School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 17 June 2022

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

Present:	Professor John Dennis (Chair)
	Professor Ann Copestake
	Professor Richard Prager
	Professor Mauro Guillen
	Professor Alexei Lapkin
	Professor Tim Jones
	Professor Stelios Kavadias
	Professor Andrew Flewitt
	Professor Michael Sutcliffe
	Professor Tim Minshall
	Professor Simon Godsill
	Professor Holger Babinsky
	Professor Simon Guest
	Professor Richard Penty
	Dr Patrick Barrie
	Mr Arslan Sheikh (postgraduate student representative)
	Dr Shui Lam (Secretary)
	Mr Matt Burgess (School Finance Manager)
	Ms Becky Ramshaw (Assistant Secretary)
In Attendance:	Professor Ian Leslie and Mr Barney Brown for items 3.1 and 3.2; Dr Daphne Ioannidis, Ms Tracy Brooks, Ms Victoria Thompson throughout
Apologies:	Professor Clemens Kaminski, Ms Clare Shine, Professor Rodolphe Sepulchre

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.   Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2022 were approved.

Matters Arising

Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal report. Victoria Thompson was thanked for her work in fundraising for the new Whittle Laboratory and congratulated on her new appointment as CUDAR's Senior Associate Director for the School of Technology.

A high proportion of applicants for promotion via the Academic Career Pathways (ACP) had been successful. The Chair thanked those who presided over Faculty Board ACP panels for their time and commitment, and Tracy Brooks and the HR team for their support. The School's recommendations on how transfers out of the Teaching and Scholarship pathway of the ACP should work had been largely accepted. Once this has final approval, the details will need to be publicised.

Following the recent REF results, the next stage is for members of UoA12 to have a de-brief, to explore what can be done about GPA differences compared to other institutions. Decisions also need to be made on how to move forward with UoA12, given it comprises three Departments across two Schools and indicated that it would have a joined-up strategy. There will also be a School meeting for all of its UoAs, to discuss lessons learned.

The reports from the Deputy Head of School and the Director of Education are as attached in Paper **T/22/25** and were verbally summarised**.**

2.   **Starred Items**

The starred items were approved.

3.   **Strategic Business**

3.1   **Vision for IT support in the University**

Professor Ian Leslie attended the meeting of the Council to discuss the University's IT vision and plans for defragmentation of IT provision. Paper **T/22/26** describes the case for defragmentation of the digital estate.

Professor Leslie noted that there is general acceptance of the justifications for defragmentation, but the challenge is in how to achieve it. There will be a need for substantial investment, significant transfer of resources and development of a new support model. Pilot work has started in some departments.

The proposed next stage is a Discovery Phase, working with ten departments across the University. This would be governed by a Steering and Assessment Group. Proposals will also be developed for a service model. The intention is to generate a detailedplan, addressing long term resource allocation, in June 2023.

UIS want to co-create the new service with departments, rather than imposing their own ideas, and there will be opportunities for department to get involved as the programme develops. The initial focus will be on defragmenting the network. Schools will be asked to nominate members for the Steering and Assessment Group.

UIS, in line with the rest of the IT industry, needs staff with more specialist skills than in the past. It is not anticipated that more staff will be needed overall, but there is a perceived need to diversify existing skill sets and centralise management. There will still be a need for front-line staff, and the current suggestion is that this might be managed under a similar model to the University Libraries, where front-line IT staff are distributed across departments (as now) but sit under the UIS umbrella.

3.2   Digital Presence Programme Update

Mr Barney Brown attended the meeting of the Council of the School to provide an update on the University's Digital Presence Programme. The 5-year programme ending in 2024 will change how we build websites and intranets, measurably improving their quality and introducing better support. Staff across the University and Colleges will also have access to more training and career development support to make them more able to maintain and improve existing websites and intranets. Before that time there will be additional pressures on anybody trying to build new websites, and the Programme team want to make sure everybody is aware of what support is available, and the rationale behind the work being carried out.

The Programme team are aiming to deliver a new service in 2024, supporting two products: intranet in a box (on SharePoint) and website in a box (on Drupal). These products will essentially be templates that will allow a standardised digital presence across the University, improving the experience of both end users and those responsible for design and maintenance, and reducing costs and security risks. The intranet is being prioritised, as there are greater risks associated and also staff frustration at having access to existing tools without any accompanying guidance.

Professor Leslie and Mr Brown were thanked for their contributions and left the meeting.

3.3   Provisional Chest Budgets 2022-23 and Use of Strategic Allocation

Financial plans were submitted in December 2021, forecasting costs for 2022-23 against an indicative Chest allocation of £34.6m for the School. The School requested that the baseline be increased by £600k to £35.2m, to remove the disproportionate impact of the reserves-based adjustment to its allocation for 2021-22. Following meetings between School Officers and Professor David Cardwell and members of the Finance Division, the School's case for removal of the impact of the reserves-based adjustment has been agreed but actual allocations were not based on indicative allocations (uplifted or otherwise.) Instead prior year allocation baselines (adjusted to remove the impact of the 2021-22 reserves based adjustment), were firstinflated at 4% and then were subject to a 5% hold-back by the University. Under the agreed approach, the University will underwrite 100% of the inflated allocation but only release 95% of it to Schools and non-Schools initially. In recent years there has been a marked underspend against full allocations, arising predominantly from the impact of the pandemic (recruitment freezes, home working reducing the use of consumables and deferred equipment replacement). By applying a hold-back but underwriting 100% of the cost, the University seeks to avoid accumulation of unused funds in local Chest reserves.

Applying 4% inflation, the School's provisional baseline budget has been set at £37.0m with a 5% hold-back reducing the initially available budget for 2022-23 to £35.1m. While the full £37.0m will be underwritten by the University, expenditure will be reviewed by the Planning Office throughout the year, with a view to ensuring as far as possible that costs charged align with plan and in particular to avoid large transfers of spend against Chest budgets at the year-end to 'use-up' underwritten amounts. While the precise details of in-year reviews are not yet known, the School Finance Manager will work with finance staff in departments to manage these aspects as far as possible.

The overall 2022-23 budget is yet to be formally approved, so awarded sums remain provisional. Subject to final sign-off of budget awards, Paper **T/22/27** sets out the implications for the School in terms of savings targets and supplementary Chest budgets, while Appendix 1 (Paper **T/22/28**) provides detailed budget analyses for each department. It is recommended that departments continue to assume steady-state pay and non-pay budgets for 2022-23, despite the hold-back.

Paper **T/22/27** also proposes apportionment of the School's strategic Chest allocation (£500k) for 2022-23, in proportion to each department's share of Chest budgets and suggest that requests for use by departments be submitted in time for consideration by Strategy & Planning during the Michaelmas term in 2022, to ensure costs are incurred in the 2022-23 financial year.

The proposed budgets and use of £500k strategic allocation were approved, subject to approval by the University Council of final budget awards.

3.4   Full Business Case: Whittle Laboratory Extension

At the meeting, it was reported that the Department of Engineering was seeking an investment from the University Capital Fund for the new Whittle Laboratory. The project has secured £25.75M in funding from external sources and is seeking underwriting from the Investment Fund of £24.57M (of which £5M has already been committed). The Department has committed £0.75M to meet the costs of IT/AV, loose furniture/equipment and moving costs.
The business case from the Move West Project Board is in Paper **T/22/29**.

Professor Prager noted his thanks to those who had been involved in the proposals and the fundraising, both within and outside of the Department of Engineering. He will provide some notes for the Chair in advance of PRC.

The business case was approved.

4. **Regular Business**

4.1 **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.

Paper **T/22/30** sets out the recommendation for membership of the Faculty of Computer Science and Technology.

The membership of the Faculty of Computer Science and Technology ACP Committee was approved.

In accordance with Annex A of the Report of the General Board on arrangements for senior academic promotions, Paper **T/22/31** sets out the recommendation for the Chair and External Member of the School-level ACP Committee. If approved by the Council of the School, the recommendation will then go to the General Board for approval. Full membership of the School-level ACP Committee will be shared with the Council of the School for approval as soon as details are available.

The Chair and External Member of the School-level ACP Committee were approved.

Further memberships of the Faculty Board ACPs and the School-level ACP Committee will need to be approved by circulation over the summer.

5.   Straightforward Business

5.1   ***Minutes of Other Committees

Strategy and Planning Committee	07 June 2022	**T/22/32**
IT Strategy Committee	18 May 2022	**T/22/33**
Undergraduate Education Committee	23 May 2022	**T/22/34**
HR Committee	25 January 2022	**T/22/35**
Postgraduate Education Committee	17 May 2022	**T/22/36**

5.2   Health and Safety Matters

No Health and Safety matters were raised.

5.3   Risk Assessment

The Council of the School is routinely required to consider the risk assessment of any major decisions taken at the meeting.

If the Whittle Lab extension is approved by the Regent House, the Infrastructure entry on the School's Risk Register will need to be updated.

6.   Any Other Business

There was no further unreserved business.

7.   Dates of Future Meetings 2022-23

2.00 p.m. Friday, 21 October 2022
2.00 p.m. Friday, 25 November 2022
2.00 p.m. Friday, 03 February 2023
2.00 p.m. Friday, 10 March 2023
2.00 p.m. Friday, 12 May 2023
2.00 p.m. Friday, 16 June 2023