their mind after speaking to us would have been good, and communication needs to be better
- **Amy, Chloe and Joe to think about this**
- (Murray) If Murray has a meeting to discuss the meeting, he would cc them in
  - o Can SPs be cc'd into emails?
  - o This seems like a reasonable suggestion
  - o We could also request that Amy forwards emails on to us
  - o (Camiel) Could be a confidentiality thing
- (Hannah) Felt that SPs wouldn't be taken seriously

**Teo – 2<sup>nd</sup> year class rep raised that film using theories that are widely used (e.g. Marxism) and psychoanalysis etc**

- It is assumed that students know what these theories are
- Could maybe reach out to other Schools to see how they explain these theories
- (Geraint)
  - o Module to deal with historiography (study of study of history) – philosophy of history
    - Critical methods module
- (Callum) Critical theory comes up in honours
  - o A few lectures that explore Marxism for example
  - o Talking about restructuring subhonours
  - o Introductions to classic texts and critical theory would be good
- (Imaan) There is a fear of oversimplifying theories, but it is important that students need have a baseline, so they can build on knowledge

**SPF – invite extended to all Convenors**