Subject: Message from the Pro-Director Professor Paul Kelly

Dear students,

This email is the first of a series of occasional messages to students on major matters in the life of the School. It includes details on two major developments LSE is undertaking across the current academic year: LSE’s new academic year structure and its planned improvements to the timetables system. Both come into effect for the start of the 2015-16 academic year.

**LSE’s new academic year structure**

In June 2014 the School decided to revise its teaching year, meaning that the current academic year will be the last to use three ten-week terms. Departments are currently working out individual plans and students will be consulted on proposed changes through Staff Student Liaison Committees.

From 2015, the new academic year structure will change to two 11-week teaching terms, followed by a seven-week term primarily for exams. This means that the new Michaelmas and Lent Terms will be extended by one week, and as a student you can expect 11 weeks of teaching related activity across both terms.

Teaching loads will remain the same for students as under the current academic year structure but departments will be able to use this added time to provide extra opportunities. There are various ways that academic departments can use the extra term-time week in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms: some may spread this load across 11 weeks, some may hold ‘reading weeks’ and others may hold structured learning activities such as skills-based workshops across the extra term-time week.

Students may also benefit from an earlier, additional exam period in January of each year, which will enable departments to hold exams for Michaelmas Term half unit courses earlier than has been previously possible. The Summer Term will also be shortened from ten to seven weeks: the first week will be held open for revision classes, with exams held in the remaining six weeks. The academic year will formally end three weeks earlier than under the current structure.

Websites and handbooks will be updated in good time to inform you about teaching delivery under the new academic year structure. You can find out more information about it [here](http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/TQARO/AYR/home.aspx).

**Improving the teaching timetables system**

The School will also be replacing the IT system which manages its teaching timetables and room bookings, which should give you a much improved user experience and keep you much better informed as to what you have booked and when.

This is something that our students have been asking for in their response to student surveys, with many of you commenting that the current system is outdated, difficult to view and hard to understand.

The project to implement this new system is now underway, and the team is keen to involve students in trialling it so as to help us to ensure it is fit for purpose. User input will also help us to collate a list of Frequently Asked Questions and appropriate user guides. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Zoe Saunders-White (Z.Saunders-White@lse.ac.uk).

The new system will mean that students will:

* experience a more intuitive, web-based interaction with the timetabling and room booking system;
* be able to access personal timetables in a more attractive looking and user-friendly view than the existing version, as well as view timetables in other calendars such as Outlook, Google and Apple iCal
* be able to see bookings for LSESU societies online or on smartphone calendars
* be able to use screens which can be resized and maximised with a click and drag facility, as well as being able to zoom in and to increase font sizes be automatically notified of timetable changes and updates in calendars.

These benefits will start to be realised from September 2015, when the new timetables are published for courses running in the academic year 2015-16.

Regards,

Professor Paul Kelly

Pro-Director, Teaching and Learning