

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos held at 2:15 pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in the **Greaves Dixon Room, Department of Pathology, Tennis Court Road.**

**Present:** Dr Nicholas Holmes (in the Chair), Dr David Summers, Dr Deborah Longbottom, Dr Tim Weil, Dr Sandra Fulton, Professor James Elliott, Professor Nick Butterfield, Dr Bill Nolan, Dr Eric Rees, Dr Dee Scadden, Dr Stewart Sage and Jane Clare (Secretary). Laura Gillies, a Widening Participation Officer from Cambridge Admissions Office attended for minute 947.

Apologies were received from Professor John Richer, Dr Daniel Margocsy, Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant and Mr Gilbertas Umbrasunas

### 928) Membership of the Committee

A current list of members had been circulated and some amendments were identified.

The Committee noted that of those members whose terms end in December 2018:

Dr Deborah Longbottom (class a), Prof John Richer (class b), Dr Nicholas Holmes (class b) and Dr Tim Weil (class b) had been re-nominated; Dr Bill Nolan had been nominated to replace Dr James Keeler for the remainder of his term (until Dec 2018) and thereafter, for a full 3 year term.

Dr Nicholas Holmes was nominated as Chair of the Committee by Dr Deborah Longbottom, and seconded by Dr David Summers.

### 929) Minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 were approved.

### 930) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

There were none.

### 931) Reported and straightforward business

The Committee noted the following:

- Minutes of the meetings of the Biological Sciences Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018;
- Updated Calculator Notice;
- Part III Entry Requirements 2019-20;  
It was noted that there was an error in the wording of the Astrophysics criteria. The Secretary to amend.
- Part III Interdisciplinary Notice 2018-19 ;
- Additional costs for individual courses;  
The Secretary will make a small amendment to the cost of trip Q, to bring it into line with L, which is the same trip.
- Part III Physics and Master of Advanced Studies in Physics, 2018-19 Notice ;

- NST website 2018-19 – the Committee noted that most updates have been completed, examination guidance and information on the Part II subject allocation procedure would be updated in due course.
- Open Days 2018  
It was noted that the Open Days were again well attended. The main NST information stands were in the marquee on the Sidgwick site which was fairly spacious and had excellent footfall. Mornings were busier than afternoons when subject talks were held. The timetable allowed for visitors to plan their activities without having to move around Cambridge too much. There were three main focuses of activity, the Downing site with Biological tours and lectures, the Sidgwick site with information stands and talks, and the West Cambridge site for the Physical Sciences. Details of all NST departments that were open and/or running tours and lectures were included in the main programme.

The Committee noted that the Faculty of Biology would like to focus on offering more on the Downing site, sample lectures and laboratory tours for example. Dr Claire Michel, from the Faculty Office of Biology would be prepared to take on the extra work this would entail and would liaise with the Admissions Office. Further volunteers would be required to help on the Open Days themselves.

- The Committee noted that the Part IA Practical Allocation worked fairly smoothly this year, mainly because numbers were again down on previous years and several cohorts of students were allocated manually. 627 students were allocated places, down from 644 in 2017 (660 in 2016). A further 165 students were allocated manually (Computer Science Tripos, Maths Tripos, PBS Tripos students).

The Committee look forward to a full report at the next meeting.

- National Student Survey results – no NST subject met the response threshold.

### **932) Materials Science lecturing venue**

The Committee considered a request from the Materials Science Teaching Committee which had raised serious concerns about their current IA lecturing venue, the Physiology Lecture Theatre. As there are no other suitable venues available at the relevant time slots it was requested that the Management Committee consider a timetable change (specifically a swap with Earth Sciences to use the 11-12 Mon, Wed, Fri timetable slot) so that Materials Science could be housed in the Bristol-Myers Squibb lecture theatre.

There was a discussion around the various issues that this change might precipitate, particularly the timetable clashes that would result.

It was reported that some lecturers were unhappy with the facilities in the Physiology Lecture Theatre despite the programme of improvement which seemed to be only half finished. The Biology of Cells course organiser had resisted a move to the Bristol-Myers Squibb lecture theatre, because of the distance between it and the Zoology laboratory where the Biology of Cells practicals are held immediately after the lectures. There was a general discussion about travelling time between lecture theatres which is causing a considerable number of students to arrive late. Some lectures were being cut short as a result, one lecturer is reported to be giving 35

minute lectures. One suggestion was to use marshalls to shepherd students in and out of lecture theatres encouraging speed and efficiency of movement.

Another possibility is the re-opening of the Cockcroft lecture theatre which had been closed as part of the ongoing work on the New Museums site. This work has now been put in abeyance for 18-24 months, so there is the possibility of the Cockcroft re-opening temporarily.

**The Secretary to analyse how a Materials Science/Earth Sciences swap would affect the IA timetable. The Chair to liaise with Student Registry to discuss the possible re-opening of the Cockcroft and the availability of other large lecture venues.**

### **933) Part II Half-subject Materials Science**

The Committee heard that the Materials Science Teaching Committee would like to discontinue the option of offering Part II Half-Subject Materials Science as it has not been taken up for many years, and the Committee feels that it is no longer required.

**The Committee agreed that the course could be discontinued from 2019. The Secretary to make the necessary changes to the regulations.**

### **944) Proposed new BBS minor subject**

The Committee noted the proposal for a new BBS minor subject: Surgical and Radiological Anatomy. Dr Fulton and Dr Summers explained that this course had been designed to encourage students on the Medical Tripos to take BBS, but that Veterinary Tripos and Natural Sciences students may also want to take it. In the first year, numbers will be limited to 10, rising to 15-20 in following years.

### **945) Natural Sciences course video**

Laura Gillies (CAO) introduced this item, and the Committee discussed the possibility of creating a video to advertise the Natural Sciences Tripos on the CAO webpages.

The NST has obvious issues of size, scale and breadth it was decided that a small working group (including representation from both the Physical and the Biological sides of the Tripos) be convened to liaise with CAO.

Ms Gillies mentioned that CAO will also be recording videos for outreach purposes, with the possibility that two separate films (physical and biological) could be made. The focus of these videos would be student experience rather than course content.

**Dr Fulton and Dr Longbottom to convene and small working group to liaise with Cambridge Admissions Office.**

### **946) NST IB Subjects Fair**

Following on the success of last year's event, the Faculty of Biology will organise another NST Part IB Subjects Fair on Thursday 14th March (time tbc). The event will take place at the University Centre. Poster boards and tables will be available. All NST IB subjects are welcome to participate. We expect all Biological Sciences Subjects to be represented, and would be very happy to welcome HPS and Physical Sciences Subjects as well. For more information, contact Claire Michel ([Claire.michel@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Claire.michel@admin.cam.ac.uk)).

The Committee agreed that the subjects fair had been a useful event and thanked the Faculty of Biology, particularly Claire Michel, who had taken on the burden of organisation. Although biological subjects were fully represented only Earth Sciences represented the physical subjects. Professor Butterfield confirmed that Earth Sciences would again be in attendance this year.

The Committee agreed that greater participation of the physical subjects would be welcomed. Dr Nolan indicated that Chemistry would take part. Dr Longbottom volunteered to liaise with the Department of Physics.

The Committee was reminded that some Departments still run their own open days.

**947) Any other business**

i. NST Booklet

Laura Gillies introduced the newly designed NST booklet. CAO had surveyed students on the design and content and received a largely favourable response.

There was some discussion around the challenge of expressing the diversity of NST in a small booklet. Some Committee members felt that biological subjects were under-represented and, although the unique selling point of NST is its broadness, potential students should also be clear that they can follow a much narrower path if that is what they prefer.

A couple of minor amendments were suggested (including changing the dominant colour on the cover from red to blue).

The Committee then agreed that the booklet should be produced and updated professionally and that the Physical and Biological Schools should be canvassed to provide some funding for ongoing costs.

**Laura Gillies and her team to make minor amendments and price a professional printing package. Dr Fulton and Dr Longbottom to liaise with the relevant Schools.**

ii. Science Taster Day

Ms Gillies informed the Committee that a Science Taster Day would be held at the West Cambridge site on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Between 60-80 Year 12 students were expected to attend. The deadline for expressions of interest was 26<sup>th</sup> October.

**948) Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 2:15 pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in the Greaves Dixon Room, Department of Pathology, Tennis Court Road.