

Faculty of Natural Sciences Undergraduate Student Staff Committee

Date: Wednesday 20 June 2018

Time: 12.30-14.00

Location: HXLY 341

MINUTES

Present:	
Michaela Flegrova- Chair (MF)	Physics Department Student Representative/ RCSU Academic Affairs Officer (Elect)
Emma McCoy- co-Chair (EMc)	FoNS vice-Dean Education
Abhijay Sood- Chair (AS)	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Shervin Sabeghi (SS)	RCSU Welfare Officer
Nicholas Burstow (NB)	ICU Deputy President (Education)
Hler Kristjansson (HK)	Physics Year in Europe Rep
Christos Klerides (CK)	Maths Year 3 Rep
Timothy Marley (TM)	Physics Year 3 Rep
Michael McGill (MM)	Maths UG Departmental Representative/RCSU President (Elect)
Yizhou Yu (YY)	Life Sciences Department Student Representative
Bob Forsyth (BF)	Physics Director of Undergraduate Studies
Don Craig (DC)	Chemistry Acting Director of Undergraduate Studies
Chris Ford (CF)	Maths Senior Tutor
Anita Hall (AH)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Nazia Hirjee (NH)	Faculty Operations Officer
Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager
Apologies	
Lidia Ripoll Sanchez (LRS)	Biochemistry Department Student Representative
Huw Williams (HW)	DUGS Life Sciences
Nadeem Hunain (NH)	Year 2 Rep

1. Welcome and Apologies

MF welcomed the attendees to the meeting and apologies, as above, were noted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting, with an amendment to the strike dates listed in Item 10.5, which should have been listed as:

- Week 1- 22 and 23 Feb
- Week 2- 26, 27 and 28 Feb
- Week 3- 5,6,7,and 8 March
- Week 4- 12,13,14,15 and 16 March

3. Review of Actions

The action tracker was reviewed and the following completed/ updated actions noted:

Action 6. AS confirmed that he had met with Alan Spivey to discuss common room space. They also discussed the challenge of student support with the imminent Chemistry move to White City. AS

agreed to discuss these matters in detail with MF in the RCSU AAO handover meeting. The action was marked as complete.

Action 7. Complete- see notes on Action tracker

Action 8. Ongoing. AS noted that there had been some confusion between the ICU Dep. Pres. (Wellbeing) and himself regarding the bursary document that he had prepared. It was confirmed that Malcolm Edwards had agreed to take the Imperial Bursary matter forward, but it was noted that no further response had been received on this. EMC and NH agreed to follow up with Malcolm.

ACTION: EMC and NH to follow up progress regarding the discrepancy in the Imperial Bursary payment amount with Malcolm Edwards.

ACTION: NB to follow up any progress regarding the discrepancy in the Imperial Bursary payment amount with Fintan O'Connor, ICU Dep. Pres. (Wellbeing)

Action 9. ME was not present to report on this action, but it was agreed to mark the action as complete.

Action 10. This action was noted as complete.

4. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

4.1 Chemistry

There were no Chemistry Student Reps present.

DC noted that the Department were in the process of reviewing the RCSU/ FoNS Student Survey data and would be producing a You Said/ We Did-style response.

DC also noted that some students in Chemistry had raised issues with the proximity of their exams to the end of term- particularly those students who wished to undertake internships that commenced prior to the end of term. He noted that because the start of some lecture courses had been pushed until some weeks after the Easter break, this had caused the exam timings to shift accordingly. RM noted that, officially, students should not be starting internships, placements etc. until after the end of term, regardless of when exams take place.

4.2 Life Sciences – Biology

YY noted that Huw Williams had begun the process of consulting with students regarding curriculum review.

Having arrived after the start of the meeting, YY also mentioned the matter of common room space in SAF- see **Item 3, Action 6** for an update.

4.3 Life Sciences- Biochemistry- there were no Biology Student Reps present

4.4 Mathematics

MM noted that the Maths response to the FoNS/RCSU Student Survey had been circulated that morning and that the survey results had been discussed briefly at the Department SSC.

He noted that anecdotal feedback regarding the exam re-rooming had been positive.

Finally, MM noted that there had been good consultation with students on curriculum review, including a student survey.

4.5 Physics

MF noted that the Physics SSC was scheduled to take place on Thurs 21 June.

She noted that progress with curriculum review was slow, but that the department intended to consult with students over the summer period- presumably via email.

MF noted that the Physics Reps had carried out surveys on exams and revision lecture. She agreed to send the survey questions on to EMc and RM, so that they could share with other departments/ reps who may wish to do a survey in future.

5. **RCSU Strategy**

MM introduced the new RCSU Strategy- see details in Appendices A and B.

6. **Faculty Funding for Departments- a proposal for improving the student experience**

HK explained that he felt that one of the biggest obstacles in improving student satisfaction is the bureaucracy required to make any changes.

He gave the following examples of requests made by students that he believed had been pushed back due to lack of funding, or where responsibility for resolution did not lie with the department:

1. Provision of better cameras for lecture recording
2. Funds in order to pay a student to clean the shared microwave
3. Repainting the walls in the computer suite

On one occasion, HK stated that he had been told that permission would have to be gained from 'the blue building'.

On point 1. RM noted that this issue was known by the Faculty AV Support team, who work closely with key staff in departments, and that new cameras had already been installed.

On point 2. it was agreed that the department should be able to fund this, but a better solution might be to encourage students to clear up after themselves, with the threat of removal of the microwave if cleanliness does not improve.

On point 3. NH noted that an extensive project was underway to improve and refurbish many rooms across FoNS, and indeed the College, and that this would be paid for from central College funds, not by individual departments.

In order to investigate HK's concerns further, NH asked HK to email her with any other specific examples of what had been requested, of whom, and details of the response received.

ACTION: HK to email NH with specific examples of what had been requested, of whom, and details of the response received.

7. **Chair's business-** none

8. **AOB**

8.1 **Co-Curricular Module Proposal**

EMc noted that at a meeting of QAEC, V-PAGE and other key staff on Thurs 14 June, the co-Curricular module proposal had been discussed and approved.

EMc noted that the modules in question would be of 5 ECTS, would be graded on a Pass/Fail basis and would be eligible for condonement in the case of a near miss.

TM noted concerns about the breadth of module choice that would be available. EMc confirmed that this had been a concern shared by some FoNS staff, but that she felt the final version of the proposal addressed these concerns in that choice would not be restricted purely to the existing Horizons and BPES offering, but would include an enhanced Horizons+ offering, including potential offerings from the Advanced

Hackspace and Enterprise Lab; STEM-based modules offered by Departments; and interdisciplinary projects.

MM noted that it would be important to consider carefully the procedure for students who fail a co-curricular module in their final year, which could prevent them from graduating- EMc agreed that this would need to be discussed.

8.2 Year Weightings

EMc confirmed that the proposal for a zero weighted Year 1 had also been discussed at the meeting on 14 June and that it had been agreed to move to a 7.5% weighting.

8.3 Access to Panopto Recordings

TM asked whether it was possible for individual students to be given access to specific Panopto recordings made outside of their own Department. It was confirmed that this *might* be possible, but would be a case of liaising with the Principle Learning Technologist in terms of gaining access to the recording, and of receiving permission from the recording owner. RM agreed to raise with the Principle Learning Technologist, Moira Sarsfield.

ACTION: RM to raise with the Principle Learning Technologist, Moira Sarsfield the possibility of individual students being permitted access to Panopto recordings made outside of their own Department.

8.4 Exam Rooms

Students who had sat exams in the QTR were generally happy with the experience, and approved of the slightly larger exam desks than those usually used in the Great Hall. It was noted by SS that there had been some confusion over seating arrangements in the QTR for Physics exams.

TM noted that he had sat an exam in a room in EEE and that he had appreciated the table space available in this room and the fact that tables were split by dividers.

RM asked whether students had concerns about being asked to sit exams in rooms outside of their home department. All of the Reps present stated that this was not a concern for them as long as the location of the room was made clear prior to the exam and there were no access issues.

9. Dates of Future Meetings:

Dates for 2018/19 were confirmed as:

Committee	Date	Time	Room	Call for Papers	Paper Deadline
UG Academic Student Staff Committee	Weds 14/11/18	12.30- 14.00	TBC	17/10/2018	31/10/2018
UG Academic Student Staff Committee	Weds 13/03/19	12.30- 14.00	TBC	13/02/2019	27/02/2019
UG Academic Student Staff Committee	Weds 19/06/19	12.30- 14.00	TBC	22/04/2019	05/06/2019

Faculty of Natural Sciences UG Student Staff Committee Actions 2017/18

Item/ Reference	Action	Owner	Meeting Date	Update/ Notes	Progress
FoNS SSC Meeting 20 June 2018					
13.	RM to raise with the Principle Learning Technologist, Moira Sarsfield the possibility of individual students being permitted access to Panopto recordings made outside of their own Department.	Rebecca Middleton	20 June 2018		Complete
12.	NB to follow up any progress regarding the discrepancy in the Imperial Bursary payment amount with Fintan O'Connor, ICU Dep. Pres. (Wellbeing)	Nick Burstow	20 June 2018		
11.	EMc and NH to follow up progress regarding the discrepancy in the Imperial Bursary payment amount with Malcolm Edwards.	Emma McCoy/ Nazia Hirjee	20 June 2018		
FoNS SSC Meeting 08 February 2018					
10.	The RCSU to disseminate the UCU statement to students pending the outcome of the Union Council meeting on 13 February 2018.	RCSU- AS/ ME	08 February 2018		Complete
9.	ME to write a note to the Dean of Natural Sciences outlining the formal RCSU position on the UCU strike action pending the outcome of the Union Council meeting on 13 February 2018.	ME	08 February 2018		Complete
8.	EMc and NH to bring the discrepancy in the Imperial Bursary payment amount to the attention of Malcolm Edwards, and to request that a one-off adjustment is made to students receiving the lower level of payment.	EMc and NH	08 February 2018		See Action 11. above
7.	RM to report back to SSC on any progress made from meeting of 09 Feb to discuss UROP Bursaries.	RM	08 February 2018	Notes from the meeting on 09/02: <i>For 2017-18 UROPs the proposal is to bring all types</i>	Complete

Item/ Reference	Action	Owner	Meeting Date	Update/ Notes	Progress
				<p><i>of bursary to the same level, benchmarked against the minimum wage. This will depend upon approval from FoE, BP and Imperial College UROP awards. For 2018-19, the proposal is to benchmark against the cost of living in London. Approval for this will be required from the EPSRC, FoE, BP and Imperial College UROP awards and a submission will need to be made in this year's planning round. Any further updates will be shared with the SSC as they become available.</i></p>	
6.	AS to contact Alan Spivey to discuss whether it might be possible to revisit the proposal to redesign space in SAF to create a shared common room area, and to emphasise the view that space should be prioritised for those departments which currently have none available.	AS	08 February 2018		Complete
FoNS SSC Meeting 15 November 2017					
5.	Once the Terms of Reference are approved, RM to organise meeting dates for the new Wellbeing Student Staff Committee, in liaison with the RCSU WO, SS.	RM	15 November 2017		Complete

Item/ Reference	Action	Owner	Meeting Date	Update/ Notes	Progress
4.	RM to send draft Terms of Reference for new Faculty SSC structure to AS and SS for comments and approval.	RM	15 November 2017		Complete
3.	RM to speak to George Yeorghaki to request that SOLE results be made available by year cohort.	RM	15 November 2017		Complete
2.	HW to discuss Horizons room booking with the LS UG Office Manager, with a view to offering alternative space outside of computer rooms in future.	HW	15 November 2017	<i>From HW: I have looked into this. There are a few Horizons sessions in G27 over next few weeks, but following these we will not allow any further horizons booking of computer labs.</i>	Complete
1.	RM to send the Eventbrite link to Student Reps.	RM	15 November 2017		Complete