

**Student Forum, October 12, 2018. 3:30 – 5:00 PM**  
*Meeting Notes: Student Feedback and Department Responses*

**1. Welcome and introduction**

Matt Moffitt welcomed the students and introduced Department people in attendance – himself, Katherine Elvira, Alex Brolo, Peter Wan, and Rosemary Pulez. There were 12 – 15 students there, some left early for a mid-term.

**2. EQHR/ EqDI.**

Katherine described the Chemistry Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee, explaining that it consists of 2 faculty members, 2 staff members, 2 graduate students and 2 undergraduate students. At this time the committee is looking for undergraduate members, so Katherine invited anyone interested to let her know. Students were told that if they have any comments or concerns about equity, diversity and inclusion in the Department of Chemistry they should email them to [chemeqdi@uvic.ca](mailto:chemeqdi@uvic.ca) or contact one of the committee members. She assured them that they would meet to discuss in a safe space and that all disclosures are confidential. A flyer to explain EqDI and related policies and processes is under development at this time. Chemistry will make it available to all students and personnel when complete.

**3. Curriculum Review.**

Alex explained the history of the Curriculum Review process which has been underway since 2014. He said that the Department considered all options from small tweaks to a complete rebuild. After many discussions during retreats, Department meetings, and focus groups the Department voted for a complete rebuild, but even so in many ways the curriculum “will not be that different”.

The new curriculum will appear in the May 2019 calendar, and the changes will take affect starting in September 2019. He made the following points:

- The only change in first year is the addition Biology 186.
- The biggest changes are in second year. Chemistry 213 is not part of the new curriculum. The content of Chem 213 will be distributed between Chem 225, 231, 234, and 260.
- The only course in second year to have both lecture and lab components will be Chemistry 212. Chem 225, 231, 234, and 245 will be lecture only with 1 hour of tutorial each. Chemistry 260 will be a stand-alone lab course for inorganic and organic chemistry.
- A second year statistics course has been added (requirement).
- During the transition period, probably 2 years, Chem 213, 222 and 232 will also be offered so that students who are midway through their degree do not repeat or miss any requirements.
- There will not be big changes in third year – e.g. the 36X labs will be the same as this year (18/19) – 6 hours/ week and 1.5 credits (students seem fine with this).

- Another change in third year is that Chem 335 will no longer be offered. It will be offered for the last time in Spring 2019 although Chem 337 and 437 will be available.
- In the fourth year, there will be a new requirement – Chem 405 (Professional Development and Societal Engagement). Alex showed the list of fourth year course options and explained that Honours students will take 4 courses from the list and Majors will take 2.

Student comment: “Chem 213 was my favourite course. I can’t believe it is being cancelled.”

Department response: Chem 213 content will remain in the curriculum as part of Chem 225, 231, 234 and 260. Also, a 4<sup>th</sup> year course specializing in spectroscopy has been added.

Student question: “Will Chem 260 be offered in 6 hour blocks or 2 x 3 hours?”

Department response: Chem 260 will be offered as a 4 hour session one day plus a 2 hour session on another day later in the same week. Details are still being discussed.

Student question – Has the Department discussed the possibility of undergrads specializing E.g. receiving an Analytical Chemistry degree etc

Department response: “Streaming” was discussed during the curriculum review process however the Department decided that undergrad degrees should be broader so streaming was not pursued. However, 4<sup>th</sup> year options provide the ability to specialize somewhat.

Student question: “Has 400A been removed from the curriculum?”

Department response: Yes. Chem 300A will be offered every year and will cover most of the aspects formerly covered in Chem 400A.

Student question: “What is the description of Chem 405?”

Department response: 405 is a project course, done in the community: [https://www.uvic.ca/science/chemistry/assets/docs/undergrad/undergrad\\_courses\\_2019\\_2020/chem405\\_web.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/science/chemistry/assets/docs/undergrad/undergrad_courses_2019_2020/chem405_web.pdf)

Student question: “Who should I ask about CHEM 399?”

Matt said that Dennis Hore takes care of the research courses – or “just knock on doors” to see if PIs are taking undergrads and what the options are. Katherine added that you don’t have to know the researchers in order to do 298, 398, 399 or 499. We try to spread the word to all students about research opportunities.

Department response: Website link to undergraduate research opportunities is found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/science/chemistry/undergraduate/undergrad-research/index.php>

Student question: “What are the criteria for doing co-op?”

Department response: The chemistry co-op coordinator is Arcady Futerman (email: [scicoop@uvic.ca](mailto:scicoop@uvic.ca); office: ELL 118). The Website link to co-op is found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/>

#### 4. Student workload.

Student question: "In second year I have found considerable disparity between expectations in the labs. Will the labs be normalized so that expectations are similar in all lab classes?"

Department response: The new curriculum involves only two second year lab classes (212-analytical/physical – lecture and lab, and 260 – synthetic chemistry – lab only). The Department is evaluating standards and evaluation methods.

Student comment: "In third year different TAs mark the lab reports for different experiments. e.g. Experiment B12 will be marked by TA 1 while experiment B13 is marked by TA2. The TAs have different expectations so the marking is different."

Department response: The Department is evaluating standards, evaluation methods, guidelines and training for TAs, and other aspects of how lab classes are presented.

#### 5. Course support.

Most students were not concerned about course support however one did say that there are no office hours for her course – just some pre-midterm office hours. It was suggested that she send her instructor an email to set-up a time. Peter commented that starting September 2019 all second year classes will have tutorials (1 hr/wk), but that instructors should also be offering office hours or additional tutorials.

Department response: The Department encourages all faculty to offer office hours for their courses and encourages all students to participate in office hours.

#### 6. Time to complete a chemistry degree.

Student question: "What is the average time to completion?"

Department response: All 60 unit degrees are possible within 4 years if the student completes 15 units per year or  $5 \times 1.5$  unit courses per term. UVic provides extensive flexibility for students in selecting the course composition of their program and their term by term workload (numbers of courses per term). The new curriculum provides a clear schedule for students to complete 5 courses each term.

Student comments: Students who spoke up said that they didn't think that getting a chemistry degree in 4 years was possible or easy to do.

Department response: Completion in 4 years was difficult in the past. However, the new curriculum provides a clear path to a 4-year degree.

Student question: “Do research courses add to time for completion?”

Matt said that 298 and 398 are “extracurricular”. However he has had students who work on their 298 or 398 projects for a couple of hours/ week. This should be possible for all – discuss with PI. 399 and 499 are for credit so there are specific requirements.

Department response: Research courses provide valuable experiences for students. The flexibility built into these courses should allow many students to fit research experiences into their busy schedules.

## **7. Declaring your major.**

Matt explained that declaring early helps students plan and therefore complete sooner.