

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD: DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

PHYSICS JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

HT23-2: 13:00 on Wednesday, Wk 2 TT23
Robert Hooke Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE

• Those Present

- Gareth Hopkins (GH) - Chair, 2nd Year Rep
- Helena Bhattacharya (HB) - Secretary, 1st Year Rep
- Jack Barker (JaB) - Webmaster
- Naiqi Zheng (NZ) - 1st Year Rep
- Woon Sing Lau (WSL) - 3rd Year Rep
- Hans Kraus (HK) - Head of Teaching
- Jenny Barnes (JB) - Teaching Laboratories Manager
- Carrie Leonard-McIntyre (CL-M) - Assistant Head of Teaching
- Malcolm John (MJ) - Academic Committee
- Jamie-Anne Davey (J-AD) - 1st Year Rep

• Apologies From

- Wendy (Yixuan) Dang (WD) - PhysPhil Rep, 3rd Year Rep
- Hannah Glanville (HG) - Teaching Faculty Administration Officer
- Om Gupta (OG) - 2nd Year Rep
- Thomas Ford (TF) - 2nd Year Rep
- Bradley Westwood (BW) - 3rd Year Rep
- Suat Baris Tuncay (SBT) - 4th year Rep, MMathPhys Rep
- Uri Sharell (US) - 4th Year Rep, MMathPhys Rep
- Andrew Okukura (AO) - 4th year Rep, EDI Rep

MINUTES

1. Minutes of last meeting (Wednesday, Wk 2 HT23) (5)
 - (a) No matters arising

2. Committee business (20)

(a) **Chair**

- i. Update on study spaces survey
 - GH started the meeting by going through the main takeaways from a survey he sent out recently regarding student views on study spaces.
 - GH said that there was overall a lot of enthusiasm for study spaces for collaborative work and problem solving with a particular emphasis on being able to use whiteboards or blackboards for workings. GH also noted that 3/4 of respondents did not know where the Clarendon Cafe was, so had not considered it as a location for group work.
 - HK noted that a lot more in depth research and investigation would be needed before study spaces could be established - in particular how much space would be need, evidence of why existing spaces are insufficient and what restrictions might rule out certain potential locations, such as potential fire hazards of large groups congregating.
 - GH offered to send out a more detailed breakdown of the finding of the survey.
 - HK suggested that GH should put together a good document outlining more specifically what students were looking forward and HK could then help pass up the proposal.
- ii. Update on status of the push for past paper solutions
 - GH said that there was initially a slow response to the call for past paper solutions as a lot of people have thrown completed papers from previous years. However, as people have started revising this year more past paper solutions have been submitted.
 - JaB asked about how the papers would be shared with students, pointing out that uploading solutions to the website would take time, so probably would not be possible before the Summer vacation.
 - HK also pointed out that it is important that solutions are only visible to students and HB suggested making them only accessible on the Oxford network might achieve this.
 - JaB said that he would definitely look into how this could practically be done.
 - HK noted that student collated solutions to several past papers is a much more positive learning experience than if the department supplied solutions to papers.
 - HB then asked whether any progress had been made on the department release of certain years of past paper solution sets.
 - CL-M said that the solutions were a work in progress and the years to release have been chosen, but it has been very busy in the Teaching Office lately.
 - CL-M said they were putting a lot of effort into making sure answers are as complete and detailed as possible, so students can get the most benefit from them.

(b) **Secretary**

No business

- (c) **Webmaster**
No business
3. Year reps' business (15)
- (a) **First Year**
- i. Unlocking of 2022 Short option past paper
- HB mentioned that several students had asked about whether the June 2022 Short option paper (the most recent) would be released ahead of the sign-up deadline for the exams.
 - CL-M thanked HB for flagging this and said it was just a technical issue and the paper will be published on Canvas.
- (b) **Second Year** *No business*
- (c) **Third Year**
- i. Confirmation on the title of the Short Option S25
- WSL said several students had been asking whether the name of S25 was Climate Physics or the Physics of Climate Change, as students were keen to know what would appear on their exam transcripts.
 - CL-M said that she would check with the lecturer, but the name would depend on what had already been submitted and when students entered for the exam online the name would match what will appear on the transcripts.
- (d) **Fourth Year** *No business*
4. **PhysPhil business** (5)
- (a) Enquiry about weight of A2P and part B modules
- Although WD was absent, CL-M said that examination convention have been published and would remain in place with no movement of regulation.
 - GH asked what would allow this to change in the future and CL-M replied that students needed to prove why the regulations should change.
5. **MMathPhys business** (5) *No business*
6. **Practical Course business** (5)
- (a) Printing in the practical course labs
- WSL asked JB whether there was any possibility of students connecting their laptops directly to printers rather than logging onto the computers in the labs.
 - JB said that instructions are written on printers, but it is very complicated and the necessary software takes 20 minutes to download and does not often work.
 - JB also said that it would be useful if students could let her know of difficulties they experience so the issue can be taken up with IT.
7. **Any other business** (5)

(a) Coding

- HK asked PJCC members a few questions and there was a short discussion about how to develop computing and coding in the physics course.

(b) Respect of conventional working hours

- CL-M asked that students respect the working hours of the Teaching Faculty when sending emails - in particular not sending questions late in the evenings or at weekends.
- HK agreed with CL-M adding that it is good practice for respecting peoples' personal lives in all professional settings, pointing out that now in academic research emails are not sent out at weekends.
- HK suggested that students should set timers on emails written outside working hours, so they send at appropriate times.

(c) Appropriate language in surveys

- CL-M pointed out that the language used by students in the additional comments section of surveys sent out by the Teaching Faculty was completely unacceptable in some cases.
- CL-M added that students should express their point of view however they are feeling in a respectful way with clean language.

(d) Examination results

- CL-M stated that results would be published by mid-August this year and asked the PJCC to communicate this, so that students do not send emails to CL-M and JB earlier over the Summer.
- CL-M also pointed out that calling the department should not be done at all, as examination results cannot be given out over the phone.
- HB noted that the PJCC should use a better method for communicating important information like this rather than just word-of-mouth.
- CL-M said that in the case of degree-related information rather than advertising, the department email could be used to inform students if the PJCC wrote an email to send.