

Commission Mixte March 3 2017

Present :

Téo Verhoeven
Nantana McKinlay
Gioia Cacchioli
Roberta Marangi
Roberto Keller
Valérie Fehlbaum
Amy Brown
Guillemette Bolens
Deborah Madsen

Meeting opened 12.20pm. Roberto Keller, Téo Verhoeven and Professor Madsen left to attend other meetings at approximately 1pm.

1. Professor Bolens, with Professor Madsen, tabled a memo containing a draft of possible changes to the plan d'études, which, when finalised, would take effect in autumn 2018. Its main points were:
 - I. To devote a module to American literature (BA7)
 - II. To change the structure of the BA1 module to include fortnightly academic writing tutorials.
- I. Professors Bolens and Madsen both spoke of the changes to BA7 in terms of forward planning for the department, and in terms of providing students with an opportunity to study American culture in context. The meeting generally supported these points, with the additional point that it is thought that a module on American literature may draw interest from students in other departments (as a cross-listed unit).
- II. Student members were concerned about losing linguistics seminars in BA7: it was noted that the English linguistics staff, after deliberation, turned out to be in favour of the changes, as they are under staffing stress due to the loss of Professor Forel's position.
- III. There was some concern about losing the cross-listed BA7 option, but Professor Bolens noted that the majority of our students complete BA7 within the department.
- IV. Dr Fehlbaum and Professor Bolens both noted the importance of retaining (or re-assigning) the graded paper within another module. The professors intend to continue discussing this and determine where it can be best placed.
- V. Student members were in favour of the changes to BA1: some concerns were raised about increasing the workload, but approval was given on the basis that the changes redistribute, rather than duplicate, workload. The Writing Lab monitors expressed particular approval for more structured teaching on analytical writing skills.
- VI. The meeting gave general approval to the proposed changes, and student members intend to discuss the proposals with other students before the AGM.
2. Professor Bolens tabled the professors' intentions to institute diagnostic language testing in the beginning of BA1, to complement these changes; the meeting approved.
3. Professor Bolens reported having discussed the Commission Mixte's interest in adding a petit-memoire to the plan d'études: professors who were in the department when this was trialled reported it is not appropriate for the majority of our students, and graded papers provide students with a more structured opportunity for independent research.

4. Feedback on department social activities: the MA/PhD tea was a success; Roberta and Gioia to organise another. Creative writing group is small but thriving. The Christmas Party organised by Simon Swift and Valerie Fehlbaum with student assistance was very successful and Professor Swift is working with students to plan a summer picnic.
5. Professor Bolens reported on the Commission's concern with the lack of reading period before the June exam session: the issue has been discussed at Decanat level. Nantana McKinlay reported that the Association des Etudiants en Lettres is pursuing this issue with the faculty. Professors have discussed the three-week departmental deadline and currently prefer to retain it, because of issues of workload and consistency.
6. Nantana McKinlay raised the possibility of organising careers advice sessions, particularly for BA students hoping to go into teaching, as it is helpful to know what extracurricular or employment activities are highly regarded by the IUFE. The AEL is also discussing these needs: Nantana will liaise with Professor Bolens and speak about this at the AGM.
 - I. Subsequently, the possibility of other careers advice sessions (eg visits by former students) was raised.
 - II. The possibility of BA student apéros or morning teas, with the aim of introducing young BA students to senior BA and/or MA students was raised: it was agreed this should be organised by the students themselves, but in principle the department would support it.
7. The AGM will take place on the 11th of April. The Commission Mixte will meet on the 26th at 12.30 (room TBA), to discuss the outcome of the AGM and introduce any newly elected members.

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