

# Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Wednesday 26 November 1997

## Present

- [Juliet Kemp](#) (Chairperson), [Terry Boon](#), Musab Bora,
- [Jim Bowden](#), John Bradley, Jeremy Brookman, [Mark Colman](#), Alex Dixon,
- [Carina Edwards](#), [Matthew Gretton](#), Ruth Holland, Catriona Laing, Sam
- Lunn, Becky Manvell, Richard Mark, Camilla Metz, Alex Neville, Mark
- Newman, David Smallbone, Laurence Smith, [Caroline Rogers](#), Chris
- Terry, Timothy Tang, [Rhys Watkin](#), Emily Webb, [Tom Womack](#) and Claire
- Jones (Secretary).

## Apologies for Absence

- Received from Sarah-Jayne Dominic, Mike Roberts and Danielle Williams.

## Introduction to MURC

- [Juliet Kemp](#) welcomed the new college reps to MURC. She briefly explained the purpose of the committee and encouraged everyone to subscribe to the MURC email mailing list.

## [Minutes](#) of the Meeting of 22 October 1997

- These minutes were approved.

## Election to Committee Positions

- The following appointments were made, with a coin being tossed in the cases of chairperson and secretary, these positions having two volunteers.
  - Chairperson: [Carina Edwards](#)
  - Secretary: [Matthew Gretton](#)
  - Bookstall Manager & Treasurer: [Caroline Rogers](#)
  - Open Day Co-Ordinators: [Mark Colman](#) & [Rhys Watkin](#)
  - Publicity Officer: [Jim Bowden](#)
  - Internet Officer: [Tom Womack](#)
  - Maths & Computation Rep: [Sam Lunn](#)
  - JCCU reps: John Bradley, [Terry Boon](#), Richard Mark, [Tom Womack](#)

- [Terry Boon](#) and [Mark Colman](#), who are no longer college reps, were co-opted to MURC to act as fourth year representatives. In addition, some reps volunteered to help with the bookstall on Wednesday mornings: these were then required to become signatories to the bookstall bank account (see below).

## Bookstall

- The following formal motion was passed, changing the signatories on the bank account for the bookstall.
  - That National Westminster Bank Plc (the Bank) be authorised to honour all cheques or other orders for payment drawn upon any account or accounts for the time being kept with the Bank in the name of the Club notwithstanding that any such payment may cause such account or accounts to be overdrawn or increase any existing overdraft provided they are signed by any one of the below signatures.
  - That the Bank be authorised to accept all requests and receipts for the delivery of securities papers or other property if signed by any one of the below.
  - That the Bank be given a list of the signing Officers and be advised in writing under the hand of the Secretary of any changes that may take place and the Bank be entitled to act upon the signatures so given.
  - That these Resolutions be communicated to the Bank and remain in force until revoked by notice in writing to the Bank signed by the Chairman or the Secretary acting or purporting to act on behalf of the Society Club or Association and the Bank shall be entitled to act upon such notice.
- Specimen Signatures: Mr Terence Boon, Mr [Mark Colman](#), Mr Alexander Dixon, Miss [Carina Edwards](#), Mr [Matthew Gretton](#), Miss [Juliet Kemp](#), Mr Richard Mark, Miss [Caroline Rogers](#), Mr Timothy Tang and Mr [Rhys Watkin](#).

## Developments since the Meeting of 22 October 1997

- There will probably be six one-hour classes for each section b course in Hilary 98, as an experiment. MURC will gather feedback on this at the end of next term.
- All Part II candidates should receive a circular from the examiners by the end of term. This will address the issue of combining the marks for Parts I and II.
- In section c, an "average candidate may wish to study 6 options". There are no plans for violent changes to the options available in section c and the overall balance of subjects is likely to remain similar. Thus, the current synopses can be used as a guide when second and third years are considering the implications of their section b choices.
- The "Techniques in Applied Mathematics" section c course is being kept under review. It is up to the examiners, not the lecturer, to interpret the syllabus, so disregard the announcement made to the contrary by the lecturer for this course.
- At least one fourth year has been experiencing problems in obtaining books needed for their dissertation, so it was suggested by MURC that access to the Maths Institute Library might be provided in this situation. The Sub-faculty is looking into the issue to

see whether or not it is an isolated problem. Undergraduates are reminded that college libraries have funds available for purchasing books required for their courses. In particular, this applies to section c.

- With regard to Maths Mods 1997, the Standing Committee said: "It was felt that a first good step to boosting the confidence of candidates would be to set more reasonable papers."
- Exam candidates are reminded that they may take their candidate number into exams with them, written on a postcard. (There were problems this summer with some students forgetting their number.)
- The section b class questionnaire produced by MURC is under review by the Standing Committee and should be implemented this academic year, maybe even this term. However, the Standing Committee does not support MURC's suggestion that typed model solutions should be provided for section b problem sheets.
- Institute Notes for being prepared for o11 (Maths & the Environment), a3 and Special Relativity
- o12 Mathematical Education (starting Hilary 98) has a quota of 20 places. The deadline for subscribing to classes is 1/12/97. o11 may be discontinued or reduced to 32 compulsory lectures. (Currently, you study 2 out of 3 16-lecture courses.)

## OUSU Education Committee Finals Survey Report

- It was felt that much of this report was not particularly relevant to maths, with the exception of the suggestion that more help with exam skills could be provided. It was thought that this help should come from college tutors in the form of advice on the number of questions to attempt and the way in which questions should be approached. Although some tutors already do this, ideally the advice given should be standardised across the university. In particular, information about the criteria for obtaining firsts, seconds and thirds, and about the way marks are combined in Joint Schools, would be useful. It was observed that this should be covered by the marking scheme document currently being prepared by the Sub-faculty in response to a university-wide initiative. There were no suggestions for alternative methods of assessment (which had been requested by senior members) although it was noted that b8 and b9 had a practical component and it was possible to submit an extended essay or dissertation.

## Deadline for Choosing between the Three and Four Year Courses

- There was a general feeling that the current deadline of Michaelmas of the second year seemed very early, and more information would be useful when making the decision. It was noted that the current organisation resulted in the two courses diverging after Christmas in the second year and that a later decision might have career implications if the quota imposed on places for the four-year course meant that some people were not able to follow the course of their choice. A show of hands favoured moving the deadline to the start of Hilary of the second year, by nineteen votes to three.

## Mailshot

- [Claire Jones](#) distributed copies of a mailshot to the college reps present for them to deliver to the mathematicians at their college.

## Any Other Business

- Additional copies of the lecture numbers survey were distributed for those colleges who had not yet completed one. This survey had been introduced by MURC earlier in the term in an attempt to calculate the response rates of the traditional lecture questionnaires filled in at the end of each course.
- It was reported that the Maths and Philosophy rep is proposing a change to the fourth year of that course, enabling students to take some maths b options in both the third and fourth years. There was support for this suggestion from the Maths and Philosophers present, it being noted that currently they have a very limited choice of options in section c since they do not study many b courses in their third year.
- In response to a discussion at Faculty Forum (an OUSU committee meeting for all Joint Consultative Committee reps) earlier in the week, [Claire Jones](#) asked those present about their college's policy on marks released after Mods and whether in-college problem sheets were graded. Most colleges, but not all, tell students their total marks, sum of squares and alpha-beta counts for each paper. However, a lot of tutors do not grade problem sheets. It was felt that this would be useful, since feedback on progress was sometimes lacking. Indeed, it was suggested that grades for individual questions, as well as for the work as a whole, would be helpful.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed.