Social Policy: Staff-Student Liaison Committee 2022/23

Semester 2

Representatives:

Y1: Dono Abdurahmanova

Y2: Xiaotong Zhu

Y4: Sophie Burbank

Apologies: Grace Davis, Molly Flatley, Zohra o'Doherty

Introduction

- Richard Brodie opened proceedings and invited participants to introduce themselves

Minutes

Year 1

- **DA**: quite a few students mentioned strikes, and the fact that they resulted in about half of lectures and tutorials cancelled. It feels like an incomplete course.
    - would it be possible to get a list of potential take-home paper topics for Politics of the Welfare State?
        - **RB**: will ask Elke Heins
    - **DA**: additionally, given that only some staff members went on strike, some students found that more of their classes were cancelled compared to others. It makes the degree more difficult, and Social Policy less attractive compared to joint degrees with (e.g.) Economics
        - **RB**: there should be guidance coming around for this, but students will be informed.
- **DA**: Quantitative Methods – some students felt as if Maths for Social Science (Sem 1) and Intro to Statistics (Sem 2) are the wrong way around. The latter feels as if it builds up to the former.
    - **SB**: that wasn't my experience personally. It's designed that way, perhaps because many people join Quants in semester 2.
        - **RB**: will speak to Valeria to ask about the logic of that choice.
- **RB**: how can we encourage better attendance at cohort events?
    - **DA**: snacks would be an idea.
        - **RB**: happy to do this if need be, but don't have much of a budget for it
- **RB**: what events would you like to see next year?
    - **XZ**: more social events
    - **DA**: internship opportunity information

Year 2

- **XZ**: students are worried about the final exam for EPP – will the marking criteria be changed, or other support provided?
    - **RB**: will raise that with Dan Kenealy
- **XZ**: many students complained about the week 7 and 8 content, which revealed for many of them that there is pre-requisite knowledge on fiscal policy that they didn't have. Jargon in

lecture was overused and went unexplained. Tutorials were very difficult to participate in as a result.
    - **RB**: will raise this with Dan Kenealy
- **XZ**: little sense of community across subject area.
    - **RB**: strikes have made this very possible this semester. We had planned to have different events, but these got lost due to strike action. Absolutely accept that this is a problem, and plan to do more for current year 1s and 2s going forward. New student support model will also see more events put on.
    - **DA**: EconPALS is much more active than P PALS – their leaders are paid £500 per year, and their events have snacks.
        - **RB**: we're having difficulty recruiting and are losing some very active members this year. We'll look into any possibility of doing something similar in SPS.
- **XZ**: doesn't feel that she's had much help from within Social Policy regarding internship opportunities, which – as she's had more help from Economics – has seen her move towards Economics despite being on a first-name Social Policy degree.
    - **RB**: will do more to support students on this going forward.
- **XZ**: what can students do if they want to drop Social Policy for single-Hons Economics?
    - **RB**: students shouldn't get their hopes up if their Econ marks aren't high. They should speak to Student Advice and Support in the Economics School

<u>Year 4</u>

- **SB**: standard of teaching on Multi-Level Modelling has been disappointing compared to previous years, on the part of both course organiser and tutor
    - **RB**: will speak to Kevin Ralston (?)

<u>Strikes</u>

- **RB:** were strikes a problem across the board?
    - **SB**: students have accepted them with resignation
    - **XZ**: they were confusing for students (though Economics staff did not strike)

<u>Social Policy Society</u>

- **XZ**: been difficult to encourage people to join because the Society hasn't been very active, but this is also fuelled by the lack of participation at events.
- **SB**: many people have occasionally been able to organise, but it's been difficult to manage as they've been year 4 students leading and some potential new leaders are on JYA. We'll need names to ensure the Society can maintain itself going forward
    - **RB**: will send an e-mail with details of the AGM coming up on 5th April, and mention it at cohort event on Wednesday next week.