

Staff-Student Consultative Committee
Minutes for Meeting No. 2 of 2017/2018

Date: 4th May, 2018

Time: 10:55 a.m.

Venue: Rm 518A, CYM Physics Building, HKU

Present:

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

Dr. J.H.C. Lee (Staff representative)

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

Dr. M. K. Yip (Staff representative)

Prof. H.F. Chau (In attendance)

Mr. Wong Hong Tsun Thomas (2nd representative)

Mr. Ng Ka Wai Patrick (4th year student representative)

Mr. Chan Ho Cheung (Postgraduate student representative)

Mr. Chan Sai Wai (Physics society)

(1) Feedback from 1st year student representative

The 1st year student representative was absent in the meeting.

(2) Feedback from 2nd year student representative

Concern: The tutor in the MATLAB tutorial class of PHYS1150 (Problems Solving in Physics) simply read aloud the solutions, rather than explaining concepts. The tutor needs to improve his teaching style.

Deliberation: *The course coordinator for the MATLAB tutorial class of PHYS1150 has been informed.* Because there are a limited number of tutors who are knowledgeable in MATLAB, there is a limited pool of tutors to choose from. Nevertheless, tutors should be reminded that tutorials are meant for explaining concepts and not simply reading aloud solutions.

Concern: Students taking PHYS2255 (Introductory Electricity and Magnetism) had difficulty completing the full lab report that focused on the use of a Cathode Ray Oscilloscope (CRO).

Action: The instructor will review the lab manual.

Concern: Students taking PHYS2265 (Modern Physics) described that the teaching pace was a little too fast in view of the copious contents.

Action: The course coordinator has been informed.

Concern: Students taking PHYS2055 (Introduction to Relativity) described that the attendance of the morning lecture at 8:30am is poor.

Deliberation: There is little as can do owing to centralized timetabling. Students were reminded that that 8:30 am is the formal start to the teaching day.

Concern: Students taking PHYS3350 (Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics) described that the lab in this course was the same as that in PHYS2265 (Modern Physics).

Action: Dr. Jenny Lee will replace the mentioned experiment in PHYS3350 with a new one.

Concern: Students taking PHYS3550 (Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics) reported that the lecture notes in ppt format were hard to follow. Moreover, they asked for more exercises.

Action: The course coordinator has been informed, and is encouraged to seek feedback on why the lecture notes are difficult to follow from the SETL or through direct contact with class students.

Concern: Students taking PHYS3450 (Electromagnetism) reported that there was only one tutorial during the semester and it was held just before the examination. They request more tutorial classes and exercises. In the equations presented in the lecture notes, they would like the instructor to quote the equation numbers printed in Griffith's textbook so that they can make the correct association. In addition, they asked for the instructor to reduce the materials outside Griffith's textbook because they found those materials very hard to follow.

Action: The course coordinator has been informed. The committee explicitly requested feedback on why there was only one tutorial throughout the whole semester.***

Concern: Students requested laboratory report collection boxes outside the HOC labs so that they can submit lab report if completed after the lab has finished. They also asked for printing services in the lab.

Action: Jenny Lee was present at the SSCC meeting, and will consider actions to be taken.

Concern: Students suggested the department to provide a more complete guide (i.e. a pdf document posted on the web) for course selection. They praised the information prepared by the math department.

Action: The Chair of the Undergraduate Committee, Dr. Jason Pun, was present at the SSCC meeting, and will consider action to be taken.

Concern: Students taking SCNC1112 (Fundamentals of Modern Science) reported that some of them had difficulty handling this course because of insufficient high school training in either biology or chemistry.

Deliberation: Dr. Jason Pun explained that students' performance in this course was weakly related to their high school training in these subjects. Rather, students' engagement in university education was the crucial factor in determining their performance, and quoted statistics to support this conclusion.

Concern: Students reported that some past papers in the exam database had restricted access.

Deliberation: Not all teachers post their final exam papers on the exam database. In such cases, the committee recommends that teachers post sample exam papers on the Moodle platform so that students can have ideas about the level of difficulty and the format of exam questions.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

Concern: Students taking PHYS2155 (Methods in Physics II) asked if the course can include change of basis, transformation, and optimization.

Action: The course coordinator has been informed.

(3) Feedback from 3rd year student representative

The 3rd year student representative was overseas. No concerns were tabled before (or after) the meeting.

(4) Feedback from 4th year student representative

Concern: Students proposed the department to offer a new course in fluid dynamics.

Action: The Chair of the Curriculum Development Committee, Prof. H. F. Chau, was present at the SSCC meeting, and noted this request.

Concern: Students proposed that the department to include additional information in the course description on the essential mathematical knowledge needed in each course, as this information can be very helpful to them for planning course selection in mathematics. They also asked if some of the physics courses can provide hyperlinks to useful math resources.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

(5) Feedback from postgraduate representative

Concern: Postgraduate students suggested the department to move the Wednesday Departmental Gathering back to Friday because of the poor attendance on Wednesday.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

Concern: Postgraduate students reported that they disliked taking the graduate English course. In the SETL questionnaire, however, they could not give poor scores because the questionnaire was designed in a such a way that they could only agree to all the questions asked.

Deliberation: The Committee suggests that students send comments to the Director of the Graduate School and meet the senior management team of the School.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

Concern: Postgraduate students asked if the mini-course conducted by Dr. K.M. Lee can be converted to a formal postgraduate course. Currently, the mini-course is a series of informal classes and a non-credit bearing activity in the summer.

Action: Dr. Lee has been informed. The Chair of the Curriculum Development Committee, Prof. H. F. Chau, was present at the SSCC meeting, and noted this request.

Concern: Postgraduate students reported that they had difficulty to register the graduate English course in the first semester.

Deliberation: The Committee suggests that students send comments to the Director of the Graduate School and meet the senior management team of the School.

Concern: Postgraduate students request the department to organize more academic and social events.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

(6) Feedback from physics society representative

Concern: As always, the 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.

Concern: A request on the extension of opening hours in room Rm 312 (Computer room) on Saturday and Sunday. Currently, the room opens 24 hours from Monday to Friday and a CCTV is installed for security purpose.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018.

Concern: Students wondered why SCNC1112 (Fundamentals of Modern Science) had very little contents in physics.

Deliberation: Students were encouraged to pass their comments to the course coordinator through the SETL and other means.

Concern: Students would like to see if the department can organize more talks.

Deliberation: The department/faculty organized several public talks a year, but few undergraduate students turn up at such events. In the future, the department will engage the Physics Society to publicize such events.

Action: This issue was raised at the Staff meeting on 30 May 2018. Partition announcement board outside department office so that half is reserved for department and relevant faculty events.

(1) Report from Dr. Jason Pun

- He outlined the curriculum reform held in the department. He invited students to promote the new curriculum to the visitors in the coming Information Day for Undergraduate Admission. Some features of the reform are the skill set development and the four new themes.
- He also reported the rationale and the offering schedule of the Intensive Major in Physics.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

MK YIP (Temporary Secretary)

4th May, 2018