

Education Committee Meeting

Date | Time 30th March 2023, 06:00 PM | *Location* Large Rehearsal Room, Student Union

Meeting called by	Education Executive Committee	Attendees: Noah, Anne, Serena, Sadie, Quinn, Federica, Rosa, Zoe, Rovvie W, Madeleine, Robbie C, Shreya, Carol, Harry, Jane, Kirsy, Patricia, Laurence, David, Krish, Syna, Harry B-B, Dan, River, Catherine, Claire, James, Olivia, Martyna, Toni, Kiera, Tom R, Gemma L, Maggie, Kiki, Anna, Phoebe, Sairaa Optional: n/a Apologies: Iona, Yasmin, Cam, Ava, Fran, Chase Absences: Tom B, Iona, Grace, Emma, Taylor Please read: n/a Please bring: n/a
Type of meeting	Education Committee Meeting	
Facilitator	Faculty Presidents	
Note taker(s)	Toni	
Timekeeper	Toni	

Agenda Item

Topic	Presenter	Time Allotted
Welcome - All attendees introduce themselves.	Noah	5 minutes
Jane Yarnell (Disability Officer) from the Disabled Students Network (DSN) is invited to lead a discussion with officers surrounding accessibility issues raised by students - Jane relates that the DSN is looking at workload expectations as well as physical accessibility of reading lists (i.e. some texts are not legible for screen readers) - Jane asks officers for examples and experiences in various schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Catherine (SP English) and River (incoming SP English) relate that accessibility of reading lists has been raised frequently in the School of English, in particular concerning the format of texts. Many texts are not available digitally. Library staff scan copies but sometimes shadows make copies illegible. The building is inaccessible due to stairs. This also extends to attitudes from members of staff. o Federica (Comparative Literature Convenor) relates similar experiences as well as high expectations 	Jane	20 minutes

<p>concerning workload. Most books in Sub-honours modules are not available online. Scans of pre-modern texts are often scanned which poses difficulties for accessibility. Students often do not have the time capacities to copy-and-paste texts into PDF files.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jane responds that there is a University service available that turns texts into digitally legible sources. This is not widely available, though. ○ Kiki (SP International Relations) relates that access to support tools is often predicated on the disclosure of disabilities. Many students do not have diagnoses yet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jane responds that in theory, students would still be able to access help. However, what is not available is software support. Kiki asks for more transparency and communication of these sources. Jane takes note of this. ▪ Rosa (SP History): in History, some sources are in Old English which is not legible for word-to-speech devices. Catherine agrees: the same is the case for the School of English. ▪ Jane confirms that they will be working with their successor on guidelines on how to make reading lists more accessible. ▪ Claire (SP Music): some primary readings are unavailable online due to publishers. Claire acknowledges that this is an issue specific to music. Jane confirms that this is specific to music and adds that there surely must be a way of working around it. Jane takes note of this. ▪ Laurence (SP Divinity) asks for how to gauge if workload is reasonable. Jane responds that the credit points are calculated based on working hours. If a person takes longer to do the same amount of work, this should be adjusted. Jane is trying to get more consistent and transparent labelling of what is compulsory and what is additional in terms of reading. ○ Noah (Director of Education) asks: would officers be comfortable putting together an open letter outlining these issues raised in collaboration with the DSN? This could go to SRC or be carried over into next year's EduCom and then picked up by next year's committee? 		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoe (SP Maths & Stats) emphasises that matters of accessible reading lists do not apply to all schools equally. Noah agrees. ▪ Catherine (SP English) suggests an open letter with recommendations to all schools that takes into account different modes of operation across Schools. Catherine suggests including information about what makes a reading list accessible so that students can voice the issues they encounter specifically. ▪ Jane adds: a module on good practice is being developed for staff. This should be included in the open letter, as the module will be made optional. ▪ Kiki (SP International Relations) asks: is it possible to make the conversion of files into HTML school policy? Noah (Director of Education) responds: this type of policy should not be made uni-wide policy due to the uniqueness of school-specific issues. So far, uni policy states that reasonable adjustments are to be made which is a very broad definition. This should be brought into a conversation and addressed in each school respectively. Zoe (SP Maths & Stats) adds (in the chat): ‘my DoT says that it’s a university policy to have accessible course notes for all modules within 5 or 7 years but personally has not seen this.’ Jane shares this in the chat (LINK). 		
<p>UAF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zoe (SP Maths & Stats) asks for clarification on academic calendar discussions. Would it be reasonable to reach out to staff again via email to follow up? Noah welcomes everyone to reach out to staff before the end of their term. - Madeleine (German Convenor) relates a meeting with Gerald Prescott (Associate Dean Education Science) and Ros Claase (Director of Student Experience). Madeleine expresses that communication appears to fail and that three meetings per academic year is not sufficient. Madeleine appreciates that other universities are being consulted for existing models for the academic calendar but emphasises that this is not sufficient in serving as a counter-argument to data gathered by EduCom that specifically relate to students’ experiences at St Andrews. There would need to be better briefing before meetings so that staff can properly engage with the 	Noah	20 minutes

<p>arguments that would be raised. Madeleine suggests that staff could attend EduCom more frequently so that staff would know how students are feeling. In the meeting with Gerald and Ros, communication of information was addressed. Madeleine suggested physical copies of information i.e. in libraries and university spaces. Madeleine emphasises the variety of issues that come up across schools. Madeleine expresses that the 1:1 meeting was much more efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noah (Director of Education) relates that conversations in the past have revolved around the same issues and took similar directions; these suggestions were never acted on. This is why next year's EduCom was brought along last week to familiarise themselves with the argumentative trajectories staff would follow. Noah invites officers to go to their Schools' Learning & Teaching Committees to raise these issues. Noah asked DoTs to input on a version of the academic calendar that works for them and their workload ○ Rosa (SP History) suggests an open document with advice for next year's educom. Noah responds: the Faculty Presidents and Director of Education will meet with all officers individually to check in about handover and what advice has been passed on. ○ Several officers confirm that they will ask for input from DoTs on the academic calendar at upcoming SSCCs. ○ Catherine (SP English): several committees that Catherine went to throughout the year were very informative and offered insight into higher management. Catherine asks if the average student (who is not a Rep) could also sit on those committees in the future? Catherine expresses that emails about these opportunities often add to confusion, when meetings get cancelled and students may not receive notifications about changes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Noah (Director of Education) relates that work is being done on re-evaluating who sits on what committee. In July, new officers will be invited to share values and based on that will be offered to sit in on various working groups/committees. The idea is to open up spaces where students can give input. Noah emphasises that the same person will commit to sitting in on each committee for 		
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<p>consistency and more efficiency throughout the academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catherine (SP English) advocates for a larger Educom data bank for access of information. ▪ Chase (Academic Representation Coordinator) and Toni (Academic Representation Intern) sent a folder for that and this will be picked up again. ▪ Laurence (SP Divinity) asks: after the last UAF in February, Frank (AVP Dean of Learning and Teaching, Provost) followed up on issues raised. Was this the case again? Noah (Director of Education) responds: Noah followed up on the points that were left unreplied, but this did not happen again for last week's UAF. Noah will meet with staff next week about UAF. ○ Jane: had a conversation with Sharon Leahy (Associate Dean, Students Science) about extensions. In the new generalised system, there will be an option to automatically escalate an extension request if there are issues with one member of staff. Sharon is happy to get input. ○ Noah (Director of Education): Sharon (Associate Dean, Students Science) and Stephen (Associate Dean, Students Arts & Divinity) were meant to attend UAF, but had family issues come up spontaneously. Noah adds that they always send summaries of every EduCom meeting to members of staff. 		
<p>Rep nominations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminder to nominate Reps for School President and Class Rep awards. Reminder that officers can self-nominate. 	Noah	5 minutes

Observers: None

Resources: