

Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Second Meeting of Michaelmas Term • Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

20th October 2016

Present: Charlie Hutchings (President, Lincoln College Rep.), Utsav Popat (Treasurer, Maths and Computer Science Rep.), Hannah Merwood (Maths and Statistics Rep.), Sam Davies Udina (Maths and Philosophy Rep.), Liam Stigant (Questionnaire Rep., IT Rep.), Anita Gergely (Hertford College Rep.), Anthony Landau (Trinity College Rep.), Lewis Gaul (St. Edmund Hall Rep.), Dan Fletcher (Oriell College Rep.), Andrew Tweddle (Somerville College Rep.), Maria-Magdalena Stamatova, Emily Filicos, Elizabeth Wilkinson, Mike Fuller, Rebecca Burmiston, Andreea Iorga, Terence Tsui.

Apologies for absence: There were none.

The meeting commenced at 1:06pm.

1 Minutes and Matters Arising

1.1 Minutes from EGM

The minutes from the EGM were **accepted**

2 General Business

2.1 Appointment of College Reps

Lauren Enright resigned from her position as St. Hilda's College Rep.

Nominations were opened for the positions of college reps.

Mike Fuller nominated himself as Pembroke College Rep. As he was the **sole nominee**, Mike therefore assumed the position of Pembroke College Rep.

Rebecca Burmiston nominated herself as Lady Margaret Hall Rep. As she was the **sole nominee**, Rebecca therefore assumed the position of Lady Margaret Hall Rep.

Maria-Magdalena Stamatova nominated herself as St. Hilda's College Rep. As she was the **sole nominee**, Maria-Magdalena therefore assumed the position of St. Hilda's College Rep.

Emily Filicos and Andreea Iorga nominate themselves as Merton College Rep. Utsav asks whether they would be happy to take on different roles in the committee; they say maybe. Someone else asked whether they had come to MURC meetings before; Andrea has, Emily has not. An election was duly held.

Result: **6 votes for Emily, 5 votes for Andrea with 3 abstentions.** Emily therefore assumed the position of Merton College Rep.

2.2 By-elections

Nominations were open for the position of President. Charlie Hutchings nominated himself and an election was duly held.

Result: Charlie Hutchings was **unanimously elected**. Charlie therefore assumed the position of President.

Nominations were open for the position of Secretary. Rebecca Burmiston nominated herself, and an election was duly held.

Result: Rebecca Burmiston was **unanimously elected**. Rebecca therefore assumed the position of Secretary.

Nominations were open for the position of Outreach Rep. No one nominated themselves.

Nominations were open for the position of Publicity and Careers Rep. No one nominated themselves.

Nominations were open for the position of 4th Year Rep. Sam Davies Udina nominated himself, and an election was duly held.

Result: Sam Davies Udina was **unanimously elected**. Sam therefore assumed the position of 4th Year Rep.

Nominations were open for the position of Arts Rep. Dan Fletcher nominated himself, and an election was duly held.

Result: Dan Fletcher was **unanimously elected**. Dan therefore assumed the position of Arts Rep.

Nominations were open again for the position of Publicity and Careers Rep. Maria-Magdalena Stamatova nominated herself and an election was duly held.

Result: Maria-Magdalena Stamatova was **unanimously elected**. Maria-Magdalena therefore assumed the position of Publicity and Careers Rep.

Nominations were open again for the position of Diversity and Inclusion Rep. Charlie Hutchings nominated himself and an election was duly held.

Result: Charlie Hutchings was **unanimously elected**. Charlie therefore assumed the position of Diversity and Inclusion Rep.

Nominations were open again for the position of Outreach Rep. Charlie Hutchings nominated himself and an election was duly held.

Result: Charlie Hutchings was **unanimously elected**. Charlie therefore assumed the position of Outreach Rep.

Liam Stigant resigned from his position as IT Rep.

Nominations were open for the position of IT Rep. Andrea Iorga nominated herself and an election was duly held.

Result: Andreea Iorga was **unanimously elected**. Andreea therefore assumed the position of IT Rep.

2.3 Report from Teaching Committee

Charlie reported from the meeting of the Mathematics Teaching Committee that had taken place on Wednesday. He noted that lecture capture had been given the go-ahead for a trial period which will take place during this academic year. It was noted that the recording equipment will be installed in three rooms on the mezzanine level during Michaelmas Term, with a trial lecture capture period taking place in Hilary Term. The results will be available to view in Trinity Term.

Charlie noted that many students had emailed the department regarding part B/C course registration at the beginning of the long vacation. These students did not understand why they had to choose which courses they were taking before they had received their exam results. It was noted that these students would feel more comfortable if they knew the results of their previous year before choosing what to study for their next year. The department wished to stress that course registration is not a final decision of what classes students would be taking, but rather a quick survey of opinions, so that the department can organise adequate lecture rooms and determine how many class teachers would be needed. Charlie noted that next year's email will be clearer in explaining this.

It was also noted that the new class registration website failed during the period of class registration, requiring students to manually email the department with their class choices. The department assured that this has been fixed and will not happen again in Hilary Term.

Finally, Charlie noted that the number of EU applicants had increased since "Brexit." This goes against the departments fears that European applications would take a dramatic fall after Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

2.4 Report from Lecture Questionnaires

Liam reported from the data collected from the end of term lecture questionnaires which were handed out in Trinity Term. He noted that lectures from Analysis III were unstructured and hard to follow. It was also noted that it was very difficult to read the board. Liam noted that there were many complaints about this. After some discussion from those who had taken the course with the same lecturer, it was agreed that this was indeed the case.

Liam also noted that Groups and Group Actions contained slightly difficult material. However, it was agreed that the lecturer was excellent.

It was also noted that there were comments from the course Mathematical Biology saying that the material was too difficult. It was discussed that the course was taught at Part B and has only recently been made a Part A course, which means that it might not have been fully adjusted to suit this.

During discussion, it was noted that the lecturer for Fourier Series and PDEs often finished early. It was also noted that the lecturer for Non-Linear Systems was thought to be very bad.

2.5 Constitutional Changes

Utsav proposed a number of constitutional changes. One change was to re-word the constitution so that it becomes easier to read. It was noted that the current constitution has been made to reflect the format of forms from HSBC. Utsav then noted that this format was unnecessary and only makes the constitution more confusing. Charlie seconded the amendment and an election was duly held.

Result: First constitutional change was approved **unanimously**. (See Appendix A for first constitutional change)

The second change concerned the number of signatories required to authorise a payment from the MURC bank account. It was noted that the current number of signatories required is two. Utsav noted that the current format makes it hard for the treasurer to make payments with cheques, since both signatories

must sign the same cheque. In discussion, it was noted that the current format of the constitution prevents the treasurer from mis-handling MURC funds. Sam asked how many cheques Utsav is required to write; he said he has not written a cheque. It was noted that the amendment would not simplify the day-to-day management of the MURC bank account. Charlie seconded the amendment and an election was duly held.

Result: **12 votes against with 3 abstentions.** Second constitutional change fails. (See Appendix B for second constitutional change)

2.6 Standing Order Changes

Charlie proposed a change to the standing orders. The change concerned what the Treasurer is allowed to do regarding the selling of books to MURC. It was noted that the current standing orders do not allow the Treasurer to refuse the sale of a book to MURC, even if multiple copies of the same book are held in the book cupboard. It was noted that having a large number of copies the same book that don't sell is not financially beneficial to MURC. Charlie noted that the change to the change to the standing orders will allow the Treasurer to refuse to buy a book from a member if copies are already held in the MURC book cupboard. Utsav seconded the amendment and an election was duly held.

Result: Standing order change was approved **unanimously.** (See Appendix C for standing order changes)

2.7 Examiners Present for Whole Exam

It was proposed by ex-member Tim that it would be good to have examiners present for the full duration of maths exams. It was noted that the nature of maths exams means that errors in a question are not often noticed until it is actually attempted. It was noted that if the third question attempted contains an error, then it won't be spotted until after the examiner has left the building. It was then noted that a response probably won't be received until too late in exam to be responded to, if at all.

It was then noted that the department might be reluctant to allow this, but it would be good to ask the faculty to see what their response is anyway.

Action: to be raised at JCCU

2.8 Arts Rep. to Become an Executive Position

All in favour of Arts Rep becoming a member of the exec.

Action: constitutional amendment to be proposed next meeting.

2.9 Accounts Update

Utsav proposed that the signatories on the account should be updated to reflect the new exec committee.

All in favour of Charlie, Rebecca and Utsav to be signatories on the account as President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

Action: Utsav to approach HSBC and complete the relevant paperwork.

2.10 Tutorials for Part B/C Options

Liam noted that some colleges offer tutorials for Parts B and C whereas most do not. He noted that this was unfair, since tutorials provide each student with far more input from the tutor when compared to a class. He also noted that the majority of top scoring 3rd year students from previous years have been

from a college which offers 3rd year tutorials.

He asked whether guidelines could be put in place so that all students get the same treatment. It was noted that not all colleges would be able to provide tutorials. He suggested that the department should not claim that students get the same treatment, regardless of college.

Action: to be raised at JCCU.

2.11 Part A Short Options Exam

Liam noted that the questions on the ASO paper have a very wide variety of difficulty. He noted that it is not possible to scale each question individually, therefore the scaling of each of the questions are the same. It was noted that this system could penalise stronger students, who would be more likely to attempt harder questions and achieve a similar amount of credit to students who answer easier questions.

He asked whether there is a way to combat this.

Action: Charlie to email undergrads asking for comments on this and to be raised at JCCU.

2.12 Status of MURC Website

Liam notes that we have two MURC websites: an old one which is difficult to access and contains the official college rep list, and one on the new website which is much easier to use. It was suggested to edit the old one so that it redirects any viewers to the new one. Liam is unsure of how to do this.

Action: Utsav to look at this and see what he can do.

2.13 AOB

Hannah reported that Stats are interested in lecture capture, but it will not be implemented in the department this term.

Meeting was concluded at 2:23pm.

Appendix A

Details of Changes to MURC Constitution:

6. In reference to financial transactions (including, but not limited to, when used in Section (c) of Paragraph 38, and in Paragraphs 39 and 40), 'instructions' means:

- (a) cheques or other payment instructions signed on behalf of the ~~Club/Society/Association~~ and any payment instructions which have been duly authorised otherwise than in writing, whether any account of the ~~Club/Society/Association~~ is in debit or credit;
- (b) any instructions to stop a payment on behalf of the ~~Club/Society/Association~~, received by the Bank in accordance with the applicable provisions in the Business Banking Terms and Conditions at that time;
- (c) any instructions to deliver any item held on behalf of the ~~Club/Society/Association~~ by the Bank in safe keeping;
- (d) any other instructions in respect of any other transaction with the Bank (including the opening of additional account(s) and closing of any account(s)).

Appendix B

Details of Changes to MURC Constitution:

40. When any financial business is to be transacted, there must be present either the Treasurer or a Member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent his or her views to the meeting. In addition, any withdrawals from the MURC account, or any other instructions given to MURCs bank, must be approved by any ~~two~~ *one* of the following signatories: the MURC President, the MURC Treasurer, the MURC Secretary, or the Academic Administrator at the Mathematical Institute.

41. The Treasurer is responsible for operation of the internet and telephone banking of the MURC account. However, further to Paragraph 40, any instructions given to MURCs bank via these methods require the authority of the MURC Treasurer (~~alongside at least one of the MURC President, the MURC Secretary, or the Academic Administrator at the Mathematical Institute, as specified in Paragraph 40~~). In this case, approval from the MURC President, the MURC Secretary or the Academic Administrator at the Mathematical Institute must be provided in writing to the Treasurer. Records of such communications should be kept by the Treasurer.

Appendix C

Details of Changes to MURC Standing Orders:

The following paragraph should be appended to the standing orders under the heading of 'bookstall':

IX: If multiple copies of a title are held by the bookstall, the treasurer may, at their absolute discretion, refuse to buy another copy of the title from a Member.