

**DATE:** Wednesday 09 February 2022

**TIME:** 12:30 – 14:00

**LOCATION:** via MS Teams

## MINUTES

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### 1. Welcome and Apologies

#### Present:

Manasa	Sanaga (MS)	Postgraduate Taught Academic & Welfare Officer, Chair
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Richard	Thompson (RT)	Vice-Dean (Education), Co-Chair
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager, FoNS
Matt	Horsfield (MH)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), FoNS
Arash	Mostofi (AM)	Head of Master's Education, Physics
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	Yoghananthan (SY)	Student Experience Coordinator, Mathematics
Amalia	Chrysostomou (AC)	Department PGT Rep, Chemistry
Cecil	Lee-Grant (CLG)	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (South Kensington)
Badis	Khiari Millan (BKM)	Department PGT Rep, Life Sciences (Silwood Park)
Stuti	Shankar (SS)	Department PGT Rep, CEP
Jeremy	Huisman (JH)	Department PGT Rep, Mathematics

#### Apologies:

Graeme	Rae	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS
Rudiger	Woscholski (RW)	MRes Director of Studies, Chemistry
Philip	Miller (PM)	PG Senior Tutor, Chemistry
Zoe	Wang (ZW)	Department PGT Rep, Physics
Zhaoyan	Zhang	Department PGT Rep, Chemistry
Daniel	Lo	ICU Deputy President - Education
Mike	Tennant (MT)	MSc Programme Director, CEP
Travis	Schedler	Maths PGT Representative, Mathematics

## 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 01 December 2021.

## 3. Matters arising from the minutes and review of action tracker

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

- Action 1 - RM confirmed that the Shuttle Bus from the White City campus had been raised at the recent Student Experience Committee and the committee had talked about the budget for the service. It was noted that the contract for the service was expiring soon, and the College was looking to sign a new contract, with more frequent services. The committee agreed that this was a positive development.

## 4. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

### 4.1 CEP

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

- The Department had their SSC meeting last week and the committee had reviewed the Autumn term to see what had gone well and what could be improved. The committee had talked about the assessments and grading and how student can use the marking rubric.
- SS explained that at the moment, the students were split into their optional modules and therefore they are all doing different activities such as field trips and external placements. SS noted that students were keen to organise a social event in the future as they were working in smaller groups this term. SS and MS queried if students could organise social events now as restrictions were being lifted. RM explained that students can organise social events, but a risk assessment will be required.

### 4.2 Chemistry

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

- The Department held their Departmental SSC last week and no major issues were raised.
- The students have now moved to their research elements of their courses and were working closely with their project supervisor.
- AC noted that social events were slow to be organised in the Autumn term but had picked up. Students were also keen to organise some events in the Spring term too.

### 4.3 Life Sciences

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

- BKM explained that students have had multiple issues with the washing machines in the accommodation blocks at Silwood Park. There are three machines for the five accommodation blocks, but one machine has persistently been broken. BKM noted this has been reported to the campus service team, but no action has been taken.  
**Action 1: RM and RE to contact the campus service team for an update.**
- BKM explained that students have struggled to complete their literature review as they have not been allocated a project supervisor yet. Staff have been slow to reply to emails which has left students worried about this assessment. RE explained that he will contact each course director to make sure they follow up with each project supervisor, so all the students are aware of their final project and supervisor.

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

- The Department recently held their first Departmental SSC meeting which all courses were invited to from both South Kensington and Silwood Park. Both RE and PS explained to the committee they were new in post and this combined SSC should improve how students' feedback to the Department.
- CLG explained that students have raised their concerns about a lack of constancy in the Department with coursework rubrics and students being given different advice in the lecture. For some courses, assessments don't even have a rubric to help students.
- Some students have raised concerns about the timeline and how it is not clear if classes are online or in person. This can be made more difficult if the lecture has an external speaker or hosted at an external venue such as the Natural History Museum.
- Both CLG, BKM and MS raised their concerns about the personal tutoring system in the Department and how the majority of students did not know who their personal tutor was. BKM noted this was a particular issue at Silwood Park. PS noted this had been raised at the SSC last week and the Department were aware of this issue. CLG suggested it would be good if there was a clear description of how a personal tutor could help. Students are unclear if they should contact their personal tutor if they require a reference once they have completed their course.
- PS explained that the Department have set up a new senior tutor group which should help identify how the Department can improve their current system. PS explained to CLG that the personal tutor should be providing wellbeing and pastoral support and if students require a reference, they could use their project supervisor who they will be working closely with.
- JS explained to the committee that the Faculty had carried out visits to each Department last year to review the personal tutor system. JS was aware of some issues in the Department and suggested to PS and RE that they should be addressed with the new senior tutors in the Department. JS suggested that they should create a list of all students on their Masters courses and clearly allocate each student a personal tutor so current students know who to contact.

#### **4.4 Mathematics**

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

- JH explained that he has sent out a survey to all students this term. Students had raised their concerns about repeated content in lectures and not enough time to complete the exercise or problem sheets. Students also felt that the upcoming exams in May were too short and there was not going to be enough time to complete the papers.
- JH noted that students have requested an iPad loan scheme, to work with the laptop scheme, as these would help students with live learning and completing problems. SY explained that the laptop loan was for two weeks but if the student required extra time, they should contact the Department.
- JH explained that students have requested if the exam periods could be planned earlier to give students some time off in their academic calendar. JH noted that the students on the MSc courses have no reading week. SY explained that she can discuss these concerns with JH directly, but the Department have announced their exam policy for this year. The May exams will be in person but open book so students can bring in two sides of A4 notes.
- JH stated that students were also keen for more social events. SY encouraged JH to think about this and let her know so she could arrange the budget.

- SY explained to the committee that she will arrange a Departmental Masters SSC later this month but if the students did have any issues, please contact her directly.

#### **4.5 Physics**

The detailed report document was noted by the committee. ZM was not present at the meeting, but AM had one comment to raise.

- The Department had their SSC meeting last week and there were no major issues raised. Any comments were being addressed by the course directors.

#### **5. Faculty Senior Tutor's verbal report**

- JS explained to the committee that he was concerned with the number of MC claims that had been submitted so far, this academic year. It was noted this was mainly across the undergraduate courses, but he would expect a similar pattern for the postgraduate courses. The next Faculty Mitigation Oversight Panel (FMOP) will take place in April 2022 and the panel will review the number of claims in the Faculty.
- JS noted at the recent Student Experience Committee, there was a discussion about a recent report on sexual misconduct published by the [ICU](#).
- RM and RT explained to the committee that the College has agreed that there will be in session resits in the summer for students who have a referral or deferral. This has been agreed for 2021/22 academic year only.
- JS noted that the ICU have re-launched their advice centre, with four members of staff.
- JS noted there will be interviews in due course for a new role, mental health intervention officer. The role will be based in student services and fixed term for a year.

#### **6. Wellbeing Matters**

- MS asked the other student reps if they had any comments to raise under this item. CLG and BKM noted they had no comments to add for Life Sciences.
- MS explained she had recently sent out a survey to postgraduate students across the Faculty and would report the results at the next meeting in June.
- JH noted that students in the Department of Maths were feeling stressed about their upcoming exams in May and felt they were under a lot of pressure.

#### **7. Chair's business**

- RT noted that in the recent government announcement, the College has been encouraged to offer more face to face teaching this term. RT explained he would be contacting each Department to discuss any changes in their teaching approach but also asked if the student reps had any feedback. The committee noted that the Faculty will need to report on the overall teaching strategy.
- CLG explained that students in Life Sciences preferred in person classes and often the online elements have had a low turnout. It was noted that students, who interrupted in the last academic year, have only returned as teaching has been on campus. JH added that students in Mathematics were divided as some students enjoyed the hybrid model and other students have requested more in person elements. AM noted that Physics were looking to introduce more teaching on campus. SS explained that the majority of teaching in CEP has been in person and no changes have been proposed by MT.

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

- Minutes noted.

**9. Any other business**

- CLG queried when the ICU elections were taking place, and MS confirmed that they were planned for March 2022.

**10. Dates of Future Meetings**

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