

Minutes for MURC Meeting 19.10.2017

Present: Utsav Popat (President, Maths and Comp Rep.), Rebecca Burmiston (Secretary, LMH Rep.), George Cooper, Matthew Hillman (Treasurer), Antonin Schrab, Chris Fitzpatrick, Matthew Goh, Dan Fletcher (Arts Rep., Oriel Rep.), Liam Stigant (Feedback Rep., Jesus Rep.), Samuel Banks, Sean Liew (Stats Rep)

Apologies: Andreea Iorga, Rosemary Walmsley

The meeting commenced at 16.07pm.

1. Minutes of previous meeting
 - a. These were confirmed unanimously, with no matters arising.
2. Report on Teaching Committee (Utsav)
 - a. On 18.10.2017, Utsav attended Teaching Committee.
 - b. Dissertation marks: It was noted that Maths dissertation marks were noticeably higher than Maths and Stats dissertation remarks for fourth years. Dr Earl and Dr Laws were to meet after Teaching Committee to discuss this further.
 - c. Networks Course: The networks course in Trinity may include Python, although further discussion is needed with the lecturer about this.
 - d. Lecture capture: this is currently occurring on an opt-out basis in L1, L4 and C1.
 - i. Lecturers will be given an advice booklet on lecture capture.
 - ii. There have been some issues with sound, so microphone placement may be changed.
 - iii. Recorded lectures will be reviewed soon.
 - iv. There is currently one Stats course being recorded, but there may be more next term.
 - e. Career skills: It was noted that one of the department's set aims two years ago was to help students improve their career skills, but not much progress has been made with this so far.
 - i. The department aims to do more this term, for example sessions for undergraduates on Friday afternoons to help improve their skills.
3. Report on Stats Teaching Committee (Sean)
 - a. Sean attended Stats Teaching Committee earlier this week.
 - b. Lecture Capture: It was noted that a lot of whiteboard space had to be lost for the Stats lecture to be recorded, which the lecturer found inconvenient. This means lecture capture may be unpopular in the Statistics department.
 - c. Extended exam times: It was noted that exams have been extended by 15 minutes, in order to give more time for students to read the questions.
 - i. This measure was partially implemented in to help reduce the male-female gap in exam results, although it was not effective in this.
 - d. Dissertations: The disparity in marks between Maths and Maths and Stats dissertations was noted. There will be an inter-departmental review of how dissertations are marked.
4. College Reps elections
 - a. Matthew Goh, from Queen's stood to be the college rep for Queen's and was elected.
 - b. George Cooper, from Balliol, stood to be the college rep for Balliol and was elected.

- c. Chris Fitzpatrick, from St. Peters, stood to be the college rep for St. Peters and was elected.
- 5. President Elections
 - a. Utsav Popat, from Balliol, stood to be MURC President and was elected.
- 6. Fourth-Year Rep Elections
 - a. Sam Banks, from Merton, stood to be Fourth-Year Rep. He was asked what he would bring to the role.
 - i. Sam Banks noted that he has been involved with MURC since last year, helping to write the survey and report on classes, and redraft the class questionnaire. As Fourth-Year Rep, he would like to take this work forward by looking more into class sizes.
 - b. Sam was elected.
- 7. AOB
 - a. Changes to class questionnaire
 - i. MURC are proposing changes to the questionnaire the department sends to students on classes, as it is thought the questions on the previous questionnaire were unspecific, and not picking up the concerns students have about tutors engaging the class and not just going through solutions to problems.
 - ii. Therefore, MURC have proposed and written a new questionnaire, which asks more targeted questions to address these concerns.
 - iii. The new questionnaire also asks questions on issues such as the level of communication between the class tutor and TA (teaching assistant), and on the helpfulness of the TA's marking.
 - iv. MURC have also proposed removing the questions on lectures from the class questionnaire, as not all students in classes attend the lectures, and vice versa.
 - b. Lecture notes for Part C courses
 - i. It was noted that some Part C courses don't have online lecture notes on the department website, although we are not sure whether it is compulsory for notes to be on this website. However, it is highly useful for students.
 - ii. Of these courses, some use books, and some have noted on other websites.
 - iii. It was noted that the use of books can be inconvenient, for example if the books are reference only, or a student's college library does not have enough or any copies of the book.
 - iv. **Action point:** Utsav to email the department seeking more clarity on this matter.
 - c. Problem sheets
 - i. It was noted that at least one course only has its problem sheets on the lecturer's personal website, and that the location of these problem sheets was only mentioned in a lecture, and not on the department's page for the course.
 - ii. **Action point:** Utsav to email the department about this.
 - d. Dissertation project books for Part B students
 - i. It was noted that some books in the department library needed for dissertation projects are not accessible for Part B students, as they are undergraduates.

1. It was noted that students can gain access to the library/these books by emailing the librarian.
- ii. It was noted that some books needed for dissertation projects by Part B students are only in the Radcliffe Science Library, and are reference only, which makes them difficult to use for writing a dissertation.
 1. It was noted that students can email their college librarian to request the relevant books, but if their college is unable or unwilling to help then the department should step in.
- e. Expectations of classes
 - i. It was noted from the class survey last term that students were not told what to expect from their classes.
 - ii. This year, the department held an induction session on classes for Part B students, to set out what they should expect from their classes.
 1. It was noted a similar session was held with TAs.
 - iii. It was also noted that the department plans to hire more people who can teach classes, although it was also noted that any new class teachers will be hired primarily to research and not to teach.
 1. **Action point:** To discuss this further at JCCU.

The meeting was concluded at 4.33pm.

These minutes were confirmed 14.11.2017.