

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 19 January 2015.

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair); the Master of Corpus, the Master of Jesus, the Mistress of Girton, the Warden of Robinson; Professor Anderson, Professor Davis, Professor Karet, Dr Oosthuizen; Dr Anthony, Mr Caddick, Dr Charles, Dr Good, Dr Holmes, Dr Lingwood, Dr Padman; Mr Lewisohn, Professor Dame Shirley Pearce, Mr Shakeshaft (Deputy Chair), Ms Weller; Ms Hoogewerf-McComb, Mr Jones, Ms van Gijn; with the Registry, the Head of the Registry's Office, University Draftsman, the Academic Secretary and the Director of Finance; the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Affairs) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

The Senior and Junior Proctors were present.

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the Master of Corpus, the Mistress of Girton, Professor Anderson, Dr Anthony, Dr Charles, Dr Holmes and Ms Weller to their first meeting.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

PART A: PRELIMINARY, LEGISLATIVE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS

45. Declarations of Interest

Dr Charles, as a Bye-Fellow of Newnham, declared an interest in the matter recorded as Minute 56 (Honorary Degree) because one of the nominees was a Member of the College. Otherwise, no personal or prejudicial interests were declared.

46. Minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014 were received and approved.

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

47. Matters arising

Elections to the Council and the Board of Scrutiny (Minutes 35(c) and 36 refer)

The Registry reported. No nominations had been received by the deadline of noon on Friday 16 January 2015 to fill one vacancy on the Council in class (c) and two vacancies on the Board of Scrutiny in class (c)(ii). In accordance with the provisions in Special Ordinance A (ii) 3, a further bye-election would be held to fill the Council vacancy.

It was noted that Regulation 2 for the election of members of the Board of Scrutiny provides that, if at any election insufficient nominations were received to fill the vacant places in class (c)(ii), the Council should appoint as many members as may be necessary.

The Council was asked to consider whether it wished to make an appointment or whether there should be a bye-election to fill the vacancies on the Board. It was agreed that nominations should be re-opened and that there should be a bye-election. The Business Committee would be asked to approve a Grace to enable this.

A Notice announcing the timetable for the bye-election to fill both the Council vacancy and the two Board of Scrutiny elections would be published in due course.

It was noted that, as agreed at the Council's meeting on 15 December 2014, a Grace had been submitted to enable nominations to be re-opened and a bye-election held to fill a vacancy in class (c)(i) on the Board and there would be a news story about the work of the Board of Scrutiny during the week of 19 January 2015.

48 Procedure of the Council

(a) Arrangements for the chairing of agenda items

It was agreed that the Vice-Chancellor should chair the meeting for all items of business.

(b) Business starred as straightforward

It was noted that a request had been received for the unstarving of the matter recorded as minute 49(f). Otherwise, 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
33/14	19 December 2014	5 January 2015

49. Vice-Chancellor's Report

(a) The Vice-Chancellor congratulated members of the University named in the recent New Year Honours list as follows:

CBE	Professor Graeme Barker (Emeritus Disney Professor of Archaeology and director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research) Mr Tim Oates (Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment) Professor Sharon Peacock (Professor of Clinical Microbiology)
BEM	Trevor Llewellyn Richards (formerly Capital Project Liaison Officer, School of Clinical Medicine)

(b) The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional Affairs) had spoken at a reception for long serving members of the University in the Combination Room on 15 December 2014.

(c) The Vice-Chancellor had welcomed participants to the Annual Conference of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland which had been held in Cambridge on the 8 and 9 January 2015.

(d) The Vice-Chancellor had delivered a lecture on the topic of 'Past, Present and Future of Graduates at the University of Cambridge' at a Graduate Union event on 12 January 2015.

(e) The Vice-Chancellor had attended the Annual Ede Circle Dinner at Kettle's Yard on 13 January 2015.

(f) The Vice-Chancellor had hosted a dinner at the Lodge on 14 January 2015 for Heads of House to review the College Campaign priorities. It was noted that this was the first of two meetings. The outcome of these discussions would be reported to the Campaign Board in due course and to the Council as part of a periodic update report.

(g) The Vice-Chancellor reported that the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills had asked Sir Paul Nurse to undertake a review of the role of the Research Councils. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Treasury had also issued a document entitled 'Our plan for growth' setting out the government's science and innovation strategy. Both documents indicated an increasing departure from the Haldane Principle which determined that decisions about the allocation of research funding should be made through peer review within the academic community rather than by politicians. This was likely to have implications both with regard to the type of research undertaken and to the geographical distribution of funds. The balance between investigator-led and strategically-focused (and, often, government driven) funding was also under review.

50. Council, legislative and comparable matters

(a) Council Work Plan 2014-15

The updated Work Plan was received.

(b) Business Committee

No meeting was held on 12 January 2015. It was noted, however, that the Business Committee had approved, by circulation, a Report on the construction of an Algal Innovation Centre in the Botanic Garden, adjacent to the existing Growth Facility. The project would be funded by the Department of Plant Sciences and the School of the Biological Sciences, supported by an award from the European Union's EnAlgae project. The amount of this grant had not yet been determined but would be in excess of £125K. The approval of the Resource Management Committee would be sought once the amount of the EU grant was confirmed. The Council approved and signed the Report subject to RMC approval and on the understanding that the amount of the EU grant might change but that the Chest would not fund any part of the project.

Action: Draftsman (publication)

(d) Dates of meetings

The Council received a paper listing dates of Council, General Board and Finance Committee meetings for 2015-16 and provisional dates for 2016-17 which had previously been circulated in Council Circular 29/14 on 14 November 2014.

(e) Hard copy distribution of Council papers

The Registry reported. Council papers were now available on the new governance website. The site also gave access to Council circulars and to Business and Audit Committee papers. It was intended that it would become the portal to an increasing number of central committees. Each Council paper was available on the site as a separate PDF and there were also bundled reserved and unreserved Council papers. The bundled papers were bookmarked to allow for easy navigation between papers. Login was via a Raven password with access levels determined by CRSID.

The Council agreed that hard copy circulation of agenda papers and circulars would cease with effect from February 2015 and members of the Council and others to whom papers were currently distributed would, instead, be advised by email of their availability on the governance website at <https://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/>. It was noted, however, that arrangements could be made for individual members of the Council to receive hard copy papers on request; this would be on an ongoing and not on a meeting-by-meeting basis. It was agreed that consideration should be given to the provision of additional and accessible power sockets in the Council room.

Action: Head of the Registry's Office
(confirmation of arrangements)

51. General Board

The General Board had met on 14 January 2015. The minutes would be presented to the Council at its meeting on 16 February 2015. There was no urgent business to report.

PART B: MAIN BUSINESS

52. Research Excellence Framework

The results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) had been publicly announced on 18 December 2014. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) reported. A presentation was tabled.

The primary purpose of the REF was to determine the allocation of QR funding to Higher Education Institutions. QR funding to the University as determined by the outcome of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (the REF's predecessor exercise) was £110m p.a. and, therefore, an important income stream. There were some important variations between RAE2008 and REF2014 which made direct comparisons between the results of the two exercises difficult. The three sub-profiles in RAE2008 had assessed the outputs, environment and esteem of a Unit of Assessment (UoA); REF20014 had assessed outputs, environment and impact. There had also been changes to the disciplinary coverage of some UoAs. It was important to note that the broad research discipline encompassed within each UoA did not necessarily map onto a single Faculty or Department in the University. The overall quality profile and the three sub-profiles all graded quality against a star rating as follows: 4* (world-leading); 3* (internationally excellent); 2* (recognised internationally); 1* (recognised nationally). Quality which fell below the standard of nationally recognized work or which did not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of the exercise was graded as unclassified.

The University had made 32 submissions to 30 UoAs, with two each to UoAs 17 (Geography and Archaeology) and 32 (Philosophy and History and Philosophy of Science). The Grade Point Averages (GPA) for all of the Cambridge submissions were above the national average for the UoA GPA. 87% of Cambridge submissions were 4* or 3* when weighted by FTE and 47% were 4*, an increase from 32% in RAE2008.

Commentators and institutions had used a number of data analysis methodologies to determine rank orders (both by institution and by UoA), producing a variety of outcomes. Research Fortnight had analysed the results to produce rankings by quality index (based on the current funding model); by power; and by market share. Times Higher had undertaken further analysis to take account of the proportion of eligible staff included in each submission with a view to establishing an intensity-weighted GPA. This was an attempt to moderate the effect of the tactic adopted, legitimately, by some institutions of including only leading academics in their submissions thereby concentrating quality by diluting quantity. This analysis relied on extrapolation and assumptions from HESA data and therefore included a margin of error. (It was noted, in discussion, that some intensity mechanisms excluded CTOs. While this might be significant in some UoAs, it was statistically negligible for the University as a whole.) The league tables were further complicated by the inclusion or otherwise of institutions such as the Courtauld Institute and the Institute of Cancer Research which had made submissions, respectively, to only one and two UoAs.

It was noted that, although all of the Cambridge submissions were above the national average for the UoA GPA, some UoAs had performed better than others. It would be important carefully to review the detailed results with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses in a way which would determine strategy, both at a local level and institutionally, for the next REF. Consideration would be given as to ways in which to enhance the research environment across all UoAs in order to ensure that the University was in a position to deliver to the highest level of research excellence and be at the top of the rank orders regardless of metric. As part of this process, there would be discussions with academic colleagues who served on the UoA panels. It would be important to look beyond the headline results for each UoA. There were some UoAs which had apparently performed well which could have achieved a still better result. There were, however, some UoAs which had clearly underperformed both in absolute terms and by comparison with other institutions. Initial analysis indicated that there was no single reason for this underperformance. There had, however, been a tendency, during the internal peer review process in some UoAs, to over-rate the quality of outputs, resulting in an unfortunate 'tail' at the lower end of the quality profile. Accurate judgment and a robust selection process had produced higher rankings.

The General Board would consider the introduction of a rolling programme of UoA assessments undertaken by external reviewers. These would consider, *inter alia*, the nature and quality of new appointments and whether the University was sufficiently outward looking in this regard. It would be important also to ensure that the support and development arrangements for new appointees were fully implemented and observed in all UoAs. Identifying a strong network of external reviewers would enhance relationships and engagements with other leading research universities and, potentially, provide recruitment opportunities.

The University's quality profiles for impact were not significantly different, in most cases, from those achieved by leading competitor institutions. It was noted that impact, as defined by the REF and the Research Councils, considered the social and economic benefit of a specific research publication; it did not take account of the wider impact of the Cambridge phenomenon and the innovation ecosystem. It would be important to consider and to decide

whether the University should make some appointments which would enable a closer engagement with the impact agenda as defined by the REF and the Research Councils.

Other topics for General Board discussion would be the University's departmental structure and the extent to which it reflected the topography of academic disciplines in the 21st century; and the question of academic leadership for REF and other purposes. It would also be important to ensure, as the University embarked on the next major phase of capital development and fundraising, that the infrastructure was designed in such a way as to facilitate research excellence into the future. Consideration would need to be given to the University's recruitment strategy and appointments processes, particularly in the context of aggressive recruitment in a number of competitor institutions. This was true for posts at all levels but particularly for senior posts.

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

- The formula by which QR funding would be allocated would be announced by the HEFCE in the coming months. Notwithstanding the various league tables, the financial implications for the University were the most important aspect of the REF result.
- It would be important to take a nuanced view of the results across UoAs and not assume that underperformance existed only in UoAs with poor results. Good practice and performance should be supported and encouraged. A limited number of UoAs had not engaged fully with the REF preparation process in a timely and constructive manner.
- It was anticipated that the UoA REF committees would continue for the time being. It would be important to maintain momentum and to view preparation for REF (institutionally and locally) as an ongoing and not a periodic activity. It was noted, in this context, that there was a document repository for impact statements.
- It was noted that there had, in the past, been a system of rolling reviews which looked at all aspects of a department's activities. This had been replaced by Learning and Teaching Reviews which considered only teaching. Consideration might be given to combining (or, at least, co-ordinating) the two processes.
- It was noted that the current department structure was, in some cases, a historic accident and might usefully be revisited. The rolling review process would focus on academic disciplines rather than on departments where there was discrepancy between the two.
- The REF would inform the University's research strategy (and, indeed, its broader strategy) but would not drive it.

The General Board would discuss the matter further at forthcoming meetings. A report would be brought back to the Council thereafter.

53. Finance

Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 7 January 2015 were received. It was noted that the Committee had received a paper and draft Grace from the Assessment Sub-Committee recommending that the specified index for the amount to be paid annually by the Colleges in contributions under Statute G II should be changed from the Higher Education Pay and Prices Index (HEPPI) which had been discontinued to RPI+1% which had been found to track HEPPI closely. The Finance Committee had agreed to recommend the proposal to the Council. It was reported that the Assessment Sub-

Committee would review this indexing factor on an occasional basis. The Council approved the Grace.

Action: Draftsman (publication)

54. Audit Committee

The Audit Committee had met on 15 January 2015. The minutes would be circulated to the Council for its meeting on 16 February 2015. There was no urgent business to report.

55. North West Cambridge

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Affairs reported. The first two tranches of residential development would be undertaken by Hill and by Countryside. The first properties would be on the market later in the year with the expectation that they would be ready for occupation in 2016. Planning work for the release of further tranches of land for market development was ongoing as was work with the potential hotel operator. The steel framework for the primary school was now in place and the school would open as planned in September 2015 with the provision for temporary accommodation if necessary. There continued to be good progress on individual development plots for University sites. There was some concern about the programme for the delivery of the main site-wide infrastructure works. It would become clearer over the next few months whether there would be any impact on the overall timetable for delivery.

PART C: RESERVED BUSINESS

Officers other than the Head of the Registry's Office withdrew.

56. Honorary Degrees Honorary Degree Committee

A strictly confidential paper containing recommendations by the Honorary Degree Committee was received. The Council noted the arrangements for approval of nominations by vote set and approved the nominations.

Action: Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office,
Ceremonial Officer

Vice-Chancellor
16 February 2015