

**School of Biological and Chemical Sciences**

**Postgraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee**

**24 February 2021**

**Draft minutes**

**Staff members present:**

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| Prof Andrew Leitch | Deputy Director (PGT Programmes) and SSLC Chair |
| Natalie Holland | Postgraduate Administrator (SSLC Secretary) |

**Student members present:**

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| Anjumanara Areefa | Course Rep - MSc Chemical Research |
| Joeeta Bagchi | Course Rep - MSc Chemical Research |
| Sophie Dennis | Course Rep - MSc Ecology and Evolutionary Biology |
| Zoe Sturgess | Course Rep - MSc Ecology and Evolutionary Biology |

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| **Part 1 – Preliminary Items** | |
| **1(a)** | **Welcome and introduction for new members** |
| 2020.016 | The Representatives were welcomed to the meeting. |
| **1(b)** | **Apologies for Absence** |
| 2020.017 | None. |
| **1(c)** | **Minutes of the previous meeting and actions taken** |
| 2020.018 | The minutes were approved. There were the following matters arising. |
|  | **2020:008 It was agreed that the importance of sharing lecture notes in advance to students with SpLDs was to be fed back to all MOs.**  An email had been sent to all Module Leads and Student Reps confirmed there had been no further feedback from students about this. |
|  | **2020:010 Representatives offered to circulate a questionnaire to all students to gather feedback on their views on what the schedule should include.**  This was complete. A potential return to Face-to-Face activities on campus was discussed later in the meeting. |
|  | **2020:013 NH was to update the QM+ page with the external examiner reports for the MSc Chemical Research programme.**  It was reported that this was now complete. |
| **1(d)** | **Nomination of Co-Chair** |
| 2020.019 | Zoe Sturgess (ZS) was appointed as Co-Chair. It was confirmed that in the next meeting the Part 1 section of the agenda would be Chaired by ARL and Part 2 would be Chaired by ZS. |
| **Part 2 – Student feedback, Programme Delivery and other matters** | |
| **2(a)** | **Field Trips (an update)** |
| 2020.020 | It was confirmed that a decision about field trips will be made in April and communicated to students after the Easter break. Alternative options such as field trips in the UK were being considered. The prospect of international field trips was looking increasingly unlikely but if government guidance allows then the option to go in August is still a possibility.  A question was raised about the module diet changes in relation to the lack of field trips for this cohort, specifically in regards to the module which had a domestic field trip to Dorset last year. It was confirmed that the content of each module for this year was adjusted to remove field trip elements specifically because of the pandemic. The only field trip options that remained were the standalone 15 credit modules with international field trips as at the time of planning the hope was that by August 2021 travel restrictions would have been lifted.  The issue of fee adjustments was also raised in light of reduced field trips for this cohort, but it was also confirmed that adequate content had been put in place of those UK field trips and so fee adjustments were not appropriate in this instance. However, a separate discussion will take place regarding fee adjustments if the 15-credit international field trip modules are cancelled. |
| **Action:** | Students to be contacted after the Easter break with an update about field trips. |
| **2(b)** | **Module Evaluations** |
| 2020.021 | The response rates to the Semester A module evaluations were shared with the Student Reps. It was reported that the response rates were low. It was unrealistic to take meaningful feedback as the views expressed could be a misrepresentation of the whole student body. The importance of students completing the evaluations was re-emphasised. |
| **Action:** | Student Reps to remind students of the importance of completing module evaluations**.** |
| **2(c)** | **Research Projects** |
| 2020.022 | Students were reminded that the research project was the most important part of their degree. This was illustrated by the emphasis placed on research projects in the process of applying for PhD training routes such as NERC and LIDO.  It was reported that for some students there was confusion about what to include in the literature review assignment. They appreciated the briefing session in January but felt the timing of this was too late. A suggestion was made to have a similar session towards the end of Semester A when this assignment is scheduled next year. It was confirmed there would be a different structure in place next year with a 15 credit standalone literature review module and separate 90 credit research project. The impact of this change would not affect current part-time students. Their module diet would remain with 105 credits for the research project.  Students were also reminded that they should be having regular meetings with their supervisors. If this was not happening or they had any concerns with how the project is going then they are to raise this initially with their Project Supervisor and if they are not happy with this response their Programme Director and if this was still not resolved then PGT Programme Director (ARL).  It was reported that students on the MSc Chemical Research programme were happy with how things were going in terms of the adaptations that had been made to enable them to work in the lab. They also noted that this had possibly been made easier as they were such a small cohort of students. |
| **2(d)** | **Student Feedback** |
| 2020.023 | Representatives were asked for their general feedback and for their views on the possibility of there being Face-to-Face activities on campus. It was confirmed that at this was stage there was no certainty that this would be possible. The provisional schedule that included a series of workshops on topics such as Paper Writing, Coding, Statistics advice sessions, Careers Talk was re-considered. ARL reported that he was awaiting further updates on this from Senior Executive and would know more after 8th March |
| **Action:** | Students to be contacted with an update regarding the possibility of Face-to-Face activities by the end of March. |
| **Part 3 – Any Other Business** | |
| 2020.025 | There was no further business. |
| **Part 4 – Date of the next meeting** | |
| 2020.025 | TBC |

**Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee**

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| **Minute** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Timescale** | **Action status** | **Issue resolved?** |
| 2020.021 | Students to be contacted after the Easter break with an update about field trips. | ARL |  |  |  |
| 2020.022 | Student Reps to remind students of the importance of completing module evaluations**.** | Student Reps |  |  |  |
| 2020.024 | Students to be contacted with an update regarding the possibility of Face-to-Face activities by the end of March. | ARL |  |  |  |
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