

## FACULTY BOARD OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY

A meeting was held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in the Committee Room, Institute of Astronomy. There were present:

Professor R.T. Phillips (Chairman), Mr P.M. Aslin, Professor C. Abell, Professor G.T. Burstein, Professor G.F. Gilmore, Professor A.L. Greer, Mr R.A.C. Hay, Dr H.R.N. Jones, Professor R.C. Kennicutt and Mr A. Norman.

Apologies were received from Dr J.R. Batley, Professor S.M. Best, Mr. J. Foerster, Ms J. Horsley, Professor W. Jones, Professor P.B. Littlewood, Dr W Nolan, Ms A. Quider, Dr J.M. Riley, Professor J. Robertson and Dr D.M.A. Stuart.

### MINUTES

09601 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2009 were approved.

09602 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

09603 Election of student members of the Faculty Board

It was noted that the election of student members of the Faculty Board will take place on Tuesday 1st December 2009, with the closing date for nominations on 24th November.

09604 National Student Survey 2009

The Faculty Board received the results of the National Student Survey and felt they were generally satisfactory. The results have been circulated to Departmental Teaching Committees in the departments of Chemistry and Physics with an invitation to submit any comments directly to the Education Committee. The Secretary was asked to ensure the survey results are also seen by the student consultative committees in Physics and Chemistry. Overall the trends in the responses for Chemistry and Physics were similar to the University average but it was noted that lower satisfaction was evident in the responses relating to workload in Physics. The Physics Teaching Committee will be asked to consider this issue in particular.

The Chair stressed that students should be encouraged to complete this national survey because the results are important and widely circulated and there is a natural tendency for a higher proportion of the more disgruntled students to respond but this factor would be diluted with a higher overall response rate. It was noted that this survey is intended for final year undergraduates but is sent only to third year NST students.

09605 Review of the Senior Academic Promotions Procedure

The Faculty Board raised the following points in response to the General Board's review of the Senior Academic Promotions Procedure:

a) Structural matters

The current career structure is essentially sound and appropriate. The grade of Reader should be retained although it could perhaps be retitled, Associate Professor. The grade of Senior Lecturer does need clarification and the Faculty Board would be content if it were to be used for staff who have shown sustained excellence in teaching but may be less active in research. Some simplification of regulations regarding eligibility would be beneficial. For example, an ADR is not currently permitted to apply for a Senior Lectureship, despite the fact that some do substantial teaching.

b) Procedure

The three-stage structure has created difficulties when "higher" committees have upset the ranking order determined by the Faculty Committee which has happened on many occasions. The role of higher committees should be to interleave Faculty ranking lists, not to re-evaluate them completely. This can be seen as analogous to external examiners in the undergraduate examination process where their role is to moderate, not to reorder. If this role were to be adopted there may not be a need for a three-tier process - it should be possible with two. The GB sub-committees and main committee could be amalgamated and perhaps some smaller Faculty Promotions Committees amalgamated where appropriate.

"Sustained" performance is currently a requirement for promotion to USL but not for Reader or Professor. This has in the past generated some inconsistencies and difficulties when the Faculty Promotions Committee is required to make comparisons between very different cases for promotion. Sustained performance should be a requirement for all promotions.

The flow of information and minutes between committees is inadequate. It should be a two-way flow of information not just upwards as at present.

c) Special considerations

Present system is satisfactory.

d) Financial constraints

The Faculty Board believes financial constraints are necessary and that these should be operated centrally.

09606 The future of Ordinary Examination and the Ordinary BA Degree

The Faculty Board accepted the amendments proposed by the Education Section to Regulations governing the Ordinary Degree. It was noted that this would mean students performing well in Parts IA and IB but not proceeding to Part II would receive only an Ordinary degree.

09607 Students' issues

There were no issues raised

09608 Election of the Chairman of the Faculty Board for 2010

Professor G.F. Gilmore was elected Chairman of the Faculty Board for the calendar year 2010.

09609 Appointment of a member of the Council of the School of the Physical Sciences  
Professor G.F. Gilmore was appointed a member of the Council of the School of the Physical Sciences for the calendar year 2010.

09610 Co-option of members of the Faculty Board in class (d)  
**R\***

09611 Observers on other Faculty Boards  
The following observers were appointed to serve on the Faculty Boards stated for the calendar year 2010:

Biology	Dr M.J. Duer
Earth Sciences and Geography	Mr P.M. Aslin
Engineering	Professor G. T. Burstein
Mathematics	Dr R. Batley

09612 Pilkington Teaching Prize  
**R\***

09613 Deputy Heads in the Department of Physics  
**R\***

09614 Any other business  
There was no further business.

**R\*** These items remain Reserved