



Our Ref: GSCC15-16/M1/08.10.2015

GRADUATE STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday 08 October 2015, 2.00 pm, Bragg Committee Room

Present: Professor Haniff (Chair), Ankita Anirban (SP), Hippolyte Astier(SP), Giovanna Cottin-Buracchio (HEP), Ms Dann (Graduate Office), Nandan Gokhale (CSC), Tejas Guruswamy (QS), Kamrad Javid (AP), Siri Luthman (BSS), Peter Newton (TFM), Professor Parker (HoD), Peter Townsend (SMF), Yago del Valle-Inclan (NP), Konrad Viebahn (AMOP), Bono Xu, Mrs Weale (Secretary)

Apologies: Adrien Amiguez (QM), Christopher Ashcroft (SD), James Hamp (TCM), Carmen Palacios Berraquero (NanoDTC), Leah Weiss (OE)

1. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising

- (i) Graduate Education Manager – the secretary reported that Ms Surayya Khan had been appointed to this new position over the summer and would be starting in post on 2 November. She would be working with the chair in developing the Department's graduate programme, including taking forward issues raised in this committee, and would also be leading the administrative team in the Graduate Office.
- (ii) Graduate Student Conference – the date of the conference had been changed to Thursday 3 December (from Friday 4 December).
- (iii) Cavendish III – the process of selecting architects and other professional teams to take preparations for Cavendish III to the next stage was underway, and interviews for the shortlisted teams would take place in November. Input would be sought from graduate students over the course of the winter and spring, along with other constituencies in the Lab, to feed into the full design of the new building.



3. Graduate Student Conference

The date and keynote speaker were now confirmed, and advertisements and posters were being prepared. Participants would be asked to register in advance via a website, and members of the committee were asked to promote the conference in their Groups so that there was a good spread of participation. The chair had encouraged all graduate supervisors at the recent Staff Meeting to support their students in participating and attending. The budget was to be confirmed.

ACTION: Secretary to confirm the budget

4. Graduate Student Matters

(i) Food and drink – the secretary would discuss a replacement for the water dispenser recently removed from the Rutherford with the Laboratory Superintendent, as well as whether the vending machines could be refilled more often so that there was more food available to those working in the Lab during the evening. The quality and availability of food in the canteen was discussed. It was explained that, for historical reasons, and because of the Cavendish III project, it was difficult to make changes to the current canteen. Plans for catering for the West Cambridge site as a whole were being considered as part of the masterplanning process, and the public meetings being held 29 October were an opportunity to provide input to this. The provision of microwaves at tea points and kitchens in the Lab were a matter for Heads of Group and students were encouraged to take the matter up with them. The secretary would enquire as to whether a microwave could be made available in the canteen for student use.

(ii) Skills Training - better co-ordination and publicity of the various training opportunities would be possible once the Graduate Education Manager was in place. Other critical student information about submitting the thesis, first year reports, and input into the selection of examiners was also currently hard to find, and not drawn attention to sufficiently clearly. This information was provided via the Degree Committee website:

<http://www.dpcp.physsc.cam.ac.uk/graduatestudents>

but if supervisors were also better informed, then students would feel more secure about what they needed to do, and by when. It was agreed that some kind of talk/presentation on this material would be very helpful, as well as full coverage in an updated Graduate Student Handbook.

ACTION: Chair and Graduate Education Manager to develop proposals for information provision for discussion at a future meeting

(iii) Awards – Information about awards and grants available to graduate students also needed to be better disseminated. There was a University resource focussed on this, known as CamFunds; a database which could be searched for funding opportunities for existing graduate students: <https://webservices.admin.cam.ac.uk/camfunds/gfinder.jsp?status=new&reset=reset>



(iv) Community-building - Student representatives were encouraged to initiate and organise any appropriate social activity which would help develop general community feeling, and requests for a budget for these would be considered. While the Happy Hour run by the Research Staff Committee had been successful, some would prefer an event without alcohol, eg: a regular coffee morning.

(v) Bicycle sheds – the secretary would follow up with the Laboratory Superintendent on plans for replacing the bike shed removed as a result of the refurbishment of the teaching labs. Students were anxious to see adequate provision for storing bicycles.

(vi) Reimbursement of expenses – it was requested that these be made via BACS rather than cheque if possible. The secretary advised that this was likely to be possible for students already paid a stipend via the payroll, and she would enquire about the method of paying expense claims for those not on payroll.

5. Any other business

It was agreed to update the website with the current members of the committee and a copy of the approved minutes of meetings.

ACTION: Secretary

6. Date of the next meeting

12 November 2015