

Faculties of Mathematics, Computer Science & Statistics

Joint Consultative Committee with Undergraduates

Friday 28th October 2011

Unconfirmed minutes of meeting

Present: Mr Ben Hoskin (*MURC President*), Mr Chan-Young Song (*MURC Secretary*), Miss Petra Staynova (*MURC Math & Phil Rep*), Mr David Hagger (*MURC Questionnaire Rep, Univ*), Dr Richard Earl (*Director of Undergraduate Studies, Admissions Co-ordinator*), Dr Neil Laws (*Statistics*).

In attendance: Mrs Helen Lowe.

Apologies: Dr Peter Neumann (*Faculty Teaching Advisor*), Elena Sizikova (*MURC Maths & Comp Rep*), Ms Louise Sumner (*MPLS*)

1) Meeting held on Friday 20th May

a. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were approved.

b. Matters arising from the minutes

3)a. Early questionnaire forms: the Teaching Committee did see the draft questionnaire produced by MURC. The questionnaire has been put online for the lecturers who would find it helpful. However, it was reported that most lecturers did not consider it particularly useful because there is already enough chance for students to feedback early during lectures regarding problems such as not speaking out audibly, not writing big enough etc..

3)d. Part B Options fair: Part B Options fair was held on 23rd of June

6) Part B and C options: synopses have been published; course registrations, Part C options fair and project lecture have taken place.

2) Membership of JCCU

b. Junior members

The elections for this year's committee will take place on 7th week of this term (MT 2011).

3) Report on Matters Raised in Examiners Reports (oral report)

The Teaching Committee had considered the project reconciliation process and the procedure for appointing a third assessor. Teaching Committee had agreed to modify the project reconciliation process so that assessors are required to give an upper and lower mark, the range between which should not span more than one class boundary.

Last year, a Gibbs prize should have been awarded to Maths and Statistics student but couldn't be within current procedures. As a temporary solution, the Statistics Department was able to provide a prize for the student. It was suggested that Maths and Statistics students in the future should be eligible for the Gibbs prize at Part B.

4) Reports from the meetings of the Faculty/Teaching/Academic Committees**a. Mathematics**

Dr. Earl reported on an informal discussion considering 4th year exchange programme with M.I.T. Up to present, there haven't been many exchanges and it was noted that the exchange programme may be more plausible for courses where the 4th year is project based. Dr. Earl suggested discussing this idea in MURC meetings for students' views.

Dr Earl reported on the first and second year syllabus changes. It was noted that the changes to the first year of the course are currently being considered by the Senior Tutors Committee. The Division had approved the changes to the first year but had asked the department to consider introducing compensation, where failure on one or two papers is compensated for by a better performance on other papers. Following discussion, the department had decided not to introduce this. The changes to the second year would be discussed further by the Syllabus Working Party this term and then by Faculty in Hilary Term. It was noted that the examination structure at Part A would become more like that at Part B.

Dr Earl reported that it has been proposed that the workload in the fourth year be increased from the equivalent of six 16-hour courses to eight 16-hour courses. The Mathematics Faculty had approved this and the Statistics Department were also supportive of the proposal. The proposal would also be considered by the Joint Committee for Mathematics and Philosophy and the Department of Computer Science.

Dr. Earl reported that the requirement for Part C has now been changed to 2.1 officially and is now in the Grey book with Part C in 2013 being the first year affected.

b. Computer Science

None.

c. Statistics

It was reported that the department was discussing whether 4th year projects should be weighted as a third of the 4th year of the course or a quarter of the year (which would be equivalent to 2 lots of 16hr lecture courses). There was also a discussion on the structure of the exams for the Actuarial Science course.

5) MURC Business**a. Project feedbacks**

MURC pointed out that we don't have much feedback from the 3rd and 4th year students who took the projects and extended essays and suggested a questionnaire form for them. For example, was the amount of supervision provided sufficient? Dr. Earl highlighted the problem of anonymity as there are few students who take projects and extended essays. The questionnaire will have to be carefully designed so that it guides the students to comment about the overall system itself and not about their personal supervisions. MURC agreed to provide a draft questionnaire by 7th week.

b. Library access

MURC asked if it would be possible/appropriate to give access to the Maths Institute library to students taking projects and extended essays. This is so that the students could have more readily access to the resources and to be able to see for themselves what resources are out there.

Dr. Earl responded that it is after all a graduate library and this fact needs to be respected. Students should have sufficient information on what kinds of books are relevant to them from their supervisor's reading lists. Also, any books which aren't available in other parts of the university library can already be accessed by the students through the Maths Institute librarian.

c. Extended essays

MURC reported that further guidance on the marking for extended essays would be useful. There are sample papers online for students to refer to but it has neither information about the marking it received nor any pointers as to what was good about it and what aspects needed to be better. Also, Miss Staynova pointed out that there is less number of hours of teaching for projects compared to the lectured courses.

Ms Lowe explained that because of confidentiality, the division would not allow much detail as to exactly how good the essay was to be published.

Dr. Earl explained that project students are getting sufficient feedback during the supervisions and the projects are a sufficiently well described task. That although the number of hours of teaching may be less, the supervision is much more focused on the individual student than lecture course or class teaching which more that makes up for the difference in the number of hours.

6) Open days

The next open days have been confirmed to be 28th of April and 5th of May.

Dr. Earl reported that it would be good to have an open day representative from MURC to give a talk at the open day like it has been done during the last open day.

7) Lecture List for Hilary Term 2012

Ms Lowe reported that the list will be uploaded in a few weeks' time.

8) AOB

Miss Staynova reported the problem Maths and Philosophy students have (especially 1st years) getting from the university museum to the examinations schools between consecutive lectures which results in the students missing the first part of the philosophy lectures. Miss Staynova asked if it would be possible to run a minibus for students. Dr. Earl explained that this would not be practical but it may be possible to adjust the lecture times.

Chan-Young Song 07/11/11