

DATE: Wednesday 01 December 2021

TIME: 12:30 – 14:00

LOCATION: via MS Teams

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present:

Manasa	Sanaga (MS)	Postgraduate Taught Academic & Welfare Officer, Chair
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager, FoNS
Matt	Horsfield (MH)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), FoNS
Rudiger	Woscholski (RW)	MRes Director of Studies, Chemistry
Philip	Miller (PM)	PG Senior Tutor, Chemistry
Arash	Mostofi (AM)	Head of Master's Education, Physics
Mike	Tristem (MT)	Silwood Park Master's Coordinator, Life Sciences
Travis	Schedler (TS)	Maths PGT Representative, Mathematics
Zhaoyan	Zhang (ZZ)	Department PGT Rep, Chemistry
Badis	Khiari Millan (BKM)	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (Silwood Park)
Zoe	Wang (ZW)	Department PGT Rep, Physics

In Attendance:

Cami	Daeninc (CD)	Student PGT Rep, CEP
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Apologies:

Richard	Thompson (RT)	Vice-Dean (Education), Co-Chair
Stuti	Shankar	Department PGT Rep, CEP
Mike	Tennant	MSc Programme Director, CEP
Niki	Gounaris	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Life Sciences
Sai	Yoghananthan	Student Experience Coordinator, Mathematics
Jeremy	Huisman (JH)	Department PGT Rep, Mathematics
Daniel	Lo	ICU Deputy President - Education
Cecil	Lee-Grant	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (South Kensington)

2. Faculty of Natural Sciences Student Staff Committee - Terms of Reference and Membership 2021/22

The committee noted the terms of reference and membership for 2021/22.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 15 June 2021.

4. Matters arising from the minutes and review of action tracker

The action tracker was reviewed, and actions were marked as complete. RM discussed the final action from the previous meeting.

- Action 7 - RM confirmed that NG had contacted the student but had no reply. Action has been marked as completed.

5. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

5.1 CEP

No detailed report document was received. CD presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department.

- CD stated there has been an increase in the number of positive Covid-19 cases in their course and these students are following government guidelines. The Department had arranged for some classes to be moved online to support these students who were attending online. CD noted that this was the final week of teaching in the Department, so teaching hadn't been affected significantly.
- RM explained to the committee that positive Covid-19 cases were increasing across the College.

5.2 Chemistry

No detailed report document was received. ZZ presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department.

- Students had raised concerns about being allocated a project supervisor as some students had reported that it was difficult to get a reply from some members of staff. PM noted that this had been reported in previous years and the Department will remind staff that they need to reply to students within 3 working days. The Department will remind staff next year if they wish to commit to research projects, they must communicate effectively with students at the start of term.
- ZZ explained to the committee that there was a lack of suitable study space at the White City campus and students did not know where to locate other study spaces across the College. PM agreed that currently there was a lack of suitable study space on the White City campus, but some new spaces would open after Christmas. PM explained that the course team are working on a document to be circulated to the students that would list suitable study spaces at White City, South Kensington, and Hammersmith campuses. RW noted that it might not always be appropriate for students to travel to the South Kensington campus due to the travel time and the shuttle bus would need to be increased so there are more frequent journeys.
Action 1: RM will discuss the Shuttle Bus with the new Faculty Operating Officer.
- ZZ suggested that it would be beneficial if students had access to an app which would show available study spaces across the College. RW explained that at the White City campus they don't have a library and therefore students would have to travel either to South Kensington or Hammersmith if they wanted to study in a quiet zone.

5.3 Life Sciences

No detailed report document was received. BKM presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department at Silwood Park.

- Students were disappointed not to get a tour around the Silwood Park campus during their orientation programme. Students would have liked to have seen the labs at the beginning of term to see what facilities they had access to. MT explained to the committee that around 50 students were isolating at the start of term so it was not an appropriate time to arrange a campus tour but would include this for new students in October 2022.
- RM quired if these concerns had been raised at a Departmental SSC yet. BKM explained that a course SSC had not taken place yet. MT would follow up on this to arrange the first SSC of the year at Silwood Park.
- BKM explained that students were struggling with one module this term, which was teaching students about R coding. BKM noted that the content was not too difficult, but the teaching styles made it difficult for students to understand. Each week, the module was taught by a different member of staff and students were struggling to keep up with each teaching style. MS agreed this had been raised by students at the South Kensington campus too. MT stated that this is raised each year by the students, but he would raise this at the Department teaching committee in January 2022.
- BKM agreed with ZZ that students were struggling to contact potential supervisors in the Department. MT asked if BKM could send him an email of staff who were not replying, and he would follow this up.
- No matters were raised for the Department at South Kensington.

5.4 Mathematics

No detailed report document was received. JH was not present at the meeting, but TS had one comment to raise.

- At the recent Department SSC, students had reported results of an internal survey about the upcoming exams. Students were not in support for open book exams and bringing in notes into the exam hall.

5.5 Physics

No detailed report document was received. ZW presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department.

- At the recent Department SSC meeting, it was mainly positive feedback and course reps had reported any issues when they occurred to the course director, so were now fixed.
- ZW explained that students were keen to get advanced warning of assessment deadlines to ensure assessments did not clash. Students were also keen to find out more information about how the exams will run in the Department, such as: format, location, and length.
- AM stated that students had raised their concerns about the exams in the summer and he explained that he keep students up to date once the College had circulated more information.

6. Faculty Senior Tutor's verbal report

- JS explained to the committee that he chaired the Faculty Mitigation Oversight Panel (FMOP) on 16 November 2021. The panel reviewed the mitigating circumstances (MC) claims which were submitted in 2020/21 to ensure fairness across the Faculty and to discuss areas of best practice.
- JS noted the Faculty were still reviewing the personal tutor provision across the postgraduate courses as it varied in each Department

7. Wellbeing Matters

- RM reminded the committee that the Faculty have a new wellbeing service for all students, across all courses in the Departments. The service can provide support to students on a range of wellbeing and support topics. Students can book an appointment via the [webpage](#).

8. Chair's business

- MS encouraged all the Departments to review their communication to their students about the summer exams as a lot of students were confused and worried about how they will run.
- MS encouraged the committee members to speak to staff in their Department to make sure they reply to student emails within a suitable timeframe.
- MS reminded the committee that all staff and students should follow Covid-19 guidance when on campus. Also, if students are aware of another student who might be isolating, MS encouraged them to reach out and provide support if needed.

9. Minutes of Departmental Student Staff Committee Meetings (to note)

- Minutes noted.

10. Any other business

- TS explained that students had reported issues with accessing modules on Blackboard at the start of term. RM suggested that this might be that the student was not registered on the module via the Student Records System or that the module leader had not updated their Blackboard page yet.
- TS queried if there was guidance for staff about how to run a hybrid lecture.
- BKM reported that students have had trouble accessing a lecture recording via Panopto. MT advised BKM to email him with those details.
- ZZ suggested that the Department could improve the quality of some of their lecture videos as it can be hard to see what practical is being recorded. ZZ added that it would be beneficial if some pre-recorded lectures were released for students to watch before scheduled classes. RW suggested that ZZ should report this to his course director, and they can address his concerns.
- CD asked the committee if there were any further resources that the College had to encourage students to test regularly for Covid-19. RM informed the committee that the College was encouraging students to test regularly if they were coming on to campus, but they could not enforce this guidance.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Committee	Date	Time	Teams/ Room Details	Paper Deadline
FoNS - Masters Academic Student Staff Committee	09/02/2022	12:30 – 14:00	SALC 10, Sherfield	02/02/2022
FoNS - Masters Academic Student Staff Committee	14/06/2022	12:30 – 14:00	SALC 10, Sherfield	07/06/2022