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Attendance:
Dr Richard Earl, Director of Undergraduate Studies (Chair),
Dr James Munro, Admissions Coordinator,
Dr Vicky Neale, Faculty Teaching Advisor (Dr Neale arrived late and was in attendance for items 5i onwards),
Nina Tomlin, Head of Academic Administration, for a year on an interim basis to cover for Charlotte Turner-Smith,
Gemma Proctor, Undergraduate Studies Administrator,
George Cooper, outgoing President of MURC, will be leading MURC Business section of this meeting. Will be handing over in a couple of weeks time,
Christopher McGarry, MURC Secretary and 4th Year Rep for MURC,
Matthew Goh, Maths and Stats rep, again handing over at AGM,
Chris Fitzpatrick, Treasurer and D&I rep,
Beth Thomas, Outreach Rep for MURC.

1 Meeting held on Friday 17 May 2019

1.1 Minutes (attached, JCCU-19.11.01 (1a), page 1)

The minutes were AGREED.

1.2 Matters arising

A question was raised relating to Lecture Capture and what options there are for students with disabilities who rely on lecture recordings when lecturers have 'opted out' of having their lectures recorded. Dr Earl confirmed that the department generally advises students to record the lectures in person if they need to.

Dr Earl highlighted the issues that the Mathematical Institute and Department of Statistics are facing in relation to the allocation of students to intercollegiate classes, one of the main problems is the lack of responses to the June and September requests for registrations. Around 75% of students respond to these requests, which makes planning very difficult, especially given shifts in preferences. The departments are not keen on enforcing quotas on classes, it was suggested at Teaching Committee to tell students that they must respond to the September request to ensure their place on a course, and allow students to register for 9 courses. If a student has not registered for a course in September the departments may refuse students requests to take the corresponding classes, if there are no available places, this is also something that the departments are keen to avoid. Students without access to classes would not be forbidden from sitting the examination, if they wished to.

The MURC Reps felt that even in September it is not always clear what a course will be like, especially if lecture notes are not yet published, so it can be hard to choose. However, most years the syllabus will not have changed and usually previous year's online notes are still available. The flexibility of registering for 9 courses would help, and students would still likely be able to change even if not guaranteed.

General MURC policy is that larger classes are better than quotas, although this is not imposing a blanket ban.

Dr Earl asked the MURC Reps to clarify what information they felt people were lacking when they choosing courses, that makes it difficult to have a clear idea. The MURC Reps felt that due to factors such as lecturers changing it can cause a significant shift, and there are some courses where the course synopsis does not have much information.

MURC are going to look into which courses do not have much information in the synopses and report back. The Department may then need to speak to the course lecturers and ask them to provide more information in synopsis or the options guide.

The departments could also automatically notify tutors about who has not submitted preferences so that they can encourage their students to submit preferences, and possibly also have meetings with tutors to discuss options.

2 Membership of JCCU (for information)

- 2.1 Senior Members
- 2.2 Junior Members

3 Report on matters raised in Examiners Reports (oral report)

[All examiners reports will be available on the Mathematical Institute's website, https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/ examinations-assessments/examiners-reports.]

At the Part B Final Examination Board concerns were raised about differences in the amount of Firsts awarded at Part B pure vs applied vs stats. This is something that the department intends to look in to, but more data is required as a starting position, the department would consider papers with good marks and try to determine if the papers were easy or the students strong.

Examiner's reports should be published in the next couple of weeks on the web.

4 Reports from the meetings of the Faculty/Teaching/Ac Committees (for discussion)

4.1 Mathematics

4.1.1 PGT Classification

Part C classification will change to Distinction/Merit/Pass from 2020/21 onwards.

4.1.2 Compulsory Dissertation

At Part C it will be compulsory to complete a dissertation, and the mark awarded will be counted towards averages. The MURC Reps reported that quite a few part B students were not aware of the dissertation becoming compulsory, but Dr Earl confirmed that an email was sent out before the students arrived.

4.1.3 Differential Attainment (attached, JCCU-19.11.01 (4ai), page 7)

Guidance from Education Committee concerning differential attainment, with focus on gender, ethnicity, and disability.

Meaning of data: difference between percentage of students in privileged/unprivileged group getting mentioned mark. Some categories likely have insufficient data. Methodology unclear, likely not statistically sound.

Some good suggestions in Annex B, such as diversity of assessment methods (although we wish to stick to examinations at the moment). We are working a lot with bridging courses, curriculum diversity, such as describing real world impact of courses, etc.

Is this likely to lead to more non-mathematical content? No, but trying to take easy opportunities with no loss of mathematical content. We might think about other courses we could put on, and work with History of Maths. We are not talking about significantly changing the mathematical content.

Possibly working more with projects, and making accommodations for disabled students.

Could we use poster space to discuss stories of alumni, or diversifying the mathematicians on our existing posters. As a department we should be doing more on this front.

This is a matter for note, to discuss in the future.

4.2 Statistics

4.3 Items to refer to Faculty/Teaching/Academic Committees

5 MURC Business

5.1 Student Feedback from Options Guide

At last MURC meeting we asked for feedback on the Options Guide; the general opinion was that members were unaware of its existence, and could only find them in the original email.

This will be resolved by putting them in on the Course Materials webpage for each year.

Action: Gemma will write to Dr Earl with list of missing entries and Gemma will also upload the guides to the Course Materials page.

5.2 Clarification regarding Part C Mini-Projects

At Teaching Committee, the Part C Networks Mini-Project was discussed with reference to the difficulties faced finding suitable second assessors. The issue was resolved, with a great deal of work by Gemma and the Part C Examiners. The department are now considering creating a new Data Science Subject Panel, which would take ownership for courses such as Networks. It is envisaged that the creation of the new subject panel would help to avoid these types of issues in the future.

6 Questionnaires (for report and discussion)

6.1 Trinity Term 2019 statistical summaries (attached, JCCU-19.11.01 (6a), page 20)

The End of Year questionnaire results have now been analysed and Dr Neale has written a report. This will be reviewed at the next Teaching Committee meeting and return to the next JCCU meeting.

Dr Neale did say that overall there does not seem to be any cause for concern, but the total number of questionnaires for Part A seemed quite low, there should have been at least 400 ASO results; but response rates are around 30%-60%. Dr Neale looked at the data to see if this is correlated to lecture capture, but that does not seem to be the case.

Action: Gemma will send the questionnaire breakdowns to Matthew as questionnaire rep.

Action: Dr Neale to meet with Matthew as questionnaire rep.

6.2 NSS Results (to follow)

6.3 Student Barometer Results (to follow)

7 Open Days in 2019-20 (for report)

Report from Dr James Munro: 1826 applications for maths this year, up 10%. Increase in all areas, home, EU, overseas.

There will again be open days next year, the department always appreciates having student helpers at the open days. Dr Munro confirmed that he has contacted Invariants, LGBTQI³, about web and prospectus presence.

The department will still run 4 UNIQ summer schools, but will replace Maths and Stats with another Maths week as most students wanted to do Maths week.

8 8. AOB