

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER  
**School of Chemistry**  
**STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE**

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**MINUTES**

Meeting held at 1pm Wednesday 26 November 2014 in School of Chemistry, Room G05.00

**Present:** Garry Procter (Chair), Andrew Regan, Karen Charters, Abigail Webb

Student Representatives:

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

**1. Apologies for absence**

From Haydn Mann

**2. Matters arising**

The following action points have been completed:

From meeting 22/10/2014:		
3	ChemDraw link on the intranet.	KC has updated the intranet page with two separate links.
4	Concern surrounding content and exams of Y4 students returning from placement.	KC has feedback concern to Y4 teaching sections.

**3. First Year matters:**

The Y1 representatives reported the following issues from Y1 students:

- The Y1 reps reported that they received no complaints from Y1 students. The already reported demonstration problems are still ongoing; still waiting on responses from students. Overall, the Y1 student reps confirmed that all has been going well for the last past couple of weeks.

**4. Second Year matters:**

The Y2 representatives reported the following issues from Y2 students:

- No notification was sent to Y2 students informing them that the maths test marks were on Blackboard.
- Some Y2 students attending the SLAB seem to be unsure of waste disposal. The student reps suggested that there be a quick run through of the waste disposal procedures to avoid mistakes and accidents. Members of the Committee explained that Y2 students should be aware of Y2 waste disposal procedures and if unsure about anything should check with their demonstrator.

- Quite a few students have raised a need for a reading week. The student reps confirmed that some students have said that they felt overwhelmed and exhausted by Week 8. The Committee agreed that this is not feasible after year 1 because of the timing of all lectures and laboratories.
- A number of issues relating to labs were raised:
  - Some Y2 students have expressed concern in keeping SLAB reports short like they are instructed to do. However, some students are worried about not giving enough explanation in the discussion to try and get high marks.
  - Some students have an uncertainty of what to include in the error analysis in MLAB reports. Furthermore, the MLAB experiment requires that students need to refer to the Semester 2 notes. The student reps stated that it is unfair if you have the MLAB experiment in semester 1 and do not have the Semester 2 notes. More information was sought regarding this – which experiment, which set of notes, for example.
  - Some students have found that the MU experiment equipment is very unreliable and needs recalibrating, as it often gives false results.
  - Some students believe that a MLAB experiment feedback session would be helpful especially for students that are getting low marks and want to improve. The student reps suggested that 20 minutes after laboratories would be sufficient.
  - Some students believe that the general organisation in the synthesis lab needs improving and the marks definitely need moderating. Some students received a low mark in their second report which included all the feedback from their first report in order to write a better report. The students thought that this was confusing and not fair.
  - Some students reported that they're still experiencing problems getting SLAB reports graded; students having completed the synthesis part for the first part of Semester 1 have not had their reports marked. They are already through the measurements lab and this has yet to be resolved.
  - Some students have commented on the Synthesis lab. Group 2 were expected to annotate and explain NMR before they had even done anything on it in the lectures.

Students were reminded that feedback mechanisms are in place in all labs and that discussion with demonstrators is the first point of call for queries. If this was not satisfactory the lab organiser should be the next person to refer any problems to.

- Quite a few students have commented on Y2 lectures being much more boring than last year, with too much importance placed on the spectroscopy exam. The student reps suggested that online tests might be a way to improve this issue and to lower the weight of the exam.
- One student mentioned that SLAB lab coats can be cleaned by the School for first years. Cleaning of lab coats was not provided as the nature of the experiments being undertaken was such that there should be no need for this.
- Some students have experienced difficulties with using Chemdraw on Apple Macs. The correct procedure when using an Apple Mac was explained to the Y2 student rep by the group.

- Students reported that chemometrics (CHEM20711 – set of 4 lectures by Mathias Nilsson) was not very well received. The lectures were not very informative, no chemistry examples and students do not know what they were supposed to get from the lectures or what they needed to know for the exam. No lecture material is on blackboard and the printouts of the lecture slides were not good enough. The issue of blackboard material was to be investigated (**Action: KC**) and students were encouraged to bring forward their views on the course via the online questionnaires.
- There had been a request for the CHEM20500 essay deadline to be extended, as it had been in the last academic year. Whilst it was felt that there was both adequate notice of the deadline and time to complete this assignment (from week 5 to week 11), it was recommended that the course convenor was the best person to approach about this issue.

### 5. Third Year matters:

The Y3 representatives reported the following issues from Y3 students:

- The Y3 reps requested that PASS leaders would benefit from having access to Y2 material on Blackboard. It was explained that this was more problematic this year, due to guest access having been switched off for all units in the School. A solution would be investigated for semester two (**Action: KC/AW**)
- BSc labs: M1 lab reports; there were some issues regarding the demonstrators for this project, who didn't seem to be very well briefed, meaning that they were unable to provide much direction. As a consequence the students didn't feel confident about the write up for the project.
- BSc labs: S1 – one of the demonstrators was felt to be a bit patronising, with some students feeling micro managed, which is frustrating. Some students are also struggling to find equipment. (**Action: KC to pass comments on to lab organisers**)
- CHEM30211 photochemistry (Sven Koehler) – there had been some complaints that Dr Koehler was often late for lectures and that the lectures themselves were confusing, with not much content on slides (often images with no text). No podcasts so if you miss a point to annotate the slide there is no way of revisiting the material.
- CHEM30441 – Dr Quayle is very slow at posting lecture notes, as he always has to double check the content for errors.
- It was reported that the provision of printing credits had been well received.
- MChem Group Project - group 14 with Roy Goodacre, the students have not seen him since Week 7. The group is having problems with the demonstrators. It was explained that Neil Burton is the group project coordinator and so any issues regarding the running of projects should be taken to him in the first instance.
- MChem Group Project – Dr Horn's group were having problems with lab equipment. It was recommended that they discuss this with Dr Horn.
- Some students had requested that there be more space on the desks in the computer cluster, perhaps with the PC units being placed below the desks. It was explained that the equipment in the clusters is provided by Faculty IT services, and so the most appropriate place for comments would be the Faculty SSLC meeting.

- Survey on careers; students want information on other career sources not only for chemistry. **Action:** Students need to talk with Simone Wilkes on what it is that they want in term of careers. SW can send out other information.
- Unit surveys: some students thought that there was too much writing needed. It was explained that all comments were optional. There was also concern that results weren't anonymous. It was explained that although there was a record of which comments were posted by which student, these records were kept centrally and would only be accessed in cases of legally defamatory or offensive comments being posted.  
Students would prefer to have mark schemes/model answers for all past papers. It was explained that it was School policy not to make these available, and that any student working through past papers would be able to submit their work to tutors or lecturers for feedback.

#### 6. Fourth Year matters:

The Y4 student representative reported the following issues from Y4 students:

- The fourth year rep reported that most students are happy with the careers service.
- Semester 2 Advanced Organic for 3<sup>rd</sup> year placements students have no access to notes.

#### 7. Any other business

No other business reported.

#### 8. Summary of Action Points

New:		
1	Access to Blackboard material for CHEM20711 lecture block 1	Karen Charters
2	Access to lecture material for PASS leaders to be investigated	Karen Charters/Abigail Webb
3	Comments regarding M1 and S1 labs to be passed on to lab organisers	Karen Charters
4	Year 3 students to discuss with Simone Wilkes (employability intern) what would be helpful for careers input	Year 3 reps