

Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Wednesday 23rd November 2005

Present

- Helene Neufeld
- James Lancaster
- Anna Duncan
- Helen Turner
- Graham O'Connor
- James Holwell
- Andrea Mendham
- Daniel Wong
- Matthew Cornford
- Luke Burton
- Hannah Clapham
- Sonny Green
- Annie Ma

Apologies from

- Eleni Kanellopoulou
- Katherine Leonard
- Sarah Dixon
- Adam Lindsay
- Kenji Han
- Helen Beggs
- John Jones
- Holly Seals
- James Powell
- Muting Wan

Report from JCCU Meeting

- Points from the recent JCCU meeting held in 3rd week were outlined and discussed.
 - French classes for 3rd years have been badly organised in that they were only sorted out at the last minute. The course entry exam was on a Monday at 5pm but students were only notified of this at 2pm on the same day. The Language Centre told the Maths Institute that they would get in touch with students regarding classes but failed to do so and as the Maths Institute had no lists of

students taking the option the situation was worsened. This is to be rectified next year.

- The format of 3rd year classes has again been brought up. The change from six 60 minute classes to four 90 minute classes, although not reducing teaching time, has reduced the frequency of contact students have with class tutors. It is proposed that a survey will be taken to ascertain the feelings of students on the matter. It was noted that the Statistics department has kept to the old format of six one hour long classes.
- The 'weak paper' policy for exams in which students must gain over a given mark in ALL papers as well as a sufficiently high USM for certain levels has been discussed. Students feel the policy is unfair due to fatigue that can occur in the papers taken towards the end of the exam timetable. The system will be changed for the academic year 2006-07.
- The third year option B5.a) was discussed after a mix-up last year meant questions due to appear in the exams were posted on the Maths Institute website prior to the exams. After complaints from students it was ruled by the Proctors that a rescale based on performance in the other exams was unjustified. Students who have now left the University have the chance to return to retake the paper if they wish.
- It has now been decided that Part A can be taken once and once only so the marks obtained will be final. Part C has been changed in that 3 units are now taken instead of 4. The implementation of removing Quantum Mechanics from the Part A course and replacing it with Electromagnetism has occurred and a Quantum Mechanics course is offered to Mathematics students in their third year by the Physics Department. The 10 extra marks on offer for presentation in the Part A short question papers have been scrapped this year as there was confusion among students and tutors over exactly what was required to gain the marks.
- Ways of teaching Faculty members how to teach in classes (i.e. how to be a class tutor) have been discussed.
- 3rd year class registration was brought up as it caused a lot of hassle in the first week of term. It was suggested that students are informed of available class times before lectures begin e.g. in 0th week, to reduce the hectic nature of 1st week. Large classes, especially in Mathematical Ecology and Biology are to be sorted next year by bringing in more Class Tutors.
- The open days held in May and September seem to have worked very well as applications to subjects involving Mathematics have increased by 25% in the last year.

Subfaculty meeting

- Points from the Subfaculty meeting held earlier in the term were discussed.
 - In Part C, students now need to offer the equivalent of 3 full papers as opposed to 4 from previous years. Students must now do 2 questions from the first half of the course (lectured on in Michaelmas term) and 2 from the second half

(lectured on in Hilary term) whereas originally a minimum of only 1 question from each half had to be submitted still with 4 questions completed overall. It was agreed that a 2 and 2 split was a better option.

- The 'Bologna system' in place in Universities across Europe that regulates the amount of work required by students to obtain certain levels of degree has been a point of interest in Oxford recently. The short terms we have in Oxford was a point of concern as it was thought that a result of this was that Oxford students were falling short with regards to the hours spent on study recommended by the 'Bologna system'. A Faculty member produced a study that shows Oxford students in fact meet and indeed exceed the outlined number of hours needed.

Website and E-mail protection

- It was outlined by the Internet Officer the steps that have been taken to protect the [Bookstall](#) from misuse via spam. A filter has been put in place that only allows computers connected to Oxford University networks to access the [Bookstall](#). Problems that arose from the spam were mainly centered on stock levels being disrupted that caused extra hassle for the [Bookstall](#) manager and Internet Officer in correcting the stock levels. The 'Contact Us' form is also still being used for advertising of gambling sites so it was decided that the form would be removed and a list of relevant e-mail addresses posted on the page instead. It was also noted that the forum is still being underused but is causing no problems to keep on the site so no action will be taken regarding removal of the forum.

Questionnaires

- Part B class questionnaires that are used as a survey on the preferred class system offered to students were due a re-draft, which was pointed out by Dr. Luke when the first draft was sent to her 'for approval'. The intention was that the MURC Questionnaire rep would work with the Faculty on this but as it hasn't happened thus far, the Faculty may well by-pass MURC and act by themselves as they want to get the problem sorted.

New Committee

- The new committee was formed from those at the meeting that will be a part of MURC next year. A vote was needed for the post of Chairperson in which [James Holwell](#) won by 3 votes to 2 over [Sonny Green](#). The new Committee will be as follows.
 - Chairperson - [James Holwell](#)
 - Secretary - [Hannah Clapham](#)
 - [Bookstall](#) Manager/Treasurer - [Sonny Green](#)
 - JCCU Representatives - [Helen Beggs](#), [Helen Turner](#) and [Matthew Cornford](#)
 - Internet Officer - [James Lancaster](#)
 - Open Day Co-ordinators - [Annie Ma](#), [Matthew Cornford](#) and [Sonny Green](#)

- Questionnaire Rep - [Graham O'Connor](#)
- 4th Year Rep - [Helene Neufeld](#)
- Maths and Statistics Rep - [Annie Ma](#)
- Computer Science Rep - [James Powell](#)
- Maths and Philosophy Rep - [Linus Mattauch](#)
- The post of Publicity Officer has not been filled and as it is not a part of the [Constitution](#) that MURC has a Publicity Officer it was agreed that the position can remain vacant unless someone comes forward with an interest for the position. [James Lancaster](#) agreed to continue as Internet Officer unless a replacement can be found. [Matthew Cornford](#) and [Sonny Green](#) expressed an interest in being Open Day co-ordinators but will confirm their positions at a later date.

Next MURC meeting

- The new committee members will take their posts from 1st week of next term except the Chairperson, Secretary and JCCU reps who will take their posts in 4th week after the JCCU meeting in 3rd week. The next meeting is to be organised by the new committee in Hilary term.