

FACULTIES OF MATHEMATICS, COMPUTATION AND STATISTICS

Joint Consultative Committee with Undergraduates

A meeting of this committee was held on Friday 12 May at 2.15pm in the New Higman Room, Mathematical Institute.

Present: James Holwell, *Exeter*, (MURC Chairperson), Hannah Clapham, *Hertford*, (MURC Secretary), Helen Turner, *Merton*, (JCCU Representative), Linus Mattauch, *St Hugh's*, (MURC Maths and Philosophy Representative), Annie Ma, *St Hilda's*, (MURC Maths and Statistics Representative; Open Day Coordinator), Dr G Luke, (Mathematics Director for Undergraduate Studies), Dr G A Stoy, (Senior Member representing the Joint Committee for Mathematics and Philosophy), Prof B McColl, (Senior Member representing Computer Science), Mr Yan-Chee Yu, (Deputy Academic Administrator, Mathematical Institute)

Apologies: Helene Neufeld, Dr R Earl, Dr C N Laws
Dr Luke said thanks to Dr Laws for all he had done during his time in Oxford.

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

1. Meeting held on 3 February 2006:

(i) Minutes

No matters arose

(ii) Matters arising.

Item 9(ii) Emailing list for Careers matters

Mr Holwell reported that this mailing list was now up and running and that this morning there were 343 people signed up. He said that those in the Maths Institute who helped had been very helpful. It was noted that Catherine Goodwin would be sending out the emails to the mailing list.

2. MURC business:

(i) Publication of examination timetables

- a) Abject apologies were issued and it was stated that the Mathematics Faculty had done everything it could to chase up the timetables, and the delay was due to staff shortages at Examination Schools.
- b) The exam timetables for all years have now been finalized and all students have been notified.

- (ii) **Request for classes in which the tutor goes through exam papers**
 - a) It was suggested that it would be useful to have, on top of consultation sessions, a class in which the tutor goes through last year's paper.
 - b) Students should be informed in advance when these are to occur.
 - c) It was thought these would be most useful in 3rd-4th week TT.

- (iii) **French Classes- Results**

Dr Luke said that the Language Centre had been contacted, and that the results had not then been sent out, but should be now.

- (iv) **Part B: Scheduling of classes when they fall in the following term**
 - a) Those problems that had arisen had now been sorted out.
 - b) It was noted that model solutions were not always helpful without the class.
 - c) Email confirmation of classes should be sent out.

3. Reports from the meetings of the Teaching Committee/ Academic Committee:

- (i) **Academic committee**

Nothing relevant to report.

- (ii) **Teaching Committees: Mathematics**

- a) There will be changes in the way Gibbs and Mathematics Prize Fund prizes are awarded. From 2006-7 they should be awarded to the best student(s) and the end of their third year, (whether they are leaving or not) and then also for the best at the end of the 4th year. They will be at the discretion of the examiners. Similar changes have been made in Maths and Philosophy and Computer Science.
- b) Dr Luke reported that there had been a staff development session on how to teach a tutorial, and that this will probably be run every year.
- c) The proposal for a new Part A option, Projective Geometry had been turned down.
- d) There is to be an increase in Mathematical Physics Options. 3rd year students will be able to take choose from two M-level courses, Quantum Computers and General Relativity, which will also be available to 4th years. These can be taken in accordance with the guidelines. In the 4th year, students will be able to take a course Advanced Quantum Mechanics, mainly lectured in, and with exam questions set by, the physics department. The Maths Faculty's part of the course will be examined via a mini-project.
- e) The French Classes have been undersubscribed. Next year they will be available to 3rd and 4th years, and also to those with a full A-Level.

- f) The Lankester Report, which addresses the admissions procedure, was discussed. The outcome could be roughly described as some of the other departments becoming more like Maths.

(iii) **Teaching Committee: Computer Science**

- a) It is planned that Maths and Computer Science and Computer Science are to be given more relevant questions in the admissions examination. Specimen papers will be available.
- b) The first year course of the Computer Science course is to be modified, with more emphasis on practical and with linear algebra taught within Computer Science. This will probably lead to 5 short papers. This is in discussion, and not yet fully finalized.
- c) The timetabling has become complex for the options and there are 7 Part A courses that have been felt it would be ok to clash lectures.

(iv) **Teaching Committee: Statistics**

- a) Part A Statistics will now be taught wholly in Hilary term. It will be ensured that students know enough probability by that point to do the course.
- b) Optimization, currently a 2nd year option is to become a 3rd year option, as it was felt too hard.

(v) **Teaching Committee, Philosophy**

Didn't meet in week 3, as the meeting was cancelled at the last minute.

4. Undergraduate courses development:

(i) **Mathematics Part B and Part C 2006-7**

- a) The agenda noted: We are aiming to have draft Synopses for mathematics courses published on the web only, by week 5. Students will be asked to register for classes and lectures by Monday of week 9.
- b) It was noted that this is necessary for timetabling lectures and planning numbers of classes. A few students can and do change their minds.
- c) There was a request that the draft synopses were available as soon as possible, and that there was an announcement when the list was available.

(ii) **Mathematics Part C options- afternoon tea- Friday Week 8**

This will be held between 3 and 5. There will be someone from each panel available. It will be an opportunity to discuss individual options and the packages that have been chosen.

(iii) **Mathematics collaboration with Physics**

This was covered in 3(ii)d).

5. Third/Fourth year Classifications:

- a) The agenda noted: current second year students taking the MMath with continue to receive one degree, but will receive two classes.
- b) This has been brought in to help those who are unsure if they are staying on for the fourth year.

6. French Classes:

This had already been mentioned in 3(ii) e).

7. Questionnaires:

(i) **Hilary term statistical summaries**

No comments were made.

(ii) **Report from the Chairman of Maths Faculty**

- a) Dr Luke and Graham O'Connor (MURC Questionnaires Representative) have met to discuss the report.
- b) The issue was raised that Maths and Philosophy students felt that they would like to learn Maple. This opportunity is open to them, but it was felt that this needed to be better publicised.
- c) Undergraduates would welcome problems set on problem sheets where they could use Maple.
- d) It was raised that some felt there was prior knowledge of Matlab assumed at the beginning of the Part A option, Numerical Analysis, and that perhaps computer science could produce a handbook as an introduction to Matlab.
- e) It was noted that Maple is used for many reasons, including costs and licences.

(iii) **Actions taken. Dr Luke to report.**

The Maple handbook is to be rewritten over the summer by Ms. Cath Wilkins, who works with the Open University on Maple.

8. Number of classes supporting Part B Mathematics Options:

Dr Luke reported that an email had been sent round asking for preferences between the 4 and 6 class structure, reasons why, and suggestions.

9. Admissions matters:

(i) **Open Days**

Dr Luke reported that the Open Day held on 29 April was felt to be a success and extended her thanks to Annie Ma for the presentation she gave.

10. Induction of First year Students, MT 2006-05-15

The induction day will begin with all Mathematics students together, and then those doing joint honours will separate. It will require two MURC members to talk to the new students. There were volunteers. Dr Luke said there will be an email sent at the end of the summer holidays to ask for those who wish to do it.

11. Appointment of Director Of Undergraduate Studies in Mathematics: Dr Audrey Curnock:

She is coming from the American Institute in Rome and will take up the post in September.

12. AOB:

- (i) It was noted that undergraduates may use the graduate common room until 3.30, and that there is a water cooler in there. It was felt maybe this should be publicised, as many did not know this.
- (ii) There was a problem with the lecture notes for one lecturer in Statistics. It was suggested that the lecturer should be contacted directly and asked to put the lecture notes online. Dr C N Laws should also be contacted.
- (iii) Dr Stoy wished to thank greatly Dr Luke on behalf of all the undergraduates for all the hard work she has done for them.

HC, 15/05/06