

Minutes Staff Graduate Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 24th February 2016 – Steve Critcher Room, Department of International Politics

In Attendance: Dr Ayla Gol (Chair, Director of Graduate Studies), Donia Richards (Academic Operations Officer), Abigail Blyth (2nd year representative), Lydia Cole (3rd year representative), Quincy Cloet (1st year representative stand in for Jana Wattenberg), Dyfan Powell (4th year representative stand in for Florian Edelmann), Adrianna Kapek (Masters representative), Simon French (IS / Library representative)

1 Welcome

Dr Gol, Chair of the SGCC meeting welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if Abigail Blyth would take the minutes which she agreed to do.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Dr Berit Bliesemann de Guevara – Deputy Director of Graduates Studies – PhD

Prof Jenny Edkins – Master’s Programme Officer

Florian Edelmann – 4th year PhD representative

Lowri Thomas – Masters representative

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25th November were circulated beforehand and then confirmed at the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4 Library Matters

4.1 Simon French, the current International Politics subject librarian said that he would be leaving his post on Friday and therefore any queries or concerns should be sent to acastaff@aber.ac.uk. Currently, there is no confirmed temporary replacement.

4.2 SF raised awareness of the More Books campaign where more books can be requested through Primo. If they cost over £50, the request will be reviewed. They are encouraging people to use this service. Quincy Cloet asked if this service was applicable to books written in a foreign language which are still useful for your PhD. SF said yes, this function was available to foreign language books, providing they were available to buy.

4.3 On behalf of Florian Edelmann, Dyfan Powell asked for clarification on whether you have to pay for books through document supply. SF stated that all staff and PhD students get 10 free document supply requests and then have to pay for the service via the Department. Masters students have to pay for any document supply requests. AB asked for clarification on whether fines are placed on items from document supply particularly when a renewal request is still being processed. SF said he would look into this matter.

4.4 Library opening hours have now been extended at the Thomas Parry Library. The Hugh Owen Library is now open 24 hours a day with library staff present between 6am and 9pm. Outside of these hours, you need to swipe your library card to enter / exit the library.

5 Items from the Chair

5.1 AG highlighted, as Dr Jenny Mathers had in the open PhD meeting that a joint application by Aberystwyth and Cardiff for a joint ESRC pathway has now been submitted. The Department are waiting to hear back but expect that the application should be successful.

6 Masters Matters

6.1 Alex Williams asked if there would be a dissertation workshop this semester. Donia Richards confirmed that there would be one on the 11th March 2016 and an email would be sent round soon confirming this and the topic.

7 PhD Matters

7.1 Specific concerns about PTTS contracts had been received by Lydia Cole. These were:

- Have any contingency plans been made by the department to avoid further repetitions of the problems experienced last year?
- What lessons learnt meeting between the department (Jenny) and the institute (Jackie)? Did this include HR? What came out of this?
- Is this still a problem still affecting any PhD students?

AG said that contingency plans had been put in place to prevent the same issues from occurring again and thought that lessons had been learnt with things improving for this semester. It was unclear whether HR were involved in these discussions.

7.2 AB raised the issue that the PTTS consultation room was now being used as an office for Dr Caroline Dale and therefore where were PTTS to talk to students. DR said it was only being used as an office during office hours and was therefore still available for use as a PTTS consultation room. DR was going to clarify this and then send an email around.

7.3 DP asked on behalf of FE whether there would be the option of PhD students being offered membership of the European Consortium for Political Membership as this was more applicable to their research than the professional membership which is currently offered.

AG said that it depends on the cost of membership and would be possible if it was in the same price range as the other memberships offered. DP stated that although ECPR offer individual and staff membership, these fees are still very high but, it does offer specialist training. AG stated that the institutional costs are also high and wondered whether there would be a discount offered if there was a large demand for ECPR membership as the overall decision would be based upon cost. DP said he would let those interested know and see if any others were interested in ECPR membership.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th May 2016