

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 12 June 2020

Meeting online via Zoom

UNRESERVED MINUTES

Present: Professor John Dennis (Chair)
Professor Lisa Hall
Professor Ann Copestake
Professor Christoph Loch
Dame Polly Courtice

Professor Robin Langley
Professor Alexander Routh

Professor Holger Babinsky
Professor Andrew Flewitt
Professor Simon Guest
Professor Tim Minshall
Professor Simon Godsill
Professor Richard Penty
Dr Patrick Barrie

Professor Garth Wells (School observer)

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

In Attendance: Professor Kaminski, Ms Tracy Brooks, Ms Isobel Cohen

Apologies: Professor Richard Prager, Professor Alastair Beresford

Professor Kaminski attended this meeting as an observer as the incoming Head of CEB next term.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2020 were approved.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than those minuted here.

Chairman's Report

The Chair provided a verbal report.

- The Chair has submitted the list of School of Technology buildings to be reopened, including buildings in CUED, and the main buildings for CEB and CST, and the Sainsbury's Centre in JBS, to the Buildings Taskforce. He will provide updates to the Departments as to which buildings can open once he has confirmation.
- The University Finance Committee has considered the draft budget report which had an original Chest deficit of £17m, rising to £47m if more requests for resources were included. The University is required to plan to save £20m over the next year. Measures would include:
 - pay restraints: pausing future Professorial Pay Review and Senior Academic Promotions and most of Contribution Increment exercises temporarily;
 - temporary recruitment pause: scrutinising Chest funded posts to ensure only mission critical posts are filled;
 - Savings to be made in procurement, review of the use of space, as well as in the professional services functions that could be further shared across the University, Schools or departments.
 - Suggestions as to eating into Departmental Reserves were pushed back on by the Schools' Representatives.

There were concerns from the Council of the School that the University should avoid overly negative messages, and that it would benefit from focussing on opportunities arising increasing revenue. The Council of the School discussed how the School could set an example to show how we could benefit from opportunities, and avoid shrinkage, even aim to grow. It was agreed that a small group consisting of Professor Minshall, Professor Flewitt, Professor Loch and Dame Polly should meet to discuss opportunities for the School in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Deputy Head of School provided a verbal report:

- The School response to the recent ARPA UK consultation was submitted and all who contributed were thanked. An ARPA fund represents a potentially significant source of funds for the Departments of the School if these are extra to the UKRI/IUK funding currently available.
- The Research Committee met the previous day and considered the 6 applications to the School Seed Fund, with 4 projects considered worthy of funding pending some checks.

The Director of Education provided a verbal report:

- The Undergraduate and Graduate School Committees are now considering how to deliver the teaching next year. Decisions are required as to whether existing teaching material will be delivered remotely, if tailored online content should be created or a mix of the two.

- Several issues exist regarding Graduate students returning physically to Cambridge next year that include:
 - Social distancing affecting return to laboratories.
 - Colleges struggling to accommodate existing and new students
 - How residential courses for JBS and CISL part-time courses will be run
- PRC are considering the University's requirements to run remote teaching, and issued a survey for individual academics to respond to that has caused controversy as it is considered that the consultation should have been at an appropriate level, which should have been with Departments and Teaching Committees.

2. **Starred Items**

The Committee approved the starred items.

3. **Strategic Business**

3.1 **COVID-19: Academic Vision**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Strategy), Professor Cardwell, asked the Schools to update their School's academic vision in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Paper **T/20/29** has been produced by the Head of School for discussion regarding the School of Technology's vision statement. The Strategy and Planning Committee has considered the paper and commented.

The paper identified the top priorities for the School, and how these have been affected by COVID-19. Ideas that the Chair will reflect in the updated Vision arising included:

- SPS, Clinical Medicine and the School of Technology should work more closely together
- The University is unlikely to put much money to fill large funding gaps in capital projects. Other opportunities need to be found as priorities.
- Consideration should be given to efficient and shared use of facilities and buildings, with areas of overlap or duplication identified, as is occurring on the West Cambridge site. Large lectures may be less in demand with the drive to deliver teaching online.
- If the University wants to remain one of the world leading Universities then we need to review how we collaborate across Departments in teaching and research, or risk becoming non-competitive. COVID has pushed us into a faster adjustment of delivery of teaching, and better coordination of this will improve delivery.
- The University is well placed to get proposals straight in front of cabinet ministers and others in decision making positions, and should capitalise on this. The decarbonisation of aviation proposal that was delivered to the Minister for Transport is an example of how the University can punch above its weight when it pulls together to deliver demonstration projects. It was agreed that the School needs to identify a problem that the departments' expertise can solve, and respond quickly.

- Although the CISL-Whittle collaboration is an example of success many siloes reducing beneficial collaborations still exist. Identifying how the necessary cultural change be embedded to promote cross-departmental collaborations would be valuable.

3.2 UEF Allocations and Savings

The University's draft Budget Report (Paper **T/20/30**) was approved by Planning and Resource Committee on 20th May 2020. Paper **T/20/31** has been prepared by the Finance Manager based on the draft Budget Report, showing provisional detailed departmental UEF allocations for the Departments for 2020-21.

However, subsequent discussions at the Finance Committee and other bodies now required some significant changes to the draft Report. The School Finance Manager provided the following update:

As the revised draft budget report will propose the same budget as 2019-20. The School Finance Manager will meet with each Department over the summer as normal.

Improving cost recovery on grant applications such as through University or School guidelines on including pooled labour or part time directly incurred posts to fund support staff, as is being considered by the School Research Committee, will be part of this. SPS currently recovers around £1m a year from applying pooled labour to grants where this is an eligible cost, and although there is no formal policy on this Departments provide their own guidelines.

The Council of the School took the view that if there was no directive from senior leadership on this, or no clear benefit to the research or PIs applying support staff costs to their grant in being able to access support staff, then there would be no incentive for academics to include support staff costs on grants. Overheads are already placed on research grants, particularly on industrial funded research, but it is difficult for academic staff to understand what these fund. A mechanism linking support staff funding applied for, and access to support staff, as well as a cultural change within the School where individual PIs are encouraged to include support staff costs in grants, is required with clearly aligned incentives for any policy to work.

It was suggested that the School officers develop a paper on the use of, as well as improving cost recovery on grant funded research.

4. Regular business

4.1 Academic Career Pathway: Indicators of Excellence

At the meeting of the Council of the School in the Easter Term 2019, it was reported that a revised SAP would be launched in Michaelmas term 2020, with the condition that Departments and Faculties adopted and published guidance

setting out the expectations required for passing probation and promotion. After consultation with Departments, the HR Committee and the Council of the School, Paper **T/20/32** was prepared by the HR Business Manager for approval.

The revised paper was reviewed by the Council of the School and the HR Business Manager agreed to make the changes requested relating to the quality rather than the quantity of research outputs, an upward trajectory of research as well as omit any reference to REF or explicitly requiring knowledge of Research Integrity or Research Ethics. It was agreed that the Chair and Deputy Head of School can approve these changes on behalf of the Council of the School.

4.2 Membership of the Council of the School

The Council of the School has a practice of co-opting the Heads of Division in Engineering and so it was agreed to co-opt the new Head of Division C, Professor Michael Sutcliffe to the Council of the School with effect from October 2020 to the end of the tenure of Professor Robin Langley.

It was noted that Professor Kaminski would become an *ex-officio* member of the Council of the School from October 2020, replacing Professor Hall.

5. *Minutes of Other Committees**

Strategy and Planning Committee	02 June 2020	T/20/33
IT Strategy Committee	14 May 2020	T/20/34
Graduate School Committee	26 May 2020	T/20/35
Undergraduate Education Committee	28 May 2020	T/20/36

6. Straightforward Business

6.1 **Undergraduate Admissions Numbers**

The Council of the School noted Paper **T/20/37**, an informal annual report, prepared by the Director of Research. As discussed in previous meetings, based on demand by students the Departments of the School have the ability and the capacity required to expand its student numbers and should be pushing for expansion.

7. Health and Safety Matters

Although the Council of the School discussed measures relevant to the COVID situation, such as reopening buildings, no decisions relevant to Health and Safety matters were made.

8. Risk Assessment

Although the Council of the School discussed measures relevant to the COVID situation, such as reopening buildings no decisions were made that would require updating of the Risk Register.

9. Any Other Business

Professor Hall and Professor Langley were thanked for their contributions to the Council of the School.

10. Dates of Future Meetings 2020-21

It was noted that depending on the situation it would be likely that the next Council Meeting would be virtual.

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:
Friday, 23 October 2020

2.00 p.m. in Large Meeting Room (West Cambridge site), Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology:
Friday, 27 November 2020

2.00 p.m. room tbc, in Department of Engineering (West Cambridge site):
Friday, 5 February 2021

2.00 p.m. in Room W2.01, Judge Business School:
Friday, 12 March 2021

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:
Friday, 14 May 2021

2.00 p.m. in FW11, Computer Laboratory:
Friday, 18 June 2021