



University of St Andrews Students' Association Education Committee

MINUTES

Monday 26 October 2015 – Committee Room – 6pm

Present

Member's Name

Eleanor Mullin
Amelia Hunter
Claire Brodie
Marjan Magharehi
Joe Tantillo
Timothy Stackhouse
Sarah Alexander
Kirsty Mearns
Ilaria Gidoro
Eilidh Reid
Kit Klaes
Nic Wells
Megan Bruce
Mira Boneva
Louis Fearn
Hussain Raja
Tania Struetzel
Sally Allmark
Tomi Baikie
Deborah Moffett
Louise McCaul
Imogen Hawley

Position

Arts & Divinity Faculty President
Biology School President
Chemistry School President
Classics School President
Director of Representation
Divinity School President
Earth & Environmental Science School President
Economics & Finance School President
Education and Representation Coordinator (Minutes)
English School President
Film Studies & Music School President
Geography & SD School President
History School President
International Relations School President
Management School President
Medicine School President
PG Convenor
Philosophy School President
Physics & Astronomy School President
Psychology & Neuroscience School President
Science & Medicine Faculty President
Social Anthropology School President

Absent

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In attendance

Miriam Chappell

SRC Wellbeing Officer

1. Apologies

Member's Name

Lily Barnes
Jesse Galapia
Raghav Mehra
Verity Baynton

Position

Art History School President
ELT President
Mathematics & Statistics School President
Modern Languages School President

Reason

2. Matters arising

“Early information” to be added to the agenda under point 4.

3. Reports/Catch up

Everybody presented a short report and informed of various events and SSCC meetings. Some issues concerning mass messaging were discussed. Imogen said that 1st-year students received her emails in the spam folder. Hussain stated that the messaging system was not working at all for him. One of Kirsty's emails also did not go through. Joe said that he would look into this.

Action: Joe to look into messaging issues.

The Faculty Presidents informed of what had been discussed during the last SRC meeting, including the motions that had been approved. The SRC had also co-opted a new member for Widening Access and Participation.

Some School Presidents reported that their class reps were not being very engaged in their roles. Joe suggested SPs in this situation have a face-to-face meeting with the class reps, and reminded them that they can decide to dismiss reps and co-opt others. He also encouraged SPs to let him know by email when some class reps are particularly avoiding their responsibilities.

One SP mentioned that she was having difficulties communicating with her DoT. Eleanor suggested that SPs cc the Faculty Presidents and the DoRep in emails when this happens. Joe said that he was willing to meet DoTs if SPs are having similar problems.

Tim was negotiating a budget for the SP with the School.

Deborah was setting up a mentoring scheme and said that her School was undergoing another external review.

A SP stated that she was having difficulty getting her money back for an event, after this had been approved by the School. Joe encouraged her (and others in this position) to go to the School Administrator with the printed email showing that the funding request had been approved.

Mira informed that the tutor pay had been increased in the School of IR.

Tania informed that the first PG Exec Forum was going to happen on 3 November and asked SPs to let her know who the PG Exec reps in their Schools are. She also informed that she was working with the Proctor on the issue of tutor pay and asked all to keep her in the loop if they are thinking of doing something about it.

Joe informed that he was working with the Proctor on the reporting scale, as some lecturers did not seem to use the entire scale (from 0 to 20). He wrote a paper on this, arguing that lecturers should use the entire scale (including 0 and 20, if relevant). He also reported that some students wanted to start a petition to reinstate a reading week, with exams happening after Christmas. This was still at the early stage. Joe also highlighted that students should inform their Schools or Student Services when they are experiencing anything that could affect their grades and he stressed that students should disclose this information at the right time, before appealing. He encouraged students to get in touch with the Students' Association's Education Advocate, Iain Cupples, for advice on appeals. Eleanor informed that there is detailed information about appeals on the University website. Some SPs raised that it is difficult

to find this information and that it should be more easily accessible. Tania reminded everyone that a guide to appeals is also available on <http://www.yourunion.net/support/education/disciplineandappeals/guidetoappeals/>.

4. Working group updates

4.1. Early Information

Louise reported that she was going to create a document with all the information received on this point from SPs. Some SPs seemed to be happy about how things were going, but others were very unhappy, and she would work with them.

4.2. Feedback

Sally reported that the situation seemed to be very different on this point in the two faculties. She asked all to send her and Claire information on this as soon as possible.

Action: All SPs who have not done so yet to email Claire and Sally with information about feedback.

Claire argued that, in Science, students do not seem to request feedback a lot. Louise said that perhaps students do not know that they can ask for it.

4.3. Supervision

Louise said that she intended to find examples of good practice on this point from last year and asked Joe and Ilaria for the texts of the nominations for the Teaching Awards in this category.

Action: Ilaria to send Louise anonymised Teaching Awards nomination texts about lecturers who did well in supervision.

Louise also informed that she wanted to look at the questions in the MEQ for the dissertation modules, as these have different questions. She asked for help from those who are having the dissertation module this semester.

Action: All relevant SPs to collect feedback from students who have the dissertation module this semester and send to Louise.

Mira informed that she was working on PGT supervision and she was in contact with her DoT.

4.4. Diversity of Assessment

Eleanor informed that she had only heard back from one School and she was hoping to get more replies.

Action: All SPs to send Eleanor information about diversity of assessment.

4.5. Joint Honours

Eleanor reported that some Schools were doing really well on this point, but others had issues and she wanted to work together with the relevant School Presidents. She wanted to create a focus group of about 15 students from the different Schools who are doing Joint Honours.

Action: All SPs to find one person in their School who is doing Joint Honours and is willing to take part in a focus group.

Eleanor was also thinking of creating a Joint Honours handbook for all Schools.

4.6. Advising

Eilidh reported that she got into conversation with students informally on this point and they seemed to be satisfied. She asked SPs from Science to join the working group. She also asked SPs to email her if they are aware of some ineffective advising.

Action: All SPs to email Eilidh about ineffective advising.

Joe suggested she get in touch with the two Pro-Deans Advising.

Deborah pointed out that the name “advising” can be confusing for students, as it is actually more “academic guidance”.

5. Student-Staff Ratio

Imogen asked whether other SPs were concerned about the student-staff ratio in their Schools. Her HoD wanted her to raise this with the EduCom because the situation in Social Anthropology is bad. This is so because the School does not seem to have money to hire more lecturers. She also pointed out that their NSS results had not been very good, perhaps also because of the student-staff ratio. Kirsty also argued that the ratio was bad in her School, and they also had bad NSS results.

Joe argued that the University of St Andrews is one of the best for student-staff ratio in the UK. He stated that we need exact numbers to bring this forward.

Action: Imogen (and other concerned SPs) to find exact numbers of student-staff ratio in their School.

Joe stated that he would add this point to the agenda of the next meeting.

Action: Joe to add “student-staff ratio” to the agenda of the next meeting.

6. Study space issue

It was proposed to discuss this issue more. Tomi argued that it is going to be even worse with the number of students rising year after year. Joe informed that the University is currently discussing study space issues and they are aware of the problem. They are planning to move some staff out of town to Guardbridge in the future to create more space. Tania reported that last year they found some study spaces in the various departments, but they were unused because students preferred to go to the library. She reminded everybody to encourage students to use the Gateway or study spaces in their Schools and advertise yourunion.net/studyspaces.

Action: All SPs to encourage students to use the Gateway or any available space in their Schools or halls at peak times.

Tomi raised the point that tutorial rooms are often empty and they could be booked by students if there were a system to book them.

Joe informed that there are several computer rooms around town and they are not very well used.

7. PG business

Megan stressed that EduCom should also concentrate on PG issues. Other SPs said that they should encourage their PG reps to organise socials.

Joe said that this point would be added to every EduCom agenda.

8. AOCB

Miriam Chappell said that she wanted to know more about welfare reps and activities in Schools. Joe and some SPs mentioned welfare events that had been planned or were being planned. Miriam proposed some more types of stress-release events and offered SPs to get in touch with her on wellbeing@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Joe informed that there were going to be meetings to elect the spokespeople of the Yes and No campaign teams for the NUS referendum and asked all to spread the word.

The meeting adjourned.

Next meeting:

Education Committee, Monday, 9 November, 6pm, Committee Room