

DATE: Wednesday 16 February 2022

TIME: 12:30 – 14:00

LOCATION: via MS Teams

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present:

Ceire	Wincott (CW)	FoNS Postgraduate Research Academic & Welfare Officer, Chair
Richard	Thompson (RT)	Vice-Dean (Education), Co-Chair
Paul	French (PF)	Vice-Dean (Research)
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager, FoNS
Graeme	Rae	Faculty Operations Officer, FoNS
Matt	Horsfield (MH)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), 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
James	Wilton-Ely (JWE)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Chemistry
Aileen	Cooney (AC)	Department PGR Rep, Chemistry
Vanessa	Ho (VH)	Department PGR Rep, Chemistry
Alex	Auyang (AA)	Department PGR Rep (Silwood Park), Life Sciences
Kamilla	Rekvenyi (KR)	Department PGR Rep, Mathematics
Amy	Smith (AS)	Department PGR Rep, Physics
Hanbo	Yang (HY)	Department PGR Rep, Physics
Yurong	Yu (YY)	Department PGR Rep, CEP
Tatiana	Rizou (TR)	Department PGR Rep, Crick

In Attendance:

Anna	Goodwin (AG)	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS
Ella	Robson (ER)	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS
Seldon	Paul (PS)	Senior Teaching Fellow, Graduate School

Apologies:

Magdalena	Jara	Head of Pedagogy and GTA Programme Leader, Graduate School
Daniel	Lo	ICU Deputy President - Education
Xu	Zhang (XZ)	Department PGR Rep (South Kensington), Life Sciences
Judy	Xie	Department PGR Rep, CEP
Hui	Gong (HG)	Department PGR Rep, Crick

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 07 December 2021.

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. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

4.1 CEP

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

- Students in the Department had worked with other students in the College to organise an [event](#) in response to COP26 and the environmental crisis. The event was a success and students were keen to organise more in the future.
- The Department recently had a town hall meeting to discuss the research activities and student feedback with Department and Faculty staff members. YY noted this would feed into the PRES survey for this year. This included making more opportunities for GTAs in the Department.
- YY explained that students were keen to organise more social events now the Covid-19 restrictions were easing.

4.2 Crick

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

- Currently working on the organisation for a joint university student symposium next summer, which will be held at Crick. TR noted that they were looking for sponsorship still to provide funding.
- The Crick student reps are running a series of wellbeing activities for students if they wish to raise any issues about their wellbeing and find out where they can get additional support.
- TR noted that the last graduation had been cancelled due to Covid-19, so staff and students are looking forward to the next graduation.
- TR explained that the Crick have organised training sessions for supervisors to help them with supervising student projects.

4.3 Life Sciences

The detailed report document was noted by the committee and AA presented the key matters arising in the Department at Silwood Park.

- AA provided an update on the Silwood Union. The Union have requested 50% more funding from the ICU for this year, which had been discussed a few years back.
- AA noted there are weekly social events at Silwood Park and the ICU are planning to visit the Silwood campus later in the term to see the events which are hosted outside of South Kensington.

CW presented the key matters arising in the Department at South Kensington.

- The Department recently held their Departmental SSC meeting and there were no major issues raised by the student reps.
- CW noted that the Department were looking to organise some events later in the year, which include a research day and poster event. Both events were held last year and were a great success.

- A recent survey sent out to all students showed that students were keen for more social events to be organised.
- CW explained to the committee that some students who are registered to their programme in Silwood Park, don't actually live near the campus and live-in central London. These students have requested study space at the South Kensington campus which they can access. CW noted this has been discussed with DM.

4.4 Mathematics

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

- The Department recently sent a survey to all students and KR noted the main results showed that some students felt isolated due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Students were keen for social events to be organised so they could meet peers on their course.
- KR noted that the Graduate School will be meeting with the Department in due course to discuss GTAs and the additional qualifications they could obtain while undertaking their PhD at the College. This included the MARS scheme and HEA fellowship.
- KR explained to the committee that the student reps in the Department have suggested that there should be a database of examples of early stage assessments (ESA) and late stage reviews (LSR). The committee discussed this in great detail as members agreed this would be useful in some cases, but they would need to be very careful about data protection and if the work has been published. PS noted that the Graduate School have workshops to help students understand the purpose of the ESA and what they are expected to show in the ESA and LSR. CW noted that each Department will have different practices for the guidance which is given to the students. RB would discuss this with colleagues in the Department and then arrange a meeting with KR, and other student reps, to discuss possible options.

4.5 Physics

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

- Students in the Department have reported there have been a lack of social events but as the Covid-19 restrictions were being lifted the Department were keen for these to be organised again. HY noted that they have a social event on the last Tuesday of every month, which includes a seminar and pizza. Future events will include pub quizzes.
- Some students in the Department have reported that they have had very few interactions with their supervisor and HY suggested that there should be a document on mutual expectations between the student and their supervisor.
- HY queried if PhD students are considered a member of staff or a student. RM noted that PhD students are technically considered a student at the College but might have some staff access depending on their research project. BS noted that some PhD students might be in the staff email address book. RM and BS suggested that HY should find out what emails announcements the PhD students think they are missing, and this can be investigated by the Department.

4.6 Chemistry

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

- The Department were starting to organise some social events this term, which included netball and drinks. AC and VH queried how they could calculate the capacity for any future social events and were advised to speak to their Department for any support with risk assessments.

- From the PRES Action Plan, AC noted that students were happy with their supervisors but had raised their concerns about access to facilities at White City and a lack of suitable study space. JWE agreed that there was a lack of suitable study space for students at White City and this was being investigated by the Department. The Department did have access to other study spaces during lockdown, but this was returned to the College recently.
- The MARS [scheme](#) was being promoted to all students in the Department.
- Seminars had resumed in the Department but were mainly being delivered online by each research group.
- AC and VH discussed about usefulness of mindful sessions for the students in the Department, and how some students had discussed about the imposter syndrome. PF suggested that the Department might like to consider inviting in alumni to speak to the students about their experience while at the College and what they did next. The committee agreed this was a good idea to encourage discussion between current students and alumni and their experience while at the College.
- VH reported that the catering at White City was limited compared to South Kensington and students felt the prices were not affordable. RM explained she would follow this up with the Faculty Management Committee.
- VH explained that the student reps had requested some career seminars during lockdown, but these had not been organised. JWE agreed this had not been organised, but the Head of Department was aware and will allocate a member of staff to organise this.
- The committee discussed the rent guarantor scheme, which was run by the College. RM explained she would follow this up as the website had not been updated for the upcoming academic year and it appeared that the scheme was closed. It was noted that the scheme is currently not available for postgraduate students, but RM had queried this, and it was being discussed.
- VH noted that the College counselling service only offer five sessions and queried why this was low. RM and ER explained that the College had limited resources and therefore couldn't provide a long-term service for students. RM circulated a [website](#) link to other NHS services.
- VH asked the committee if the College would continue to supply lateral flow tests if they are required for students to attend the campus. RT explained the College would keep students updated and more news should be announced soon.

5. Chair's business

- Nothing to be raised.

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

Minutes noted.

7. Any other business

- TR queried if the other student reps were aware about a freeze in the Crick stipends, which had made students concerned since the level of inflation has risen. CW believed that the stipend for Crick was higher than at Imperial but wasn't sure. RT suggested that TR should contact Crick about this directly.
- ER reminded the committee of the new Faculty wellbeing advice service, which is open to PhD students too. Appointments can be requested [online](#).

8. Dates of Future Meetings

Committee	Date	Time	Teams/ Room Details	Paper Deadline
FoNS - Research Academic Student Staff Committee	04/05/2022	12:30 - 14:00	SALC 10, Sherfield	27/04/2022