



Meeting **FACULTY RESEARCH STUDENTS' COMMITTEE**
Place **Wessex House Council Chamber**
Date and Time **12.30 – 2.15pm, Wednesday 3rd February 2016**

Present	Prof Sue Wonnacott Dr James Doughty Dr Simon Lewis Dr Jim Laird Dr Adrian Hill Dr Lorenzo Caggiano Dr Sergey Gordeev	Chair Department of Biology and Biochemistry Department of Chemistry Department of Computer Science Department of Maths Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology Department of Physics
In attendance	Mr Simon Gane Miss Ceri Dibble Mr Matthew Humberstone Ms Dorcas Mumford	Graduate School Manager Programmes Officer Students' Union Officer Programmes Officer (E&D, observer)

		Action
1054	Welcome and introductions SW welcomed Dorcas Mumford to the meeting as an observer.	
1055	MINUTES Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th December 2015 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.	
1056	MATTERS ARISING 1040: All annual monitoring reports were received and submitted to URSC. Sue Wonnacott (SW) wrote a summary of the reports and also submitted this to URSC for consideration at the next meeting. This has been pushed back from January to 24 th February. 1043: CD informed the committee of the plans for the trial of online confirmation report submission via Moodle in March. The Graduate School are requesting that hard copies are submitted to examiners in the department. Students with submission dates in March will be contacted soon with instructions on how to submit via Moodle. SW will draft the confirmation guidelines and circulate to DoS.	SW
1057	CHAIR'S BUSINESS <u>University Strategy</u> : The University will be moving towards a new focus on research and growing postgraduate numbers. SW informed the committee of the five year plan (2016-2021): Phase 1 (years 1-2): Expansion of numbers through 'evolution' of existing activity	

	<p>Phase 2 (years 3-5) A bigger increase in PG numbers following innovations developed in the first two years There are plans to improve the infrastructure for PG students and a review of accommodation (PG research/work space within the university). A new PG sabbatical officer in the Students' Union will be appointed for the next academic year. SW welcomed this development. A PGR Doctoral College is also being considered. The structure of such an entity is not yet clear but Jonathan Knight (PVC Research) is consulting relevant personnel. All DoSs are still concerned about the lack of space for PGR students and how the strategy will cope with this. Matt Humberstone (MH) mentioned that plans for a 293 bed residence on campus for PG students has been submitted. This would be for the 2017/8 academic year.</p> <p><u>ResearchFish meeting:</u> SW and SG attended a meeting with Katy McKen from RIS, together with other Graduate School managers and Karen Toogood from Studentships. All Research Council funded students beyond year 1 need to update the ResearchFish website with information on their outputs and achievements, between February 1st and March 14th. From next year there could be penalties if students do not comply. SW did query if there could be an interface between PURE and ResearchFish but this is not possible. Jim Laird (JL) informed the committee that this exercise had generated a lot of queries and wanted to know who they could be referred to. SW suggested that they are forwarded to Katy McKen.</p> <p><u>Three Minute Thesis:</u> The heats were held on Thursday 28th January. There were seven excellent talks, with four from Chemistry students. Two students were selected to go forward to the next round; James Corbett from Biology and Matthew Camilleri from Chemistry. The next heat will be held in about 6 weeks' time in the Bath Brewhouse.</p>	
1058	<p>PRES ACTION PLANS Draft plans for Pharmacy and Physics were received prior to the meeting.</p> <p>LC presented the main points of the Pharmacy action plan to the committee members. <u>Research Culture:</u> Students had complained that the departmental seminars weren't relevant to their research. They also requested the opportunity to present at a seminar but when this was offered to the students, no one took it up. <u>Induction:</u> Usually there is just one induction event held in October but LC is now holding ad hoc induction sessions for mid-year arrivals. <u>Teaching:</u> Students are not happy with the day-long PG skills course for demonstrating. This is not something that LC can change as it is a university requirement. AH mentioned that Maths have a 2 hour course but SW pointed out that it is mandatory for those undertaking lab-based demonstrating to take the PG skills course. SW will discuss the demonstrating training course with Neil Bannister. <u>SSLC:</u> One action already accomplished is the establishment of a PG-only SSLC; two meetings have been held since the start of the academic year. <u>Working Space:</u> This issue has got worse since the survey was taken. SW suggested that the common themes from the department reports should be collated and discussed in the faculty report. <u>Mental Health:</u> It was suggested in the Pharmacy SSLC that the department holds a 'family day' so that PGR students who may normally feel excluded from activities or have family commitments can bring their families onto campus. LC questioned some of the terms used in the submission rates data (e.g. submitted in time/out of time), SG will circulate a clarification.</p> <p>Sergey Gordeev (SGv) summarised the Physics action plan. There are a lot of areas/questions that are not under the control of the DoS. SGv questioned whether the University will also have an action plan for these areas. SW suggested that any issues that are beyond the remit of a DoS are highlighted. SGv was also not sure how to measure some of the milestones. SW proposed that some milestones could be given dates for achieving the goal, others by specific targets that should be met.</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>SG</p>

	<p>James Doughty (JD) has started to draft the Biology action plan by identifying the areas to address. He has consulted the PGR student reps and set up a working group (including the head of department) to discuss the issues.</p> <p>Rresearch culture: while this seemed to be good the survey showed that some aspects need improvement. JD also wants to understand why the wider research community opportunities scored poorly.</p> <p>Progression: some students didn't seem to be aware of the progression procedures. This could be due to a poor induction process or the students starting mid-year. JD will now do ad-hoc sessions across the academic year for new starters and hopefully this will help the students understand the various deadlines and monitoring points involved in a PhD. Students mentioned to JD that they would like a PhD timeline in their induction packs or for the Graduate School to produce a video as they don't bother to log into Moodle for information. It may help if this information is available via a simple link that the students can access on their phones or tablets.</p> <p>JD informed the committee that 41% of respondents were first year students, to get a better and more accurate overview a better response from other years will be required. Only about 1/3 of the whole cohort completed the survey. MH wondered whether the questions in the survey need to be worded differently..</p> <p>JD concluded that submission rates are declining and it is possibly due to the change in ratio of Home/EU and overseas funding. SW wondered if the number of extensions had also increased over the last few years. CD to check data.</p> <p>JL is drafting the Computer Science report. The results were not great overall but some of the low scores were due to there not being a dedicated PG SSLC, which has now been established.</p> <p><u>Research Culture:</u> The diversity of the department needs to be looked at. No one attended the departmental seminars previously so they were stopped. These will be reintroduced with a more diverse programme.</p> <p><u>Induction:</u> This has not worked well in previous years. Students were either not happy with it or they just didn't turn up. This has improved this year and students were more engaged. JL is working with the PGR reps on the report and discussing the outcomes with the DoS team and the departmental research committee.</p> <p>SL is working on the draft report. Space is still a major issue in Chemistry. The students complained that the departmental seminars are unbalanced. SL thinks this can be tackled by changing the schedule of talks. The Chemistry PG SSLC is still to be established.</p> <p>Adrian Hill (AH) has not been able to consult the students yet due to many of the PGR students taking exams in January. He is still trying to work out what some of the answers mean, as the questions were ambiguous.</p> <p>Most students seem to be happy with the departmental seminars.</p> <p><u>Induction:</u> most complaints were around the inefficiencies in the induction programme. AH would like to reschedule induction for week 0.</p> <p>The next Maths PG SSLC is in two weeks' time. The PGR reps have the open comments and they will feed back on these and make their own proposals.</p>	CD
1059	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH informed the committee that the Students' Union have written up a PG research project with details of focus groups, dealing with issues such as isolation and the PGR lifestyle. • The nomination period for the new PG Officer sabbatical post closes on Friday 19th February. • MH has also been involved in a project focusing on mental health issues with Student Services and Health and Safety with the aim of developing a three year action plan. There will be a consultation period and an initial report then an action plan should be ready by the end of the academic year. Adrian Hill (AH) queried whether DoS would get 	

	to see the report. MH confirmed that this will go to URSC and will then go on the agenda for March FRSC.	
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