

**DATE:** Wednesday 04 May 2022

**TIME:** 12:00 – 13:30

**LOCATION:** SALC10, Sherfield Building

## MINUTES

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### 1. Welcome and Apologies

#### Present:

Ceire	Wincott (CW)	FoNS Postgraduate Research Academic & Welfare Officer, Chair
Richard	Thompson (RT)	Vice-Dean (Education), Co-Chair
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager, FoNS
Matt	Horsfield (MH)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), FoNS
James	Wilton-Ely (JWE)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Chemistry
Magdalena	Jara (MJ)	Head of Pedagogy and GTA Programme Leader, Graduate School
Kamilla	Rekvenyi (KR)	Department PGR Rep, Mathematics
Amy	Smith (AS)	Department PGR Rep, Physics
Judy	Xie (JX)	Department PGR Rep, CEP
Tatiana	Rizou (TR)	Department PGR Rep, Crick

#### In Attendance:

Victoria	Crossley (VC)	Teaching Fellow, Graduate School
Anna	Goodwin	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS
Ella	Robson (ER)	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS

#### Apologies:

Daniel	Lo	ICU Deputy President – Education
Paul	French (PF)	Vice-Dean (Research)
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Graeme	Rae	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS
David	Mann (DM)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Life Sciences
Jem	Woods (JM)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, CEP
Ben	Sauer (BS)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics
Ryan	Barnett (RB)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Mathematics
Yurong	Yu (YY)	Department PGR Rep, CEP
Vanessa	Ho (VH)	Department PGR Rep, Chemistry
Aileen	Cooney (AC)	Department PGR Rep, Chemistry
Hui	Gong (HG)	Department PGR Rep, Crick
Alex	Auyang (AA)	Department PGR Rep (Silwood Park), Life Sciences
Xu	Zhang (XZ)	Department PGR Rep (South Kensington), Life Sciences
Hanbo	Yang (HY)	Department PGR Rep, Physics

## **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 16 February 2022.

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

The action tracker was reviewed, and there were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

## **4. Cornerstone Programme (Graduate School)**

VC presented a detailed [presentation](#) on the new Cornerstone Programme in the Graduate School. The following points were made:

- This is the College's new doctoral supervisor support and development umbrella programme which has been designed to bring together resources and training into one place.
- The new programme has been developed in response to the PRES results in 2019 and both students and supervisors had been consulted.
- VC explained that they have developed a new online training course called Fundamentals of supervising PhD students, which would be mandatory for all new members of academic staff. This would replace the existing workshop, which is run by the EDU, but staff could still book the Introduction to supervising PhD students' workshop as a refresher session. Staff also had the option to book the workshop Introduction to being an Assistant Supervisor. VC noted that staff should complete these workshops at least every six years.
- VC informed the committee that there was a new Cornerstone [webpage](#).
- CW explained that she was impressed with this new programme and was excited for the programme to start. CW queried if this training was mandatory for all new staff and VC explained that it was mandatory for all new staff at the College but optional for current staff.
- RT queried how well known this is at the College, as he wasn't aware of the training which is available for current staff. He also queried who would be responsible for making sure staff completed the refresher training every six years. MJ noted it should be the Department who decide how to monitor staff completion rates for the new training sessions but agreed that this could differ between Departments.
- MJ explained that the graduate school are working with ICT on a site which would show the training sessions completed per staff member. This would allow the Departments to monitor what training sessions have been completed by their staff members.
- RM suggested that the details of the Faculty Wellbeing Advisers should be added to the Cornerstone webpage if staff needed to direct a PhD student for support.

## **5. Reports from Department Student Representatives:**

### **5.1 CEP**

The detailed report document was noted by the committee and JX presented the key matters arising from the report.

- The student reps have been organising more social events for the student body, which had been raised in the PRES report. This included a climate themed escape room. JX noted that the students have also been giving out birthday cards to their peers.
- The student reps were working with the Department to update the student handbook for new students who start in October 2022.
- JX noted that the Department recently held a town hall meeting with key members of staff from the Department and Faculty.

## 5.2 Chemistry

No detailed report document was received. No student reps were present, so CW presented a verbal report of the key matters arising in the Department.

- The student reps have organised several social events this year.
- Students were still disappointed by the lack of catering options at the White City campus. JWE explained the current catering options to the committee. RM noted that she had contacted the Faculty Operating Officer about this, in relation to another point raised at the Faculty Education Committee. JWE noted that issues relating to the shuttle bus and lack of suitable study space had been raised in the PRES report.

**Action 1: JWE to contact the Head of Department (Chemistry), to further note lack of catering options at the White City campus.**

## 5.3 Crick

The detailed report document was noted by the committee and TR presented the key matters arising from the report.

- TR noted there was not much to report, but students were helping to organise the annual Crick symposium in the summer. TR noted this would be in person at the Crick.
- TR noted that there have been some social events organised, such as 'meet your student rep'.
- RT asked if there are issues with supervision at the Crick, as the supervisors can work at various institutions in London. TR explained this is often raised at Crick meetings as support can vary between supervisors. TR confirmed that the Crick were looking to improve training for supervisors. VC noted that Imperial staff at the Crick would have access to training by the graduate school, such as the new Cornerstone programme.
- CW asked if TR had heard back about the stipends at the Crick. TR explained that the student reps had written to the Director of the Crick and the stipends had now been raised.

## 5.4 Life Sciences

The detailed report document was noted by the committee CW presented the key matters arising in the Department

- The Department and student reps were working on the upcoming research day and poster event. Transport has been organised for those students travelling from Silwood Park.
- CW explained the Department were keen to organise more social events and asked the other student reps if they got a yearly budget for their social events. The student reps discussed how they each request money for their social events and noted that they often need to claim money back via expenses. The student reps asked if they could submit their expenses online, like staff members.

**Action 2: RM to contact the Finance team to confirm how students should submit their expense claims and if they should be using their personal bank accounts to purchase items for social events.**

## 5.5 Mathematics

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

- Some students have expressed that they feel isolated from their Department as their offices can be small and some students are still working from home. KR is working with the Department to improve the student experience as students return to campus. This has included organising more social events such as coffee breaks on Wednesday and a Pizza evening with the Department of Computing.

- The committee talked a lack of women in Science at the College and how they could improve this. CW noted that PhD students currently don't need to do EDI training which is mandatory for all staff.

## 5.6 Physics

The detailed report document was noted by the committee and AS presented the key matters arising from the report.

- The student reps were working on the PRES feedback with the Department. In this feedback, the students identified a case of sexual misconduct which had not been investigated by the Department. The student reps did report this to the Head of Department, and this has since been investigated by a central College EDI committee.
- The student reps were working on a FAQs document for new students to help them settle in next October. AS explained that each research group operates differently in the Department but this will bring together all the knowledge in the Department to help PhD settle into their programme.
- AS noted there has been some social events organised in the Physics common room.
- AS noted the Physics symposium had been organised for the 06 July 2022.

## 6. Chair's business

- Nothing to be raised.

## 7. Minutes of the PhD Departmental Student Staff Committee Meetings (to note)

Minutes noted.

## 8. Any other business

- The committee discussed representation in the PhD student reps and how to encourage EDI discussions in each of the Departments. CW noted it might be easier to tackle this at a Department level, than Faculty level, as each Department will have their own operations plan for EDI issues. RM suggested that she can discuss this with CW in more detail in a future catch up meeting.
- CW noted she was looking at organising a Faculty social for PhD students in July and she has sent a survey out to all PhD students. She has had a good number of responses so far. CW explained this will be funded by applying for the central communities fund and the Departments contributing a small amount. The student reps discussed about dates for their upcoming symposium events, to avoid a clash with the proposed social event.

## 9. Dates of Future Meetings

Committee	Date	Time	Teams/ Room Details	Paper Deadline
FoNS - Research Academic Student Staff Committee	tbc	tbc		