

**SEFYDLIAD MATHEMATEG A FFISEG  
INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS**

**PWYLLGOR CYSWLLT STAFF/MYFYRWYR/  
STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 2012 AT 1.10 P M IN THE SEL  
ROOM, IMAPS BUILDING**

**Present:** Paul Arnold (Chair and Year 3 Rep), Katherine Ball (Year 3 Rep), Craig Bibbey (Year 2 Rep), Robert Douglas (Staff), Alan Jones (Staff), Adil Mughal (Staff), Jennifer O'Neil (Year 1 Rep), Sahn Nikoi (Information Services), Cerys Rand (Year 3 Rep), Adam Smith (Year 2 Rep), Aled Wyn Thomas (Year 2 Rep), Adam Vellender (Postgrad Rep), Aled Wyn Williams (Year 1 Rep).

**Apologies for absence were received from:** Sam Reynolds (Guild of Students), Jennifer Wheatley (MMath Year Rep).

**In attendance:** Llinos Evans

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**M I N U T E S**

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting which was held on 6 December 2011 were confirmed and approved subject to a minor amendment with the surname of Sahn Nikoi under item number 4 - Staff Matters.

**2. STUDENT MATTERS**

Year 1

Students expressed concern with the lack of lecture notes in some modules running in Semester 2. The examples given were MA11310 Statistics and MA11110 Mathematics Analysis.

Staff responded by stating that notes were given out in the lectures themselves rather than putting complete lecture notes on blackboard to avoid students being absent from lectures. It was agreed that summary notes would be available on blackboard at the end of the semester. It was pointed out that students indeed should take notes themselves during lectures and re-read the lecture notes provided after the lecture.

Students complained that the room used to deliver MA11210 Differential Equations did not allow students to view the Board when power-point was being used. Many of the seats were also broken in Room C4 Hugh Owen which did not make it possible for some students to move nearer to the front to view the board more clearly.

A request was made for all emails sent to students to be in a bilingual form. It was noted that students did indeed receive emails bilingually from the office but a request was made for this provision to be made across all modules.

### Year 2

Students raised concerns with the lack of copies of handouts on Blackboard for MA27210 Regression and Anova module. They were told that there were plenty of handouts given out in the Lectures and Practical sessions to students who actually attended. Students requested that when notes were put on Blackboard for this module that the module co-ordinator emailed all the students alerting them to this.

Students reported that the background noise disturbed the MA25110 Numerical Analysis lecture together with general chatter in the class.

Clarification was sought by students regarding a Reading Week due to some departments having a Reading Week in the middle of term with others not having such a week during a semester. It was pointed out that in IMAPS there were 11 weeks of teaching and week 12 was set aside for revision. It was not IMAPS practice to have a Reading Week.

In respect of the shorts tests introduced by Rolf Gohm for MA21510 Complex Analysis, students wished to compliment him on these and found them very beneficial.

### Year 3

Students complained about a room in the new IBERS building which adjoined the cafeteria. They felt the layout was unsuitable for lectures and many had great difficulty in reading the lecture notes from the board. They did not feel it was a practical room at all for lectures and the noise carried through from the cafe as all that separated the two rooms was a folding back partition. Students had to sit around tables whilst others had to sit in rows at the back of the room. It was therefore

**RECOMMENDED:** that the use of this room be reviewed for next session.

It was also reported that there were problems with the use of Room 319 as students sitting at the back of the room could not see the board.

Students felt that some two-hour examination papers did not allow them to show their true potential and asked whether the length of the examinations could be extended. It was reported by staff that the above is a fault with the exam itself and not the topic.

Students enquired about the examination time-table for Semester 2 and it was reported that Alan Jones would request examinations be spread out over a three-week period this session to avoid having too many examinations close together. It would also be requested that modules having a greater number of students would be examined in the first week of the examination period.

### Postgraduate Matters

Postgraduate students raised concerns with low attendance at the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Help Desk. This proved to be more of an issue in Semester 2. It was felt that this was a valuable service provided by postgraduate students to assist first-year students. It was therefore

**RECOMMENDED:** that a general email be sent round to remind first-year students about the above service which is available for a duration of three hours each week, giving the exact times.

Students reported that perhaps more attended the SCHEME (STEM) help desk in the SEL room at the beginning of term as opposed to the one in the Library. It was stated that the Help Desk in the Library was geared to assist with Level 1 modules and had materials and problem sheets ready to hand. Students commented that by semester 2 some worked more independently and thus did not feel the need to use the above service. However it was felt that following the recent examinations some students in the first-year would indeed benefit from the assistance given by postgraduate students at this Help Desk.

### Maths Society

The Society would welcome the introduction of lectures delivered by Guest Speakers. They also suggested that some of the current staff in the department could give a lecture about their research interests. It was felt that this was a good idea. It had been done in the past for Year 3 and M students and potential PhD students where staff gave a short presentation on their research areas.

## **3. STAFF MATTERS**

Examination feedback was discussed in particular with reference to the recent trial run of general feedback being given for the MA20110/MT20110/MX30110 and MA30210 exams. Students found the comments supplied very helpful. They welcomed the idea that this could be done more generally. The fact that these comments were circulated soon after the examination period was far better while things were fresh in the minds of students rather than later on in the next semester. They also requested that the examination question itself was included in the feedback for ease of reference.

There were no other issues raised by staff.

## **4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Sahm Nikoi reported that following the last meeting in December there had been an increase in the usage of the Physical Sciences Library.

The problems with the lack of heating in the Library had been reported to the Estates Office and it was hoped that this would be addressed.

Sahm reported that he was in the Library personally on Mondays and Thursdays and would e-mail the general office with exact times so that this could be sent round to all the students. A poster was also available which would be put on the reception desk in the Library on Mondays and Thursdays to draw the attention of students to the service available.

It was reported also that Library staff would be weeding out books which proved to be out-of-date in the Library to make room for new stock and to ensure that what they have is what is best for the students. IS were anxious that staff did not have the impression that this was a sign that the library was closing. The general rule was that if a book had not been borrowed in the last six years it was not useful and was thus transferred to the external store. It would still be possible to borrow this book but prior to a 24 hour notice. Discussion took place regarding out of date books which resulted in both staff and postgraduate students agreeing that such books may still have been consulted although not actually borrowed from the library. Certain books could be old but they still proved very useful in a subject such as Mathematics. Of course in a subject like Computer Science this was different. It was felt that staff and students preferred to actually see these books in the library rather than being hidden away in an external store. Sahm reported that at present there were no plans to weed books in Maths and Physics. The overall aim was to make more space for student to study in the library.

IS had suggested that a Library Student Liaison Committee be formed to deal with library related issues which needed to be addressed and then taken forward to the IS Committee. Salm asked for this idea to be considered and perhaps have one committee to cover both Mathematics and Physics.

### Joint Committee with Physics

No firm date had yet been agreed for the above but the intention was to call such a meeting as soon as possible. Students were asked if they favoured such a meeting on a Wednesday afternoon which of course was free from teaching. Students did not welcome this idea due to various other commitments on a Wednesday afternoon.

The above could be an opportunity to bring constructive comments re the MP modules running and with representatives from the Physics group there would be more common ground. Matters in respect of Careers and computer programming could also be a subject relevant to both groups for discussion. Discussion could then take place at the end of such a meeting as to the way future meetings should be run.

Student representatives were encouraged to think of some topics for discussion at the Joint Committee and to forward these to Dr Rob Douglas.

### National Student Survey

Students enquired as to whether they were suppose to put down Mathematics or IMAPS as their department when they completed the above. Staff responded by indicating that the survey would recognise what department they were in from their degree scheme.

### Lectures/Workshops in Labs

Students commented that a sign should be put on a door if a lecture is going on in a Laboratory for the benefit of the lecturer, the students participating in the lecture, and other students who might enter the room to study privately not knowing that a lecture was going on. Those taking part in the lecture/workshop/practical would have priority.

It was reported that not enough computers were available to Mathematics students in the Lab on a Tuesday. It was also reported that it was also very noisy at times which affected their work.

### Senior Representatives Meeting

The Chair then gave a short report on items discussed at a recent Senior Representatives Meeting as listed below:

The use of B23 for lectures was discussed and it was unsure if this was part of a universal plan.

Use of Blackboard with respect to recording services. Lecturers were now able to record their lectures and this matter was discussed. Some believed that this could encourage non attendance, and as a result, poor performance. Staff reported that they way they would approach the recording of lectures would be not to give the whole lecture on Blackboard; they would give support for the lecture, but it would not be a substitute. It could also prove to be a useful revision tool. It was important to staff that students have an opportunity to ask questions in class, and Blackboard therefore was no solution for this.

It was reported that there were plans to renovate the Old College and turn it perhaps to a Postgraduate Teaching Centre. There were also plans to renovate the Llanbadarn Campus so that more teaching could take place on this site.

Student lead teaching awards – these would take place on 24 May which allowed students to nominate lecturers and staff who excelled. There were a total of seven awards for lecturers and 3 for Staff/Student Committee representatives.

It was reported that arrangements would be made to make Blackboard, Webmail and Student Records more streamlined so that they could be easily accessible from one page.

### **Any Other Business**

Complaints had been received re the vending machine in the Foyer and as a result students had to go over to the new cafe in the IBERS Building for coffee which proved to be expensive.

Students were asked to contact Dr Gwion Evans re any suggestions of Maths Society participation in Open Day and Visiting Day activities.

## **5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday, 27 April at 1.10 p m.

Meeting closed at 2.20 p m.