

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 22 October 2021

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

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

Professor Rodolphe Sepulchre
Professor Alastair Beresford
Professor Alexei Lapkin

Professor Holger Babinsky
Professor Andrew Flewitt
Professor Michael Sutcliffe
Professor Simon Guest
Professor Simon Godsill
Professor Tim Minshall
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: Professor Ian Leslie and Ms Emily Mason attended for item 3.1. Ms Tracy Brooks, Dr Daphne Ioannidis throughout

Apologies: Professor Richard Penty, Dr Stella Pachidi

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2021 were approved.

1.1. Membership of the Council of the School

The current membership of the Council of the School was noted. The Chair welcomed Professor Mauro Guillen, Professor Rodolphe Sepulchre and Professor Alexei Lapkin to the Council.

Matters Arising

The School HR Business Manager provided an update as to item 3.5, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan:

- building on EDI initiatives progressed by the School of Clinical Medicine EDI team, the School HR team will be circulating information regarding EDI relevant networks and well-being events for those across the School, including a race awareness session scheduled for the end of Michaelmas term.
- HR will also provide EDI briefings, including advice as to EDI related updates regarding recruitment. The School is also seeking two EDI Champions as well as members of the EDI forum.

It would be appreciated if information about these events and initiatives is circulated as widely in the Departments as possible.

The HR Business Manager agreed to share details when they are available.

Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal report:

- The progressive decline in the University's percentage share of the EPSRC research funding portfolio, on which IAA and DTP funding is based, leading to 50% reduction in funding in IAA, was discussed. Although other sources of research funds (such as EU) are important in the University portfolio, the EPSRC remains the School's major funder.
- The Chair has liaised with the Head of the School of Physical Sciences regarding how EPSRC funding awarded could be increased. Concerns exist that EPSRC funding is attributed to the lead PI institution, and that academics find it easier to be a Co-I on larger grants than lead them, because there are no clear incentives to taking on the management burden of a large bid. University representation on EPSRC committees and other management bodies is not currently sufficient to give enough advance warning of upcoming funding opportunities.
- A shared role across both Schools could provide high-level liaison with the EPSRC regarding advance warning of funding opportunities, and coordination of mentoring regarding development of applications.

- However, there were views expressed that overall UTO capacity to apply for and manage projects was a bottleneck and therefore, tackling that should also be considered as part of a package of appropriate measures.

Other updates included that:

- The School's proposed provisions in response to the DORA recruitment process guidelines regarding evaluations of academics have been accepted, including the publication requirements that are standard for international business schools.
- The West Cambridge Sharing Project, which is part of the Recovery Programme, is in the process of recruiting the Sharing Project team, with Dr Anthea Messent, currently National Strategic Facilities Manager for the Cavendish Laboratory, taking the role of Project Manager.
- As the financial constraints arising from Covid lockdowns were not as severe as anticipated, the University is likely to move £150m into the Investment Fund, which would potentially provide financial support for progression of the Whittle Laboratory construction project.
- The School Research Committee has approved the Ethics Code for Research and the Terms of Reference for the proposed Joint Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Schools of Technology and of the Physical Sciences. Once approved by the Council of the School of Physical Sciences, these will be submitted to University REC for their approval prior to the Joint REC being established.
- The review of the JBS will be submitted to the General Board for discussion in November 2021.
- There are members of the School on the search committee for the next Vice-Chancellor.

The report from the Deputy Head of School responsible for Research was noted as Paper **T/21/50**. The Director of Education invited the Council to contact him directly regarding specific Education updates.

2. Starred Items

The Committee approved the starred items.

3. Strategic Business

3.1. Sustainable Business Travel policy

A progress report on the consultation for a University Sustainable Business Travel policy was introduced by Professor Ian Leslie and Ms Emily Mason who have been instrumental in its planning and consultation across the collegiate University.

There are strong perceptions that the University should reduce emissions relating to business travel, although the proposed mechanisms for requiring

permissions for flights from Heads of Department was met with some negative feedback. Easy to access, clear information as to the carbon intensity of travel options will be required to support informed travel choices.

It was anticipated that the scope of emissions covered by this Policy would be limited to travel by University staff and students. This scope might need to expand to those travelling to the University e.g. for research purposes and conferences. It was considered important that the Colleges also cooperate with this policy for it to be sufficiently effective in reducing emissions.

Measures to offset travel related emissions would be introduced in line with funders measures for inclusion of these in their award terms and conditions. Nudging would help target reductions towards reducing conference travel rather than student field trips, which could be viewed as essential travel. It was recognised that ECRs must be facilitated to build their career and networks, and alternatives to conference travel would be publicised.

Further granularity in reporting on business travel emissions would follow further consultations; it was expected that identifying emissions by department would contribute to solving problems. The Council of the School was invited to submit any further questions directly to Professor Leslie or Ms Mason.

Both Professor Leslie and Ms Mason were thanked for their contributions and left the meeting.

3.2 Review of IT governance and support

The School commissioned a review of exiting mechanisms for IT governance and support in the School, led by Professor Garth Wells and supported by Mr James Matheson. The report, Paper **T/21/52**, details the findings.

The findings and proposals were generally supported, so that the School would retain an oversight of IT issues, with any departmental GDPR or cybersecurity mitigation measures remaining in line with those of the University. It was thought that the existing structure, of ITSC, which has a largely strategic remit and academic membership, and of ITAC, which has a largely advisory role and senior IT staff membership, function well. Potential sharing of IT resources across the Departments should be considered to ensure that appropriate expertise is available when required.

The proposed IT Seed Fund might usefully provide a focus for the ITSC, if modelled on the School Research Seed Fund: it would need to provide a useful, agile, quickly deployed source of funds to support projects across departments.

Better coordination with the School of Physical Sciences was thought beneficial, particularly in communication with, and getting strategic IT needs onto, the agenda of the ISC and UIS. It would also help with minimising the time and effort required to engage with the ISC materials in order to influence or progress any decisions or directions. There were concerns that, due to the federated structure

of committees with their individual portfolio of responsibilities, the University cannot progress quickly enough to keep up with the pace of technological change, and so is falling behind compared to international peer institutions.

The Head of School agreed to raise the issues of concern with the relevant parts of the University.

3.3. Planning Round 2021

The Council of the School noted the guidance (Paper **T/21/1**) for the planning round 2021 that was made available recently.

It was reported that the central University will provide guidance on the School's position on its Chest contributions to establish its position for the 2022-23 financial year. The School still needs to receive its indicative contributions based on its past financial requirements. The utilisation of School and Departmental reserves to reduce the central University's Chest deficit in the pandemic crisis is not expected to be repeated. The School's planning submission will be discussed at the next meeting of the Council of the School.

4. Regular Business

4.1. Chest and Other Spendable Reserves

The School has been set a £2.175m non-recurrent savings target in the current budget year (2021-22), as part of the measures adopted to help the University reduce its Chest deficit this year. The Strategy and Planning Committee agreed to share this non-recurrent savings requirement between departments based on respective spendable reserve levels, by circulation over the summer. It is expected that departments will utilise local reserve balances to cover respective shares in the 2021-22 financial year.

The School Office realised a significant unplanned Chest surplus in 2020-21 primarily as a result of ongoing changes to the way the University built budgets alongside general uncertainty arising from Covid-19 at the time that 2020-21 budgets were set. The Council noted that in view of the University's focus on spendable reserves held by Schools and departments, the Strategy and Planning Committee agreed that the 2020-21 Chest surplus be offset against this year's non-recurrent savings target of £2.175m (noted above), with reductions shared by departments in proportion to the split of the original £2.175m sum (leading to a net figure of £1.375m for apportionment across departments in 2021-22).

4.2. CISL Annual Report

The Director of CISL provided a verbal summary of key priorities arising from the annual report of CISL:

CISL has had a recent fast rate of growth with strong demand in the area, which will be addressed to ensure focus as well as quality of delivery, while avoiding providing a greenwash to companies that risks enabling their continued poor practices.

The landmark 1 Regent Street Entopia retrofit project was due for completion early 2022.

4.3. *HR Briefing**

The HR Business Manager's HR briefing paper was noted.

4.4. Health and Safety Matters

There were no Health and Safety matters to raise.

4.5. Risk Assessment

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

5. *Minutes of Other Committees**

The minutes of other School committees were noted.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Dates of Future Meetings 2021-22

2.00 p.m. Friday, 26 November 2021

2.00 p.m. Friday, 04 February 2022

2.00 p.m. Friday, 11 March 2022

2.00 p.m. Friday, 13 May 2022

2.00 p.m. Friday, 17 June 2022

