

## MURC Agenda – Trinity 2015

### Matters Arising:

- Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes – passed unanimously (with editing to be done)

- Strategic Review

To keep exams same format in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year, but make them an hour longer to relieve time pressure. No time scale to get approved. Controversial: Lecturers are allowed to base lecture series based on set texts instead of providing bespoke notes. Move away from step by step guides towards synoptic lectures.

### General Business

- Elections

**St Annes** – Jenny Seaborne Unanimous

**St Hildas** – Lauren Enright Unanimous

**Maths and Philosophy** – Nicholas Williams Unanimous

### Questionnaire rep –

James – Wrote for student newspapers, been in MURC for a few terms. 3<sup>rd</sup> year (4)

Tim – Has committee experience, opined about courses and the way maths is run.  
Haengun: what year are you in? 3<sup>rd</sup> year (8) Elected.

**D&I Rep** – Gender disparity initially, and expanded to include mental, international students BAME, low socio economic background etc. Attend JCCU meetings, Good Practice Steering Group, preparing reports and carrying out plans to improve diversity and inclusion.

Naomi Vides – Unanimous

- Reports from Departmental Committees

**Teaching Committee** – long discussion about exam conventions for mmathphys – if you fail to hand in a single problem sheet you can fail the degree. New part A short option in mathematical biology. (9 in total now). From National Student Survey: feedback on exams taken before the final year (prelims and part A), marks on individual questions in papers, should exam scripts be sent back to tutors for future tutorials (department not willing to do this),

Alex: Cross sectional papers (particularly short options in Part A), it would be helpful to get a breakdown of marks.

Tim: a good idea for questions individual marks to be released. General consensus of it being a good idea

**Arts Committee** – No meeting, but has received maths department art strategy. Some people are worried about the budget for the art department. Alex: (Need to consider whether this will be a permanent position)

- Report on Lecture Questionnaires (at this point we can discuss the possibility of online questionnaires/gender question/question about TA's explication of solutions)

**Prelims** - Good in general, MUPAD was generally taught less well than last year, was a new person to the university, will receive advice on teaching. Project 1 is both too easy and too hard, Project 3 was designed specifically for learning a new project language and most people didn't do it, but those that did, did well at it.

Dynamics – Introduced new geometry course, so moved dynamics into Hilary, and removing tops. (no replacement). Ben questioned whether they were adding more material as losing geometry and tops.

Multivariable Calculus – going to be encouraged to include more examples

**Part A** –

Linear algebra 2 – Worst course in the university. Mostly disagreeing (improved from last year, which was strongly disagreeing). Problem sheets still too hard, not been changed from last year.

Numerical Analysis – Far too easy. (and in 2<sup>nd</sup> year 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year). 34% thought too easy. Looking into making it more challenging.

Topology – Change in part A, introducing more metric spaces in complex analysis, so going to rebalance topology course so later things are covered in more detail

Waves and fluids - too easy and too slow. But intentional, want to give people a good grounding

**Part B** -

Continuous Martingales – Problem sheets too hard. Lectures are interesting, but the pace of the course is too fast.

**Part C** –things aren't great. Problem sheets too hard, pace of the course too fast. Workload is still too high, need to readjust.

Networks – Problems Sheets are too hard, lectures unstructured and rushed. Changing to assessment by miniproject.

Thank you Michael for all your hard work!

**Stats Questionnaires** – Applied Stats 2 was lectured for the first time by someone who had never lectured before, unsuccessful. Did not do well in any category. Assistance and guidance will be provided.

Actuarial Science - well received.

Online report – so people who aren't at lectures can give view. Add a question about TAs explaining answers.

Michael: Dr Dyson has a bureaucratic issue with asking for gender.

- D&I Report

Huge thanks to D&I Team. This report is going to the Good Practice Steering Group. A few points to check MURC agrees with opinions being taken to the group.

We can't do much actively, but we can raise awareness as a department/committee. We agree as a committee that the department can be active in raising awareness of mental health issues and such.

James: Mathemagicians exist, but it is difficult for people to get out of Oxford during term time.

Ben: Mentoring and Shadowing before admissions. We as a committee agree that there is an appetite for more student participation in outreach. Charlie has done work on the freshers pack. Need to tackle disparity between international students and domestic. Not leave this up to colleges.

Should we have department peer supporters? Get in touch via email, drop in sessions.

Edwin: Useful because mental health issues are related to work stress. So talking to someone on the same course is an added benefit.

Ben: Finals Forum. Need better publicising.

Jenny: Peer support training provided by college

Ben: The department should put some money into training peer supporters, need investment to show care about mental health.

- Revision classes (I'd like to seek ideas on how to make people turn up)

Alex: Cake makes people turn up, but they don't stay to revise.

James: People don't turn up, because people aren't in the department at 4 o'clock.

Alex: They are late in the afternoon because then space is available.

Ben: Coursemates don't feel the need to go to revision classes, so no people to work with.

Brigitte: Department Facebook page, MURC facebook page, need to relaunch. Better advertisements.

- Feedback from assessment (passed from Department/Division. Consultation on whether more feedback can/should be provided to students from assessments not in the final year)

Covered under strategic review

- Classes and Office Hours (may be covered under Strategic Review; I'd like to give some feedback on class format)

People aren't satisfied with 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year classes. Stats provide answer sheets, doesn't cause any issues.

Tim: Most frustrating thing about classes is that they seem to focus on the questions that people didn't have many issues with.

Haengeun: Amongst 2<sup>nd</sup> year, after lectures not much time to ask long extended questions based on the actual lecture.

Alex: strongly in favour. Department is strongly against. Will raise it again at JCCU. Office hours operate successfully at other universities.

- Website

IT rep not present

- Part A Review

We have told the department we would do a review of part A. College reps need to forward email to mathematicians in their college to gather responses.

- AOB

James: Open day is on Saturday – come at lunchtime, 12.30-2.00!

Ben: Freshers Pack - d&l perspective, what sections should be included in the freshers pack?

Charlie: Freshers pack was a booklet that was 5 yrs old, currently details what you would expect in 1<sup>st</sup> year, a brief description of what to expect in years to come. Little bit at the end that mentions MURC, Mirzakhani, Mathemagicians.

James: How is it going to be distributed?

Alex: Put on MURC website, might get put on maths website. Should be ready for A level results day.

Tim: Specimen Papers – there aren't any for part b this year.

Thanks to Ben, Michael and Rose! Extra thanks to Ben!! More thanks to Ben, for being super helpful when we lost a president.

Meeting ended at 2.03 pm