

Physics & Astronomy Student-Staff Council Meeting
Thursday 10 November 2022– 1pm, Staff Common Room

Present: Rita Tojeiro, Paul Cruickshank, Graham Smith, Murray Purkis, Euan Martin, Sham Ahmed, Ian Bonnell, Moira Jardine, Charlotte Fries, Carol Ballinger, Marisa Samuel, Liam King, Francesca Lavelle, Anna Conti, Vasileios Kalaitzidis, Katie Kyles, Emily Frank, Nela Sedlackova, Lachlan Dufort Kennett, Charlotte Thackeray, Laura Uronen, Joseph Brennan, Oscar Cray, Loic de Saint Do, Chico Paulics, Lukas Rossmanith, Hannah Russell, Janet Lovett, Vivienne Wild, Yiu Fung Chiu, Ben Houston, Bhani Kaur, Alfie Russell, Chris Hooley, Lucy Hadfield, Graham Turnbull, Cameron Rae, Jonathan Keeling, Linda Cousins

Apologies: Phil King, Vicki Cormie, Tomas Almeida, Stephanie Cho

1. Welcome

The meeting was chaired by the Arts and Divinity Faculty President.

2. Year Group Reports

1st Year Reports

Physics – students are happy with PH1011 and are finding Properties of Matter easier to understand. Feedback on tutorials was positive, and lab feedback was mixed but it was not clear what the issues were so the class rep will try to find out and let the lab coordinator know.

Astro – students are finding lectures interesting.

Gateway – students would like recordings to be available for PH1502. The sessions are interactive and the module coordinator is concerned that recording would discourage participation, so will consider other ways to make the material available to students.

2nd Year Reports

The responses from the MSS are still being processed. The class test average mark was low and the class rep has discussed this with the module coordinator.

3rd Year Reports

Experimental and Astro students are fine. Theory students are enjoying lectures but feedback about tutorials was mixed. In PH3014 students feel unprepared for talks and essays, and would like more examples on moodle. They have found some of the deadlines confusing, but it was noted that all deadlines are in the module handbook.

4th Year Reports

Students are enjoying PH4041 but finding the workload high. In PH4039 students found the class test very challenging, and they would like more tutorial questions. The content for PH4032 is challenging but interesting, and the tutorial questions are helpful. PH4105 labs are good but some equipment was broken for the low temperature sub module, and students thought the technical report was unnecessary and increased workload. This was only introduced this year and the module coordinator will look at possible revisions. Students are enjoying AS4025, but have some concerns about writing reports as they feel they have not had enough practice in previous modules, and would like detailed feedback on reports. AS4011 is fast paced. PH4036 is good.

5th Year Reports

Students are struggling with deadlines for PH5023 and AS5001. These module are both 100% continuous assessment and students often put too much effort into work for submission. Submission deadlines were all available at the start of the semester. When available, the feedback from the MSS will be sent to module coordinators, year coordinators, and DoT.

Joint Honours Rep Report

There were no issues relating to joint degree programmes.

PGT reports

Astrophysics – students would like more study space in the building, particularly for students who don't live in halls of residence. There was concern that students were expected to have prior knowledge of Fortran, and would like more resources to help.

Photonics – it would be useful if there was somewhere to store bags in the building. Some lockers may be available and students should contact the Building Manager.

PGR Reports

An entrepreneur talk for PGR students is planned. The DoPGR suggested that PGR matters should be separated from SSC to allow more focussed discussion relevant to PGR students. This would also be useful for community building, and is the practice in some other Schools.

3. EDI Report

A sheet entitled "Are you OK?" is being produced by the EDI committee for P&A students containing useful contacts for a variety of concerns from mental health to climate anxiety, and will be available soon. The EDI rep will work with the Director of EDI to develop the content of the wellbeing noticeboard in the group study area.

4. Society Reports

PhySoc - Recent events have included a board games night, LaTeX workshop, internship event, and a wine & cheese event; a Christmas dinner is planned, and the CERN trip is being organised.

AstroSoc - Recent talks and stargazing events have been well attended.

EASy - The focus has shifted to competitions, also providing careers resources.

5. AOCB

The Chair thanked reps on behalf of the Students' Association for working in difficult circumstance this semester. It is hoped that matters will be settled by next week.