

MEETING MINUTES
CMS STUDENT COMMITTEE
WINNIPEG, JUNE 1, 2007
2:00 – 6:00 PM, DELTA, HEARTLAND ROOM

MEETING COMMENCES AT 2:15

Present: Joy Abramson, Marcus Barnes, Al Erickson Mélisande Fortin-Boisvert, Laura Gauhier, Sandra Gregov, Alan Kelm, Jessica McDonald, Liliane Sousa, Jenna Tichon, Robert Woodrow, Graham Wright.

(1) WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR AND INTRODUCTIONS

People introduce each other starting with Sandra, then the people from Student Advisory Committee of MITACS (SAC), and then the rest of the CMS Student Committee (Stude) members. The members of the SAC leave after the introductions. The purpose of introducing the SAC members was because the student events at the meeting were co-organized by the Studc and SAC.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

The agenda is approved.

(3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF WINTER 2006

The minutes of the winter 2006 meeting are approved.

(4) PROJECT REPORTS AND DISCUSSION:

(A) WEBPAGE (MARCUS), FRENCH TRANSLATIONS (MÉLISANDE)

Most work the past six months has focuses on getting the French site up and running properly. The language independent tree structure works great and thanks to Mélisande's hard work translating many of the pages, we can actually claim to have French versions of some of the site. There are still a few pages that need to be translated. Due to Mélisande's looming thesis deadline, this work will probably not get done until later in the summer.

A new page call Resources has been set up that will contain documents such as Studc meeting minutes, the guides, etc. This was set up in response to ideas put forward at the Toronto meeting.

The current webmaster's term will be ending July 1st. In the month ahead, he will add comments to the Studc operations manual to hopefully make the transition to a new webmaster smoother.

(B) LISTSERV (MARCUS)

167 members of the grad listserv
269 members of the undergrad list

This past six months has seen more traffic on the listserv. A lot of these messages were compiled by Marcus from announcements sent to him and then forwarded on, rather than Marcus accepting-declining, etc., submissions to the listserv, though this type of traffic has increased a little bit, which is encouraging.

Whoever replaces Marcus as Listserv manager should be proactive and add them selves to listservs from the various mathematics institutes (Fields, CRM, AARMS, etc.) so that they can forward on relevant messages to the listservs. There will not be a useful amount of traffic on the listserv if the moderator simply waits for others to forward things to the list. Marcus suggests that the listserv manager job be part of the webmaster's portfolio.

Since Marcus' term ends July 1st, in the month ahead he will add some comments to the listserv section of the Studc operations manual that will he hopes will be useful to the future listserv manager.

It is suggested that a new announcement be sent out introducing the listservs with the aim of increasing traffic and membership. It is also suggested that the way the listservs are set up may discourage some people from posting, since currently those who forward a message are told that their message awaits moderation. Instead of this, it might be better to forward all potential listserv messages to the moderator, who would then post them to the list if the messages are appropriate.

It is pointed out that we have failed to post a message to the listserv announcing the publication of our newsletters. Such messages should be sent out starting with the spring 2007 issue, the hope being that this may increase the pick-up rate of the newsletters.

(C) WEB FORUM (JENNA)

Jenna explains some of the problems with maintaining the web forum, among them, some problems with registration. The forum has seen more traffic since the announcement of the CMS meeting, which is encouraging.

Joy asks whether it might be worthwhile getting commercial forum software. This might help make managing and maintaining the forum much easier. Specifically, some commercial software is better at dealing with spam posts. Such software typical costs about \$160. Al asks what forum software the Art of Problem Solving Forum uses, as in his experience it seems to work well. It is also emphasized that we should look into

software that supports LaTeX. Joy suggests that we make a renewed push for the forum after the CUMC.

Alan thanks Jenna for her quick action setting things up on the forum when SAC asked for student related material to be posted in anticipation of the MITACS - CMS meeting (e.g., student housing options).

It is suggested that we may want to review our current hosting service, to make sure we are getting the best deal for our needs.

Jenna mentions her draft for a guide for starting one's own math student group. She will contact student groups to get input on the contents of the guide. The aim is to have this completed by the end of the summer.

Joy asks whether we are still keen on preparing a kit for new mathematics clubs. Joy points out that the treasurer of CMS asked what the Studc would do if we had more funding – a kit of resources for new mathematics clubs could be one such thing. There could be a CMS membership included so that any new club could get issues of Crux. Jenna inquires about the idea of setting up student chapters of the CMS. Al suggests that if kits are sent out, then sample constitutions would be useful. Joy suggests including Studc posters and Sandra suggests including information the CUMC and on the Studc and its activities. Joy points out that getting physical copy would be more effective than simply sending out such a kit as an electronic document. Sandra ask about whether it would be good to have an official title for the student contact at each university. This would enable people acting in such a capacity to, for example, add a line to their CV about their activities. For the kits, Al suggests including tips on obtaining internal funding, as students usually do not know where to look and who to ask about such funding opportunities.

Aside: Sandra suggests it would be valuable if at least one of the new members we are seeking for the committee have design experience.

(D) CUMC PREPARATIONS (AL)

Al passes around the CUMC poster for all to see. Registration for the conference is now up and the posters have been printed and sent out. The French version of the CUMC website is up, but the translation is still being worked on. Almost all the pages have been translated except for registration, but this page will be translated shortly. Al briefly describes the conference packages. Bookkeeping for the conference is being handled by mathematics department. Joy suggest that Al look into whether the CUMC at SFU may be eligible for a GST rebate, as the York CUMC organizers were able to get one. Al describes the conference centre that will be used, namely the IRMACS Centre at SFU.

Accommodations have been reserved with SFU accommodations. Joy suggests that Al call the university accommodation service to make sure that people are being booked

where promised, as in the past, some organizers had problems with their university accommodation services.

The opening banquet will be a barbeque at the student pub on the SFU Burnaby campus. All costs have almost been met, as some funding is still yet to arrive. Funding targets have more or less been met.

Al shares an experienced mathematical Olympiad problem solver at SFU will be putting together a small problem solving contest for the conference. The winner of the contest will receive a free copy of Maple.

The speakers have been confirmed except for one, but things are looking good. The closing banquet for the conference will probably be a dinner cruise

(Alan departs at 3:00p.m.)

Some work that still needs to be done is the compilation of abstracts for the talks as well as finding volunteers for helping with the day to day workings at conference. Joy points out that this is a standard problem of getting people and one strategy for getting more volunteers is to set aside a small amount of the budget for an honorarium for volunteers. Joy also points out that interesting sounding talks should be scheduled at the same time, so that the distribution of people at any concurrent talks is more even.

It is suggested that we should start another advertising push for CUMC now that registration is up. Jenna will add a new CUMC section on the forum. Joy asks Graham if a message about the CUMC can be sent out to the chairs-list or other venues. Late registration for this year's CUMC is July 1st.

The aim is to get about 100 participants. Joy emphasizes the importance of getting someone to bid for next year's CUMC – ideally a school from the East coast. CUMC organizers in the past have contacted people before the conference with the aim of encouraging bids from various schools. International advertising for the CUMC is briefly discussed. Joy asks that Al and the other CUMC organizers try to put together a list of who they successfully contacted for funding, as it would be beneficial if there could be some continuity in funding,

(E) CUMC OPERATIONS MANUAL (SANDRA)

Sandra modified the manual in February after the winter meeting. The manual has been vastly improved. Having CUMC organizers contribute to the Wiki version is very important. The hope is shared that Al and others will take the time to make additions to the Wiki as much as possible to make future work for CUMC organizers much easier. Content such as what was included in the conference kit can be very useful.

(F) CUMC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING (JOY)

Joy retells the story of the CUMC infrastructure funding. Ideas for utilizing the funding include making small plaques for hosting institutions and getting CUMC posters laminated for display. Mélisande suggests that a student prize be awarded at the conference for students who have contributed to fostering the mathematical community.

(Graham joins the meeting around 3:20p.m.)

Mélisande updates Graham on the student prize idea. As an award, free travel to a CUMC might be provided. Such a prize would raise awareness for both the CUMC and the Studc. Graham points out that the CMS would need formal submission of criteria, timeframe, etc., He suggests looking at the documents for the other CMS awards for ideas on how to do all this. The idea is to give the award at the CUMCs and that the award could be announced at summer CMS meetings. Al points out that students who are eligible for such a service award are the very sort of people that the Studc would want as members. So the award for service can also act as a recruitment tool for the Studc.

Aside: Graham asks that we insure that the CMS office gets a copy of the poster for this year's CUMC.

Joy inquires if anyone is interested in pursuing details for student award. Jessica volunteers to look into some of the details of setting up such an award. Graham shares that if things get set up by December of this year, an award could be given out the following summer.

(G) STUDC POSTER (SANDRA)

Sandra passes copies around of the Studc poster for all to see. It is a two-sided poster, with English on one side and French on the other. Sandra reiterates the need for someone with design experience to join the committee for things such as the poster. If any changes need to be made to the poster, please contact Sandra within the month. The idea of including the poster in the CUMC conference kit is briefly discussed.

(H) STUDC OPERATIONS MANUAL (JOY FOR PAWEL)

The Studc Operations Manual was updated some by Pawel and Joy. Now that all members are not totally new, we should update the sections relevant to our positions. Doing so is especially important for any outgoing members. Sandra shares that she has already updated the sections relevant to her duties. Marcus still needs to update those sections relevant to his duties.

(I) MITACS LIAISON (SANDRA)

As Sandra's term on the committee is ending, we need a new MITACS liaison. Sandra describes the position. Every month the MITACS SAC holds a teleconference of about

an hour in length. The work of SAC mainly focuses on the student social and student sessions at the yearly MITACS conference. The purpose of the liaison is to be a bridge between SAC and Studc. Some of the benefits of being on SAC include paid travel for attending the twice yearly meeting in Vancouver and for attendance at the MITACS conference. Sandra shares that SAC is a great group of people, but notes that currently SAC is mostly grad student orientated, though work is being done to include lower levels.

Joy suggests explicitly including a description of this position in the call for the new committee members.

Aside: Graham inquires about the status of future newsletters. The aim is to publish twice a year Jessica suggests aiming for early in each semester. Graham points out that getting the newsletter in the hands of people at the CMS office by mid-October would be good and for the winter issue, by mid February,

Graham asks about any progress on getting student representatives in mathematics departments. Joy shares that this still in the works.

Graham reminds the committee that the drafting of the annual budget is coming up fast and that we should submit any budget requests soon.

Graham leaves the meeting.

(The meeting is halted for a short break at 3:55p.m. The meeting commences again at 4:10p.m.)

(Liliane joins the meeting.)

Liliane inquires about what the CUMC organizers need from the CMS. Al shares that there is definitely space in the conference kits for CMS literature. Joy points out that this material would better be included in the conference program rather than as inserts. Al points out that what the CMS wishes to include can probably be accommodated. A suggestion is to include a brief presentation by someone from the CMS in the schedule to mention details about the CMS. Joy asks that Jenna be given five minutes to talk about the Studc just before the bid for the next conference. Joy also asks that the CMS office send any leftover copies of the newsletter to SFU for inclusion in the conference kits.

(J) NEWSLETTER (LAURA)

The next big goal for the newsletter is to improve distribution. The last time the newsletter was sent out a cover letter was included, but this did not seem to help with the distribution problems. On the topic of the recent newsletter, someone actually sent in a solution to contest problem. Joy points out a problem with masthead. Laura will look into the problem.

Liliane shares that setting up a mailing database is easy, but she needs to know who to send the newsletters to. So we need to take the current list and add any useful addressees. Joy points out that we should change the current cover letter, since it obviously did not work well. Joy asks whether we should include a raffle in the next issue. We may use the response to such a raffle as a way to gauge distribution.

Laura would like to see more local news included in the newsletter.

Joy suggests that we add a permanent box with information on the Studc.

Joy asks whether we should add some photos, for example a photo from the upcoming CUMC.

Aside: Al describes the CUMC Annual idea that will be tested out at this year's CUMC. The idea is to collect student work before the conference and print it as the Annual, which will be distributed at the CUMC. The Annual will not be a Proceedings (it is noted that the Proceedings idea has failed in the past), but rather as an avenue for student work of various sorts, not necessarily created specifically for presentation at the CUMC.

(K) REGIONAL CONFERENCES (JOY FOR PAWEL)

Joy notes that the regional conference budget was doubled this year, but that we have only given funding to one event so far, which is cause for concern. Jessica shares that she has possible lead, which she will follow up on. Joy will look into AARMS events and Mélanie will look into events being held at the CRM,

(L) STUDENT SESSIONS (JESSICA AND SANDRA)

Jessica explains why the idea for a session on stress management did not come to fruition at this conference. She will see what can be done for the next conference.

The speaker at this conference was Nick Pizzi. He gave a talk about the NRC in general and then talked about his own research. About 20 people showed up to the session. It is noted that the lunchtime scheduling may reduce the number of people who attend the session. We should investigate whether we can get a lunch with tickets for students for the session at the London conference, as this might encourage more people to attend. We might also want to include a raffle as part of the session, again the aim being to increase attendance.

Jenna asks whether we can get information on the number of students attending given CMS meetings. Joy says that this should be possible.

Jessica asks for ideas for topics for future sessions. Suggestions should be sent to Jessica. The idea of focusing on soft-skills still seems like a good idea. Joy shares that panel type sessions are very interesting. A possible idea is a discussion about jobs opportunities beyond academia for mathematics students. It is pointed out that, in terms of reliability,

getting local mathematicians is the best bet. Joy also points out that “My story” sorts of panels are also very interesting and entertaining.

(M) FRENCH CONTENT (MÉLISANDE)

Mélanie quickly recaps what was said earlier about French content with regards to the Studc website.

(N) STUDENT SOCIAL

Using tickets is a good idea and seemed to have worked well at this meeting. The idea is that students are more likely to come if they have a ticket in their hands. It is noted that one person from SAC is from London, so we should contact him about places to hold the student social at the upcoming conference.

(N) NEW PROJECTS?

It is decided that it's best to focus on our current projects and make sure that these projects turn out well.

(5) STUDDC MEMBERSHIP

(A) REVIEW OF CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Joy distributes a handout about the current membership.

Robert will stay on the committee for another two years. Sandra and Marcus's terms are ending July 1st. So there will be three vacancies on the committee that will need to be filled, namely an Atlantic member, a Webmaster, and a general member.

It is noted that the job of moderating the listservs and being linkmaster for KaBoL will be folded into the job of Studc webmaster. At a later date, maintaining the sites associated with Studc own domain will be included in the webmaster duties as well.

Jessica will be given the Ontario representative position since she lives in Ontario.

(B) NOMINATIONS

For the new positions, getting someone who is interested in being the MITACS liaison and someone who has design experience would be definite assets. It would also be good to try to recruit an undergrad that would be interested in spearheading the student group work.

Joy asks if anyone has a good idea for the last funny question on the nomination form.

Jenna will be organizing the nominations.

(6) REVIEW OF BUDGET

Joy reviews our current budget. Please see Joy for more details

Joy would like suggestions for the new budget proposal.

(7) NEXT MEETING: LONDON, ONTARIO, WINTER 2007, AND KEEPING ON TRACK

Joy asks that members of the committee promptly send her information on what they plan on doing before the next meeting.

Joy thanks Sandra and Marcus for their work on the Studc.

[A couple of photographs are taken of the current student committee in the hotel lobby.]

(8) REIMBURSEMENTS

The reimbursement form is quickly reviewed and it is noted that these should be promptly submitted after Joy has reviewed members expense claims.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned at 5:35pm.