

Meeting 3/22

25 August 2022

For general publication

**ACTION**

**Present:** Ms Kusumitha Shrinivasan (Chair), Mr Zakaria Ahmed, Miss Charne Crous (observer), Ms Tammie Fair, Miss Rebecca Leonard, Mr Ben Smith (minutes), Miss Brooke Thorpe, Miss Madeline Thompson, A/Prof Nick West

**Apologies:** Mr Vishaak Gangasandra, Mr Abdulwahad Gnawy, Miss Faith McKay, Ms Phuong Nguyen, Miss Thu Vy Tran, Dr Simon Worrall, Mr Jinyang Yang.

**Absent:** Nil.

**1. Welcome and apologies:**

Kusumitha Shrinivasan welcomed members to the third CSAG meeting of the year and noted the apologies.

**2. Recognition:**

An Acknowledgment of Country was spoken by the Chairperson, in recognition of the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting was taking place.

**3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 12 May 2022:**

The minutes of the meeting held 12 May 2022, having been circulated to group members and published on the School website with SCMB constituent students notified via email that the minutes were available, were taken as read and were confirmed by those who had been present.

**4. SCMB Honours and Postgraduate Information Session**

Kusumitha Shrinivasan reported that SCMB would be holding a Science Honours and Postgraduate Study Week poster event on Friday 2 September, on the Chemistry Building podium from 12:30pm -2:00pm.

Tammie Fair explained that prior to COVID an Honours week event was held annually in September where academics with research projects would present a poster, and students would have an opportunity to talk to potential supervisors. The event is primarily aimed at third year students and postgraduate students, but anyone interested is welcome to attend.

**5. Art of Science Competition:**

Ben Smith noted that advertising materials for the 2022 Art of Science competition were available and had been distributed to students via email and updated on the SCMB webpage. Members in attendance from the Chemistry Club and Biotechnology Society were encouraged to share the advertising materials.

Rebecca Leonard queried if the competition was open to students enrolled in 2022 courses, noting that the poster mentioned 2021 courses.

Ben confirmed this was a misprint, and that the competition was open to all students enrolled in SCMB courses in 2022.

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**6. Other business/open discussion:**

Brooke Thorpe noted that the poster boards located on level 4 and 5 of the Chemistry Building were mostly empty, and there was an opportunity to use these poster boards for relevant materials. These poster boards have high visibility with second year and beyond Chemistry students completing laboratory sessions, so information targeted towards these cohorts may be appreciated by the students.

Kusumitha Shrinivasan raised the topic of advertising and raising awareness of the process for volunteering in laboratories, noting that it was not currently well understood by undergraduate students. Approaching a supervisor can be daunting, so information on how to go about this would be highly beneficial for interested students.

Brooke responded that she had recently been through this process and was happy to provide some feedback and collaborate around how to best convey the relevant information. Brooke mentioned that being present and engaging with academic staff was ideal for opening up opportunities.

Kusumitha mentioned that at the recent Biotechnology research night many students were seeking advice on how to approach a potential research supervisor, and what to include in emails to supervisors. Opportunities such as the Summer Research Program are well advertised, but a user-friendly guide to approaching supervisors (ideally with input from students) is currently lacking.

Rebecca Leonard gave an example of the Summer Research Program requiring students to email a supervisor before submitting an application, but there was no information on what to include in the email. Rebecca agreed that a guide to approaching research supervisors could be very useful.

Brooke mentioned that from her recent experience finding the appropriate form for an internship was a convoluted process.

Tammie Fair shared that SCMB had a high volume of students undertaking research projects, but volunteering was less common, and the relevant forms were not as readily accessible. Tammie mentioned the SCMB Internships and Industry Placements webpage, but agreed the application form itself was not user friendly.

Kusumitha mentioned that the SCMB Coursework Community Blackboard site includes some of the relevant forms students and research supervisors need to complete before commencing a research project, but including the volunteering form on this site would be helpful.

Zakaria Ahmed reported that the Biotechnology research night was well attended and well received.

Kusumitha agreed this was a great opportunity for students to talk to researchers and queried if there was any possibility of holding an SCMB research function.

Nick West explained that the upcoming Honours and Postgraduate information event would fill this purpose.

Kusumitha shared feedback from a peer that some academics had become accustomed to reading out slides, which was not appreciated by students who are seeking more engagement.

Nick encouraged sharing this type of feedback via the SECAT process.

Brooke noted that the CHEM2050 end of semester examination had been long and difficult, and the time commitment required for the companion course CHEM2054 may be adversely affecting the amount of time students have to dedicate to CHEM2050.

Charne Crous shared that she had taken these courses together in 2019, and amongst her cohort the sentiment was that this was an extremely high workload.

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Brooke suggested that CHEM2060 may have more relevancy and content overlap with CHEM2054 in place of CHEM2050.

Nick queried if the primary issue was the level of work involved in CHEM2054 or the frequency of the assessment items.

Brooke replied that the frequency of assessment was the main issue. The report writing skills utilised in CHEM2054 were highly useful but reducing the frequency of assessment submissions may be worth considering.

Kusumitha queried whether a Biotechnology Society member should be invited to CSAG meetings as previously discussed in meeting 2.

Nick confirmed that it was resolved in the previous meeting that a member from the Biotechnology Society could be invited as an observer but put forward a question to the group of whether a separate representative would be beneficial if there are already members of the group who are part of the society.

Rebecca responded that a separate representative from clubs and societies would allow the group members to fully focus on their role within the student advisory group without also attempting to represent their respective club/society.

Tammie noted that the Teaching and Learning Committee has a number of non-sitting members who are asked if they would like to submit agenda items each meeting, and if necessary, they can report at the meeting. Tammie suggested that a similar approach could be taken with the relevant clubs and societies for the Coursework Student Advisory Group.

Kusumitha queried if there was any possibility of changing when SECAT surveys were available, noting that when the surveys were open students were focussed on end of semester examinations and assessment items.

Tamie noted that the SECAT process was centrally administered, but this feedback had been passed on previously.

Brooke suggested opening SECAT surveys earlier in the semester, because things that occurred early in the semester were often difficult to remember by the time surveys opened.

Madeline Thompson agreed that courses where different lecturers ran different modules throughout the semester were not well represented in the process.

Kusumitha thanked the group members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

#### **7. Next meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 14 October at 12pm in Building 68, Room 306.

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