

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Confirmed minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos at 2:15 pm on **Tuesday 10 May 2005** in the Meeting Room at the **Centre for Research in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CRASSH)**.

Present: Dr J Keeler (Chairman), Dr P Barrie, Professor TW Clyne, Dr R Hardie, Dr K Johnstone, Dr P Oliver, Ms H Stagg, Mrs S Stobbs, Mr N Tammuz, Dr N Woodcock, Professor MG Worster and Dr MG Russell (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr W Allison, Dr S Holden, Dr N Holmes, Mr A Jefferies, Dr J Russell and Dr S Schaffer.

255. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2005 were approved.

256. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted that Dr Sean Holden (Computer Laboratory) was on sabbatical for this Term, and that Dr Ian Wilson was on sabbatical until January 2006. It welcomed Dr Patrick Barrie, representing the Chemical Engineering Syndicate in Dr Wilson's absence.

257. REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

The Committee received a paper of reported business (**CM.281**), which included:

- Minutes of the Directors of Biological Studies, 20 January 2005 (**CM.282**)
- Minutes of the Biological Sciences Committee, 14 March 2005 (**CM.283**)
- Increased tuition fees and compulsory course costs

On the matter of increased tuition fees and course costs, the Committee noted that the various field trips offered in the NST would account for most of the impact, and that funding issues would need to be resolved by the Councils of the Schools concerned. It further noted that field trips provided educational opportunities for students and that their retention should be supported by the Committee. **It agreed to consider a list of field courses for the NST at a future meeting to assess the extent of the provision.**

258. MATTERS ARISING

i. Admissions information from the Colleges (minute 247 i, 238 iii, 227)

The Committee noted that no response had yet been received from the Director of Admissions, regarding the provision of admission advice for the Natural Sciences Tripos, as the current information (**CM.284**) was thought to require further consideration. **The Committee agreed to wait for further information from the Admissions Forum, noting that it had already agreed a statement which could be used in the interim.**

ii. Open Days (minute 247 ii, 238 iv, 228)

Dr Johnstone reported on a recent meeting of an Admissions Forum Working Group on University Open Days. He indicated that, for this year only, the Open Day activities would need to be conducted on the Downing Site, in available lecture theatres and marquees. He also reported he was coordinating efforts to produce coordinated and integrated displays, which would consist of: general course structure and information, admissions information, information on each Part IA course (to a pre-agreed template), and optional Departmental displays to illustrate learning pathways through the Tripos. General information lectures on the Tripos would be run on both days in both the morning and the afternoon to accommodate the large numbers of attendees. **The Committee welcomed these developments.**

iii. General Board Review of Part III of the Tripos (minute 248)

The Committee received the final submission document (**CM.285**) and noted that the Review Committee was meeting appropriate staff members and students (including some members of the Committee) on Wednesday 11 May 2005. The Secretary reported that the Review Committee was likely to focus on the current and future structure of the individual courses, whether they should be part of the NST or separate Masters courses, and the role of the NST Committees in governance and management issues.

iv. On-line Part IA Practical Registrations (minute 249)

The Committee noted that:

- a) the Secretary had written to all Part IA course organisers and all Senior Tutors (and the Senior Tutors' Committee) for feedback on the proposals: most feedback had been positive and supportive but there had been some concerns from individual Colleges about the proposed timetable;
- b) CARET had begun development work on the project and was meeting regularly with the Secretary: a prototype of the user interface was expected by the end of May 2005;
- c) Dr Johnstone and the Secretary had considered a request to include an option to indicate day(s) that students would prefer not to have practical sessions, and had considered this to be unworkable: **the Committee agreed that the practical registration system would not likely be able to accommodate these requests for large numbers of students and that the current mechanisms for changing practical days after registration would continue to be appropriate;**
- d) a decision over whether to take on-line registrations forward would need to be made by the end of August 2005.

v. "Natural Sciences" Leaflet (minute 251)

The Committee noted that corrections and amendments to the leaflet had now been passed to the Press and Publication office and that a proof of the revised edition was available for comment. It also noted that the Councils of the Schools of Biological Sciences and Physical Sciences had agreed to provide £1000 annually each to the costs of publicity for the Tripos (Open Days displays and handouts, leaflets and induction session materials).

259. UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS NUMBERS

The Committee received for information a letter, dated 27 April, from the Secretary of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee, detailing projected student intake for 2005-6, and a table showing recent NST Part IA student numbers prepared by the Secretary (**CM.286**).

260. DATES OF MEETINGS 2005-6

The following dates were agreed (all meetings on Tuesdays at 2:00 pm):

<i>Michaelmas</i>	<i>Lent</i>	<i>Easter</i>
18 October 2005	7 February 2006	9 May 2006
29 November 2005	7 March 2006	13 June 2006

261. PART II ALLOCATIONS

The Secretary reported that all College returns were expected by Friday 13 May 2005, and that current returns had not indicated any problems with the revised procedures.

262. COMPUTER SCIENCE TRIPOS, PART IA

The Committee received a paper (**CM.287**) outlining a proposal from the Computer Science Syndicate to change the times of their lectures in Part IA of the Computer Science Tripos from October 2005, such that the choice of Natural Sciences subjects available to Computer Scientists would change. The Committee acknowledged the impact this would have on the student numbers for the Biology of Cells, and the Materials and Mineral Sciences courses. **It agreed to relay the following points to the Computer Science Syndicate:**

- (a) it was concerned that the relevant committees in the Computer Laboratory had not fully considered the appropriateness of the Evolution and Behaviour course for its students, and that it would be a more difficult course (than Biology of Cells) for students without A-level Biology;
- (b) the re-timetabling would severely restrict 25% Computer Scientists who did not have either A-level Chemistry or A-level Biology (*i.e.* those students would only be able to read Physics and Geology, alongside Mathematics and Computer Science);
- (c) the proposal had been made relatively late, and that the teaching committees had not had a proper opportunity to discuss the implications.

263. ITEMS OF RESERVED BUSINESS

There was no reserved business.

264. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting shall take place at **2:00 pm** on **Tuesday 14 June 2005** in the Meeting Room at CRASSH.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME FOR THE START OF THE MEETING.
