**Faculty of Humanities**

**eLearning Network**

**Tuesday 1st December 2020**

**Karenne Sylvester** ([karenne.sylvester@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:karenne.sylvester@manchester.ac.uk))

Outgoing Secretary, Faculty Teaching Learning & Student Experience

**Imogen Durant** ([imogen.durant@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:imogen.durant@manchester.ac.uk))

Incoming Secretary, Faculty Teaching Learning & Student Experience

**In attendance**:

Becki Bennett (BB), Anna Verges Bausili (AVB), Stuart Phillipson (SP), Jac Dennington (JD), Steve Bagley (SB), Natalie Gent, Rob Marks (RM), Hannah Cobb (HC), Mark Shepherd (MS), Dan Rigby (DR), Huw Morgan (HM), Angela Gardner, Nikos Aspiotis, Joanna Delgado, Karenne Sylvester (KS), Andy Richardson, Olesya Shipova, Mark Lobjoit, Ray Wilson, Elsa Lee, Helen Perkins, Hamza Badenjiki, Blaise Nkwenti-Azeh, Kar Stanton, Graham Holland, Janean Lancaster, Omar Ahmedmia, Rachel Willder, Lauren O’Donnell, Jennifer Hewitt (JH), Adaeze Ezeh (AE)

1. **Welcome & Apologies received:**

Jonny Crook, Hilary Pooley, Lisa Mcaleese, Imogen Durant, Chris Millson and Moyra James.

Becki Bennett (BB) welcomed everyone and commented that the work of this committee shouldn’t only take place in the meetings. The newly created [MS Teams space](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a8c8c0a8ddebb48de8bdeab7ea7bde76b%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=0024f138-1f42-478d-9428-0273b30c7fed&tenantId=c152cb07-614e-4abb-818a-f035cfa91a77) should help to facilitate work in between meetings and maintain momentum leaving the purpose of these meeting for reporting back and discussion.

1. **Minutes of last meeting, 8th July 2020**

**Received:** eLN 1\_21\_1 Minutes 8th July 2020

BB asked members to let KS know if anything in the above document needs correcting.

1. **Matters Arising and Outstanding actions**

**Received:** eLN 1\_21\_2Outstanding Actions

Ensure student voice:

* Items Pick up on issues reported in student survey
* BB invited suggestions and ideas about how to ensure student voice is heard
* Student reps invited to raise issues in between Network meetings as well as in meetings

Continue developing ways to share best practice:

* School reports focused on sharing best practice

1. **Chair’s Update**

*To receive a verbal update from BB.*

* BB thanked everyone for how hard everyone has been working and the challenges everyone has faced.
* Faculty is in a good position – reports from student survey, staff and eLearning leads indicates high quality of teaching materials and high quality of support that has been provided, thanks to everyone’s hard work.
* BB outlined successes, including completing hardware requests, Padlet licences and Voicethread Platinum service licence.
* 30 video conferencing items to support hybrid in person/online teaching available – BB invited members to come forward if you know anyone who would find it useful.
* Faculty has representation on high up committees. BB invited Committee to approach her if need her to put pressure on.
* Flexible Learning Programme – taking over from existing reviews such as eLearning review, VLE review and now coming under this umbrella. Dan George leading the project, and putting in a bid for resource to carry out this project in July. Interview for Academic Digital Lead took place 27.11.2020. The Programme does not aim to reduce numbers of eLearning staff. BB is on operational committee so will update when she has more info.

1. **Student Voice**

**Received:** eLN 1\_21\_3 HUM\_earlyStudentExperienceSurveys\_27November2020

**AVB: Outcomes of Student Experience Survey**

Reasonable participation in survey: approx. 1200 UG students, 700-800 PGT. PGT students in SOSS not yet represented in these figures. Student views from both UG and PGT are widely positive. Areas identified by students for improvement are in the delivery of seminars rated lower than lectures, ongoing issues with access from China, but most prominently workload specially but not solely reported by UG students. While Students welcome flexibility of lectures being online, students call for more interaction (‘isolation’ being frequent comment) in seminars and lectures and miss face-to-face teaching.   
**JH:**

* Workload is the biggest problem. Lecturers have gone overboard in offering participation-based content e.g. discussion boards and Voicethreads. Students are finding the lack of structure and blurred lines between work and home life challenging.
* Departments responding in different ways e.g. CLAH starting to peel things back because academics don’t want to spend time offering extra participation work if it isn’t being well received.
* Benefits of online classes:
  + Students more likely to attend
  + More accessible for both DASS and non-DASS students, especially Voicethread which is more manageable than full length podcasts/lectures

**AE:**

* SOSS PGT students haven’t completed survey - AE trying to reach them via Programme Administrator.
* AE surprised to hear that PGT students are less overwhelmed with workload as she has heard that this is an issue, especially volume of materials available. Some lecturers have replaced 1 hour lecture with 3 hours of video recordings.
* Tutors are providing more pre-lecture content and not covering it all in the lecture. Students either overwhelmed or just getting by but not completing all reading.

**A discussion was held regarding students’ experiences with isolation and workload pressures:**

**BB** found that there was a prevalence of the word ‘isolation’ in the survey, possibly adding to the feeling of being overwhelmed with workload because students can’t share experiences with peers. There is a need to enable them to have these conversations with one another, with more signposting to indicate essential/non-essential work.

**AVB** asked student reps how much the students were talking to other students, and how could this be promoted.

**AE** mentioned that onelecturer reached out via email this week to reiterate these points and invite students to join informal group which she could facilitate but not participate in. Students asked to indicate interest directly. She provided email addresses and asked students to organise this informal discussion (hasn’t yet been organised).

**DR** said thatif content and curriculum hasn’t changed, process of engaging with it and degree of isolation is having an impact.

* **HC’s** Spark page about managing time for [SALC students](https://spark.adobe.com/page/LvYyj6WKVE4Ma/) has been recreated and is also being used with [SOSS students.](https://spark.adobe.com/page/UEpjpSJdhIpx3/)
* Ralph Becker (SOSS) contacted his first years, offering to create groups within degree programmes to facilitate communication. 300+ responses from students who wanted to participate which demonstrates interest and isolation and that we pro-active action can be taken to facilitate peer-to-peer support.

**HC** stated thatlecturers need to set expectations for students in terms of workload and what is/isn’t required, not just ILOs.

* Informal peer-to-peer comms is generally good (whatsapp), formal comms in seminars is also good, but no in-between space to discuss lecture without tutor – facilitation needed.

**HM** said they have been using Bb groups to facilitate this with positive response, and they offered 1 mark per discussion in order to promote them. Using peer instruction techniques, students will organise themselves. It’s a good idea to promote at course level rather than programme level – open course rooms in zoom/collaborate.

**BB** alsoasked student reps if groups would benefit from a trivial purpose e.g. icebreaker to get the conversations started.

**AVB** agreedthat there needs to be a space which is neither engineered nor totally unstructured and wondered if some students could be given a role to lead these groups. She also suggested bringing in learning design expertise – you don’t go straight from no participation to discussing lectures. You need phases: 1. Icebreakers 2. Sharing information 3. Sharing opinions. Students can lead the facilitation of this discussion themselves.

**BB** said that the most important thing is to do it in a way that won’t create more work for students.

**AE** suggested that it would be best if this practice was implemented from the beginning of Semester.

**JH** stated that some students were reluctant to talk to peers on discussion boards. Some students will want to meet informally online, while others were fatigued from online interaction and won’t engage. She suggested that there can be a conflict between students wanting to interact with each other but not wanting to spend extra time online/on zoom.

**BB** added that one of the benefitsof Padlet is anonymity and the main areas to focus on are workload, lack of community, isolation.

**DR** raised the point that engagement in seminars is an issue, especially within breakout rooms. He asked how people can be encouraged to participate, for instance through muting and unmuting, and use of cameras. He also asked about what lessons can be shared and passed on in order to make these sessions work better for semester 2.

**JH** described her experience of breakout rooms, where students are faced with 8-9 peers with cameras and mics off, not willing or too anxious to engage. She said that people feel very exposed, but there have also been in-person seminars where people don’t engage. She suggested that lecturers apply what they do normally, as having 30 people in a zoom main room is better than putting them into breakout rooms before they have the chance to get to know each other.

**BB** & **HC** emphasised a needto translate face to face engagement techniques to the online environment using a combination of zoom interaction tips and re-remembering our core pedagogy.

E.g. Snowballing - pairs report back to bigger group, who then report back to bigger group.

Extra zoom tips – e.g. include icebreaker in decision about reporting back and include icebreaker e.g. the person who woke up latest, or the person furthest from Manchester has to report back.

**DR** stated that breakout rooms do still have the capability to work and **BB** said that when they don’t, the lecturers should look for different ways of doing it e.g. make the purpose clearer.

**JH** reiterated that students are grateful for the extra work that staff are putting in.

1. **Sharing Good Practice**

**BB** said that while good practice is being shared, it would be a good idea to have a place where people can share tips and advice. She gave the example of AMBS having found a workaround for China, through the use of MS Teams.

While **MS** said that if this is done, there is a strong need to consolidate resources more effectively, **DR** stated that it is difficult to find things that you know exist: Staffnet, humanities teaching academy, ITL, HUM eLearning. We need a radical rationalisation of resources.

**BB** agreed, suggesting a FAQ section that is well signposted and easy to navigate. She asked if anyone could do this and share it with the group.

**SP** brought up the point that **s**ometimes this relates to access and how you want to deliver the message – e.g. the humanities eLearning WordPress site can be updated in seconds but has less impact. To get something on Staffnet can take 2 weeks of coordination. Higher impact stuff = more time and people involved, so sometimes we do things out of convenience because it’s faster.

**BB** suggested having a Spark page where new resources are added. Once you have the link, any additions can be found there.

**HC** responded that the Humanities Teaching Academy website should be that central repository, and that a ‘square’ of 5 minute tips, could be added to it. She said that in her experience, Staffnet doesn’t get the reach some people think it does – people don’t look there for information and that the staff survey found people reporting that there was too much, rather than not enough stuff.

**HM** said that the pages usuallydirect people to FAQ but not to a direct link, they have to scroll down, and **SP&AVB** said that it may bepossible (but time-consuming) to provide a link, and that they would look into it.

**AVB** added that this issue is a lost battle given that we can’t have a single place which is updated on a regular basis, with all the documents and ability to filter as there are too many different working groups, faculties, etc all creating documentation. Examples of good practice are contained in hubs = discrete areas which organise content.

**BB** asked if MS Teams could be used, toshare between us, and then we decide who it’s useful for?

Finally **HC** said that she doesn’t think it’s a lost battle because we are in charge of what is going out. Furthermore she felt that we have the ability to say – from now on, the single point of truth is *this* website. If you have any eLearning questions, you go there. Nothing to stop us having a square for each school so we can link to specific guidance.

**7. IT Services Update**

**Received**: eLN\_1\_21\_6\_Humanities eLearning Network Dec 2020 - IT Issues Raised

* IT Services aiming for more regular service reporting.
* New telephony system (Gamma), can provide statistics.
* Trying to pull in stats about tickets. 3734 tickets in Humanities this month. Average 11-20 days to resolve tickets.

Helpdesk wait times:

* ½ October calls abandoned before they were answered. Down to 1/3 in Nov.
* Average Wait Times (AWT) only include answered calls
* IT services developing targets for AWTs

Challenges:

* Remote access– low capacity. Average 600 users. Around 20 tickets at a time related to RPC.
* MFA - Encourage students to test access before the teaching.
* Software issues e.g. Voicethread not accessible in the Library due to browsers not being updated or incompatible with some browsers.
* Standard request in Support Centre for software not deployed to particular cluster. Working on publicising which software available in which cluster for next Semester.
* Adobe Acrobat Pro – access per user per device, on request. Would cost £300,000+ for full subscription. Schools and faculties have to pay for the product individual licences. Other products offer similar functionality e.g. Carrell Suite – free to download from software centre.
* Bug - link to Knowledge Base articles only take you to the main portal not individual pages. Issue reported to Service Desk.

Laptops for Students:

* Laptops – HelpMeGetOline do not offer laptops for temporary student use, but IT services are speaking to Widening Participation and Library about extending their Library loan laptop service to see if it can be adapted and utilised for shorter term purposes. SB will keep the Committee updated.
* **SW** reported that Library’s laptop loan service maxed out over summer. 102 laptops loaned to students, none returned. Will attempt to recover laptops in Jan and use them for this type of service. Global demand for laptops outstripping supply. Average of 600-800 laptop requests at any time. IT delivering 300-400 per month.
* **HC** asked if iPads in AGLC could help to provide a temporary solution?

Access Issues for Students in China:

* AMBS may have a workaround for China but we need to check the legality. Allow students remote access to clusters.

**SP** said that University’s Legal Counsel think it’s ok, and that we are able to tell students who are experiencing problems that they can do this, however we shouldn’t put this information out on a public webpage yet.

**BB** suggested that peopleconsult with Stuart to check you are implementing this in the way we have been advised.

Finally, **SW** said that the IT team are trying to learn what the Network Committee needs to know from ITS. For the Feb meeting – network members should let IT team know concerns in advance. **BB** suggested that we use MS Teams to have these conversations more fluently and not to leave it until February to raise issues.

**8. Faculty eLearning Updates**

**Received:** eLN\_1\_21\_5\_FacultybriefingNote\_July-Nov2020; eLN\_1\_21\_5\_Teaching Online Flyers-2020\_condensed, and see [Resources Page](https://spark.adobe.com/page/GiI2rArulYKU9/).

**DR** said thatSOSS want fresh templates for all courses in Semester 2. Rollover option should be disabled, and AVB said that she needs to go back to central team about this.

**Teaching Online Workshops**

* **AVB** asked team members to please publicise them and to let her know about suggestions for topics and presenters to share good practice in schools, including a series of short 5 minute ‘how to’ resource sharing e.g. zoom icebreakers for future workshops.

**9. AOB:**

Upcoming meetings in 2021, meetings should be rescheduled 2 hours duration as 1.5hrs were deemed too short.