

DATE: Wednesday 17 November 2021

TIME: 12:30 – 14:00

LOCATION: SALC 10, Sherfield Building

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present:

Tianyu	Wen (TW)	RCSU Vice President – Welfare, Chair
John	Seddon (JS)	Faculty Senior Tutor, Co-Chair
Richard	Thompson (RT)	Vice-Dean (Education)
Rebecca	Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager, FoNS
Matt	Horsfield (MH)	Education Support Coordinator (Secretary), FoNS
Stephen	Brickley (SB)	Senior Tutor (Biological Sciences), Life Sciences
Chris	Ford (CF)	Senior Tutor, Mathematics
Ingo	Mueller-Wodarg (IMW)	Senior Tutor, Physics
Amelia	Barron (AB)	Student Experience Officer, Chemistry
Inkeri	Hibbins (IH)	Undergraduate Liaison Officer, Mathematics
Sai	Yoghananthan (SY)	Student Experience Coordinator, Mathematics
Anna	Goodwin (AG)	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS
Nicolas	Barykin Pankevich (NBP)	RCSU Vice President – Education
Chinny	Lee (ChL)	Department Wellbeing Rep, Chemistry
Desmond	Lin (DL)	Department Wellbeing Rep, Mathematics
Anthea	MacIntosh-LaRocque (AML)	Department Wellbeing Rep, Physics

Apologies:

Steve	Connolly (SC)	Undergraduate Liaison Officer, Life Sciences
Yasmin	Andrew (YA)	Student Liaison Officer, Physics
Ella	Robson (ER)	Student Wellbeing Adviser, FoNS
Kauthar	Benriassa (KB)	Department Wellbeing Rep (Biological Sciences), Life Sciences
Pansy	Pan (PP)	Department Wellbeing Rep (Biochemistry), Life Sciences
Stuart	Haslam	Senior Tutor (Biochemistry), Life Sciences
Robert	Law	Senior Tutor, Chemistry
Nathalie	Podder	ICU Deputy President - Welfare
Aparna	Pillai	RCSU President

2. Faculty of Natural Sciences Student Staff Committee - Terms of Reference and Membership 2021/22

The committee noted the terms of reference and membership for 2021/22.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 09 June 2021.

4. Matters arising from the minutes and review of action tracker

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

5. Reports from Department Student Representatives:

5.1 Chemistry

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

- The student reps were looking to organise drop-in sessions every other week- for students if they had any concerns they wish to discuss. The Department would provide refreshments.
- ChL was hopeful more social events will be confirmed such as a Christmas social and a Mario Kart night for students and staff. It was noted 1st and 2nd year students had requested more social events.
- ChL informed the committee that AB had set up a webpage for all student support links in the College and had been encouraging students to circulate this website in their cohort.
- Wellbeing reps are planning a survey to be sent out to all students to get some feedback on areas they wish to develop over the year.
- ChL noted that for this academic year the student reps would work with the Department on improving the relationship between staff and students; the ICU events; and making students feel more involved within the Department. One idea was to organise a no alcohol social event.
- ChL explained that she had got mixed feedback about online lectures as some students prefer lectures online and some prefer lectures in person. The student reps are planning to send out more information to help students with time management and study skill resources.

5.2 Life Sciences – Biochemistry

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

- The student reps in the Department were working together to organise wellbeing events for the 1st year students and to help them adjust to being a student at the College. One event which has been discussed is decorating the new common room. TW confirmed that the common room is currently restricted to final year students' use only-but will be open to all years after Christmas.
- Recent feedback from students showed that 1st year students would prefer more in person teaching and 2nd year students have enjoyed online lectures. All students have requested more wellbeing talks and discussions.
- TW stated that she would like to see MS Teams accounts set up for all personal tutor groups so students can keep in touch over the whole year. It was noted that students in the Department preferred online personal tutor sessions than in person sessions. SB explained that all personal tutor sessions should be online anyway as not all offices have the required ventilation to be used for tutorial sessions.

- TW suggested that it would be useful if students had access to a list of rooms that were available on campus which they could book for private study.
- Both Department reps were planning to work with Huw Williams on the NSS actions plans. This included improving exam feedback, the relationship between staff and students and signposting in the Department i.e. the Mitigating Circumstance (MC) process. SB noted that the Department were keen to improve expectations with exam feedback.
- TW queried if the Department reps should have had a handover meeting with the previous reps from last year. RM confirmed this should have happened but can be hard to arrange if the previous Rep has completed their course over the summer and left the College.
- TW noted at the last Department SSC meeting, it was raised if students are expected to be wearing masks in the library, mainly on the 1st floor.
Action 1: RM to contact the library to clarify mask wearing requirements while in the library.
- AG asked TW if students would like any sessions to be arranged by the new Wellbeing Advisers. TW suggested the students would like a session on time management.

5.3 Life Sciences – Biological Sciences

No detailed report document was received. TW confirmed that the issues raised in the Biochemistry section apply to the whole Department as neither student rep could attend.

5.4 Mathematics

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

- The Department had several vacant rep positions in 3rd and 4th years and the JMC course.
- The reps were currently getting feedback from students about the Maths common room and how this should be organised.
- There were a few upcoming events with the Maths Society, which included Pictionary nights, Thanksgiving, and secret Santa. There was also an event being organised for students who were parents. TW stated that the ICU were also looking to organise a 'Mums & Dads' social event so the Department could work with the ICU on this event.
- DL noted that mid-term surveys would be sent out to students once they have completed their mid-term tests.
- DL noted there had been some successful projects in the Department, which included reviewing the coursework and assessment timeline to reduce the number of clashes, the Student Shaper Project to renovate Huxley Building over the summer, and attendance monitoring using QR codes. SY explained students are required to check-in via the QR code once per week and this would be checked by staff only.
- There was a low demand for laptop loans in the Department, so this was no longer a project for the student reps.
- Under the NSS action plans, DL explained that CF had emailed all students to explain the process of applying for a MC and what assessments they could apply for an extension. For example, they could not apply for an extension on a short Blackboard test.
- The number of personal tutor sessions had temporarily been increased to three sessions per term, but CF explained this was temporary and, in the future, it will go back to two sessions per term.
- The student reps would also be looking at bursaries for UROP.

- At the last Departmental SSC, DL noted that the committee had discussed the possibility of in person exams in May 2022, student participation on staff recruitment panels and action plans for SOLE feedback.

5.5 Physics

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

- The student reps were working on a proposal to be presented at the Departmental teaching committee about the under-representation of minority groups in teaching staff.
- AML was working with the Physics society to organise some social events and 'Meet your rep' events.
- AML noted there had been some successful projects over the last year, which included the lab report reform. AML noted they would be able to get feedback on this next term once provisional marks had been released.
- The student reps had set up an anonymous suggestions box which was working well.
- AML had set up some wellbeing stand events and a lecture 'buddy up' scheme so students could watch live lectures with their peers on campus.
- AML noted there was a student-staff forum on the 10 November 2021, and this was successful. The LGBTQ+ committee had also been organised.
- The student reps had carried out a pre-term survey, with the results attached in Paper 5.
- AML noted they had planned a series of videos to celebrate Black History Month but there was a low uptake for speakers.
- Under the NSS action plans, AML explained that the student reps were looking at running student support groups as a place for students to speak about any issues they might want to raise. AML was hoping to work with the Student Minds charity on this project.
- At the most recent Departmental SSC, students had raised concerns about the subtitles on Panopto and how they did not reflect what the lecturer was saying. The committee discussed that this is a problem in all the Departments and should be investigated at a College level committee. RT noted that the captioning software was better on MS Teams but not perfect so had to be checked by staff.
- RT queried with AML if the exit interviews had worked well in the Department and AML did not have any feedback. JS and AB explained that exit interviews were useful in the Department of Chemistry and often allowed the Department to untangle any issues reported in the NSS.

6. Update from Faculty Student Wellbeing Team

- AG informed the committee that the Faculty Student Wellbeing Advisers were now seeing students either in person or online. Students can book an appointment via the Faculty wellbeing [webpage](#).
- AG noted that some recurring support themes had been picked up so far from what the students had reported, and this would help the service develop and improve. The Faculty were keen to develop training for staff to help when dealing with reported wellbeing issues.
- Both Wellbeing Advisers would be contacting the Departmental student wellbeing reps to get some feedback on wellbeing support in the Faculty and areas they could improve.
- AG explained that she was part of the College-level sexual consent working group to acquire a training provider for the whole College.
- Both Wellbeing Advisers had been invited to attend induction events in some Departments and would hope to attend more next academic year.

- AG asked the committee that if they had any ideas for how to best promote the wellbeing service in the Departments, they should email the Wellbeing Advisers directly.

7. Chair's business

- TW informed the committee that the ICU were going to hold a referendum of all students concerning the upcoming strike action planned by the University and College Union (UCU). Students should sign up from the ICU [website](#) if they wish to vote. TW explained this would be positive for staff to ensure better pension conditions but that strike action could have a negative impact on teaching and marking.
- JS thanked the Faculty Wellbeing Advisers for their help with the recent personal tutor training.
- JS informed the committee that the College is going to recruit two positions to support serious student casework, the role holders will work closely with the Faculty on a trial period before being rolled out across the College. AML queried what this position would involve. JS explained that there had been an increase in the number of serious student cases over the last few years and staff were not trained to support these difficult student cases. This new role would bring together the different strands of support services to provide the best support for the student.
- JS reminded the committee that he is the safeguarding lead for the Faculty.

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

No minutes noted.

9. Any other business

AB asked the committee if they had received any information about free sanitary products being made available. RM stated she had not heard anything.

Post Meeting Note

AB followed up the matter of access to free sanitary products being made available and received the following response from Stephen Curry, Assistant Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, 'Nick Roalfe (Director of Estates Operations) is overseeing this. Installation of free sanitary product vending machines starts on 20 November and should be complete by 06 December, all being well. Communications on this coming soon.'

10. Dates of Future Meetings

Committee	Date	Time	Teams/ Room Details	Paper Deadline
FoNS - UG Wellbeing Student Staff Committee	09/03/2022	12:30 - 14:00	SALC 10, Sherfield	02/03/2022
FoNS - UG Wellbeing Student Staff Committee	08/06/2022	12:30 - 14:00	SALC 10, Sherfield	01/06/2022