

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 12 March 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 Alexander Routh
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

Dr Shui Lam (Secretary)
Mr Matt Burgess (School Finance Manager)
Dr Ann Thompson (Research Strategy Facilitator)

In Attendance: Ms Tracy Brooks, Ms Daphne Ioannidis, Ms Isobel Cohen

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 05 February 2021 were approved.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than those minuted here.

Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal report.

The REF returns from the three Units of Assessment within the School (UoA11, UoA12 and UoA17) have been signed off. The Chair thanked the REF leads and all involved, particularly the professional support from staff in the Centre, the School and Departments. The UoA12 return for this round had a higher proportion of 4 star outputs than that submitted in 2014.

A press release recently went out regarding the launch of the refurbishment project at 1 Regent Street, CISL's landmark office retrofit project, which is the first of its kind in the UK and will inform professional bodies as to sustainable/low carbon office refit best practice.

The School was invited to submit its initial plans and strategic funding requests for the current Planning Round.

The School has been invited, along with Physical Sciences, to a consultation regarding the shape of the University's relationship with BP and Shell as to ways of working and the areas in which academics would like to work with these companies. The consultation is due in the Easter Term.

The Chair announced the new Director of the Judge Business School as Professor Mauro Guillen from 1 September 2021, currently at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

The reports from the Deputy Head of School and the Director of Education were attached in Paper **T/21/14**.

The Deputy Head of School provided further verbal updates:

- RPC met yesterday to determine the SRI applications that will be invited to submit full applications to be considered. All 3 SRI applications with significant School involvement are through to the next round.
- The Isaac Newton Trust have agreed to provide a further year's funding for the Joint Early Career Support scheme, shared between the Schools of Physical Sciences and Technology, with departments matching the funding of INT awards to early career lecturers. The majority of applications for this scheme have been from SPS, so more applicants from the SoT would be welcomed.

The Director of Education provided further verbal updates

- COVID restrictions will potentially impact on teaching into the 2021-22 academic year.
- Postgraduate courses will need to be available with an option to complete on a part-time basis, as part of the move towards widening access to education. Current courses that the Degree Committee deem not able to be offered on a part-time basis may face new requirements to have a part-time option following UKRI funding mandating part-time courses being offered.
- Although the University of Oxford is waiving its application fees for overseas students, the University has chosen to retain theirs in order to pay assessment costs, although these may deter overseas students from applying.
- Following external review of teaching quality at the University, supervisor training has been identified as weak so delivery methods of appropriate training is under consideration.

2. Starred Items

The Council of the School approved the starred items.

3. Strategic Business

3.1. Enhanced Financial Transparency

Professor David Cardwell attended the meeting to discuss the Enhanced Financial Transparency (EFT) project and played a 20 minute presentation given by Ms Joanna Walmsley, Head of Financial Planning and Budgeting. The presentation outlined the aims, purpose, scope and timelines of the project.

EFT is a major part of the University's Financial Transformation Project which aims to make the University's methods, systems and culture regarding financial management work better. EFT aims to replace the current idiosyncratic processes, that do not sufficiently enable academic impact, with simple accounting mechanisms which clearly show financial performance to enable local financial decisions supporting academic priorities.

EFT will include a roll-out of simple, transparent and pragmatic budgeting and financial intelligence tools and systems for finance, administrative and academic staff. The prototype new system will shadow the existing financial systems as of late 2021, with a second phase system roll-out for Chest income flow in 2022. The full system for all incomes and at all levels should be in place in 2025.

Council members were invited to submit questions as part of a recorded session of the meeting, to be sent to Joanna Walmsley to address. The key points of the discussion are as follows:

Would the transparency would put some loss-making Departments in jeopardy? Professor Cardwell responded that EFT will mean that course revenue will increasingly be fed back to the generating Department (50% was mentioned at the meeting), but a yet-to-be-determined level of cross-charging will remain to support Departments that make a financial loss. EFT is not a project to help identify financially underperforming departments and penalise these, as the mission of the University is academic excellence; however current cross-charging does not incentivise Departments that make a surplus to increase revenue. The new planning and budgeting tools will enable Departments who make a surplus to plan and budget better to support better investment decisions. Some Departments of the School, such as the JBS and CISL, already have full transparency regarding their course revenue and informed early stage planning for EFT.

How would the crossflow be determined? Professor Cardwell responded that the RMC would consider the roll out of the model and monitor financial performance against plan. Professor Cardwell also reported that to ensure the "taxation" is set at a fair level a neutral group of University staff and external experts and senior academics has been proposed to support decision making on cross-charging.

Professor Cardwell was thanked and left the meeting. Professor Kaminski also left the meeting at this point.

[Post-meeting note:

With the University slipping in international ranking, there is some concern over the level of investment in the academic parts of the University. The School raised the following issues with Professor Cardwell prior to the meeting. While he did not completely address all the questions at the meeting, he has supplied the answers to the questions in writing, **in red**:

- The School of Technology has always been a net contributor to the University's finances, recording significant RAM surpluses annually. The School would therefore expect to benefit from any move towards an allocation model which devolves funds more directly to the places where they are generated (recognising that cross-funding of other disciplines will continue to be an important factor but also that greater investment in surplus generating schools will in-turn generate more income for cross-funding other disciplines). But in view of the University's large recurrent Chest deficit, is there a risk that any surpluses the School might hope to access under the new model, will be fully used in cross-funding existing activities elsewhere in the University?

I think I largely answered this at Friday's meeting. Of course, the bottom line is that the structural deficit affects the entire University and no part of it will be exempt in addressing its reduction. That means the School of Technology will have to play its role in supporting the short-term financial recovery, but this will be proportional and will be in parallel with the roll-out of effective incentivisation schemes that will potentially raise income across the School. There has to be a balance in preserving income and the provision of cross-flows.

- What bodies exist centrally to take genuinely objective views in determining appropriate levels of investment / cross-funding of different schools and disciplines under the new model, and set out medium-term strategies for redeploying resources accordingly? (RMC and PRC both have strong representation from Heads of School who will be conflicted.)

Again, I think I addressed this to some extent at Friday's meeting. This is a complicated question and there are no easy and immediate solutions. However, it's clear at this stage that we will need to involve a broad range of stakeholders including schools, non-school institutions and the UAS. Given the potential conflicts of interest, as you point-out, my view is that it will also be necessary to involve externals on any oversight body that has responsibility for determining incentivisation algorithms and cross flows. It's highly unlikely we'll get this right first time and that will need to work towards an optimum allocation algorithm based on costs and the ability to generate income over two or three years (but don't hold me to that!). As you know, RMC now has a much greater role to play in the budget setting oversight and monitoring process and I envisage it will take a regulatory role in the new distribution process.

- A similar question applies to the size of the central operational budgets. How will these budgets be determined going forward in the new model?

We have to treat all parts of the University equally based on business critical considerations, effective use of resources and actual costs. Central operational budgets are no exception and we will need to develop and agree effective and consistent ways of allocating budgets and monitoring financial performance. Again, I appreciate that this is a complex process and that there are many questions we will need to answer and address in due course.

- When will capital projects start again?

This will be determined ultimately by the ability of our non-operational estate (essentially CUP and CA) to re-generate income that will feed the investment fund. In addition, there are a number of urgent infrastructure projects that will require funding over the next five years, which will limit the amount of investment we can allocate to new buildings. Of course, capital projects that are funded entirely from external sources have never been paused and these will clearly continue. But PRC will continue to expect rigorous and reliable financial assessment of all new capital projects and will continue to prioritise where this expenditure should be (we currently only have five prioritised capital projects that require university investment). My view, therefore, is that it is unlikely that there will be any new capital projects that are not externally funded for at least the next two years.]

4. Regular Business

4.1. Academic Career Pathways

In line with the Annex to the Report of the General Board dated 15 May 2019 on arrangements for the implementation of the Academic Careers Pathways scheme

(<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2018-19/weekly/6547/section4.shtml#heading2-20>,

School-level indicators of excellence for promotion were first shared with the Council of the School at the meeting on 29 November 2019 and re-considered at the meeting on 12 June 2020. Following the latter meeting, the HR Business Manager was asked to make changes in response to feedback provided by the Council of the School relating to: the quality rather than the quantity of research outputs, an upward trajectory of research as well as omitting any reference to REF or explicitly requiring knowledge of Research Integrity or Research Ethics. In parallel with this ongoing work, the HR Business Manager, in consultation with the School, drafted School-level indicators of excellence for academic (Research and Teaching) probation aligned with the Report dated 24 June 2020 (<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2019-20/weekly/6586/> together with a proposed protocol for considering academic (Research and Teaching) probation, for anticipated use in Michaelmas 2021.

Paper **T/21/15** was updated as requested by the Council of the School, however reference to a rising research trajectory and REF could not be omitted from the documentation since it is included in the Annex to the Report of the General Board dated 15 May 2019 on arrangements for the implementation of the Academic Careers Pathways scheme. It was noted that mention of Research Integrity as a School-level specific indicator of excellence could however be removed as it is not referenced under the criterion in the abovementioned Annex.

It was noted that Institutions use a broad range of factors on which to base promotions, and that the indicators of excellence (for promotion) are suggestive in nature and non-exhaustive; not all the indicators will be relevant to all applicants / individuals.

The Council of the School were reminded that there is provision for Institutions to have a few local indicators of excellence specific to their discipline under the Academic Career Pathways scheme, if necessary. It was noted that one Institution had provided the School's HR Business Manager with some local indicators of excellence. Institutions were reminded that should they wish to have any local indicators of excellence they must align with the guidance, principles and criteria set out in the Report agreed by the General Board and be approved by the Council of the School by no later than June 2021.

School-level indicators of excellence for academic (Research and Teaching) probation together with a proposed protocol aligned with the Report dated 24 June 2020, was also considered. It was explained that the revised protocol is expected to come into effect from 1 October 2021. A copy of Paper **T/21/16** was shared with Heads of Institutions at the December 2020 meeting of the School's HR Committee.

In reviewing the proposed School's probation protocol for managing academic (Research and Teaching) probation, it was noted that reference to the composition of the Selection Committee should take into account what is reasonable in the context of gender proportions in academic and professional disciplines. This should however be in line with both the Reports on Selection Committees and on Academic Career Pathways.¹ It was noted that whilst there is need to improve the gender balance of panels and committees, there is also a need to protect the time of senior female academics. It was also agreed that reference to mentoring should be repositioned such that it features earlier on in the document. Further, that clarification be made on who should Chair the respective Selection Committees.

Concerns were raised with regard to the fact that the indicators of excellence for academic (Research and Teaching) probation and promotion, together with the probation protocol, did not reflect the proposed changes to Academic titles (Research and Teaching), as per the recommendations set out in paragraph 13 of the Joint Report of the Council and the General Board (dated 18 March 2020), on the titles and structure of academic offices (Reporter, 6582, 2019-20 p. 419). It was noted that these recommendations were approved following the ballot held before Christmas 2020, however the indicators of excellence and probation protocol could not yet be updated since the proposed changes to Academic titles (Research and Teaching) were still subject to approval by Her Majesty in Council. In the event the proposals are agreed, the new academic title structure will come into effect with effect from 1 October 2021 and the School's HR Business Manager will update the documentation accordingly.

Concerns were also raised more generally about the proposed changes on the titles and structure of academic offices, specifically that they downgrade the

¹ Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on arrangements for academic recruitment (published 21 February 2018)
<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2017-18/weekly/6496/section5.shtml#heading2-10>
Report of the General Board on arrangements for the implementation of the Academic Career Pathways scheme (published 15 May 2019)
<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2018-19/weekly/6547/section4.shtml#heading2-20>

current Professorial title. It was noted that the School of Technology had responded to the consultation on the proposed titles in December 2019, and in doing so did provide this specific feedback.

It was agreed that the School's HR Business Manager would update the School of Technology Protocol for managing Academic (Research and Teaching) probation, taking into account the feedback provided by the Council of the School. The protocol will be resubmitted for approval at the May 2021 meeting.

In addition, The School's HR Manager would update the academic titles in these documents once the new structure for academic titles has been approved by Her Majesty in Council.

5. Straightforward Business

5.1. * Part-time Masters Fees**

The School is now the approval body for the setting of MSt fees, (in place of ICE). Paper **T/21/17** proposes MSt fees for 2022-23. The recommendations in the paper from the Departments were approved.

5.2. * Membership of the Strategy and Planning Committee**

At the meeting of the Needs Committee on 24 April 2014, the minute for item 4.1 is as follows:

"At the meeting, the Chairman reported on a request for Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) representation on the Needs Committee.

The Needs Committee considered this request and agreed that the Director of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership will be a member of the Needs Committee of the School for the tenure of the current holder of the post. This will be reconsidered in the light of experience when a new person takes on the Directorship of the Institute. In view of the fact that not all the business of the Needs Committee is relevant to the Institute, the Committee agreed to grant dispensation to the Director for non-attendance of meetings: that she retain membership even if she does not attend three successive meetings."

The benefit of having all the Heads of Departments on the Strategy and Planning Committee is clear. Therefore, the Committee agreed that the membership of the Committee be changed permanently to include the Director of CISL, in line with other Heads of Department. However, the dispensation for non-attendance shall be receded since this does not apply to the other Heads of Department.

5.3. HR Briefing

An HR Briefing paper, prepared by the HR Business Manager (Paper **T/21/18**) was noted.

In response to a query, it was reported that considerations were being prepared for staff returning to the workplace "post-COVID". It was noted that while it was expected that some staff would wish to work partly from home, approval for such requests would

have to depend on the way of working, the expectations from students and colleagues, and the ability to work effectively and efficiently from home. The difficulties of having blended meetings were also noted as well as the potential need for duplicate equipment to enable hybrid working.

5.4. Proposed Dates for Meetings in 2021-22

Proposed dates for the 2021-22 Council of the School meetings, as detailed in Paper T/21/19, were approved.

5.5. Health and Safety Matters

No Health and Safety matters were raised.

5.6. Risk Assessment

There were no decisions made at this meeting that required updates to the Risk Register.

6. *Minutes of Other Committees**

Strategy and Planning Committee	2 March 2021	T/21/20
IT Strategy Committee	18 February 2021	T/21/21

7. Any Other Business

This being her last meeting, the Chair thanked Dame Polly for her contributions to the School and the University, noting her profound input to CISL and the School, and holding the University to account. Dame Polly commented that the decision for CISL to join the School in 2008 was the best decision ever taken by CISL, a School that is innovative and entrepreneurial that is representative with the culture of CISL. She also thanked former Heads of School and School staff for their past support.

8. Dates of Future Meetings 2020-21

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

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