

Mathematics Undergraduate Representative Committee

Wednesday 5 March 1997

Present

- [Juliet Kemp](#) (Chairperson), [Terry Boon](#), Musab Bora, [Mark Colman](#), Jon Emberson, Katie Golding, Philip Hannay, Tom Lancaster, Tom Lorenc, Erica Neely, [Christine Nix](#), Louise Pickwell, Emma Pointon, Michael Reid (Magdalen), Chris Swift and [Claire Jones](#) (Secretary).

Apologies

- received from Neil Gillespie, [Stephen Gower](#), [Jim Hanson](#), Janet Lucke, Camilla Metz and [Chris Tebbet](#).

[Minutes](#) of the Meeting of 29 January 1997

- These minutes were approved.

Mailshot

- In the absence of [Chris Tebbet](#) (Publicity Officer), [Terry Boon](#) reported that the mailshot had been redrafted in accordance with the suggestions made at the previous meeting. It was proposed that it would be sent out to all undergraduate mathematicians at the start of Trinity. Each rep will be given a list of the mathematicians in their college (obtained from the University Offices) together with the correct number of copies of the mailshot.

Other Matters Arising from the [Minutes](#)

- It was reported that o12 would definitely not be examined before 1999 and that the prerequisite of b1 for the philosophy o-courses had been imposed by the Philosophy Sub-Faculty. Although the Geometry and Logic panels had submitted their proposed section c course titles, these titles had not yet been released. The Sub-Faculty had approved the use of non-programmable single-line calculators in Mods and it was thought that they would publish a list of approved calculators in due course. It was confirmed that Maths Mods will start in 9th week as usual, but no details about Finals dates had been released. Erica Neely had heard that o-course papers would be examined with the rest of the papers set by that sub-faculty (for example, philosophy exams were likely to be in 5th week).

[Bookstall](#)

- Musab Bora explained there had been few sales since the start of the term, mainly because there weren't many books to sell. Therefore it had been decided to open the stall an hour later (i.e. at 10am) for the time being. [Terry Boon](#) asked whether it would be possible to start slightly earlier in time for people arriving for 10am lectures, but the assistants were not able to do this since they had a lecture until 10am. It was felt that MURC needed more publicity regarding the *purchase* of books. In addition to the general mailshot already in preparation, Musab is intending to write to all finalists next term asking them for books. It was pointed out that there may need to be a special session of the bookstall on Friday of 8th week of Trinity for this purpose, depending when finals finish. It will also be necessary to make arrangements to buy books from first years after Mods since these will be needed for the Induction Day in 0th week of Michaelmas.

Section b-Classes

- It was noted that many third years were unhappy with the arrangements for these: communication between lecturers, class tutors and markers is a particular problem and marking is frequently inconsistent. It was generally felt that the third year of the new course is not well-organised.
- There were few complaints with regard to the length and difficulty of problem sheets, although b3 questions were often irrelevant to the course and some of those for b4 couldn't be answered by the class tutors. Ambiguities and mistakes were a problem with b5 sheets and many third years didn't receive the corrections because they were not attending the lectures this year.
- It was recommended that *all* b-course question sheets should be typed. It was also suggested that *typed* model solutions could be handed out in classes: it was thought that this would be very helpful.
- Some undergraduates felt that classes were not as useful as tutorials since there was little opportunity to ask the tutors to explain the theory of the course and the wider significance of the problems set was not emphasised.
- It was noted that there is currently no effective method of feedback for the class system. There was support for the proposal that questionnaires should be introduced, with individual class tutors receiving their results.

Open Day

- [Mark Colman](#) distributed a letter to all reps present giving details of the arrangements for the Open Day. He emphasised that volunteers were needed to help at the Maths Institute as well as taking students to lunch at their colleges: reps willing to help in this way were asked to contact him or [Christine Nix](#).

Questionnaire Results

- It was asked which MURC rep had been nominated to see the results of individual lecturers. It was reported that the Publicity Officer had and [Juliet Kemp](#) agreed to check

that the Maths Institute had been informed of this. A request was made for suggestions for improvements to the questionnaires, but none were forthcoming.

MURC Reps for Joint Schools

- It was noted that the positions for Maths & Computation, Computation and Engineering & Computer Science Reps were still vacant and no-one knew whether any elections were underway. [Terry Boon](#) reported that his enquiries about the election procedures for these subjects had been unsuccessful and [Claire Jones](#) undertook to pursue the matter further. There were two college reps present reading Maths & Computation and Computation respectively who appeared willing to be co-opted to these positions if they remained unfilled.

Any Other Business

- Several MURC reps had been unable to attend the meeting because they were participating in Torpids. One of these, Camilla Metz, submitted a suggestion that in future MURC should move their meetings of Seventh week, Michaelmas and Hilary, to a more convenient time for rowers. However it was felt that since MURC suffers from poor attendance anyway, it wasn't worth changing the date of meetings. Reps were reminded that meetings are held on Wednesdays of 2nd and 7th week each term.
- There was wide support for the suggestion that Institute Notes would be useful for a1 Linear Algebra and a3 since the books on the reading list are not closely related to the course. It was agreed that a request be made for Notes for these courses, preferably written by someone other than the lecturer in order to give an alternative view of the material.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed.