

STUDENT-STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting #3, 2023

2nd August 2023

Not for general publication

Present: Olivia Uy (Chair), Samuel Weir (Secretary), Prof. Daniel Zizzo, A/Prof. Ian MacKenzie, Mr. John Raiti, Carter Douglas Stuart Hoffman, Francisco Tavares Garcia, Brandon Botting, Hamish Trim, Amelie Marsland, Danya Mody, Laura McBurnie, Benjamin Stephens, Serena Huang, Nikolas Stamatiou

1. Apologies:

A/Prof. Heiko Gerlach, A/Prof. Lana Friesen, Mr. Joe Symons, Jayde Parker, Varen Arya, Nishay Bhikha, Margaret Hayes, Sophia Psaros (UQES), Tea van de Brenk (UQPPEs), Eliza Madden (UQWIES)

2. Confirmation of the minutes from the previous meeting:

Yes

3. Business arising from the previous meeting:

- i) The SSLC intends to run a postgraduate networking event in collaboration with UQES to encourage networking between international, postgraduate, and undergraduate students
 - a. This could take the form of a panel discussion, barbeque, or mixer, but will have to be organised to make the event accessible for postgraduate students (in conjunction with timetabled classes – which we can use to give an indication of when the best times are)
- ii) In terms of Student-Staff Partnerships, the SSLC heard about three that were happening
 - a. Francisco and Mr. Raiti are engaged in an SSP that hopes to redesign the assessment for ECON3350 (Applied Economics for Macroeconomics and Finance). The main idea being to remove two large assessment items that end relatively late in the semester and replace them with four smaller assessment items. Hence, feedback could be delivered before the census date for the first items, and can be used as a better gauge for progress throughout the semester
 - b. The School of Mathematics has designed a *virtual environment population* that can be used for unique data to shape assessment pieces. The School of Economics' addition is to add economic data to the population and implement it effectively. Dr. Sherwood and Mr. Raiti are involved in this SSP.
 - c. A final SSP involving ECON3210 (Financial Markets and Institutions) aims to increase engagements in tutorials, using different methods such as *Miro interactive whiteboards* and collaborative tutorials. Dr Bracoud and Mr Raiti are involved in this SSP.
 - d. More information is available from the SSP website

- iii) Regarding the introductory writing and coding courses developed by Mr. Raiti in conjunction with UQ Library, there has been a submission for the modules to be submitted into the Currency e-newsletter and are available to be added to Blackboard. Students can contact course coordinators to suggest this addition into individual courses.
 - a. So far, implementation has been successful, but further feedback is always appreciated.

4. Business arising from this meeting:

- i) Olivia thanked members of the SSLC for their assistance at Semester 2 Market Day
- ii) On raising attendance in tutorials and classes
 - a. Prof. Zizzo suggested that participation marks are not a solution. There have been attempts to include sequenced assessment in tutorials, but this level of *overassessment* has been deemed unfeasible by the school review
 - b. Number of students coming to campus is increasing, and this could assist with part of the problem in years to come (despite many students being accustomed to online studies)
 - c. We need to consider how tutorials and classes are used – what value do they add (particularly in contrast to online classes)?
 - d. Mr. Raiti indicated that structural features that will improve attendance will gradually develop
 - i. We can engage students better by drawing their attention, and offering additional value in in-person classes
 - ii. Assessment milestone are also a driver of attendance
 - iii. Francisco indicated that the recordings for both lectures and tutorials encourage students to attend only when necessary, and deprioritise attendance
 - iv. Prof. Zizzo suggested that there may be advantages to recordings so we need to maintain a balance, however other class types could be more feasible in generating attendance
- iii) Mr Raiti. requested feedback from the SSLC regarding the *Borderless* competition
 - a. Serena discussed her experience in taking part in the competition, noting that the scope felt quite broad, and the expectations were unclear. Communication was scattered and seemingly rushed toward the submission deadline. However, students benefitted from participating.
 - b. The new idea for the competition is a 'weekend hackathon' where students will complete the competition in a much shorter timeframe
 - c. Partners include Deloitte and the University of Exeter
 - d. Feedback from the committee was as follows
 - i. Prof. Zizzo indicated that in past experience, employers who were impressed by participants had strong incentives to offer positions or internships to teams/students. In addition,

competitions like Borderless help students stand out amongst their peers when going for internships and positions.

- ii. Mr. Raiti indicated that this is a key focus of the competition – employability is paramount, and each student is given a certificate to add to their credentials
 - iii. Serena indicated that having a lot of time was both good and bad, suggesting that perhaps participants work out priorities at a compulsory initial meeting and then solving the problem with the limited time they have after that. She also suggested a more targeted problem would be helpful here.
 - iv. Ben agreed that a corporate sponsor was a great idea, but was concerned about the weekend time zones, and the shortness of the 'weekend hackathon' idea
 - v. Ultimately, Prof. Zizzo and Mr. Raiti noted this feedback, and suggested that this remained a work in progress, but would let the committee know how this develops in coming weeks.
- iv) The committee received the following comments regarding the ECON2030 course, Microeconomic Policy:
- a. "[The student] felt that the first part of the first assignment shouldn't be graded. This first part is the draft but graded according to the 'final' criteria. They felt that either there should be no contribution to your grade since it is a draft or the weighting could be lower than the 30% we had in Sem 2, 2022."
 - b. A/Prof. MacKenzie responded, suggesting that the piece of assessment discussed in the feedback was worth a relatively minor portion of the course grade students received (7.5%). Although no marks could be given, this 7.5% is to encourage students to submit a preliminary draft to improve their work later in the course.
 - c. Francisco and Nik agreed that there should be some incentive for students to complete the draft, and 7.5% was appropriate
 - d. Carter suggested that there could be a potential second submission that supersedes the first draft
 - e. These suggestions were noted and would be taken into consideration in reviewing the course
- v) The committee received the following comments regarding the ECON2103 course, Financial Economics
- a. "The content, which should be very interesting, is not because of the lecturer and how it is taught". In addition the student noted that similar courses, like ECON2200, Management of Financial Institutions, were much more engaging and rewarding
 - b. Prof. Zizzo and A/Prof. MacKenzie indicated that a course review could be considered from this especially given the content similarities to ECON2200
 - c. SECATS provided some evidence for a lack of student satisfaction, and Mr. Raiti noted this feedback to give to the course coordinator.

- vi) Carter provided some feedback to the committee, suggesting that a lack of feedback on assessment items is prevalent within some courses, indicating that this feedback is central to student learning and improvement.
 - a. Particular assessment items of note were reports and exams
 - b. Mr. Raiti suggested that there are pressures on staff members that could contribute to this, but feedback is a central part of teaching and this is a priority. The school provides help to academics to provide feedback through the appropriate rubrics.

5. Actionable before the next meeting:

- i) Organisation of any social events for students within the School.
- ii) Response to feedback on ECON2103.
- iii) Submission of any Student Staff Partnership program ideas.

6. Next meeting:

Tuesday 14th November, 3pm