

Staff-Student Consultative Committee
Minutes for Meeting No. 1 of 2024/2025

Date: 28th February 2025

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Venue: Rm 518, 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)
Prof. Jenny Lee (Staff representative)
Dr. M. K. Yip (Staff representative)
Prof. Chenjie Wang (Staff representative)
Mr. Yang Chi Fung (1st year representative)
Mr. Fung Chiu Wah (4th year representative)
Mr. He Zhiyaun (MSc in Physics representative)
Mr. Yiu To Chung Martin (Postgraduate student representative)
Mr. Yang Feichi (Physics Society representative)
Dr. K. F. Lai
Dr. K. K. Lam
Mr. Choi Chung Hei

Apology:

Prof. J. J. L. Lim (Staff representative)
Mr. Chiu Shi Yuen (2st year representative)
Mr. To Chung Cheung (3rd year representative)

(1) Feedback from 1st year student representative

Concern: Students reported that the questions given in the tutorial sessions for PHYS2250 (Introductory Mechanics) in semester 1 and PHYS2155 (Method in Physics II) in semester 2 were too difficult, especially for the students who could not attend the tutorial session in person.

Deliberation: Dr. Judy Chow pointed out that the question sets for the tutorial sessions are designed for students to practice on their own. The tutors will select a few questions from the question sets to be discussed during the tutorials. Dr. J.C.S. Pun reminded that students are welcome to make an appointment with tutors for consultation.

(2) Feedback from 2nd year student representative

The committee will collect comments after the meeting.

(3) Feedback from 3rd year student representative

The committee will collect comments after the meeting.

(4) Feedback from 4th year student representative

Concern: Students reported that the progress of PHYS3350 (Classical Mechanics) in semester 2 was behind schedule and no lecture notes were provided. The lecturer spent most of the time on the topics of year-2 mechanics and the early chapter of oscillation motion.

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

Concern: Students reported that the lab manual for PHYS3760 (Physics Laboratory) in semester 2 was not clear enough to follow. Some samples used in one of the experiments were damaged with no replacement.

Deliberation: Dr. K. K. Lam pointed out that the sample were repaired and the lab technicians are working on revising all the manuals.

Concern: Students suggested that PHYS2150 (Method in Physics I) should be offered in both semesters as it is the major prerequisite for most PHYS3xxx courses.

Deliberation: Prof. H.F. Chau pointed out that the current arrangement is due to limited manpower. Dr. Judy Chow added that students could apply for special approval to take the subsequent PHYS3xxx level courses without passing PHYS2150.

Action: The issue will be discussed in the teaching committee.

Concern: Students asked if some MSc in the field of Space Science courses could be opened to undergraduate.

Action: The issue will be discussed in the teaching committee.

Concern: Students reported that some Math students were taking the mathematical physics courses PHYS1150, 2150, 2155 and 3150. They suggested that these students should not be allowed to take this course for fairness. Year 1 representative added that some MATH2xxx math courses had imposed enrollment blocking.

Action: The issue will be discussed in the teaching committee.

(5) Feedback from MSc in Physics representative

Concern: Students reported that the tutorial sessions were not suitable for every student as they clashed with other courses and could not be changed after consulting with the teachers.

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

Concern: Students reported that the computational physics courses were difficult for those without programming background. Students requested additional support or training beyond the tutorial sessions.

Action: The issue will be discussed in the Programme coordinator and teaching committee.

(6) Feedback from research postgraduate representative

The committee received no comment from the representative.

(7) Feedback from Physics Society representative

Concern: Students asked about the availability of CYP Room 522.

Deliberation: Dr Jason Pun reported that Room 522 is now temporally repurposed as a department office. Room 518 is now under renovation and expected to open in mid-May. Prof. H.F. Chau added that there may be 2-3 weeks delay for the renovation work.

Concern: Students asked if they need to run an election for the year representative.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling suggested that the student representative should be elected by the students instead of appointing by the department.

Concern: Students reported that the promotion of the public academic seminar is not effective.

Deliberation: Prof. H.F. Chau pointed out that the relevant information is sent through mass-mail and posted on the Department of Physics website.

Action: The public seminar announcement should be sent to undergraduate students through email along with the postgraduate.

Concern: Students asked if the photo-taking day will be organized this year.

Deliberation: Dr. J.C.S. Pun replied that the department will support the event. Prof. F. C. C. Ling suggested arranging the photo-taking day after some major physics courses such as PHYS1150.

Concern: Students proposed to hold an intercollege integration week in the form of a quiz competition targeting the undergraduate and master students.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling suggested that physics society can elaborate more to him in person and discuss how department supports the event.

Concern: Students requested a Physics Society room as an office and place for students to gather and study.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling pointed out that such room is not available now due to limited resources. He added that department could provide space for storage upon request.

Concern: Students mentioned that some links on the physics department website are broken and suggested including the physics society website's link on the department webpage.

Deliberation: Prof. F. C. C. Ling suggested that the physics society email him the relevant information. He will contact the IT technician to fix it.

(8) Feedback from teacher representative

- Prof. F. C. C. Ling requested help from the physics society to spread information about the upcoming career talk organized by the Faculty of Science. He also suggested that the physics society should decide the scope of topics/interests and actively promote the career talk to ensure higher student participation.
- Dr. J. C. S. Pun reported a proposed change to the intensive major curriculum, which will affect current Year-1 students. Intensive major students are required to take PHYS4351

Advanced Quantum Mechanics or PHYS4450 Advanced Electromagnetism to fulfill the requirements.

- Dr. J. C. S. Pun reported changes to the UG courses offered in the 2025-26 academic year. PHYS4653 Selected Topics in Astrophysics and Cosmology and PHYS4652 Planetary Science will be offered. PHYS3151, PHYS4655, and PHYS7750 will not be offered. PHYS1250 in Semester 2 and PHYS2160 may not be offered.
- Prof. Chenjie Wang pointed out that there are no participants from HKU joining the annual international theoretical physics competition PLANCKS2025. He suggested that the physics society could help spread this information to undergraduate and master students next year.

(9) AOB

Concern: Students suggested extending the opening time of computer lab Room 312 to Saturday. They mentioned that the furniture in the lobby area is not suitable for studying.

Action: The issue and the possibility of opening Room 105 for students during the weekend will be communicated to the teaching committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Kenneth Kin Fung Lai (Temporary Secretary)

28th February 2025

Remarks:

Dr Jason Pun received reports from a student who would like to keep the identity hidden. The report is as follows.

I think the discontent is common among students, although I didn't discuss it with them in detail.

1. *Regarding 2155, the problem is that Dr. Tu frequently doesn't keep a clear track of what she is doing. She may start proving something and only towards the end say what theorem it was in the first place. This is confusing. She also confuses indexes for the matrices frequently, although keeps emphasizing how important it is to have a clear understanding. The problem is, with her confusing those indexes, I always double guess if my understanding is wrong. Also, since she simply recites the material from the lecture notes, I find it easier to just self-study those notes and not attend the lectures, because thus there will be no logical gaps in the proofs.*
2. *As for 2265, the general complaint is that Prof. Zhao starts explaining things without proper introduction, jumping mid-way into the topic. He also speaks quite quietly as if to himself.*

Prof Lim, the staff representative, emailed a comment after the meeting and is as follows:

i would like to bring up a long-standing issue that i continue to hear from grad students - and that is their inability to understand (many) seminars/colloquia outside their fields. They see no actions on this issue, so they are resigned to the fact that complaining brings no response. the course coordinator should be made aware of this continuing problem.

Prof Yanjun Tu has sent response to the Chair SSCC concerning the course PHYS2155:

Thank you for sending the message from the SSCC meeting. In response to the student feedback, I believe that the views expressed may not be representative of the majority of students in the class. Based on the feedback from previous SFTL reports and the students' mid-term scores, it appears that most students have recognized and benefitted from my teaching style in this class. I have included some statistics to reinforce this perspective.

Teacher evaluation PHYS2155 in SFTL 2021-2122: 85.3

Teacher evaluation PHYS2155 in SFTL 2022-2123: 75

Teacher evaluation PHYS2155 in SFTL 2023-2124: 83.3

Here are some positive feedbacks from the SFTL surveys:

Dr. Tu always welcomes all kinds of questions and always answers with passion

The lecture notes are clear

She can make complicated things easy

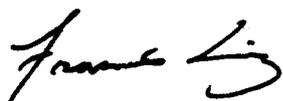
The mid-term statistics in 2024-2025:

Highest score: 100

Lowest score: 26

Mean: 81.8

I will continue to enhance my teaching skills, understanding that it may not be feasible for every student to fully engage and satisfy in the class.



Prof Francis Ling

Chair, SSCC

11 June 2025