

## Faculty of Natural Sciences Research Student Staff Committee Meeting

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018, 12.30-14.00

**Venue:** Huxley 341

### MINUTES

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#### Present:

Luke McCrone (LMc)	GSU President- Chair
Luke Delmas (LD)	GSU Academic and Welfare Officer (Physical Sciences) & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year PhD Rep
Claudio Bellani	Mathematics Research Student Representative
Sophie Armstrong-Brown	Strategic Research Manager
Sue Gibson (SG)	Director of the Graduate School
Niki Gounaris (NG)	Director of Postgraduate Studies-Life Sciences
Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer
Sebastian Hoof	Physics (Astrophysics Group) Student Research Representative
Katia Hougaard (KH)	Life Sciences Rep
Lloyd James (LJ)	Physics PG Dept. Rep
Melissa Lee	Pure Rep - Maths
Laura Lane	Manager of the Graduate School – Graduate School
Niki Gounaris (NG)	Director of Postgraduate Studies-Life Sciences
Bill Proud (BP)	Director of Postgraduate Studies - Physics
Sonia Rebollo Ramirez (SRR)	PhD Rep – Life Sciences
Simon Schoeller	Applied Rep - Maths
Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager
Michael Thomson	Life Sciences Research Student Representative
Anne Neuman	Francis Crick Institute Student Rep
Alexandre Adler	GSU Vice-President- Representation

#### Apologies:

Hazal Busra Kose	Crick – Imperial Research Student Representative
Yusrah Al-Gharebawi	Chemistry Research Student Representative
Jack Maxwell	Physics Dept Rep
Emma McCoy	Vice-Dean (Education)
Paul French	Vice- Dean (Research)

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

LMc welcomed members to the committee and apologies, as above, were noted.

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (Paper 1a)

The previous Minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting of 20.11.17. The following amendments were made:

- (a) Nazia Hirjee was added to the list of attendees
- (b) The review of Action (paper 1b) was amended to state the meeting was a Research meeting and not an UG meeting on page 5.

### 3. Review of Actions (Paper 1b) and matters arising from the previous meeting

The Action tracker of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 was reviewed and updated as follows:

No. 11 – to be discussed at No. 5 in the Agenda.

Item No. 12 – Issues relating to kitchen access and microwave still ongoing. RM volunteered to liaise with the Department to assist with trying to resolving the issues.

Item No. 15 – to be discussed at Item No. 4.6.

### 4. Reports from Research Student Representatives:

#### 4.1 Chemistry

The focus has been on the move to White City campus and as such nothing further to report.

#### 4.2 Life Sciences

KH and SRR reported that a social event for first year students was held on 20.2.18 hosted by a successful PhD student. There was a good turnout of guests for networking opportunities. Planning on hosting another social event and inviting alumni and other guest speakers who have good knowledge of postgraduate courses and subjects of interest to give talks and for networking opportunities. LL informed the Rep there might be community funding available via the Graduate School for such an event and to keep her informed as to arrangements. The Reps to give feedback of the event at next meeting on 09/05/2018.

***ACTION: KH and SRR to give feedback of the next social event for first year students at meeting on 09/05/2018***

#### 4.3 Mathematics

The Maths Representatives reported that it would be helpful to have a mentoring event for first year PG students to share information about student life and discuss topics such as how to access information on mental health and other related issues, as well as an introduction to the Welfare Officer in the department at the start of their course. The Rep suggested it would be helpful to email/promote all resources regarding mental health and mentoring schemes around the college. It was also suggested that it should be mandatory for new supervisors to undertake training skills on mental health issues and related topics.

NH pointed out that the FoNS HR team were piloting a course called Managing Mental Health in the Workplace in conjunction with MIND and hoped to roll out the course to all relevant staff.

It was also pointed out that there is currently no avenue or forum for students to discuss matters or talk to staff. It was noted that the Maths Department do not currently run a Student Staff Committee for PhD students.

***ACTION: RM to speak to the Maths DPS and administrative staff about the lack of a SSC for Research students in the Department.***

#### 4.4 Physics

It was reported there were still issues regarding use of the common room for Physics and Maths. BP pointed out that permission had been granted for both departments to use the Physics common room and there was no longer an issue. He would formally let everyone know.

The potential UCU strike action was discussed. It was confirmed that the ICU had passed a motion to support the proposed action. Where it is known that exams or teaching would be affected, students would be informed in advance, although it was noted that staff are not

obliged to give notice that they intend to strike. A College-level communication regarding the potential strike action was due to be sent to students in the next few days.

A tour of the Queens Tower is being planned for PG students. LJ has conducted guides of the Tower in the past and is happy to put himself forward as a volunteer guide.

#### 4.5 CEP – Nothing to report.

#### 4.6 Crick

It was noted that some Crick-based students spend 50% of their time at Imperial. There are also others who are primarily based at the Crick and spend less time at the College. All Crick students need to have a health and safety induction with their Imperial supervisor in order to obtain their College ID card. Because some Crick students are at College less frequently than others students, there can be a delay in getting their ID cards.

LD to invite the Crick Student Reps to join the Student Social Committee and work towards hosting an event to provide all Crick students with the opportunity of networking and socialising at the South Kensington campus. LL also agreed to speak to Crick student reps at the forthcoming Crick Research Degrees Committee about opportunities to host events at the Imperial Campus.

***ACTION: LD to invite Crick-based Student Reps to be involved in the PG Student Social Committee.***

***ACTION: LL to speak to the Crick student reps at the forthcoming Crick Research Degrees Committee about opportunities to host events at the Imperial Campus.***

### 5. Report from the Graduate School

5.1 LL discussed Paper 2 entitled ‘*Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree Student Supervisor Partnership*’ which is designed to facilitate conversations to establish effective partnerships between the supervisor and new student at first meeting and agreed to circulate document link to RM for circulation to students. LL also agreed to circulate links on wellbeing support provisions regarding coaching and courses - see links below.

<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/codes-of-practice-for-research-degrees/Mutual-Expectations-for-the-Research-Degree--Student-Supervisor-Partnership.pdf>

Coaching: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/doctoral-student-coaching-programme/>

Courses: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/professional-skills/doctoral/shortcourses/understanding/>

LL also agreed to double check college policy on PGR annual leave (and whether it includes College closure / bank holidays) and if it is in line with the Research Council's recommendation of 8 weeks. RM to report back as soon as LL has had the opportunity to look into this.

***ACTION: LL to double check college policy on PGR annual leave (and whether it includes College closure / bank holidays) and if it is in line with the Research Council's recommendation of 8 weeks. RM to report back as soon as LL has had the opportunity to look into this.***

5.2 The topic of '*What makes a good research student induction?*' was also discussed. It was generally felt that a motivation talk from the Head of Dept for first year students was beneficial, as well as H&S, introduction to key contacts re: technicians, support people, welfare Officer, first aider, and more networking opportunities.

## **6. Scientific Computer Training Provision**

LL invited Student Reps invited to liaise with colleagues to find out what scientific computer training (software, programming etc.) they would find helpful. A suggestion was received by email that mathematical licences to enable students to access various software packages to prepare for revision and tests would be useful. Statistical software courses would also be helpful. LL reported that investigation was taking place for mathematical and physics licences for departments that would benefit from the software. LL reported that due to budget constraints they would not be able to supply all the licences and software packages requested. LL suggested emailing her directly with specific licences/software packages which would be considered.

Another suggestion was employing Maths PG students to teach certain subjects e.g. computer courses and writing course work in LaTeX rather than Microsoft Word.

## **7. Report from the FoNS Student Social Committee**

LD confirmed that the next event organised by the committee would take place on 19 April 2018. Two student speakers have been lined up to speak.

## **8. Chair's Business**

The Chair reported that elections are taking place for nominations for the Graduate Union. Will update at next meeting.

## **9. AOB**

There was no AOB.

## **8. Dates of Future Meeting:**

09/05/2018 12.30-14.00