

**Selected Actions Taken from of the School of Physics & Astronomy Student Staff Council meeting
Friday 12 April 2019**

Minutes and Matters Arising

Congratulations to Amy Gallacher for being elected as the next School President. The official handover is in July.

BDS asked SSC student members to fill out survey forms for feedback on assessment matters, lecture capture and the possibility of meeting to discuss these matters further.

Useful information was provided on the survey forms, thanks. Six student members met with Bruce in pairs to discuss this matter. The different pairs seemed to have contrasting views on the matter. This semester one lecture course is engaging in lecture capture.

There were many applications for SSC Vacation Awards and 20 small awards of £500 were made. There were no applications eligible for the overseas research major award, so it was decided to make 2 awards for the new Hong Kong University major award.

Class reps have discussed the results of the mid semester survey with staff.

An "actions taken after the last meeting" document has been provided.

Year Reports

Year 1

Physics – survey feedback has been discussed with ADF and NVK. Some changes have been already implemented; students are pleased that the visualiser is being used in lectures rather than the whiteboard. Students feel that this semester is less demanding than semester 1 with more time to consolidate their learning. They are enjoying working on the Group Discovery Projects. Students say they like the idea of lecture capture but do not want to compromise use of clickers and other interactions. Students are more relaxed about their lab books and have a better idea what they should look like. They feel that the timetabling of lectures has worked well with topics running in parallel.

Astro – there was an anonymous suggestion from a student that AS1002 should be advertised more widely as they were enjoying it so much. There are a lot of non Astro/Physics members of AstroSoc and AS1002 could be promoted to them in semester 1 as an option for taking in semester 2.

Year 2

Physics – there were positive responses from the mid semester surveys. Several students indicated that they would like lecture capture. There have not been requests for use of visualiser rather than whiteboard. Students have requested that lab scripts are available in a type font approved for dyslexia. CFR is happy to make any such changes with guidance on what is required. PASC is looking at accessibility issues for students with autism or dyslexia in conjunction with the Disabilities coordinator.

Astro – survey responses were positive. Students are finding the second part of the course more challenging. Class rep has discussed the tutorial work imbalance with CC and a solution has been found. Students are happy in labs. They have a class test on Monday.

Junior Honours

Astro – the class was surveyed after feedback for each [Comp Astro] exercise. They are enjoying working collaboratively. Students have asked for clearer instructions on formatting as they have been losing marks for this. To discuss with PWO.

PWO noted the importance of formatting to the readability of programs. Students were advised on how do to formatting successfully.

Experimental – enjoying labs, generally positive feedback, workload varies across individual experiments, but this balances out over the semester. The Burn conference weekend took time out for working on lab books but those with a Monday hand in had an extension of one day.

Theory – students are feeling stressed and exhausted and lecture attendance is low. They are not sure why they are struggling and have talked to IAB. Students found the QM2 and EM class tests quite hard, although no complaints about L&HD. Some students have given up as they are experiencing blow after blow of class test disappointments and are finding it hard to come back. Students mentioned in the mid semester survey that there was not enough support for mental health issues. It was suggested that we might ask someone from student services to be available in the School to talk to students. Students feel they really need someone to motivate them. The inter-year student meeting is coming up which is a good opportunity for this.

The inter-year meeting happened, and I hope was helpful.

JH is a hard year with lots of core modules. The School has tried to improve things to reduce stress and provide support. Students are encouraged to work together and promote good study habits and peer support, particularly SH students advising JH students. Self-study groups where students can bounce ideas off each other are important for learning. IAB encouraged this year's JH students to interact more with the incoming JH cohort when they are in SH.

A mentoring scheme has been set up in collaboration with CAPOD for level 5 students to mentor (not tutor) JH students in 2019-20 where both sides wish this to happen.

Joint Honours – the maths projects will be chosen by the end of week 10 and joint honours students would like to be able to see what physics projects will be available to help them decide. The physics project poster session is next Tuesday and this will give a good indication of what areas of research projects will be available in.

Senior Honours

Astro – the non-assessed class test for Gravitational & Accretion went well, Stars 2 student organised study sessions are going well, and Fluids is also going well.

Experimental – fine

Theory – fine. Not so keen on tablet use in QM, would prefer whiteboard.

Fifth year

Astro/Experimental/Theory – students have done their own survey by email for which there was a low response, which may indicate that all is going well. The comments were mostly positive. There was some

frustration with project research, but this is to be expected. There was no indication that any projects had been affected by the fire in BMS. Students feel that writing and submitting peer group minutes is an unnecessary chore, but this is a useful way for project coordinators to keep track of progress and flag up any issues. Students would like more guidance for the project posters. PDK explained that examples are not available as we do not want them to become templates for posters. There are plenty research posters on display around the School which can give an indication of what is expected and students are encourage to be creative.

PGT/PGR – there are currently no reps