

Meeting of the CM of the English Department – Monday, 11 March 2019

All members present: Guillemette Bolens (GB), Valérie Fehlbaum (VF), Oran McKenzie (OM), Gioia Cacchioli (GC), Donatella Avoni (DA), Benjamin Loubet (BL), Lorraine Devillard (LD).

The president opens the meeting at 16:15

Guillemette explains why the planification of the AGM and of this CM meeting was rushed, and thanks the CM for reacting quickly.

Staff news:

For reasons of timing, the CER-meeting will take place after the AGM. The wish is to have one such meeting every semester. Students of the CM are encouraged to also plan a meeting among students every semester.

News from the students' meeting:

Student association:

- There is some interest and motivation from a group of students to revive the student association. The group is gathering and an email will soon be sent to inform the other students of the department. Any student who is interested and motivated is welcome to join in the process.
- Donatella advises to have all the paperwork done by the end of June to ensure that the association can be in place for the Autumn semester.

Creative Writing Group (CWG):

- There is also motivation to ground a CWG led for and by students. The idea is to sit together during 1h-1h30 and take the time to write, then exchange about the texts. The organisers will come with a small impetus (such as "make it sound Shakespearian") if the inspiration should be lacking. The first session will take place at the end of March (Friday the 29th, at 16:00).
- The project is warmly welcomed by the staff who supports the idea of having an activity linked to literature but not under the pressure of academic assessment, and powered by students.
- Lorraine sees potential in the CWG to help reviving *Noted*, depending on how the group evolves and if a positive snowball effect can take place.

Feedback for the "bureau qualité":

- Gioia reported that students gave their approval to answering a questionnaire giving some more personal information (e.g., if they have a job alongside their studies, if they have children to take care of, etc.), if it can help bridge the expectations and the reality of the situation.
- The "observatoire de la vie étudiante" is a good resource to create this questionnaire professionally.

Frustration among students:

The problems discussed during the student meeting with respect to the procedures of evaluation have been reported and a long discussion ensued, in which following points were addressed:

- There is a need to better understand the correlation between teaching practices and ways of assessment (from both sides, students and staff-members). Guillemette announces that this will be the main topic of the first staff meeting on teaching practices.
- Guillemette explains that plagiarism is taken seriously by the department because the UNIGE sees it as a fraud which involves legal responsibility. She sums up the procedure that teachers are required to follow if plagiarism is suspected; it is a procedure implemented to ensure fairness towards every party.
- The discussion also addressed the complexity of the curriculum and diverse skills that students are expected to learn (not only in terms of writing and reading, but also in terms of adaptation to expectations, of human interaction and professionalization). The different horizons offered by the different professors and staff members represent a richness to the acquisition of these skills.
- Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the office hours (which are moments dedicated to students!) and to ask for feedback on their exams and attestations. Students of the CM (and others!) have an important role to play in encouraging the other students to open the dialogue with the assistants and professors who teach them.
- There was a common consensus that the main issues pertain to communication. Student associations and commissions are very important in this respect.

Additional point:

Oran expressed a need for feedback concerning the new BA1 module and the writing lab, knowing that module BA1 is in a transitional year after the change of plan d'études, and that it underwent many complications in academic year 2018-2019. This should settle down as of the Autumn semester. Details about these changes will figure in the minutes of the AGM-meeting to be held on March 12th, 2019.

The president closes the meeting at 18:02.

LD/gb/vf/om/gc/da/bj