

**Staff-Student Consultative Committee**  
**Minutes for Meeting No. 1 of 2019/2020**

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

**Time:** 2:00 p.m.

**Venue:** Zoom meeting

**Present:**

Dr. J. J. L. Lim (Chairman, Staff representative)

Dr. J.C.S. Pun (Staff representative)

Dr. Meng Su (Staff representative)

Dr. Y. J. Tu (Staff representative)

Dr. M. K. Yip (Staff representative)

Mr. Jason Chin Hin Wong (1<sup>st</sup> year representative)

Mr. Tsz Chun Ngan (2<sup>nd</sup> year representative)

Mr. Kai Hei Chan (3<sup>rd</sup> year representative)

Mr. Wong Hong Tsun Thomas (4<sup>th</sup> year representative)

Mr. Ziang Hu (Postgraduate student representative)

Mr. Zou Xiang (Physics society)

**Apology:**

Prof. S. J. Xu

**(1) Feedback from 1st year student representative**

*Concern:* Students requested access to more final exams papers and their solutions

*Deliberation:* The university guideline requires teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper to students, but do not require the solutions to the paper(s) to be provided.

*Action:* Students are encouraged to approach teachers directly for hints or solutions to questions in past final exam papers. The need for teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper has been brought to the attention of teachers.

*Concern:* As final exams over the past year have been conducted remotely, students are concerned that other students may cheat even though they need to train cameras on themselves throughout the exam. Students suggested that cameras should also be trained on their screens.

*Deliberation:* The use of multiple cameras, even if feasible, will not necessarily prevent cheating with students using other devices.

*Action:* Teachers have the ability to identify cheating if common solutions are simply copied off a

web page. For the next academic year, the SSCC recommended to the Department that exams be open book whenever possible to alleviate this concern, a recommendation that was widely adopted by teachers.

## **(2) Feedback from 2nd year student representative**

*Concern:* Students reported that the questions in the laboratory worksheet were not clear due to insufficient background information. The laboratory videos were not always coherent with the instructions in the laboratory manuals.

*Deliberation:* This critique should be seen in context of the need to conduct laboratories remotely due to the sudden onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and thus the need to quickly create laboratory videos.

*Action:* Students provide feedback on deficiencies in laboratory videos to their course instructors in real time. This recommendation is part of a broader instruction by the SSCC to student representatives and their peers for the past few years: provide real-time feedback to course instructors, or notify SSCC members about problems, while solutions can still be pursued.

*Concern:* Given reports of outside parties breaking in to Zoom sessions, students suggest instructors to impose password protection for ZOOM lectures.

*Action:* This well-known problem has since been addressed by Zoom.

*Concern:* Students reported that there was sometimes a timetable clash between mid-term examination and due date of assignments.

*Action:* Students should be proactive to communicate with the course coordinators on issues that need to be resolved in real time. This issue also has been brought to the attention of teachers, who have been encouraged to seek feedback from students about their overall course workloads.

*Feedback:* Students were asked how to improve interactions in Zoom lectures. Students reported that some were more willing to raise questions using the chat function during online lectures than to ask questions in face-to-face lectures.

*Concern:* Students reported that the guidelines of the proctoring exam were hard to follow, in particular the suggested distance between the candidate and the laptop webcam (i.e. ~65cm).

*Deliberation:* Do your best to meet the guidelines. There is avenue for explanations and appeals.

### **(3) Feedback from 3rd year student representative**

*Concern:* Students reported that the lab documents were not clear and the videos were hard to follow.

*Action:* Students should be more specific in providing feedback on the quality of videos and lab documents to their course instructors. (See common concern and suggested action from 2<sup>nd</sup> year representative.)

*Concern:* Students suggested that the department should keep using online submission for assignments and lab reports even when face-to-face teaching is resumed.

*Deliberation:* Assignments can be submitted, and feedback provided, through the Moodle platform.

*Action:* The SSCC has recommended to the department that all homeworks be submitted online whenever possible.

*Concern:* Students requested access to more final exams papers and their solutions

*Deliberation:* The university guideline requires teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper to students, but do not require the solutions to the paper(s) to be provided.

*Action:* Students are encouraged to approach teachers directly for hints or solutions to questions in past final exam papers. The need for teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper has been brought to the attention of teachers.

*Concern:* Students suggested that teachers set up (more) pop quizzes during live Zoom lectures, and provide Q&A sessions for students who choose not to attend live Zoom lectures but only view the recorded Zoom lectures.

*Deliberation:* Having pop quizzes, especially if graded, could invite more participation in live Zoom lectures. On the other hand, this will penalize students who choose to view recorded Zoom lectures rather than attend live Zoom lectures.

*Action:* Teachers consider providing Q&A sessions – perhaps as part of their weekly consultation hours.

*Concern:* Students suggested that teachers provide all (foundational) equations necessary for examinations.

*Deliberation:* Students are assumed to be able to recite some basic equations. Lengthy equations are normally given in the mid-term and final examinations of advanced courses.

*Action:* Students should be able to find out details on equations provided from past exam papers.

*Concern:* Students suggested if an open book online exam would discourage cheating.

*Deliberation:* Students could browse the answers online if the exam contained standard textbook questions.

*Action:* For the next academic year, the SSCC recommended to the Department that exams be open book whenever possible to alleviate this concern, a recommendation that was widely adopted by teachers.

*Concern:* Students suggested that projects be used to replace written examinations.

*Deliberation:* While it is possible to use projects to replace a written exams for some advanced courses, a final exam is necessary for a foundation course to measure students' capability and knowledge for taking further courses.

*Concern:* Students reported that there was a gap between PHYS2260 (Heat and Waves) and PHYS3550 (Statistical Mechanics & Thermodynamics).

*Deliberation:* The problems arose as a transient period when PHYS2261 (Introductory Heat and Thermodynamics) was going to replace PHYS2260 (Heat and Waves). The syllabus of PHYS 2261 was designed to bridge up with that of PHYS3550.

#### **(4) Feedback from 4th year student representative**

*Concern:* Students taking PHYS2160 (Introductory Computational Physics) reported that the PowerPoint lecture files were too large to conveniently download. They suggested the teacher reduce the file size by recording the lecture with Panopto.

*Action:* This issue has been brought to the attention of Dr. Judy Chow, the course instructor. Dr. Chow clarified that she did not conduct live lectures but posted PowerPoint files with audio annotations – thus the large sizes of the files. In the next year, she will conduct Zoom lectures, record, and post these lectures.

*Concern:* Students suggested that the teacher should indicate clearly the reference book of each chapter in the lecture notes because they were given a long list of reference books in the advanced courses.

*Action:* This issue has been brought to the attention of teachers teaching advanced course.

*Concern:* Students suggested the teachers to provide the key steps of derivation of some equations in advanced courses.

*Action:* This issue has been brought to the attention of teachers teaching advanced course.

### **(5) Feedback from postgraduate representative**

*Concern:* Students suggested that the department should organize online seminars and invite speakers from mainland China and overseas.

*Action:* That regular seminars need to be conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic has been brought to the attention of the course coordinator.

### **(6) Feedback from physics society representative**

*Concern:* Students requested access to more final exams papers and their solutions

*Deliberation:* The university guideline requires teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper to students, but do not require the solutions to the paper(s) to be provided.

*Action:* Students are encouraged to approach teachers directly for hints or solutions to questions in past final exam papers. The need for teachers to post at least one past final exam paper or provide a sample final exam paper has been brought to the attention of teachers.

*Concern:* Students asked if they could access the online teaching materials of courses in which they are not enrolled as they can no longer sit in class for live lectures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Deliberation:* Students should contact the course coordinators and ask if they could create guest accounts for this purpose.

*Concern:* Students asked if the Faculty could review the curriculum so that they could double major in intensive physics and intensive mathematics.

*Deliberation:* Double major in intensive physics and intensive math would violate the current rules of the curriculum. Any change of the rules should go through the Curriculum Committees of the Faculty of Science and the University.

*Concern:* Students asked for new lockers for storage purpose.

*Action:* This issue is being acted upon.

*Concern:* Students asked for more space for self-studying.

*Deliberation:* Students have access to Room 522 and the common area outside the department office at the 5/F of Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building where sofas have been placed.

*Concern:* Students reported that the difficulty of the final exam was generally harder than that of the mid-term test.

*Action:* The issue will be brought to the attention of the physics department.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

**(7) Post-meeting note**

*Concern:* As always, the Physics Society requested a society room to serve as an office as well as a place for students to gather and study.

*Deliberation:* There is a desire to provide such a room, but no such room is available at the moment. The Society representative is reminded that Rm 522 can be reserved for Society use after class.

MK YIP (Temporary Secretary)

7<sup>th</sup> July, 2019