

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 18 June 2021

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

Present: Professor John Dennis (Chair)
Professor Richard Prager
Professor Clemens Kaminski
Professor Ann Copestake
Professor Christoph Loch
Ms Clare Shine

Dr Stella Pachidi
Professor Alastair Beresford
Professor Garth Wells

Professor Holger Babinsky
Professor Andrew Flewitt
Professor Michael Sutcliffe
Professor Simon Guest
Professor Tim Minshall
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, Ms Daphne Ioannidis

Apologies: Professor Alexander Routh

The Chair welcomed Ms Claire Shine as the new Director of CISL.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2021 were approved. The notes of the cancelled meeting scheduled to be held on 14 May 2021 were noted. (Paper **T/21/33**).

Matters Arising

1.1 Academic Career Pathways

The Council of the School had previously approved Papers **T/21/23** and **T/21/24** by circulation. However, it has been necessary to update the indicators of excellence for academic promotions (see page 4 of Paper **T/21/23** and page 7 of Paper **T/21/24**) to provide clarification, as follows:

“Narrative on expectations, including balance of contribution across criteria:

The School of Technology expects that applicants should normally provide evidence under criteria one to three below. University Teaching Officers are expected to deliver consistently well-organised and clear teaching and research supervision. Teaching should be effective, innovative and provide a sound basis for further learning. It is also recognised that individuals can contribute in this area through other routes such as supporting and nurturing PhD students and other researchers.”

These changes were approved at the meeting.

Chairman’s Report

The Chair provided a verbal report:

CBELA Report on Green Credentials of Industry Partners

- An external consultancy has delivered their report on the green credentials of key University industry partners to help establish whether these partnerships should continue. Leading academics, including the Heads of School of Technology and Physical Sciences and the Director of Cambridge Zero, have commented on the report findings and on how continued partnering of fossil fuel/extractive companies could support their transition away from fossil fuels, to provide further information for CBELA.

West Cambridge Sharing Project

- This joint project between the Schools of Technology and Physical Sciences to promote improved sharing of facilities, equipment and staff across the West Cambridge site, has been awarded funding to recruit a project team to progress the agreed activities, including those made to date by the four academic-led taskforces. Next steps would include Heads of Departments at West Cambridge addressing issues that prevent barriers to sharing such as buildings access, Health and Safety and training requirements.

Agile Working

- Following the recent debates within the University regarding Agile Working, the School is keen to develop practical ways of working in this way. Established pragmatic ways of working could then feed into the central guidance on Agile Working that is in development.

Reports from the Deputy Head of School and the Director of Education were attached in Paper **T/21/34**.

The Deputy Head of School provided the additional verbal update:

- Following initial assessment by RPC four SRI applications have been selected for interview at next week's RPC meeting: two with substantial School of Technology involvement: Precision Healthcare and Quantum.

The Director of Education provided the additional verbal update:

- Guidance on ways of working are being regularly updated, with the ability to have input or provide feedback to these variable. The revised Framework on the use of education materials should provide appropriate flexibility.
- Departments with undergraduate students need to provide students with statements regarding their courses under Consumer Protection Legislation prior to acceptance for a course.
- The EPSRC is due to confirm the application process for the next round of DTP awards. Departments are asked to contact the Director of Education for support in representing central issues related to applications.

2. **Starred Items**

The Council of the School agreed to approve the starred items.

3. **Strategic Business**

3.1 **UEF allocations 2021-22**

Paper **T/21/35** contains the draft Allocations Report 2021-22. It is subject to approval by Grace in the Regent House.

Paper **T/21/36** has been prepared, showing the latest understanding of the high-level budget position for 2021-22, emerging from recent discussions at PRC. In-year budgets are likely to remain close to current levels, leading to small recurrent savings requirements. However, due to a continued structural deficit at University level, it is proposed to fund in-year awards this year via School non-recurrent savings targets calculated based on (3% of) spendable reserves held by each department. Paper **T/21/36** sets out the implication of this proposal for each department in the School of Technology, if savings targets are set at this level. Precise details are still to be finalised and all numbers presented in supporting papers are subject to approval by the Council and Graced by the Regent House.

It was reported that the Head of School and School Finance Manager have liaised extensively on this matter, including with the University's Finance Director, specifically regarding what amounts to a proposed "levy" on Departmental and School reserves. They have provided the University with feedback that any "levy" on reserves would be likely viewed negatively and risk encouraging imprudent use of these funds which are a vital source of bridging funds for PIs.

While it is now apparently accepted that calculating savings targets based on reserve levels sends unhelpful messages and undermines incentives to generate and protect local income streams, it is thought to be too late in this year's budget process to adjust the School's savings target. Further clarification has been requested from the University as to:

- A better definition of what is a spendable reserve? This includes many types of reserves but excludes trust funds and specific donations
- How spendable reserve should be used and how best to access funds which are widely distributed in PI accounts?

It was reported that Heads of School indicated at RMC their strong preference for an upfront communication of future medium-term allocations, to reduce the structural deficit, instead of a complex expenditure-based solution accompanied by emergency measures to close the budget gap.

The Council of the School had a keen discussion on the proposed mitigation of the University deficit, and how to absorb these costs across the School:

- A way of balancing the University budget should be established that is fair and sustainable and which doesn't disadvantage those departments making the biggest financial contributions, or result in regular claims against locally held funds.
- Concern was expressed that the University could be taking an overly corporate view of reserves as capital that is unemployed, when the University invests all its available working capital in the CUEF, meaning reserves provide a return at some level. It was noted that Schools are not able to invest some short-term sources (e.g. overheads and trading accounts) in the University's internal investment scheme; if the School holds significant reserves in such sources, the University will generate external income from investing this spare cash but the School will not participate in this income.
- Schools and Departments will need to consider how to make more strategic use of aggregate funds held, including investment in income generating opportunities. The Council of the School has previously discussed the possibility of running modest and controlled Chest overdrafts, using spendable reserves in non-Chest sources as collateral, as a way of accessing widely distributed funds.

For 2021-22 budget purposes, it will be for Departments to determine how best to meet respective shares of this year's non-recurrent savings targets; it remains to be finally determined how best to apportion the School's likely savings target of £2m across Departments in the School.

It was agreed that the School should formalise a methodology for sharing the non-recurrent savings target across Departments and communicate baseline budget levels for 2021-22, once final allocations are confirmed.

3.2 School of Technology Strategic Initiatives

Paper **T/21/37** sets out the strategic initiatives submitted by the School in February 2021 to this year's planning round. In view of the University's structural Chest deficit it is likely that there will be no new funding for the posts identified but the Strategy and Planning Committee has agreed that since the initiatives are of strategic importance, the School should deploy some of its reserves to pursue those opportunities. It was confirmed that the School has a total of £6m in reserve, the majority of which must be held to cover the cost of Chest funded posts, so that £1m can be made available to make investments to support future revenue.

Paper **T/21/38** provides a financial summary of the requests which have been updated to reflect the latest developments. The School will need to identify the priority core needs to fund, including plans to ensure the School is in a good position for the launch of the Enhanced Financial Transparency Project, which have been discussed at the Strategy and Planning Committee. Further support for the reorganisation of CEB, additional new posts to provide HR support, and the AI Roll Out coordinator are being considered, as well as a School Industry coordinator. CUED have provided resource to fund extra HR support, which they would like taken into account in any future resource allocations.

It was agreed that the School would circulate a ranked list of funding priorities to the Strategy and Planning Committee for approval.

3.3 Academic Career Pathways (ACP): probation

School-level indicators of excellence for the Academic Career Pathways Scheme (Research and Teaching), due to be introduced 01 Oct 2021, have been approved by the Council of School previously.

In parallel with this work, the HR Business Manager, in consultation with the School, drafted a proposed protocol, Paper **T/21/39**, for considering academic probation within the School of Technology aligned with the Report dated 24 June 2020 (<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2019-20/weekly/6586/>). A copy of the probation protocol was shared with the HR Committee at the December 2020 meeting and with the Council of the School in March 2021. Full details of the management of academic probation will be set out in the new Probationary Procedure for Academic Staff (details of which can be found at the above link).

The documentation has been updated in response to feedback and ongoing developments concerning this initiative to align School policy with the University policy, while reflecting local probation processes. It would be expected that any mandatory training would be managed and implemented at a Departmental

level, and include any courses needed as part of local inductions, or those required for involvement in decisions relevant to staff development, such as Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Unconscious Bias.

The proposed protocol was approved.

3.4 ACP: Faculty and School Committees' membership

As set out in Annex A of the Report of the General Board on arrangements for senior academic promotions, the membership of the Faculty Committees for the Academic Career Pathways (ACP) no longer requires General Board approval. Instead it has been agreed that membership should be recommended by the respective Faculty Boards to the Council of the School for approval.

The membership of the respective Faculty Committees should comprise:

- a minimum of five members and normally not more than nine members, who will be normally be at professorial level and will be chosen to cover the range of disciplines covered by the committee; and
- a professorial member of staff in an appropriate subject area who is independent of the institutions covered by that committee.

The Council of the School approved Paper **T/21/40** setting out the recommendation for membership of the Business and Management Faculty Committee and Paper **T/21/41** the School level Committee membership.

3.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Paper **T/21/42** was considered at the May 2021 meeting of the School's HR Committee. The document aims to provide an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) initiatives that have been progressed across the School of Technology to date, as well as identify any emerging ED&I priorities to be progressed (and incorporated in to the School's HR work plan, as appropriate). Having been considered by the School's HR Committee, it was agreed that Paper **T/21/42** should be reviewed by the Council of the School for comment and approval.

It was noted that EDI champions would help implement and progress initiatives, although no obvious champions have been identified to date. Previous ED&I initiatives have focussed on the student population, so a staff-focussed initiative is welcome, and ideally will link with student focussed initiatives. University ED&I considerations should also broaden thinking as to inclusiveness as well as engagement of external partners. Ideally the University will be leading on initiatives rather than being reactive.

Once approved, it is proposed that this paper be published on the School of Technology ED&I webpage, together with an overview of the agreed School-level ED&I actions including detail on: ownership, progress and target completion dates. The paper was approved.

It was agreed that the School would review its role in supporting ED&I initiatives and who could help support the identification of School ED&I Champions.

4. Regular Business

4.1 Risk Register

The University is adopting an increasingly formal process for risk assessment. The new format for each risk item is to have a delegated academic lead, a delegated administrative lead/s and a committee to oversee the risk assessment. In addition, the risk register is expected to be updated twice a year.

The Council of the School is responsible for the overall School Risk Register, which is submitted to the central University as part of the annual Planning Round. In addition, there is a standing agenda item on risk assessment on decisions made at every meeting of the Council of the School.

The key risks in the Risk Register are overseen by School-level committees: Strategy and Planning Committee, Research Committee, Postgraduate Education Committee etc. It was agreed that all School Committees should review the risks that they own once a year, and delegate the half-year review to their Chairs and their Secretaries.

The practice of the Council of the School approving the School Risk Register annually as part of the Planning Round and the second revision of the risk register being delegated to the Head of School and the Secretary of the School was approved.

Paper **T/21/43** containing the individual risk item overseen by the Council of the School was approved.

5. Straightforward Business

5.1 HR Briefing

Paper **T/21/44**, which contains the regular briefing note from the HR Business Manager, was noted.

The previously notified re-introduction of in-person right to work checks have been delayed due to ongoing COVID related restrictions

5.2 *Minutes of Other Committees**

Strategy and Planning Committee	08 June 2021	T/21/45
HR Committee	21 January 2021	T/21/46
Postgraduate Education Committee	18 May 2021	T/21/47
Research Committee	28 May 2021	T/21/48

The minutes of other School committees were noted.

5.3 Health and Safety Matters

There were no Health and Safety matters to raise.

5.4 Risk Assessment

No decisions requiring any update to the risk registers were made at the meeting.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Dates of Future Meetings 2021-22

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering (proposed venue):
Friday, 22 October 2021

2.00 p.m. in Room W2.01, Judge Business School (proposed venue):
Friday, 26 November 2021

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering (proposed venue):
Friday, 04 February 2022

2.00 p.m. in Large Meeting Room (West Cambridge site), Department of
Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (proposed venue):
Friday, 11 March 2022

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering (proposed venue):
Friday, 13 May 2022

2.00 p.m. in FW11, Computer Laboratory (proposed venue):
Friday, 17 June 2022