

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

*School of Chemistry***STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE****MINUTES**Meeting held at 1pm Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 in School of Chemistry, Room 5.02**Present:** Garry Procter (Chair), Andrew Regan, Karen Charters, Hayley Teixeira-Roxburgh

Student Representatives:

Level 1	Scott Cowley	Liam McGrenaghan
Level 2	Sophie Neild-Crabb	
Level 3	Benjamin Marshall	Oliver Mercer
Level 4	Heena Panchal	

**1. Apologies for absence**

From Haydn Mann

**2. Matters arising**

The following action points had been completed:

From meeting 02/05/2014:		
	Contact Estates regarding girls toilet locks	Fixed, though noted locks on some of the new refurbished toilets were now broken. This had also been reported

**3. F****First Year matters**

- a) The Y1 reps commented that no Facebook group was set up for new students before they arrived. They thought it would be a good idea to set one up in advance for next years students and hand over the administration of it to the new reps in advance.
- b) The Y1 reps set up a survey on their Facebook group for first year students. Some of the results were as follows;
  - Non-standard entry students were asked about their experience. 7 responded, 1 said they could have had some extra help but did not specify.
  - Students were generally happy with Welcome Week.
  - Students were finding lectures difficult but happy with the lecturers.
  - Students were finding CHEM10511 hard due to the self-taught nature of the course and would have preferred workshops as supplementary help.
  - Students found tutorial sheets challenging but were happy with the tutors. The reps mentioned that sometimes questions asked on tutorial sheets had not yet been covered in lectures.

- c) The reps reported that the demonstrators were very varied and a few students hadn't received their lab reports marks yet. Prof. Procter advised that he could assist with chasing these demonstrators if was provided with specific details. **(Action: reps)**
- d) The reps also reported that students felt a discrepancy in marking between demonstrators. GP reiterated his earlier point about needing specific details to deal with issues and also explained that students should build up a good relationship with their demonstrators so they are able to sit with them and go through marked work and get better feedback.

#### 4. Second Year matters

- a) Students had reported that there had been a delay with lab marks coming back but they had been given a week's extension on their second report to ensure they received feedback.
- b) The students were confused about ACD labs and had been given unhelpful advice regarding this. The Y3 rep present explained they would receive some more instruction in Semester 2 and the Y4 rep advised that look up some very useful tutorials on youtube that had helped them.
- c) The students had reported that within the CHEM20500 module, the maths elements were made more difficult due to how questions and answers were released weekly, not leaving enough time to prepare before the test in Week 6. **(Action: KC)**
- d) Students on the Industrial Experience programme reported to the reps that they were worried about the application process. Karen reiterated the role of Simone Wilkes (Employability Intern) whose role was to increase the pool of placements and offer training and CV assistance to students and that she should be utilised as much as possible. Heena (Y4 rep) added that her own experience of an industrial placement taught her that students must be self-motivated and practise their basic chemistry knowledge.

#### 5. Third year matters

- a) Students on placement who were distance learning had reported back that Dr. Webb's podcasts were too quiet to be useful. Dr. Regan commented that there were technical issues that affected podcasts regularly. Heena (Y4 rep) added that she had found the podcasts were supplementary to the lecture notes supplied on Blackboard and that there should be plenty of material to learn from.
- b) Other students had mentioned that MChem supervisors could be difficult to contact. Dr. Regan emphasised that they should contact Dr. Burton with individual and specific cases so this could be chased up.
- c) The reps reported back that the 'Chemistry Uncovered' event was generally received well but students would have preferred to have a few more speakers like the event last year. Karen explained that it was meant to be a different type of event and there is always a slight issue with not having concrete numbers signed up when inviting external speakers. Karen did emphasise that the Careers Service were pleased and got good feedback from the speakers.
- d) Students reported the recurring issue of ChemDraw not being available on all PCs although this has been improved lately. It was brought up that the link on the intranet needs to be updated for students who have already downloaded ChemDraw once but have bought a new laptop. **(Action: KC)**

## 6. Fourth year matters

- a) Students who had returned from placement explained that they were unsure of the structure and content of some of their exams as they were studying Y3 material but taking Y4 exams. This was mainly around the Physical Chemistry section. Karen commented that there should have been different tutorial groups allocated for the Y4 students. Heads of Teaching (Inorganic and Physical) would be reminded of this (**Action: KC**)
- b) The issue of Y4 students not having tutorials was also brought up. Karen explained that each course should have either workshops or problem sheets available.

## 7. Any other business

- a) Prof. Procter commented that he had a meeting with Prof. Winpenny and one of the topics of discussion was the MChem Project Allocations. Prof. Winpenny had requested some feedback and wanted to re-introduce the project allocations booklet. It was explained that the process was conducted by Karen (some students were unaware of this) and Heena (Y4 rep) commented that she had received good feedback about potential projects after emailing different supervisors. Other comments included;
  - It would be useful to know more about logistical project elements when making project decisions such as techniques and lab apparatus that would be used and the amount of time that was expected in the lab.
  - Everyone agreed that 10 choices was a good number and the vast majority of students were allocated within their 10 choices.
  - Reps reported that generally, students were happy with the process.
- b) Karen asked if anyone had any comments regarding the Teaching and Learning Action Plan. Comments were as follows;
  - Non-standard entry students: was there a possible issue of motivation in their first year as for those students, it was more like a second year? Scott (Y1 rep) who had entered via a foundation year found that this wasn't the case.
  - There was an issue of parallel Maths courses within the foundation year course, one of which was easier than the other which created some difficulty when entering first year Chemistry with AAA/AAB students.
- c) Prof. Procter asked for some feedback regarding e-learning and what students wanted to see.
  - Students commented that generally, they just wanted easy access to materials, know where to find things and to have the actual learning material functioning and easy to use. They were not interested in any 'gimmicks'.
  - Students also commented that more quizzes would be useful – especially ones that provided explanations of why answers were incorrect.
  - They also mentioned that spectroscopy quizzes would be useful.

## 8. Summary of Action Points

<b>New:</b>		
1	1 <sup>st</sup> years to report specific instances of demonstrator problems	Year 1 reps to report this back to cohort
2	CHEM20500 Maths Questions and Answers.	KC to contact Patrick O'Malley and ask him to release answers early.
3	ChemDraw link on the intranet.	KC to update intranet page with two separate links.
4	Concern surrounding content and exams of Y4 students returning from placement.	KC to feedback to Teaching Sections.