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|  | Confirmed Minutes |
| Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages |
| Date |  | Friday 15th May 2015 |
| Time |  | 11am |
| At |  | RFB 326 |
| Subject |  | Staff-Student Liaison Committee |
| Present |  | Professor Roberts (Chair), Mr. Cooley (minutes), Ms. Bingham, Dr. Darlow, Ms. Deadman, Mr. Hicks, Ms. Klein, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Speed & Ms. Tudose  |
| Apologies |  | Ms Conway, Dr. Jones, Mr. McKeegan, Ms. Monsalve, Ms. Pastorino, Professor Wilson |
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Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 8 and 21/22 from the Lent Term SSLC

2. REPORTED: that the Faculty Board’s working party on language papers has made an interim recommendation that the Faculty norm for supervision hours for C1 papers should be increased from 0 to 4 hours with effect from the beginning of 2015-16. This is pending the results of the Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) and a wider review of Part II language teaching which is expected o take place by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the working party once the LTR has reported.

3. REPORTED: that the interim recommendation, which has been endorsed by the Faculty Board, will aim to increase the support given to translation work at Part II and even out the disparities in college provision for language, as some colleges already supervise for this whilst others do not.

Minute 65 from the Lent Term SSLC

4. REPORTED: that the Faculty Board has agreed a procedure for managing the numbers of students on papers: papers apply to the USC for permission to manage numbers, and decisions will be made on caps at its meeting next Monday. Caps will be clearly communicated to students, as will the procedure: to allocate places randomly by lottery, after an application deadline for places on the relevant papers has passed.

5. REPORTED: that managed number papers will be sparing, and will only be approved in cases of documented and demonstrable resourcing or similar issues.

Minute 66

6. REPORTED: that the Chair would like to thank all of the students who participated in the Learning and Teaching Review visit on 2nd March. A substantial number of students, both undergraduate and graduates, took part at very short notice, for which the Faculty are extremely grateful.

Student Matters

MML Part I

Audio Visual Examinations

7. REPORTED: that students have complained that the Audio Visual (AV) examinations cut into the academic portion of the term. Many students have reported clashes with important supervisions and have asked whether it is possible to have them scheduled later on in the term.

8. REPORTED: that AV exams are timetabled a few days before the main exams start for technical reasons (the main one being they disrupt other examinations as they involve playing audio material, but also certain cohorts are large and therefore require two slots).

9. REPORTED: that the AV examinations could not be scheduled at the end of the exam period as it would leave insufficient time to mark these.

Recycling bins in the MML library

10. REPORTED: that students have requested recycling bins in the MML Library.

11. REPORTED: that the Library does have recycling bins but that the Library are working on improving the signage so library users are more aware. Library users can pin any recommendations they may have on the suggestions board.

Long essay examination

12. REPORTED: that students feel it is unfair that the same level is expected of the long essays submitted in January and April, despite the fact that students’ writing and analysis skills will have improved significantly by the time the second essay is written.

13. REPORTED: that the Instructions to Examiners booklet (IEB) has a note for examiners which states that:

*Examiners are reminded that Long Essays have been written during the Michaelmas and Lent terms and succeeding vacations, and may therefore display less breadth of knowledge than candidates can be expected to demonstrate by the end of the year*

(Criteria for Marking Long Essays, p. 71, note 1, IEB 2015)

There is also a note to the same effect under 13.10 Long Essays on page 47. Examiners are not expecting that candidates display the same level of skill in their first long assay as they would in their second.

14. REPORTED: that the Instructions to Examiners booklet is freely available to all Part IB and Part II students through Moodle.

15. REPORTED: that students have expressed that it would be constructive to receive some form of feedback about their first long essay before they start the second one.

16. REPORTED: that the essay is summative feedback, and that it is not practice to mark mid-way through the year for any other elements. There are issues of resourcing and also of moderation, meaning any marks would be subject to end-of-year moderation, diminishing its usefulness.

17. REPORTED: that arrangements are comparable to the previous portfolio of essays, and that students get to discuss their essay and their plan with their supervisor.

18. RESOLVED: that despite the difficulties in implementing this change, this feedback will be put to the USC.

Borrowing papers from HSPS (Faculty of Human, Social and Political Sciences)

19. REPORTED: that students going on their year abroad next year are looking to pursue politics in their studies and would like to borrow papers from HSPC once they return in their 4th year. Students believe there are parallels between HSPC and MML, and political theory allows a greater analysis of certain texts covered in MML.

20. REPORTED: that the decision to permit MML to borrow papers rests with HSPS.

21. REPORTED: that MML has a limit to the number of papers it can borrow into its schedule, meaning some papers may have to be relinquished in order to borrow new ones. This could be a case of swapping any less popular papers for those that have a greater demand.

22. RESOLVED: to liaise with the student representative for MML Part I to determine whether there are particular papers which students have an interest in.

23. REPORTED: that the School has a working group that will look into the issue of borrowed papers and that changes may be forthcoming.

Commentary in Sp1

24. REPORTED: that students have complained that no supervisor or lecturer has mentioned that there is a commentary passage on the paper and as a result students have not done a practice commentary essay. Students have requested a better explanation of what the examination contains at the beginning of the year.

25. RESOLVED: to feed this back to the Head of Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

26. REPORTED: that the webpage for Sp1 explicitly states that there is a commentary in the examination:

*Each of the literature sections includes a commentary question; this is not compulsory, but no more than one commentary question may be answered in the exam.*

 Assessment, <http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/sp1>

Students are reminded to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the paper. Students can also look at past papers to determine the composition of the examinations.

Translation classes

27. REPORTED: that students believe one translation class every two weeks in not sufficient. In addition, they would like to be taught translation theory, rather than discussing passages they did outside of class.

28. REPORTED: that the question about frequency is being actively considered by the Faculty (minute 2 and 3 above).

29. REPORTED: that the USC discussed this last year, and considered that Faculty-wide lectures could take place in translation theory, including machine translation taught by a colleague in Linguistics. This matter is likely to be revisited with the upcoming review.

30. RESOLVED: the suggestion about translation theory will be taken to the USC or the review when this takes place.

Portuguese Oral classes

31. REPORTED: that a student had raised concerns about a particular member of teaching staff.

32. REPORTED: that the student should contact the Head of Department of Spanish and Portuguese with this feedback.

Very Positive feedback about Use of Spanish and Use of Portuguese

33. REPORTED: that students have expressed very positive feedback on the Use of Spanish and Use of Portuguese.

34. RESOLVED: to pass this on the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

MML Part II

Praise for the Spanish and Italian departments

35. REPORTED: that students would like to thank the Departments of Spanish and Italian for their dedication, responsiveness and humanity. Special thanks goes to Coral, Nan and each tutor, supervisor and lecturer in these Departments.

36. RESOLVED: to pass this feedback on to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Department of Italian.

Departmental control of exam date and place

37. REPORTED: that a student has suggested that each department should be responsible for the date and location of their examinations, as they do the teaching and marking and already conduct the orals.

38. REPORTED: that the Faculty and its departments have very little control over the examinations. The Board of Examinations (part of the Student Registry) are responsible for running the exams, with support from the Faculty.

39. REPORTED: that in recent and upcoming years there is additional pressure due to building work at the New Museums Site and the increasing cost of external venues (Guildhall, Corn Exchange, University Sports Centre), meaning there are greater restrictions on where exams can take place.

40. REPORTED: that there has been a Proctorial recommendation following last year’s exams that no venue can hold exams at the same time that are of different durations. This is in response to disruption caused at the end of exams. This means some candidates will need to travel to venues away from the Sidgwick Site, as in other Faculties, but these other venues are generally much better than the Lecture Block.

41. REPORTED: that the Faculty’s/department’s involvement is limited to recommending the general timing of the exams (e.g. language papers towards the start of the period), but the constraints of number of candidates, clashes and the above mean there is limited scope for changing the timetable or locations of exams.

CS1 workload and Romanian classes

42. REPORTED: that a student has found CS1 to be very enjoyable, well taught (both by lecturers and supervisors) and engaging. However, the obligatory Romanian lectures (2 hours per week in Michaelmas Term and 3 hours per week in Lent), along with a lot of obligatory language work set every fortnight over the Christmas vacation seems disproportionate compared to other language papers.

43. REPORTED: that the student states Romanian is not directly assessed in the examination, unlike the language papers where there will be a translation, yet there is a far greater amount of time spent on the language. They suggest that Romanian could become a component of the examination, or the amount of language classes are reduced, to reduce how challenging the paper is.

44. RESOLVED: that this will be fed back to the Department of Italian.

45. REPORTED: that in Sp10 (Catalan) the language element will be assessed separately from the main paper from next year.

Proportion of work done in the target language during the degree as a whole

46. REPORTED: that the MML Part II representative had conducted a survey across the departments of the Faculty on the proportion of work done in the target language during the degree as a whole.

47. REPORTED: that the Part II representative had found that students would like to continue translation into masters-level study.

48. REPORTED: that the respondents to the survey were very receptive to increased target language work, but suggested that if there was an increase in the fourth year, this would have to be sustained from the first and second year, to avoid the final year suddenly becoming too difficult.

49. REPORTED: that students said other universities, particularly in the US, are teaching increasingly in the target language.

50. REPORTED: that respondents would like the scheduled papers to contain target language work (for example, writing some or all of the essays in the target language and having supervisions in the target language).

51: REPORTED: that there is a need to balance strengthening students’ skills and hampering learning by teaching in what is still a foreign language to students.

52. RESOLVED: to consider these matters further during the upcoming reviews of teaching.

SPC2 - equal split into Spain and Latin America

53. REPORTED: that students have found it strange that one term of the SPC2 paper is spent on Spanish topics and one on Latin-American topics given that debates in class focus on Latin-America being considered as one country, yet the course structure reflects this split.

54. RESOLVED: that this feedback will be passed on to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, who are already actively reflecting on their courses and teaching.

Austria in German Teaching

55. REPORTED: that a student had raised that throughout the German course, there is no mention of or focus on Austria during the German papers, language and scheduled.

56. RESOLVED: to pass this feedback on to the Department of German and Dutch.

Linguistics Part I

No agenda items received

Linguistics Part II

No agenda items received

MPhil EuroLit/MPhil Screen Media

Feedback on modules

57. REPORTED: that students have suggested that feedback on modules is not provided for in a sufficient format in the Master’s Self-Evaluation or the Postgraduate End of Year Survey.

58. REPORTED: that the current survey is nationwide (the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, or PTES) but this can be quite generic. There will be an end of year Faculty survey, published shortly after students have submitted their theses, which will provide students with an opportunity to feed back on all of the terms and elements of the course.

Library fines

59. REPORTED: that students feel the current library fine system is punitive and unfair as students cannot renew books online once they have gone a day overdue, even when they have not been recalled. Other libraries (the UL, for example) carry the fine over and permit the borrower to renew the loan (although they do not allow the borrower to take out additional books).

60. RESOLVED: to raise this feedback with the School Librarian (Libby Tilley), at a Library staff meeting and at the next Library Committee, and to report the outcomes to the next SSLC meeting.

MPhil Linguistics

No agenda items received

PhD

No agenda items received

**National Student Survey 2015**

61. REPORTED: that the National Student Survey closed at the end of April. Unconfirmed results suggest that 71% of Part II students and 57% of Linguistics Part IIB students had responded, which is a significant increase on last year.

62. REPORTED: that the Faculty would like to thank all participants of the survey, and gives special thanks to Becky Timothy who ran the London Marathon for the Stroke Association and as the nominated charity will now receive a donation from the Faculty.

AOB

Space Survey and working party

63. REPORTED: that following on from last year’s Space Survey, a working party is being set up to look at how we can best make use of our existing space and increase our net useable space so that we can respond to feedback raised in student surveys.

64. REPORTED: that a room has been made available in the Graduate Centre as a quiet study space. The room can be booked using the calendar on the door for group meetings or discussions. The room is for the exclusive use of graduate students.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 11:46 p.m.