

Education Committee Meeting

Friday 18 October at 5pm in the Committee Room

Present:

- Ondrej Hajda, Education Officer (Convenor & Chair)
- Scott Schorr, Postgraduate President
- Sophie Kelly, Arts & Divinity Senate Rep
- Max Fabiszewski, Arts & Divinity Faculty President
- Mary Kempnich, Science & Medicine Faculty President
- Ben Anderson, Member for Widening Access

Apologies:

- Teddy Woodhouse, Director of Representation
- Peter DaBell, Science & Medicine Senate Rep
- Iain Cupples, Education Advocate (non-voting)

Minutes:

1. Library: Student survey

Ondrej in the process of planning a student-based survey on the Library. The Education Committee discussed issues they wanted to include in this survey:

- opening hours
 - opening earlier on Saturdays and Sundays (9am)
 - closing later on Fridays and Saturday (2am)
- higher fines for recalled books
- new silence system – Level 2 normal, Level 3 quiet, Level 4 silent
- short loan experience based on School

Ondrej expressed that Teddy would probably like to include a question on 24-hour Library opening hours during busy term times period and the revision/exam period.

Question about reserving short loan books was raised as well. Ondrej mentioned he was not sure if such an issue was possible from the Library side. The committee asked if there was any restriction in place on the number of times people can take out a short loan book. Ondrej would find out the answer from the Library.

(Ondrej inquired this issue with the Library Helpdesk later: There is no set number of times you can take out a short loan book and technically you can check it in and out forever. However, if someone approaches the Library Helpdesk in person, they are able to limit this number manually for specific short loan books).

Scott asked if there would be a separate PG survey. Ondrej replied this was something they could work on together.

Ondrej expressed that the best way to address individual issues with the Library was emailing library@ or morebooks@. Furthermore, SLUG (Student Library User Group) would happen later in Semester One with the Library staff and School Presidents (or Library Reps) in attendance.

Action: Ondrej to create a draft version of the Library Survey.

2. Library: Coffee spills

Coffee spills were still a concern for the Library and they were considering running another campaign against it, with a possibility of banning coffee from the building from January. The Library would like a student help on this issue. Ondrej and Teddy were to meet with Ewan on Monday to discuss this issue further.

Mary mentioned that using “Your friend said...” approach or a photo campaign might be effective.

Ben mentioned that Blind Mirth was already doing something for the Library on the issue of recycling and suggested they could do something on the coffee spills as well.

The committee suggested that cleaning stations should be provided in the Library (at least tissues), so that students could clean up after themselves if they spilt anything.

The committee felt that for the campaign to be effective it needed to come from the student body (e.g. Blind Mirth, or the whole Students’ Association). This could also be included in the email the SA President sent out to the whole student body, phrased as “students think” rather than “the Library wants...”

Action: Ondrej and Teddy to present these points at their meeting with the Library.

3. Library: Preservation Week

Linked with the previous issue, Sophie explained that a student initiative could be more effective on addressing the issue of writing in the books. Ondrej added that books that were highlighted or annotated cannot be scanned and digitized for students’ use (e.g. via MMS). Sophie proposed we could hand out bookmarks that would in a funny way address the issue. Mary expressed that a whole week might be too long but maybe an awareness day. The committee proposed the extra money spent on buying new copies and lack of digitisation were the most convincing arguments that could be used during this campaign.

4. New Advising System

Ondrej explained that Teddy was still looking for one more volunteer to help out with testing of the New Advising System. Scott mentioned he would ask in the Postgraduate Committee.

Action: Scott to ask for a volunteer for this project in the PG Committee.

5. Education Events

5.1 Joint event with Debates

Ondrej mentioned he was in touch with the Debating Society about holding a debate on ‘education’. Topics included: arts vs. sciences, outdatedness of the lecture room, and universities preparing for a job market. The Debates were keen on using the ‘job market’ topic and make it their Accenture debate.

5.2 Joint event with Fine Food and Dining

Ondrej mentioned he wanted to organize a session on “brain food” with the Fine Food and Dining Society. This could be anything from a cooking class, lecture or a workshop and they would invite a specialist, maybe from the Sports Centre on healthy eating. Ondrej hoped to organize it for the revision period in Semester One but didn’t have time to organize it. Hopefully, this could be done at the beginning of Semester Two.

Mary mentioned that Student Minds were in touch with a nutritionist in Edinburgh for their Disorder Awareness Week and recommended getting in touch with them.

Action: Mary to send Ondrej contact details for Student Minds person who was organizing this event.

6. AOCB

Scott mentioned that the PG Society was keen to organize a referendum on PGT/PGR identity (especially concerning St Leonard's College) and felt like the University is moving forward without asking for student opinion on this.

Action: Scott to inform the committee on development regarding this referendum.

Ben noted that the Library collects over £75,000 in fines each year and inquired if it was possible that there would be a day on which the Library would donate all the fines paid to the Students' Association Bursary Fund (alongside the donation day to Book Aid International in November and RAG Week in February). Ondrej suggested this could happen at the end of Semester Two.

Action: Ondrej to ask the Library about raising money for the SA Bursary Fund through donating Library fines on a specific day at the end of Semester Two.