

STUDENT-STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting #1, 2022

10 March 2022

For general publication

Present: Rhiain Powell (Chair), Phiet Le (Secretary), Prof. Daniel Zizzo, Prof. KK Tang, A/Prof. Heiko Gerlach, Mr. Joe Symons, Benjamin Stephens, Austin Smidt, William Splatt, Smriti Girish Nair, Tian Behenna, Michael Carroll, Téa Van Den Brenk, Isobel Kayrooz, Megha Thakkar

1. Apologies: A/Prof. Marco Faravelli, Issac Newbold, Adele Greedy-Vogel, Arita Puriso, Jarrod Richards, Albert Kitt Hermo, Guangyu Lyu

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 all new and existing members. The Committee had 23 candidates applied for the 'Committee Member' role, and we recruited a total of 8 new members.
- ii) Phiet gave a brief overview of what the SSLC had been able to achieve last year (e.g., helped the School of Economics to conduct an academic review of its postgraduate program, received more feedback through our anonymous form on the SSLC website, or participated at some of events either from the BEL Faculty – like the BELfast Day in Semester 1, or the Get to Know Your School – or from what we organised by ourselves – like the Undergraduate Mixer Event). Even though the SSLC was able to get a bit more attention from the Economics students, we still have a lot of areas in which we can improve and gain more traction. Some members suggested the SSLC in 2022 to:
 - Set up a fortnightly 'drop-in' session at the BELTop Café or anywhere on campus (e.g., Great Court, UQU Food Court, etc.) where there is a lot of traffic (meaning, students usually walk past through or stop by to buy something, sit down and have a chat with their friends). With 2+ years studying and doing everything online, students probably would want to have some sort of an in-person event. So, by doing this, students will feel more welcome and comfortable to sit down and have a chat with us (and hoping that we can get students to provide more feedback through those informal chats).
 - In addition to the point raised above, Prof. Daniel Zizzo suggested the SSLC to have a banner/signage in which it can use when we have those fortnightly 'drop-in' sessions (or where representatives of the SSLC are at events on campus) so that

students know where we are. This is a really good suggestion in which Phiet and Rhiain has worked with the Marketing Team to organise a banner for the SSLC, and they told that the banner has been printed and is ready to be collected (the design for the banner looks great).

- William suggested to use Blackboard to advertise SSLC's events. However, in some of the SSLC meetings last year, there were some issues/concerns being raised by some staff that Blackboard should be used for course-related announcements only. If Blackboard is being used to advertise SSLC's events, then students will get confused of which announcements are the important ones that they should pay attention to. In response to this comment/feedback, Prof. Daniel suggested we should only use Blackboard to post things about the SSLC from Week 3 onwards so that students can settle down into the semester (and he also suggested to do it sparingly). Prof. KK suggested that the SSLC should do a 1-2 minutes video in which we could introduce ourselves, and ask the lecturers to post it at the beginning of the semester. Phiet and Rhiain think this is a good idea, and they are currently working on it with the BEL Marketing Team.
- Smriti suggested to have the SSLC on the Student Services website, and that we should send out a survey on their economic courses at the end of the semester. Having the SSLC on the Student Services website is a really good idea, and Phiet and Rhiain will have a look into it. However, about sending out the survey at the end of the semester, there were some concerns raised during the meeting as students probably will receive a lot of surveys to answer at the end of the semester (e.g., SeCAT). Now, having one more survey probably will deter students from answering it. Therefore, if the SSLC really wants to send out a survey at the end of the semester, then it should be succinct and easy for students to answer without taking too much of their time.
- Lastly, Megha suggested the SSLC to have its own social media accounts. Phiet commented that even though this idea was a really great idea, the SSLC did not have much things to post regularly on social media (unlike student societies where they have a lot of things going on in which they can post to retain the followers and engagement). The SSLC had already considered about this since its inception, but the idea was not feasible at all so that's why we do not do it anymore. Both Phiet and Rhiain agreed that we could work with the School of Economics to post our stuff on the Currency e-newsletters that are being sent out to all Economics students in every 2 weeks, and ask the student societies (i.e., UQES, UQPPES and UQ WIES) to help us advertise our stuff (in which the representatives from all 3 student

societies have no problem with that). Téa, the Secretary of UQPPEs, offered to post SSLC stuff on their society's newsletter.

iii) About the course/program structure is not clear to students, that the School of Economics should do something to address this issue so that students know exactly which courses are compulsory, and which are the elective course, here is the testimonial from one of the Committee Members, Michael Carroll:

- “We have anecdotally found at the Student Relations Network Call Centre that some students are unsure about which courses they are meant to take when commencing their degrees, which has sometimes resulted in first-year students taking general elective courses or courses with pre-requisites in their first semester. From the feedback that we have received, it seems that many first-year students are unaware where to find the program structures and planners online. These degree planners, whilst available, cannot be found through the Future Students site, which is the primary source used by many commencing students. The Future Students site only gives students a list of courses they are required to study throughout the duration of their degree.”

In response to Michael's comment, here is the response from the School of Economics (and from the wider BEL Faculty), quoting from Mr. Joe Symons:

- “The Future Students site is designed to provide all the relevant information for students in the application stage of their UQ student journey. Once they have received and accepted their offer of enrolment in a UQ program, they are sent a link to [‘Starting at UQ’](#) in their offer letter, which then links to program plans, etc.”

Hopefully, with the ‘Starting at UQ’ site, it will address the issue of students not knowing which courses they have to take in their first semester at UQ.

iv) About the pilot testing of rolling out Slack/other platforms for Economics courses, Mr. Joe Symons said that he will contact Dr. Carl Sherwood (as the last time he contacted Carl, Carl said that there were some technical issues as some features were not being supported by UQ ITS. There was a lot of hesitation in rolling out and implementing a chat platform to all Economics courses). Slack will be tested on ECON7021 this semester, and the School will monitor and see where to go from there.

v) The SSLC has recently attended the BEL Welcome Celebration Event and the Get to Know Your School of Economics Event. Feedback from both events is that the turnout was much better than last year. This might be due to the fact that international students are now able to come to Australia and attend classes in-person (therefore, there was such a big turnout at both events).

vi) Prof. Daniel Zizzo and Prof. KK Tang said that the School of Economics in this semester wants to organize face-to-face and online lecture concurrently (meaning, both modes of delivering lecture will be

happening at the same time). The University has requested that all consultation hours will have to be in person (unless there are unavoidable circumstances in which consultations can be held online). This is a new initiative from the School of Economics, therefore, Prof. Daniel Zizzo and Prof. KK Tang wants to ask for feedback from the Committee Members on what they think about delivering lectures in both modes concurrently.

- According to Austin Smidt, he said he would be very much appreciated if classes to delivered in in person (as it is more effective than when students have to attend classes online and they cannot engage as much they want to with the lecturers/tutors and peers). He also mentioned that online classes is also good as it gives more flexibility to students, but in-person classes should be given the priority.
 - Phiet Le said that in one of his courses that he is doing this semester – Introduction to Management (MGTS1301) – all the seminars being delivered both online and in-person at the same time. The turnout on both modes of delivering are fantastic (there are about 100+ students attended online, and about 50-70 students attended seminars in person).
 - Furthermore, Phiet noticed that for ECON2101 – Cost-Benefit Analysis – that he takes this semester is starting to implement both modes of delivering concurrently and that students appreciate it a lot. It creates flexibility for students as they can attend the seminar/lecture wherever they are.
 - Tian Behenna as a tutor for the School of Economics, said that he noticed some of his students got a lot of values from studying online, and others got a lot of values from in-person classes. Therefore, he suggested that the School of Economics to continue deliver classes in both modes. Rhain Powell also supported this suggestion from Tian.
 - Prof. Daniel Zizzo also mentioned that the School of Economics has invested in buying tablets and lend them to the staff so that they can use during teaching. If needed, the School will provide some trainings for staff in order for them to teach effectively.
- vii) Prof. Daniel Zizzo said that School of Economics has received an announcement from the University central management team that from semester 2 onwards, each faculty can make their own decisions on how to deliver their courses (whether it is in person or online). The School of Economics will take onboard all the feedback/suggestions that have been given during the SSLC, and will look for ways to allow students to study flexibly.
- viii) Lastly, if the SSLC is thinking of having a mixer event in the future, it is good that we could engage A/Prof. Heiko Gerlach to join so that students can come and talk to him about career pathways once they graduate from UQ.
- ix)

5. Actions to do before the next meeting

N/A

6. Next meeting

Semester 2, 2022 (the exact date is TBA)