

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY
STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE
Meeting No. 1/2009
1 pm, Tuesday 24 March 2009
Conference Room, School of Chemistry

MINUTES

Present: A/Prof. Muthupandian Ashokkumar (*Chair*), Dr Colette Boskovic, Christine Callahan (*Minutes*), Penny Commons, Dr Spencer Williams, Hannah-Lee Baker (610 311), Daniel Basuki (610 283), Michael Leeming (610 283), Robert Mann (610 171), Jack McCardel (101 am), Chloe Miller (Honours), Kumaravell Sepulohniam (101pm), Jessalynn Sukamto(610 150), Clifton Vella (610 341)

1. Apologies

- Meeting commenced at 1.10pm.
- The Chair, A/Prof Ashokkumar, welcomed the staff and students of this year's Committee. There was a brief introduction of everyone around the table.
- Apologies: Nil

2. SSLC Responsibilities

- Ashok tabled the Functions and Terms of Reference to the Committee and gave a brief explanation of the Committee's function and purpose.
- Meetings are normally held twice a semester or whenever necessary.

3. Matters Relating to Honours, Third, Second, and First Year teaching program

Honours Report:

- No issues have been raised so far.
- Students have given positive feedback about the layout of the new coursework (there are more lectures this year). Spencer is interested to get feedback on the balance between lectures and coursework.

Action:

- Chloe Miller will find out what students think of the balance between the lectures and coursework and get back to the Committee about this.

3rd Year Report:

(311)

- Students have requested for all lecture notes for the entire semester be published all at once on LMS at the start of the year if possible. Colette advised that lecture notes are not posted all at once as this gives lecturers the flexibility to change the content of the lectures if necessary.

- Students are requesting for a review of the weighting of results. They would like to have more graded assessments as part of their marks instead of having a large percentage of their grade to be dependant on the final exam.
- Chemistry library is closed at lunchtime. This is very inconvenient for students.
- There are no longer computers in the Chemistry library and 1st year students doing ChemCAL occupy most of the computers in the Labyrinth.
- There has been positive feedback on the 3rd year lectures.

Action:

- Ashok will speak to Franz Grieser (3rd year coordinator) on giving more assessments so that a larger component of grades goes towards assessments.
- Ashok discussed with Franz about this issue. Since the semester has already commenced, it is difficult to make changes to the assessment procedure for this year. This aspect will be considered for next year when new Melbourne Model 3rd subjects are introduced.
- Colette will follow up on the Chemistry library being closed at lunchtime.
- Colette emailed Peta Humphrey regarding the library being closed between 1pm till 2pm on several occasions. Peta has assured that this will not happen again.
- Ashok has raised the issue of lack of computers for undergraduate students' usage to the APC. In the new 2nd/3rd lab (2nd and 3rd levels of Masson building) under renovation, several computers will be available to students' usage.

(341)

- Students do not know when pracs for 341 are starting. Ashok has confirmed that pracs will begin in Week 7.
- Students would like the answers for the last 2 tutorials that were run by Brendan Abrahams.

Action:

- Colette will speak to Brendan Abrahams about putting up the answers for the last 2 tutorials.

2nd Year Report

- ChemCAL is not available as it was in 1st year and there seem to be more resources available only to 1st year students (eg: 1st year tutor, tutes on ChemCAL).
- Students are happy with Jonathan White's lectures.
- Students do not like the high frequency of assessments. They do not view these graded assessments as "feedback." They would be more comfortable if "feedback" were based on non-graded assessments.
- The tutorial classes are too full. There are insufficient tables and chairs. It becomes no longer interactive as there are far too many people.

Action:

- Ashok will bring the lack of resources for 2nd year students to the APC.
- Ashok will speak to Stephen Best about the "feedback assessments."

1st Year Report

101(pm)

- Lectures are overcrowded and students have to sit on the stairs even though there are seats in the middle of the theatre. A detailed response was sent to the Student Committee Member who raised this issue.
- ChemCAL is very useful but only in the Labyrinth as it is difficult to gain access outside of Uni. Spencer advised that this is dependant on the browser and the software on the computer. Tutors are available to help with ChemCAL in the first 4 weeks of semester from 9-10am and 1-2pm.
- The pracs are overcrowded and there is insufficient bench space for students to do their experiments. Spencer suggested that students try to speak to Peter Mills regarding this issue so that they could be allocated to a different prac session.
- Audio lectures are of poor quality.
- Students feel that there is insufficient support available. Spencer advised that student should be responsible for independent learning. Penny has offered her assistance to student that need more help.

101(pm)

- Students think that Mark Rizzacasa is an excellent, fascinating lecturer who communicates the information very clearly.
- ChemCAL has been very beneficial.
- Students are concerned about the content of the exams. Penny advised that these are written very clearly at the start of their workbooks.

150

- Students are requesting for Lectopia. This is to benefit international students. Spencer is concerned that Lectopia may compromise student attendance.
- Students would like extra tutorial sessions. Penny has offered her assistance through email consults or through the learning centre.
- Tutorials are run in lecture theatres and students would like them to be held in a classroom environment to promote interactive learning.

Action:

- Spencer will speak to Carl Schiesser and Tony Wedd about implementing Lectopia.
- Penny will speak to Robert Gable about classroom availabilities (i.e., Russell Love Theatre, Richard Berry Bldg). However, it may be difficult to organise extra tutes for this year.

171

- Tutorials are not consistent with lectures. Students feel that the tutorials are meant to reiterate lectures. Time is wasted because the tutors are trying to teach new material to the students instead of going through the questions.
- Pracs are daunting, as 171s have no previous chemistry experience. Pre labs are also insufficient to prepare them for the pracs. Students would like an introductory session to ease them into pracs.
- Some of the tutorial questions do not have relevance to the lectures taught.

- Brendan Abrahams lecture pace is too slow and is never able to cover all the material in time. Colette advised that the material that is not covered will not be examinable.

Action:

- Spencer and Ashok will look into putting introductory information into prac books in the future.
- Robert will email Ashok the tutorial questions that do not correlate to the lecture.

4. Any Other Business

- Nil

Meeting ended at 2.25pm. Next meeting Tuesday, 19 May at 1pm in the Masson Conference Room.