

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

A Meeting of Philosophy Staff and Students was held on Tuesday 1st November 2016 at 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room, Sidgwick Site.

Present: Clare Dickinson (Principal Secretary), Heather Sanderson (Administrator), Dr Paulina Sliwa (Undergraduate Co-ordinator), Prof Tim Crane (Faculty Chair), Charlie Evans (Secretarial Assistant), Anni Raty, Iván Merker, Paula Keller, Farbod Akhlaghi-Ghaffarokh.

- 1 Starring of items was invited.
[People attending the meeting will be invited to star any item(s) they wish to discuss.]
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Jenni Lecky-Thompson, Fran Davis, Ege Yumusak & Alia Khalid.
- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2016 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- *4 As previously agreed, Farbod Akhlaghi-Ghaffarokh chaired the meeting.
- 5 Staffing Matters
It was noted that Emily Brierley has left her post as Library Assistant in the Philosophy Library, and has been replaced by Gorazd Andrejc.
- 6 Old Library
Staff and students were reminded that the Old Library is a common area where undergraduate students can meet informally, have coffee/tea and discuss philosophy. Staff and students were also reminded that due to the nature of the location discussions would have to be kept fairly quiet because of the various offices adjacent to it. It was noted that tea and coffee are available to purchase for 50p – students were also told that payment should be placed in the black honesty tin next to the coffee machine. Students were reminded that if anyone is using one of the mugs provided by the Faculty for their hot drink, they should return it to the sink by the Faculty Office when they have finished with it, and ideally, wash it up and return it to the top of the coffee machine. There was some discussion of the fact that the Old Library Area and the coffee machine are used by MML students and members of the research area on the second floor of the building, and that sometimes this means that Philosophy staff and students are unable to use the area themselves because of lack of space. It was decided that the Faculty admin staff would consider how best to address this in a way that wouldn't offend other users of the building – possibly putting up a sign, or sending out an email to the MML Faculty Office. It was also noted that the Faculty are really pleased with the number of students using mugs rather than disposable cups.
- 7 Election of Student Representatives
Faculty Board in class (f)
It was noted that the elections for student representatives on the Philosophy Faculty Board would be held on **Tuesday 22nd November 2016** with the closing of nominations a week earlier on **15th November 2016**.

It was noted that this year the Faculty would continue to use an online voting system for the student elections. Charlie Evans explained that more details about this voting system, and about the elections generally, would be sent to students in due course.

Council representatives

It was noted that all students on the electoral roll would also have the chance to be elected to serve on Councils of the Schools. It was further noted that these elections would use the on-line ballot and would be managed by the Education Section. It was reported that the date has yet to be confirmed by the Council of the Schools, but is likely to take place on November 24th/25th. Students were informed that CUSU and the Education Section would contact them directly about this.

8 National Student Survey

The Philosophy NSS 2016 results were circulated for information. It was noted that this would also be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting, as usual. Prof Tim Crane explained that the results of the National Student Survey would become more and more important as time goes on, for students who are deciding on which courses to take, and he therefore encouraged students to take part in the survey when it opens. Heather Sanderson explained that this year, the results from the NSS had shown that student satisfaction on workload and also assessment and feedback related questions for the Philosophy Tripos were above the Cambridge average, and that the Faculty was potentially going to be contacted by the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning to share ideas on best practice in these areas.

However, Tim Crane also flagged up the fact that the Faculty consistently gets low scores on the question of whether the criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance (only 54% of students agreed with this). This year, it was noted that the question ‘this course has helped me to present myself with confidence’ also got a low score, with only 54% of students agreeing with this statement. The students present at the meeting felt that the low score on the second question about confidence wasn’t such an issue, as it wasn’t necessarily something they expected/wanted as an outcome from the course. However, there was some discussion about how marking criteria could be made clearer to students. The students present felt that this wasn’t so important in relation to supervision essays, where they understood that it wasn’t easy to have clear criteria on how such essays should be marked. However, Anni Raty commented that it was important for students that marking criteria for exams are made clear. Paulina Sliwa suggested that an email should be sent to DOS’s in Lent Term, asking them to discuss marking criteria with their students in their end of term meeting before they start exam preparation, and specifically, asking DOS’s to direct students to where the exam criteria can be found on the Faculty website:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/marking-criteria-pdf>

Charlie Evans also confirmed that she would send out an email to students during Lent Term setting out the various exam resources that are available to students on the Faculty website. Students were also reminded that Dr Clare Chambers runs an Exam Technique and Revision Session at the end of Lent Term, which all students are welcome to attend.

Farbod Akhlaghi-Ghaffarokh explained that at the two previous universities he had attended, students were able to access sample essays which were clearly annotated throughout the body of the essay to explain why the essay had received a particular mark. Charlie Evans told students that there are sample answers available on the Faculty website:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>

However, students felt that the comments at the end of these essays which explain the mark given to them are quite brief. Paulina Sliwa and Charlie Evans agreed that they would work together to expand on the comments on these essays to make them a more useful resource which might help to illustrate more clearly the Faculty’s marking criteria.

9 Faculty of Philosophy – Casimir Lewy Library Committee:

It was noted that the date of the meeting would be announced in due course.

Students were reminded that Elections for Student Representatives take place in November, as above. It was noted that the Library Committee meeting takes place in the Lent Term to ensure that newly elected Faculty Board Representatives can be present at that meeting.

It was reported that the Library Committee consists of the following members:

The Librarian
The Chair of the Faculty
The Secretary of the Faculty
The Director of Graduate Studies
The Undergraduate Co-ordinator
The Chair of the Staff Student Committee
The two Undergraduate Representatives on the Faculty Board
The Graduate Representative on the Faculty Board

10 Competition to design the next library bag

Students were invited to come up with a design to go on a bag to be sold in the library, with the possibility of winning **£50 of Amazon vouchers**. It was noted that this design competition is open to all students and the closing date is **Friday 2 December**. It was reported that further details are available from: <https://lewylib.wordpress.com/2016/10/10/design-a-bag-competition> or students were told that they could pick up a postcard in the library.

11 Email lists

It was noted that the Faculty has two email lists which are used for publicising events relating to Philosophy – Phil-events, which is for Philosophical events/groups based in Cambridge, and phil-bulletin, which is for philosophical events taking place further afield. Students were told that they can find more information on these lists, and subscribe to them by visiting <https://lists.cam.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo> and entering the name of the relevant list.

12 Titles for Parts IB and II extended essays

It was reported that at the last SSC Meeting on 26 April, there was some discussion of a Faculty proposal to come up with a list of pre-approved titles for Part IB & Part II Extended Essays. However, it was noted that the Faculty Board in fact decided not to go ahead with this proposal, so that the procedure for essay titles would still be that students would choose their titles, which would then be sent to the Chair of Examiners for approval. There was some discussion of why it had been decided not to go ahead with the proposal, and Prof Crane explained this was because Faculty Board members had become aware of strong feeling about students having the freedom to choose their own title. He also explained that it became clear that it would not be easy to administrate the scheme of pre-approved titles, as Faculty staff had come up with quite a disparate number of titles across different subjects. However, Prof Crane also stressed that it remains very important that once students have chosen their title, and had it approved, that they do write on that topic, and don't deviate from it. Students present said that while they were pleased with the decision, they felt it would be helpful if the Faculty could produce a list of sample titles, to help students with deciding on which title to choose. It was agreed that Clare Dickinson would send a list of last years' approved titles to students and Directors of Studies.

13 Extended Essays in Part IB/Extended Essays and Dissertations in Part II

It was noted that examples of good work are available for perusal from the library issue desk. It was also noted that there are several examples on the faculty website under 'Undergraduate Exams'.

Students were reminded that the deadline for application to submit an extended essay or dissertation title is 18th November 2016.

It was noted that all titles have to be approved by the Chair of Examiners before students leave for the Christmas break.

Students were also asked to note that any student who does not submit their Extended Essay on time, would have no option but to sit the corresponding exam paper. It was further noted that any student who does not submit their dissertation on time would effectively fail the paper, as the deadline for submitting dissertations is after the final deadline for amending exam entries.

Students were also asked to note details of this upcoming training session:

Research Tools Training – Part IB and Part II

Friday 4th November, 2-3pm, Philosophy Board Room

How to find resources for your extended essays and dissertation.

14 Examiners' reports

It was noted that the reports for 2016, including external reports, are now available on the Faculty website under "Examiner reports":

<https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/exam-reports>

It was further noted that a raven login is required to access the reports.

15 Discussion Groups for Part IB students:

Students were informed that the Faculty is in the process of arranging discussion groups for Part IB for Lent Term 2017 (weeks 2-7). It was noted that the topics and leaders of these groups would be:

Logic: Wes Wrigley – Tuesday 1-2pm

Metaphysics & Epistemology: Dan Brigham – Monday 1-2pm

Ethics: Nora Heinzelmann – Thursdays 9-10am

Early Modern Philosophy: Alex Moran – Friday 4-5pm

Greek & Roman Philosophy: Carlo Rossi – Wednesdays 10-11am

Philosophy of Science: Katie Robertson – Monday – 4-5pm

Political Philosophy: Maxime LePoutre – Thursday - 1-2pm

Students were informed that they may sign up for as many groups as they wish, but need to bear in mind the additional work involved. It was stressed that once a student has signed up, it is expected that s/he will attend all the sessions.

16 Lecture questionnaires

Students were encouraged to complete the paper questionnaires, which would be distributed in final lectures in weeks 4, 6 or 8 of Michaelmas Term, depending on the length of the lecture series. Students were also encouraged to complete questionnaires circulated in Discussion Groups and Logic Classes. It was noted that if any students miss the final lecture, or do not get the opportunity to complete a questionnaire in their lecture, it is possible to download questionnaires from the Faculty website:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/questionnaires/ugrad-questionnaires>

17 Lecture Questionnaires evaluation sheets

Students were reminded that evaluation sheets for completed lecture questionnaires are available for consultation from the Library issue desk.

18 Sample Answers

Students were reminded that there are now several sample answers to Tripos Exam Questions available on the Faculty website:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>

19 Social Committee for undergraduates

It was noted that the Faculty is able to provide some funding for social events for undergraduates. Students were informed that if they are interested in setting up a social committee, they should contact Heather Sanderson.

20 Graduate Social Events

It was noted that the Faculty is able to provide some funding for social events for graduates, such as the graduate dinner. Students were informed that if they are interested in setting up a social committee, they should contact Heather Sanderson.

21 NUS Green Impact

It was noted that the Faculty was awarded a Bronze Green Impact Award in June, and that the Green Impact Team in the Faculty were now hoping to work towards a Silver Award. Students were informed that if they were interested in joining the Green Impact Team, they should contact Clare Dickinson – cli30@cam.ac.uk

22 Cambridge Postgraduate Open Day

It was noted that the University would be holding its first Postgraduate Open Day on Wednesday 2nd November 2016. Students were asked to see the following webpage for more details:

<http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/news/postgraduate-open-day-date-your-diary>

It was noted that there would be an information stand in the Law Faculty Foyer in the morning, as well as events arranged by the Faculty in the afternoon, including a tour of the Faculty.

23 Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduates

Thursday 30th June and Friday 1st July 2016.

All those who helped with the Arts Open Day were thanked. Particular thanks were given to Dr Arif Ahmed and Ms Charlie Evans for the organisation and the smooth running of the events for these two days.

It was noted that next year's Open Days would be on 6th and 7th July 2017.

24 Sutton Trust Summer Schools

It was reported that the Faculty was jointly involved in running the summer school with the Faculty of Divinity which took place from 18th – 22nd July 2016.

Warm thanks were given to the following graduate students who took part in giving talks:

Laura Nicoara

Li Li Tan

Sahanika Ratnayake

Shyane Siriwardena

It was noted that the Sutton Trust provided for each student to be paid £50. It was further noted that the Faculty Board agreed the Chair's proposal for a similar arrangement with Divinity for 2017.

25 Introductory Day, 5th October 2016

It was reported that the Introductory Day for all new Philosophy students took place on Wednesday 5th October 2015. Alia Khalid was thanked for giving a very informative talk on what is involved in being a student rep. It was noted that it is hoped that a similar talk would be given by a student rep at the next Introductory Day in October 2017.

26 Amoral Sciences & Immoral Sciences Clubs

Students were informed that details of the Amoral Sciences Club, Immoral Club, and other discussion groups and seminars could be found here:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/seminars-phil/seminars-discussions>

27 There was no further business.

The meeting ended at 1.43pm.