

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Unconfirmed minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos at **2:15 pm on Tuesday 12 June 2007** in the **Old Schools Council Room**.

**Present:** Dr N Holmes (Chairman), Dr R Barnes, Dr P Barrie, Dr D Buscher, Professor M Carpenter, Dr P Dupree, Dr S Holden, Dr B Nolan, Dr R Padman, Mrs S Stobbs, Miss E Bailey, Miss A Turnbull and Mrs K Allen (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Professor B Clyne, Dr K Johnstone, Dr J Keeler (sabbatical leave), Dr J Little, Dr N Woodcock, Professor MG Worster,  
Absent: Dr S Schaffer.

### 375. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2007 were approved.

### 376. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman thanked Dr J Little and Dr D Buscher for their sterling work in acting as Chairmen for the Examinations. Both will be acting as Assistant Chairmen for the next academic year to support the new Chairmen.

Dr B Nolan, as a co-opted member from the Faculty Board of Physics and Chemistry, will be serving on the Committee next year.

The Committee noted that the Secretary has written to DAMTP; the Faculty Boards of Physics and Chemistry; Earth Sciences & Geography, and Computer Science about their representatives on the Committee. In Michaelmas Term the following terms of office come up for renewal or replacement. Professor M Worster, Dr Sean Holden, Dr James Keeler and Dr N Woodcock.

### 377. REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

The Committee received a paper of reported business (**CM.417**). It included:

- Changes to regulations: Part III course sharing; Part II BBS Dissertation submission dates, and changes to Part IB Physics. (**CM.418**)
- Electronic Calculators in Examinations, 2007-8: Notice (**CM.419**)
- Minutes of Biological Sciences Committee 15 March & 17 May (**CM.420 & CM.421**).

The Committee noted that the Biological Sciences Committee have set up a Review Group to look their Faculty's teaching of Mathematics to NST Part I students; currently done as Quantitative Biology and Elementary Mathematics for Biology.

### 378. MATTERS ARISING

#### i) Part III Course Sharing Proposals (minute 363, 370)

The Committee noted that the Secretary had received a response to her letter from The Department of Earth Sciences, dated 8 June (**CM.426**) confirming the Department's consent to 'host' the Environmental courses, and examination, to be offered at Part III for next year. The Committee were informed that the Chemistry Department will not be offering the module *Atmospheric Chemistry and Global Change* until 2008/09, but were happy for their students to take part in the other options. Alongside the changes made to Regulation 33 a Notice has been produced (**CM.427**) detailing the module and assessment options available.

### **368. PROPOSAL FOR A CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE CHAIRMEN OF EXAMINATIONS**

The Committee considered a proposal to change the split in responsibilities for the Chairmen and Assistant Chairmen of the NST. (CM.422). The Chairman for Part IB, II and III indicated that less than 10% of his time was spent in dealing with Part II and III inquiries and that dealing with Part IB was a challenging role. He felt it would be too onerous a task for one person to co-ordinate both Part IA and IB.

The Committee decided that it was good to review the procedures currently in place; but that it would be best to leave them as they are for the time being.

### **369. PART II PHYSICAL SCIENCES OPTION**

The Committee reviewed the current arrangements for this option which has been running now for two years. They noted that in year one there were 4 students who started; this year there are 5 students taking the course. Next year three students have indicated that they would be taking this option as their first choice. The Committee noted that the course was a useful option for students not wishing to specialise in one area, and as such was providing greater flexibility to the programme. However, the Committee did feel more could be done to raise the profile of the course to students; colleges and directors of studies. The Committee requested that the relevant Faculty Boards be consulted on the promotion of the Part II Physical Sciences option.

The current mix of options to take at Part IB and Part II were considered to be adequate; with the exception of Mathematics at Part II. The Committee felt this area would best be served by offering Mathematics at Part IB ONLY.

The method of appointing Senior Examiners for this course and informing them of their responsibilities lacks clarity. The Secretary will discuss a way forward with current Chairmen of Examiners to aid transparency of information sharing.

**The Secretary will write to the Faculty Boards of Physics & Chemistry; Earth Sciences and Mathematics to clarify the above points.**

### **370. OUTREACH WORK**

The Committee noted that the Secretary had received several inquiries via the NATSCI email account, asking about summer schools and pre-entry courses, for the 15-17 year old age group. Papers CM.423 & CM.424 gave examples of current opportunities. The Committee felt that these 'activities' should be linked from the NST website, so that students can have a 'one-stop' web-site for their initial inquiries.

### **371. ITEMS OF RESERVED BUSINESS**

- **Appointment of Examiners for the Tripos, 2007-2008**
- **Increases to NPAPs**

### **372. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting shall take place at **2:15 pm on Tuesday 16 October 2007** in the **Seminar Room B, First Floor, 17 Mill Lane.**