

Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science
SSCC Physics 11th November 2015 13:00 Physics Common Room

Present: Chris Finlayson (CF), Simon French (SF), Xing Li (XL), Dave Langstaff (DL), Eleri Pryse (EP), Edwin Flikkema (EF), Andy Evans (AE), Balazs Pinter (BP), Sandy Spence (SS), Nick Mellor (NM), Gweno Foster-Evans (GFE), Katie Hope (KH), Gareth Stevens (GS), Phoebe Holcombe (PH), Luke Searle (LS), Ryan Cutter (RC), Naveen Vijayan (NV), Chloe Sumner (CS), Thomas Cross (TC), Dean Clarke (DC), Alex Pitchford (AP), Connor Hudson (CH), Rachel Evans (RE, Chair), Miranda Capecchi (MC, Minutes)

Agenda

1. **Apologies for absence:** Paola Montoya, Giselle Morris, Chris Lorch
2. **Election of Student Chair for 2015/2016 session:** Rachel Evans was elected.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting – 29th April 2015:** accepted
4. **Matters Arising from the minutes of 29th April 2015**

4.1. Actions

No.	Minute No.	Action	Whose Action	Action Status
4	4.1.	Deborah Croft to be contacted about using the library for the Summer University. student representative offered to contact her and also to obtain feedback from her and students after the Group study trial	Student rep	No one reported to RE that this had taken place, but she and the students used the library during the summer
4	4.2.	Survey of Student preference for Group or Individual Work study to be sent to IS	SEP	Informal survey undertaken by some of the 2 nd year students - ongoing
4	4.4.	Year 1 requested more notes about 'uncertainties' to be made available	DL	Done
4	4.6.	SEP will speak to Institute about various procedures	SEP	Done
5	5.1.	A Welsh Representative would be sought from all years to obtain feedback	SEP/CF	Done

4.2. The library does have a group study area, but it is not possible to have this and a quiet area in the same room, therefore, it was the general consensus amongst students that the library is not a solution as additional space to study in groups, as is also the case for the labs. A more permanent solution needs to be found.

1. ACTION: RE to contact Director of Infrastructure Dave Price, concerning available study areas for all years.

5. Student Matters

5.1. Year 0

Nothing to report

5.2. Year 1

5.1.1. Assignments on BlackBoard: these are sometimes difficult to find, could they be all in one place? It was suggested that a shared calendar would be a solution to this problem and students agreed that this was a good idea.

5.1.2. Tests: there are two tests only one week apart, so students have little, if no time to prepare.

2. ACTION: Year 1 reps to discuss this with the co-ordinators of the module(s) in question.

5.1.3. Calculus/Algebra: there is material that students are expected to know in Calculus that is taught in Algebra, therefore, it was suggested that this Algebra material needs to be taught before Calculus.

5.2. Year 2

5.2.1. Recording of lectures: this is not happening for all lectures, but should come into practice before the 2016 cut off. Staff assured students that this is moving forward. Staff are getting training available to enable them to use the new equipment in the lecture rooms.

5.2.2. MP26020: this module needs to be revised for next year. The general consensus is that it appears to be a big step up from the first year. Concerns over the test were raised and students have had to undertake student led tutorials in order to prepare for it. Further, it was suggested that the lecture needs to be a longer to incorporate all the material taught in a 1 hours session. The lack of help in workshops was also raised, as there are not enough demonstrators

ED requested that students didn't leave the workshops for MP26010 early and that they should be asking for help if help is needed. Group work was actively encouraged.

5.2.3. Instrumentation: students need more help with learning to use the equipment. There is only one demonstrator to help out in this session and there is a need for more; it was suggested that a technician might also be brought in to help.

DL told students that the labs are open and a timetable for lab usage has been circulated and there is also one on the lab door. DL said students are free to come and ask for extra assistance. Further, the course has been restructured and DP has taken issues on board.

3. ACTION: Student reps for Year 2 to put a message out about the lab timetable and encourage its use.

5.3. Year 3

5.3.1. Condensed Matter: the two hour lecture is too much in one go to take in and a lot of students are leaving half way through. It was suggested that it either be split into two one hour sessions or the students are given something practical/hands on to do in the second half or during a break.

5.3.2. Numerical Methods: students feel that there is too much work attached to this for a 10 credit module.

5.3.3. Assignments: students consider there to be a lot of assignments due in too close together at present and some have not been put on the assignment timetable.

5.3.4. IDL: there needs to be access to this across the campus and not just in the labs. This is being looked at by IT staff.

5.4. Year 4

5.4.1. Assignment deadline pile up on 11/12/2015: students suggested that it is too much to cope with and could some of the deadlines be moved. Further, some assignments hadn't been given in advance so students haven't been able to prepare properly. Students also feel that it is not clear what is expect of them in year 4.

4. ACTION: Year 4 student reps to discuss this issue further with EP.

5.4.2. Masters study area: year 4 are technically studying at the same level as masters students, but there is no provision for a study area for them and they are not able to use the Postgraduate Centre, as technically they are classed as 4th year undergraduates. (See action 1)

SS suggested that, as we are an institute, that all IMPACS students are welcome to use the computer rooms in Computer Science, of which there are several available, as study areas.

5. ACTION: RE to advertise this to all Physics students.

6. ACTION: SS to request that FORTRAN is installed in all the 24 hour computer rooms around the University.

5.4.3. It was reported that the printer in the lab is broken and needs fixing. It was also suggested by staff that the printer in Lab 2 needs to be set up the same as all other printers.

7. ACTION: SS to investigate the possibility of changing the status of the part 2 lab printer.

5.5. Postgraduates

5.5.1. Demonstrators pay: issues have been raised concerning the rate of pay for this year's PG demonstrators. As the majority of demonstrators are contracted as staff, it is a staff matter and should be discussed outside of SSCC.

5.5.2 Demonstrating: this year's demonstrators were more prepared than last year's – AP and AE have worked hard together to achieve this, but this needs improving on for next year. Further, there are also fewer demonstrators this year and how these are being used needs discussion.

5.6. Welsh Medium

5.6.1. Representation of welsh language: it is felt that this is not visible enough in Physics, e.g. during certain events such as open days, bilingual emails and assignments – the general consensus is that there needs to be more made available in Welsh. Further, it is felt that staff have differing attitudes towards doing things in Welsh which has caused some students to feel uncomfortable about asking for something in Welsh, when this should be automatic.

The department takes the Welsh medium policy and equality in general, very seriously and thanked the students for raising their issues, and assured them that Welsh medium and equality continue to be an important topic raised during all departmental meetings.

6. Staff Matters

6.1. Employability: this is important in the University and staff encourage students to actively engage with this by, for example, attending careers fairs and other such employability events.

Reps suggested that they could advertise these events to other students via social network, such as the Phys Soc. Facebook page. The idea of using the monitor in the Physical Sciences foyer as an advertising spot was also put forward – the idea was met with enthusiasm by both staff and students.

6.2. SS talked about how Computer Science students have a website where they showcase their achievements and suggested that Physics students might like to do the same. Physics students are in the process of publishing a Newsletter for this purpose and were in favour of having a website and/or again, using the monitor to showcase their achievements.

7. AOB

There will be 3 meetings of the SSCC this academic year, with the next one scheduled for late February/early March 2016.

Action Table

Action number	Minute number	Action	Whose action	Action status
1	4.2.	Contact the Director of Infrastructure, Dave Price, concerning available study areas for all years	RE	
2	5.1.2.	Discuss lack of preparation time for tests with the co-ordinators of the module(s) in question	Year 1 Reprs.	
3	5.2.3.	Put a message out about the lab timetable and encourage lab use	Year 2 Reprs.	
4	5.4.1.	Discuss 11/12/2015 assignment pile up with EP	Year 4 Reprs.	
5	5.4.2.	Advertise the use of Computer Science computer rooms to all Physics students	RE	
6	5.4.2.	Request that FORTRAN is installed in all the 24 hour computer rooms around the University	SS	
7	5.4.3.	Investigate the possibility of changing the status of the part 2 lab printer	SS	