

# IGC Staff Student Liaison Committee

5 May 2021, 2.00-3.30, Zoom

## Minutes

Present:

### Academic staff

Val Brunton

Kathy Evans

Nick Gilbert

Dasa Longman (Chair)

Pauline McDonald (Minutes)

### Student Representatives

Portia McGhan - HGU

Fraser McPhie - HGU

Michaela Raab - HGU

Heather Love - CGEM

Grant Marshall – CGEM

Esme Bullock - CRUK

Nathalie Feeley - CRUK

#### **1. Matters arising from previous meeting**

No matters arising from previous meeting. Dasa welcomed Michaela Raab and Fraser McPhie as new student representatives to the committee.

#### **2. Pastoral support committees pilot (Nick)**

NG explained that a new pilot was being introduced in the IGC, which would provide pastoral support to students. The reason for introducing these committees is to have additional support in place for students, which is not directly linked to academic progression. NG confirmed that all students would still have annual thesis committees and that pastoral committees would ideally take place at the beginning of the academic year. Thereafter, pastoral committee meetings would take place every 12 months, however, it was agreed that students can request to meet with their committee on an ad hoc basis if required. As there is approximately 130 students on site in the Institute, a gradual roll-out of the scheme would have to be implemented, starting with first year students, moving on to second year etc.

NG gave a brief overview of the proposed scheme, explaining that we had to take a realistic and pragmatic approach; there will be approximately 10 committees, which will consist of one PI and one post-doc and will oversee approximately 13 students. These committee members will not be from the same Centre as the student. NG hopes to run a 1hr training session for pastoral committee staff, which will help staff to deal with different scenarios and ensure they are equipped to signpost students to other helpful support services across the University. As each pastoral committee has a duty of care for each student, they will feedback any concerns to PG Directors in the first instance, or if they would like to seek advice on behalf of the student.

All committee members were supportive of the pilot and are keen to see this initiative implemented, whilst keeping the pilot under advisement. If the pilot is successful, this scheme would be rolled-out across CMVM, which may allow other members of staff across College to become part of IGC pastoral committees.

**Action:**

- NG to implement new pilot and students to provide feedback at next SSLC.

**3. Post-covid support – are we doing enough?**

NG confirmed that there have been a number of rounds of student extensions, and every student who has applied for an extension in IGC has been awarded one. In addition to this support being implemented, NG asked student reps if they think there is anything else we can do to help. The students felt that overall student engagement at POGS had been low, but this was possibly due to extended lockdown conditions and remote working. PM reported that only 15 students attended the recent Careers event and was unsure why there was such a poor turnout.

Student reps felt it would be helpful if the Institute had a more robust booking system for office space, as students would like to be able to utilise/book office space in IGC so they can engage in as many activities as possible when on site. It was acknowledged that students would like all seminars/talks to be recorded to allow more flexibility whilst using shift system, as it can be difficult to attend online meetings whilst travelling to work and when maximising time spent in the lab.

**Action:**

- NG to ask Angela Ingram about students being able to access booking system for office space within the Institute.

**4. Computational students - how do they feel about returning to office-based work?**

PG Directors are keen to ensure that all students returning to the workplace are supported. As there are no computationally based students on the SSLC, NG asked student reps if they knew how their fellow computational students felt about returning to the office. Student reps were very supportive of TestEd but feel that more information about induction would be useful for computational students. The committee discussed the UoE hybrid working model and agreed that it would be beneficial to staff and students to have some face-to-face interaction with colleagues, even if only on a part-time basis. NG reported that UoE are planning to reduce office space by 50%, and getting a good working balance for all staff and students is essential. NG encouraged student reps to let computational students know they should contact him if they need any reassurance or information about their return to the workplace.

**Action:**

- DL to recruit some computational students onto committee.
- NG to ask Angela/Eilidh to draft an induction email specifically for computationally based students.

**5. General comments from student reps**

Overall, the students were positive extremely supportive about the TestEd facility on site. Student extensions were well received amongst the student community and student reps were all in favour of the new pastoral support committee pilot that is in the pipeline.

The committee discussed the new student checklist (verbal contract/agreement) which is due to be implemented, and it was acknowledged that clear guidelines should be put into place for supervisors regarding expectations for working (guide to normal working hours, annual/sick leave). The committee agreed that a pro forma document should be used in conjunction with the checklist, in the event that students can refer to this document if a supervisor suggests something atypical to student expectations. The committee also agreed that students should be encouraged to take annual leave and it was noted that most funding bodies recommend students should take the same amount of leave as staff.

NG informed the committee that sick leave is available for students but not all funding bodies cover these costs. PG Directors are supportive of students taking time off when they are unwell and this information should be added to the pro forma document, which should be discussed between supervisor and student.

Due to the IGC bespoke annual leave system being replaced with new UoE People and Money system, the committee agreed they should re-visit annual leave booking system for students as the new central system is for staff only.

Student reps felt that students who started their studies remotely could benefit from being reminded about day-to-day supervisors as they may require more support in lab.

The committee discussed on-site catering, shower and gym facilities and agreed that an update from Angela Ingram would be helpful.

Action:

- NG - pro forma document to be implemented in conjunction with student checklist.
- NG to ask Angela Ingram to provide update on on-site catering, showering, gym facilities.
- NG to remind new students about role of day-to-day supervisors for assistance in lab.

6. Any other business  
No other business

7. Date of next meeting  
October 2021