

Staff-Student Consultative Committee
Minutes for Meeting No. 1 of 2020/2021

Date: 7th January, 2021

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Venue: Zoom meeting

Present:

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

Dr. Judy Chow (Staff representative)

Dr. Jenny Lee (Staff representative)

Dr. F.C.C. Ling (Staff representative)

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

Dr. M. K. Yip (Staff representative)

Mr. Cheuk Yin Yu (1st year representative)

Mr. Richard Ruizhe Liu (2nd year representative)

Miss Sammi Kwun Ching So (3rd year representative)

Mr. Meng Chit Ho (4th year representative)

Mr. Thomas Hong Tsun Wong (Postgraduate student representative)

Mr. Jason Wong (Physics society)

(1) Feedback from 1st year student representative

Concern: Students reported that the teaching pace of PHYS1150 was a bit faster than expected during the pure on-line mode in early September. It was about right when dual mode teaching was introduced. The level of difficulty of the homework assignments was about right for them to prepare for the test and exam. They suggested that the teacher prepare short videos as summary for each chapter.

Deliberation: Students were suggested to turn on the video camera during the Zoom lectures. It will help teachers to see the response of students.

Action: The issue has been reflected to the teacher, but are irrelevant if teaching returns to face-to-face.

Concern: Students reported that the lecture videos PHYS1650 were posted on moodle by chapters making it convenient for study. The abundant resources of past HW assignments and exam papers prepared them well for the mid-term test and exam.

Concern: Students reported that the teaching pace of PHYS1250 was about right. They, however, had problems when doing experiment NE05 (i.e., RLC series circuit). They found that the lecture did not cover the knowledge of the experiment and the instruction in the lab manual was difficult to follow. Students also reported that they could not complete the mid-term paper in 45 minutes. The time given seemed too tight.

Action: The issues have been communicated to the teacher, who has set up a plan for remedial action.

(2) Feedback from 2nd year student representative

Concern: Students expressed a hope for f2f teaching in the coming semester. For Zoom class, they appreciated teachers wrote the materials on the Zoom boards.

Deliberation: Dr. Judy Chow reported that teachers could use the visualizer for writing purpose. Most classrooms and theatres had already installed visualizers.

Concern: Students reported that the questions in the open-book exam were harder. They suggested teachers to post sample questions of open-book exam.

Deliberation: The purpose of open-exam question is to avoid cheating. The questions are mostly unseen questions.

Concern: Students asked the arrangement of Lab in the next semester.

Deliberation: Like the first semester, students will be given two options to perform the experiments, either f2f or online. Dr. Jenny Lee reported that 30% of the students chose f2f approach in the first semester.

Action: Students should be proactive to communicate with the course teacher.

Concern: Students reported that the pre-recorded video provided a good solution to complete the teaching when the contact hour in the semester was tight.

Deliberation: According to the curriculum, a 6-credit course was designed to complete within 36-lecture-hour. Dr. Jeremy Lim suggested that teachers should provide live consultation after pre-recorded video was posted.

(3) Feedback from 3rd year student representative

Concern: Teacher should better share the full screen if the materials were scattered in different windows. Some students suggested to the video the teacher too.

Action: This is a technical issue related to the software used on laptops for presentations.

Concern: Teachers should avoid scrolling the lecture notes up and down rapidly during the Zoom class. Students also suggested if teachers could share the mind set of problem solving for study purpose.

Action: Students were asked to be proactive in communicating lecture delivery issues with the teachers.

Concern: Students suggested if pop-up quiz problems can be introduced during the Zoom class. They would think that the activity will help promote class interaction. Some students preferred if the activity did not count the final grade. Overseas students might not be able to attend live classes too.

Deliberation: Some teachers prepared check-point questions on moodle and the duration of the activity was short, e.g. five minutes. The wish for more pop quizzes has been widely reflected to teachers.

Concern: Students reported that they could not understand the PPT notes of PHYS 3350 Classical Mechanics because the slides were lacked of explanation. Some test papers were marked wrongly. The number of tutorial class was insufficient. They were two only during the semester.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teacher.

Concern: Students reported that they were asked to work on many questions in each HW of PHYS 3351 Quantum Mechanics. It was time consuming because some questions were of similar types, though not difficult. Students suggested if the teacher could update the hand-writing notes to typed notes. They also reported that the tutors provided codes in Mathematica instead of MATLAB in the solutions. They would think that MATLAB was better.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teacher.

Concern: Students reported that the teacher of PHYS3151 Machine Learning in Physics had good skills to handle i-Pad and computer at the same time, but there were echoes during the class. They suggested if the tutorial could teach the Python Library.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teacher.

Concern: Students reported that the voice quality in the dual mode lectures of PHYS3650 Observational Astronomy was lowered because the teacher wore the face mask throughout the class.

Action: The issue has been reflected to the teacher. Face masks are mandatory in class.

Concern: Students reported that the teacher of PHYS3750 Lasers and Spectroscopy was kind to encourage discussion during the class. However, there were missing words or grammatical problems in some questions of the exercise, test and exam. It made them hard to understand the questions.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teacher.

Concern: Students asked if there were any quota for PHYS3760 Physics Lab.

Deliberation: There is a quota for this course.

Concern: Students asked the total number of credits of a capstone course for intensive major.

Deliberation: The total number of credits of such capstone course is 12.

(4) Feedback from 4th year student representative

Concern: Students reported that the lecture videos on moodle provided flexibility for their study.

Concern: Students were pleased to see that code writing was required in some HW problems of PHYS1150, PHYS2150 and PHYS2155. They asked if there would be one specific HW set focusing on code writing for each course.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teachers.

Concern: Students reported that there were few words to explain the equations in the lecture notes of PHYS3350 Classical Mechanics. The notations were inconsistent too.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teacher.

Concern: Students reported that there were gaps between the course contents of PHYS2XXX and the midterm test (mostly the core courses).

Action: The issue will be reflected to the teachers.

Concern: Students asked the arrangement of virtual lab in the next semester. They reported that they enjoyed online lab session in the first semester. They felt safe at home.

Deliberation: The arrangement will be the same as the first semester. Dr. Jenny Lee welcomed all suggestions and comments about the learning experience of virtual lab.

Concern: Students reported that the low enrollment of PHYS3760 Physics Laboratory was due to pandemic. Many would like to wait for a clear situation such that f2f laboratory work can be performed. They are concerned about the graduation requirement for intensive major.

Deliberation: Dr. Jenny Lee reported that the course required students to perform f2f lab. However, the enrollment is very low (one only) and it is very likely to cancel this course. She told the committee that Prof. Chau will talk with the student representatives about the impact on their study due to this issue.

(5) Feedback from physics society representative

Concern: Students reported that the low attendance of f2f class lectures was due to the many confirmed cases of COVID-19 in HK and at HKU. They also told the committee that many students did not watch the lecture videos until they were asked to work on HW assignments.

Concern: Students reported the poor hygiene in Rm 522. Garbage and insects were found in the room.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the Department Office.

Concern: As always, the Physics Society asked for new lockers for storage purpose. They also needed a society room to serve as an office as well as a place for students to gather and study.

Deliberation: The Society representative was reminded that Rm 522 can be reserved for Society use after class. Follow-up action was taken to see if more locker space could be provided.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the Departmental Space Committee.

(6) Feedback from postgraduate representative

Concern: Students reported that the teaching of PHYS 4654 General Relativity was disappointed. The Panopto lectures were not enough to cover the course content described in the syllabus.

Action: The SSCC convened a separate meeting to discuss this issue. See attached follow-up report.

Concern: Students reported that PPT was not a good media to teach hard courses. They suggested if teachers could write the materials on a board during the class.

Action: Not possible or difficult in Zoom lectures.

Concern: Students reported that the TA of PHYS 3660 Astronomy Laboratory had high workload. They suggested if the department could increase the number of TA for this course.

Concern: Students reported that the astronomy part of PHYS 8201 Basic Research Methods in Physical Science was very useful to include journal writing. UG asked if they could enroll this course.

Deliberation: This course was on the list of PG courses, so UG were not allowed to enroll it. PG had some concerns on the high standard of the course if UG joined this course.

Concern: Students asked if the chief tutor should avoid a TA to teach the same course again if he/she had poor record on teaching that course.

Deliberation: Such way would promote poor teaching. Dr. Jason Pun suggested awarding the good TA. There was already a policy to punish the bad TA, e.g. suspension of studentship.

Feedback from teacher representatives

Concern: Dr. Judy Chow asked the student representatives to pass the following message to their peers. The coding workshop of PHYS 2160 Introductory Computational Physics will only be conducted through f2f. Announcement had been posted on the course moodle page.

Concern: Dr. Jeremy Lim asserted that cheating will cause serious consequence. The Physics Department is setting some rules to cope with cheating cases.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

MK YIP (Temporary Secretary)

7th January, 2021