

Minutes of the Lent Term meeting of the Staff Student Liaison Committee

In attendance:

Robert Eisenberg
Kate Gillett
Cees Heere
Taunton Paine
Tanya Harmer
Arne Hofmann
Paul Horsler
Nayna Bhatti

A: Follow-up on previous agenda items

1. Library & LSE IT Services
 - The feedback from the previous meeting was passed on to the library and the IT department.
 - On computer availability, it was noted that there are a number of rooms outside of the library with usually enough computers available. E509 cannot be outfitted with a computer, since the room cannot be properly secured.
 - The LSE's computer availability app was met with approval. At the moment, it is only available for the iPhone, but versions for Blackberry and Android are in development.
 - It was suggested that it would be nifty to be able to use an app to renew library books.
2. The induction process
 - In order to provide more information prior to arrival, it was suggested to provide six newsletters to offer holders from the department of history. The suggestion was met with approval.
 - It was noted that students in the Double Degree Programmes would receive their newsletters during their year at Columbia/PKU.
3. Visa applications for Double Degree Students.
 - The website of the LSE's visa office has a special section on Double Degree students. The pre-arrival newsletter from the department may be employed to flag up concerns about visa application in advance, and link through to the relevant information.
4. Course packs
 - The course pack for the second term of HY451 unfortunately arrived late. It was noted that Professor Rodriguez-Salgado personally reimbursed students for the extra printing costs incurred as a result.
5. Financial support for two-year programmes

- It was noted that the concerns about financial support for the Double Degrees raised at the previous meeting were incorrect: it is possible for LSE-PKU students to apply for financial support for their year at LSE on the outset, before starting their year at PKU. For the LSE-Columbia programme, it is possible for students to apply for financial support whilst at Columbia. This discrepancy is caused by the fact that applications for LSE-Columbia are handled by Columbia University, while those for the LSE-PKU programme are handled by the Graduate Admissions Office at LSE.
6. Length of Seminar for HY421.
- The length of the seminar was discussed at the staff meeting, but will remain at 1,5 hours, since the 1-hour lecture brings the grand total of contact hours to 2,5.
7. Allocation of dissertation supervisors
- After reviewing the dissertation proposals, a few students were given the opportunity to swap advisors. It remains problematic, however, that there remains an overwhelming demand for historians working on the 20th century, meaning that there will always be some students who cannot be paired up with the advisor of their choice.
 - It was noted, however, that on the whole, the current system seems less suitable to matching people with their preferred advisor than the previous one. A later allocation of dissertation supervisors was looked on favourably.

B: New Points Raised

8. Deadlines for capped courses
- It might be worth further investigating the possibility of moving the deadline for applying to capped courses forward, allowing students who don't get in more flexibility in selecting alternative courses.
9. Issue with HY412: Spain and the Great Powers
- A concern was raised on the teaching schedule for HY412. The course is taught through a seminar and a lecture. Unfortunately, the seminar falls directly *before* the lecture, diminishing the perceived value of the latter. A further issue was raised concerning the coordination between the two teachers responsible.
10. Library & IT
- LSE for you has been updated to allow for a motivational statement per capped course in the course registration section. This will serve to prevent any further confusion.
 - Mr Paul Horsler took the opportunity to encourage the Committee to participate in the ongoing debate on loan periods. It was noted that increasing the availability of eBooks may be worth pursuing further.
11. HY499
- Dr Hofmann stated his intention of recasting the format of the lectures for HY499. Instead of giving a lecture every two weeks, the lectures will be given on a weekly basis. This will make information on sources, archival research etc. available to students earlier.

- The inclusion of a career day was met with approval, but would be better held at an earlier date: the 3rd of March was considered too late. The second week of Lent term was put forward as an alternative.

12. Round Table Debates

- Last term's round table on WW1 was met with approval, and the organisation of more of these debates (perhaps as many as two per term) was encouraged.