

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

School of Chemistry

STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting held at 1pm Wednesday 18 November 2009 in School of Chemistry, Room GE.005

Present: Garry Procter (Chair), Andrew Regan, John Blunden-Ellis, Karen Charters, Karen Butterworth

Student Representatives:

Level 1	Rebecca Ruscoe	Conrad Goodwin
Level 2	Siobhan Valderama	Laura Millar
Level 3	Aiden Tierney	James Rae
Level 4	Laura Wilson	Jasbinder Kenyon

1. Apologies for absence

None received

2. Chairman's introduction

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained that the minutes of these meetings would be tabled at Teaching Committee.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved with no changes.

4. Matters arising

8b) A feedback form for 3rd year lab projects had been approved for use this year.

5. Careers Service Matters

Karen Butterworth introduced herself, described her role and asked for ideas about what type of help the service could offer. It was agreed that the following would be welcomed: CV and PG application workshops offered to final year students; CV drop in for year 2 students applying for placements; employer fairs with panel sessions, to help 2nd/3rd year students to decide on career paths, better representation from Chemistry employers at Science & Technology fair (**Action: KB/KC**)

6. Library matters

- It was noted that the JRULM holds one of the largest chemistry collections but that space is limited. Some books are therefore kept in the Joule library but can be delivered to the main site when ordered.
- An analysis of demand for books on the Chemistry reading list took place in 2009, in order to target expenditure to the areas of most demand. E-copies are also purchased where possible.
- SciFinder Scholar to be decommissioned at the end of the year, meaning a move to use of the web version or client version installed onto personal PCs. Some students reported difficulties in registering with web version. Any problems were to be reported to the Library Representative for further investigation (**Action: Reps/JB-E**)
- In response to a query it was confirmed that library refurbishment works were proceeding on schedule.

7. First Year matters

- a) Some students had suggested that extra help should be made available to students taking the CHEM10511 course who had not taken A-level Maths. A discussion followed amongst students from all years who felt that some continuing Maths study would benefit them in first and second year. The Chair noted that this item was already under review by a curriculum working group and Teaching Committee (**Action: GP**)

8. Second Year matters

- a) Students had complained about the opening hours of the synthesis labs. The lab often did not open for students until 10.15 and students were being asked to leave before the 12:30 lunchtime closure. This often meant that time to complete experiments was limited. The Chair agreed to bring up this issue with the lab organiser (**Action: GP**)
- b) Some people had expressed a preference for choosing their own groups for work in Communicating Chemistry. It was felt by those present that the experience of working with different people was a valuable one and that this practice would therefore continue.
- c) Not all lecture notes were being posted onto Blackboard. The Chair would bring this to the attention of the Teaching Committee. (**Action: GP**)

9. Third Year matters

- a) There was concern expressed about the recent announcement that CHEM30311 lecture notes and workshop/tutorial answers would not be posted on Blackboard unless there was 80% attendance. It was felt that student who did attend should not be penalised in this way, and it was noted that lectures are not compulsory and so students should not be penalised for non-attendance.
- b) Complaints had been received that students were being asked to leave the computer cluster at 6/6.30 pm even though the stated opening hours are until 8pm. The Education Officer would speak to the Building Superintendent about this (**Action: KC**)
- c) Lunch hour in labs – it was reported that this was inconvenient, especially for students working on Synthesis projects. The Chair reported that the lunchtime lab closure had been introduced for Health and Safety reasons and would be reviewed during and at the end of the year. If students had a particular experiment which required constant attention then they should discuss this with the lab organiser in the first instance.

10. Fourth Year matters

- a) Complaints had been received about the lack of consistency in the experience of 4th year projects. Some students started their lab work in week 1 whereas some were delayed for up to 5 weeks at the beginning of term due to health and safety training requirements. There seemed to be little understanding amongst some Post-Docs of the timetable commitments 4th year students had. It was suggested that 4th year project allocations should be done before the summer break, so that students could prepare and read. These items would be discussed with the project co-ordinator (**Action: GP**)
- b) It was requested that feedback from 3rd year MChem project reports be made available to students. This was agreed and would be actioned within one week (**Action: KC**)
- c) Study space for 4th year students was reported to be a problem, as most write up rooms did not have space in them. Reps were reminded that the 4th year students could use the PG common room – an email would be sent to inform students of this. (**Action: KC**)
- d) Support for distance learning in year 3 was brought up, some problems experienced were difficulties in contacting UoM supervisors, lack of understanding of DL requirements amongst industrial supervisors and difference in quality of DL materials. Suggested improvements were to the pack for industrial supervisors, ensuring that students were aware of tutors allocated for

organic/inorganic tutorial support and exploring the possibility of taping/filming lectures. The Chair would bring these matters to the attention of the programme director (**Action: GP**)

11. Any other business
No business discussed.

12. Next meeting

Wednesday 3 March 2010
Wednesday 20 April 2010