

Minutes

School Meeting

10.00am, Thursday, 9 April 2015, MLR1

Present: John Bamberg, Andrew Bassom, Chrianna Bharat, Tania Blackwell (Minutes), Ed Cripps, Alice Devillers, Joanna Fawcett, Nev Fowkes, Michael Giudici, Stephen Glasby, Des Hill, Nazim Khan, Cam Marshall (item 3), Miccal Matthews, Luke Morgan, Kevin Murray, Gopal Nair, Lyle Noakes, Irene Pivotto, Cheryl Praeger, Michael Small, Lucho Stoyanov, Eric Swartz, Michelle Trevenen, Berwin Turlach, Annie Walker

1. Apologies

CJ Goh, John Lau, Gordon Royle, Phill Schultz, Thomas Stemler, Matt Tuson,

2. Confirmation of Minutes from 19 February 2015 and Business Arising from the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2015 were accepted as a correct record.

3. Update on current works in progress – Mathematics building (Cam Marshall)

Cam Marshall provided an update on current building works in progress or works that have been approved and are in the planning stages. Plans, where available, were provided. There are currently 4 main projects:

i) Refit of Building 123 Lab space

Two years ago there was a minor refurbishment of the MCL due to the lighting not being up to code, however it didn't actually change the function of the room. The current refurbishment will provide all forward-facing desks, A/V facilities, new all-in-one computers, a soft power system which can't be accessed by students as well as additional wifi points and a meeting space for students. Except for the A/V which is being organised separately, this should be completed by Monday and last for the next 5-10 years.

ii) Access network upgrade

This is replacing aging and unstable switches and hardware and is being completed in line with the MCL refurbishment.

iii) End-of-trip facilities

This is a UWA initiative and is part of the facilities being provided to encourage alternate methods of travel. The facilities will include toilets, showers, changerooms, lockers, drying areas for towels and secure bike storage. There will be

an exit into the central courtyard which will contain the bike storage area as well as seating platforms and landscaping. The changerooms, showers and bike storage areas will be accessible by Cardax and it is expected that this will be a centrally managed process. There will also be end-of-trip facilities available at Physics. The works are currently underway and are expected to take 12 weeks with a mid-June completion.

iv) Support space, Building 123

This is a minor refurbishment to the building so the office space can be utilised more efficiently, working conditions can be improved and a tea room can be provided. The architects have provided the first plans which will work as a starting point. The refurbishment is designed to provide a single reception point, HOS offices, A/V enabled meeting rooms, a tea room with kitchen, break out spaces, cardax security and air-conditioning. Cam will be talking to the Academic Services staff and staff from CSSE for feedback. It is estimated that this work will be completed in 2015, probably October, but the plans have to be signed off and the work then has to be run out to tender. The work should take approximately 14 weeks from vacating the area to moving back in. Office staff will be shifted to another area within the building. There were concerns that there was asbestos in the building but 30-40 samples have been taken and tested from the areas to be refurbished and they have come back negative. At this stage air-conditioning will only be installed in the refurbished areas as the budget isn't available to air-condition the whole building however this will be looked at as part of a larger body of works. A detailed and approved plan for support space is required before CSSE staff can be moved into the building.

4. HOS Report (Lyle Noakes)

The Faculty is required to provide a report to the Executive on its expectations, benchmarks and plans for the future and in a few years' time will be measured against these expectations. The School contributed to this report which will be available online shortly.

The Office of Operational Excellence conducted Functional Reviews last year on the administrative processes within the University. This review is not yet available on the web. There will be changes though to some administration areas and processes, such as student enrolments, to improve efficiency and some functions will be centralised.

At the last School meeting there was some discussion about the way Mathematics and Statistics members of staff would be evaluated in terms of academic performance. The Dean has since appointed Andrew Bassom to draw up a new scale against which all staff will be measured.

Also mentioned at the last meeting was that we would have less office space in future. There is going to be continuing pressure on office space and one result of this is that adjunct staff will be expected to share offices or have the use of 'hot' desks.

There is a review of adjunct staff currently going on within the Faculty with the apparent aim of decreasing the number of adjunct staff. There is a view that some adjunct staff don't contribute very much to the Schools. It is expected that this review will reduce the number of adjunct staff and those that remain will be expected to contribute to the School via publications or teaching. All adjunct staff were made provisional until June, however this has been extended until October while the review is under way.

Another matter from the last meeting was the hope that we might be able to make two changes to improve our service to students and one of these was to improve our first year teaching. Since that meeting it has become apparent that we don't have the resources within the School to make major changes and after discussion with the MPC it was decided that the most we could offer for Semester 2 is enrichment classes that students would have the option of attending. Lyle will liaise with Des and interested staff members to work out the program.

It has become apparent that we have a large problem with our teaching allocations for second semester. There are 4 essential units that we presently don't have lecturers for. Contributing to the problem is that according to the Faculty workload model most staff are slightly underallocated however when we break down what staff are working on they are actually very busy. Des and Lyle will be meeting with Jeneane Bilman tomorrow for further details on exactly how the workload model operates and why it doesn't work very well for mathematics. The units without lecturers are MATH1720, STAT3404, STAT3369 and GENG5507. We should be able to manage MATH1720 but the statistics units and GENG5507 will be more difficult. The statistics units are very important, if they don't run the students will be delayed in completing their majors and GENG5507 is important because it is shared with the engineers and is one of the few ways we can collaborate on teaching with them. Our adjunct staff are not presently in a position to be able to assist. Lyle will be meeting with Paula to find out if funds are available to employ casual staff for these units.

Benchmarking was discussed at the Full Faculty meeting yesterday. Benchmarking is not currently being performed but will be in the future for Schools as well as for the University as a whole. It is best practice to benchmark against better institutions to encourage improvement. However in our case we may find we are being benchmarked against better institutions but also institutions that are larger and have significantly more resources. We are comparable in terms of quality of staff with these places but we don't compare in terms of size and this shows clearly in our 3rd and 4th year courses. We don't have the resources that the larger institutions have which means we will have to look at the resources we do have and manage them very carefully.

5. Undergraduate matters (Des Hill)

We were expecting lower enrolment numbers this year due to the 50% cohort however our numbers are about 70% of last year's enrolments. Enrolments for level 2 and 3 units are very healthy, up by approximately 50%.

Nazim initiated some changes while he was Acting DUGS and the result is that QM majors are now able to do honours in mathematics and statistics. Our Honours program will be configured so they can take appropriate units.

There has been a change to our level 3 units. Students have to do 4 units for a major and previously they had to select pairs of units. We have requested that this be amended so that students can select any 4 of the 6 units. Students planning to do Honours will need to ensure they choose appropriate units.

We currently have a very bright Pure mathematics student who has chosen to take some third year units in second year semester 2 which has now left her with not enough units to do in Semester 2 third year. This problem may also affect some of our other very bright students. Students are able to take MM3 however this is very physical and not really appropriate if they wish to take more units in a specific area of maths. For BPhil students in the future we could recommend that they spend their second year semester 2 overseas however this doesn't solve the underlying problem which is that we are not teaching enough maths at 3rd and 4th year level. This problem is being solved by asking for volunteers to teach an extra unit but these staff are then teaching these units for free.

In previous years we have had fairly good finances and staffing which has allowed us to work out our lecture allocations for one year in the previous year and to keep the workloads fairly fair. This is not the case any longer and it has become clear that we will need to plan further in advance so leave plans will need to be known a couple of years beforehand. At the moment we spend quite a lot of money on casual staff for tutorials. We have reduced this in the past by having permanent staff teach a proportion of the tutorials but the tutorials are still very expensive and they don't count for a lot in the workload model. This may mean that tutorials will not be run in future and we will need to look at other ways of teaching our first year units, for example workshops like MATH1721 and MATH1722.

6. School Examiners Board (Nazim Khan)

In previous years the School has held School Examiner's Board meetings prior to the Faculty Examiner's Board meetings however these weren't held last year. Nazim suggested that these Board Meetings be reinstated as they have proven useful in the past.

7. Postgraduate matters (Michael Giudici)

No matters to report.

8. Outreach Committee report (Nazim Khan/John Bamberg)

The new Mathematics Union Executive Committee is as follows:

Immediate past President:	Melissa Lee
President:	Emily Kelly (3 rd year Maths/Physics)
Vice President Education:	Jonah Gannon (3 rd year Maths/Physics)
Vice President Events:	Angelene Groom (3 rd year Maths/Finance)
Treasurer:	Jarrad Phoebe (2 nd year Maths/Finance)
Secretary:	Edward Hollingdale (2 nd year Maths/Finance)
Postgrad Representative:	Dan Hawtin
First Year Representative:	Mark Smith (Mature age student)
Other Committee members:	Jake Miller and Katy Proctor

9. Any Other Business

No other business.

Meeting closed 11.20am.