

09 Feb 2018

## **Department of Chemistry Response to Questions and Topics raised during the Student Forum on 13 Oct 2017**

### **Changes to 3<sup>rd</sup> year lab courses**

Starting in Sept 2018, 36X lab courses will be transitioned to a one-term format. The Department has already written to every student registered in a chemistry course to inform them about the changes. Each 36X course will offer a total of 60 hours of lab experience per term for 1.5 units of credit. The scheduling for each class will be announced in early 2018. It is possible that each of the four lab courses will be structured differently.

### **Organic chemistry in CHEM 101 & CHEM 231**

Some students mentioned that there is currently a big step into second year organic chemistry, and CHEM 101 provides insufficient preparation for CHEM 231. The Department acknowledges that the organic chemistry component of CHEM 101 is minimal and that CHEM 231 is the introduction to organic chemistry. CHEM 101 is currently packed with topics and new ones may be required to accommodate changes in BC high school curriculum. The Department further acknowledges that CHEM 231 is a challenging course, as is CHEM 245. There is a natural increase in challenge and expectations when moving from first to second year, and then again into the senior-level courses. CHEM 231 tutorials were introduced to assist students with this transition, and feedback from students indicates that it is working well. The Department encourages students to engage in those tutorials.

### **CHEM 231 tutorials**

Students have requested that problem sets be assigned that may be downloaded ahead of time. That way students can work on these at home, and then come to the tutorials to see these being worked out. The Department points out that this is a great way to study, and there are already problem sets assigned in this manner. The Department is in the process of developing a guideline for TAs to create consistent and more effective tutorials in CHEM 231.

### **CHEM 231 concurrently with CHEM 102**

It is possible to take CHEM 231 in first year, but for the reasons mentioned above, this is not advisable for all students. The 200 level curriculum is designed for second-year students. The Department acknowledges that taking CHEM 231 in first year is currently described as a viable route in the academic calendar. The Department welcomes further student discussion and comments on this topic.

### **EQHR update**

During the forum, Dr. Bohne gave a brief presentation on the Department's roles and efforts to convey information about Equity & Human Rights (EQHR). The student response was very positive, indicating that the mention of EQHR in classes was a good addition in the Fall term, as it acknowledges issues facing society. Students suggested that the Department consider

partnership with UVSS campaigns to help get the word out. The UVic Chemistry website now features an EQHR section.

### **Chem Med Sci course selection**

The students brought to our attention that some courses in Pool A are easily available, while others have prerequisites. However, many of the courses in Pool B are not available due to a larger number of prerequisites. The Department has built flexibility of course selection into the Chem Med Sci program, but acknowledges that while students already make use of the flexibility it should be better advertised. The Chem Med Sci calendar entry will be changed to more clearly indicate that other options are available for course selection.

### **Academic Advising**

The students brought to our attention that the UVic Social Sciences, Science, and Humanities Academic Advising Centre staff are not well informed about the various chemistry programs. They are able to advise students on general topics, but a specific contact within the Department would be very useful. The Department already has undergraduate program advisors for each of the honours/majors and Chem Med Sci programs, but none of the students present at the forum realized this. The Department has created a chemadvisor@uvic.ca email address and has updated the link on the Department website.

### **WileyPlus package**

Some students mentioned that WileyPlus is a useful study tool, and was a good value for the money. One student mentioned that the package is expensive if purchased alone (i.e. not bundled with a textbook), and asked about the possibility of less expensive alternatives. Students also mentioned that it would be more helpful if better feedback could be provided in the software, rather than just an indication of whether the answer was right or wrong. The Department agrees that the online feedback is not state-of-the-art. WileyPlus is highly recommended for extra practice. The textbook-WileyPlus package costs \$175 (for two courses 231, 232); WileyPlus alone (without the book) costs \$125.