

Annual Report of the Teaching Committee (September 27, 2006)

1. The Teaching Committee is required by its terms of reference (FB Minute?) to provide an annual report to the Faculty Board in the Easter Term.
2. The members of the Teaching Committee are currently
 - Dr G R Allen
 - Ms L J Colwell (Junior Member, Trinity, Part II)
 - Prof T Fokas
 - Mr C R Gibbs (Junior Member, Christs, Part IB)
 - Prof A M W Glass (College representative)
 - Dr T W Körner
 - Dr J R Lister
 - Dr S T C Siklos (Chair)
 - Dr R M Williams

Junior members are nominated by the Chair of the Committee and appointed by the Faculty Board. Recent practice has been to seek expressions of interest by means of an e-mail to all Part IB students before the beginning of the academical year, and to invite the Junior Member at the end of his or her first year of service to serve for an additional year, so that there is a Part IB representative and a Part II representative.

3. We have met a total of 6 times in the 2002/03, four times in the Michaelmas term, once in the Lent term and once in the Easter term. As usual, the major items on the agenda were the Tripos examinations and the paper and e-mail questionnaires.
4. We provided a detailed response to the reports of the Examiners and the External Examiners which was used as the basis of the Faculty Board's response to the Education Committee of the General Board. This report was considered by the Board at its November meeting.
5. Each year, shortly after the Tripos examinations, an e-mail questionnaire is sent to all undergraduates. This timing and nature of this questionnaire mean that it provides information that is not available from the paper questionnaires distributed by the lecturers at the end of their courses: students' views on the examinations; information from students who did not stay until the end of the lecture course; comparative information between courses. We considered the response to the e-mail questionnaire in conjunction with the data provided by the Faculty Office from the paper questionnaires. From all this information (together with examination data and statistics), we form judgements on the overall undergraduate programme. Broadly speaking, courses are badly received either because they are inappropriate in some way (which may concern prerequisite courses), or because the lecturer has presented them badly (or for a combination of these reasons). In the former case, we liaise with the Curriculum Committee and in the latter case we liaise with the Heads of Department who are responsible for the provision of teaching in their departments.

As a result, the Chair of the Committee wrote to the two Heads of Department mentioning in total three courses which, in our opinion, had been badly received specifically because lecturers had presented them badly. In discussing these matters, the committee bore in mind such factors as whether the course is to be revised for next year and whether there is a different lecturer for the current year.
6. We also provided advice to the Faculty Board on Examination rubric (which was not adopted by examiners) and drafted an e-mail to first year students explaining the rubric of the Part IA examination.
7. In addition, the Teaching Committee was involved in various miscellaneous activities, including
 - Induction session for first year students
 - Examination session for Part IA students
 - Examination session for Part II students
 - Supervisor training sessions