

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

School of Chemistry

STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting held at 1pm Wednesday 13 February 2013 in School of Chemistry, Room GE.005

Present: Garry Procter (Chair), Andrew Regan, Ian Fishwick, Ben Coe, Karen Charters

Student Representatives:

Level 1	Ikra Pervaiz	
Level 2	Lisa Williams	Jonathan Phan
Level 3	Jessica Quirke	Kyriacos Demetriou
Level 4	Priyanka Comar	Harriet Rugg-Easey

1. Apologies for absence

None received

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Chair reported that the School's bid to the Dean's fund for refurbishment of the 4th floor library had been successful, and that work would begin immediately following the exam period, for completion in September 2013. The following was noted:

- a) A request for desk dividers, to provide more private work space;
 - b) An offer from the library representative to arrange visits to other 'learning commons' spaces across campus.
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- 3a) Comments about the BIOL10551 course had been forwarded to the Med Chem programme director, who was planning to meet with representatives from the course. Course feedback comments, received in the semester one teaching questionnaire, had also been forwarded to the course co-ordinator.
 - 3b) The computer cluster opening hours were now confirmed as 8am-8pm Monday-Friday.
 - 4a) It was reported that feedback from level 2 synthesis had improved, but would be kept under review. Year 2 reps to report any further problems to the Chair.
 - 5a) It was reported that the broken lock had been fixed.
 - 6a) Comments regarding CHEM30211 had been passed onto the Head of Physical Teaching.

3. Library Issues

Dr Fishwick introduced himself as the Academic Engagement Librarian covering Chemistry. He explained that planned developments included putting more resources into subject websites, introduction of new pages giving advice on copyright issues, drop in sessions in Blue 4 and the Eureka! Project, which is a dragons' den style project encouraging users to come up with innovative ideas to improve services.

Issues raised by students and staff present included a query about reduced library opening hours – the impression being that the opening of the Learning Commons had led to a reduced library provision, rather than being an extra resource. In addition it was reported that Reaxis had stopped working.

It was agreed that student representatives would ask their peers for any specific comments relating to library provision and bring these issues to the next meeting. (*Action: all reps*)

4. First Year matters

- a) It was reported that Dr Gardiner's CHEM10412 lectures went very fast, with some students being unable to follow the detail. These comments would be passed on.

5. Second Year matters

- a) Some students had queried why exemplar answers were not made available for year 2 course units. It was explained that the issue had been discussed at Teaching Committee, and the feeling was that exemplar material was designed to help students with the transition to University in year 1, the aim being to develop more independence in learning as students' progressed through their course. Supporting material would therefore be limited to year 1. It was noted that students could use past papers and submit their answers to tutors for marking, as long as they gave sufficient notice. This policy was to be made more explicit, to be included in programme handbooks and on the new 'virtual common room' under development in Blackboard.
- b) It was reported that the CHEM20411 booklet produced by Dr Wallace was very popular, and some students had asked if something similar could be produced for all courses. It was explained that staff had different preferences for the production and supply of course material (for example Dr Regan uses 'fill in the blanks' notes, which also receive good feedback) and so therefore it was not seen as desirable for one style to be adopted across the School.
- c) It was reported that messages posted to the year 2 listserv address were not getting through. The Senior Education Officer would check this and report back. (*Action: KC*)

6. Third Year matters

- a) There were some complaints about equipment in the S-Lab not working. The NMR machine had been out of action but was now fixed, and the water trip switches were broken, awaiting fixing. It was acknowledged that such matters could be better communicated to students, and this matter would be brought up with the third year S-Lab organiser. (*Action: GP*)
- b) Comments had been received regarding CHEM30312, in relation to poor notes being provided by Dr Pritchard, making lectures difficult to follow. This matter would be brought to the attention of the head of Inorganic teaching. (*Action: GP*)

7. Fourth Year matters

- a) It was reported that Professor Micklefield's teaching on CHEM41412 appeared to assume prior knowledge of the material from CHEM30412, which students who had been on placement last year did not attend. It was therefore requested that the course material be placed onto Blackboard for background reading. This matter would be discussed with Prof Micklefield and appropriate action taken. (*Action: KC/GP*)

- b) Some students had asked why NMR software was not available on the cluster machines. It was reported that the software was open-access and so could be downloaded onto personal computers, but that in the longer term a request would be put into IT services for it to be added to the 'image' for the cluster PCs (*Action: HR-E to send note to GP/GP to contact IT services*)

8. Any other business

- a) Dr Coe introduced himself as the School careers and employability officer, explaining that his role was to provide a link between the school and careers service, and promote employability developments within the School. Any ideas or feedback about current resources and events would be gratefully received.

- b) The Senior Education Officer updated reps on the following information:

- A new Chemistry website would be launched within the next few weeks, and some first year students had volunteered to give feedback on the draft. These students would be contacted once a link had been provided by the faculty web team.
- A graduation date would be released within the next two weeks, and final year students informed as soon as it had been received.
- Exam results would be published on Monday 25 February. The move to a Monday release day was in response to concerns in previous years about releasing marks when no staff were available to answer queries.

9. Next meeting

17 April 2013