

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 11 March 2022

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

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

Professor Rodolphe Sepulchre
Professor Alexei Lapkin
Professor Tim Jones

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)
Dr Ann Thompson (Research Strategy Facilitator)

In Attendance: Dr Daphne Ioannidis, Ms Tracy Brooks

Apologies: Professor Stelios Kavadias

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made for the unreserved items.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2022 were approved.

1.1. Membership of the Council of the School

At the meeting, it was noted that there was a vacancy in the class f membership (for a postgraduate student representative) because of a lack of candidates standing for the two elections held in the Michaelmas Term. Arslan Basit Sheikh, a Faculty Board student representative, has kindly stepped forward to be co-opted by the Council of the School.

Therefore, it was agreed to co-opt Mr Arslan Sheikh as proposed. Paper **T/22/8** gives the most up-to-date membership of the Council of the School. Mr Arslan Sheikh was welcomed to his first meeting of the Council of the School.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising other than those minuted below.

Chair's report

The Chair provided a verbal report:

The West Cambridge Sharing project progress included:

- The recruitment for the 3 roles of the Project Team is nearly complete.
- The Project Board has approved a workable plan to harmonise access across the West Cambridge Departments, a licensing strategy for the use of the Statocore PPMS system and the trial of an Enterprise Resource platform to manage the commercial side of mechanical workshop services.
- Four pilots to progress sharing and access have been identified: Professor Owen's Bioelectronics Laboratory, Dr Strank's X-ray facility, the electronics workshop in Electrical Engineering and the lithographic facility in Materials Science.

The West Cambridge Shared Facilities Hub building is now complete and has been handed over to the University. There are issues surrounding the governance of the building and concerns over the catering provisions on the site; the Chair will be meeting Professor Neely on the former and Professor Copestake would elaborate on the latter under Any Other Business.

There are concerns in the University regarding the potential shortfall in postgraduate admissions for the October 2022 intake, because the University has agreed to underwrite the Colleges' costs for planned growth to accommodate the University's aspirations. It was noted that PhD courses are limited by availability of studentships, with more flexibility with Masters courses. The School has made fewer offers than last year, but as there is still time to make offers, members of the Council of the School were asked to bring this concern to the attention of those who can influence postgraduate offers.

The Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology building's atrium roof space has been completed, which highlighted issues as to difficulties in responsibilities for signing off, from a safety standpoint, certain repairs and maintenance within the University estate.

The Deputy Head of School provided the following verbal update:

- The School Research Committee met on 4th March 2022, with key items including a presentation from the Office for Scholarly Communication regarding the changes to the UKRI Open Access Policy. There are new requirements that short-form publications arising from UKRI funded work submitted after 01 April 2022 must be open access without embargo when published and include a data access statement. Advice was provided regarding publication in non-OA or transitioning journals regarding provision of a copyright retention declaration to enable open access publication of content, which is being trialled by some U.S. universities.
- The School will hold a masterclass on "Managing risks in international engagement" on the 30th March 2022. The Head of Governance and the new SPO Head of International Engagement will lead sessions regarding identifying risks, and where to find support from the University regarding international collaborations. As academics will carry increased personal risks regarding work with international partners, attendance is encouraged.
- The Deputy Head of School has been asked to serve as a member of the Transforming Research Support Programme Board, overseeing the replacement of University research grant management system by Worktribe, providing inputs from an academic perspective.

The Director of Education provided the following verbal update:

- The University and Colleges have agreed to review the provisions for part-time students, to examine the inconsistencies that currently exist between courses regarding governance, treatment, residency requirements, and level of College support.
- Part-time courses contribute to the widening participation agenda of the University, and provide flexibility for those with caring responsibilities, as well as generate revenue, so that it is important to understand the concerns being expressed at College level regarding increasing numbers of part-time students, and the perception of lower level of quality.
- The centre is currently looking for members to serve on the part-time provision review committee and its working groups. As the School has particular expertise in providing world-leading part-time courses it would be useful for academics involved in these to join the relevant part-time review groups. Colleges who also are notable for their excellent provision for those on part-time courses should also be encouraged to participate in these review bodies.

2. Starred Items

The Committee approved the starred items.

3. Strategic Business

3.1. Research Strategy, research support and international partnerships

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith attended the meeting to provide updates on the following topics.

Development of a research strategy:

The central University aims to facilitate and connect the departmental research programmes, providing a meeting of top-down and bottom-up strategies. Top-down strategies include widening inclusion and improving partnerships, particularly with those in disadvantaged areas. The central research office is aware that there is a strong need for interaction with funding bodies to be re-invigorated, and there are plans to improve coordination regarding this.

Large Grants:

The PVC (Research) acknowledged that the School is innovating as to improving the ability to apply for large grants that the University could usefully take up.

The University is supporting applications for big grants via two funds;

- The Large Grant Contributions Fund, which aims to provide financial contributions to large collaborative grant proposals
- The Bid Preparation Fund, which provides small grants or up to £10k to enable preparation of large collaborative bids, by covering a range of costs that may be incurred.

Anyone who may potentially benefit from either of these funds should contact the Research Strategy Office regarding eligible costs or any potential use of funds.

International partnerships:

The University has developed the “Towards an International Strategy” to extend our impact and contribute to global public good and globally leading research and ensuring we have a globally leading voice and can recruit the best students.

The University developed 5 key principles to address the main risks identified regarding staff, students, academic freedom in an environment of increasing geopolitical concerns, compliance and press scrutiny. Trusted Research advice will be provided via an information hub to help staff identify and mitigate risks, including the due diligence and compliance regarding international collaborations.

AI in the University:

AI@Cam supports the University’s aspirations to be a global leader in AI research and education, and an innovation and advice hub. It was noted that the University is well placed to provide an overarching view, including on the trust issues regarding AI. A CISL/CCI data hub is at planning stage, that will feed into this agenda.

Prof Lawrence and Jess Montgomery from CST have led an inclusive engagement across the academic community.

Similarly to bioinformatics, AI is of increasing importance across a range of research disciplines, and there is a strong need to educate researchers in the use

of AI tools, with PhD students and post-docs providing the expertise within many research groups. In addition, key knowledge is required as to the limits and the wider ethical implications of use of AI.

AI Masters programmes are planned, with better sharing of materials, or modules where appropriate, with other courses.

ARIA

The Chief Executive of this £800m cross-sector funding agency has been announced to be a previous Deputy Director of DARPA. This is an excellent opportunity for supporting higher risk projects, and as they align with the UK levelling up agenda, the University would need to better align the harnessing of its academic excellence to contribute to locations where this could benefit.

Concerns were raised on the potential short-termism of the funding driven by political agenda, the selection and quality of programme managers in charge of shaping funding agendas. Questions still remain as to IP ownership and the potential erosion of trust because ARIA is exempt from FOI requests.

The Council of the School thanked Professor Ferguson-Smith for her contributions and she left the meeting. The Secretary agreed to circulate Professor Ferguson-Smith's presentation pack.

3.2. Staff morale

Having worked through two years of the COVID pandemic with additional load following repeated changes in teaching and assessment styles, the recent news of the USS pension benefit reduction and an unsatisfactory wage settlement in the face of increasing cost of living, are all contributing to poor staff morale. The Council of the School discussed what actions the School or the University could take to mitigate the impact on staff.

It was commented that the market pay increases for new recruits were not helpful in boosting existing staff pay and morale, and had risks of exacerbating gender pay gaps if men disproportionately applied for these. The University would have more flexibility over pay offers if it departed from the national pay scales, or could have a similar weighting system to London, to account for the higher than national average cost of living in Cambridge.

As well as these changes, the University's recent increase in new initiatives, including those arising from the pandemic, on top of an already high workload for many across the University is leading to a level of exhaustion and mental health issues. Support is required particularly after a crisis to help transition back to normal. Professor Minshall highlighted the work the IfM is doing with the Cambridge Hospital Trusts regarding initiatives to support staff morale. The Head of School and Professor Minshall agreed to talk offline regarding the IfM/CHTs initiatives, and how these could be shared across the School and University.

4. Regular Business

4.1. El-Erian Fund: transfer to the School of Technology

At the meeting, it was reported that the El-Erian Fund was an endowment fund to support research into human behaviour and policy. It was proposed by the Council of the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences, to reassign the El-Erian Professorship of Behavioural Economics and Policy, currently in the Department of Politics and International Studies, to the Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS) in the School of Technology. The El-Erian Fund for Economics and Policy, which supports the Professorship, would also be transferred to the Cambridge Judge Business School. The Fund also supports the El-Erian Institute of Human Behaviour and Economic Policy, a Fellowship at Queens' College and studentships.

The draft Notice by the General Board, proposing the change with the consequential amendments to Ordinances, and the second deed of variation, detailing the revisions to be made, had been previously approved by the Council of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty Board of Business and Management for their parts. At the meeting, the Council of the School of Technology considered and approved the proposal as stated in draft Notice and deed of variation.

5. Straightforward Business

5.1. Proposed Dates for Meetings in 2022-23

The proposed dates for the Council of the School meetings in 2022-23 were approved.

5.2. Health and Safety Matters

No Health and Safety matters were raised.

5.3. Risk Assessment

No decisions made at this meeting required any update to the Risk Register.

6. *Minutes of Other Committees**

Postgraduate Education Committee	10 February 2022	T/22/13
Research Committee	18 October 2021	T/22/14

7. Any Other Business

Under Any Other Business, catering provision at West Cambridge was raised. It was reported that the West Cambridge Shared Facilities Hub (SFH) building has been

completed and handed over the University. This was intended to provide student learning space, a shared library and a catering facility at West Cambridge. However, issues around the catering provision were yet to be resolved, and the Hub could open on the 26 April 2022 with no catering, possibly with catering from 16 May 2022, although the catering provision could not be guaranteed even at the later date.

At the meeting, strong concerns were expressed that the proposed governance and decision-making structure might be overly complex and prevent sufficient responsiveness to local customer needs. The Council of the School was of the opinion that the SFH should be open as soon as feasible, due to its importance in making the West Cambridge site a good location to work and study. If there are any issues with the University's catering provision, then temporary coffee carts and food vans could be used, potentially from local businesses, to provide vital catering services.

The Head of School agreed to discuss the issues with Professor Neely, the PVC for Business and Enterprise, with an aim to make the hub work well for its customers.

8. Dates of Future Meetings 2021-22

2.00 p.m. Friday, 13 May 2022

2.00 p.m. Friday, 17 June 2022