

Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Wednesday 11 June 1997

- Present were [Juliet Kemp](#) (Chairperson), Josh Bell, Chris Bland, [Terry Boon](#), [Carina Edwards](#), Katie Golding, Philip Hannay, Ruth Holland, Tom Lancaster, Tom Lorenc, Stephen Nichols, [Christine Nix](#), Louise Pickwell, Emma Pointon, Alisoun Probert, Anthony Rustell, Chris Swift and [Claire Jones](#) (Secretary). Apologies for absence were received from Musab Bora, [Mark Colman](#), Neil Gillespie, [Jim Hanson](#), Janet Lucke and Paul Meredith.

Minutes of the meeting of 7 May 1997

- These minutes were approved.

Matters arising from the minutes (not covered elsewhere)

- Section c courses: It was reported that the Sub-faculty had released a draft list of course titles which had been circulated to undergraduates via the email mailing list. The synopses, including reading lists, will be approved by the Board in 8th week and should reach the relevant people before the end of term.
- Finals Dates: The Chairman of Examiners had written to the Sub-faculty, noting both the undergraduates' and the examiners' displeasure at the late publication of the Finals timetable. This will be brought to the attention of the Proctors in the Examiners' Report and a recommendation will be made that the timetable be published before Easter in future years. MURC was pleased that their opinion had been acknowledged.
- Bicycle Sheds: The Maths Institute had investigated the installation of bike hoops, but had decided instead to re-open the bike sheds to undergraduates, with immediate effect.
- Open Day: [Juliet Kemp](#) read out a letter received from [Mark Colman](#). He thanked all those who helped, in particular Ms Sian Miller of the Maths Institute, who put in a huge amount of work in order to make the Open Day possible. The event was extremely successful, reportedly "much better than the one at Cambridge." The bookstall made a profit of £61 from Alternative Prospectus sales.
- Joint Schools Reps: Chris Bland from Somerville was appointed as Engineering and Computer Science (ECS) Rep.
- Third Year Workload: This issue was raised at the JCCU meeting in 4th week. The senior members pointed out that undergraduates were expected to study six options in their second year and three in their third, leaving sufficient time for revision.
- Weighting of Finals Papers: It was reported that the examiners would not make a decision about the possible use of a scaling factor until the papers had been marked this summer.

Section b Classes

- The Sub-faculty is considering replacing the current system of four 11/2-hour classes by six or seven 1-hour classes for each course. Some MURC reps reported that their college's undergraduates would prefer to retain the 4-class system: although the total tuition time might remain the same, additional time would be spent travelling to the classes. Other students were concerned that the workload may increase if the number of classes was increased. However, it was felt that the 6/7-class option might avoid problem sheets getting ahead of the lectures. It was noted that 1-hour slots would fit in better with the lecture timetable structure, although availability of rooms might be a problem. Opinion was divided as to which system was preferable: a straw poll showed 5 reps in favour of change and 6 in favour of retaining the current number of classes.

b Class Questionnaires

- [Claire Jones](#) explained that she had produced a draft questionnaire (and circulated it with the agenda) in response to the Sub-faculty's request for question suggestions. The idea had been agreed in principle and it was hoped that a questionnaire could be introduced in Michaelmas 97. Additional questions about approachability of the class tutor and class sizes were suggested.
- It was asked how the questionnaires would be administrated. It was thought that the Sub-faculty would organise them in the same way as the lecture ones, with forms being handed out during the last class. Concerns were expressed about confidentiality if completed questionnaires were handed directly to the class tutors. It was suggested that they were placed in a box in the basement of the Maths Institute, which could be done immediately after the class finished.

Course Handbook Entry

- The senior members of the JCCU had reacted favourably to the suggestion that MURC produce an insert for the Course Handbook. A draft version was discussed and approved after some minor changes. It was noted that MURC has a noticeboard in the basement of the Institute which now displays the current list of reps. It was suggested that agendas and minutes of meetings could be posted there in future.

Bookstall

- It was agreed that there should be a bookstall session on Friday of 8th week for the purchase of books from finalists. A request was made for reps to help with this. In the absence of the [Bookstall Manager](#), [Claire Jones](#) agreed to produce a flyer for distribution to all third year mathematicians.
- It was noted that help would be required for the bookstall sessions in Freshers' Week. It was intended to buy books from second years (who would have just finished Mods) at the start of the week and sell them at the Induction Day.

Mailshot

- [Juliet Kemp](#) announced that the planned mailshot had been abandoned. Instead one would be prepared ready for distribution as soon as the new committee was appointed in Michaelmas. This would include space for the name of the college rep (and other information could be added if desired).

Survey or Numbers Taking Optional Courses

- Stephen Nichols pointed out that the current system of lecture questionnaires does not give any indication of the number of people who cease to attend each lecture course and MURC should investigate ways of remedying this. He suggested that MURC reps could conduct headcounts of the number of people attending lectures in weeks 1, 3 and 6. Another proposal was made that MURC reps could be sent a form each term asking them how many mathematicians at their college were studying each option. It was thought that the senior maths tutor at each college might be a better person to ask about this, but that MURC reps might be more reliable in providing the information.

AOB

- A request was made for someone to act as JCCU rep in Michaelmas following the resignation of Erica Neely. Tom Lorenc said he might be willing, but would need to check that the meeting did not clash with other commitments.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed.