

Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

First Meeting of Hilary Term • Minutes of Meeting

30th January 2014

Present: David Abed (President, New College Rep), Alex Homer (Secretary, Oriel College Rep), Michael Holloway (Questionnaire Rep, St Hugh's College Rep, deputing for the Treasurer), Rosie Ryan Flinn (Maths and Philosophy Rep, Worcester College Rep), Lewis Morgan (Maths and Computer Science Rep), Ben Spells (Careers and Publicity Rep), Rachel Ahlquist (Outreach Rep), William Juan (IT Rep, Somerville College Rep), Joel Cawte (Fourth-Year Rep, Jesus College Rep), Thomas Chandler (Lincoln College Rep), Jacob Muller (The Queen's College Rep), Jacob Cable (St Anne's College Rep), Chris Williamson.

Apologies for absence: Ryan Murphy (Treasurer), Stewart Jerrome (Maths and Statistics Rep), Pei Wang (First-Year Rep), Niloy Biswas (St. John's College Rep), Petru Hilhor (Wadham College Rep)

The meeting commenced at 1:09pm.

Minutes and Matters Arising

1. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were **accepted**.

2. College Rep elections

Nominations were opened for the position of St. Edmund Hall (SEH) Rep. Chris Williamson nominated himself, and an election was duly held.

Result: Chris Williamson was **unanimously elected**. Chris Williamson therefore assumed the position of SEH Rep.

3. Gender disparity

In preparation for JCCU, the issue of gender disparity was raised. It was suggested that there was nothing more to add than in the previous minutes; it was additionally noted that MURC's position should be that any gender disparity is completely unacceptable, and that more research should be carried out.

It was further noted: that at the MPLS meeting there was a suggestion of disparity across the sciences; that the Division has carried out research into this, but that it was broadly inconclusive; that in general male students achieve both more Firsts and Lower Seconds than female students, but that this was not the case for Maths. It was suggested that change within the Department may be difficult.

Potential areas for research were discussed: these included the male-female ratio of lecturers, courses being taken, and gender stereotypes. It was agreed to look at exam results statistics in the first instance. **Action: to be raised at JCCU; Rachel to research exam result statistics.**

Presidential Business

4. Report from teaching committee

David noted that concerns have been raised about the new Part A course Differential Equations I, and that a review is to take place. It was noted that there were other problems with courses last year. On this theme, it was put forward that teaching courses for lecturers could be a worthwhile suggestion.

David noted that other points raised at Teaching Committee were that model exam answers are being provided to College tutors, and that new prizes are to be introduced for Parts A and B.

Action: teaching quality to be raised at JCCU.

Executive Committee Business

5. Report on lecture questionnaires

Michael introduced himself, and proceeded to give his report on the lecture questionnaires from Michaelmas Term 2013, which may be summarised as follows:

- Prelims courses much improved in general, although still perhaps could be improved.
- Some concerns about the new Part A.
- A few specific courses proved problematic across both Prelims and Part A.
- Similar feedback to last year in Parts B and C, which haven't changed. Again some problems with specific courses.

It was queried whether or not contact is made by Dr Dyson with lecturers with less-positive feedback; it was suggested in response that such scores are considered less of a problem in Parts B and C, as students should be working more independently.

General Business

6. Exam entry dates for third- and fourth-years

It was noted that Alex had received contact from a student at St Peter's College, noting that students in third- and fourth-years were required to submit choices in the first two weeks of Hilary Term, before having had much experience of courses.

It was noted that the deadline set by the Examination Schools is noon on Friday 31st January, and that colleges set deadlines before this (with some variation in timing) to allow them to submit forms by the University deadline.

It was generally agreed that the University deadline should be later. It was noted that this was raised at JCCU this time last year.

Action: to be raised at JCCU, specifically to ask the Department to liaise with Exam Schools and to advise colleges of the problem.

7. Moving election date for President

David proposed that a President-Elect should be elected in Trinity Term or at the first meeting of Michaelmas Term, thereby allowing the incoming President to shadow the outgoing President for a period, with the President-Elect assuming the full responsibilities of President at the start of the calendar year (as at present).

It was suggested that an election in Trinity Term was too early. It was agreed that the proposal for Michaelmas Term was workable in principle, but that specific details regarding the constitution needed to be resolved.

Action: David to investigate potential constitutional changes, with an aim to hold a poll on this at the next meeting.

8. Key issues for coming year

9. Communication skills – National Student Survey

10. Prelims review

In view of time constraints, it was agreed to defer these items until a later date.

11. Mailing list – update

It was noted that the 'murc-members' mailing list needed updating, both in terms of adding new members and removing those whose membership had elapsed from the mailing list. **Action: Alex to check constitution on this point and act accordingly.**

12. Any other business

Ben noted that an item on the previous set of minutes required him as the Careers Rep to work on a careers noticeboard, and noted that if this involved the website, it would need to go to JCCU.

Action: Ben to prepare proposal for a later meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded at 2pm.

AH 30/01/2014