

Minutes of the Undergraduate Student-Staff Liaison Committee First Meeting
Wednesday 17 October 2007, Room E409

Present:

Students: Yisam Heneghan, Elisa Prosperetti, Adrian Rogstad

Staff: Nigel Ashton, Alexandra Smith

1. *Review of induction process for new students*

Students feedback was positive; the induction had been informative and built expectations for the year.

Nigel Ashton raised the issue of whether there was too much information being given at once during the induction, but students disagreed, saying the amount of information was manageable.

2. *Elections for representatives to the Library User Group and Undergraduate Student Forum*

Yisam Heneghan stood for the position of Undergraduate Student Forum representative and was elected unanimously.

The Library User Group representative position remains vacant, and will be advertised in an e-mail to all students.

3. *Election for a General Course representative*

Whitney Hart, absent from the meeting, stood for the position of General Course representative and was elected unanimously.

4. *Election for IR department liaising representative*

Elisa Prosperetti stood for the position of IR department liaising representative and was elected unanimously.

5. *Any Other Business*

- Nigel Ashton informed about a new school initiative on a review of teaching practices, prompted amongst other things by the school's ranking in the National Student Survey. A paper on this was to be presented to the Academic Board on Wednesday 17 October. In connection with this the department will be looking into ways of getting better and more extensive feedback from students on their experience of teaching methods and practices.
- Concerns were raised by Elisa Prosperetti over the accuracy of feedback being given on essays from temporary staff class teachers, leading students to get the wrong impression of how well prepared they are for exams. The example of the IR department, where students hand in essays to their personal tutors for evaluation, was cited as a possible remedy for this. Despite the problem of certain history courses being too specialised for the IR example to be followed, the concern will be raised by Nigel Ashton at the departmental staff meeting for discussion.
- A question was raised by Adrian Rogstad as to whether it would be possible and/or desirable to allocate students pursuing a joint IR and History degree personal tutors specialising in contemporary history, as this is often the interest of students focusing on IR. The matter will be raised by Nigel Ashton at the departmental staff meeting for discussion.
- Concerns were raised by Yisam Heneghan over some first year students having not been contacted by their personal tutor, and also by Adrian Rogstad over the general contact between tutor and tutees often not being very extensive or encouraged. The specific problems of first year students this year were cleared up as misunderstandings in a largely confusing allocation process. On a more general note it was pointed out that the contact between tutor and tutees is a two-way process, but that at least first year students should be contacted directly by their tutor in order to establish contact.

- It was pointed out that the department offers no course in African history, leading students who take an interest in the region to attend courses in other University of London colleges. The matter will be raised by Nigel Ashton at the departmental staff meeting.
- A provisional date and time for the committee's next meeting was set to 16 January 2008 at 10am.

Adrian Rogstad
Chair