

## 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 2:00 pm on **Tuesday 28th February 2012** in the Todd–Hamied Room, Chemistry Department, Lensfield Road.

Present: Dr J Keeler (Chair), Dr M Aitken, Dr A Alexandrova, Dr P Barrie, Professor M Carpenter, Dr S Fulton, Dr D Good, Professor H Griffiths, Professor R Horgan, Professor Colin Hughes, Mr V Oleinikovas, Dr R Padman, and Mrs E Oliver (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr G Cottiss, Professor J Morton, Professor A Mycroft, Professor S Redfern, Professor D Ritchie, Dr N Rutter, and Dr T Tiffert.

Dr David Good who was attending his first meeting as a newly co-opted member, was welcomed. It was noted that the presence of the Directors of Education from both the Schools of the Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences on the Management Committee would help discussion and the flow of information.

### **637) MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2012 had been circulated and were agreed.

### **638) MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

A summary sheet of action points and matters arising from the meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> January (**CM.766**) had been circulated.

#### **Minute 622.**

Further discussions had taken place with CARET regarding support for the examination process and a document was being prepared for the May meeting of the Committee. Initial priorities had been discussed as follows: 1) support for use of, and development of, overall IA and IB spreadsheets for this academic year and in the future; 2) provision of templates for subject examiners to include formulae; 3) improvement of transfer of classes and marks between overall IA & IB spreadsheets and CamSIS; 4) investigation of secure web-based mark entry at initial stage.

#### **Minute 631.**

i) Part II Neuroscience examinations would remain the same for the 2011-12 year but changes were being considered for 2012-13.

ii) The CamSIS February release had included improvements to the Part II process and the change of name to NST Part II Subject Allocation. The updated documentation for Colleges, Directors of Studies and students together with the Departmental criteria had now been circulated and updated on the NST website at:  
[http://www.cam.ac.uk/about/natscitripos/part\\_ii/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/about/natscitripos/part_ii/)

v) The Chairman noted that efforts were already being made at admissions conferences to raise awareness of the new Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Tripos (PBST) alongside discussion of Natural Sciences. Dr Good reported that the PBST Management group had met with Admissions Tutors and Colleges and that their new website would go live shortly. It was felt that the new Tripos was a positive addition to the portfolio of courses on offer.

viii) Information for Part II students considering continuing to Part III had been agreed by the relevant subjects and circulated to Colleges and published on the NST website at:  
<http://www.cam.ac.uk/about/natscitripos/ps/structure/part3.html>  
Additional guidance has been circulated to Departments and a list of potential applicants would be provided shortly.

**Minute 632.**

The Committee's response to the draft Key Information Set data had been forwarded to the Education Section.

**Minute 633.**

The Board of Examinations had been notified of the Committee's approval of the change to process for extra time in practical examinations and had confirmed that this would take effect for the examinations in Easter 2012. The Board of Examinations would provide one list for each of Parts IA & IB which would be forwarded to the relevant practical coordinators by the Secretary. This had been confirmed to the Departments concerned.

**Minute 634.**

The Committee's response on the subject of Supervision Data had been forwarded to the Senior Tutors' Standing Committee on Education.

**Minute 635.**

The Secretary had written to Dr Good inviting him to be a co-opted member of the Management Committee until December 2012 and Dr Good had accepted.

**639) REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS**

A paper of reported business had been circulated (**CM.767**). It included:

**i. Faculty Board of Biology, Biological Sciences Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 (**CM.768**). It was noted that Dr Good was now the Chair of this Committee.

428.01 It was confirmed that this referred to the same group that was being set up by the NST Management Committee.

429 The appointment of Dr Aitken as the Deputy to Dr Good was noted. Dr Aitken would continue to serve on the NST Management Committee.

**ii. Physical Sciences Education Committee (PSEC)**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011 (**CM.769**).

4.3 Discussions on the matter of the awards available to Affiliated students were moving forward.

5.2 The classing criteria for M.A.St courses would be further explained on the minutes from the most recent PSEC meeting (yet to be confirmed). As far as NST was concerned, there would be no changes from the previous year's classing criteria for those subjects with a M.A.St. At the next meeting of PSEC, further consideration would be given to the process for 2012/13 and would include discussion as to whether Part III subjects should move to a masters-style merit mark system. This would need agreement from all subjects at Part III, including Biochemistry and Systems Biology. Those present confirmed that Biochemistry would be in favour of the move to merit marks and that Chemical Engineering currently classed their fourth year but had considered changing in the past. Other subjects had not expressed an opinion so far. In advance of the next PSEC meeting, further research would be carried out both to assess the existing practice in other Universities and to gauge current thinking within the NST subjects.

**iii. Membership**

It was noted that the General Board has confirmed the appointment of Professor Colin Hughes to the NST Management Committee until December 2012.

#### **iv. Allowances to Candidates for Examinations**

The Committee noted the list of candidates to whom allowances had been made by Council in respect of examinations which were held in the Easter Term 2011.

#### **640) Part III ENTRY REQUIREMENTS 2013-14**

The revised notice for publication in the Reporter had been circulated (**CM.770**). This included the revised criteria for Experimental and Theoretical Physics from a II.2 to a II.1 with effect from those candidates commencing in October 2013; this was the only change from the Notice issued for the previous year. Attention was drawn to the final section, common to all subjects, on treatment of cases requiring special consideration. The Committee approved the notice.

**Action:** Secretary to arrange for publication in the Reporter and updating of the NST website.

#### **641) ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Mathematical Biology**

The Course Organiser for Mathematical Biology had contacted the Secretary regarding a proposed change to the timetabling from Tu/Th/S at 9.00 to M/W/F at 9.00. This would remove the clash with Mathematics but would introduce a clash with Physics and Elementary Mathematics for Biology. The rationale for the proposal was to make it easier for students to sample both Mathematics and Mathematical Biology at Part IA which would hopefully lead to students ultimately settling on the mathematical course most appropriate to their needs. . Those present felt that perhaps two students in each college each year were likely to switch between these courses. The change of day was not thought to be a problem but staff availability would need to be checked. The Committee was well disposed to the proposal and suggested that Dr Cunniffe prepare a paper for presentation to the next meetings of the Biological Sciences Committee and the NST Management Committee.

**Action:** Secretary to relay comments to Dr Cunniffe.

##### **Fee for Part III and M.A.St.**

Professor Mycroft had raised a query regarding the perceived disparity between the fees charged for students taking Part III and M.A.St., which are effectively the same course. It was explained that Part III and M.A.St fees are currently aligned and that the new fee level would be applied to both Part III and M.A.St in October 2015. The differences between fees and funding for undergraduate masters and MPhils were discussed. A report was awaited from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills which could affect the funding mechanism and would require further consideration by the University. It was agreed that this was a complex matter within a changing landscape.

**Action:** Secretary to contact Professor Mycroft.

##### **Part IA Scientific Computing**

The Chairman reported that a feedback survey was currently running and that marks for the two exercises had been released to students.

#### **642) DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, 1st May 2012, Todd-Hamied Room, Ground Floor, Department of Chemistry.