

**SSLC Meeting**  
**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017**  
**14:00, IF Rm 1.16**

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**Present:**

Bob Fisher – Deputy Head of The Graduate School  
Amanda MacKenzie – PGR Administrative Officer  
Patrick Hudson – IGS On-course Student Support Administrator  
Katharina Heil – DTC representative  
Francisco Quesada Real – CISA representative  
Stefan Fehrenbach – LFCS representative  
Martin Ruefenacht – PPAR representative  
James Garforth – RAS representative  
Pavlos Andreadis – IPAB 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.

**1. Update from Bob Fisher**

- a) Bob started the meeting with a brief update regarding events and initiatives that the graduate school have organised or are planning for the students. These included: Student Family events, Furbush trips, VOX coaching and Scientific Computing sessions.

**2. Feedback from Student reps**

- a) Katharina Heil (DTC) initially brought up that some students may struggle to find the help and support they require while on course, or are not aware what is available to them.
- b) It was discussed that perhaps a refresher could be provided to students to let them know who to contact for certain situations. Ways to do this were discussed and an A4 handout or poster were thought to be the best option. The A4 handout would include an FAQ.
- c) Also information on IGS websites to be reviewed and updated.
- d) When information is distributed via emails is it suggested that this is sometimes too wordy and therefore often ignored by students. Emails should be more to the point and include links to more detailed information for those students that wish to read more. This is the case also for IAD emails that Bob Fisher distributes on behalf of IAD. Try and make these more clear as to what the training is without students having to read a lot of information to find out.

### 3. Tier 4 issues

- a) Bob discussed the new issues facing Tier 4 students and their engagement
- b) Internships were discussed and how the new rules for internships affect students. Also how paid internships are handled.
- c) Some of the reps seek clarification as to when a student is still a student during their thesis submission and corrections.

### 4. Leave of Absences

- a) Some of the reps looked for clarification about the leave of absence process and when it was necessary to complete the forms on line and when it was not
- b) It seems that the information online is not completely clear
- c) When is a leave of absence form necessary? It seems that as leave of absence forms for Tier 4 students are always necessary and this is not the case for non-tier 4 they are often not completed.

### 5. Council Tax

- a) Students were not entirely sure how long they would remain exempt from paying council tax
- b) It was mentioned that once a thesis has been submitted that a student is then automatically made 'interrupted, thesis submitted' on EUCLID. This is the reason their student status changes and they then will be eligible to pay council tax
- c) This is not something that can be changed by IGS. This information should be made clearer to students so they are aware of this and can plan ahead financially

### 6. Completion Rates

- a) It was suggested that maybe not all PhDs can be completed in 4 years. Different research topics can take different amount of time
- b) Bob stated that a PhD is training to become a researcher and that most research will go on beyond the completion of the PhD
- c) Different supervisors can have different methods and this can affect the time taken by students. In some cases students feel this could delay thesis submission
- d) It was mentioned at a later point in the meeting that maybe students who complete tutoring or teaching could be given extra time towards their thesis submission date, for example an additional month. Bob suggested this would be very unlikely to happen as college would not be willing to grant additional months

### 7. Payslips

- a) Some students having issues accessing the new online payslips
- b) It was suggested that IGS resend the guidance on how to do this to make sure all students are able to gain access easily

## **8. Hoodies and Business cards**

- a) IGS enquired if the reps felt that both Informatics branded hoodies and personalised business cards maybe something that they felt would be in high demand if offered to the PGR students.
- b) All reps felt both options would be popular
- c) IGS will look into this further. Funding options for both not confirmed so budgets will need to be looked at

## **9. Desk Allocations**

- a) IGS told students that were present that the desk allocation was now looked after by IGS
- b) Bob mentioned to the reps that there are potential space issues forthcoming due to the new student intake. These issues will likely remain until The Bayes Institute is complete. It may have an effect on students who are close to completion and will then have to move from their desks
- c) Reps seemed positive about this as long as the process was well communicated and plenty of notice was given to the students concerned

### **Actions for next meeting:**

- a) **IGS to look into an FAQ style handout**
- b) **IGS to update webpages**
- c) **IGS to look into Leave of Absence procedure online**
- d) **Make students aware of council tax and payslip procedure**

**Date for next meeting: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017**