

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 **2.00pm** on **Tuesday 9th June 2009** in Seminar Room B, 17 Mill Lane.

Present: Dr N Holmes (Chairman), Professor T W Clyne, Dr S Dalziel, Dr P Dupree, Professor H Griffiths, Professor R Horgan, Dr J Keeler, Professor A Mycroft, Dr R Padman, Dr R Preece, Professor S Redfern, Dr S Russell, Professor D Ward, Miss S Zhang and Mrs E Oliver (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr P Barrie, Dr Lauren Kassell (on behalf of Professor J Secord), Dr M Mason.

485) **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5th May were approved.

486) **MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

A summary sheet of action points and matters arising was circulated (**CM.555**) and the Committee noted that there were no plans to reprint the Natural Sciences brochure once current supplies were exhausted.

487) **REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD**

A paper of reported business was circulated (**CM.556**).

The minutes of the Biological Sciences Committee: 14th May 2009 (**CM.557**) were noted.

The Committee was presented with data from the first round of the Part II Subject Allocation (**CM.558**). This indicated the first choice of all students (898 in total), overall numbers for each department and numbers requesting research projects (research projects only and research projects preferred). The data were useful for providing an indication of long term trends. It was noted that only a few subjects were oversubscribed and that some subjects such as Biochemistry had increased numbers this year and Astrophysics had smaller numbers. It was likely that Chemistry would be able to absorb their extra numbers. A request was made for a breakdown of the MVST and NST numbers but it was felt that this would be more appropriate at a later stage. As in previous years, Departments would be provided with provisional marks for them to make their initial first round selection and an interdepartmental meeting would take place to allocate those students not placed in the first round.

The Guide to Courses (**CM.559**) had recently been updated following consultation with relevant Course Organisers. The Committee was asked to note the updated version and inform the Secretary if any further amendments were required. It was noted that there was considerable variation in length between the entries for the different subjects.

The programme specification for the Natural Sciences Tripos (**CM.560**) had recently been updated and was circulated for the Committee to note. Highlighted queries were clarified and a final version would be produced for publication on the web.

In accordance with Statutes & Ordinances pg 386, the Management Committee is required to publish details of the Interdisciplinary papers in the Easter Term in the year next preceding the examination. The Notice (**CM.561**) which will be submitted to the Reporter

was circulated for the Committee to note. It was possible that some additional changes may be required to the Physics entry but these would be made later in the form of a correction.

An updated notice is required to define the standards required for entry to each Part III subject which will include the new Part III courses in History and Philosophy of Science and Systems Biology. Relevant course organisers will be contacted shortly and the updated document when complete will be reported to the next Management Committee.

A draft of the annual Notice on the use of Electronic Calculators in University Examinations 2009-10 (**CM.562**) was circulated and noted by the Committee.

488) **CARET PROPOSAL: SUPPORTING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW**

The Chairman provided an explanation of the background to the proposal and the proposed involvement of the Natural Sciences Tripos. It was felt that the complexity of the Tripos would be useful in providing an initial model which could enable curriculum development processes. The Chairman and Secretary had met with the Director of CARET and members of the development team and had outlined certain areas where development of user-friendly tools could be helpful. The project team plan to capture all the NST course information and consult with interested parties during the summer, and to report back before the start of Michaelmas Term. Initial proposals will be refined into a specification for initial implementation in November. Individual Course Organisers and Departments may participate in whatever way they deem appropriate. The Committee approved the involvement of the Natural Sciences Tripos as a developmental model.

489) **PUBLICATION OF CLASSIFIED EXAMINATION RESULTS**

A paper was circulated (**CM.563**) which outlined a proposal for amending the process of publishing class lists to students from 2010 onwards. The proposal had already been considered by Senior Tutors' Welfare and Finance Committee, Senior Tutors' Committee and the Board of Examinations. The Committee was asked to consider the proposal, indicating clearly whether or not it agrees with the proposal and to forward its decision, together with any additional comments, to Kate Allen, Head of Student Administration and Records by the Division of Michaelmas Term. Discussion took place on the current processes and the proposal, the main implication of which would be to enable individual students to see their results privately by accessing their CamSIS account before the results are publicly displayed. The Committee agreed with the proposal.

Action: Secretary to inform the Head of Student Administration and Records.

490) **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair of the Examiners for Part IA raised the issue of the continuity of processes for producing the IA and IB examination spreadsheets. This year, changes to courses had required significant updates to the IA spreadsheets which required a certain level of computing knowledge. Departments also felt that additional help was required. It was felt that investment was needed which could take the form of a computer officer or a coordinator or additional administrative support and possibly the development of a user-friendly database that linked to CamSIS. It was likely that additional funding would be required from the Schools and it was suggested that the School members of the Committee (Dr Rachael Padman and Dr Steve Russell) should take this matter to their respective Schools.

Action: Dr Rachael Padman and Dr Steve Russell to refer the question of support for the examination process to the School of Physical Sciences and the School of Biological Sciences.

The Chairman noted that this meeting of the Committee would be the last attended by the two Chairmen of the Examiners and wished to thank them for their hard work during the examination process so far, and in the coming weeks.

491) **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting shall take place at **2:00 pm on Tuesday 13th October 2009** in **Greaves Room, Pathology, Tennis Court Road.**