# College Forum Meeting Minutes

## ***College of Physical Sciences and Engineering Students***

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| **Date:  31/1/2023** | | **Time:  3:30pm** | | **Location: Teams** |
| Chair: | Angie Flores Acuña | | | |
| Minutes: | Rhys Jones | | | |
| **Apologies:** | | | | |
| Staff: | | | Student reps: | |
|  | | | * Natalia Diaz Diaz (ARCHI) * Jana Jhaveri (COMSC) | |
| **In Attendance:** | | | | |
| Staff: | | | Student reps: | |
| * Angie Flores Acuña (VP Postgraduate) * Michaela Hennessy (Representation and Policy Coordinator) * Andrew Roberts (PSE Undergraduate Dean) * Julie Gwilliam (PSE Postgraduate Dean) * Paul Jones (IT Services) * Kath Evans (Education Manager) * Annabel Hurst (Catering Services) * Ella Ferris (Student Advice) * Llinos Carpenter (PSE Business Partner) * Fran Simpson (Estates Business Partner) | | | * Alex Meers (MATHS) * Alexander Holton (CHEMY) * Charlotte Hogg (EARTH) * Elena Jones (EARTH) * Fatima Khan (ENGIN) * Fin Headley (PHYSX) * Ibrahim Hindal (ENGIN) * Kirsty Lerchundi Mboengho (ARCHI) * Sophie Slater (ARCHI) | |
| **Update on Actions from the Previous Panel:** | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |

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| **Rep Feedback: Maths** |
| 1. Alex Meers (AM) provided some updates from previous meeting: 2. ABACWS bookable rooms and opening hours are being looked into by the Head of School and Building Committee. They seem to be open to change, not quite to 24hr access, but to better than present. 3. They have had some minor IT building logistical issues that have been sorted reasonably by Matthew Pugh. 4. We’ve had a few complaints about the new structure of Learning Central, a new module has been moved over to a different system and nobody likes it.  * Alexander Holton (AH) added support for AMs point, he stated how he would be hesitant to say that the new interface problem is a problem unique to Mathematics as it is also a fairly common complaint among Chemistry students too. * Angie Flores Acuña (AFA) extended the question to other student representatives on the call, Fin Headly (FH) suggested how Physics have received some input about it but the main feedback that they have is the need for clear communication about how it has changed. There hasn’t been much communication about how things have changed but apart for that its okay. * AFA asked AM and AH is the new system not user friendly, or would they want more information on how it has changed? * AM replied by saying how it is less-friendly to use than it was previously, and proceeds to talk about an example of this.  1. Regarding Open Book Exams and Reading Week, AM is looking at getting that raised in the Board of Studies. AM and AFA have emailed DLT. 2. AM raised new issues: 3. Regarding the advanced availability of information on modules, so students know what they are getting into with chosen modules. It would save students time if they had access to lecture notes or feedback beforehand. 4. There is a year 3 teaching Mathematics module only available to BSc students and not integrated masters students, AM asked for clarity on that. |
| **Action/Key Decision: When: ASAP Who: Andy Roberts, Alex Meers, Julie Gwilym, Paul (IT),** |
| 1. iii.  * AR responded to the issue raised regarding Learning Central, he stated how most of the feedback regarding the new interface has been positive and AM was the first bit of negative feedback he’d received regarding it. AR suggested it would be worth AM going into Learning Central to directly provide feedback to the learning technology team. AM responded by saying how the main problem with the new interface is that it is harder to actually find learning material for the lectures, to which AR responded by saying it should be easier. AR suggested AM have a chat with Matthew, and if there’s still an issue they can take it further. * Julie Gwilym responds by referring to the user experience, Julie states how the reps should talk to the LTA members who are leading on this program to provide valuable feedback to the project as it prepares to be rolled out more widely. * Paul (it) supported this by explaining the role of the LTA. * AR suggested inviting Tony Lancaster (LTA) to a future meeting to discuss this, and AR will put AH and AM in touch with Tony to discuss their experiences. The module leaders may require additional support as the new system is structured differently, its supposed to guide you through your learning stage by stage and will not work so well if its just used as a repository. Further action could be to have LTA discuss the new system with lecturers.   2ii. Andy Roberts (AR) responded to the point of the module saying AM should pick it up with the school office, he suggested that there may be a reason for it or it may be an administrative mistake. |
| **Rep Feedback: ARCHI** |
| Kirsty Lerchundi brought up two issues:   1. Receiving all the things that are advertised to students on their course such as trips and projects that are being cancelled due to COVID. KL stated how even though many of the problems/restrictions of COVID are not being faced anymore but the students are still not getting all that was advertised to them. For example, the course advertises a week-long trip to a European destination but this years second years received the same trip to London as they did in 1st year which is not adding to their value. 2. KL also stated that the organization of the course has been last minute, for example they were only given specific details of the buildings they should visit on the trip a week in advance which impeded on their ability to fully prepare. Further, the tip was only funded with a bursary of £50. KL concluded by stating how the feedback refers to not receiving what they are promised and a lack of organization. 3. KL further refers to the vertical studios which was cancelled due to COVID-19. KL explains how students haven’t been able to do this even though it was a big excitement to them as they applied. 4. The other point KL addresses refers to the size of year groups and available space, this is mostly relevant to 1st and 2nd years. Year groups are about 200 students however in first year the studios can only house 100 students. Having studio space is very important but this lack of space is a health and safety issue, especially in 2nd year when there’s a lot of group work. KL explains how the lack of space is also obvious in lecture rooms. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Andy Roberts When: Next Wednesday/ASAP** |
| 1. Andy referred to how trips are starting to go back to overseas, but highlights the question of sustainability with overseas trips.  * Andy states how the student staff panel is next Wednesday and encourages how KL should raise it there. * KL responded by stating how they couldn’t raise the issue of trips in staff student panels before because they only heard about it 2 weeks ago, this further questions the organization of the course and shows how it should be improved. KL states how students appreciate really clear briefs regarding terms and assessments. They notice that specific modules leave out a lot of information and they notice this at the end of modules. * Andy responded by highlighting the year meetings Architecture do, and states how those are great opportunities to flag these things.  1. Regarding size and available space, Andy said how the course and uni is very popular but he doesn’t have any solutions. He encourages KL to flag it next week and states how he will relay it to the head of college and head of education to raise it at a higher level. |
| **Rep Feedback: COMSC** |
| 1. Students felt that across some modules coursework was given with incorrect or high questions that covered topics that had not been taught. 2. There were 3 deadlines back to back post holidays that proved stressful to students, feedback was delayed by lecturers without adequate reasoning. Some modules had exams set for before students had received feedback on their coursework of that module, which added to the stress of students who didn’t know how they had done.      1. Students felt that prerecorded lectures contain outdated material and wrong information. Regards to in person classes. Lecturers often solely read from the slides shared before the lecture, rather than really teach the content. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Andy Roberts When: ASAP** |
| 1. AR asked MH to email over the feedback so AR can pick it up with the DLT in COMSC. 2. FH added on to the lateness of feedback. FH referred to a module he completed through COMSC that had an assignment due 24th Nov, feedback was due 9th of Jan and the second assignment due 13th Jan. FH did not receive feedback on the 1st assessment till after the 13th of Jan. FH added that this as unnecessarily stressful. 3. AR asked FH to share the module code. |
| **Rep Feedback: CHEMY** |
| 1. AH referred to the positive reaction that students have had towards the 2 common rooms in Chemistry. He states how the spaces is good but the amenities could improve. Added kettles, microwaves would improve the adoption of the space. 2. AH refers to how some lectures are releasing slides before lectures but some aren’t. AH raised this at an SSP and was told told that sometimes the slides change and they are not obligated to release them. AH explains how some slides are reused from previous years, the material is often there. AH suggests an agreement that the slides are released pre-lecture, but students are aware that those slides may change between them being released and the lecture, after they’ll be updated. That is being done by some lecturers, and has been received well. 3. AH would like to see more social activities between physical sciences but admits he should discuss that somewhere else. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Fran, Annabelle, Julie Gwilym When: ASAP** |
| 1. Annabelle explains how microwaves and hot taps installed in other parts of Uni were organised by catering and estates – Fran and Annabelle will discuss to see what they can do.   Annabelle explains how there is access to microwaves and hot taps in the Chem building.  AH responds by stating how the UG common room has these, however the PG room does not. As a result, most people flock to the UG space which impedes on the ability of everyone to use them.   1. Julie Gwilym states how AH described a helpful way of enabling slides to be released prior to lectures in all situations as that is always good practice, its not an obligation but is good practice. |
| **Rep Feedback: EARTH** |
| Charlotte stated how there are no points to raise as their issues were resolved at the SSP meeting.  Elena agreed. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Fran, Annabelle, Julie Gwilym When: ASAP** |
| **N/A** |
| **Rep Feedback: ENGIN** |
| Ibrahim Handal explains how previous issues have still not been resolved, specifically the:   1. Toilets in the Queens Buildings having an odour. 2. The need for clarification on the plans for study rooms and the Queens buildings with COMSC moving. |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Fran, Andy Roberts When: ASAP** |
| 1. Fran stated how she is aware of the toilets in Queens, an answer is not ready but they are aware of it. Fran offered to create an open dialogue with the students regarding the situation, to keep them in the loop. Fran will raise the topic with the school.  * Andy Roberts clarified how action has yet to be taken as Fran has only recently begun her role. |
| **Rep Feedback: PHYSX** |
| Ben echoed what ENGIN said about the Queens toilets.   1. 4th year students recently had a trip to Mid-Wales which raised concerns about the organisation of the trip. Numerous students finished exams on the Wednesday, and were expected to be ready to leave at 9am on Thursday. Staff are aware of this, as it has been raised in previous years. This takes away any downtime for the students after exams, as straight after the trip semester 2 starts. Another student had to organise their own travel, due to them having an exam on the day of travel. 2. There’s a desire for more PG socials. 3. 3rd year students were limited by a wordcount during their final project that included references. That was raised last year but the student doesn’t remember if it was resolved.   Another PHYSX rep added the following comments.   1. EXAM dates should be posted earlier, especially important for international students that need to plan on flying home. 2. Students are having mixed feelings regarding the 18 days of strikes planned. Students often commute in, which is a wasted journey if their class if cancelled due to strikes but they are only able to be told on the day. Some students are considering asking for refunds or are withholding tuition payments for this semester. The student asked how is the lecturer pay that is withheld through strikes used to help students, as it is said to be done on the website? |
| **Action/Key Decision: Who: Andy Roberts, Julie Gwilym, When: ASAP** |
| 1. AR states how they can raise the trip with Richard, but asks if the trip does not occur then, when is the best time? EXAMS period is a logistical challenge. 2. Andy remembers the problem but does not remember the outcome. The school has strict page limits, and marks are allocated by adherence to template. The school agreed to explain the process to students better, but this has not occurred.  * **Ben** suggested that the trip could be reorganized if a reading week was implemented, similar to Swansea and Aberystwyth Uni.  1. N/A 2. Andy referred to the email from Claire Morgan and the uni complaints procedure. AR asked to not withhold fees as the danger exists of being thrown out of the uni.  * Julie doesn’t know where the money goes, but is happy to ask that question as it is a reasonable one. * AFA offered the SU perspective, there will be comms coming out and they are also interested in where the salary goes. |
| **Staff Updates:** |
| **Department/Service name: DEANs**   * Can reps remind schools to email minutes of Staff Student Panel meetings to the SU. * AR is going to tell the schools. * Julie Recommended that SV check who they are circulating those reminders of the need to do minutes to. * Michaela stated how they have sent it via SVEN, Emails and through Student Engagement Teams.   **Department/Service name: IT**   * Paul said he’s going to put his details in the chat, any issues contact helpdesk with as much information as possible.   **Department/Service name: Student Futures**   * Llinos Carpenter stated how they are based in the CSL and has linked in the chat how SF can help students. * Added the SF’s Whats On guide for spring to the chat and asked others to share.   **Department/Service name: Catering**   * Annabelle stated how affordable the food at the SU is. A sandwich and a cup of soup for £2.90. * Reminded of the 20% discount they have just launched on dinners. * Asked to follow on Instagram to be aware of competitions. * Spin to Win will be out again soon. * Supper club is a free meal once a month. Be visible for tickets. * Try the Too Good To Go App. * Be aware of the signs and the offers available.   **Department/Service name: SU**   * Ella simply reminded how they are here for students as always to help in anyway especially since industrial action is on. * AFA Stated how the Spring Election nominations close on Feb 6th and there’s time to stand. * MH spoke about the Student Leaders Conference this Saturday and encouraged students to attend by posting a link in the chat. * AFA stated how Speak Week 2 is coming up, exampled how SW has made changes in the past and MH gave a link to the SW focus groups. |
| **Any Other Business:** |
| Ben (Physics) stated how 4th years Physics have only been taught for 60% of their time at Uni (both online and in person due to COVID and Strikes. Ben asked how is this going to be quantified against their final grade and taken in account?  AR stated that the grades the student receives are benchmarked against certain qualities they meet, they are not adjusted because of ECs and a student has a grade based on ability. The mark they get only corresponds to the student’s work outputs. There is a complaints procedure if the students have worries but they cannot compensate through grades.  Ella added that if any student has worries about ECs, they are welcome to have a chat with the SU Student Advice about that and the appeals process together as that is at the end of year. |