

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos at 2:15 pm on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 in the Greaves Room, Department of Pathology, Tennis Court Road.

Present: Dr Nick Holmes (in the Chair), Dr David Summers, Dr Deborah Longbottom, Dr Sandra Fulton, Dr Tim Weil, Dr Ulrich Schneider, Dr Hannah Clarke, Dr Daniel Margocsy, Dr Dee Scadden, Dr Jessica Gwynne, Professor James Elliott, Professor Harvey Reall, Jasvin Kaur (SBS Student Representative), Katie MacLeod (SPS Student Representative) and Jane Clare (Secretary).

Apologies were received from: Dr Bill Nolan, Dr Julia Davis, Professor Nick Butterfield and Dr Patrick Barrie.

### **1004) New Members**

The Chair welcomed Dr Hannah Clarke (PDN) and the new student representatives, Jasvin Kaur (SBS) and Katie MacLeod (SPS).

### **1005) Minutes**

The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### **1006) Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda**

#### Minute 997, 26Nov19 refers

Professor Elliott noted that the IA Scientific Computing working group continued to work on proposals. He requested that another academic with the relevant knowledge be permitted to join the group, naming Dr Alex Thom. Dr Deborah Longbottom agreed that the School of Physical Sciences would approach Dr Thom to ask whether he would be willing to join the group.

Professor Elliott also noted that if the course is to be offered in ipython, all classrooms would require network access.

#### Minute 999, 26Nov19 refers

The Chair provided an update on the possibility of a new IA Allocator system. A re-structure of business process at UIS has categorised policy areas into distinct portfolios. Communications about the IA allocator should now be directed to the owners of the Education Portfolio (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Prof Graham Virgo and Head of Education Services, Alice Benton). The Schools of Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences are in the process of writing to the portfolio owners to ask for extra resource.

#### Minute 1001i, 26Nov19 refers

Dr Dee Scadden reported on the IA Chair of Examiners report from 2018-19. She mentioned that issues with the Sports Hall as an examination venue remain unresolved. A party of IA Senior Examiners and the NST Administrator would be making a visit to the Sports Hall to ascertain whether the use of projectors would assist in announcing corrections to the students in what is a very large venue. The Head of Exams, Jenny Green, had indicated that she would be willing to consider the use of such equipment if it was supplied by the NST IA/IB Exam Boards.

**Action: The Secretary to arrange a visit to the Sports Hall and report back at the next meeting.**

### **1007) Reported and Straightforward Business**

The Committee approved the following:

- i. The minutes of the Biological Sciences Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019;
- ii. A Part III Earth Sciences regulation change to amend the duration of examinations for the six written papers from 1.5 to 2 hours.

**Action: The Secretary to arrange publication of the appropriate notice for ii.**

### **1008) Chemical Engineering Tripos Revisions**

The Committee heard that the Department of Chemical Engineering is proposing the creation of a new four year Tripos. A preliminary proposal had been circulated.

Chemical Engineering students would no longer take IA of the Natural Sciences Tripos, but would still want to take Maths and Chemistry.

Whilst the Committee was broadly content with the proposal, it was noted that these changes would affect IA allocations, primarily that there would be more students taking Chemistry to fit into the practical sessions.

The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal on condition that the effect on practical allocations was manageable.

### **1009) Allowances for Assessed Practicals**

The Committee noted a spreadsheet showing departmental approaches to allowances to assessed practicals. It showed that whilst good practice was widespread, each department had their own approach given the specific nature of each practical exam. The Committee decided that generic guidelines would not be helpful and that departments should continue with their own practices.

### **1010) Open Days 2019 Feedback**

The Committee noted the feedback from visitors to the Open Days. It was generally very positive. It was noted that potential students particularly value talking to current students (or graduate students that had taken NST as undergraduates). It was hoped that departments would encourage a similar turn out of staff and students at the 2020 Open Days.

### **1011) Any Other Business**

#### **Changes to IB Biological courses**

The Committee noted the proposal by the Faculty Board of Biology to change the examination regulations for some of its subjects. In the main, this entailed moving from three assessments to two.

The Committee approved the proposals.

**Action: The Secretary to forward the proposal to the next meeting of the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee for consideration.**

### **1012) Date of next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting will take place at 2:15 pm on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in the Dixon Room, Department of Pathology, Tennis Court Road.