

Hebrew and Jewish Studies Department
 Staff Student Consultative Committee Minutes
 Wednesday 4 February 2021, 1pm on Microsoft Teams

Agenda	Progress & Decisions	Action
1. Welcome	<p>Present: Michael Berkowitz (MB, Chair), Casey MacKenzie Johnson (CMJ, minutes), Oksana Baigent (OB, PhD Rep), Siyi Qi (SQ, first year rep), Victoria Lisek (VL, second year rep), Sacha Stern (SS), Lily Kahn (LK), Florentyna Spyrek (FS, finalist rep), Francesca Kurlansky (FK, MA rep), Danilo Paganelli (DP, first year rep)</p> <p>Absent: Sadia Shahid (SSh, first year rep)</p>	
2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	<p>Minutes ratified, nothing has come up.</p>	
3. No detriment policy	<p>SQ: UCL is still finalising details, guidelines out so far are very generalised. Students feel that UCL as a whole (not HJS) does not care enough about the difficulties students are having this year.</p> <p>SS: we are waiting for this policy to come out. The understanding is that in broad terms deadlines or modules will be able to be postponed into LSA. It is not clear that having more time is the most helpful as this will mean working through the summer holiday. There was not as much transparency over the mitigation process as SS and the students would have liked.</p> <p>Students feel they were not consulted about the no detriment process. They feel that the university is overly concerned about the quality of the degree over the mental health and personal/family issues students are facing right now.</p> <p>We will find out what mitigations will be put into place soon.</p> <p>This is not a departmental issue and needs to be relayed to the institution and we as a Dept can stand together in these issues.</p>	
4. Tuition Fees	<p>General sentiment reported by SQ that students feel they want a tuition fee refund. Students, especially international students, feel they are not getting what they paid for and UCL has “massive endowments” and is in a good place financially.</p> <p>SQ emphasises that it is understood that staff have been working harder than in typical year.</p> <p>SQ unaware of specific students in HJS who are requesting a refund but reports there is a general sentiment that a refund would be welcome.</p>	

	<p>SS emphasises that everyone in the country is suffering and missing out on usual life. It is unrealistic to expect compensation for everything people are missing out on.</p> <p>FS Suggests more economic transparency from UCL so students can see where UCL is spending money in regard to online teaching. SS agrees this is a major issue. The new provost has pledged more transparency and accountability.</p> <p>OB points out there is support for students in financial difficulty. There is a hardship fund for living expenses for students as well.</p>	
<p>5. Mental health and teaching supports</p>	<p>Generally reported that Student Support and Wellbeing is not adequate- it is under resourced for the rising demand. Or the support they have supplied has not been very helpful.</p> <p>A student of concern was reported and student did not find this helpful. This is not a departmental issue and needs to be relayed to the institution and we as a Dept can stand together in these issues.</p> <p>Personal tutor is not allocated on Portico. Students are confused about who their personal tutor is. This is a major issue.</p> <p>FK Teaching support- students are worried about deadlines without library access. MB reports that we are very aware of this- it hasn't been a huge issue so far- we can get books and resources to students.</p> <p>SQ students are worried about oral exams and ask for tutors teaching those modules give them more guidelines and expectations.</p> <p>SQ students are unsure of essay requirements- first year students want more info on how they are marked and what is expected at University level.</p> <p>SQ reading lists: sometimes are less relevant because it is resources that are available online</p> <p>VL suggests looking at essay mark sheet on website and that learning how to write good essays and approach the reading list is a good use of the first year of uni.</p> <p>See point 7 about feedback for support.</p>	<p>Look for personal tutor info in Portico listed in student summary for students (CMJ)</p> <p>Raise this with personal tutors.</p>
<p>6 Research student funding extensions</p>	<p>Research students are unclear about funded (from UCL) extensions within the PhD- not just people at the end of their degree. There has not been good support from the doctoral school and no clear policy. SO far extensions have only been for people in their final year.</p>	

	<p>SS he and other HoDs have been making requests for this to be resolved as it is a big issue for PhD students and Postdocs.</p>	
<p>7. Module feedback forms</p>	<p>“Have your say” feedback forms had an extremely low response rate. If we have this feedback, we are better able to support learning. Teaching staff really would like</p> <p>FK notes that feedback is usually taken up when it is negative. She will nudge MA students to give more response. She also notes how well things are going within the Dept.</p> <p>SQ reports students in HJS are very happy.</p>	<p>Feedback forms should all still be live CJ to check</p> <p>All students to nudge their cohort to give feedback</p>
<p>8. AOB</p>	<p>Study abroad all seems really unclear at the moment- when we have information or a plan, this information will be disseminated.</p> <p>VL asks about modules next year- they will be posted soon.</p>	

CMJ 04/02/2021