**Student Voice Committee Minutes**

**SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & LINGUISTICS**

**Tuesday 2nd March 2021**

**Time and location:** 12pm, via group Zoom call.

**Staff Attendees: Jo Robinson (Head of School); Kate Errington (Facilitator); Adam Mearns (DELT); Martha Young- Scholten (Stage 2&3 Senior Tutor); Neelam Srivastava (Literature Subject Head); Heike Pichler (Language/ Linguistics Subject Head); Lars Iyer (Creative Writing Subject Head)**

**Student Attendees: Anna Howarth (Chair); Joseph Caddick (School Rep); Meghan Capper (Secretary); Liv Blackham (EngSoc); Amy Langdown (EDI Rep); Leanna Thomson (Student Blogger)**

**Student Course Reps: Sophie Wilson; Bethany Richardson; Lucy Rimmer; Grace Cook; Tom Moorcroft; Emily Woodhouse**

**Apologies: Jos Harrison (Careers consultant); Emily Murphy (Stage 1 Senior Tutor)**

**Matters Arising**

* **Communication issues with History department for English Literature and History (QV31) students.** Programme is managed by the School of English, but students have not received information from History: e.g. newsletters, induction weeks, deadline extension information. Joint honours students feel left out.
  + Kate reassured that staff were aware of this and in communication with History department to improve communication to Joint Honours students. Looking into fine tuning on a modular level.
* Sophie highlighted **perceived discrepancies on the English Literature Dissertation** module. Some students feel like they are getting less supervision time than others.
  + Specific concerns were emailed to Neelam (Subject Head for English Literature).

UPDATE – Neelam asked Sophie to encourage English Literature Dissertation students to fill in Meiko O’Halloran’s (Module Leader) survey, to gain more insight on how we can better support students. It was also discussed at Literature Subject Group where staff were reminded of dissertation supervision policy. Students are entitled to 6 hours 1:1 supervision over the year. It was suggested that some students may feel like they’ve had more supervision than others because some are attending writing groups which do not count towards supervision time.

* Joseph addressed **student concerns over marked group work**. Students were asked to reach out to specific people as part of the assignment. However under COVID circumstances this is proving difficult.
  + Specific module concerns were emailed to Kate (SVC Facilitator) who raised with Adam Mearns (DELT) and Heike Pichler (Subject Head for English Language & Linguistics).

UPDATE – Heike liaised with module teaching team and wrote to Joseph addressing concerns.

* Emily addressed **interest in Student Voice Committee from first year students**.
  + Any students interested in participating with the Student Voice Committee are strongly encouraged to email kate.errington@ncl.ac.uk

**Student Reports**

**Careers Blog and Social Media Update**

* Leanna advertising Creative Careers events and plans to do a review of the events with News Associates and Bis Horner on the careers blog.
* The first submissions for Creative Writing series are in and will be posted on Instagram.
* Leanna creating an infographic Instagram series about different research databases with the help of Lucy and the library team. Also, will be posted on library blog.
* Leanna plans to share advice on a blog post for applying speculatively for internships.
* Leanna also plans to start a series drawing attention to commonly overlooked features of the Careers Service.
* Tom working on a review of a Journalism event he hosted
* Tom researching ways he can get increase engagement on the Instagram and SELLL Careers blog.
* Hattie working on motivation music article
* Hattie will be interviewing Steve Bowden, Enterprise Adviser from the Careers Service.

**English Society Updates**

* Society Newsletter will be launched and circulated every 2 weeks
* Questionnaire about the society coming out soon
* Close relationship established with FemSoc, helping out with their summit this weekend
* Working alongside Mind the Gap campaign and running creative writing newsletter to come out in June
* Working towards running a Summer ball provided COVID circumstances change
* Society plan to add more officers for next year’s committee

**EDI Updates**

* Class disparity questionnaire has been written.
* As a result of SVC discussions, the questionnaire has been deferred to NUSU to expand reach to the whole university rather than just SELLL.

**Staff Reports**

**Safety Net Deadline Time Management**

* Adam discussed the new measures to ease stress for student assignments. There are now four **deadlines spread across the 25th and 27th May and 1st and 3rd of June**. Still an emphasis on individual time management; prioritising assignments and setting own deadlines.
* Emphasis on talking to personal tutors for support
* Leanna encouraged peers to check out the time management blog posts on the SELLL careers blog.
* Kate commented that School of English assessments allow students to resubmit before the deadline. However this is not the policy in all schools. Students should always check the assessment policy in the relevant schools.

**National Student Survey: Responding to Feedback**

* Neelam updated on measures taken since last NSS, to address SELLL student feedback.
* Formative assessments for many modules have been introduced as a way to allow students to get feedback before the final assessment.
  + Opened up for discussion from Student Reps; some preferred a summative mid-module assessment to balance out with the final assignment as otherwise they are heavily relying on the final mark. Others thought that it built their confidence.
* Marks were overall higher as students could specifically apply the feedback to their summative assessment.
* Grace found formatives useful as it helped to break up workload and she already felt prepared for final assignment.
* Liv raised concern over students wanting to write on a text that comes after the mid module, making formative assignment less useful. It was discussed how the mid-module assessment doesn’t necessarily have to be on the same text, as it still allows students to practice the essay writing skills prior to the summative assessment.
* Addressing perceived inconsistency on feedback across modules and markers, Neelam described the overall marking process. Summative assessments worth over 20% on team-taught modules are moderated. We also have external examiners who review sample of work and feedback, so there are several layers of oversight.

**Recruitment for Student Voice Committee**

* According to Semester 1 student feedback, only 36.23% students felt their voices were heard; how can we improve this as a committee?
* Kate commented that there’s not a lot of representation from Language and Linguistics courses, whilst Heike encouraged diversity in student reps as some students might not feel that they personally are being represented and might be reluctant to raise their concerns.
* Leanna commented that SELLL Instagram account would like to hear from Language and Linguistics students, to make sure that it addresses them as well (all current bloggers are Literature students).

UPDATE – since meeting Joseph has been in touch with SELLL bloggers to provide and Lang/Ling perspective. Bloggers have also run an Instagram survey to assess whether students feel their courses are adequately represented in their social media content. 83% agreed that their course was represented.

* Proposed that **Personal Tutors and Module Leaders should be highlighting these opportunities** because newsletters are skimmed over. It was also commented that emails from familiar staff are more likely to be read.
* Bethany proposed that **Peer Mentors should also receive training on School Opportunities** to encourage first year applications.
* Grace suggested that reps should speak about experiences to encourage people to apply for the Student Voice Committee.
* Kate suggested fortnightly newsletter Student Voice Committee spotlight to increase visibility.
* Suggested that Newcastle University Instagram page (central account) could share content from School stories to improve engagement.

**Library Update**

* Lucy highlighted access to resources at the library via Click and Collect and their new Click and Post service.
* Library working towards widening access to eBooks.
* Trial of Oxford World Classics online.
* Special collections and archive team have started a virtual reading room; member of staff has a zoom meeting so you can access your selected archives.
* From 8th March Marjorie Robinson library times will be extended till 10pm and they will be reopening two levels of Philip Robinson 9am-6pm.
* Shelf browsing on levels 3 and 4 remains closed.
* There is still 24hr support through Library Help, as well as 1-1 appointments and the enrichment week sessions the library are running, including the Writing Development Centre and information on finding resources.
* Reminder that the Twitter account is: @NCLRoblib

**Careers Update**

* Kate encouraged students to look at enrichment week materials which includes planning for the rest of the Semester, next year, and planning for graduate outcomes.

**IT Updates**

* Anonymous suggestion box for Student Reps is now live in the App.
* Teaching Excellence Awards now open for nominations via NUSU.
* Student Rep awards now open for nominations via NUSU.
* Peer mentor recruitment is now open.
* NUSU officer elections are now open.