

HoDoMS Conference 2013

Annual General Meeting 6pm Friday 5th April.

1. Apologies for absence: Prof Tony Wickstead

2. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the last AGM on 13th April, 2012 were accepted as correct, and there were no matters arising.

3. Matters Arising not otherwise on the Agenda: None

4. The Chair's Report:

I was not able to give a verbal report at the meeting because of time constraints. I notified the meeting that I would record my comments in writing.

I thank the HoDoMS committee again for supporting me during this current year as Chair.

Key concerns for 2012-2013 were:

A. Government changes in curriculum.

- a. Mathematics continues to be a key part of the politics of education. There is no doubt that the current government sees mathematics as a key part of raising the educational standards of the nation. As a result, mathematics teaching in schools is being altered ultimately with a wish to improve standards of achievement for both school and college leavers. Many mathematical organisations and committees have made their views known on numerous occasions in the run-up to the current reforms. There is concern amongst many organizations within the mathematical community that the government is making unnecessary efforts to change the curriculum too hastily and without reference to the way in which this will raise standards where teaching quality and the type of examinations that are set play an even more key role than curriculum. Initial responses to KS1 and KS2 curricula changes are not positive. At a recent meeting chaired by ACME in March, 2013 there seemed to be few organizations represented there who could identify and support the general thrust of the reforms, and the curriculum detail that is starting to emerge was seen to be "unconvincing, poorly prepared, dangerous, nonsensical", and even worse!
- b. These are strong criticisms and it is worrying that there seems to be almost a parallel universe of advisors and acolytes of the government going about their business on these reforms apparently independent of the advice from respectable and concerned groupings in UK Mathematics. The general view seems to be that the Education secretary is not listening to the general thrust of professional bodies in mathematics.
- c. **Given the large number of interested parties and views in Mathematics Education UK, the HoDoMS advice for OFQUAL was simple and to the point:**
 - i. the danger of introducing new syllabuses/learning outcomes which need careful and expensive re-education of the teachers as to what the changes mean and how they will affect examinations.
 - ii. the concern that changing syllabuses and increasing standards are not necessarily related.
 - iii. that gradual changes in examination standards were needed over a period of years to avoid disasters of the type we have suffered in the past for university entrance, notably Curriculum 2000.

- d. **OFQUAL**, to give them their due, have recently said that the proposed changes are workable but will require a lot of support (and finance).
- B. **EPSRC** is still facing fall-out from their decisions in 2011 to shape the allocation of research fellowships.
- a. An observation - I am still a member of the EPSRC Strategic Advisory Team for Mathematics. Also, following the introduction of National importance and Shaping as criteria in Autumn 2012, I was the Chair of the following Mathematics Prioritisation Panel in November. I didn't observe bias against the mathematical communities who were most concerned about the new rules on shaping and NI. Excellence is the leading criterion by which the decisions are being made.
 - b. The point that I repeatedly raise to EPSRC, and which I feel strongly about as Chair of HoDoMS, is that large numbers of Mathematics Departments are effectively disenfranchised from EPSRC. Small, but meaningful, grants should be more available to give promising researchers in less favoured institutions extra free time for research development. As Chair of HoDoMS, I feel strongly the disparity between research rich and research poor departments should not be allowed to grow out of control, and this would be a positive programme to reduce disparity.
 - c. An issue which affects many departments is the DTG allocation. I understand the CMS, Council for Mathematical Sciences has made strong protestations on this at one of their scheduled CMS-EPSRC meetings on clarification of the procedure. A problem of course is that the allocation of DTG is made at a "faculty level" within Universities, and contribution to Mathematics may be greater or less than that nominally allocated by EPSRC.
- C. **Mathematics interface with Government** I continue to feel strongly that the mathematics community is not benefitting as much as it should in its dealings with government. I made this point last year and I have seen some spectacular own goals by members of our community in dealings with the Department of Education! We do not present a coherent and organized face to the Government. This problem has been confirmed by certain government officials who feel that Engineers and Physicists have a much more effective and beneficial interchange.
- D. **Website** We now have a new web site, www.hodoms.org.uk but we haven't as yet made available the HoDoMS archive that was available from the Coventry University website. New facilities have been made available by the LMS (which provides a server for our web-site) in the last week to be able to complete the tasks needed for our new website which I hope will see improvements in the next few weeks.

5. Treasurer's report

The annual statement by Anthony Wickstead, HoDoMS treasurer, is Appendix 1 of these minutes. There are no substantial issues raised. We are slightly down on last year's balance, by about 2%, so the finances remain stable.

Tony Wickstead has been Treasurer for 6 years and his term of office comes to an end at this meeting. Unfortunately, he could not be with us today because of his health and is still in the process of recovery from his illness. He decided to continue as Treasurer during this period and oversee the registering of Conference participants and the administering the associated tasks with the University of Birmingham. He has done that very efficiently and we are very grateful for his commitment at such a difficult time, as well as his long-standing support for HoDoMS. I will be writing a formal letter of thanks to him after the meeting.

6. To elect officers

The post of treasurer.

Professor Anthony Wickstead had served 6 years as treasurer and his term came to an end at this conference.

Professor Dugald Duncan (Heriot-Watt) was nominated by David Arrowsmith(Chair, HoDoMS) and seconded by Professor Jeremy Levesley(former chair of HoDoMS). He was elected to the post of Treasurer.

Other committee members

Alison Hooper(UWE) finished her term of office on the Committee (of which time was spent as Secretary). Erik Burman(UCL) resigned after moving from Sussex where he was HoD.

The following members of the committee agreed to serve for a further year and this was ratified by the meeting.

Dr Cathy Hobbs (UWE)

Dr Pargat Calay (London Met)

Professor Charles Taylor (Vice-Chair)

Professor Kevin Parrott (Greenwich)

Dr Toby O'Neil (Secretary)

7. Co-opted members of the HoDoMS committee

LMS Marin Hyland has been replaced by Professor Stephen Huggett(Plymouth).

ORS A replacement has to be found for Jeff Griffiths.

In attendance

Ms Lindsay Walsh (LMS-CMS).

(Ms Anne Bennett (LMS) sadly passed away in 2012).

8. Any other business None.