



GRADUATE STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 27 January 2016, 3.00 pm, Bragg Committee Room

Present: Professor Haniff (Chair), Ankita Anirban (SP), Carmen Palacios Berraquero (NanoDTC), Christopher Ashcroft (SD), Steven Green (HEP), Hippolyte Astier (SP), Lukas Wutschitz (CSC), Tejas Guruswamy (QS), Kamrad Javid (AP), Siri Luthman (BSS), Peter Townsend (SMF), Yago del Valle-Inclan (NP), Konrad Viebahn (AMOP), Leah Weiss (OE), Ms Khan (Secretary), Professor Parker (HoD)

Apologies: Adrien Amiguez (QM), Giovanna Cottin-Buracchio (HEP), Nandan Gokhale (CSC), James Hamp (TCM), Peter Newton (TFM), Bono Xu, Ms Dann (Graduate Office), Dr Gripaios, Mrs Weale

Part 1

Graduate Student Workshop led by Linda Spinks (Business Change Consultant)

A review was in progress within the Department of Physics to look at the effectiveness of its processes surrounding the administration of graduate students. As the work approached its conclusion, the GSCC was employed as a platform for hosting a student workshop in order to seek feedback from student members on some of the issues and themes raised. The feedback would inform a final review report to be produced for the senior management of the department.

Part 2

1. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November were confirmed.

2. Matters arising

- i) Food and drink – the Laboratory Superintendent confirmed that more water dispensers would be installed over the Summer period and invited student members to make suggestions for locations.

There were health and safety issues associated with making a microwave available for student use in the canteen, which would require further investigation. It was noted that microwaves were available in the research group areas.

- ii) Bicycle sheds – the Laboratory Superintendent confirmed that 150 additional cycle stands were made available in the last month around the Maxwell and Rutherford buildings. There were further plans to add more cycle stands in front of the Bragg building once the site huts were removed in the Spring.
- iii) Reimbursement of expenses – the secretary confirmed that the University only allows reimbursement of expenses claims to be made via BACS to University employed staff, which meant only those students who were receiving a stipend could be reimbursed in this way.
- iv) GSCC webpage – the secretary confirmed that the latest set of confirmed minutes had been uploaded, and that further improvements to the webpage would be made once the necessary training on the content management system had been arranged and completed.

3. Chairman's business

- i) PRES survey results 2014-15 – the chair reported that a draft departmental response and action plan had been prepared and was tabled for members. Members were invited to read the paper in more detail and provide feedback to the Chair. It was noted that the draft response and action plan would be presented to the department's Graduate Education Committee (GEC) before being sent to the Faculty. Members requested copies of the questionnaires in order to better understand the context of the results.

ACTION: Secretary to email PTES and PRES questionnaires to members. Members to send comments and feedback to the chair in order to finalise the response and action plan.

- ii) Researcher development – the chair reported that the researcher development bid had been submitted to the School and that the department was waiting for confirmation as to which items were approved. It was noted that one of the items submitted was the Alumni Industry Day, and that if approved student volunteers would be required to organise and run the event.

ACTION: Student members to volunteer and arrange to meet chair to plan Alumni Industry Day.

- iii) Information for current graduate students – the secretary confirmed that a skeletal structure was being developed for the graduate student webpage that was aligned to the PhD journey.
- iv) Supervision reports – members were reminded that the supervision reporting arrangement was enshrined in the Code of Practice for Research Students. It was noted that students should be reading their termly supervision reports, and that this was an important part of the supervision arrangement. Student members were encouraged to read their reports and the Code of Practice.

ACTION: Secretary to send link to Code of Practice for Research Students.

- v) Researchfish entries – members were informed that students who were funded by the Research Councils had received emails to activate their accounts on the Researchfish website, and submit their research outcomes. The collection period began on the 1st February and would close at 4pm on the 10th March. It was noted that even if students had no outcomes, they were still required to report and submit this fact. Non-compliance with the collection period could lead to sanctions being imposed on the University, in terms of funding allocations. Further information was available on the university's Researchfish webpage, which was a useful resource.

ACTION: Secretary to send the link to the University's Researchfish webpage.

- vi) Visitors – the chair reported that a departmental policy was being drafted for the management of student visitors in order to underpin the department's duty of care and the responsibilities of the sending and receiving institutions.
- vii) Undergraduate demonstrating - the chair reported that a departmental policy was being drafted to facilitate and promote the transferrable skills acquired through students taking part in teaching and demonstrating.

4. Graduate Student Conference

The organising committee reported that the Graduate Student Conference had been a great success, with ample posters, talks and a good quality guest speaker. The chair thanked the organisers for all their hard work and reported that the content presented was of a high quality, and that the guest speaker was very relevant in talking about her graduate experience. It was noted that, in future, the conference could be included in induction packs and that students should be expected to attend for the entire day, and that supervisors should also attend.

5. Graduate Student Matters

- i) Canteen price increase – it was reported that the recent price increase was necessary to cover the costs of running the canteen, whilst still remaining competitive. Although the canteen was a separate institution from the Department, it was the Department's responsibility to manage it on behalf of the University. It was noted that the canteen was running at a considerable deficit and therefore it was necessary to take steps to manage the deficit, which even with the price increase would still not be reconciled. It was confirmed that, unlike the Colleges which are able to subsidise their canteen prices due to college fees, there were no sources of funding available to subsidise prices or refurbish the area to ensure that the appearance and quality was comparable to other eating establishments on University property. In addition, the operation was not a viable venture for a commercial operator due to the lack of business, thereby making prices untenable to cover costs.

6. Any other business

- i) Cavendish III – members were reminded that many of the issues raised at GSCC regarding the social and public environment should also be fed into the Cavendish III building design. The Head of Department reported that the architects were now on

site, checking design parameters and requesting input from stakeholders in order to verify requirements. It was noted that the Heads of Groups (HoGs) had already been approached and had submitted their feedback on office space, laboratories, teaching rooms etc. Within the department, an internal staff logistics group had been set up to collect feedback on the conceptual design, with each member responsible for a particular function of space. GSCC members were invited to provide feedback to the staff logistics group on the requirements of the new building, and on any features of other buildings that they had liked. Students were first advised to approach their HoG to request access to the requirements submitted for their group, so as not to duplicate requests. On a similar note, any feedback on communal/social facilities could in the first instance be fed via the GSCC.

ACTION: Student members to send feedback on communal/social facilities to the chair for submitting a GSCC contribution to the staff logistics group.

ACTION: Secretary to send details of the staff logistics group for members to follow up with any additional feedback.

- ii) Health and safety – the Head of Department described a recent incident involving a gas leak in a nitrogen filter, and stressed the importance of adhering to safety measures and carrying out risk assessments. Members were reminded to report any health and safety breaches or concerns.

7. Date of the next meeting

3rd March 2016