

School of Technology

Council of the School

2.00 p.m. on Friday, 06 March 2015

**Board Room, Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology,
Pembroke Street**

UNRESERVED MINUTES

Present: Professor Richard Prager (Chairman)
Professor Nigel Slater
Professor Christoph Loch
Mrs Polly Courtice
Professor Mike Gordon
Professor Nick Collings
Professor Robin Langley
Professor Bill Byrne
Professor Ross Anderson
Mr Nsikan Essien (Undergraduate Student Representative)
Mr Max Conway (Graduate Student Representative)
Dr Alan Blackwell (School observer)
Dr Simon Guest (School observer)
Professor Richard Penty (School observer)
Dr Shui Lam (Secretary)
Mr Matt Burgess (School Finance Manager)
Ms Rachael Tuley (Assistant Secretary)
Miss Yi-Jun Lin (Administrative Secretary)

In Attendance: Ms Sarah Botcherby, Professor Lynn Gladden for item 3.1

Apologies: Professor David Cardwell; Professor Andy Hopper; Professor Robert Mair; Professor Lisa Hall; Professor Gishan Dissanaïke; Professor John Robertson; Professor Sir Mike Gregory; Professor Mark Blamire (School observer); Dr James Moultrie (School observer); Ms Georgina Cannon.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2015 were approved and signed.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's report/Departmental updates

The Chairman had nothing additional to report at this meeting.

2. Starred items

The starred items were approved.

3. Principal business

3.1 REF

The Chairman welcomed Professor Gladden, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), to the meeting to discuss the outcomes of the REF with the Council of the School.

Professor Gladden made a presentation to the Council of the School based on her paper to the General Board, Paper **T/15/9**. In addition, she made the following additional points.

In the last RAE, Oxford was number one in power but lower in the GPA score. Since then, Oxford had caught up on the GPA. In terms of submissions for the REF, Oxford had increased by 7.25%, Cambridge 2.31% and UCL by 43% (mostly by incorporating other institutions).

For the next REF, it would be important to ensure the following:

1. produce four 4* outputs,
2. answer all the questions in the environment statement,
3. write the strategy top down,
4. promote the research work in the 100 words,
5. identify the right outputs and
6. identify the REF2020 Chairs as soon as possible.

The School of Technology did well in the REF: most of the points above were well covered, but there could be potential improvements to point 5.

There were some trends developing in the higher education sector which were relevant to the School and, therefore, important to note:

1. Consortium leadership of research grants is becoming important. If a new metric were to be developed to measure the value of grants awarded (and not expenditure), a consortium leader would receive all the credit with little or none going to the Universities actually doing the research. Some institutions have started to employ academics solely to manage research grants as consortium leaders.
2. Engagement with CDTs is important and Cambridge missed out on this by a few days at the last REF.

To address some of the issues, the General Board agreed to set up discipline-specific External Advisory Boards, which should meet once every 2 years and report directly to the General Board and the Head of School. The Department of Engineering has already got something similar in place. Professor Gladden reassured the Council of the School that this is not intended to become an exercise in which externals come in to dictate the operations of Departments.

On the point of growth since the last RAE, the Council of the School was keen to invest in the Departments to enable them to stay competitive: it would be logical to invest in Departments that have done well in the past and that have demonstrated an ability to generate income. The Council of the School was concerned that the allocations to the School by the RAM Distribution Model (welcomed that they are) are only a small fraction of the surpluses that the School has been making over the years, with the rest of the surpluses being used to subsidise other activities (cf the minute below on item 4.1). This could be a topic for future discussion with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources).

Professor Gladden was thanked for her contributions and left the meeting.

4. Straightforward and Reported Business

4.1 Departmental RAM Actuals 2013-14

At the meeting, it was reported that PRAO has published the Departmental disaggregation of the 2013-14 School RAM actual, paper **T/15/10**. This will be used to apportion the School's RDM allocation for 2015-16, once it has been approved by RMC.

Questions were raised concerning the School's large and increasing RAM surplus; it was noted that, despite new allocations arising via the RAM Distribution Model, Engineering's surplus has increased as a percentage of RAM costs, from 10% in 2010/11 to nearly 20% in 2013/14. There was broad concern that increasing amounts generated by the School, are being used to part-fund other activities across the University. Particularly in view of discussions regarding REF outcomes, which indicate that peer institutions are growing and improving faster than Cambridge, it was argued that the School

should be able to retain more of the income it generates, for re-investment in its profitable activities. This in turn will generate more income overall, allowing for continued cross-subsidy of other activities.

It was noted that this position was summarised in the Head of School's preface to the 2014 Planning Submission and that School Officers would continue to make this case where appropriate.

4.2 Half year-end Financial Report

The half year-end Financial Report is enclosed (Paper: **T/15/11**).

The School Finance Manager noted that:

- Chest reserves in departments continue to reduce, following significant investment by Engineering, in the capital cost of the CAPE extension (£1.5m so far in 2014-15);
- JBS and CISL are both ahead of forecast at the six month point: JBS is expected to break-even by the end of the Financial Year (after allowing for £1.5m JBSEEL gift-aid income), a little better than plan; and CISL is on course to generate a small surplus (compared to a forecast overspend of £0.3m);
- The School's grant activations for 2014-15 remain modest at the six month point, £19.4m is down from the two previous January comparatives; historically activations pick up in the second half of the Financial Year but new awards will continue to be monitored closely.

4.3 HR Briefing

The HR Business Manager highlighted the following points in the briefing paper:

- HR Work Programme for 2104-15
- Update on HR Division exercises and initiatives
- Pensions - USS

4.4 Risk Assessment

The Council of the School did not require any action to be taken with regard to risk.

5. *Minutes of other committees**

Needs Committee	24 February 2015	T/15/12
Graduate School Committee	6 February 2015	T/15/13
Research Committee	2 February 2015	T/15/14

IT Strategy Committee	26 January 2015	T/15/15
HR Committee	27 January 2015	T/15/16

With regards to the Graduate School Committee minutes, the Chairman highlighted the Taught Master's Review and PTES, with particular reference to the c.90% completion rate expected, and plans to achieve this.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:
Friday, 01 May 2015

2.00 p.m. in FW11, Computer Laboratory:
Friday, 05 June 2015

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