

Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences

Mathematics Student-Staff Consultative Committee

Thursday 8th November 2018, 12:30pm in MP-3.05, Physical Sciences Building

Present: Rob Douglas (RSD, Director of L&T Maths), Adam Vellender (Year 1 tutor), Cameron Wilcox (Year 4 Rep), Chris Svendsen (Year 4 Rep), Paige Robinson (MathsSoc deputy), Panna Karlinger (Year 3 Rep), Kim Kenobi (Year 3 tutor), Tudur Davies (Year 4 tutor), Tirion Roberts (PG Rep), Anwen Thomas (Welsh Medium Rep), Ethan Atkinson (Year 0 Rep), Yuan Shen (Year 0 tutor and Employability), Daniel Skerman (Year 1 Rep), Baylee Paige Schütte (Year 2 Rep), Georgie Massen (Year 2 Rep), Simon French (Library), James Owen (Year 3 Rep), Joel Greenwood (Year 3 Rep).

In attendance: Michelle Symes (MIS37, Minutes)

Apologies: Morwenna Jeffery (Careers), Amy Major (MathsSoc)

The meeting started with a welcome from Rob Douglas who confirmed to the Committee that all issues raised would be listened to, and discussed at Mathematics Subject group; he noted that constructive suggestions are easier to implement. SSCC is a student-led committee.

Agenda

1. **Minutes of 25th April 2018**

The minutes were accepted.

2. **Matters arising**

Two matters arising from the April 2018 minutes were noted:

- Check the availability of MP-0.10 and MP-0.11 for Major Projects presentations for MMath students – Tudur Davies confirmed this as completed; and
- Provide Beamer presentation support for MMath students – Tudur Davies confirmed this as completed.

3. **Election of a student Chair**

Chris Svendsen was nominated and elected Chair for the 2018/19 sitting of this Committee.

4. **Student Matters**

TUN: Rob Douglas confirmed 3 TUN notices had been received:

- Lecturers need more technology/Panopto training: a number of sessions failed to record or recorded without sound. Specifically this occurred in MA33310 Integral Transforms. Panna Karlinger confirmed that Daniel Peck did not know that the session had to be recorded initially but had addressed this issue subsequently.

Action: Rob Douglas to speak to Daniel Peck regarding technology required for lecture capture.

- Video recording of whiteboards was reported as being of poor quality, only a few instances were found where the recording quality was reasonable. Adam Vellender updated the Committee on his discussions over the Summer regarding this issue and noted:
 - Only EL-0.26, MP-0.15 and LL-A6 have cameras that can be focussed on the board; it was the work of several meetings to achieve this; camera/image quality is an issue; and
 - Most rooms do not have cameras that can be focussed on whiteboards; the E-Learning team is investigating the possibility of installing more cameras but as yet they have not appeared.

The Committee confirmed it would like more high definition cameras, able to capture whiteboard writing, installed.

Action: Adam Vellender to report these observations to IS.

- There was a request for the 9am lecture on Thursday (incorrectly referred to as 9am on Wednesday in TUN) to be rescheduled at 4pm on Friday; timetabling was able to offer Friday at 5pm instead; there was no reason to suppose this would have been popular with the class as a whole, especially considering some extra classes had to be held on Fridays at 3pm. Rob Douglas confirmed that there was little scope for movement on the timetable.

More general timetabling issues relating to the 4 hour block of teaching on Tuesdays for Year 2 were raised and the impact on attendance highlighted.

Year 4/M:

The twinning of modules MAM2620 and MAM3320 is not working with regard to assignment deadlines. One is due in on the Friday and the other on the following Monday.

Action: Rob Douglas will speak to the lecturers concerned.

Door in MP-3.05 creaks all the time.

There are no assessed presentations for Minor Projects, but students feel that unassessed presentations would be useful practice for the assessed Major Project presentations in semester 2. Students in Year 4 had confirmed that either before or after Christmas would be good for them. A brief discussion followed and concluded that before Christmas would be better.

Action: Tudur Davies to arrange a series of Minor Project presentations before the Christmas break as practice for Year 4 Major Project presentations.

The layout of C64 was an issue as at the start of each class the room had to be rearranged. Students also raised concerns regarding Health and Safety: there are desks which have flip tops and move when any pressure is applied to them.

Year 3:

It was requested that Blackboard materials, from modules taken in previous years, remain visible until the end of the course. Presently some files disappear, having reached the set expiry date. Some lecturers are concerned about making solutions available beyond the duration of the module.

Action: Rob Douglas to contact Module Co-ordinators regarding making more Blackboard materials permanently available.

Card reader: does not always work in MP-3.02. This was an issue particularly at the start of the Semester.

Rob Douglas confirmed that students could approach the lecturer at the end of the session and request to be signed in.

MA33310 Integral Transforms: the assignments were reported as being difficult and that the examples given in lectures were not as challenging. Students discussed the positive aspect of preparation for tougher exam

questions, but also the impact on students who were struggling. Panna Karlinger noted that there had been constructive dialogue with the lecturer concerned.

Yuan Shen suggested that students ask Daniel Peck for reference book examples to practice on.

Year 2:

MA/MT25200 Introduction to Numerical Analysis: lots of students are struggling with the programming aspects of the course, it was reported to be a steep learning curve for some but of little benefit to those who had programming knowledge. Students suggested that MP12910 could shift its focus away from Excel to Python and that this would help. It was noted that the CS12020 Introduction to Programming elective (available to Year 1 single honours Maths students) gave students a good grounding in the necessary techniques and thought processes required.

For some of those with programming experience the walk up to campus on an otherwise free day to hand in an assignment is seen as a trial and on line submission was requested. Staff noted that this was not possible as part of the procedure was verifying that it was the student's own work; handing in assignments personally was not seen as an onerous task.

It was noted that assignment marks were generally good with only a few not submitting.

Tudur Davies confirmed that the start level would be reviewed.

The Year 2 representatives noted that moving the workshop to Wednesday had an impact on attendance.

MP/FG26020 Mathematical Physics: Some students thought that redundant material was being taught in Mathematical Physics: this related to topics taught in greater depth in Algebra and Calculus. Students want the material to be covered more thoroughly in one module rather than in brief over two modules.

MA20310 Abstract Algebra. Marked first assignments had not been returned until recently: Rob Douglas noted that many attempts had been handed in, and that it had taken some time to complete the marking.

Year 1:

No issues raised.

Year 0:

No issues raised.

Welsh Medium:

No issues raised.

MathsSoc:

A reminder was given that on Wednesday 14th November in the PSB Common Room a talk was being delivered by Erica Tyson of the IMA regarding Teacher Training scholarships. Kim Kenobi confirmed he had received information about these; also that up to £22k was available for training with 2 x £5K being allocated after training was completed.

The talk is at 1pm and there is free pizza available for attendees.

Action: Yuan Shen to advertise the event on the foyer screen once details have been passed to him by MathsSoc.

Post Graduate:

No issues raised.

5. Surveys

NSS Action Plan: Rob Douglas reported the 2018 NSS had gone very well. The area with the most room for improvement was that of “Community”. The Mathematics Department continues to lobby for an area in the PSB for the use of Maths students, two currently unused Level 3 rooms being seen as particularly suitable. Discussions regarding this are on-going with Faculty Executive: Simon Cox will attend a discussion with Dave Smith and Dave Price. It is hoped the PSB can host displays of examples of good work by Maths students, in particular from the Semester 2 Puzzles module MA15110, and also MP12910 and Level M projects.

The other area that was highlighted is “Student perception of the SU”. A general discussion was held on interactions with the SU and the perceptions raised, most of which related to:

- Lack of understanding of differences between subjects;
- Desire to create conformity across all areas – Maths and The Madrigal Singers were given as examples where this was not appropriate;
- Errors in the election process; and

Returning representatives were generally unhappy with the requirement to sit through the same training session every year. They requested that consideration be given to delivery of training to new representatives only and that returning representatives should receive any slides from the training sessions, but not attend.

Rob Douglas requested that the Student Representatives act as Ambassadors for the NSS and encourage finalists to complete the survey.

6. **Employability**

A good turnout was reported for the Alumni speakers, although not from the Maths Department.

A LinkedIn training session was discussed and Yuan was agreeable to this.

Action: Yuan Shen to organise, via Careers, a LinkedIn session for Semester 2.

Morwenna Jeffrey had submitted written comments:

Weekly departmental drop-ins take place in the Computer Science foyer from 10:30 to 12:30 on Thursdays;

These are an opportunity for brief careers related chats;

There was a successful Autumn Fair on 10/10;

A Spring Careers Fair is scheduled for March 2019.

7. **Staff Matters**

Library: Simon French offered his thanks to students for voting (in the NSS) the Library top for facilities. He reaffirmed that students should contact him with any issues.

Over the Summer the library has had a new cataloguing system, a new user interface and the book loan limit has been raised to 40. Loans are also now for 1 week with a rolling renewal up to 6 months.

Requests for items to be returned for reloan to others is managed via PRIMO.

Cameron Wilcox commended the level M training session.

There was a request for more plug sockets in the PSB Library. A discussion was held on closing times.

Action: Simon French to request more plug sockets for the PSB Library.

Submission of work: Rob Douglas noted that assignment handing in rates are dropping off in some modules; students are not collecting marked work regularly.

Year 2 students: Adam Vellender urged Year 2 students to continue to attend sessions as numbers had started to drop. Representatives were asked to encourage students to attend as exams are harder if lectures have been missed.

8. **AOB**

The Committee expressed contentment with this time of the week for SSCC meetings.

Rob Douglas will attempt to book this slot for the Teaching Week 10 meeting.

Thanks were offered to Panna Karlinger for providing chocolates.

9. **Actions carried forward:**

Action Number	Minute Number	Action	Whose Action	Action Status
1	4	Speak to Daniel Peck regarding technology required for lecture capture.	rsd	
2	4	Adam Vellender to report these observations to IS.	asv2	
3	4	Speak to the lecturers concerned about twinned Level M modules.	rsd	
4	4	A series of Minor Project presentations to be arranged before the Christmas break as practice for Year 4 Major Project presentations.	itd	
5	4	Contact Module Co-ordinators regarding making more Blackboard materials permanently available.	rsd	
6	4	Advertise the IMA event on the foyer screen once details have been passed to him by MathsSoc.	yus10	
7	6	Yuan Shen to organise, via Careers, a LinkedIn session for Semester 2.	yus10	
8	7	Request more plug sockets for the PSB	sif4	

		library.		
--	--	----------	--	--

Meeting closed.

DRAFT