

# Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

## Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting

**Present:** Rosie Cretney (*Queen's, Chairperson*), Stephen O'Keeffe (*Hertford, Secretary*), Henry Bradford (*St John's, Treasurer/Bookstall Manager*), Joe Wales (*St Hugh's, Questionnaire Rep.*), Matt Scroggs (*St Hugh's, I.T. Rep.*), Anne-Marie Imafidon (*Keble, Maths and Computer Science Rep.*), Gege (Irene) Huang (*Keble, Maths and Statistics Rep.*), Wanfei (Paul) Wu (*St Hugh's, First Year Rep.*), Penelope Quek (*Jesus*), Joe Liang (*Keble*), Rosanna Ramsay (*Exeter*), David Sims (*Mansfield*).

**Apologies:** Xiao (Helen) Liu (*Somerville, Open Day Co-ordinator*).

### 1. Meeting held in Michaelmas Term 2008

(a) **Matters arising.** None

### 2. MURC Bookstall

Henry reported that the MURC account currently contains approximately £250. In addition, he said he had received very few enquiries about buying books, and believed that not enough students and faculty staff are aware of the bookstall. He suggested contacting college tutors, asking them to send information to potential students about the bookstall, and placing adverts in student publications, such as the Invariants magazine and Freshers' Guides.

Some discussion followed, and notable points raised included Rosie asking whether or not the book inventory was up to date, and suggesting adding student reviews to those books currently in stock. Henry replied that an audit of the bookstall would be a good idea, and agreed one should be carried out soon. Stephen asked if the explanation of the bookstall was still available on the website, and suggested adding selling prices to each book. Matt said he still had the information available, and would update the website accordingly. Penelope thought that providing links to amazon.com would prove useful for students in deciding if a book would be useful for them.

Joe Liang suggested it may be a good idea for MURC to sell books to college libraries, although Irene and Joe Wales replied that some colleges already have arrangements with Oxford bookshops, such as Blackwell's. Irene also added that the bookstall could be publicised on the MURC lecture evaluation forms.

### 3. Vacant Committee Positions

#### (a) **Mathematics and Philosophy Rep.**

Although Rosie and Stephen had been contacted by three interested students before the meeting, none of these attended; the position was not filled.

#### (b) **Publicity Officer**

There was one candidate. Penelope Quek was unopposed, and therefore elected.

#### (c) **Fourth Year Rep.**

There was one candidate. David Sims was unopposed, and therefore elected.

#### (d) **College Reps.**

Rosie reported she intended to send out an email to all college officers named on the

MURC website in order to determine who wishes to remain on the committee, and to attempt to fill vacant roles.

#### **4. End of Year Questionnaire**

Following the JCCU meeting earlier in the term, Joe and Rosie agreed to help design a questionnaire to be sent to students at the end of each academic year.

#### **5. Teaching Awards Scheme**

For the first time this year, the Maths Institute intends to allow students to nominate faculty members for teaching awards. It was reported that nominations will be sent to the MURC Chairperson and that this fact should be publicised. Matt agreed to create a section on the website explaining the nominations procedure.

#### **6. Freshers' Guide**

Rosie raised the issue that many upcoming freshers have questions and issues about the Oxford maths courses, and suggested it would be a good idea for MURC to produce a guide to be sent out to new students. There were two volunteers who agreed to help produce the guide.

#### **7. Facebook Group**

There was some discussion regarding a group recently set up on Facebook where Oxford maths students can upload their solutions to problem sheets and share them with others. Points raised included the fact that these solutions were unreliable, since they had not been marked, and therefore did not pose a large problem. Constructive alternatives were suggested, such as an online forum where students could discuss problems with their work without posting whole solutions.

One member reported that an article in a student newspaper had given the impression that the group constituted plagiarism, and suggested this may have been misleading.

#### **8. Motions**

##### **(a) Motion to amend the MURC Constitution**

There was some uncertainty regarding the definition of 'minor errors' in the constitution, and Joe questioned why the motion had been seconded unnecessarily. Rosie agreed to retract her seconding of the motion, and it was agreed that an amended constitution would be presented at the next meeting for approval by the committee. The amended motion was carried (*See below*).

#### **Motion to Amend the MURC Constitution**

##### **This Committee notes**

1. That there are several errors and inconsistencies present in the MURC Constitution
2. Paragraph 38 of the Constitution states:  
"All elected MURC Exec officers shall serve from 0<sup>th</sup> week Hilary Term to 0<sup>th</sup> week Hilary Term of the following academic year."
3. The current Executive Committee was not elected in Michaelmas Term.
4. Currently, the MURC Fourth Year Rep is not able to serve a full term of office, since they complete their degree before their office ends.
5. Motions do not, at present, have to be seconded.

##### **This Committee believes**

1. That in order for MURC to function properly, it needs a reliable Constitution.

**This Committee resolves to**

1. Present an amended constitution for approval at the next meeting, including the following amendments:
  - (a) Amend paragraph 38 to read “All elected MURC Executive Officers shall serve from the first meeting of Hilary Term to the first meeting of Hilary Term of the following academic year, except for the Fourth Year Rep, who shall serve from 0<sup>th</sup> week Michaelmas Term to 0<sup>th</sup> week Michaelmas Term of the following academic year.”
  - (b) Amend paragraph 18 to read “All motions must be proposed and seconded by MURC members.”

**Proposed: Stephen O'Keeffe**

**9. AOB**

It was reported one student had asked if the order of teaching of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses B8a and B8b could be reversed, since she felt there were some topics covered in B8a which were explained in more depth in B8b.

SO'K 08/03/09