

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 5 February 2021

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

Present:	Professor John Dennis (Chair) Professor Richard Prager Professor Clemens Kaminski Professor Ann Copestake Professor Christoph Loch Dame Polly Courtice
	Dr Stella Pachidi
	Professor Alastair Beresford Professor Garth Wells
	Professor Holger Babinsky Professor Andrew Flewitt Professor Michael Sutcliffe Professor Simon Guest Professor Simon Godsill Professor Richard Penty Dr Patrick Barrie
	Mr Caredig Ap Tomos (Undergraduate member)
	Dr Shui Lam (Secretary) Mr Matt Burgess (School Finance Manager) Dr Ann Thompson (Research Strategy Facilitator)
In Attendance:	Ms Tracy Brooks, Dr Daphne Ioannidis
Apologies:	Professor Tim Minshall, Professor Alexander Routh

Mr Caredig Ap Tomos was welcomed to the Council of the School.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2020 were approved.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising other than those minuted here.

Chair's report

The Chair provided a verbal report:

- **Size and Shape:** there is an agreement between the Colleges and the University to have an uplift of 300 additional students to be spread evenly across the Schools, giving approximately 50 per School. However, some Colleges had general concerns as to how the quality of students would be maintained.
- **1 Regent Street:** the renovation building work has started and is on schedule despite the COVID pandemic and Brexit.
- **Judge Business School:** a strong candidate has been recruited to be the new Director of Business School.
- **UK Fusion Activity:** after several years of slow progress, there is new growth in Fusion via an EU-led demonstrator reactor project and increased UK Government funding for fusion via AEA. A recent meeting took place between AEA Cullen, Professors Wells, Neely, Prager and Dennis to discuss the University's contributions to the project, particularly in engineering. The subject of the potential UK Brunel Challenge was discussed and association with AEA is potentially important if Cambridge wants to be part of this initiative.
- **West Cambridge Sharing Project:** the next step in this project to promote and improve sharing of major research facilities and equipment, and to ensure appropriate technician and apprentice development across departments on the West Cambridge site, is to submit a business case for resource needs.
- **REF:** UoA12 has nearly completed its environment statement, and the impact case studies. The output selections have needed re-evaluation owing to an issue with the assessment algorithm used.

The Deputy Head of School provided a verbal report further to that in Paper **T/21/1**

- Three applications to the School Seed Fund were received, and funding decisions will be made at the School Research Committee meeting next week.
- Three SRI bids with significant School involvement were submitted to RPC last week.
- Bids from the School for the formation of Leverhulme Centres in similar research areas to the SRI applications were also submitted to the University.
- **RPC report:**
 - It looks likely that the UK will continue to be able to participate in the next rounds of EU Horizon Funding as an associate member (as per Japan and Norway).
 - Research Integrity training may become compulsory for research students and researchers in the biomedical sciences, and mandatory for those in other subjects.
 - In response to the changes in Export Control measures required post-Brexit, the University has obtained a block licence to simplify export of research materials to the EU.

The Director of Education provided a verbal report further to that in Paper T/21/1.

- Changes in COVID measures are affecting student residency and the need for online teaching and examinations. It is unclear what level of restrictions will be in place next term.
- While research students are less affected by Covid restrictions than those on taught courses, key UKRI student related deadlines have been extended.
- As it is highly unlikely any in-person exams will be possible, online proctoring and modes of assessment are being planned which staff and students need to be made of aware of once these are decided. Concerns were raised that standard online methods of meeting colleagues and students were not part of the plans, and it was not clear why.
- A draft of the proposed exam format and online proctoring will be circulated early next week, and any feedback on these should be sent promptly to the Director of Education for inclusion in any response from the School.

2. Starred Items

The Council of the School approved the starred items.

3. Strategic Business

3.1. DORA Implementation Guidance

The Council of the School considered the consultation on the implementation of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and some draft implementation guidance, detailed in Paper **T/21/2**. The School was asked to consider the draft guidance and provide the Implementation Group with comments and feedback to the Research Strategy Office by the end of Lent Term 2021.

It was reported that the measures within the guidelines were aimed at solving issues that originated from the evaluation of academics in the biological sciences based on journal impact factor. The Council of the School was of the opinion that this is not generally as much of an issue in the Technology subjects due to the higher diversity of leading journals. The proposed measures of not taking into account the quality of journals where outputs have been published particularly clashes with the standard practices of evaluating business school candidates, where there is a recognised standard of A grade journals internationally.

It was reported that promotion panels in the School already consider candidates in a “rounded” way, taking into account narrative comments from the referees and a variety of data, the structure of which helps to address any unconscious bias. Some of the proposed measures such as expecting review panels to make judgements on outputs outside of their areas of expertise, narrative CVs and DOI based publication lists could risk introducing less impartiality, more unconscious bias of candidate’s outputs and lead to less transparency.

The University is a signatory to DORA so the principles within this must be adhered to although it is likely that proposed University guidelines will not have to be implemented uniformly across all of the Schools, as long as it is clear that Schools take a range of quality measures of candidates and their outputs into account. However, it is important to be aware of potential appeals from unsuccessful candidates if the School’s evaluation processes can be interpreted to be not completely following the University’s guidance.

The Head of School agreed to circulate a draft of the feedback before replying formally to the consultation on behalf of the School.

3.2. A framework for planning: 2021-22

The Council of the School considered Paper **T/21/3**, which is a draft framework for the 2021-22 planning exercise. All Schools and NSIs have been asked to produce their plans for the next year based on the draft framework.

In summary, it was proposed that the 2021-22 budget would be based on the following:

- actual expenditure in 2020-21 and relevant inflationary assumptions (paragraph 2.b.i)
- planned changes in 2021-22 and 2022-23 (paragraph 2.b.ii): initiatives required for the size and shape discussion, “Category 2” initiatives (savings and income generating activities), and
- any urgent or significant changes (paragraph 3.c).

For size and shape: because of the timescale, the University is particularly interested in new and existing courses which may generate additional income (paragraph 5.a). The Strategy and Planning Committee agreed that the Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology Tripos (see item 4.1) should be included. If any Department has any further significant requests to be included in the 2021-22 proposed budget, these need to be submitted to the Secretary of the School next week to meet the central deadline of the end of February 2021.

3.3. Industry Co-ordinator/facilitator

At the meeting, it was reported that the School of Technology accounts for up to ~ 40% of University’s industrial income for research. At previous meetings of the Strategy and Planning Committee and the Council of the School, as well as the last School Away Day, the need to establish wider and deeper links with industry was discussed with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations), Professor Neely. Subsequently, the Head of School has had more detailed discussions with Professor Neely and agreed that a starting point would be the recruitment of a new role of an industry co-ordinator/facilitator at the School level to take forward some of the key actions to make strategic links and engage PIs and Industry to develop projects. The Council of the School considered Paper **T/21/4** which sketches out the key responsibilities of the role.

Although it was expressed that research facilitation and management roles could prove useful there was uncertainty expressed as to how a such role would operate at School level, as these roles normally would need to have strong departmental contacts and knowledge. Questions were raised if a more appropriate resource would be at a lower grade which could network and liaise with individual staff with strong industrial engagements. Some Departments also raised the point that they already had more potential industry projects than they could accommodate.

The Head of School agreed to review the role and liaise with Departments further.

4. Regular Business

4.1. The CEB Tripos

At the meeting, it was reported that the CEB Department was proposing to replace the current three-year Chemical Engineering Tripos, that was last updated 20 years ago, with a four-year course with a single entry route (Paper **T/21/5**), directly into the Tripos from October 2023. The new and existing courses would operate in parallel until the final year of the last cohort of the existing course. It was proposed that admissions would be handled separately to both

Natural Sciences and Engineering. The undergraduate cohort was expected to stay around 50 per year.

The additional resources required to deliver the revised Tripos (known as the CEB Tripos) were detailed in section 2.6 and 2.7 (pages 14-16) of the new course approval form. Extra resource would be needed in particular to deliver both the new and existing courses at the same time. The School Undergraduate Committee considered the proposal on 25 January 2021 and made various recommendations (Paper **T/21/10**). The CEB Syndicate considered the revised paperwork, Paper **T/21/5**, on 4 February 2021.

It was noted that the new CEB Tripos would help to modernise the discipline away from a fossil fuel focus and take into account the incorporation of biotechnology in the symbiosis. One potential drawback would be a new barrier to students on the Engineering Tripos and the Natural Sciences Tripos who might decide to transfer to the CEB Tripos at the end of the first year. Currently, the transfer could be easily achieved but would, in future, require a more formal application to the CEB Syndicate, but would still be possible to do.

It was anticipated that the proposed Tripos changes would have minimal impact on Colleges. The planned increase in total undergraduate student numbers have been included in the School's planning submission in 2020.

Therefore, for its part, the Council of the School approved the proposal, having taken into account the following:

1. fit with the strategic interests of the School,
2. alignment with the School's undergraduate student aspiration, and
3. the realistic delivery of the proposal given the additional resources required.

It was agreed that the Head of School and Head of Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology would meet to discuss the resource requested to ensure it could fully cover the scope of the proposal.

4.2. Surplus Investment Fund (SIF)

At the meeting, it was reported that the School was not currently preparing any formal SIF bids, because SIF envisages repayment of up-front investment plus interest to the University, over a tight timescale. Instead the School (and departments) would prefer to invest its own reserves in strategic activities, which could then be recovered internally over longer timescales. Such an approach would require up-front income share agreements with the University, to allow investments to be made on the basis of predictable income streams. School Officers met with officers from the Finance Division in November 2020, to discuss income share for specific taught Masters courses, with encouraging results.

Following the broad steer received, the School has been working with HoDs and Course Directors to generate draft bids for income share relating to two specific MPhil opportunities. These have been prepared on a similar but more streamlined basis, to formal SIF bids. The bids have been discussed at the Strategy and Planning Committee and Paper **T/21/6** is the revised bid relating to the Energy Technology MPhil (Engineering) and paper **T/21/7** is that relating to the emerging AI initiative, which encompasses two existing courses: Advanced Computer Science (CST) and Machine Learning & Machine Intelligence (Engineering).

As proposed in the paper, It was agreed that the Energy Technology MPhil would have a 40% return to the Department, and 60% to University, with the AI initiative courses proposing a 60% return to the Department, and 40% to University.

It was reported that these applications were likely to be submitted to the next Planning and Resources Committee on the 22nd March 2021. The Council of the School was concerned that

delays to an income share agreement may result in both MPhils missing out on planned student increase, and thus increased student fee income to the University, for the October 2021 cohort. The Head of the Department of Computer Science and Technology commented that it might be necessary to reduce the numbers for the Advanced Computer Science MPhil from the current level because it has seen growth over the past few years with no additional recurrent resource.

It was agreed that the Head of School would discuss with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy & Planning) regarding the need and timescales required to approve these courses.

4.3. Strategic Partnership Office: Public International Partnerships (PIPs) team

After a hiatus during the first phase of the COVID response when key staff were assigned to immediate priorities, the Public International Partnerships team in the Strategic Partnership Office was now focusing on the next steps in the development of the University's International Strategy and on how the team could best add value to academics' and researchers' international research activity. A high-level briefing paper **T/21/8** was attached for discussion, but due to the lack of time, the item was not discussed at the meeting.

5. Other Business

5.1. Health and Safety Matters

No matters relevant to Health and Safety were raised.

5.2. Risk Assessment

No decisions were made that would require updating of the Risk Register.

6. *Minutes of Other Committees**

Strategy and Planning Committee	26 January 2021	T/21/9
Undergraduate Committee	25 January 2021	T/21/10
Research Committee	2 November 2020	T/21/11
HR Committee	9 December 2020	T/21/12

7. Any Other Business

7.1. Academic Staff Categories and Titles – proposed Academic (teaching and scholarship)

The Council of the School considered Paper **T/21/13**, a consultation paper on the proposed academic titles for teaching-focused staff. In the paper, two options are available for consideration:

- Option 1: All academic roles at Grade 9 and above would be established. All academic roles below Grade 9 would be unestablished; and
- Option 2: Different titles to be created for academic unestablished posts to differentiate them from the equivalent established roles in Grades 9-12. Academic staff below Grade 9 would be unestablished.

The Council of the School was of the view that it was essential for teaching posts to remain as flexible as possible because of the rapid pace of change in the disciplines of the School. It was noted that it was possible for such posts to be unestablished but permanent to provide job security.

Regarding the titles, the Council of the School was of the view that Professor was not generally appropriate for teaching-focused posts, particularly for posts at Lecturer level, and nomenclature for these roles needed to be improved.

8. Dates of Future Meetings 2021

2.00 p.m. meeting online via Zoom:
Friday, 12 March 2021

2.00 p.m. meeting online via Zoom:
Friday, 14 May 2021

2.00 p.m. meeting online via Zoom:
Friday, 18 June 2021

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