



A meeting of the Graduate Students' Forum took place on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at 12:00 in GC22 in the Computer Laboratory, William Gates Building.

1. Attendance

SB Sandro Bauer (NLP)
CC Claire Chapman (Temporary Minutes Secretary)
LG Lise Gough (Graduate Education Manager)
HH Heidi Howard (SRG)
SK Stephen Kollman (DTG)
AR Andrew Rice (GEC) [Chair]
GS Gheorghe Sarbu (CAG)
KS Kumar Sharad (SRG)
EW Errol Wood (Rainbow)

2. Apologies

Bob Fang (MPhil)
Ivo Timoteo (AI & B)
Ramana Kumar (PLS)
Luana Fagarasan (NLP & women@CL)

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2014 were approved.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

- i. Unofficial PhD guide
SB has not yet heard back from Yoli Shavit with regard to providing information on leave to work away for other students. It was agreed that as each case is different and the rules constantly change, a sentence will be put on the web stating that *'Each individual case should be discussed with your tutor and LG on a one-to-one basis.'* SB will update the guide to this effect on the website. Paid internships aren't offered at the Department and only expenses can be reimbursed.
- ii. Department barbecue over summer
GS still has to undertake his Basic Food Hygiene training. The course is of ½ day duration and the Department will pay for this. EW and SB also stated an interest in obtaining the certificate. AR will circulate details of the course.
- iii. GSF supervising hours survey
AR will report from back from the Graduate Education and Teaching Committee. Ann Copestake is going to obtain more feedback on CamCORS for the Department.

5. Sys-admin feedback

Nothing to report.

6. Departmental announcements

The Learning and Teaching Review will take place on Thursday 12 March. GS will be one of the graduate student representatives. He has read the code of practice which he found useful and recommends that other students read the code.

The Masters Provision Review will take place on Friday 13 March.

LG apologised for the number of surveys which students have been sent.

7. Staff-student consultative forum

HH reported that the café has been asked to open earlier at 8.30am. This will be trialled for 6 weeks. She asked that people be encouraged to go during this time, so that this can be a regular occurrence.

8. Researcher development

There are now Advanced Supervising Courses organised by AR in operation and the first course was fully subscribed.

9. Student feedback

SK: Demonstrating and open days require a zero hour contract to be completed each time. Is this a necessity? **Addendum:** It is a requirement of the Accounts Office that a short-term contract must be completed.

A system which records talks in SW01 is currently being addressed by Brian Jones. LG will report on progress at next meeting.

Supervisors have complained of the poor writing quality of the Undergraduates. This will be fed back to Student Administration for action.

SB: A talk on taxation would be helpful in the Department; especially for Overseas students. LG noted that this is already discussed at the Induction Meeting and will provide a link to Revenues and Customs on the website.

Rooms are too hot/too cold and temperatures can't be controlled in the room. AR said that heating can't be individually controlled but the number of air vents opened can be altered which will have a slow gradient effect but will also have a knock on effect for nearby offices. If the problem can't be resolved with Building Services, then students need to escalate the problem by contacting Caroline Stewart and Andy Hopper.

Later opening hours at the café was requested. NB: The café is currently undergoing a 6 week trial of opening earlier at 8.30am after a request made at the SSCOF. Later opening hours wasn't requested.

KS: Male students had noticed that they are not eligible to submit an abstract or poster to the Oxbridge Conference organised by the women@CL. HH said that the policy is that males are able to attend, but are unable to submit or present.

EW: Cutlery is continually disappearing from kitchenettes. AR agreed to fund replacements, but asked to ensure new cutlery was of an ugly appearance and easily identified. LG offered to send a call out for cutlery to be returned.

Can the quality of speakers be improved at the Wednesday Seminars and can they be scheduled for the evening? AR said that meetings/seminars have to be held between 10am-4pm to allow people will child care duties to be taken into account. AR said that in Michaelmas, good speakers were invited, but this still resulted in bad attendance. EW suggested offering refreshments to encourage more people. Another suggestion was that each term a research group should invite a speaker to a Wednesday Seminar. AR said that this would be a duplication of the weekly Group Seminars.

It was noted that Techtalks held for the Undergraduates sometimes clash with the Wednesday Seminar and this should be avoided as they attract a high audience. A reminder will be sent to Jan Samols.

The Department has introduced an annual Wheeler Lecture to invite a high-profile speaker.

HH: Can a quicker mechanism for undergraduates to feedback be put in place? Often students complain to supervisors about small things i.e. lecturer not speaking loud enough, which could be rectified immediately rather than at the end of term. AR said there is an email system in place but students think it is for extreme cases and so wouldn't use it for small issues. Student Administration will be approached to remind students of the email address.

The SRG have had issues with Building Services who are continually changing the room layout of FN05. Due to the curtains catching in the door, Building Services have removed the door handles which now make it impossible to close the door. This room is used for Skype calls and needs to be private. Caroline Stewart will be informed and asked to resolve this.

10. Any other business

Appointment of Forum Secretary

It was agreed that a Round Robin will be put in place. CC will circulate the Agenda for the next meeting in May and SB will take the minutes.

11. Date of next meeting

To be arranged in May.