

June 2024

Dear all,

I hope the end of examining and the arrival of summer herald some very pleasant weeks for all of you. I thought it might be helpful to remind and update you on some news before the long break (things I forget reflect my deteriorating memory, and not their importance).

Congratulations of many flavours are in order:

— to John Aston and Oscar Randal-Williams on election to Fellowships of the Royal Society (alongside Eric Lauga and Mihaela van de Schaar in DAMTP);

— to Perla Sousi on promotion to Professor (Grade 12) and Varun Jog and Qingyuan Zhao on promotion to Professor (Grade 11); [promotions also in DAMTP to Blake Sherwin (G12), Ulrich Sperhake (G12), Aron Wall (G11) and Steven Gratton (G9)]

— to Julia Wolf for the Pilkington Prize, and to Jack Thorne for the Clay Research Award.

(There were many other accolades earlier in the year: Jason Miller won the Fermat Prize, Julian Sahasrabudhe the Salem Prize, Andrew Thomason the Leroy P. Steele Prize, Holly Krieger and Po-Ling Loh Leverhulme Prizes, Pierre Raphael the previous Clay award....)

Farewells are due to Roland Bauerschmidt, who has resigned from DPMMS to take up a position at Courant Institute New York, and to Jake Rasmussen who has resigned to take up a position at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Both were longstanding colleagues and friends to many of us and will be sorely missed.

On the side of the professional support staff, both Chris Mortimer and Deryck Thake are leaving the IT team (to go on to Westminster College resp the Institute of Astronomy) after very long service, so please be patient whilst the IT team rebuilds its strength (and we look to fill the gap in the steady stream of dry humour that Deryck provided).

Welcomes are or will be due to our three new UTOs: Dominique Maldague (harmonic analysis) who arrived last week and I hope everyone will make very welcome; and Jeremy Hahn (algebraic topology) and Joni Teräväinen (analytic number theory) who will both arrive in January. Our new Herchel-Smith postdoc will be Tim Santens (algebraic number theory). There will be at least one new CTO, Adam Morgan (algebraic number theory, Caius College).

We will have a large number of other new research associates starting next term, so will try to organise some kind of 'meet and greet' event near the start of Michaelmas.

In another direction, Vivien Gruar (on secondment at the School of Physical Sciences this past year) has resigned her position as Business and Operations Manager, to take up a longer-term appointment in the School, but very fortunately our acting BOM Ben Daft has accepted to take up the position on a permanent basis. So welcome afresh to Ben in his same-but-extended role.

Resource: The growth in our postdoc community (and numbers of medium-term academic visitors) has put significant pressure on office space, and we have instituted a new 'office allocation policy' to try and rationalise use and create space where needed. Enormous thanks to the several Emeritus-but-very-regularly-present Faculty who have helped us in this rationalisation by consolidating into a number of shared offices.

In a hopefully more friendly direction, we have created small research funds to help people (both UTOs and CTOs) with small travel or research costs between grants, we will now reimburse visa and ILR costs for Faculty and their partners, and will try to be generous to incoming postdocs / Fellowship holders in the same way.

Fundraising efforts, especially for PhD studentships, continue with the help of Meaghan Annear. I hope that by the coming academic year some of these might have crystallised, or at least look more definitely fruitful, but we shall see. Funding for PhD

recruitment this year was very tight but we have a decent incoming cohort, and have tried hard to distribute the resource to maximum benefit.

The University draftsman and Legal Services continue (I hope) to investigate ways we can change the Trust fund terms to allow us to use the discredited 1769 Smith Fund benefaction for prizes for PhD students in new directions, most likely centred around the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences. The Rayleigh-Knight parts of those funds remain, but a paper suggesting a fairly drastic re-think of the shape of those prizes should come hopefully to the Michaelmas term meeting.

Academic recruitment will play a big role again next year: we hope to advertise three positions in Pure Mathematics, one in Probability, one in Statistics, and to convene a Board of Electors for the Chair in Mathematical Statistics. Updates in Michaelmas, but it would already be good to collectively think of people we are keen to have apply, and perhaps to invite them to visit in Michaelmas. By all means talk to me if you have candidates in mind.

Part II reform was approved by Faculty Board. The actual reform is intended not to affect current students and will happen in roughly 4 years time; in the coming weeks Colm and I will approach members of both departments to serve on an Implementation Committee, and DPMMS will also need some people to think through the consequences for each of our Section C courses. I re-iterate thanks to the members of Working Group 4, Chaired by Henrik Latter, for their efforts, with special thanks to Mike Tehranchi for his work (anchored by the IB Statistics course!) designing and testing a new protocol for exam moderation.

Refurbishment rumbles on, with Pavilions D and C now largely completed, and Pavilion E currently due to come in for refresh only in early 2026 (though that date might well come forwards a bit). Many other building projects are happening at a slower pace: the new roof for Central Core (which looks less likely to happen this summer), possible heat pump replacements for the boilers, and the INI expansion are all under active discussion but there are not yet clear timelines for any. Please be patient when the disruption eventually alights! If as seems likely the new roof work takes place in summer 2025, there will be consequences for use of Central Core over that summer, and hence for conference activity, and we will clarify those as soon as we can. We are also currently advertising for a new Facilities Manager.

Again next year many people will be on sabbatical or exceptional leave, and covering the basic teaching and administration will be a collective effort that touches all of us. I hope at some point that, between slimming what we're trying to do and growing the ways we try and do it to build in more flexibility, putting together the roster of teaching, examining and other duties might cease to be an annual trial and tribulation; but we are not there yet. Thanks to all who have agreed to do innumerable things they would rather not!

If you read this far, that seems plenty! The Part III party will take place later today. I hope summer is warm, productive and inspiring, and that you all get plenty of rest to come back recharged in Michaelmas. And thanks to everyone for your help steering and steadying the ship through (most of) my first year at the helm.

All best,

Ivan