Success for the Community in Funding Bid

A group made up of members from the Maths, Stats & OR Network, HoDoMS, the IMA, the LMS, and the RSS, working on behalf of the HE mathematics and statistics community, made a successful bid to HEFCE for funding to support a pilot programme aimed at attracting more young people to study the mathematical sciences at University. The Group was awarded £3.3M from the Council’s Strategic Development Fund and the outcome of the programme is aimed to be a contribution to HEFCE’s widening participation activities whilst at the same time increasing the supply of mathematical sciences graduates.

In the pilot programme, work will take place in three regions, namely the West Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside and London and it will run over three years. A number of HEI’s are involved; the three lead institutions are Coventry University, Leeds University (supported by Sheffield Hallam University) and Queen Mary, University of London. The project will be administered by the Maths, Stats & OR Network. In addition, several other Universities have already expressed a desire to be involved in the planned activities. These activities will support four strands:

- Careers theme: Promotion of information about the wide-ranging relevance and applicability of mathematics and the breadth of career opportunities open to graduates from the mathematical sciences.
- Student theme: Enrichment activities, aimed directly at students to encourage them to raise their aspirations and attainment levels in the mathematical sciences and to consider the study of mathematical sciences in Higher Education.
- Teaching theme: Support for mathematics teachers to enable them to raise the aspirations and the attainment level of their students.
- HE Curriculum theme: A review of the nature of the Higher Education curriculum in the mathematical sciences to ensure that it is suited to a wide range of students.

A range of activities is planned to deliver each theme. An important element is the promotion of contacts between, on the one hand school and college students and teachers and on the other hand, HE and employers representatives. School/college and HEI links will be further strengthened through the use of university students as ambassadors and role models. As well as supporting existing careers advisory organisations, new careers material will be produced and the CMS careers website (www.mathscareers.org.uk) will be enhanced.

The programme is seen as a part of the community’s response to the Smith Report and the work will involve strong collaboration with the newly-launched National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics as well as agencies focusing upon widening participation and the promotion of the vitally important STEM subjects. Appointment of a Project Manager, based in Birmingham, and other staff based within the regions is scheduled for later this year, and it is intended that delivery of the project will start early in 2007.

Christmas Lectures Researcher Job Description

The Ri wishes to appoint a science/maths researcher for the period 1 September 2006–January 2007 to assist with preparations for the Christmas Lectures. The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures are an exciting event that take place annually, and have done since the 1820s and are broadcast on TV. The role will involve working with academic researchers, TV production companies, science communication professionals and assorted kids, animals and unpredictable props. This year they will be given by Professor Marcus du Sautoy, and will be on the subject of mathematics. The ideal candidate will be a graduate or post-graduate in a mathematics-related field, or have used mathematics in their research, and they will wish to continue in research after this project. They will be enthusiastic about communicating their research to public and student audiences, and will want to get a taste about how this is done.

If you are aware of anyone who may be interested in this exciting opportunity, please ask them to visit http://www.rigb.org/rimain/news/newsdetail.jsp?com p=1&id=105&lang=EN where further details are available.