

**Physics & Astronomy Student Staff Council Meeting**  
**Thursday 9 November 2023, 1 pm, Staff Common Room**

**Present:** Paul Cruickshank, Lucy Hadfield, Cameron Rae, Sebastian Schulz, Aleks Scholz, Moira Jardine, Bruce Sinclair, Rory Brown, Hugo Decitre, Ava Kelly, Anna Conti, Nikko Juengsophonvitavas, Callum Murison, Lewis Thompson, Elias Malisi, Theo Cuthbertson, Sam Morrison, Graham Smith, Shiju Prasad, Angela Gupta, Varvara Konovalova, Katie Stewart, Lucy Kappai, Valerie Bui, Aaron Wafflart, Holly Seo, Cameron McDonald, Tom Rosas, Luke Campbell, Murry Purkis, Natalia Korolkova, Janet Lovett, Ian Bonnell, Graham Turnbull, Lachlan Dufort-Kennett, Lilla Barta, Ozde Ozkasap, Mateo Guzman Subiria, Phil King

**Apologies:** Vicki Cormi

**1. Welcome from the School President**

There have been several successful events this semester including, module choices session, welcome to IOP, study abroad talk, and international pot luck day. Events are planned for week 11, Pride in STEM, including movie night, panel discussion and quiz.

**2. Year Group Reports**

**Photonics CDT** – students are happy with their modules, but feel that they are fast paced, the workload is heavy for credits, and some material is irrelevant to PhD.

**MSc Astro** – students are finding PH5011 fast paced and they are unsure of some equations, the lab part of AS5521 is the same as AS4025 but is worth fewer credits, students would like more detailed feedback on their comparative essay for AS5500. The class rep will contact the AS5500 module coordinator.

**5<sup>th</sup> Year**

**Astro** – students are generally happy, but are spending a lot of time on coursework. They would like more worked examples in class, there are some typos in notes, and the class rep has sent feedback to the module coordinator. Students have to use Fortran for the AS4011 coding assignment but some have little experience and would like more support.

**Experimental** – students are generally happy, although the response to the class rep's form was low. Students have reported that resources could be better organised, and the lecture pace can be fast and dense, making it hard to digest the material. Students find lecture recordings useful as they can pause them, but they should also attend the live lectures, where they have the opportunity to ask questions.

**Theory** – students are finding PH5004 the hardest and highest workload of all modules, but they appreciate the opportunities to ask questions in lectures and the module coordinator is available; students would like more structure for tutorial question in PH5012, students are finding the content in PH5011 quite difficult and would like more opportunities to ask questions in lectures. The class rep will feedback to module coordinators.

**4<sup>th</sup> Year**

**Astro** – students are happy with lecture pace, extra demonstrators in lab sessions in AS4025 has been addressed, for PH4036 and AS4011 students would like more clarity on what is required for exams, and some of the lecture recordings for AS4011 were not capturing the whiteboard. The class rep will feedback to module coordinators.

**Experimental** – students are happy in general, for PH4039 they would like more tutorial/Q&A sessions before final exam, in PH4105 there was an inconsistent amount of feedback between lab cycles, which has been discussed with the module coordinator, the lab book guidance from the class rep and module coordinator has been helpful.

**Theory** – students are enjoying PH4041 lectures and particularly like the 5 minute break in lectures to refocus, PH4032 lectures are challenging to follow and fast paced. The class rep has discussed with the module coordinator.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

**Astro** – student feedback for AS4010 is more positive since ILW and previous topics have been reviewed, PH3080 feedback was mixed with a higher workload reported for students with less programming experience.

**Experimental** – students would like more exam style questions for PH3081.

**Theory** – PH3061 students are happy and finding the material interesting and engaging, the class test is in week 9 which some students felt was quite late. Students are enjoying PH3014 but feel there is a high workload for the number of credits, and guest speakers should be more diverse.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Year**

**Astro** – student feedback was positive, some students are unsure what they need to know for the exam.

**Physics** – students are generally happy, labs are good, there are no issues with the oscillations and mechanics topics, but some are finding the thermal physics topic harder to follow and lecture notes were not available until week 6. The class test was challenging for some students. The class rep has discussed feedback with the module coordinator.

**Direct entry** – students reported low satisfaction for labs, finding the script hard to follow. This will be discussed with the lab coordinator.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Year**

**Astro** – students are happy.

**Physics** – positive feedback from students.

**Gateway** – students are happy.

**Joint Honours** – the issues raised at the last meeting have all been addressed, and more information will be added to Honours handbook.

## **3. School Roles Reports**

**EDI rep** – a non-binary/transgender social has been organised for 17 November with snacks and boardgames, Pride in STEM week will be celebrated in week 11 with flags in the School, a movie night, panel discussion and reception with other science Schools, and a pub quiz.

**Sustainability** – the rep has been working on a report on the School's carbon emissions, planning talks for Green Week in January, and careers events focussed on sustainability. There has been some change in attitude with use of the front doors and more students are using manual doors.

**Disability and Academic Support** – workshop with School of Maths.

**Careers and Employability** – students would like more information on internships and careers events. The Rep will make posters with information on current research in the School and internship opportunities, and would like to organise a physics careers talk and develop a School employability strategy. The School President advertises careers events in their messaging and the Careers Centre have a lot of resources.

### **Physics Base**

Student numbers attending Physics Base were quite low at start of the semester, but students who attended found it very useful. Class reps should encourage attendance (Wednesdays 2-3 pm and Fridays 1-2 pm, in room 230).

## **4. Society reports**

**AstroSoc** – recent events include PhD panel event, collaborations with EASy and Nightline, STEM week events planned, there have been no clear nights for observations but good attendance nonetheless, conference organisation is on track. AstroSoc has voiced concerns to the Sports Centre about the new running track.

**PhySoc**- recent events include a visit of therapy dogs, board games, CERN trip organisation, internship talk, Latex workshop, and Wine and Cheese event and Christmas dinner are planned.

**EASy** – recent talk from Dr Dav Macfarlane about volcano monitoring radar was successful, the society hope to participate in some smaller competitions.

## **5. AOCB**

There was no other business.