

# GRADUATE STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## Attendees

### Staff representatives:

Jeremy Smith	Head of Department
Jennifer Smith	Director of Studies
Lory Barile	Director PGT programmes
Alex Karalis Isaac	Deputy Director PGT programmes (Academic Convenor)
Lucia Ashley	Student Engagement and Experience Coordinator

### Student Representatives:

James Clarke	MSc Econ (Chair)
Arushi Nautiyal	MSc EIFE (Secretary)
Kashish Kaur	MSc Econ
Sushil Mathew	MSc Econ
Haoran Wang	MSc Econ
Ziyan Ma	MSc EIFE

## Apologies

Helen Riley	Library Representative
Stephanie Redding	Senior Careers Consultant
Ethan McQuaid	MSc BES (Economics Track)
Ayush Shastry	MSc BES (Science Track)

- 1. Declarations of interest**
  - No conflict of interest
- 2. Resources (Library/IT)**
  - James- No complaints from the students- postal service seems to be working great
  - No questions or queries raised
- 3. Skills Development and Careers**
  - No feedback from the students
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021**
  - James- study groups have been implemented; Arushi believes that there will be more attendance from students during the Spring Break;
  - James- if any updates on past papers being uploaded onto the AEP- Lory mentioned that a mock exam paper will be present on the AEP for the Econometrics module; Jeremy clarified not module specific mocks, besides Econometrics, but a generic mock to get an idea about uploading the equations and answers- intention is to allow a limited window- 7 days;
  - Jeremy- SSLC has encouraged the use of A&F to prevent the pile up and excess demand close up to the exam
- 5. Matters Arising**
  - No concerns
- 6. Teaching and Learning**
  - Ayush (James asked on his behalf) - students want at-least one face to face opportunity to meet students and professors next term- Jeremy mentioned that a revision lecture will take place per module- but the restriction is going to be on the number of students that are going to be around and the regulation, they might have to be online- buddy scheme to allow face to face peer learning to take place;
  - **James-** clarification on the timeframe of classes next term- Jeremy mentioned that classes will take place mostly in Week 1 and some drifted into Week 2; Exams for MSc students start in Week 3; Encourage university to put Econometrics in Week 4 and most optional modules in Week 3;
  - **James-** Synchronous lectures run differently for each module- some learn new material where some revise what is learnt in asynchronous- students are asking for some consistency across modules; Lory- the use of live lectures depends on the contents of the modules hence cannot make sure that colleagues do the same thing across modules; Jeremy- broad principle of the Department of Economics is to use live lectures to enhance material used in asynchronous lectures, but since modules are different, allow some flexibility in some modules;
  - Arushi- students were curious why some modules e.g. Economics of Financial Markets, do not have a seminar this year- Jennifer- it was outside department policy that all modules besides core ones will not have seminars; this is due to

the scheduling difficulty since the timetable is full hence it is outside the department's scope;

- Sushil- within the development economics module, the replication assignments really helped students learn STATA quite well; an extension of this assignment to other students as well could help students learn STATA better; Jeremy- feedback for Wiji and Manuel to incorporate as part of exercise sheet for Econometrics A and B (early in the term); Jennifer- quite useful but worried about the students being overwhelmed with the same assignment across all modules; Hence, Sushil believes that could be useful to only include it in a core module like Econometrics;

**Action-** Put feedback across to Wiji and Manuel for Econometrics A and B

### **External Examiner Report**

- James mentioned positive feedback from the external examiners. No further comments;

- **MSc Redesign**

- For Economic Analysis- James supports the idea of splitting economic analysis into Microeconomics and Macroeconomics as easier for recruiters to identify the specialisation of the students; Supports having the option of a mix of A and B. Lory- main reason to make it more consistent with the Econometrics module and also helps members of staff in terms of coordination like preparing exams; Jennifer mentioned that there was relatively small demand for cross variant and tough to create extra module, in terms of organisation paperwork and regulation problem from administrative point of view; Alex- having marked the Macro B, there was a considerable difference between marking BB students and AB students (with selection bias), but having only BB modules would raise the technical knowledge of the students; hence suggests would better to commit to either one;

- **Arushi-** possibly to raise the test in Economic Analysis from 3% to 5% then the exam would be 80% instead of 88% which could help balance the burden. Jennifer- 2020 was an experimental year- have done less sort of intra-term testing before hence wanted to start cautiously; module lecturers have a large say on what works for testing and learning for their modules- sometimes hard to persuade to have intra-term tests; their views could differ from those of the students; As a department, allow the module lecturers to decide what they believe works well; Sushil supports that pressure throughout the term would have been better as put less pressure during the exams and more widespread during the term; Jeremy added that students preferences do change quite a bit- hence, want to fit a fine balance as a test is not to pressurise and overburden the students; Arushi added that students wanted a test for Econometrics B as well so there could be equivalent weightage for Econometrics A and B exams and they could get an opportunity to test their knowledge;

**Action-** Lory and Jennifer would take the feedback back to the Department;

- Jeremy wanted to confirm that the dissertation CATs would be reducing due the harmonisation required by the university; James and Sushil mentioned that

students would prefer to have a higher weightage on dissertation as it would give them more sense of ownership over their degree; Alex mentioned that dissertation has high weightage on proposal hence could reduce weighting on that to reduce the CATS in this module; Jennifer supports the idea of reducing the proposal weightage for e.g. 20% to 10%. Jennifer supports that 30 CATS is quite amount of effort for the summer term hence is representative of the effort needed;

## **7. Student Engagement and Support**

- James mentioned that Lucia did a great job with the Virtual Concert
- Lucia mentioned Economics Photograph Challenge in the Student Newsletter and email

### **Action- SSLC to encourage students to take part in the challenge**

- Generally, for replacement of the PG event before dissertation might be a location/photo quiz or other virtual event.

## **8. Assessment and Feedback**

- James- If possible to compile pictures together into the PDF but Jeremy mentioned it is not possible within the PDF as want multiple markers marking the exams;

## **9. Dissertation**

- James- how will meetings be next term- online or virtual? Jeremy mentioned that the department is waiting for the university to give feedback on the government regulations; virtual meetings for RAE and last year MSc Dissertations students worked well given you can share screen; Default would be online but will not rule out face-to-face.
- Bank of England scheme- Arushi mentioned that students wanted to confirm the timeframe for the first and second scheme selection process so they could look for alternatives before 6<sup>th</sup> April- Lory mentioned that she will select the student in the next couple of days (before end of term) and discuss timeline for the next project with Alex; Students can apply for the second project, even those who applied for the first one.

## **10. Organisation of the Course**

- No concerns

## **11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- No comments

## **12. Any other business**

- James- Any news on the graduation ceremony? Jeremy mentioned that department working on how to celebrate students work- no ceremony in June- could be in January 2022 or June 2022 (big ceremony);
- James- when will Department reopen as study space? Jeremy- hope to open at the start of term 3 and allow for the study space for students to allow for buddy system within modules; limit no. of students allocated to each room.