

Staff-Student Consultative Committee
Minutes for Meeting No. 2 of 2023/2024

Date: 5th June 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Venue: Rm 522, CYM Physics Building, HKU and Zoom meeting

Present:

Prof. F. C. C. Ling (Chairman, Staff representative)

Prof. H.F. Chau (Staff representative)

Dr. Judy Chow (Staff representative)

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

Mr. Fung Chiu Wah (3rd year representative)

Mr. Chan Tim Lok (4th year representative)

Mr. Chen Peng (MSc in Physics representative)

Mr. Li Sung Kei (Postgraduate student representative)

Mr. Yiu To Chung Martin (Postgraduate student representative)

Prof. M. Gu

Prof. D. K. Ki

Dr. K. F. Lai

Dr. K. K. Lam

Ms. Bai Rushuang

Ms. Mi Tiantian

Ms. Wan Meiyan

Apology:

Prof. Jenny Lee (Staff representative)

Prof. J. J. L. Lim (Staff representative)

Dr. M. K. Yip (Staff representative)

Mr. Chiu Shi Yuen (1st year representative)

Mr. Yu Wing Hin (2nd year representative)

To be confirmed (Physics Society representative)

(1) Feedback from 1st year student representative

The committee will collect comments after the meeting.

(2) Feedback from 2nd year student representative

The committee will collect comments after the meeting.

(3) Feedback from 3rd year student representative

Concern: Students reported that PHYS2155 (Methods in Physics II) includes two chapters with topics such as matrices that many students have already learnt in HKDSE Mathematics Module 2. They suggest the course to focus more on other topics such as Fourier Transform.

Deliberation: Dr Judy Chow pointed out that we cannot assume all students taking PHYS2155 have learned those duplicate content since HKDSE Mathematics Module 2 is not a prerequisite for this course. Moreover, those duplicate content are taught at a higher level in PHYS2155.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the course instructor.

Concern: Students reported that the content of PHYS3350 (Classical Mechanics) was too hard to understand. There are many equations in the lecture notes without proper explanation.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling pointed out that the lecture notes of a course should only include the main points.

Action: More comments from the students on this course will be collected.

Concern: Students asked if more exercise problems can be provided for PHYS3653 (Astrophysics). The homework and tutorial questions are quite different from those in test and exam. They want to know more about the type of questions in the test and exam.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the course instructor.

Concern: Students reported that the workload of PHYS3660 (Astronomy Laboratory) is too heavy. It's very time consuming for students to conduct the labs and finish the lab reports. And the lecture notes of this course are too brief.

Deliberation: Prof. H. F. Chau pointed out that the laboratory of this course can be done at night only when the weather is good. Mr. Li Sung Kei agreed with this point. Besides, Mr. Li mentioned that students are required to submit a worksheet report for 3-4 short labs plus a full report for 3-4 long labs. Students will be given a longer period for submitting the lab reports if they conducted two or more labs within the same day. And sample data will be provided if students attempted to do the lab but failed due to poor weather. In addition, Prof. Chau pointed out that students should plan well ahead for working on the labs of this course. Mr. Li mentioned the warning about this issue has been sent to students at the beginning of this course in the last few years.

(4) Feedback from 4th year student representative

Concern: Students reported that some Math students taking PHYS2155 (Methods in Physics II) have learnt most or all the content of this course. They suggested that these students should not be allowed to take this course for fairness.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the course instructor.

Concern: Students reported that PHYS2160 (Introductory Computational Physics) has very fruitful content. They asked if more time could be spent on the discussion of recursive algorithms and computational methods in physics for this course.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the course instructor.

Concern: Students reported that even the hard-working students who have attended all the lectures and tutorials have difficulty in understanding the content of PHYS3350 (Classical Mechanics).

Action: The issue will be reflected to the course instructor.

Concern: Students reported that PHYS3760 (Physics Laboratory) has provided enough guidance for students and has a reasonable workload.

Deliberation: Dr. F. C. C. Ling pointed out that it's reasonable for PHYS3760 to have a higher workload than other courses as PHYS3760 does not have any test and exam.

Concern: Students reported that PHYS4151 (Methods in Physics II) has very fruitful content although it's very hard and demanding. They suggested more examples on modeling and computational skills to be provided in the tutorials.

Deliberation: Prof. H. F. Chau pointed out that some advanced topics can be also discussed in the tutorials.

(5) Feedback from MSc in Physics representative

Concern: Students reported that some of them thought the MSc program is not helpful for finding a job or pursuing further studies. They asked whether the department could provide more support to students on this aspect.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling pointed out that a seminar introducing the application procedure for

admission into the PhD program will be conducted in coming September just like that in last year. Students added that we can encourage the supervisors to talk with their students about career planning at the beginning of MSc program. Dr. J. C. S. Pun suggested establishing systematic program-wise advising for MSc students as we cannot rely on individual supervisors.

Action: The issue will be reflected to the Programme coordinator.

Concern: Students asked if the deadline for submission of report and the date of presentation of report for PHYS8971 (Capstone Project) can be extended to July or August.

Deliberation: Prof H. F. Chau explained that it's difficult to extend the deadline as some students will look for a job or pursue further studies in Hong Kong or other countries so that they need to finish all the courses by June.

Concern: Students reported that the workload of working on experimental projects for PHYS8971 (Capstone Project) is too heavy since these students need to finish four courses in May and submit the report of PHYS8971 by May 2.

Deliberation: Prof H. F. Chau and Prof. F. C. C. Ling suggested the deadline for submitting the report of PHYS8971 to be delayed a bit.

(6) Feedback from research postgraduate representative

Concern: Students asked if an ergonomic office chair can be provided to each postgraduate student in the office. They also asked to fix the flooding of male toilet on the fourth floor of the Physics Building. Besides, they also asked whether the noise due to the renovation work in the Physics Building can be reduced as the noise is very annoying.

Concern: Students asked whether they could be allowed not to sit for physics seminars on topics that they don't have any ideas.

Deliberation: Prof H. F. Chau pointed out that our postgraduate students are going to obtain a postgraduate degree in physics rather than a specialization in physics. That's why they are asked to sit for physics seminars on a broad range of topics.

(7) Feedback from Physics Society representative

The committee will collect comments after the meeting.

(8) Feedback from teacher representative

- Dr. J. C. S. Pun reported that PHYS3151, PHYS3660, PHYS3760, PHYS3999, and PHYS4999 are new CI-badged courses. Communication skill components including written communication, oral communication, and digital literacy will be added to these courses.
- Dr. J. C. S. Pun reported that the department has continued to resolve the issue of the uneven workload of our teaching assistants. One of the measures is Dr. K. F. Lai will help with tutor assignment and Dr. K. K. Lam will help with laboratory teaching starting from the academic year 2024/25.

(9) AOB

Concern: Students suggested organizing a career forum with our alumni working in industry as the speaker as the forum will be helpful for our current students as well the potential students.

Deliberation: Dr. F.C.C. Ling mentioned that he has approached the members of the Physics Society several times to ask for their opinion on the career forum. But no responses were received. He added that he might organize the career forum based on his own decision or post the recording of the career forum online.

Concern: Students described that the members of the Physics Society have provided many valuable advice for their studies. He asked if the department could help the Physics Society distributing an information sheet on career planning, campus info, department info, etc to students for promotion.

Deliberation: Prof. H. F. Chau suggested promoting the Physics Society to TPG and RPG as well. Besides, Prof. F. C. C. Ling asked students if they are willing to be contacted through WhatsApp and WeChat to receive the announcements from the department. Students agreed to use these channels for communication.

Concern: Prof. H. F. Chau reminded students to talk with the teacher or course coordinator once they have any complaints about the course. He added that students can contact the chairman of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee, head of the department, or even dean of the faculty if they have any urgent matters for teaching.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Judy Chow (Temporary Secretary)

5th June 2024