

Minutes for 2000 Staff-Student Consultative Committee Meeting No.3

Date: Friday April 28, 2000

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Physics Department Library, Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building

Present:

- [Mr. Terry Boyce](#) (Staff Representative & Chairman)
- [Dr. Chau Hoi-fung](#) (Staff Representative)
- [Dr. J. Wang](#) (Staff Representative)
- Mr. Ma Pui Wai (1st Year Representative)
- Ms. Michelle Cheung Suet Yee (2nd Year Representative)
- Mr. Mike Lam Ho Yan (3rd Year Representative)
- Mr. Sazabi Chin Hong Yu (Postgraduate Representative & Secretary)

Apologies

- [Dr. Wang Zidan](#) (Staff Representative)

1. Confirmation of the previous minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting ([00/02](#)) were confirmed as correct.

2. Matters arising from the previous minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3. Comments from student and staff representatives

i. Comments from the first-year representative

On behalf of the 1st year students, Mr. Ma expressed his thanks to all 1st-year lecturers.

ii. Comments from the second-year representative

- a. Ms. Cheung reported that students had complained about the apparent inconsistency in requirements to take core courses. She specifically mentioned that some students who had failed Mathematics for Physical Sciences had apparently not been required to take the course again but had instead been given permission to take an elective course in statistics, while other students who had failed core courses had been required to take those core courses again. Mr. Boyce wondered whether it might be because the course is not a physics course and agreed to raise the matter in the next Physics Department staff meeting.

[Post-meeting note: At the Physics Department Staff Meeting held on April 28, this issue was discussed and the following resolutions were made:

- i. That in principle and in practice all core courses should be treated alike.
- ii. That the status of Mathematics for Physical Sciences should be changed from a core course to an elective course, but that course coordinators for 2nd-year courses should consider making it a co-requisite for their courses.

It was also agreed that the acting head of department, Prof. K.S. Cheng, would reply specifically to the student complaint in the form of a note to be appended to the minutes of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee meeting (see below).

From Prof. K.S. Cheng:

I am writing in reply to the question, "Why should all core courses not be treated equally?" In our departmental curriculum development committee, we have already discussed this question. In principle there is no reason to treat core courses differently. On the other hand, if we require that students must pass all core courses before graduation, would this rule be too rigid? Therefore, we are looking for a balance between academic necessity and flexibility for students. Finally the committee has decided that the first year physics courses are the backbone for physics students. If students fail these courses it implies that they do not have a good understanding of physics and will have difficulty in studying 2nd and 3rd courses. Therefore, they must retake all failed physics core courses before graduation.]

- b. Ms. Cheung reported that students had complained about inconsistency in the marking of laboratory reports due to different demonstrators being involved at different stages of the process and giving conflicting advice. Dr. Chau suggested that the problem might be solved by demonstrators meeting together to discuss how to make the supervision and marking of laboratory work consistent. Mr. Boyce pointed out that consistency is difficult to achieve and a better way might be to ensure that a student's work is supervised and marked by the same demonstrator. He agreed to raise the matter at the next Physics Department staff meeting.

[Post-meeting note: At the Physics Department Staff Meeting held on April 28, this issue was discussed and Prof. MacKeown agreed that this was indeed a problem. It was resolved that an attempt would be made in the following year to re-organize demonstrator duties so that this problem would not recur.]

iii. **Comments from the third-year representative**

Mr. Lam asked whether timetable information for the following year could be released earlier to students to help them in making their course selections. Dr. Chau commented that the Physics Department timetable had to take into account inter-departmental and inter-faculty courses and that this information was often not available until just before the beginning of the academic year. Mr. Boyce agreed to raise the matter at the next Physics Department staff meeting.

[Post-meeting note: At the Physics Department Staff Meeting held on April 28, this issue was discussed and Prof. Cheng agreed to release a draft form of the timetable to students on the understanding that it was a provisional timetable and subject to later changes. It was agreed that a provisional timetable would be released to students before the end of May.]

iv. **Comments from the postgraduate representative**

There were no comments from the postgraduate representative.

v. **Comments from staff representatives**

There were no comments from the staff representatives.

4. **Any Other Business**

Mr. Boyce thanked members for their support and effort during the past academic year.

5. **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that no further meetings would be needed during the current semester, but that a new committee should be formed at the beginning of the first semester in the next academic year.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. T. C. Boyce
Chairman

April 30, 2000