

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Institute of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science

Minutes of the Departmental Board Meeting (incorporating the Board of Studies) held on Wednesday 22 November 2006

Present: Professor P Fleischmann (Chair)
Dr EE Bassett, Dr L Breuer, Dr GD Brown, Professor MS Brown, Professor PJ Brown, Professor PA Clarkson, Mr PL Duffett, Dr TC Dunning, Mrs EJ Glover, Mr A James, Dr S Krusch, Dr A Kume, Dr AF Laurence, Professor EL Mansfield, Dr JR Merriman, Mr JD Millett, Dr V Novikov, Dr RE Paget, Mr MS Ridout, Dr RJ Shank, Mrs L Van der Bijl, Dr BJ Vowden, Professor SG Walker, Dr G Williams, Mr NC Wood, Dr CF Woodcock, Dr J Zhang, Dr W Zhang, Dr FE Sowrey, Mrs C Bateman (minutes).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr ANW Hone, Mr AL Jackson, Dr OD Lyne, Professor BJT Morgan and Mrs V Srinivasan.

2. Chairman's Communications

- 2.1 The Chairman **welcomed** new members of staff to their first Board meeting, Dr RE Paget, Mr NC Wood, Mrs V Srinivasan (*in absentia*).
- 2.2 The vacancy left by Professor Sutcliffe's departure is to be filled by two lecturers, one in Applied Mathematics and the other in general mathematics/statistics.
- 2.3 The search for a replacement Vice-Chancellor, who announced he is to retire in August 2007, is underway. Professor P Jeffries, Dean of STMS, is a member of the panel. If anyone has any suggestions for suitable candidates, these should be made via the Dean.
- 2.4 The detailed results of the National Student Survey are now available, either on the Student Planning & Data Office website or from FES. The department has improved on the whole against last year, although Assessment and Feedback scores are down slightly on last year.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were **approved**.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.3 **Web CT** – GDB has made use of this and is happy to provide a demonstration for anyone interested in this.
- 4.4 **Space Allocation** – This situation continues to be monitored and we are hoping to be allocated some further office space from Computing in due course.

5. Report from Research & Enterprise Committee

The Chairman of the Research & Enterprise Committee **reported** that a proposal had been approved to fund postgraduate membership to the LMS and RSS. The Chairman will soon advise the students via email.

The annual postgraduate interviews which usually occur in October/November will be held in January/February because the progress interviews held during the summer vacation were just being finalised. A review of the necessity of 2 sets of interviews will take place at a future Research & Enterprise committee meeting.

IMSAS supported research students will be required to provide some teaching for free and staff need to ensure, when talking to potential research students that they are made aware of this expectation. This will start with next the next academic year's intake of research students.

London Taught Course Centre (LTCC) – The Chairman advised the Board that the University is part of a consortium to respond to a call by EPSRC to develop taught courses for postgraduate research students. A revised submission is being made imminently to incorporate statistics modules with maths modules. This should be available from next September.

Research Council UK – there is currently a review of the grant application process. PF has been asked to report any feedback to the Dean to enable to University to make a response.

6. Departmental Board of Studies

6.1 Report from the Learning the Teaching Committee

6.1.1 MSOR Benchmark – served very well in the past. The Committee thought it would keep this as the same.

6.1.2 It was proposed that there was an academic case for core modules in the second year (MA552 and MA553) to be made non-compensateable. However, programme convenors would need to make a decision as to whether this should in fact be the case on a programme by programme basis. It was **decided** that the Learning & Teaching Committee should undertake a systematic review of modules.

ACTION: JRM

6.1.3 MA559/MA600 – MA599 has been brought in, for students who are not capable of or motivated towards doing a full dissertation, as a alternative to MA600. However there is a need for one or two more topics suitable for financial mathematics students.

Agreed to the introduction for Business Mathematics. There are technical problems for Maths & Stats related to RSS accreditation.

6.1.4 DSU Learning Plans – If tutors become aware that their tutee has dyslexia or discalcular, this information needs to be directed to FES who can ensure that it is passed on to the relevant people.

- 6.1.5 Examination Matters – A paper was circulated highlighting issues raised as a result of the May examinations. It was decided that this paper would be sent to Faculty to enable these issues to be addressed. **ACTION: JRM/FES**

The question of security in overseas resit examinations was raised and it was felt that a change in policy was needed so that the May examination paper could not be used verbatim for the August resit.

- 6.1.6 Progress on Mathematics and Management Science – we are waiting to hear back from Management Sciences whether they are happy for MA307 to be substituted with CO357. This is to try and make sure all students have some exposure to Maple.

6.2 Report from the Staff-Student Consultative Committee

The Chairman of the SSCC wished to raise three points discussed at the committee meeting.

- 6.2.1 Facilities in lecture rooms – complaints had been received from students and endorsed by members of staff concerning the blackboards in GLT1 and GLT2, as well as Marlowe Lecture Theatre. These have been reported to Estates and appear to have improved.
- 6.2.2 A reminder to colleagues that teaching should begin 5 minutes after the hour and finish 5 minutes before the hour to enable students to get to the next class.
- 6.2.3 Discipline in lectures continues to be a major issue. EEB has now been informed of names of students believed to be causing the trouble and he will endeavour to interview them. It was agreed that it is very difficult to identify the troublemakers during some of the larger lectures. Action was left to the discretion of lecturers.

7. Report from the Computing and Web Committee

GDB presented the report on behalf of ANWH.

Equipment – This is a continual process of updating old machines to ensure that can all run Windows XP. Any postgraduate student who is in need of a new machine needs to approach their supervisor in the first instance.

Active Screen – Computing have set up an Active Screen in the McVittie Library to allow staff to try it out. There are several Active Screens available that Computing are keen to roll-out across the campus if they are advised where they are needed. GDB and JRM will fix a demonstration session for anyone interested.

ACTION: GDB/JRM

Linux mailing group – An email mailing group for help on Linux is in hand.

Web pages – these are currently in the process of being routinely modified.

8. Report from the Admissions Officers

CFW reported that there has been a significant increase in numbers over the last 5 years.

MSB informed the Board that they had approached the Actuarial profession in order for Financial Mathematics students to gain exemptions. This could make the course more attractive and increase student numbers.

MSR reported that there had been 7 MSc applications to date.

PLD reported that a number of applications had been received and some offers made. He expected that the number of applications should start to increase soon.

9. Any other business

PAC informed the Board that there was now a disabled refuge point in the stairwell of the first floor. In the event of a fire any disabled person should go to that point and call for help.

There is still no lighting on the stairs to the fire exit nearest Cornwallis George Allen Wing. This has been reported to Estates and is currently in hand. This situation will be monitored.

EEB thanked colleagues for their assistance with the non-attendance exercise. The next round of non-attendance will be coming out shortly.

JRM raised concerns about students not achieving high scores. He is going to see if he can identify a pattern. Some surgery sessions will be arranged. Perhaps tutors can suggest to students they seek help if required.

GW raised the seminar speaker budget of £25. PF said this will be reviewed at a later date.

CKB
27 November 2006
(version 3)