

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY
STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE
1 pm, Wednesday May 17, 2006
Conference Room, School of Chemistry

MINUTES

Present: Dr. Uta Wille, A/Prof David McFadyen, Dr. Brendan Abrahams, Stephen Sath (051), Gerard Prokop (141 pm), Travis Turner (101), Grace Liu (220), Steve Danczak (322 & 340), Jo Cockerell (Honours), Mubing Duan (220), Chloe Miller (121), Pauline Mihaylova, Michelle Kovacevic, Christine Callahan (Minutes)

Apologies: Sharni Stevens (171)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Dr Wille welcomed all members of the SSLC.
There was an apology from Sharni Stevens.

2. Matters arising from last meeting's minutes

In response to issues brought up in the last SSLC meeting, Dr Wille has contacted A/Prof Peter Tregloan about putting lecture notes on the web a little earlier for students to access before lectures.

She has also spoken to Dr Jonathon White about his part-written lecture notes for subject 220/221 as discussed in the first meeting. Jonathon's response was that he also had some students come to him to say that they were very pleased with this teaching technique, therefore concluding that it is difficult to please everyone.

For subject 171, Dr Abrahams has spoken to Jenny Scott about the shortage of equipment (condensers) in the labs – thus causing delays in students doing their experiments. Jenny commented that as students get more experienced and familiar in the labs, there would be less of these delays. Dr Abrahams also brought up that increasing the number of equipment in the labs would be something that we would need to consider next year.

3. Matters relating to First, Second, Third and Fourth Year Teaching Program

Representatives from each subject were asked to outline any issues/queries they had encountered so far during the semester. Comments are outlined below:

Honours

Most Honours students were happy that this year's exams were arranged earlier. However, SWOTVAC this year was over the Easter holidays and Anzac day. Students were finding it difficult to concentrate on studying. They have suggested for exams to be pushed back a week later next year.

3rd Year Physical Chemistry

The student representative received feedback that students were unhappy that there were no tutorials in place for this subject. There was also an issue about Dr Trevor Smith only putting up his lecture notes a few days after the lecture. Students do not find this ideal. There are also inconsistencies in the lecture notes, where equations are mistyped. Students are finding this very confusing. Dr Wille will speak to Trevor about this.

Students have also requested that Prof Franz Grieser put up numerical answers to the problems given instead of word answers.

With regards to pracs, references given are not accessible as lecture notes are not available to refer to. Dr Wille has suggested that students would need to do some studying in advance as pracs are arranged in a way that the lecture series do not necessarily coordinate with pracs. Another complain was that students were required to do a computer exercise during one of the pracs. They have found this exercise pointless.

3rd Year Inorganic

The student representative advised that A/Prof Peter Tregloan has no tutorial material online. Another request was for old exam papers to be put on the web, as this would be useful for exam preparations.

Students are finding it stressful that all the exams are scheduled to be so close together and all in the first week of the exam period. A/Prof McFadyen says that this is a timetabling issue and it is not possible for us to influence that.

Answers for past exam papers were also requested. A/Prof McFadyen advised that students should go to the learning centre to check if their answers are correct instead. Dr Abrahams added also that it is difficult to just provide a brief response to the exams questions as some of them are extensive and students should discuss it instead.

220/221

Revision tutorials have been requested by students as they are not feeling very confident about the exams. Dr Abrahams said that it would be difficult to organise a tutorial room during the exam period.

Students have requested a guideline as to what answers are expected during the exams. Dr Wille advised that if questions are read clearly, students should be able to know what answers to provide.

With regards to the organic chemistry pracs, students are finding that there is not enough time to understand the chemistry behind the prac as students are more focused on getting the final product. Dr Abrahams advised that it would be difficult to try to learn the mechanisms during the prac. Students should go back and learn the material in their own time.

121

The student representative reported that students found Michelle Gee's lectures amazing. However, they were not so pleased with A/Prof Peter Tregloan's lectures as his lecture notes were going up either the night before the lectures or a couple of days after the lectures. Dr Wille has spoken to him about this but the student rep says that nothing has changed.

101

The student representative says that students have no complains and everyone is happy with ChemCAL.

141 (morning class)

The student representative provided feedback that there has been complains about some of the demonstrators. They have mentioned Krystal Jackson, whom they find speaks too softly and does not seem to know her material well to be confident enough to put across the mechanisms of the prac to the students. Another demonstrator that was named was Dawn Thistlewaite, whom students find demeaning and unapproachable in her manner. When a question is put across to her, she is unwilling to give an answer and tell students that they should already know it. Dr Wille and A/Prof McFadyen will look into this. Other than that, students are enjoying lectures and are happy with ChemCAL.

141 (afternoon class)

The afternoon session have also provided feedback about the demonstrators, though they were unable to provide any names. Students feel that they are not able to ask any questions during pracs, as the answers given seem very abrupt.

171

No student representative was present to report.

051

The student representative has reported that students are not finding the pracs very relevant to the lectures. Dr Abrahams advised that for this subject, they are not trying to teach the concepts of chemistry, but more the techniques at the pracs.

4. Any other business

Date of next meeting – 2nd semester

Dr Uta Wille

(Chair of the SSLC)

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