**IGMM Staff Student Liaison Committee**

**Wednesday 28 October 2020 – Zoom**

Present

Academic Staff

Kathy Evans

Nick Gilbert

Dasa Longman

Catherine Naughton

Student Representatives

Chiara Asselborn (CRUK)

Esme Bullock (CRUK)

Sisi Dimova (HGU)

Nathalie Feeley (CRUK)

Lauren Kane (HGU)

Heather Love (CGEM)

Grant Marshall (CGEM)

Portia McGhan (HGU)

Pauline McDonald - minutes

1. **Welcome & apologies**

DL welcomed Esme Bullock and Nathalie Feeley and Heather Love to the committee as a new student representatives. DL acknowledged that this will be Lauren Kane, Sisi Dimova and Chiara Asselborn’s last meeting and thanked them for their contribution to the committee.

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

1. **Update since previous meeting**

Mental Health survey update – NG confirmed that the summary of the report indicated that IGMM need to make some changes to improve the student experience, and that these will take time to implement. NG confirmed this is a work in progress and is pleased that positive action is being taken.

1. **Student survey results**

Feedback from survey – 45 responses across IGMM; 55% HGU, 30%ECRC, 13% CGEM.

First year students were happy that induction events and teaching sessions were well organised and computational projects have had a very smooth start. Positive feedback was received from POGS regarding virtual buddy event and are happy to run the event again next year.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, overall, students across the Institute are happy with their supervisors, the booking system for shifts in the lab and the accessibility of online seminars.

The committee discussed some issues that were raised as a result of the student survey:

1. Lack of transmission of information of rules – the committee acknowledged that each Centre in the Institute has different rules and agreed that if any students are unsure about the rules when working on site, students should approach their lab managers or area supervisors in the first instance.

NG reiterated that the University is restricted by Scottish Government Guidelines, and urged students to contact him if they are still unclear or unhappy with advice given regarding on-site working.

PGR Directors agreed that if SSLC student reps would like to send further clarification of rules to students across the Institute, they should send draft email to Angela Ingram for approval.

1. Time management – the committee discussed the importance of students trying to get a good work/home life balance. It was agreed that all seminars, research talks, section meetings etc. should be recorded where possible, to allow staff and students to catch up when they are able. This would also ease any diary conflicts.
2. Social aspect- due to the new working “shift” system being implanted, students feel there is now a lack of social events within the IGMM. The committee discussed upcoming academic events (student poster event being held in November, HGU Christmas talks scheduled for December), but acknowledged that social distancing and the current way of working may go on for some time. The committee explored various options of implementing social events (shift system for TGIF, Centre specific events) and agreed that the best course of action would be for POGS to contact Angela Ingram to seek clarity on rules regarding organisation of social events.

**Action:** POGS to email Angela Ingram.

1. Mental health – student reps reported that some of their peers are having problems accessing mental health guidance.

NG told the committee that the IGMM are preparing a business case to employ a dedicated Health and Wellbeing person to have on site, but this is subject to approval.

NG reported that the Student Welfare Service have employed more staff and as a result, there is very little waiting time for students to be seen/assessed by professional services. Their expectation is that if students’ issues cannot be addressed in short number of sessions, they would recommend booking an appointment to see their GP or tap into NHS services for further assessment. The committee acknowledged that there is a long waiting list for NHS support and would like to see more UoE support readily available.

NG encouraged students to tap into resources on the IGMM student mental health poster (in student handbook) as these services may be able to help students.

The committee agreed that UoE initiatives such as Solidaritea would allow staff and students to meet socially and support one another.

**Action:** NG to email Angela Ingram/Health and Wellbeing Group to ask if there is any reason we cannot run a re-current event locally for staff and students.

1. **Any Other Business**

NG asked the student reps how they were feeling about approaching the end of their studentship. The general consensus was positive, but the students thought it would be helpful if a careers event was organised. NG suggested running an afternoon event, inviting representatives from different industries to talk about different careers.

The committee agreed that IAD would also be a good resource for students to tap into regarding further development courses, as well as accessing information from UoE Careers Service. KE reminded students that in terms of job applications, cover letters are often considered as a key element and applicants who show knowledge and interest of the lab/subject in this letter will generally fair better.

**Action:** NG to liaise with POGS regarding careers event.

Overall, the students seemed positive about their PhD training but felt it would be good to further explore options for online social events whilst working “shift” patterns. Some first year students also felt it might be helpful if a 1st year specific event was organised. It was suggested that POGS might co-ordinate a 1st year specific virtual event and organise access via the student-admin team to a specific email list. The students also thought it would be a good idea if Nick sent round the student health and wellbeing poster to everyone again, highlighting the resources available.

The committee discussed the prospect of students having a virtual viva and NG advised that, whilst complete in-person vivia’s are not currently possible, the risk assessments are in place to hold a partial in-person viva. NG confirmed that he is supportive of this for mental health and wellbeing purposes, as the student would not be home alone post viva.

1. **Date of next meeting**

April 2021