

running a seminar on how compulsory a presentation is. It was agreed that the recommendation for formal feedback should be suggested to those who run seminars. The idea of this being presented on a form similar to that of the essay cover sheet was widely accepted.

5. *Essay feedback*: It was raised that the second year's first essays in both the autumn and spring semester were often not returned before the second essays were due in. The committee agreed that this was an important matter as students need to learn from the comments of the first essay in time for their second essay. The course book only specified that essays would be returned before the exam period. It was agreed that this was not stringent enough and the matter would be put forward at the next departmental committee meeting.

6. *Reading lists*: The matter of reading lists with essay titles was brought up. It was pointed out that students could be misinterpreting the topic when answering an essay question if a reading list is not given. The consensus of the group was that choosing the correct material to revise is a skill to be developed in the course of a philosophy degree and that by attending lectures regularly students can ensure they are answering the essay questions correctly.

7. *Other business*: There was no other business

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday December 10th 2003

Present:

1. The minutes of last meeting were approved.
2. *Matters Arising:* In reference to the discussion of library closing times during the last meeting, it was brought to the committees' attention that the library's closing time has been extended to 20:30 as well as twenty four hour access during the exam period. The committee was informed that Philosophy of Science will be offered next year. David Owens asked for feedback on how widely the committee thought an Undergraduate common room would be used, as there is the possibility of a spare room on floor 12 next year. It was brought to David's attention that philosophy students had, throughout the year, been using the architecture common room until the architecture department banned non-architects from using the room. Also many believed a common room would make the philosophy department appear more approachable and welcoming to its undergraduates. However some doubted that the room would be used by more than a small group.
It was also suggested that a resource centre could be opened on the twelfth floor that could double as a common room. It was agreed that an email poll or survey should be carried out and, if positive, could be used in support for the notion of a common room on floor twelve.
3. *Online Tutor Contact List:* One of the first year representatives had been approached by a student unable to find an online tutor contact list. However the committee pointed out there is already a contact list available on the philosophy department's website and that maybe the problem lies in the layout of the website. Possibly clearer directions need to be given on how to access the department's online resources.
4. *Seminar Presentations:* It was brought up that many students disagree with compulsory presentations that do not contribute to their grade. They believe that if the presentations are not marked they should not be compulsory. The idea of formal feedback was welcomed by the committee, after David Bell pointed out that a formal mark that would contribute to the overall grade is unrealistic, for the mark would not be anonymous. Plus there are no independent adjudicators in seminars nor a chance to repeat the presentation. He suggested feedback in a similar form to the essay cover sheets. Another suggestion was that a module report could include the presentation mark, and then the student could present their mark in their job applications etc. if they wanted. Derek Foster suggested that the policy should be that presentations are promoted for their benefits but are not compulsory. However some felt that those running a seminar should be able to create an obligation to make a presentation and then if a student had a genuine reason why they could not, then they would not be forced to make one. It was agreed that the course pack should promote the benefits of presentations as they develop skills the department is keen to promote. In the course pack where the word 'opportunity' was used, the decision should be left to those