

Annual Meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011

University College London

Present: A Young (AY, in the chair), R A Bailey, P Brown, C Buck, P Farrington, T Fearn, J Forster, B Francis, G Gibson, B Gilchrist, K Glazebrook, M Goldstein, V Isham, W Kendall, J Kent, K McConway, G Nason, J Norris, J Pan, P Patil, C Skinner, J Stander (Minutes Secretary), M Stasinopoulos, A Wood, S Wood

Apologies: C Aitkin, T Bailey, P Diggle, G Dunn, S Gilmour, R Henderson, C Holmes, D Jones, S Lauritzen, B Lausen, P Smith, M Titterton, J Whitehead

1. **Welcome and Apologies.** **Alastair Young** (AY), chairing his second Committee of Professors of Statistics (COPS) meeting, welcomed members and presented the apologies that he had received.
2. **Appointment of Minutes Secretary.** **Julian Stander** was appointed as Minutes Secretary.
3. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2010.** The Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2010 were approved without any issues being raised.
4. **Domestic Matters.**
  - (a) *Membership.* This stands at 193, compared to 191 last year. Colleagues were asked to inform **AY** if they are aware of anyone who should be added to the membership.
  - (b) *Financial Report.* **Julian Stander** (Treasurer) reported that the financial situation was healthy as expenditure was low. The meeting agreed that 2011–2012 should be another subscription free year.
  - (c) *Annual Data Collection.* The meeting thanked **Jon Forster** for his efforts for data collection and summary. The situation is generally stable with respect to last year. The data collection exercise was considered worthwhile as now we have an almost complete time series for many groups for four years. Some concern was expressed about groups who may not be represented.
  - (d) *COPS Executive.* At present this comprises AY, J Forster (Past Chairman), R Henderson, W Kendall, J Stander (Treasurer), A Wood. The meeting thanked **N Best**, who stepped down from the Executive recently. The meeting was happy with the way in which the Executive is formed.
5. **Publications.**
  - (a) *Web Site.* This is maintained by **AY** on an *ad hoc* basis. The meeting considered it to be a useful source of information such as links to Masters courses.
  - (b) *Director of Academic Statisticians.* The web version is in need of updating. **AY** will send a message to the COPS email list inviting this to be done. It could be replaced by a Wikipedia page.

6. **EPSRC Mathematics Programme.** The meeting received a presentation from **Philippa Hemmings** and **Vivienne Blackstone** of the EPSRC Mathematics Programme. In this presentation the Strategic Plan, which was published in Spring 2010 and which sets out an ambitious new direction with the three key goals of shaping capability, developing leaders and delivering impact, is discussed together with the difficult choices that have to be made in the light of a real terms reduction in funding. Facts & Figures and Issues & Challenges are outlined. This item was taken at the beginning of the meeting.

The presentation is available from <http://www.copstat.ac.uk/EPSRC2011.pdf>.

7. **International Review of Mathematical Sciences 2010.** The meeting discussed the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) response. **P Farrington** said that **K McConway** is preparing a report in which some of the structural issues mentioned in the International Review will be looked at in a broad way. These includes the RSS's links with the Funding Councils. **K McConway** said that it was difficult to get a picture of issues such as funding, MSc provision and teaching because data quality was not consistently high. Suggestions for data sources, especially those related to the demand for MSc graduates and the skills that they should possess, would be gratefully received. **V Isham** (President of the RSS) asked for suggestions about what the RSS should do to promote further the academic side of statistics, and mentioned that the Council for the Mathematical Sciences (CMS) had met with EPSRC to try to improve dialogue. The meeting pointed out that the Leverhulme Trust and the Royal Society may also be able to help here.
8. **REF 2014.** **C Skinner** presented the timetable for REF 2014 and mentioned that there is a strong push for consistency across Main Panels. July 2011 will see publication of guidance on submissions and of draft panel criteria and working methods, for consultation. Responses to the consultation will be required by October 2011. **C Skinner** asked whether COPS should make an input to discussions of issues such as Impact. **C Skinner** also explained that there will be Assessors in REF 2014 as well as Panel Members, and that these Assessors will be appointed as late as 2013. **V Isham** stated that CMS had met with HEFCE, but that separate COPS and RSS responses might be useful.
9. **Research and Postgraduate Matters.** **W Kendall** discussed the Academy for PhD Training in Statistics (APTS) programme. APTS is committed to carry on as usual and will try to keep costs down. The same message applied to the National Taught Course Centre in Operational Research (NATCOR), as confirmed by **K Glazebrook**, to the London Taught Course Centre (LTCC), as confirmed by **T Fearn**, and to the situation in Scotland, as confirmed by a read contribution from **A Bowman**. **W Kendall** emphasized the national networking benefits provided to students by these programmes. **AY** pointed out the EPSRC funded students were now required to receive 100 hours of taught tuition across their three years, with some form of assessment.
10. **Any Other Teaching Matters.** There were none raised.
11. **Any Other Business.**
- (a) *Biometrika.* *Biometrika* is kindly offering free hard copies to PhD students. **AY** will write to the COPS email list about arrangements for this.
  - (b) *Joint Mathematical Council Subscription.* The meeting decided not to pay the Joint Mathematical Council (JMC) subscription. It was pointed out that members can contribute to JMC discussions through Heads of Departments of Mathematical Sciences (HoDMS), which is a member of JMC.