

Our Ref: GSCC16-17/M4/02.03.2017

GRADUATE STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday 2 March 2017, 2.00 pm, Bragg Committee Room

Present: Professor Haniff (Chair), Ankita Anirban (SP), Sean Cormier (NP), Tejas Guruswamy (QS), Evelyn Hamilton (BSS), Arthur Henderson (SMF), Kamrad Javid (AP), Claire Malone (HEP), Simon Wilkinson (CSC), Ms Khan (Secretary)

Apologies: Adrien Amiguez (QM), Alice Allen (TCM), Christopher Ashcroft (SD), Jieyi Liu (TFM), Carmen Palacios Berraquero (NanoDTC), Konrad Viebahn (AMOP), Leah Weiss (OE), Professor Parker (HoD), Dr Gripaos, Ms Dann (Graduate Office)

1. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 were confirmed.

2. Matters arising

- i) Information for current graduate students – the chair reported that the webpages were on hold due to workload and access issues. It was noted that Dr Mike Moriarty had recently joined the department as Head of IT.
- ii) Alumni Industry Day update – members were reminded that the date of the event had been set for Tuesday 14th March. 14:00 - 17:00 in the Small Lecture Theatre in the Bragg building. It was noted that volunteers were needed to help out on the day, and that GSCC student members were invited to lunch with the speakers.
- iii) First year report update – the chair reported that approximately 71 out of 78 (91%) first year PhD students had completed their viva and had assessor reports completed. It was noted that a first year report Q&A event had been planned for the 2016 cohort of first year PhD students.
- iv) Researcher development programme – the chair reported that the researcher development booklet and log were still under development.

3. Chairman's business

- i) Athena Swan self-assessment team – members were presented with the departmental values and objectives, and were invited to consider them in terms of 'what was missing' and 'how do we meet them'.

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The significant items reported by members in relation to each objective were, that:

- a. it was difficult for students to determine whether the best students were being recruited and on what basis they could judge this, however the variance between staff and post-doctoral researchers could be quite large and discernible;
 - b. there existed significant variation in 'create a positive working environment', and more generally in demonstrating the values, and it was not apparent how could they be enforced;
 - c. there was a tendency to pretend everything was okay even if/when it's not okay;
 - d. there should be more recognition for the graduate student contribution to the department's success, for example awards/acknowledgements for giving supervisions, and professionalised feedback on teaching activities suitable for job references;
 - e. most student feedback or 'voice' was channelled via committees, and therefore the time taken to enact change and report the results/outcome could be deterring meaningful engagement;
- ii) Researchfish data collection – members were reminded that the collection period would close at 4pm on the 16th March, that the current response rate was 13% and that eligible RCUK students would be sent a reminder email.
- iii) Research data management workshop – the chair reported that although 27 students had registered for the workshop on the 25 January 2017, only 4 students turned up on time, and 11 arrived late. It was noted that first year PhD students needed to be encouraged to approach departmental events in a professional manner.

4. Careers room in Physics

Gemma Cleminson, Graduate Trainee on the Ambitious Futures programme, had been invited to consult members on the arrangements for visiting students. Members were informed that Gemma was on a five-month project placement until 16 June 2017, and that her primary activity was to review the Department's Visitor policy, consult stakeholders and gather views. GSCC members reported significant variation in how they interacted with visiting students, such as:

- a. being notified by group admins that visitors had arrived but never meeting them, or having much interaction; and finding it difficult to integrate;
- b. visitors sharing the same office space with first year PhD students, and working well as a team;
- c. not being told at all about their arrival or who they were;
- d. some visitors only arriving to use equipment;
- e. visitors having to rely on staff for help;
- f. CDT visitors working in a solitary manner;
- g. visitors having to wait 2-3 weeks for access cards, and being restricted from out of hours working;
- h. variation in visitors receiving college accommodation.

5. Graduate Student Matters

- i) International Women's Day – members were informed that Cavendish Inspiring Women (CiW) had organised an event on the 8 March to mark International Women's Day, and that everyone was invited and encouraged to attend.

6. Any other business

- i) PRES survey 2017 – members were informed that the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES 2017) was underway (2 March – 18 May), and that the survey was run on a biennial basis.
- ii) PRES survey 2017 - members were informed that the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES 2017) was underway and would close on 16 June.

7. Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the GSCC was on 11 May 2017.