

School of Mathematical Sciences
Undergraduate Student Voice Committee-Exceptional Meeting
23rd November 2023

Confirmed Minutes

Staff members present:

| Name | Role |
|------------------------|---|
| Weini Huang (WH) | Reader/Director of Student Experience/Meeting Chair |
| Boris Khoruzhenko (BK) | Professor/Head of School |
| Shabnam Beheshti (SB) | Reader/Director of Education |
| Simon Rawstron (SR) | Education Services Administrator |
| Maria Patsou (MP) | Education Services Administrator/Meeting Secretary |

Student members present:

| Name | Programme name and level |
|--------------------------|--|
| Ibtisaam Musa (IM) | Mathematics and Statistics Year 2 |
| Aruzhan Nussipzhan (AN) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 1 |
| Mehmet Melih Sahin (MMS) | Computer Science and Mathematics Year 2 |
| Nasiha Khan (NK) | Mathematics Year 1 |

Apologies for absence:

| Name | Role or programme and level |
|---|--|
| Sebastian del Bano Rollin (SdBR) | Reader/Director of Graduate Opportunities and Outcomes |
| Robert Johnson (RJ) | Reader/Deputy Director of Education |
| Hamida Begum (HB) | Student Support Officer |
| Dale Breame (DB) | Education Services Officer |
| Bindiya Chongbang (BC) | Education Services Administrator |
| Jade Mills (JM) | Digital Learning Technical Adviser |
| Sonia Lassami (SL) | Careers Consultant |
| James Soderman (JS) | Faculty Librarian-Science and Engineering |
| Elliott Welch (EW) | Faculty Student Engagement and Support Manager |
| Satvika Mishra (SM) | Mathematics Year 2 |
| Buse Ozturk (BO) | Mathematics Year 1 |
| Deanna Patel (DP) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 1 |
| Fatehdeep Singh (FS) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 2 |
| Mohammed Waleed Hussain Talukdar (MWHT) | Mathematics with Finance and Accounting Year 2 |
| Vidhi Sureka (VS) | Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Year 3 |

Note to the reader: This meeting was organised to discuss urgent items. As a result, the agenda and minutes follow a different format from the rest of the SVC meetings.

WH introduced the purpose of the meeting and noted that the discussion will focus on three items, the Bancroft Building flooding, feedback on MTH5129 teaching and assessments, and MTH5124 mid-term complaints.

Item 1: Bancroft Building Flooding

BK explained to student reps that an accident with a radiator caused the building to flood and significantly damaged a lot of the building's rooms. BK explained that the Bancroft Building is very widely used building when it comes to timetabling teaching activities, and therefore severely impacted some of the teaching.

SB noted that it has now been announced that Bancroft will be open, as normal, from week 10, to teaching activities to the end of the semester. During week 8 and 9 some activities have been re-allocated with as minimal disruption as possible and trying to ensure activities were kept face-to-face. NK noted an impact to her cohort's activities, as students from IT Class 01 for MTH4000 had to be re-allocated to other existing labs during week 9.

Item 2: Format of MTH5129 Final Assessment

IM noted that in Year 1 students practiced in R for MTH4116. This year for MTH4116's continuation (MTH5129) are required to practice on paper and undertake their main examination face-to-face. IM advised the committee that students find it unfair that last year, year 2 students took the exam online and that they also feel that an online exam is appropriate for a module where practice last year place vastly through a programming language (R). As a result, students also find that they have no application for last year's notes when it comes to preparing for their examination.

SB noted that some of the content last year for MTH4116 and MTH5129 was assessed face-to-face. She also noted that R is going to come up in teaching this year as well. SB also noted that while she appreciated students wish to decide on how their assessments are run, it is not up to them. Deciding on assessment format is a complicated process that goes through serious scrutiny both internally in the School and Faculty, and via external examiners. The School should be able to justify pedagogical decisions and, therefore, students should be rest assured that assessment decisions are not taken lightly and the School considers all parameters. SB advised that this exam was not going to change format.

SB suggested to have the MO put out formula sheets if this will be helpful. IM noted that students are not looking at formula sheets, and also suggested that courseworks should be worth more because students get to use R.

SB suggested to put statisticians in the learning café so that students can get some tailored advice and support on this module. IM noted that students are shy and hesitant to speak to their advisor, lecturers and academics in the learning café. He also requested if more solutions can be made available. SB queried whether online support would be more useful, tailored to statistics. IM noted that students would find this easier to join and address questions. **ACTION: SB to ask statisticians to join the learning café and explore the option of setting an online session.**

ACTION: EST (Education Services Team) to communicate the specifics of Probability and Statistics hours in the learning café.

WH noted that R is only one of the languages that you can use for and that students should not view the programming language itself as the theory of statistics. IM noted that students find it difficult to navigate last year's notes as they are very long and difficult to find what you are looking for. On the basis of a suggestion of creating summaries for students, SB noted that she would prefer to equip students with the tools to navigate the notes rather than create summaries that may or may not include what the students feel is important to them. Therefore, advising hours, the learning café, and learning sessions that WH noted will be running in Weeks 10 and 11 to prepare students for exams, are very important to attend. SR also noted that it may be useful to students taking MTH5129 to have a set of questions that students leading on the feedback of the module had, as a guide on what they think will be useful to them at this stage. **ACTION: SR to send out list of questions for MTH5129 to IM.**

MS noted that it would be helpful to have more specific navigation/introduction to who is doing what in the learning café, as he has found that he is unsure who to talk to about studies queries. **ACTION: SB to discuss and implement better signposting with the organisers of the learning café.**

BK noted that students should take the opportunity to engage with staff, as the social skills they will gain by building relationships with them go beyond any mathematics knowledge they will earn during their studies. Students should try and go out of their comfort zone, and address queries where needed, which will enable them to learn how to solve problems in the real world. BK asked students to think about how they can bridge gaps with people who they feel are superior to them. This is something that they will later be able to apply in the workplace, as means to approach their managers for support, but also as a way through to independent thinking. BK urged reps to have conversations with their colleagues about how the School can help them with this. The idea of a revision session was noted by reps. BK asked that students let the School know in advance what they feel they need more attention on for the revision. SR suggested that one way of collecting students' preferences would be by issuing a questionnaire to the students to collect their feedback on what they think is most relevant to them for revision. **ACTION: SB to organise an MTH5129 zoom revision session for Week 13 with EST.**

On the topic of revision, AN also queried whether it is possible to get past or sample papers for practice for MTH4600. **ACTION: SB to discuss the release of sample/past papers for MTH4600 with the module organisers.**

Item 3: Complaints about MTH5124 mid-term

Item 3 was not covered due to lack of time, and it was agreed to cover it in the next meeting on 29th November 2023.