

Staff-Student Consultative Committee
Minutes for Meeting No. 1 of 2014/2015

Date: 25th November 2014

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: Room 522, CYM Physics Building, HKU

Present:

Dr. J.J.L. Lim (Chairman, Staff representative)

Dr. J.C.S Pun (Staff representative)

Dr. M.K. Yip (Staff representative)

Undergraduate and graduate students

Background: In semester 2 of the 2013-2014 academic year, the physics society failed to form an executive committee. As a consequence, there was nobody in the physics society to initiate the nomination and voting of physics student representatives for semester 1 of the 2014-2015 academic year. Thus, for semester 1 of the 2014-2015 academic year, the Staff-Student Consultation Committee (SSCC) held an open forum for students who have either declared an intention or made a declaration to major in physics, astronomy, or mathematics (mathematics students were included because our student email exploder included all the aforementioned subject areas). We also invited students to email the SSCC staff representatives or the Physics department in advance of the meeting in case they could not attend, or wished to communicate their concerns privately.

1. Computer Room. The students expressed their appreciation for the opening of the new computer room in the CYMP building, and made the following requests:
 - Extend the opening hours of the computer room to beyond 6 pm, preferably accessible 24 hours a day.
 - To have two computers that can be booted up in either Windows or LINUX.
 - To have a contact person that the students can call upon during office hours in case of problems.
 - To have a rubbish bin in the computer room.
 - To have access to a printer either in the computer room or the department office.
 - To have a few more stackable chairs in the computer room.
 - To have matlab and ds9 installed on the computers.
 - To list the software available on the different computers.

2. General Relativity and Cosmology Courses. These courses are offered only once every 2 years. Although the students are aware of this, because of scheduling constraints, many students interested in taking these courses will not have the opportunity to do so before they graduate.

- Two petitions containing the names and signatures of students wanting to take the General Relativity and Cosmology courses were handed over to the SSCC Chair.
3. Core Curriculum Courses. The core curriculum courses for majoring in physics do not include special relativity. On the other hand, there is a degree of overlap in the quantum physics courses. The students suggested:
 - Adding special relativity to the Modern Physics course.

 4. Education and Science Double degrees. Students majoring in Education are not permitted to take science courses during years 4 & 5*. The students wishing to major in both Education and Science suggested:
 - Extending the time over which they are allowed to take science courses.
 - * Further checking revealed that, in actual fact, students majoring in Education are not allowed to take science courses during only one of the semesters in years 4 and 5. The reason is that they have to practice teaching at secondary schools during one of the semesters in each of these years, and so will not have time to take science courses.

 5. 1st-year laboratory sessions. Students undertaking the 1st-year introductory physics courses currently conduct two laboratory sessions. The students suggested:
 - Increasing the number of laboratory sessions to at least three in the 1st-year introductory physics courses.

 6. Study Space. The students expressed their appreciation of being able to use desks placed outside the department office. The students recognize that they can make use of the seminar room (Rm 522) when it is not being used for official means. Yet, there is always a demand for more space.
 - The Chair suggested trialing out the tutorial room (Rm 105) for general use when it is not being used by Departmental staff.

Follow-up: Each of the requests and concerns expressed by the students were reported to the Physics Department staff at the Staff Meeting on the following day, 26 Nov 2014. Below are the decisions or action items to be taken:

1. Computer Room.
 - The intention is to have the computer room accessible 24 hours a day through student key cards. *Action item:* the space committee will look into implementing 24-hr access to the computer room for semester 2 of the 2014-2015 academic year.

- *Action item:* the SSCC Chair will check with the Computer Center to see if two computers can be booted up in either Windows or LINUX, and whether printers can be installed.
 - *Action item:* appoint Sodi as the contact person for the computer room, to be available during office hours.
 - *Action item:* ask Prof. H. F. Chau to look into the issue of installing Matlab on the computers.
4. Education and Science Double degrees:
- This is an issue for the Education rather than the Physics department to address.
Action item: This issue will be brought to the attention of the Science Faculty.
5. 1st-year laboratory sessions. The Curriculum Committee look favorably on the request to have more laboratory sessions, and will look to see if possible to implement.
6. Study Space. The staff look favorably upon the request to make Rm 105 made available for student use, and will make it happen in Semester 2 of the 2014-2015 academic year.