



University of St Andrews Students' Association

SEMESTER REPORT

MARTINMAS 2017

NICOLA SIMONETTI

Faculty President of Arts and Divinity

JOHN WEAVER

Faculty President of Science and Medicine

1 | GOALS & AIMS

September

John and Nicola met together before the end of the 2016/2017 academic year to discuss plans for the new semester, and what common goals we wished to accomplish. We both felt strongly about seeing a smooth introduction of Lecture Capture, as well as improvements to student feedback systems, and careers events. In August, John met with Zach (DoED) to catch up on summer events and preparations for the first weeks of the next term. During Freshers Week, Nicola and John met with Zach and IT Services for a walkthrough of the Elections Portal. This extremely helpful walkthrough allowed us to more effectively pass on the critical information to the School Presidents during a brief meeting of the extended EduCom (+Lang Convenors). Nicola then arranged a meeting with the School Presidents of the Faculty of Arts/Divinity to tackle feedback problems in the Faculty of Arts and the setup of a fairer system to advertise internship/research opportunities within the University.

John and Nicola also began work for hosting ID module elections, in collaboration with the respective ID coordinators for arts and science. At the induction session of ID4002, Nicola managed to ensure 7 class reps. John worked with the ID4001 staff organiser to hold elections within tutorial groups, ensuring 5 class reps.

October (Elections)

John and Nicola attended their first Academic Council. Prior to the Council, Nicola contacted the School Presidents of the Faculty of Arts to inquire about pressing matters that needed to be brought to the attention of the Council, but nothing major came up. The Council was tame and collected. On October 2, John and Nicola were updated about the satisfying results of Class Rep elections and a new proposal was made to encourage a collaboration among the Schools to introduce Offer Holders visiting days and the creation of working groups. At the end of the month, the School Presidents of Science were invited for a social evening at the Main Bar in an effort to improve communication and support. The event was well received.

November

John and Nicola organised a meeting with the School Presidents to discuss strategies of improvement of the Learning & Teaching spaces on the basis of the survey form shared by the L&T Space Review. The meeting was very profitable. Nicola and John also met up with some Class Reps from ID4001-ID4002 to discuss problems and potential solutions in the placement modules prior to the upcoming SSCC. Among the issues arisen, there were: need to clarify student role during placements; need to improve guidance/documentation for project proposals and lesson plan activities; need to increase information on how to handle disabilities in the class. The SSCC took place on November 9 and it was well attended. At the SSCC, besides the points listed above, John and Nicola acknowledged the need to encourage their successors to strongly persuade all the new module representatives to read the ID handbook thoroughly. It has been an absolute pleasure working with this dedicated team of representatives and coordinators to address problems in one of the most non-traditional modules of the University, with visible positive results.

2 | WORKING GROUPS

The Faculty Presidents observe all the working groups and lead a few. This semester two working groups were organised on Feedback and Careers. The third, and final, working group is planned for February on Equality and Diversity. We strongly recommend that future Faculty Presidents continue these meetings.

1st Working Group: Feedback

The first working group on Feedback improvement was held in mid-October. During this meeting, Nicola, John, and the School Presidents of Classics, Biology, English and Physics talked through effective ways of leading SSCCs. They discussed the relationship between School Presidents and DoTs, the logistics of such meetings and shared information on how to build a good agenda. In addition, at said meeting Nicola, John and the School Presidents who attended, agreed on trying to implement some basic ways of gathering feedback in all those schools which were willing to take part in the trial. Flashcards and sticky notes seemed to represent the best choice.

2nd Working Group: Careers

The second working group on Careers was held in November and it was attended by the Director of Education; Faculty President of Arts and Divinity; Faculty President of Science and Medicine; School of Philosophy; School of Mathematics & Statistics; School of Social Anthropology. Strategies to improve internships events, school talks, and the interaction between the Careers Centre and the student body were advanced in the hope to be implemented soon. Actions to be taken included the introduction of undergraduate bi-weekly lectures series to improve and implement students' motivation and compartmentalised publicity to improve the talks/events offered by the Careers Centre.

3 | ACADEMIC COUNCILS

We have attended the meetings, representing the entire student population within the highest academic body of the University. No further details can be provided due to the sensitive nature of these meetings.

4 | FUTURE PLANS

Nicola and John have resolved to follow through with our roles next semester, including a third working group. We understand that the second semester can be very taxing on final year School Presidents, and will work to support them where possible. We will also help publicise the National Student Survey to final year students via School Presidents and poster notices. In addition, we will be assisting with elections not only through the Elections Committee, but also by actively encouraging new candidates within and without academic representative roles. We will also be running all School President elections for which the outgoing School President is a candidate in any election. Nicola and John will also seek out means by which to host more social events for the entire academic representational system, which have been enormously successful in the past.

N.B. For any questions or concerns, please get in touch at artdivfp@ or scimedfp@