

SSLC Meeting
Tuesday 11th June 2019
Informatics Forum IF-5.02

Present:

Alex Lascarides – Deputy Head of the Graduate School
Lindsey Fox – Graduate School Manager
Patrick Hudson – IGS On-course Student Support Administrator
Michael Camilleri – Data Science representative
Anna Currey – ILCC representative
Amna Shahab – ICSA representative
Naums Mogers – PPAR representative
Wolfgang Merkt – RAS representative

Meeting was conducted as an open forum and representatives were asked in advance to bring any issues or discussion points with them to be raised with other students in attendance or IGS staff. Also prior to the meeting Alex Lascarides sent out an email and asked the student reps to contact their students and ask the following question:

- 1) Have you or any of the students you represent had any issues this year with doing teaching support, did you get paid for all the hours you put in? Did you get sufficient guidance on what was expected? Did you enjoy it? Do you appreciate the skills you learn while doing it?

- 2) We would also like to know if there are any of you or your students who find the physical environment compel you to study at home more than you would like.

1. Matters Arising

- a) Teaching support has been covered as an agenda item but some students had stated that they were not receiving payment for all the hours they had completed. This mainly related to marking.
- b) All areas which were suggested have been added to the PPR as discussion points.
- c) IGS did send out information to all students relating to the schools support structure but PH will do this again.
- d) The possibility of 'teaching bundles' has been discussed and is an issue currently sitting with Stuart Anderson. This is quite a complex subject to plan ahead for but it has been raised and AL will continue to mention this at various appropriate times. With more students taking interruptions, this could have an effect on the space constraints which are already affecting the forum.
- e) AL did speak with Dave Hamilton and Carol Marini regarding the cleanliness of office space in the forum. This helped to lead the spring clean throughout the forum which generally was a success.
- f) Some reps stated that a reminder of the school support structure would be useful from time to time.

- g) Some of the Bayes occupants have said that they do not have access to the same stationary and cleaning provisions as those in the Forum. Do these students need to take these items from the forum or should they have their own supplies.

Action – PH to email PGR students information relating to the PGR student travel funds available

Action – PH to email out support structure within the school to PGR students

Action – IGS to speak with Carol Marini regarding where Bayes occupants can get stationary and cleaning supplies from

Action – LF to add tier 4 interruptions to the PPR discussion points

2. Teaching Support

- a) AL was looking for feedback on all aspects of teaching support.
- b) For the most part it seems that tutor and demonstrator roles are well supported and the guidelines for completing these roles are clear. Also the hours for these roles are sufficient.
- c) Marking seems to be the area in which most students have issue with. The amount of hours provided for these jobs are not sufficient. Students are often taking longer than their allotted time and therefore completing unpaid work.
- d) The knock on effect of this is that the recruitment of markers is proving more and more difficult.
- e) Also consistent marking across the same papers was described as difficult. When many markers are involved it is hard to keep consistent marking. AL suggested TA's should try to get all markers together and do it as one but this is not always possible.
- f) Feedback response rates for UG students are very bad. In the recent student surveys this is an area where we ranked very low. Markers and teaching assistants should try to manage the expectations of their students so they know that the recommended 2 week turn around on feedback is not likely with larger class sizes.
- g) Some of the reps were discussing auto marking or the potential for a customizable marking tool. AL suggest Alex Burford in computing support maybe able to help with this.
- h) A student had raised that they had a 5 month delay in receiving their contract and therefore a 5 month delay in receiving payment for TD roles.
- i) One of the reps suggested that a go to page with various 'how to' guides relating to teaching and marking would be useful. Having all of this on one place.
- j) Some markers were stating that they were not receiving all the information they should relating to student extensions for exams and course work. Many students will have different deadlines from each other. The ITO should relay this information to the lecturers, it is then their responsibility to distribute this accordingly.

Action – Add marking to PPR

Action – IGS to speak with Alex Burford regarding auto marking

Action – LF to speak with the ITO about having all of the information for teaching in one place

3. PGR Working Environment

- a) The current desk space issues were explained to the group prior to this discussion. Desk space in the forum for September arrivals are going to be extremely tight.
- b) The current DS MScR cohort had been asked to move to the new PGR offices in IF-4.31/33, a lot of them have raised disapproval of this. IGS have said that this was only a suggestion and can be reviews. It is likely this cohort will now be distributed throughout the forum as requested.
- c) Ongoing issues with the air quality in the forum have been raised. Engineers have been out and this is an area that will be fixed. Unfortunately this is not a quick fix and may take time to see improvements.
- d) The heating throughout the forum is also an issue with some offices too hot and some too cold. Some students have been refused heaters for the cold offices so have had to buy these themselves. Again these issues are being looked at but there is no quick fix.
- e) There was also complaints from students that some common space on each level has been used for the storage of furniture. This initially seems to be temporary but has been ongoing for a while now. This is space that students like to use but have not been able to of late.
- f) Some positive feedback from students related to the new smaller meeting room conversions on each floor and also the small Skype pods which are both popular options for students when meeting space is required.
- g) The new seminar space in G.03 is generally a good space since the new projector has been installed. Though students again raised their unhappiness in the removal of 4.31/33 as a seminar space.
- h) Students said that that the recent spring clean was generally a success but some areas, especially the shelves in PGR offices remained very messy. This is not something that can be dealt with by the forum cleaners as they will not move student's belongings.
- i) Some students in PGR offices are messier than others and this is becoming an issue for those that share office space with them. IGS are looking to do more about on-going messy students. Students will be encouraged to let IGS know if they have concerns relating to untidy students.
- j) The fridges in Bayes do not have a cleaning rota as the ones in the forum do. It is unclear who is responsible for this.

Action – IGS to report back to those responsible for the recent spring clean that this should, if possible, be done more regularly

Action – IGS to communicate with PGR students about office cleanliness and the potential consequences of this behaviour

Action – IGS to speak with Carol Marini regarding fridge cleaning in Bayes

4. PGR computer resources

- a) A student had given feedback that their request for an additional monitor was refused. This has meant that this student has had to work from home more often. AL stated that these requests should go through the supervisors and hopefully they will have funds to accommodate these requests.
- b) The performance of ILCC clusters has improved of late. This is also the case for the Data Science clusters. Overall complaints relating to computer clusters is down.
- c) Many student have issues with how long procurement request can take. This is not something this committee can help with but an additional procurement officer has been appointed and this will hopefully help to reduce delays.

Action – Add procurement issues to the PPR discussion points

5. Student Conference Funding

- a) Some student's feedback that they did not think there was enough funding support for conference travel and this meant some were having to miss out on opportunities. The group were reminded of the student PGR funding available through IGS.

Action – PH to resend information relating to the PGR student travel funds available

Next meeting TBA