

**School of Technology**

**Council of the School**

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 20 October 2017

**Board Room, Department of Engineering**

**UNRESERVED MINUTES**

Present: Professor Richard Prager (Chairman)  
Professor David Cardwell  
Professor John Dennis  
Professor Andy Hopper  
Professor Christoph Loch  
Dame Polly Courtice  
Professor Lisa Hall  
Dr Alice Hutchings  
Professor Peter Robinson  
Professor Gishan Dissanaiké  
Professor Stewart Cant  
Professor Robin Langley  
Professor Simon Guest  
Professor Tim Minshall  
Ms Alexa Belsham (Undergraduate Student Representative)  
Dr James Moultrie (School observer)  
Dr Claire Barlow (School observer)  
Dr Mark Thompson (School observer)  
Dr Shui Lam (Secretary)  
Ms Joanna Walmsley (Interim School Finance Manager)  
Ms Rachael Tuley (Assistant Secretary)

In Attendance: Ms Tracy Brooks

Apologies: Professor Ross Anderson, Professor Sir Mark Welland, Professor Bill Byrne, Mr Erwan Rolland (Graduate Student Representative), Professor Mark Blamire (School observer), Professor Richard Penty (School observer), Ms Yi-Jun Lin (Administrative Secretary)

**Declarations of interest**

There was no declaration of interest.

## **1. Minutes**

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2017 were approved.

## **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising other than those minuted here.

## **Chair's report**

There was no Chair's report.

## **2. Starred items**

The starred items were approved.

## **3. Principal business**

### **3.1 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2017**

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2017 has been completed. The School of Technology achieved a significant response rate of 77%, compared with the University's overall response rate of 50%. The Director of Graduate Education, Dr Moultrie, provided an update on the PTES report and analysis in Paper **T/17/45**.

The School has invested effort and resources to achieve significant response rates over the past few years and there have been some excellent improvements but also there are some tricky areas still to be tackled. Dr Moultrie expressed thanks for the course directors for their contributions in the improvements in the results. In addition, he and the Head of School would be meeting the Departmental Directors of Teaching and MPhil course directors of the less well performing courses to discuss how to support the relevant courses.

The Council of the School was informed that that the University will no longer participate in PTES and PRES and will instead apply the Student Barometer, to be run in the Michaelmas Term, from 2017 onwards. There were concerns that the timing might not be ideal for postgraduate taught students who would have been in Cambridge for a few weeks at the time of the proposed surveys. Therefore, the Graduate School Committee would consider whether to run its own slimmed-down version targeted at the teaching and learning experiences of postgraduate taught students.

There then followed a general discussion on the area of "feedback and assessment", which has consistently not scored well in past surveys:

- Dr Moultrie will submit a report to the Council of the School in due course on possible improvement suggestions

- Analysis may be done to separate postgraduate students who did their undergraduate degree in Cambridge (and thus used to receiving detailed feedbacks from supervisions) from students from outside Cambridge, to see if the overall picture is different.
- JBS has been monitoring the length of the feedback period: students do not seem happy with a three-week feedback window.
- Ms Belsham, the undergraduate representative, commented that one of the irritants is when feedback and assessment is given one or two weeks later than expected. Should we be clearer on when students can expect feedback?
- Currently, the MPhil courses are managed independently with different levels of resource and different administrative structures. Is there a case to look at this more consistently across the School?

The Council of the School thanked Dr Moultrie for his detailed analysis and the work overseeing graduate education.

### **3.2 CPP Concept Paper: Refurbishment of 1 Regent Street for CISL**

At the last meeting on 16 June 2017, the Council of the School warmly endorsed an outline proposal from CISL to refurbish the building at 1 Regent Street to accommodate a significant expansion of its activities, funded mostly by an external donation.

At the meeting, the Head of School introduced the Capital Project Process (CPP) concept paper (Paper **T/17/46**) which sets out the academic case for the expansion and provides details of planned activities as well as a business case.

For its part, the Council of the School approved the proposal and delegated power to the Head of School to make any minor amendments to the paper as necessary.

## **4. Other Substantive Business**

### **4.1 Planning Round 2017: Undergraduate student numbers**

At the meeting, it was reported that the Planning Round 2017 has been launched. Paper **T/17/47** is a letter from the Secretary of School, dated 18 July 2017, on the Planning Round 2017 attaching the guidance from PRAO.

The Secretary reported that the School is required to submit a forecast of undergraduate student numbers for 2018-19 to 2021-22 for submission to the University by 30 October 2017. After detailed consultations with Departments, Paper **T/17/48** has been produced, showing the planned student numbers for the School with a steady growth.

While the Council of the School considered Paper **T/17/48** to be what the School would like to happen and that the trend is reasonable with a modest growth, they were concerned that there are no practical ways for the School in reality to ensure this desirable outcome since admissions of undergraduates are in the hands of the Colleges. The Council of the School urged the School officers to raise this point with the PVC (Education).

It was also noted that the financial planning guidance is broadly similar to previous years, in particular Chest envelopes are assumed to increase by 1% per annum over the planning period, consistent with prior years. However, underlying pay assumptions have changed following a pay settlement of 1.7% from August 2017. Schools have been asked to plan for pay increases of 1.7% in 2017-18 and 2% each year thereafter. If the UEF envelope increases at only 1% per year, this will lead to significant savings target in later years of the plan.

The Council of the School was somewhat disappointed with the lack of progress with the development of an alternative resource allocation mechanism that is simple and transparent, and provides the right incentives. It was hoped that the expected involvement of the Senior PVC and the Registry would speed up the work.

#### **4.2 REF2021: Administrative Support**

HEFCE has made some initial decisions in the Research Excellence Framework 2021, on which an initial briefing note (Paper **T/17/49**) has been produced. Key points to note are:

1. There will be a single UoA for Engineering with the option of multiple submissions; and
2. the weighting of research impact has been increased to 25% and the output assessment decreased to 60%.

The Council of the School agreed that it was essential to get the decision in relation to point 1 right for the benefit of the University as a whole. Therefore, it was agreed that Heads of Department and the Chairs of the “UoAs” should contact the central REF team to understand the consequences of the different scenarios.

In addition, the School has been informed that we would be allocated funds for two posts at grade 8 for the administrative support for REF 2021. The release of the allocation would be over 3 years, at 25% (in 2018), 50% (in 2019) and 100% (in 2020) of 2 FTE. The Needs Committee has agreed to recommend the funding gap between the central allocation and the School’s administrative requirement (option D in Paper **T/17/50**) should be funded out of the School’s Strategic Reserve.

The Council of the School approved the use of the School Strategic Reserve for this purpose.

#### **4.3 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Cyber Security**

The IT Strategy Committee has produced a report (Paper **T/17/51**) to the Council of the School on the implications of the University's GDPR policies and the expected cyber security standards for the Departments.

It was noted that, since the responsibilities for GDPR rest with the Heads of Department, Dr Thompson agreed to write to the Heads of Department asking them who in their departments should take a lead on advising a governance structure for their departments. The departmental leads should each produce a departmental governance structure for approval by the Heads of Department, which, in turn, should be overseen by the IT Strategy Committee, on behalf of the Council of the School.

#### **5. Other Business**

##### **5.1 \*\*\*End of year accounts 2016-17**

The Council of the School noted the 2016-17 Year-end accounts as detailed in paper **T/17/52**, dated October 2017.

##### **5.2 \*\*\*HR Briefing**

The Council of the School noted the HR briefing, Paper **T/17/53**, produced by the HR Business Manager.

##### **5.3 Risk Assessment**

The Council of the School agreed to add REF and cyber security to the School's risk register, if they are not on already.

#### **6. \*\*\*Minutes of other committees**

The following minutes were noted:

Needs Committee	10 October 2017	<b>T/17/54</b>
Graduate School Committee	02 June 2017	<b>T/17/55</b>
HR Committee	23 May 2017	<b>T/17/56</b>
Research Committee	12 May 2017	<b>T/17/57</b>

#### **7. Any other business**

Under any other business, the Head of School tabled a paper, Paper **T/17/54**, on a proposal to establish a linked lectureship between the Department of Engineering and Murray Edwards College. This need has arisen because of the wish of the College to make some longer term commitment to the fixed-term post (to be funded by a donation) but the Department of Engineering is currently unable to underwrite the potential funding gap after the initial 7 years. The Council of the School agreed that, to unlock the funding problem, it would underwrite the lectureship for one tenure in the first instance, subject to the condition that the first call for the funding will be on the current and future estate of the donor. Nearer to the end of the initial 7 year period, the School will work with the Department to determine how the post will be supported on an on-going basis. The final proposal will be subject to approval by the Council of the School in due course.

## **8. Dates of Future Meetings 2017-18**

2.00 p.m. in **Room W4.05** (please note room change), Judge Business School:  
Friday, 24 November 2017

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:  
Friday, 02 February 2018

2.00 p.m. in Board Room (West Cambridge site), Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology:  
Friday, 09 March 2018

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:  
Friday, 11 May 2018

2.00 p.m. in FW11, Computer Laboratory:  
Friday, 15 June 2018