

Faculty of Natural Sciences Masters Student Staff Committee

Date: 2nd December 2020

Time: 12.30 - 14.00

Location: via Teams

Minutes

Present:

Abdullah	Ahmed	Chemistry	MRes Advance Molecular Synthesis, Student Rep
Aodeng	Ao	Chemistry	MRes Bioimaging Sciences, Student Rep
Anthony Wai Tung	Chong	Chemistry	MRes Nanomaterials, Student Rep
Rudiger	Woscholski	Chemistry	MRes Director of Studies, Chemistry, Student Rep
Duncan	Lee	Chemistry	MRes in Catalysis, Student Rep
Oana	Popescu	Chemistry	MRes Chemical Biology and BioEntrepreneurship, Student Rep
Hili	Zaum	Chemistry	MRes Drug Discovery and Development, Student Rep
Carlotta	Zennaro	Chemistry	MRes Green Chemistry: Energy and the Environment, Student Rep
Leonie	Stroemich (LS)	Chemistry	Graduate Student Union's White City Officer, Dept Rep
Kasia	Kmieckowiak	FoNS	Administrative Assistant
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	FoNS	Faculty Education Manager
John	Seddon (JS)	FoNS	Faculty Senior Tutor
Richard	Thompson (RT)	FoNS	Vice-Dean (Education)
Hannah	Armstrong	FoNS	Management Trainee
Kenny	Weir	FoNS	Programme Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics
Laura	Lane	Graduate School	Head of Strategy and Operations
Chiara	Riedel-Loria (CRL)	GSU & CEP	GSU AWO (Masters) (Chair)
Michaela	Flegrova	ICU	ICU Deputy President (Education)
Elliot	Bairstow	Life Sciences	MRes Tropical Forest Ecology, Student Rep
Mirrah	Bashir	Life Sciences	MSc Applied Biosciences & Biotechnology, Student Rep
Celina	Chien (CC)	Life Sciences	MRes Tropical Forest Ecology, Student Rep
Molly	Clark	Life Sciences	MRes Molecular Plant and Microbial Sciences, Student Rep
Tesni	Collins	Life Sciences	MSc Applied Biosciences & Biotechnology, Student Rep
Elin	Falla	Life Sciences	Msc Computational Methods in Ecology and Evolution, Student Rep
Hayley	Jackson	Life Sciences	MRes Structural Molecular Biology, Student Rep
Niki	Gounaris (NG)	Life Sciences	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Student Rep
Nerea	Montes Perez	Life Sciences	MRes Ecology Evolution and Conservation, Student Rep
Ben	Nouhan	Life Sciences	MRes Computational Methods in Ecology and Evolution, Student Rep
Yue	Pan	Life Sciences	MRes Ecosystem and Environmental Change, Student Rep
Mike	Tristem	Life Sciences	Silwood Park Master's Coordinator
Shubha	Talwar (ShT)	Life Sciences	Dep Rep
Urte	Adomaityte	Maths	MSc Applied Mathematics, Student Rep
Nihaar	Popli	Maths	MSc Statistics, Student Rep
Leonard	Rosen	Maths	MSc Statistics, Student Rep
Travis	Schedler (TSch)	Maths	Maths PGT Representative
Lukas	Verikas	Maths	MSc Statistics, Student Rep
Ella	Robson (ER)	Maths	Student Experience Coordinator, Maths

Sam	Bishop	Physics	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep
Justin	Cui	Physics	Msc in Optics and Photonics, Student Rep
Zhonghe	Feng	Physics	MRes Photonics, Student Rep
Jingxuan	He (JH)	Physics	Msc in Optics and Photonics, Student Rep
Lewis	Jackson (LJ)	Physics	MSc in Physics, Student Rep
Sophia	Mexi-Jones	Physics	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep
Adam	Richardson	Physics	MSc in Quantum Fields and Fundamental Forces, Student Rep
Tancredi	Schettini Gherardini	Physics	MSc in Quantum Fields & Fundamental Forces, Student Rep
Bridget	Shidok (BSh)	Physics	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep
Apologies:			
Nazia	Hirjee	FoNS	Faculty Operations Officer
Will	Pearse	Life Sciences	PG Senior Tutor at Silwood Park
Henry	Rodriguez- Broadbent	Maths	Dep Rep
Michael	Parsey	Physics	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep

1. Welcome and Apologies

CRL, as Chair and GSU AWO (Masters), welcomed all and apologies as above were accepted.

CRL drew committee's attention to the 'Terms of Reference' document that had been posted on Teams chat. The committee also noted the [Staff Student Committee Guidelines](#) .

CRL explained that the purpose of Faculty SSC meetings is:

- To provide a forum to discuss academic and non-academic matters that are relevant to students in more than one Department within the Faculty (including e.g. welfare and accommodation) and for which a perspective broader than that possible in a Departmental Staff-Student Committee would be valuable.
- To share good practice across the Faculty's Departments.
- To allow Student Representatives to interact constructively with Faculty staff to explore ways to improve the Educational experience in the College.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2020

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 24th June.

3. Matters arising from the minutes and Review of Action Tracker

The action tracker was reviewed, and all actions were marked as complete.

4. Faculty Senior Tutor's verbal report

JS reported the following matters:

- A couple of key student-related policies had been agreed at College level:
 - *New Student Emergency Contact Policy* – it will allow contacting a named person chosen by a given student if the College had serious concerns about the student's mental wellbeing. It should be implemented by January 2021.

- *Revised Interruption of Study and Fitness to Study Policies* have been approved by Senate and will be implemented in due course.
- A large number of students are expected to stay in halls over Christmas break. Therefore, the College-level Education Strategy and Operations Group, had been discussing additional support needed to be put in place over the Christmas period both centrally and at departmental level. There had been some proposals being made such as:
 - Arranging additional wellbeing support and social activities (online and in person if possible) for students who would stay in London over Christmas. A helpline is also being investigated, which students could use if they feel they needed mental health/wellbeing support.
 - The library and the Health Centre will continue to operate, apart from the actual bank holidays.
 - There will be a rota of senior College staff (about 5 staff members) who will be providing the support over the closure.
 - The existing Student Support Zone webpages will be enhanced and will go live between 10th December and 11th January.
 - More details outlining all the support available during Christmas period will be made available on the College's website and will be communicate via email to students.

5. Reports from Department Student Representatives/ Department Nominees:

5.1 CEP

The report document was noted by the committee. CRL reported the key matters. She added that the CEP staff had been interacting with students very actively. They had arranged a number of live sessions where students could ask questions. Overall, students are very satisfied with the online teaching provided this term.

5.2 Chemistry

The report document was noted by the committee and Leonie Stroemich, Chemistry Dep Rep, reported the key matters. She added that staff had considered suggestions made by students which had been very helpful.

5.3 Life Sciences:

The report document was noted by the committee and Shubha Talwar, Life Sciences Dep Rep, reported the key matters. She added that students are very satisfied with the support provided by the DoLS staff. They had promptly dealt with any issues raised and had been very understanding towards students.

ShT also reported that the Silwood Life Sciences students had not contacted her and queried whether there were any issues to report. In response to that, NG said that there were no issues to report to the committee, as all had been effectively dealt with by Programme Directors.

5.4 Mathematics

The report document was noted by the committee. In the absence of the Maths Dep Rep, Ella Robson, the Student Experience Coordinator at Maths, reported the following matters:

- A number of Maths students had experienced loneliness due to Covid-19 restrictions. CRL queried whether Maths students had organised any online socials as this could help to exchange information on academic issues, but also tackle the loneliness. ER explained that students from Statistics had been arranging social online events,

however other programmes had not. The department had been looking into the social aspect of study to reduce the feeling of isolation among students.

- Maths students had raised an issue related to lecturers not correctly using the smart podiums installed in Maths lecture theatres i.e. the cameras had been pointed at the wrong direction.
- At the start of the academic year, a number of PG students had been unsure of what teaching week they had been on . Many universities have a freshers' week which is considered as Week Zero- Imperial does not have this, but it may explain the confusion.
- Some Maths students could not access modules on Blackboard at the start of academic year and this issue re-occurred last week. RM explained that at the beginning of academic year this issue had been related to the new system which required integration between Blackboard, Teams, Banner and Panopto. The issues reported last week were believed to have occurred due to a system glitch which had affected former UG students who had moved to a Master's. This had now been resolved.
- There had been some issues with handing the ID cards to students.
- Students had reported a lack of study space and the following comments were made:
 - o ER said that if a student has certain needs, the department will provide the space for them.
 - o RM reported that the Faculty had asked each department to make available any possible space (such as unused offices and meeting rooms) to students. Therefore, it is departments' decision on what space they will provide to students.
 - o JS reported that from January 2021, UG and PG Chemistry students will have access to 5th floor of iHub building which has 80-100 desks. They can be used by students during their 'on week'.
 - o LS asked if departments could provide small private rooms for students to take calls etc. In response to that, ER said that the common room in the Department of Mathematics had been used by students. It has breakout rooms on the side, but there are no doors, so these are not entirely private. Department of Mathematics has only one private room for students if they need it for interviews.
 - o CRL added that the CEP students have a possibility of using a private room, but they need to provide a valid reason to use it.
 - o RT reported that private study space should be only provided by the departments for students who are in particular need. There is very little space that is made available to students due to safety requirements related to the pandemic i.e. appropriate ventilation, cleaning between each use, restrictions on the number of people that can use them etc.
 - o NG added that the Life Sciences staff could not identify any space at South Kensington for students to hold private meetings. Therefore, they had encouraged students to use the library. The computer room in Silwood Park can be used, but it needs to be booked in advance.

5.5 Physics – individual programme reports:

- **MSc Optics and Photonics:**

The report document was noted by the committee and Jingxuan He, MSc Optics and Photonics Programme Rep, reported the key matters. He added that students are very satisfied with on-site Lab sessions as this helps to improve the interaction between students.

- **MSc Quantum Fields & Fundamental Forces (QFFF)**
The report document was noted by the committee and Adam Richardson, MSc QFFF programme Rep, reported the key matters. He added that formal exam solutions had been requested by students, but that the programme conveners had confirmed that these would not be provided.
- **MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology**
Bridget Shidok, the MSc Security and Resilience programme Rep, reported the following matters:
 - A number of students do not switch their cameras on even during small synchronous sessions. This makes interacting with these students more difficult.
 - Students are working on developing more online social events to enhance the interaction and community building.
- **MSc Physics:**
Lewis Jackson, the MSc Physics programme Rep said that:
 - Generally, students are satisfied with the multi-mode teaching.
 - Many students had expressed that they feel overwhelmed by the high volume of information being sent via email.
 - MSc Physics programme consist of only pre-recorded lectures and students had queried about live lectures. There are set office hours during which students can ask questions about the course content, but they prefer to do so in real time.
- **MRes Photonics:**
Jingxuan He reported that MSc Optics and Photonics programme share some modules with the MRes Photonics programme. He said that:
 - The Photonics programme students have only taught elements being delivered this term.
 - The Photonics programme is very intense so a number of students had raised the time management issue.

6. Chair's business

CRL suggested reps inform their students of the RCSU's Christmas and end of term events on social media, and also encouraged students and staff to organize course-specific online socials.

7. Minutes of PG Departmental Student Staff Committee Meetings (to note):

The committee noted the Chemistry PG Departmental Student Staff Committee Meeting minutes.

8. Any other business

Bullying and harassment training for students

Celina Chien (CC), MRes Tropical Forest Ecology Student Rep, reported that students had queried the possibility of arranging training on Active Bystander and bullying and harassment for students. RM noted that CEP provides this type of training for students already. In order to arrange such courses on the Faculty level, she would need to investigate the funding that would cover the delivery and organisation of this type of training. She added that external trainers would need to be hired and organising such course would only be plausible if there is a substantial attendance. RM will contact CC about it after the meeting.

ACTION 1: RM to discuss with CC the options of organising the bullying and harassment training.

Proctoring during TRAs

TSch reported that students had expressed concerns about having proctoring during TRAs. In response to that, RT said that proctoring had been considered at EdTech Guild and the discussion is ongoing. Students will also have input into this discussion. Proctoring might be introduced in the summer term at the earliest. However, it is very difficult to achieve the correct balance between various aspects associated with proctoring such as feasibility, technical requirements, security and privacy. TSch queried the membership of the EdTech Guild. It was agreed that RM will send him the EdTech Guild Terms of Reference.

ACTION 2: RM to send TSch the EdTech Guild Terms of Reference.

Construction work at Wood Lane Studios

Leonard Rosen, MSc Statistics Student Rep, reported that there is a very loud construction work taking place at his accommodation (Woodlane Studios) and many of the residents have exams coming up and would wish for a break in the construction for the time of exams. However, the studio management had said that the College is in charge of this. Students are wondering whom to contact regarding this. It is affecting ~600 master students, many of which have exams and are Imperial students. In response to that, RM said that she we will look into this after the meeting.

ACTION 3: RM to follow up on the construction work near Wood Lane Studios issue with LR with a view to contacting an appropriate member of College staff about the matter.

9. Dates of Future Meetings:

FoNS	Masters Student Staff Committee	Weds 10/02/21	12.30-14.00
FoNS	Masters Student Staff Committee	Weds 15/06/21	12.30-14.00