

Annual Report of the Teaching Committee

May, 2011

1. The Teaching Committee is required by its terms of reference to provide an annual report to the Faculty Board in the Easter Term.
2. The members of the Teaching Committee are currently

Prof Thanasis Fokas	Dr Colm Caulfield
Prof Imre Leader (ex officio, Chair of Curriculum Committee)	Prof John Lister
Dr Tom Fisher	Dr Stephen Siklos (Chair)
Dr R Samworth (on leave; Dr Susan Pitts covering)	Dr Keith Carne
Ms Ewa Bieniecka (Junior Member, Trinity, Part II)	
Mr Clive Newstead (Junior Member, Robinson Part IB)	

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 (or possibly a Part III representative and a Part IB or II representative).

3. We met a total of 4 times in the academic year 2010/11, in the Michaelmas term. As usual, the major item on the agenda was a review of the undergraduate Tripos examinations.
4. We provided a detailed report on the undergraduate examinations to the Faculty Board based on reports of the Examiners and the External Examiners, on examination data such as statistics and the actual questions, and on the information from the e-mail questionnaires. Our report 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, having previously been received by the meeting of Directors of Studies.
5. We provide a report to Heads of Department on the teaching of their departments, based on the paper and on-line questionnaires. A small number of courses/lecturers are referred to the Heads of Department for possible action.

In general, the feedback from students was very positive. In this year's report:

- (a) we noted that only 2 lecturers had not handed out any paper questionnaires, though the returns from a number of Part II courses are very small;
 - (b) we drew the attention of the Heads of Department to a total of 11 courses (out of 61) for which we recommended some action be taken (for some courses the recommendation related to the lecturer, for others it related to the schedule);
 - (c) we recommended greater support and guidance for new or new-to-Cambridge lecturers teaching in the Tripos for the first time;
 - (d) we highlighted the need for examiners to adhere to the classification criteria laid down by the Faculty Board;
 - (e) we reported on the decline in the take-up rate of 'short' questions and requested further analysis of the causes.
6. In addition, members of the Teaching Committee were involved in various miscellaneous activities (for some of which the Board has received an independent report), including:
Induction session for first year students;
Examination briefing session for Part IA students;
E-mail to Part IA students explaining the rubric for the examination;
Advising on the choice of lecturers;
Advising on the timetable for lectures;
Supervisor training sessions (though this has now been largely taken over by the Staff Development Office).