

University of Cambridge

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held in the Council Room, The Old Schools, at 10.15 am on Monday 17 February 2014.

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair); the Master of St Catharine's, the Master of Jesus, the Warden of Robinson; Professor Donald, Professor Hopper, Professor Karet; Dr Bampos, Mr Caddick, Dr Cowley, Dr Good, Dr Lingwood, Dr Padman, Dr Oosthuizen; Dame Mavis McDonald, Professor Dame Shirley Pearce; Mr Jones, Ms Old, Ms Osborn; with the Registrary, the Head of the Registrary's Office, the University Draftsman, the Academic Secretary, the Director of Finance; the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Strategy).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Du Quesnay, Mr Lewisohn and Mr Shakeshaft.

The Master of Christ's and Professor Gay are on sabbatical leave.

The Senior and Junior Proctors were present.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

PART A: PRELIMINARY, LEGISLATIVE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS

61. Declarations of Interest

Dr Lingwood, as Director of the Institute for Continuing Education, declared an interest in respect of the minutes of the Audit Committee's meeting on 16 January 2014 at which the departmental audit report of the Institute was discussed (minute 70 refers). Dame Shirley Pearce, as a member of the HEFCE Board, declared an interest in respect of the discussion about the HEFCE grant letter from BIS (minute 64k refers). Dr Cowley, who had taken strike action as part of the UCU's programme of continuous action, declared an interest in respect of the minutes of the HR Committee's meeting on 23 January 2014 (minute 72 refers). No other personal or prejudicial interests were declared.

62. Minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2014 were received and approved subject to the addition, at Dr Cowley's request, of a sentence at the end of the second bullet point of the minute concerning the Report of the General Board on the establishment of a Stephen Hawking Professorship of Cosmology as follows: *Dr Cowley noted that retention and recruitment payments should be made on the basis of external comparisons not internal comparisons; in his view, the mechanism proposed was not consistent with the University's procedures since internal comparisons are accounted for through basic pay and contribution increments.*

Action: Personal Assistant to the Head of the Registrary's Office to web.

63. Procedure of the Council

(a) Arrangements for the chairing of agenda items

It was proposed that the Vice-Chancellor should chair the entire meeting. The Council approved this arrangement.

(b) Business starred as straightforward

The Council approved matters for decision set out in the confirmed starred items.

(c) Council Circulars

The Council noted the issue and approval of the following:

Circular	Issue	Approval
1/14	17 January	27 January
2/14	24 January	3 February
3/14	31 January	10 February
4/14	7 February	17 February

64. Vice-Chancellor's Report

(a) The Vice-Chancellor congratulated members of the University listed in the top 100 practising scientists as follows: Professor Shankar Balasubramanian, Dr Hannah Critchlow, Professor Athene Donald, Sir Alan Fersht, Professor Andy Hopper, Professor James Jackson, Lord Martin Rees, Lord Sainsbury, Dr Peter Wothers.

(b) The Hon. Matthew Bullock would succeed Professor Paul Luzio as Master of St Edmund's College at the start of the new academical year.

(c) The Vice-Chancellor had attended the World Economic Forum in Davos from 22-26 January 2014. It had provided a useful opportunity to engage with politicians and business leaders and to meet with alumni and potential donors.

(d) The Vice-Chancellor had participated in a HEPI Seminar on 'The Purposes of Higher Education: What is it for?' on 29 January 2014.

(e) The Vice-Chancellor had chaired the Russell Group EU Advisory Committee and attended a meeting of the Russell Group on 30 January 2014.

(f) The Vice-Chancellor had attended the Unilever Sustainable Living Young Entrepreneur Award Event in Buckingham Palace on 30 January 2014.

(g) The Vice-Chancellor had delivered the keynote address at an event in Mansion House on 7 February 2014 to mark the Grant of Livery to the Company of Educators.

(h) The Vice-Chancellor had participated in a cross-government strategic foresight symposium at BIS on 10 February 2014.

(i) Lord Judge had delivered the Rede Lecture on 10 February 2014.

(j) The Vice-Chancellor attended the UUK members' meeting on 13 and 14 February 2014.

(k) The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills had issued the annual grant letter to the HEFCE on 10 February 2014. The Council received the letter and appendices. The Vice-Chancellor reported that the projected cuts in funding for Higher Education would put significant financial pressure on the sector as a whole. However, Cambridge was in a stronger and more resilient position than many other institutions. There would be an increasing expectation, in accordance with the recommendations in the Diamond Review, of efficiency savings and greater effectiveness, including through collaboration with other institutions particularly with regard to the research estate and infrastructure. HEIF funding would increasingly be allocated on a dynamic basis to reward recent and current performance and to incentivise engagement with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and with Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that Madeleine Atkins, Chief Executive of the HEFCE, had given a presentation on 'Trends and issues in Higher Education (including early sector profile from the REF)' at the UUK meeting on 14 February 2014 which had covered recent student application data and REF submission information.

The Registry reported that the Pensions Working Group (PWG), a Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee, had met on 14 February 2014 to discuss the recommendations of the Pensions Advisory Group which had been established to consider the University's response to two current consultations about the future of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The PWG had agreed a response which would be circulated in due course. It was noted that the valuation date for the USS was 31 March 2014. The deficit was likely to be in the region of £7/8 billion. The matters under consideration would be: how to reduce the current deficit; how to ensure that future service accrual was affordable and appropriately funded; and whether the USS should de-risk its investment profile.

The following is a summary of the comments made in discussion:

- It was noted that there was an additional capital allocation for the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (RPIF). The University had bids in train in order to be able to make submissions at short notice as necessary. There was some concern across the sector about the impact of RPIF on financial sustainability. It supported new, major and high profile initiatives at the expense of existing facilities and infrastructure.
- The University, primarily through the PWG, would engage fully with the current discussions and consultations about the USS. It would be important to continue to offer a pension scheme which was attractive and valued by staff but which was also affordable to the University and the sector.
- It was noted that the grant letter required the HEFCE to deliver savings in such a way as to protect high cost subjects, widening participation and small and specialist institutions. The Colleges continued to be recognised as 'small and specialist' institutions for funding purposes.
- It was noted that the grant letter cautioned restraint in top-level salaries as part of wider pay constraints.

65. Council, legislative and comparable matters

(a) Council Work Plan 2013-14

The updated Work Plan was received.

(b) Business Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2014 were received.

(c) Strategic Meetings

(i) Spring strategic meeting

A draft agenda for the spring strategic meeting on 17 March 2014 was received. The ordinary March meeting of the Council would be held at Madingley Hall, starting at 10am, to be followed by the strategic meeting.

The Deputy Chair (who, in accordance with recent practice, it was proposed should chair the strategic meeting) reported.

The circulated paper set out the proposed format for the discussion. The format was intended to allow members of the Council to engage with important strategic issues at an early stage. It was intended that papers setting out key questions for consideration under the four topics (financial and capital planning; student numbers and education; research and enterprise; and people) would be circulated to all members of the Council in advance of the strategic meeting together with background data. It was recognised that the potential scope of the topics was vast: the purpose of the meeting was to establish a common understanding of the issues; to appraise the current position and direction; and to determine areas in which further work and discussion might be required. It was intended that members of the groups would act as rapporteurs during the plenary session. Members of the Council had been assigned to groups with topics with which they didn't routinely engage through their membership of Council Committees with a view to getting a fresh perspective.

The following is a summary of the comments made in discussion:

- There was considerable discussion of the allocation of members to groups and, in particular, the proposal that they be assigned to topics outwith their usual area of experience and expertise. Concerns were expressed that this would not play to existing strengths; would lead to a less informed discussion, and would require Council members to engage in significant preparation work in order to familiarise themselves with the detail of the topic. However, there was a contrary view that the lack of detailed familiarity might allow a more creative and strategic engagement with the issues on the basis of broad projections. Further, it was an opportunity for Council members to use their particular expertise in scrutinising areas of activity with which they were not generally so closely involved.
- It was suggested that the format, if adopted more regularly for meetings, would allow members of the Council to engage both with the areas with which they were most familiar and those with which they were not.
- It was suggested that the particular perspective of the external members might better be exploited were they not to act as chairs to the groups. It was noted, on the other hand, that the groups were small and that the chairs would, therefore, be able to participate fully in the discussion.
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In conclusion, the Council noted the concerns and comments set out above. It was agreed, however, that the format be adopted as proposed for the strategic meeting on 17 March 2014.

(ii) September strategic meeting

It was noted that the September strategic meeting would take place on the afternoon of 22 September and the morning of 23 September. A venue and topics would be confirmed in due course.

(d) External Membership of the Council

The Registry reported. Dame Mavis McDonald had indicated that she would step down from the Council at the end of the current calendar year. Mr Lewisohn's first term of office would expire on 31 December 2014.

The procedures for establishing the Nominating Committee for External Members of the Council were set out in Ordinance and required that the Chair of the Committee should be a current or former external member of the Council whose reappointment was not under consideration. As required by the Ordinance, the Proctors and Deputy Proctors had been asked to bring forward a nomination, following consultation with members of the Council. They had nominated Dame Shirley Pearce to be Chair of the Committee with retrospective effect from 1 October 2013 (when Mr Shakeshaft's term of office as previous Chair of the Committee had expired) for a period of two years. The Council approved this appointment.

Action: University Draftsman (for publication)

66. Review of Governance: draft report to HEFCE

At its strategic meeting on 23 September 2013, the Council had received a written report setting out the background to an obligation to undertake a review of the University's current governance arrangements for report to the HEFCE by the end of 2013/14, arising from the HEFCE's last quinquennial assurance visit to the University in 2008. The Council had agreed in discussion that a working group, chaired by Mr Lewisohn, should be established to undertake a light-touch review of the University's governance arrangements. The working group's draft report to the Council was received for approval.

In the absence of Mr Lewisohn, Dr Lingwood reported. The working group had met on four occasions. The draft report sought to define and describe the University's governance arrangements; to demonstrate how those arrangements worked in practice; and to give examples of recent incremental change to the arrangements. The Audit Committee has received and, for its part, approved the draft report subject to minor proposed amendments which had been accepted.

The working group had also been asked to consider whether there were matters beyond the scope of the immediate review on which further work might be undertaken. A paper setting out the working group's recommendations in this regard would be provided to the Council for discussion at the meeting on 17 March 2014. The Vice-Chancellor noted that suggestions from members of the Council regarding such further work would be welcomed.

The Council approved the report for submission to the HEFCE.

Action: Registry, Head of the Registry's Office

67. Electronic voting in ballots of the Regent House

The Regent House, in March 2013, had approved the introduction of electronic voting in ballots of the Regent House with effect from 6 November 2013. As indicated in the Council's Notice of 3 February 2014, the decision had been taken that further testing was required before the online voting system could be considered sufficiently robust for use in a ballot. The vote on Grace 1 of 22 January 2014 (Report of the General Board on the establishment of a Stephen W Hawking Professorship of Cosmology) was therefore being conducted by postal ballot.

A paper setting out proposals for next steps towards the implementation of an electronic voting system was received. The Registry reported. The principal issue for the Council to determine was whether to continue development work on the in-house system or to re-open the possibility of outsourcing electronic ballots to the Electoral Reform Service. The differences between the voting systems for Regent House and student elections were much more significant and substantive than had been appreciated at the point at which the original Report, proposing the use of the in-house system used over many years for student elections, had been published and approved. There would be significant resource implications both in terms of developing and testing the system for use in Regent House elections and, for University Information Services, in maintaining and supporting it.

The following is a summary of the comments made in discussion:

- It was not possible, on the basis of the materials before the Council, to take a decision on the two options at this stage. In particular, it would be important to review the original Report.
- If, following review, it was agreed that an external supplier should be engaged, it would be necessary to publish a further Report to the Regent House.
- The ERS had considerable experience of conducting electronic ballots using a variety of STV systems.
- It would be important to take into account the security and authentication implications of using an external supplier.

In conclusion, the Council confirmed its commitment to the introduction of electronic voting in ballots of the Regent House. It would be important to determine, as soon as possible, the arrangements by which such a system would be delivered. It was agreed that, in the first instance, the working group (repopulated as necessary) should be re-established to consider the options and to bring back a Report to the Council.

Action: Draftsman, Head of the Registry's Office

68. General Board

The minutes of the General Board's meeting on 8 January 2014 were received.

PART B: MAIN BUSINESS

69. Planning and Resources

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Resources Committee held on 22 January 2014 were received. The Council approved for publication the University Composition fees for Home/EU postgraduate and overseas students as recommended in PRC 1504; the associated paper was received with the minutes.

Action: Draftsman, Head of the Registry's Office

70. Audit

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 January 2014 were received. In the absence of Mr Shakeshaft, Dr Good reported. The Vice-Chancellor had given his annual presentation to the Audit Committee and answered questions from members. It was an important element in the annual assurance cycle. The Committee had also received and, for its part, approved the draft report subject to minor proposed amendments which had been accepted (minute 66 above refers).

71. North West Cambridge

In the absence of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Affairs), the Registry reported.

The works at Gravel Hill Farm had been completed. The project team had moved in and the Syndicate would meet there that afternoon. The accommodation comprised: the project office; artists' studios for the Artist in Residency Programme; and a Temporary Community Centre. Lease terms for the supermarket on the site had been agreed with Sainsbury's. There had been rapid progress with planning negotiations: applications for Lot 1 and the Western Edge would go to committee, with recommendations for approval, on 26 February 2014. Works to the permanent junction on Madingley Road had commenced. The process of appointing contractors for the site-wide infrastructure was nearly complete and the University would shortly be entering into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement to begin preparation for the major infrastructure package. The market housing developer selection process was continuing; there had been mid-tender design review meetings with prospective partners. The negotiations with the College Rental and the College Purchase groups were nearing a satisfactory conclusion. A head teacher for the University Training School had been appointed, subject to terms and conditions.

72. University employment Human Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2014 were received together with the documents associated with minute 1533/14 ('Review of Academic Titles'). In the absence of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Affairs), Professor Karet reported.

The Committee had received a report on the arrangements for Staff Review and Development (SRD) and an update on HR systems developments. It had also discussed UCU's programme of continuous action and had agreed that, if labour was withheld for a two hour period, pay should be withheld for that same period. The Committee had agreed

to set up a working group to review the titles of academic posts with a view to ensuring, *inter alia*, that their relative seniority was immediately apparent to academic staff in other institutions.

In answer to a question, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the University remained committed to national pay negotiations; it would not, therefore, be appropriate to intervene directly with UCEA in the ongoing dispute over last year's 1% pay uplift. The Council endorsed this position.

Vice-Chancellor
17 March 2014