

Faculty of Natural Sciences Masters Student Staff Committee

Date: 10th February 2021

Time: 12.30 - 14.00

Location: via Teams

MINUTES

Present:

Chiara	Riedel-Loria (CRL)	Chair and GSU Academic and Welfare Officer (Masters)	GSU & CEP
Richard	Thompson (RT)	Co-Chair and Vice-Dean (Education)	FoNS
Urte	Adomaityte	MSc Applied Mathematics, Student Rep	Maths
Ao	Aodeng	MRes Bioimaging Sciences, Student Rep	Chemistry
Elliot	Bairstow	MRes Tropical Forest Ecology, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Sam	Bishop	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep	Physics
Celina	Chien	MRes Tropical Forest Ecology, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Anthony	Chong	MRes Nanomaterials, Student Rep	Chemistry
Wai Tung			
Molly	Clark	MRes Molecular Plant and Microbial Sciences, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Tesni	Collins	MSc Applied Biosciences & Biotechnology, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Justin	Cui (JC)	MSc in Optics and Photonics, Student Rep	Physics
Anne	Dell	HoD, Life Sciences	Life Sciences
Zhonghe	Feng (ZF)	MRes Photonics, Student Rep	Physics
Babette	Fourie	MSc Ecology Evolution and Conservation, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Niki	Gounaris (NG)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Jingxuan	He	MSc in Optics and Photonics, Student Rep	Physics
Nazia	Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer	FoNS
Hayley	Jackson	MRes Structural Molecular Biology, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Lewis	Jackson (LJ)	MSc in Physics, Student Rep	Physics
Kasia	Kmieckowiak	Faculty Administrative Assistant	FoNS
Laura	Lane	Head of Strategy and Operations	Graduate School
Duncan	Lee	MRes in Catalysis, Student Rep	Chemistry
Lintong	Li	GSU Vice President (Representation)	GSU
Chloe	Lieng	MRes Molecular and Cellular Biosciences, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Sophia	Mexi-Jones (SMJ)	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep	Physics
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager	FoNS
Nerea	Montes Perez (NMP)	MRes Ecology Evolution and Conservation, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Seb	Newell	MSc Taxonomy Rep	Life Sciences
Ben	Nouhan	MRes Computational Methods in Ecology and Evolution, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Oana	Popescu	MRes Chemical Biology and BioEntrepreneurship, Student Rep	Chemistry
Adam	Richardson	MSc in Quantum Fields and Fundamental Forces, Student Rep	Physics
Ella	Robson (ER)	Student Experience Coordinator, Maths	Maths
Travis	Schedler	Maths PGT Representative	Maths
Tancredi	Schettini Gherardini (TSG)	MSc in Quantum Fields & Fundamental Forces, Student Rep	Physics
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor	FoNS
Leonie	Stroemich (LS)	Graduate Student Union's White City Officer, Dept Rep	Chemistry
Mike	Tennant	MSc Programme Director, CEP	CEP

Emanuel	Tewelde	MSc Pure Mathematics, Student Rep	Maths
Mike	Tristem	Silwood Park Master's Coordinator	Life Sciences
Lukas	Verikas	MSc Statistics, Student Rep	Maths
Kenny	Weir (KW)	Programme Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics	FoNS
Freddie	Wilkinson	MRes Ecosystem and Environmental Change, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Rudiger	Woscholski	MRes Director of Studies, Chemistry, Student Rep	Chemistry

Apologies:

Mirrah	Bashir	MSc Applied Biosciences & Biotechnology, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Michaela	Flegrova	ICU Deputy President (Education)	ICU
Samuel	Henderson	MSc Ecology Evolution and Conservation, Student Rep	Life Sciences
Michael	Parsey	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep	Physics
Will	Pearse	PG Senior Tutor at Silwood Park	Life Sciences
Henry	Rodriguez-Broadbent	Dep Rep (Mathematics)	Maths
Bridget	Shidok	MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology, Student Rep	Physics
Shubha	Talwar	Dep Rep (Life Sciences)	Life Sciences

1. Welcome and Apologies

CRL welcomed all and apologies as above were accepted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2020

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 2nd December 2020.

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

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

4. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

4.1 CEP

The report document was noted by the committee. CRL reported the key matters. She added that students are particularly satisfied with the implementation of breakout rooms and group discussion. However, a number of students had felt that staff had been ignoring their complaints and had not been providing constructive feedback.

4.2 Life Sciences

The report document was noted by the committee and NG made comments on the key matters:

- MSc students had queried about the 'safety net' policy. NG said that students had been informed that the College plans on releasing new guidance outlining the details of the MC procedures.
- Students had raised issues with contacting other departments to arrange interdisciplinary projects and had suggested better communication within departments to ensure students have the possibility of gaining wide research experience. NG said that it is difficult to provide that as access to research labs is limited at present due to the pandemic.
- Students had queried whether better information on procedures to gain ethics committee approval for research projects could be provided. Some had expressed that they could not obtain the ethics approval retrospectively. NG commented that the Ethics Approval process is well documented on the College's website and that students should be able to obtain ethics approval retrospectively. NMP explained

that some of the biology/ecology projects are very complex and the information on the website is not sufficient. Therefore, it would be helpful if additional ethics guidelines were provided for these programmes.

ACTION 4: NG to follow up on Ethics Approval processes.

4.3 Mathematics

The report document was noted by the committee and ER reported the following matters:

- A few issues had been reported regarding private accommodation mainly affecting PG students, with students being unable to leave their contracts unless they find a new tenant. ER will email more details to RM.
- A few issues had been raised with regards to the course content, Blackboard and how the information is released online – discrepancies between modules.
- Some concerns had been raised by MSc Pure Mathematics students regarding ECTS credits when taking modules that are part of the MSc Applied programme.

4.4 Physics – individual programme reports:

- **MSc Optics and Photonics** - the report document was noted by the committee and JC reported the key matters.
- **MSc Quantum Fields & Fundamental Forces** - the report document was noted by the committee and TSG reported the key matters.
- **MRes Photonics** - the report document was noted by the committee and ZF reported the key matters.
- **MSc Security and Resilience: Science and Technology** - the report document was noted by the committee and SMJ reported the key matters. She added that students had felt that the communication between student and staff should be more regular. Also, the structure of some online sessions should be changed as it is difficult to stay focused i.e. some slides are packed with too much text.
- **MSc Physics** – LJ reported the following matters:
 - Communication between module leads and students is quite poor. Delivery of one of the modules had been delayed as a result of that.
 - 2/3 of cohort had been dissatisfied with the intensity of the exams which had been carried out in two consecutive days. This issue will be raised at the next PG Departmental Student Staff Committee Meeting.

ACTION 5: KW to discuss the issue of the intensity of MSc Physics exams with the Course Director.

4.5 Chemistry

The report document was noted by the committee. LS reported the key matters. She added the following:

- Students would like to use extra resources in the off-lab week time so a list is being compiled.
- A Community Fund had been established to support events organisation.

5. Wellbeing

CRL reported that:

- In the current situation, with lockdown in place and the requirement for self-isolation for some, students might benefit from regular checking-in by their tutors.
- The first point of contact for students who struggle with wellbeing, would be their personal tutors. However, this would be mainly for signposting and not for providing any advice.

- Students are encouraged to switch their camera on during live sessions to maintain social contact.
- Any academic issues should be raised at Departmental Student Staff meetings.

ACTION 6: JS to contact Senior PG Tutors to check if students are being contacted regularly.

6. Senior Tutor’s verbal report

JS reported the following matters:

- Approximately 80 students who were self-isolating were contacted on a weekly basis over the Christmas closure
- Student Emergency Contact Policy will be launched by end of February.
- Revised Interruption of Study and Fitness to Study Policies had been approved by Senate, are now extant and will be made available online in due course.
- There are College level discussions ongoing relating to matters including MCs, re-sits etc. Any new policies or guidance will be communicated to students.

RT reported the following matters:

- The College is working on the guidance on ‘safety net’ policies - mitigating circumstance procedures/re-sits/deferral of exams/ guidance for exam boards.
- Discussions on the above are attended by VDEs and also the ICU sabbatical team.
- Students who are affected by issues such as poor internet connection or who struggle to find a quiet space in their homes/shared accommodation during exam etc, will not be required to provide evidence when applying for mitigating circumstances.

7. Chair’s business

CRL reported that some students had not been aware of MC and other COVID-related policies. It had been felt that departments should take a more active approach to communicating these with students. RT commented that communication is very important and that students who feel they do not have the full information, should contact their course director or Director of PG Studies.

8. Minutes of PG Departmental Student Staff Committee Meetings

The committee noted the following minutes:

8.1 The Chemistry PG Departmental Student Staff Committee Meeting minutes.

8.2 Physics:

MSc committee: www.imperial.ac.uk/physics/staff/committees-and-meetings/physics-msc-committee/

PGR committee: www.imperial.ac.uk/physics/staff/committees-and-meetings/physics-graduate-studies-committee/ CEP

9. Any other business

No issues were raised.

10. Dates of Future Meetings:

FoNS	Masters Student Staff Committee	Weds 15/06/2021	12.30-14.00
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