

STUDENT-STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting #3, 2021

3 Nov 2021

For general publication

Present: Rhiain Powell (Chair), Phiet Le (Secretary), Prof. Daniel Zizzo, Dr. Carl Sherwood, Mr. Joe Symons, Hannah Lester, Issac Newbold, Jarrod Richards, Brendan Fugate, Erin Allport, Lydia Ho, Megha Thakkar

1. Apologies: Prof. Alicia Rambaldi, A/Prof. Marco Faravelli, Jennifer Min, Phuong Linh Tran, Arita Puriso, Abigail Smith, Dakoda Titmus, Guangyu Lyu, Nikhil Dugar

2. Confirmation of the minutes from the previous meeting:

Yes

3. Business arising from the previous meeting:

N/A

4. Business arising from this meeting:

- i) The SSLC welcomed Issac Newbold (UQES President 2022) and Hannah Lester (UQ PPES President 2022) to join the Committee. We are looking forward to have more events that we can involve/work with both societies next year.
- ii) Feedback from all the events that the SSLC hosted (or decided to host) in Semester 2, 2021:
 - a. The SSLC was not able to host the PG Mixer Event due to the state lockdown at the beginning of the semester, and then at the end of the semester, too many PG students were busy to come to the event, so the Committee decided to cancel it.
 - b. For the UG Mixer Event, it was being hosted the day before the mid-semester break (through UQ Life). The turnout was not that great as many students have already gone away for their holidays. However, the SSLC did gain a couple of feedback from those students who attended the event. Most of the feedback were about how about the SSLC should better promote itself to the students, and what was their experience with studying everything online.
 - c. The BEL BLOOMS Event was a successfully one. There were a couple of students visited the SSLC stall at the event. The Committee was able to raise its awareness to more students.
- iii) Updates on using Slack:
 - a. Mr. Joe Symons reported that UQ ITS was very reserved about implementing Slack to the UQ-wide ecosystem. However, they were more comfortable in using Microsoft Teams.
 - b. Prof. Daniel Zizzo recommended the SSLC should seek approval for a pilot testing of the new system (probably start with a particular cohort/program first, and then if it is being used widely by the students, the new system can be rolled out to other cohorts/programs).

- c. Dr. Carl Sherwood mentioned that Professor John Rati uses a chat platform that is similar to Slack for one of his courses. He recommended the SSLC to maybe use the chat platform that Professor John Rati has already used (so that approval process from UQ ITS can be quicker).
- d. Phiet Le mentioned that in one of his courses this semester, ECON2200, his lecturer (Dr. Axel Wieneke) created a FB group and a WeChat group for his students to communicate freely with each other (and with him). Both platforms worked really well. The engagement from students was way better than Blackboard discussion. As such, Phiet suggested why does the School of Economics use FB and WeChat (as they have been used previously and yielded good results for both staff and students).
- e. For Study Bubbles, Brendan Fugate signed up but never used it. The reason to this is that he is not used to Study Bubbles, and therefore, gave up in using it.
- f. Dr. Carl Sherwood volunteered to do the pilot testing if UQ ITS approves to use the system/platform that the SSLC suggests. He said he will be willing to test out the new system/platform for ECON1010 (as it has many undergraduate students, especially first year students, each year).
- iv) Prof. Daniel Zizzo, Mr. Joe Symons and the SSLC thanked Dr. Carl Sherwood for all his contributions as a Director of Education to both the Committee and the School of Economics. Starting from semester 1, 2022, Prof. KK Tang will replace Dr. Carl Sherwood to be the new Director of Education.
- v) Updates on UQ Behavioural and Economics Science Cluster (UQ BESC):
 - a. UQ BESC is an interactive and engaging experience in making a computer program that stimulates the financial market by your own. It is being administered and led by A/Prof. Marco Favarelli.
 - b. The laboratory for UQ BESC experiment is downstairs, in level 1 of the Colin Clark Building.
 - c. The lab experiment is opened to students from all faculties, and it is looking for more participants next year. So, if you are interested, or know anyone that is interested, please visit <https://economics.uq.edu.au/research/research-centres-and-groups/besc>. You can also contact A/Prof. Marco Faravelli (his email address is m.faravelli@uq.edu.au) if you want to know more about this.
- vi) Updates on how the SSLC and the School of Economics can improve the interactions between international students and domestic students:
 - a. The Australian Government is planning to open its border sometimes in mid-December to welcome back international students. As such, the Queensland Government is also considering opening its border. However, this is uncertain (as it depends on how the COVID-19 situation will turn out next year). As such, the School of Economics and the SSLC cannot really plan anything in advance to welcome back our international students who have been stuck back in their home countries since Australia shut down its border.
 - b. Both the SSLC and the School of Economics are prepared to actively promote more face-to-face activities when international students come back to UQ campus in February. However, in the case of the QLD

Government implements restrictions again next year, both the SSLC and the School of Economics are prepared to go online (as we have experience of doing this from the past 2 years already).

- vii) Updates on summer semester courses:
- a. The School of Economics wanted to get feedback from those students who have done a course (or courses) over summer semester in the past. Jarrod Richard commented that it felt like a normal semester, but just a little bit more condensed and faster. Live lectures and tutorials still run as normal during the summer semester.
 - b. Prof. Daniel Zizzo said that courses that are being offered in the summer semester show a lower performance when they are being offered during normal semester. The School of Economics has conducted a regression analysis to see how the students performed during the summer semester, and it shows a negative coefficient.
 - c. Megha Thakkar commented she felt it was a little bit overwhelming for her. As an international student who pays a lot of money into a course that has little interaction between students, tutors, and lecturers. She believed that if the School of Economics wants to increase the performance of students during summer semester courses, then it should ask all the course coordinators/lecturers to utilise the Discussion Board on Blackboard, and host more live lectures, tutorials, and consultations more. This will improve the performance and engagement from the students in general.
 - d. Prof. Daniel Zizzo told that live tutorials will be coming this summer semester – both on Zoom and on campus. This is a great news because there are students who work full-time (like Jarrod Richard) and can only watch the recording versions. Still, live sessions will benefit most students who can attend classes in person.
 - e. Rhian thinks live sessions are a good option. Again, it comes down to letting students have a lot of options to choose on how they are going to study, and Dr. Carl Sherwood agrees on this.
- viii) Overview of what the SSLC has achieved this year, and plans for next year:
- a. Rhian Powell gave a quick overview that the SSLC was able to get about 5-6 feedback in total from the students this year (which was about 3-4 more feedback than in 2020).
 - b. The SSLC was able to get more attention from students by rocking up at events around campus.
 - c. Plans for SSLC next year:
 - i. If UQ ITS approves to let us conduct a pilot testing, then the SSLC will work closely with the School of Economics to manage the rollout of the new system.
 - ii. Phiet Le mentioned that whenever there is something about the SSLC in the Currency, it usually being put at the bottom of the newsletter. Mr. Joe Symons will work with the marketing team, and will try to ask if they can move our section to the top in future newsletters.
 - iii. Hannah Lester recommended that the SSLC should have a representative at every single live ECON lecture at the beginning of

the semester. This will help the Committee to get more awareness from the students.

- iv. The SSLC can also do a short introduction video about itself and ask the ECON lecturers to post on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester. However, Dr. Carl Sherwood is quite reserved about this as Blackboard is for course content only (i.e., no advertising on Blackboard). Furthermore, Dr. Carl Sherwood said by the SSLC section at the top of the Currency newsletter is like asking students to fill out SeCAT survey at the end of every semester (i.e., not many students will pay attention to/fill out the survey). Therefore, the SSLC needs to have eye-catching news (or targeted questions) that grab the attention of the students right from the very start so that students will love to read more about it. On another hand, Issac Newbold suggested that the SSLC should create polls where students can just click and fill them out straightaway.
 - v. Prof. Daniel Zizzo further suggested that the SSLC should show some evidence (e.g., its achievements and the impacts that the SSLC has on the students). Both Dr. Carl Sherwood and Mr. Joe Symons agreed with this. Mr. Joe Symons said that the SSLC should look back at all its discussions/meeting minutes and document all the evidence (i.e., “you said, we did it”).
- d. Recruiting new members for 2022:
- i. Phiet and Rhian both thanked the members for the time and efforts that they have contributed to the SSLC in 2021. Either Rhian or Phiet will send a Google Form to all the current members to indicate whether they’re going to stay on or withdraw from the SSLC (which Phiet has already done so).
 - ii. To get more students apply next year, Prof. Daniel Zizzo again brought up the topic of showing evidence of what the SSLC has achieved this year. He suggested to write down all our achievements in future job descriptions.
- ix) Verification of assessments:
- a. Dr. Carl Sherwood brought up this topic during the meeting. He said a lot of the accreditation bodies require to verify 50% of the assessments for next year. From the School of Economics’ perspectives, to verify the assessments, it either has to use ProctorU or in-person exams.
 - b. From the meeting, most people indicated that they preferred to have an in-person exam over a ProctorU exam (due to privacy concerns).
 - c. Some SSLC members said that they have friends who have sit ProctorU exams before, and from what they heard from their friends, there were a lot of criticisms around using ProctorU exams. There is little efficiency of using ProctorU exams than using in-person exams.
 - d. Dr. Carl Sherwood commented that from the last School of Economics Education Committee’s meeting that he chaired, a lot of staff also agreed that in-person exams are much better than ProctorU exams. The School of Economics will take onboard all the feedback from staff and students.

5. Actions to do before the next meeting

N/A

6. Next meeting

Semester 1, 2022 (the exact date is TBA)