

**Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science**

**SSCC Maths    1st December 2015    11:10 SEL**

**Present:** Tudur Davies (ITD), Rob Douglas (RSD), Alan Jones (DAJ), Adam Vellender (ASV), Daria Andreeva (DAA), Adil Mughal (AQM), Ryan Myles-Roberts (RYM, Chair), Sian Swain (SLS), Kieran Quaine (KSQ), Tom Williams (TMW), Cathy Hankin (CLH), Sadie Morris (SAM), Joel Greenwood (JSG), Simon French (SIF), Chris Svendsen (CHS), Spencer Ncube (SMN), Miranda Capecci (MLH, Minutes)

**Apologies:** Rebekah Ord

Agenda

**1. Minutes of 27/10/2015:** approved with one amendment (to the spelling of Myles).

**2. Matters arising**

**2.1. Actions from 27/10/2015**

1. ACTION: RSD to investigate the Stats modules and their twinning arrangements – **Done.**
2. ACTION: SIF to investigate this matter – **see AOB for minutes 01/12/2015.**
3. ACTION: Maths to make enquiries – **Ongoing. A water fountain serving teaching rooms ought to be considered an AU asset.**
4. ACTION: ITD to consider this – **ITD agreed to do this.**
5. ACTION: MLH to speak to CJP concerning any possible problems with this scanner – **Done.**
6. ACTION: Maths staff to discuss MP26020 at the next subject group meeting – **the module and issues arising were discussed, but no outcomes as yet. Ongoing. Likely to be changes to this module.**
7. ACTION: DAJ will find out how to go about booking room 320 for Fridays – **It is being used by 4<sup>th</sup> years, the arrangement is OK.**
8. ACTION: SIF to report on this and feedback - **see AOB for minutes 01/12/2015.**

### **3. Student Matters**

RYM had requested that undergraduate representatives seek and receive feedback on the suitability of teaching rooms.

#### **3.1. Year M**

**3.1.1. Helpdesk sign:** this has disappeared again, something more permanent was requested.

**3.1.2. Rooms:** G3 Llandinam is OK, but the whiteboard is too small to be of use. It was suggested that if a lecturer prefers traditional mathematics teaching methods, then s/he be allocated a room with a larger whiteboard. B22 Llandinam is fine. C64 Llandinam is OK for small classes but not for classes of more than 10 students; also the desks always seem to be rearranged. Physics B is too cold.

#### **3.2. Year 3**

**3.2.1. Assignment questions:** it was requested that the marks allocated for each question be shown on assignment sheets. It is felt that this would help with exams. For non-assessed (formative) coursework staff saw disadvantages, but agreed to bring this to the attention of Subject Group.

**1. ACTION:** RSD to raise the matter of showing marks allocated by question on assignment sheets at next Subject Group.

**3.2.2. Rooms:** Physics A&B are too cold and draughty. The seminar rooms in IBERS should be used only for seminars, they are not appropriate for lectures, dependent on the number of students attending. 319 is a good room for Maths, so why isn't it being used?

#### **3.3. Year 2**

**3.3.1. Exam timetable:** some students have two instances of exams on consecutive days. Given the number of exams to be fitted into a fortnight, this seemed understandable.

**3.3.2. MA26510:** 1) an assignment was due in on the same day as a MP26020 test and there were only 6 days to complete it. 2) The first half is fine, but the second half is not particularly engaging, however, the practical sessions are good and the handouts useful.

**3.3.3. MA20310:** The students requested more problem class sessions for Abstract Algebra. Staff suggested that students should speak to Rolf Gohm themselves with regards to asking for assistance.

**3.3.4. Revision lectures:** students have requested that more of these take place before exams as they are helpful. Staff suggested that the students speak with their lecturers in advance so that arrangements can be made to accommodate this.

**3.3.5. Rooms:** Physics A&B are cold. The room used in Hugh Owen is OK, but there isn't enough whiteboard space. A12 is too big, especially when using the tablet as students can't see what's written down. General preference for writing on the board, this helped engagement.

#### **3.4. Year 1**

**Rooms:** to reiterate what others have said, Physics A&B are cold. External noise in some rooms. There isn't enough ventilation in A6 Llandinam so it gets stuffy when there is a big class in there.

### **3.5. Year 0**

Rooms: A14, Hugh Owen (H0), the desks are set quite far away from the chairs and some students find this causes back pain when having to lean forward to write. In C164, HO, which is used for the Mathematics Tutorial module, the lighting illuminates the room, not the whiteboard.

### **3.6. Postgraduates**

3.6.1. **The postgraduate office:** this is cold, something needs to be done about getting some heating in there.

3.6.2. Social event: there was a social event for PGs last week, organised by DKB and MIS which everyone found highly enjoyable and PGs would like more of these.

### **3.7. MathsSoc.**

3.7.1. It has been noted that some of the rooms used for teaching are cold.

3.7.2. An Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA) representative will give a talk on a week Wednesday (9/12); students had attended an IMA conference in Bath; a Christmas social event is taking place this evening.

## **4. Semester 1 Questionnaires**

Thanks to DAJ and office staff for compiling the results; DAJ noted that the response rate amongst this year's first years was better than in previous years.

***The committee went through the results of the questionnaires and the following feedback for the modules listed was noted:***

**MA106:** some students didn't indicate whether they were Maths or Physics students.

**MA203:** students are having problems with the lecturer's handwriting but are reluctant to say anything about this as they don't wish to cause offense, but, in the future, they will ask if there's something they don't understand.

**MAM5120:** questionnaires for this module were filled out and handed back, but the data for this is still being collated.

**MA301:** if assignments are not handed in then students can't expect to receive feedback. The course follows a book, but skips some material. This may have influenced organisation scores. There was difficulty with reading the lecturer's handwriting.

**MA365:** students agreed that if they don't hand in assignments then no feedback can be given and there has been a lack of assignments being handed in, which has affected the results of the questionnaire. Students need to be attempting these assignments and handing in the work they've managed to do.

**MA384:** the attendance at these lectures is poor and it is thought that this is due to this being the only lecture on a Wednesday and so students just use BlackBoard instead of attending.

**4.2. Recording lectures:** the general consensus amongst the students was that attendance would be affected if all lectures were recorded and that this would not be a positive thing, but in order for students to attend, staff need to ensure that their lectures are engaging.

Staff felt it was important to highlight that there is consistent progress when students attend and hand in work.

## **5. National Student Survey/Tell Us Now**

5.1. Thanks to all those students who having been filling out all these questionnaires. RSD feels that staff have learned more from the in-house questionnaires than Tell Us Now.

5.2. From the Tell Us Now questionnaire feedback it appeared that Year 3 students are more content than Year 2 and this may be due to Year 3 having more module choices.

5.3. MP26020: this has improved for Maths students. It is felt that the second lecturer has taken comments on board and made an attempt to rectify some of the issues raised with this module.

5.4. It was noted that the student who came in to lectures to impart information about questionnaires was rather rude and students feel that the Tell Us Now questionnaires are being imposed on them. Students were of the opinion that the Tell Us Now campaign is not much liked and there is a questionnaire overload. They prefer the in-house questionnaires, especially given the feedback exchanged with regards to these during SSCC. Tell Us Now seems pointless and students comment that they would rather use the time to undertake learning of their subject. It was also felt that there has not been much thought put in to the Tell Us Now campaign.

5.5. NSS: responses can be made from the end of January.

## **6. Staff Matters**

**6.1. Printer in level 2 lab:** SXC has reported that the printer will be revived, but it will be a central printer and therefore, students will have to pay to use it.

**6.2. Library:** radical plans have been proposed that staff are concerned about but are not yet able to discuss until they have more information, but students were encouraged to use the library as much as they can and to give feedback about how useful a resource it is.

Year M students reported that they are using it much more this year than before and that it has proved to be most useful to them.

**6.3. Reading lists:** students requested that there be more recommended reading from lecturers and were assured that this would develop over time now the department has moved to a new way of building reading lists. Staff also encouraged students to go beyond recommended lists and look through the texts available in the library to see what is on offer, especially with regards to introductory texts.

SIF asked students to let him know if there were texts on the recommended lists that were not currently in stock as he will make sure these are ordered.

6.4. TV in the Physical Sciences foyer: SXC requested that students let him know what information they would like to see on this. Students suggested departmental news and also staff names and room numbers, as well as advertising forthcoming events. Posters/event information should be sent to SXC.

## **7. AOB**

**7.1. Library:** SIF informed the committee that a focus group has been set up and will meet for the first time on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December – students are welcome to attend. He also invited students to submit points for discussion, however big or small, and he will raise these in the meeting. One suggestion was that the windows in the library need to be cleaned as this will improve the light and the overall ambience. It was noted that the Library could be a real asset on Open/Visiting Days.

SIF also highlighted the 'More Books' Campaign, which makes a fund available for purchasing texts. Students were encouraged to let SIF know of any texts, including magazines that are subscribed to, that they would like purchased for the library through this fund.

**7.2. Lecture issues:** Would it be possible for students to wait in the foyer until lectures finish as opposed to congregating outside lecture theatres, possibly blocking exits; a lot of noise is being generated outside the lecture halls while students are waiting for their own lectures, which is disruptive. It is also making it difficult for one set of students to exit the lecture hall if others are trying to get in.

### Summary of Actions

**1. ACTION:** RSD to raise the matter of showing marks allocated by question on assignment sheets at next Subject Group.