

DATE: Tuesday 06 December 2022

TIME: 13:30 - 15:00

LOCATION: via MS Teams

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present:

Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Head of Education and Student Experience, FoNS (Co-Chair)
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor, FoNS
Mike	Tennant (MT)	Vice-Dean (Education), FoNS
Arash	Mostofi (AM)	Head of Master's Education, Physics
Rudiger	Woscholski (RW)	Director of Master Studies, Chemistry
Martin	Head (MH)	MSc Programme Director, CEP
Pietro	Spanu (PS)	Head of Master's Teaching, Life Sciences (South Kensington)
Rob	Ewers (RE)	Head of Master's Teaching, Life Sciences (Silwood Park)
Sai	Nathan (SY)	Student Experience Coordinator, Mathematics
Zahraa	Essa (ZS)	Department PGT Rep, CEP
Kemi	Fagbenro (KF)	Department PGT Rep, Chemistry
Laura	Masiulionis (LM)	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (South Kensington)
Marko	Wojtkowiak (MW)	Department PGT Rep, Physics

In Attendance:

Dhairya	Shah (DS)	Course PGT Rep, Mathematics
Moganam	Kattan (MK)	Course PGT Rep, Life Sciences (Silwood Park)

Apologies:

Jason	Zheng	ICU Deputy President - Education
Philip	Miller (PM)	PG Senior Tutor, Chemistry
Travis	Schedler	Maths PGT Representative, Mathematics
Matt	Horsfield (MHo)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), FoNS
Luise	Ge	Department PGT Rep, Mathematics
Natasha	Granville	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (Silwood Park)

2. Terms of reference and membership

The committee noted the terms of reference and membership for 2022/23.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 14 June 2022.

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

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

- Action 3 – Complete, all actions saved on a Master Excel sheet. RM noted this will be circulated to all the student reps.

5. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

5.1 CEP

The detailed report document was noted by the committee. ZS presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department.

- ZS explained that she has conducted a survey of the two courses in the Department to collect feedback from the students.
- The students reported that they really enjoyed the online videos which have been used for online teaching, alongside in person teaching. ZS noted that she has reported to the Department that the students have requested some additional content to go alongside the recorded lecture videos and the Department are looking into this. Some students also complained about the level of noise near the lecture rooms on campus, which can make it difficult to concentrate.
- ZS explained that in the survey results, some students had noted that there was some repetition between the online sessions and the different lecturers. ZS has raised this with the Department, and staff were discussing how this could be fixed for future sessions.
- ZS noted that on behalf of the Department, she has been encouraging students to keep attending the live in person sessions as attendance has been reducing since the start of term. ZS explained to the committee that some students would prefer if the lectures could be split over two days, Tuesday, and Wednesday.
- ZS noted that students on the MSc in Environmental Technology course have struggled with navigating around Blackboard and the module sites.
- For the MSc in Conservation Science and Practice course, students have reported there was not enough contact time between themselves and the course team. The students have also suggested that they would prefer fewer external teachers on the course as it can make it difficult to keep up with different teaching styles. Other feedback from the survey was that there have been a few scheduling issues on the course.
- ZS explained to the committee that students on the new Conservation Science and Practice course have all suggested that they want to be more involved with the Environmental Technology course so they can share similar resources and content.
- MH noted that some of these issues had been discussed at the Department student-staff committee but would appreciate if the full survey report could be emailed over to him to ensure all issues have been resolved.

5.2 Chemistry

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

- KF noted that students have raised their concerns about the shuttle bus, and how busy it can be, and students can't always use it. RM explained to the committee that the

shuttle bus has been raised at this committee before and the College are working to secure additional funding to improve the service.

- The students at White City would like to have more facilities and more study spaces. RW noted this has been raised before as the Molecular Sciences Research Hub (MSRH) has limited capacity but that this should be considered by the estates team as other buildings are being built at White City and this could improve the student experience on campus. RM noted that the Faculty will continue to raise this issue at central College committees.
- KF noted that in the past there used to be a CV clinic for Chemistry students and students would like to have this option as it will help students who want to apply for jobs or PhD opportunities.

5.3 Life Sciences

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

- Some students have reported that the proposed major projects don't have enough field work elements and students would appreciate more opportunities for field work as part of their course. RE expressed that he was surprised to hear this but would make sure that research projects with fieldwork are advised to the students at Silwood Park.
- MK noted that one student had reported that it can be confusing for some students when signing up for their research project as there are no clear deadlines.
- Students on the core research skills module have noted the lectures could be more concise as the module is scheduled for 6 weeks and in some lectures the students were given a large amount of information. The students reported that this made them stressed and were not expected to work through all this information which they were given.
- RM noted that MK should raise these issues with the Department at their Department student-staff committee.
- RE explained to the committee that the ICU election process this year was not clearly advertised and quite confusing. RM agreed with these comments and explained to the committee that she has already feed this back to the ICU and suggested that the nomination period was too late for many Departments.

No detailed report document was received. LM presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department at South Kensington.

- LM explained to the committee that the students from the courses based at South Kensington have completed a survey and from these results, some students have reported that they have felt excluded from the lecture delivery. For particular modules, the lectures have been streamed live from Silwood Park and therefore the students at South Kensington have attended the lecture online. Therefore, students didn't get the opportunity to meet their classmates in person. PS noted these lectures are delivered from the National History Museum.
- LM noted that some students have had their timetable released late and this has caused some confusion.
- RE explained to the committee that in the past, students at South Kensington were given the opportunity to travel to Silwood Park via bus but this was not popular with students at the time. RE explained the Department will look into this option again.

5.4 Mathematics

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

- DS noted that he has received positive responses from all five sections in the Department.
- DS explained that the current students are all keen to progress into PhD programmes or industry, so would appreciate the project topics being released earlier to allow them more time to research the different topics. DS noted this was being looked into by the Department.

5.5 Physics

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

- MW noted that students were confused about the mitigating circumstances (MC) process in the Department and applying for disability support. MW noted that students have had to wait a long time to be reviewed by the disability advisory service (DAS). MW explained that it would be good if the personal tutors were aware of these services so they could advise the students. AM noted that all students should receive an email from the Department about these services later in the week.
- JS explained to the committee about some of the issues which the DAS Department have dealt with. For those students who are still waiting to be assessed by the DAS service, the Department should go ahead and arrange any reasonable adjustments to ensure the student is supported. AM queried if this covers additional time for exams in January, and JS agreed this can be agreed by the Department as a temporary measure.
- MW explained that some new students have struggled with the content which is taught in the Department as they have previously studied at another institution. MW suggested there should be more support for these students to support them as they adjust to studying at Imperial. MW suggested successful applicants can be given some reading to help them catch up before term begins.
- MW noted that there was positive feedback from all the Master's courses in the Department and was surprised to see lower satisfaction rates in the UG courses in the Department.

6. Faculty Senior Tutor's verbal report

- JS explained to the committee that he will be standing down from the role at the end of February 2023 and Dr Ingo Mueller-Wodarg will take over the roll from the 01 March 2023.
- JS noted that earlier in the academic year the Faculty had organised a training session for all the PG senior tutors, and this had been facilitated by Claire Fox and Kate Ippolito. JS noted that this session will be organised again as a few staff members could not attend the training the first time around. RM noted this training has been organised for the 17 January 2023.
- JS explained to the committee that the College was reviewing the emergency contact consent policy and missing student policy.

7. Chair's business

- Nothing to be raised.

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

- Minutes noted.

9. Any other business

- RE presented to the committee a proposal from the Department of Life Sciences to introduce a series of streamlined MSc and MRes courses at Silwood Park. RE noted that currently there are nine courses at Silwood Park (including two courses at the National History Museum), and all these courses share content and modules. The proposed re-design will make sure all the courses operate in the same way and students all take the same number and type of assessments. The new structure will also balance the amount of time between taught module content and work on the final project, which is particularly important for the MRes courses. RE explained that the proposed changes should improve the identity of each course, so the students on those programmes get a unique experience of the specialism they have decided to study.
- RE noted that biggest change would be a new course name, which would be either 'MSc Living Planet with XXX' or 'MRes Living Planet with XXX'. This will ensure that current branding and recognition of the course titles will remain but will be updated with the prefix.
- KM explained that she was pleased that the courses will keep their original course title in the proposed changes as students would use their specialism when applying for jobs or PhD programmes. KM noted that this will help improve the student community and will bring cohorts together.
- RW explained to the committee about some of the changes that the MRes courses in Chemistry had to make as part of the curriculum review process. For example, all the projects had the marking criteria.
- AM noted that the proposal was a good idea and there would be lots of benefits from the proposed changes which would improve the organisation of the courses and the student experience. AM noted that some students might prefer having a course title which is based off the specialism of the course and not a general course title with a specialism.
- PS queried if any of the committee members had any data on the requirement of students having a specific course title when applying for jobs or PhD programmes. MT explained that in CEP, the MSc in Environmental Technology has 8 specialisms, but the students all have the same course title, and this hasn't had any impact on students moving into a specific career. MT noted that the course title is important for developing the course identify. The committee discussed how this had been handled in the other Departments as they re-designed their courses in the curriculum review last academic year. RE noted that the course directors were keen for the courses to keep their original course title and branding.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

Committee	Date	Time
FoNS - Masters Academic Student Staff Committee	Wed 08/02/2023	13.30-15.00
FoNS - Masters Academic Student Staff Committee	Tues 20/06/2023	13.30-15.00