

Meeting Minutes
Canadian Mathematical Society Student Committee
December 9th, 2006

Meeting commences at 8:30 p.m.

Present: Joy Abramson, Marcus Barnes, Mélisande Boisvert, Kseniya Garaschuk, Laura Gauthier, Pawel Gladki, Sandra Gregov, Alan Kelm, Jessica McDonald, Jenna Tichon, Robert Woodrow, Graham Wright.

1) Welcome from Chair and Introductions

Going around the table, everyone introduces themselves.

2) Approval of Agenda - additions to agenda

No one seeks additions to be made to the agenda. The agenda for the meeting is approved.

3) Approval of minutes of Summer 2006

The minutes of the Summer 2006 Studc meeting are approved.

4) Project reports and discussion:

a) Webpage (Marcus)

Since the last meeting, Marcus has become moderator for the student listservs. After describing the listservs, Marcus highlights two accomplishments since the last meeting, specifically the set up of private webspace for Studc documents, as well as redoing the “About Studc” page.

Marcus then mentions that he has sent out most of the e-mails to the listservs. This is a problem. Alan mentions some possible solutions to this problem which Marcus is to take up with him.

Alan points out that the page that was supposed to have a French and English version in fact did not. Marcus is confused about this and will look into what he did wrong. With the translation help of Mélisande, the hope is to have a complete translation of the website by next meeting. Alan asks about what happens as new content is added with regards to translation. Mélisande does not see this as a major problem as long as Marcus keeps her informed of text changes and additions to the English website which might need to be translated for the French version of the site.

Jenna ask why Studc minutes can not be posted on the public webspace rather than just in the

Stude private space. Posting the minutes for all to see would provide more transparency. After brief discussion, it is decided that there is no real reason to keep the minutes private. Marcus is to post the minutes on the website in a suitable location.

b) listserv (Marcus)

Marcus covered the listservs in his discussion about the Webpage (that is, in his discussion of Stude web services more generally).

c) Web Forum (Jenna)

Jenna goes over some of the history of the web forum project. It was launched in October to help address the main concern of students that Jenna has talked to, namely that they feel disconnected and isolated from other Canadian mathematical students. The forum had a good beginning but died down. Jenna asks for Stude members to put renewed effort into trying to get it going again. All members present make a firm commitment to make posts, especially on new topics. Jenna mentions that there will be a new contest associate with the forum, the prize being a free CMS membership. Spamposts have now become an issue with the forum, but currently, the number of spamposts is low. It is mentioned that we all have moderator status, so we are all able to remove spam as we come across it. Some possible security measures are discussed, some of which Joy will look into. For the most part, spamposts are not currently a serious problem. Mélisande asks Jenna if weekly reminders could be sent out to remind us to post. Jenna will try to do that. Joy shares her belief that if we post consistently, that the forum could really get going and stay healthy.

d) CUMC preparations (Kseniya)

The planned dates for the 2007 CUMC at SFU are July 18-21st. The schedule is more or less done, though input is still being sought from the committee. The keynote speakers, including one who will lecture in French, have been confirmed. Joy points out with regards to the schedule that the student sessions seem much shorter than at other CUMCs. Kseniya will inform the other CUMC organizers and see if they should try to extend the student sessions. The venue for the CUMC has been confirmed. The IRMACS Centre at SFU will host the conference. In terms of accommodations, space has been arranged in the new residence buildings. Using the townhouses at SFU is also a possibility that will be looked into further. There will be three breakfasts and lunches, one of the breakfasts being supplied by a sponsor. With regards to the banquet, nothing has been decided as of yet. Kseniya shares that the reason for this is in part due to transport concerns. Joy points out that public transit is OK to use and in fact worked quite well when the CUMC was held at York, a suburban campus just like SFU. To go along with public transit, one can split people up into groups to make things work smoother in terms of getting to destinations. Charter buses are really too expensive. The CUMC organizing committee has budgeted for about 100 people with a registration fee of \$60-70. Out of province student will pay no registration fee. It might also be possible to get some of the accommodation

costs covered for such students as well, depending on how well fundraising goes. On that note, the sponsor packages are almost ready and should be sent out within a month. The website is almost ready and will hopefully be posted by the end of next week (once exams are over for the webmaster). The poster is not done because the person who promised a design did not follow through with their commitment. Joy points out that usually the CUMC poster is sent out with spring newsletter, and so, ideally, it should be completed before then. Kseniya also mentions that the SFU mathematics department has pledged to cover postage for CUMC related materials.

Jessica shares her experience with getting travel funding to attend the CUMC. For example, she did not know about funding that was available from the student Union, etc., at her school. To help avoid this happening to other students, Jessica feels it is important that something should be mentioned about these sorts of funding opportunities on the CUMC website somewhere.

Joy points out that it would be really nice to get a bid from an Atlantic university, since the CUMC has not taken place in that region of Canada for some time. Furthermore, the CUMC organizers should try to encourage people to come from the East as much as possible and try to convince them before the conference to make a bid to hold the next CUMC.

A few words on the CUMC operations manual are shared, specifically that Sandra posted example letters and other comments on the CUMC operations manual wiki. Kseniya points out that these examples have proved to be really helpful. Continuing on the CUMC operations manual, Joy emphasizes how important it is that the organizing committee should make detailed notes about sponsorship, etc., and add material to the operations manual. This will help ensure the future health of the CUMC by giving future organizers more to work with.

e) CUMC operations manual (Sandra)

The CUMC operations manual is now posted online as a wiki. Sandra continues to make changes and to improve things. Sandra asks that we forward her comments about the wiki so that she can try to improve the manual more. Joy ask that useful lists be added to the wiki, for example, what is included in conference packages. Sandra will remind the SFU CUMC organizing committee to do their part in maintaining, adding to, and improving the wiki. It is noted that Sandra should be added to CUMC-exec e-mail list.

f) CUMC infrastructure funding (Sandra)

Joy reports that Dan Piche, the executive director for the CUMC for many years, kept an investment account for the CUMC along with an account for normal CUMC expenses. These two accounts combined are currently valued at approximately \$20,000.00. The money will be transferred from two accounts in Dan's name to a CMS account. The reason for the accounts was to ensure that smaller schools that did not have as many financial resources could still host the CUMC.

Sandra shares that she liked Graham's idea of getting past posters framed to highlight the history of the meetings which could then be displayed at CMS meetings for professors and others to see. Due to the cost of framing, Alan suggests that we may want to just laminate them. This also makes mailing the collection of posters here and there easier and more affordable. Joy points out that we do not have copies of past years posters. A copy of the poster for the McGill CUMC is on their webpage. It is also suggested that posters could be transferred at CUMCs to the representatives of which ever school wins their bid to host the conference.

There is some talk of good ways to use the CUMC infrastructure money we now have access to. Sandra points out that it would be nice to have extra promotional packages, etc. Marcus suggest covering registration fees as well as possible travel funding. Jessica points out that, if anything, schools are most likely to cover the registration fees of students. Joy also points out that by covering fees and travel, the money would be used up very quickly, and besides, the CUMC organizers should work hard to fundraise, as such aid should not be a regular thing. The idea of buying a plaque for each school that has hosted the CUMC to thank them is discussed. Joy asks that anyone with good ideas on how to use the infrastructure funding to forward their ideas to her.

g) Studc Poster (Sandra)

The current poster is on the website. The content on the poster is what we want, but Sandra says the design is not the best. There is much talk on how to improve the poster. Sandra decides that it is probably best to start from scratch. She asks that people with design ideas contact her.

Joy points out that the budget for this project increased. Sandra asks if getting a professional designer is then in order. Joy points out that this would be too expensive. Jessica asks about where the posters would be displayed. The posters are for display in mathematics departments, in CUMC conference packages, and at regional conferences.

Regarding the posters, a small size would be good for mailing purposes. Ideally, it would be nice if the new design would work in both colour and in black and white. Joy would like to see a poster ready in time for inclusion in the CUMC conference packages. Jessica volunteers to try to help Sandra design the new poster. Joy ask that a few high quality printouts be made at some point. Kseniya mentions that it may be possible for the SFU CUMC organizers to do some of printing of the posters for the conference packages. Sandra plans on having a new design in a couple of months. Mélisande will provide a translation.

h) Studc Operations manual (Pawel)

Pawel reports that most of the work was already done by Joy before he was assigned to this project. He has improved some of the formatting and has updated the regional conference section. Pawel encourages people to add new material to the manual, and will help anyone who may be unsure of how to use the wiki. It is pointed out that some sections are not very

impressive and stuff should be added. Joy mentions that there are no sections for some of the projects and encourages everyone without a section to add one. Joy asks for everyone's commitment to keeping their sections updated. Alan asks whether backups of the wikis have been made. Joy shares that she has not figured it out how to do that yet, but is looking into how best to go about backing up them up.

i) MITACS liaison (Sandra)

The next conference will be in Winnipeg and will be jointly held by MITACS and the CMS. There will be a joint student social and banquet. Ideas for the banquet are still in the works. Joy mentions that student registration will be higher for the Winnipeg meeting. MITACS subsidizes students who volunteer or give posters at the conference. Joy is going to talk to MITACS people about our registration fees. Sandra is not sure how the budget will work out just yet. Joy asks about the student social. Sandra shares that MITACS can not spend money on alcohol, so the combined budget may be a problem. There is also some talk about whether it would be worthwhile having a student social or not given that there will be a student banquet.

Two big student sessions, (e.g. workshops, short courses, career panel) are in the idea stage. MITACS has suggested two panels, one on how to apply for jobs (for academics, for industry) and another on time and stress management. It is agreed that splitting the organizing of the sessions would make things easier. Joy poses the question of which session we should organize. It is decided that since MITACS has good connections with industry, they could probably do a better job with the session on how to apply for jobs. So we will do the panel discussion on stress management. Sandra will be working with Jessica on organizing our chosen session. Joy asks whether MITACS has funding for their student sessions. Sandra reports that in general, MITACS does not want to cover expenses other than gifts for panel participants.

Giving a general update on the happenings of the MITACS student committee, Sandra shares that the committee has just finished producing promotional postcards, that the committee is trying to interact more with other student groups associated with National Centers of Excellence, as well as generally trying to expand their student network, that the MITACS newsletter is still being produced on a regular basis, and that they are working on their own wiki. Also, Sandra mentions that the terms of many of the MITACS student committee members are coming to an end and so there will be new committee members in the near future. That said, Sandra's term as MITACS liaison is coming to an end. Sandra shares some benefits of taking on this project and ask that anyone who would like to take over the project after her term make themselves known.

j) Newsletter (Laura)

Laura describes the current state of the newsletters. The newsletter used to be two pages -- one objective was to double the number of pages, which has now been done for the fall 2006 newsletter. Laura thanks people for being helpful with their submissions. For the next issue, Laura would like everyone to give brief mention of what's going on at their individual

universities.

Graham makes some comments about the mistake with the final version of the fall newsletter. Laura apologizes for this. Joy suggests that the final version should be posted on the website so that we can all visually see the final version and be able to double check that there are no gross errors. Graham asks Laura to give the CMS office advanced notice before the submission of the final version.

With regards to getting the newsletters to students, Graham suggests possibly sending the newsletters to undergraduate representatives at each university. Joy wonders whether including a cover letter with the newsletter mailings would help with getting the newsletters distributed to students, rather than just tossed on a pile. Graham wonders whether it might be better to send the mailings to department chairs with a cover letter -- maybe this would be more personal. It is suggested that Graham and Tom Salisbury sign the cover letter to make it look more official.

Graham and Jessica will try to find better contacts to send the newsletters to.

Laura asks whether it might be better to print more copies rather than printing in color, with the hope of reaching more students.

Laura ask for comments on the newsletter. Looking at the fall newsletter, Graham suggests decreasing the margins and trying to center the content better. Graham ask about the resolution. Laura says that she has very high resolution copies, but that she did not have a very high resolution version of the CMS logo. Graham informs us that such a version of the logo is available. Joy suggest that Laura coordinate with Liliane with regard to printing, etc.

k) Regional Conferences (Pawel)

Pawel describes the project. There is \$1000.00 available for 4 regional conferences next year. Pawel has looked into possible regional conferences and has compiled a four page list of them. He will be e-mailing the organizers to try to find people who might accept regional conference support. Joy would like to see a blurb written that can be read at the events funded by the committee. Jessica suggest that if one of us is near one of the conference locations, that we should attend the funded student event to help advertise the work of the student committee. Joy shares that she is really excited that this project will go forward this year, especially after last year when the project fell apart for various reasons.

l) Connecting Undergrads (Jenna)

Jenna describes her project. In trying to get undergrads involved and connected, the best approach is to focus on student groups. The web forum a big step in trying to get students interacting. Jenna suggest that some material (or a possible section) be added to the website for ideas on establishing and running student groups.

Joy reports that there will be more funding for Jenna to attend the CUMC and asks Kseniya to get the CUMC organizers to add a small slot to the CUMC program in order for Jenna to speak briefly to CUMC participants about the student committee and membership with the CMS.

Jenna mentions that she helped update the community webpage.

[Graham talks briefly about the upcoming summer meeting with MITACS. Student fees are higher for two reasons: first, because most MITACS students are supported by MITACS, and second, because the cost includes a ticket to the student banquet. MITACS will be handling the registrations for the next summer meeting. Graham mentions that Lethbridge University has established a fund in memory of the late Dr. Andy Liu. Approximately \$2000.00 every year for ten years will be used to help students come to meetings. The availability of this student support will start to be advertised on the meeting websites. Graham points out that the executive office was able to maintain the student committee budget mainly due to fundraising aims and projections and because it much easier in general to get people and organizations to donate funds to be used for students. Graham reminds us that annual reports are due January 31st. Old reports are available on the web for reference. We should keep in mind that people outside the CMS and the mathematical community may read the reports, so one should write for a general audience.

Graham reports on the ceremonial signing with the Mexican Mathematical Society and the CMS to hold joint meetings. The next will be at UBC in 2009. These conferences will mostly have a narrow research focus. As well as having joint meetings, there will be student exchanges. The plan is for the CMS and the Mexican Mathematical Society to have a joint meeting every three years, as well as special topic meetings every two years.

Graham points out that the next joint meeting of the CMS with another mathematical society will take place in Australia with the Australian Mathematical Society and the New Zealand Mathematical Society.]

m) Student Session (Jessica)

Jessica reports on her organization of the session at this conference. The panel discussion will begin at 1:00 p.m. As agreed on earlier in the meeting, the session at the Winnipeg meeting will be on stress management. MITACS will organize the other student session. There is some discussion about how to better advertise the student social and student sessions. Graham points out that it will be possible to put a blurb in a pre-conference e-mail that will be sent to pre-registered conference participants who identify themselves as students.

n) Guide to Attending Conferences (Mélisande)

Mélisande describes the guide for attending conferences that she wrote and hands out some

copies. Mélisande has produced an English version of the guide with the help of Jenna. The guides will be posted on the Studc website soon. Mélisande asks that people read over the guide to look for typos, etc. Joy suggests putting an excerpt of the guide in the next newsletter, maybe even in French.

o) Why join the CMS (Joy)

Joy describes the origin of this project (last year) and describes some details of the project. It will consist of modifying the benefits of membership letter that is sent out to new CMS members in order to make CMS membership more relevant to students. The person who takes on this project will work with Lilliane to put together relevant membership material to help attract student members.

Jessica volunteers to take on this project.

p) New Projects ?

Joy informs us that David Rodgers (the treasurer of the CMS) would like us to make a wish list of what we would want or do if we had an extra \$1000, \$2000, etc. The idea is that such a list could be used for fundraising purposes.

Jessica suggests putting more funding towards student events at regional conferences and greater travel support to make it easier for students to attend conferences.

Mélisande suggests establishing a mentorship program where graduate students mentor undergrads.

Joy suggests startup money for student groups.

Laura suggest making t-shirts, etc.

Sandra suggest establishing CMS student chapters with associated funding, along the lines of SIAM student chapters.

Joy also suggest that we could expand the student committee so that the committee could work on more projects.

5) Student Social

Some words are shared on the student social of the night before. It went better than the last social, with a handful of student plus Studc members. However, it is clear that we need to modify our approach to advertising the social.

Kseniya ask why the social is on Friday. Joy goes over some of the history of why the social is always held on Fridays. It was a way to get students out of the opening reception, giving them a reason to leave about halfway through and also in order to get students to meet each other before each conference starts full steam. Joy points out that this topic is almost always talked about at committee meetings. We can definitely think of moving the day.

6) Studc membership

a) Review of Current Membership

The committee will have to start a search for a new webmaster to replace Marcus and someone to replace Sandra. Antoine will be leaving the committee. Prof. Woodrow is willing to stay on for another term.

b) Nominations

Joy talks about the nomination form and asks new members about their opinion of the form. Sandra suggests cutting question 10 on Tauyna and replacing it with another fun question. It is also suggested that we try to make the questions a little bit more disjoint, but it is pointed out that it is not exactly clear how to do this well. Deleting question 7 is a possible modification. Joy ask if there is anything else people would like to see put on the form: if you have any ideas, forward them to Joy.

c) New Studc Chairs

Joy will stay on for one more year, but we will need a new chair. Joy describes the duties of the committee chair. It involves preparing for the committee meetings, communicating to people about their projects and keeping them on track, attending the development and board meetings of the CMS and to deliver brief reports on the committee. The chair also prepares the annual report and makes a statement at the annual general meeting which is held during the summer meeting. Jenna is willing to take on the position of chair after Antoine's term ends. The details of this will be worked out.

7) Review of Budget

Joy hands out a summary of the budget and goes over it.

8) Next Meeting: Winnipeg, Summer 2007, and keeping on track

Joy makes some quick comments about keeping on track and ask that we submit material for next year's budget and for this past year's annual report. For the annual report, we need only simply write a paragraph on our project. This should be submitted to Joy by the first week of January.

9) Reimbursements

Joy goes over the reimbursement form to ensure there is no confusion on how to fill it out and reminds everyone to send her an e-mail with our reimbursement data before we mail in our claims. Joy will reply to these e-mails letting people know if things claimed can be properly covered.

10) Adjournment

12:08 p.m.