



School Presidents Forum

St Andrews Students' Association

Meeting date: 19/11/2020 (6pm) via MS Teams

Present: Amy Gallacher (DoEd), Joseph Horsnell (Arts/Div FP), Abi Whitefield (PG Convenor)

Clare Peddie (Proctor), Frank Muller (Dean of Arts)

Geraint Morgan (History), Callum Irvine (English), Eva Halliday (German Convenor), Lucy Matthews (Modern Languages), Jeanne Adam (Management), Elinor Layne (Social Anthropology), George Watts (International Relations), Lindsay Nielsen (Psychology & Neuroscience), Belinda Hawes (Earth Sciences), Camiel Leake (Chemistry), Murray Whyte (Mathematics & Statistics), Brynne Stewart (Biology), Sarah Johnston (Physics), Rachel Neighbour (Philosophy), Imaan Kotadia (Geography & SD), Ursula Goldsmith (Music), Ryan Gibb (Computer Science), Lowell So (Divinity), Teo Yarkova (Film), Maddie Lee (Comp Lit Convenor), Kushal Talsania (Graduate School), Erik Crnkovich

Apologies: Chloe Fielding (Sci/Med FP), Sanjana Ramaswamy (Economics), Hannah Koegler (Art History)

Absent: Jon Issberner (Acting Dean of Science)

MINUTES

- Introduction **(5 mins)**
 - Amy – introduced the meeting and housekeeping points about tempo of the meeting
- Follow on updates from previous meeting **(20 mins)**
 1. Upcoming Examination Diet
 - Proctor – examination diet completely online; communications coming out at the end of the week to explain what's going on

- Practice will be allowed, in a similar way to last semester – there will also be an amount of time before/after the exam
- Noted that first years won't have experienced the system before
- Students surveyed about whether they have difficulties finding a quiet space; setting up these spaces for 50 or so students to do exams in quiet
- **ACTION – if SPs find people who haven't filled out survey and need quiet exam spaces, please let the Proctor know**
- Exam timetables have gone out
- Geraint – could the link be circulated to SPs to the survey?
- Proctor – this can be circulated again, and has been but yes
- **ACTION – Proctor to send link to SPs**
- Brynne – what is the deadline for this to register need for study space?
- Proctor – We needed to know rough numbers for setting up exam quiet spaces as soon as possible; changing circumstances can be accommodated
- Sarah – Will uploading and downloading times be the same?
- Proctor – this will be in the email later this week; they will be the same amount of time (not made shorter)
- Frank Muller – keeping time window the same will be advantageous to students; majority of students will likely have good WiFi connections
- Amy – who should students contact after the form has closed to ask for quiet space?
- Proctor – this will also be included in the exam information email and there is a website with contact details
- Camiel – Exam info website there are three emails on who to contact and this is confusion; can we change it?
- Proctor – DOTs have also asked this and so have we – should be changed in time, but might not
- Callum – a number of Schools haven't consulted with students about how the exams will look in the Arts Faculty. Last semester there were choices over exam format (changes were seen in a few modules in response to student consultation)
- Proctor – exam format is fixed way in advance through Teaching Committees.
- Murray – too late in semester for this to change, but the download and upload times are too generous, and some people abuse this.
- Abi – (via chat) could there be a timestamp on submitted work?
- **ACTION - Amy – Murray's point will be picked up next week at EduCom**
- Frank Muller – teaching in semester 1 plans were sorted during the summer. 700 modules + were changed and adapted. There was no edict from the Proctor to say don't talk to your student reps; this is a School-

by-School decision-making process. There was a big spread of opinion across the Uni about exam formats, and exam grades were quite high so there was no underperformance.

2. Semester Two Plans

- Proctor – teaching will go ahead. The Uni will do its best to do as much in-person teaching as it can. Lectures will all be online next semester.
- Questions about how students can return; testing centre is up and running to enable students to go back home after exams confident that they aren't carrying Covid-19. You can have two tests, five days apart. We don't know what to do with the testing centre after Xmas; might be asked to use it to bring St Andrews students upon return. Quarantine regulations will also be in force – accommodations being made for this (including food). Whatever the Scottish Government ask the Uni to do, St Andrews will work flat-out to ensure this is rolled out smoothly.
- Sarah – questions about testing; if a student tested positive and didn't have anywhere to stay, has the Uni got contingencies? Sports Centre being used as the Testing Centre until February – could the uni test anyway irrespective of ScotGov in Jan?
- Proctor – yes, the Uni will house you if you test positive. Uni will support private renters as well, just in case this becomes an issue. Tests are provided by ScotGov for this round of testing. Huge effort from Uni to get this sorted (VP Governance)
- Camiel – (via chat) confusion between postgrads on what is expected from them doing the tests
- Proctor – some PGs have volunteered to help, they will be fully-trained
- Lindsay – worry among international students about being able to come back; afraid of not being able to get back. Does the BRP allow us in even if there is a travel ban?
- Proctor – not sure. ScotGov allow students to travel out of the country. Would be surprised if there was a ban on int'l students coming back – highly unlikely but can't promise this
- Frank Muller – closure of the UK border would be London decision, but this hasn't happened at any stage in the pandemic yet.
- Sarah – (via chat) maybe a testing FAQ on the website?
- George – thank you for testing centre communication, quashed a lot of nerves; what is the advice for students who booked travel after 30th November?
- Proctor – if you have booked travel pre-testing centre, there's no compulsory testing so nothing changes. Not going to fence students in!
- Proctor – Uni organising a big Christmas programme of events in the Can Do marquee

- Geraint – suggesting students should take things with them in case they get stuck abroad?
- Proctor – suggests students should do this anyway
- **ACTION – will ask Neil Scott (...Sally Mapstone!) to include this in comms?**

3. S-Coding Policy Update (for Semester One)

- Amy – student reps have been getting questions about what this is going to be from students who are concerned that the situation hasn't changed much and is still affecting them
- Frank Muller – current S-Coding system is like it was before the pandemic. Available on same ticket as it has always been, minus the summer arrangements. Situations which substantially affect the student's ability to submit work etc (semester two last year was entirely unexpected). Semester one this year is not unexpected – different, but not unexpected. The actual number of S-Codes requested was relatively low.
- Geraint – asked for clarity over what to communicate
- Frank Muller – reiterated the policy
- Brynne – mental health as a result of the pandemic, does this qualify for an S-Code?
- Proctor – if you have a mental health episode of any sort (pandemic-triggered or otherwise) where Student Services can back this up, then S-Coding is applicable. The only change is no 'global' availability of the policy. Evidence is required for S-Coding. Normally only allowed for 25% of the degree (usually only one semester of the four which count towards your degree).
- Frank Muller – threshold for S-Codings after the results are out is significantly higher; students should come forward with issues before. Retrospective s-coding requires a very good explanation.
- Amy – if students come to you with these issues, tell them to go to Student Services

4. Summer Graduation Plans

- Proctor – plan is for graduation to be in-person in Younger Hall at the moment (two weeks – because we need to graduate people from last year too). We will try and get everyone across the stage in-person at some point, for sure.

5. Process for Splitting Classes

- Amy – how does this process work? How does the SP role fit in here?

- Frank Muller – default is that classes are taught in hybrid mode. Not everyone has found this satisfactory – some staff decided to split the cohort into in-person and online. Module coordinator should have tried out hybrid teaching, students might find it doesn't work and they speak as a module; consensus on this among modules, DoT agrees, goes to Dean for approval. Didn't want classes which never tried hybrid and classes in which students wanted in-person teaching to be placed online.
- Lucy – can we get an update in the interim between our meetings? We were told 'no' at the last meeting and some SPs found out via their DoTs that this had been approved.
- Frank Muller – approved
- Callum – second's Lucy's point; email to SPs/students saying this is an option would've been good. Students may be unaware of this
- Frank Muller – this is for the module coordinator; every student has the option to go online if they'd like to
- Amy – communication between SPs – we should circulate progress on action points; communication on this specific policy – finding out after academic staff was problematic because students had complained to their academic reps (summarising this point)
- Abi – have module coordinators/school staff been made aware that this is now a process that they can deploy if they feel necessary?
- Proctor – DoTs were (re)told this yesterday – they should pass this onto the Schools. Silent majority of students really want in-person teaching (from SA questionnaire). Mental health benefits of being in a class and ensuring we achieve this.
- Sarah – confirmation this will be in place for next semester? When will students be consulted about this during the semester?
- Frank Muller – not something which could happen to students unless they wanted; students have the individual free choice to go online themselves.
- Sarah – clarified question. Will there be a few week trial period?
- Frank Muller – improving rooms and technology; individual option still exists; before a collective decision is taken, some in-person teaching should've been tried. Give it a couple of weeks after two weeks, then you can decide. If you don't like it anyway, you can go online
- Proctor – what is Sarah worried about?
- Sarah – it has taken so long this semester to get the process up and running for classes who want to be online to do so. Sounds like it could be a struggle again to convince staff
- Proctor – nothing to stop the process we've talked about from happening. I don't understand why you want to go wholly online when you don't know what things will look like?
- Amy – we should discuss this separately

- Callum – this came up in the SWAG yesterday; lack of faith that a lot of decisions which need to be taken for disabled students will be undertaken
 - Proctor – main concern is when we do a hybrid system?
 - Callum – probably the most troublesome part; significant adjustments required to make it accessible for disabled students
 - Frank Muller – fewer than 10 modules (4 in AD) have requested to move online-only (several weeks after this option was introduced)
 - Proctor – if it helps a hearing-impaired student to go online, we certainly will do that
- Dual Mode Delivery **(15 mins)**
- AOCB
 - Callum – looking at academic policies this afternoon. Is there an obligation for extensions to be available for any student on any module? Can a module say ‘absolutely no extensions’?
 - Frank Muller – this would be highly unusual. Would intervene if this was the case.
 - Callum – English dissertation module has said absolutely no extensions; students have contacted me with these concerns. Diss module support is very limited (even this wasn’t provided).
 - Frank Muller – write to me and summarise these issues specifically; did a review of the School last week.
 - **ACTION – Callum to write to Frank Muller**
 - Geraint – about next semester’s exams. Potential for online exams being proctored next semester (heard in discussions). Not wishing for a full-blown discussion here, but wanted to make the point student representatives need to be included in a consultation on this.
 - Proctor – two days ago, Uni approved proposition to procure digital assessment tool. Gathering requirements for the tool. No chance being in place this academic year! Students will definitely be involved in the process; sabb on the project board
 - Sarah – (via chat) will there be a survey on DMD at the end of semester to inform next semester?
 - Proctor – amended MEQs for online-delivery questions
 - Sarah – completed MEQs this afternoon; wording not conducive to DMD feedback. Note for SPs that students need to include DMD feedback
 - Murray – online lectures are DMD?
 - Proctor – this is the case, yes

- Amy – wrapped up the meeting; will make sure we follow-up on the actions. Discussion about moving classes online next semester – SPs invited to participate.