

GENERAL BOARD OF THE FACULTIES

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Unconfirmed minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos held at **2.15pm** on **Tuesday 10 June 2003** in the Old Schools' Meeting Room.

Present: Dr J Keeler (Chairman), Dr W Allison, Dr A Findlay, Dr S Hand, Dr N Holmes, Dr K Johnstone, Dr J Riley, Professor J Secord, Dr B Shachar-Hill, Dr I Wilson, Dr N Woodcock, Dr MG Worster, Mr J Zwart and Dr MG Russell (Secretary).

Apologies: Professor TW Clyne, Dr J Miller, Dr K Plaisted and Mr K Shiels.

147. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 May 2003 were approved subject to noting the title of Professor Secord.

148. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee noted that both student members would be graduating this summer, but hoped to return to serve on the Committee for the Michaelmas Term 2003.

149. REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS

a) Part IB Physics and Advanced Physics (minute 141)

Dr Allison reported that the General Board's Education Committee approved the proposed revisions of the second year physics courses at their meeting on 4 June 2003 and that Directors of Studies had now been informed of the changes. Further information for students and Directors of Studies would be posted on the NST website.

b) Minutes of the Strategic Committee for the NST, 20 May 2003

The Committee received the minutes of the Strategic Committee (**CM.189**) for information, including an attached paper relating to numbers of admissions to Part II courses next year. It noted that the issues currently being addressed were all matters in progress. The Secretary clarified that a small drift of students from physical to biological sciences (as they progressed through the Tripos) had been identified (minute 131) and that the Strategic Committee had also noted that the University regulations allowed students to graduate at the end of their third year (with a BA) although they may have opted to take the MSci strand of some courses (minute 134).

150. ABOLITION OF THE *m* QUALIFIER ON THE PART IA CLASS LIST (minute 134)

The Secretary reported that the General Board's Education Committee, at its meeting on 21 May 2003, requested that the proposal for the abolition of the *m* qualifier be given further consideration in the light of concerns of Senior Tutors on the deregulation of progression requirements for mathematics. Dr Findlay reported that the Senior Tutors' Committee had now approved the current proposals but noted that Directors of Studies should be provided with firm guidance on the progression requirements for certain courses in the context of mathematical ability.

The Committee noted that the revised second year courses had taken this into account in their recent revisions and that the Faculty Board of Mathematics would be approving guidelines for progression to NST Part IB Mathematics. **Dr Keeler agreed to raise this point with the teaching committee of the Department of Chemistry, with regard to the Part IB Chemistry A course.**

The Committee further considered whether it should advocate more explicit progression requirements for all subjects but noted it could unnecessarily restrict student choice. **The Committee agreed to take no further action but noted that this may be a point to reconsider at a future date.**

151. ENTRY TO PART III: CHANGES TO REGULATIONS (minute 142)

At its last meeting, the Committee agreed to consider redrafting regulation 5 of the Tripos to take account of appropriate levels of preparation for Part III courses and now received a paper outlining several alternative wordings for the regulation (**CM.190**). The Committee noted the views received by Departments and the Senior Tutors' Committee and **agreed to the wording outlined in Options A and C, noting that together these provided appropriate flexibility for Faculty Boards. The Committee further agreed to monitor the progression requirements outlined by Faculty Boards.**

152. REVISION OF PART II (GENERAL)

The Committee received a consultation paper outlining proposals for the replacement of Part II (General) with a new course (**CM.191**) and noted that the paper had also been circulated to Faculty Boards and other authorities associated with the Tripos. **It agreed to consider a response to the Strategic Committee at a meeting in the Michaelmas Term**, which would take account of the comments received by other bodies and the following points:

- the Committee noted that the proposed courses making up Part II Natural Sciences would largely consist of existing courses (at Part II level);
- the Strategic Committee may wish to consider the incorporation of shorter courses than the units identified, in order to allow the teaching of topics including scientific journalism and policy-making, IPR, marketing and entrepreneurship;
- the workloads of the new Part II Natural Sciences course were not comparable to that of MVST Part II and this was a point that would need addressing by the Faculty Board of Biology;
- the timetabling of courses may be problematic; Directors of Studies would have to work closely with their students to ensure that particular combinations of courses would be achievable;
- it would need to be made clear who would be responsible for the setting, supervising and examining of dissertations.

153. FUTURE OF THE LEARNING DAY (minute 106)

At its meeting on 22 October 2002, the Committee agreed to review the content and length of the Learning Day. The Committee now noted that, although the session was well-attended and well-received, College provision in this area was increasing and students often indicated that there was a duplication of advice. The Committee further noted that the demand on students at that time was high and that a number of students attended because they felt they must. **The Committee agreed to suspend the "Learning Day" from October 2003 but that Senior Tutors should be provided with information on what had been included in past events to aid them in their own provision. The Committee further agreed that the handout material could usefully be incorporated as advice to current students on the NST website.**

154. ANNUAL REPORT 2002-3

The Committee noted that one of its duties was to submit an annual report to the Strategic Committee, the General Board and the Faculty Boards and other authorities concerned with the Natural Sciences Tripos. It now received a draft report (**CM.192**), which shall be revised and updated over the summer and shall come to the Committee for approval at their next meeting on 28 October 2003. Members of the Committee were invited to pass comments on the draft to the Secretary.

155. PART II CHEMISTRY

The Committee received a paper (**CM.193**) outlining changes to the papers for the examinations in Part II Chemistry. **It approved the proposals and the publication of any necessary changes to regulations or Form and Conduct Notice.**

156. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting shall take place at **2:15 pm on Tuesday 28 October 2003** in the Old Schools' Council Room.