COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Minutes

There was a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos at 2:15 pm on 11th May 2021 via Teams.

Present: Dr N Holmes (in the Chair), Dr Tim Weil, Dr Sandra Fulton, Dr David Summers, Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant, Dr Ulrich Schneider, Prof Harvey Reall, Dr Nik Cunniffe, Dr Jess Gwynne, Dr Deborah Longbottom, Dr Patrick Barrie, Prof Jim Haseloff, Dr Hannah Clarke, Dr Helen Curry, Mr Raymond Ramm, Ms Catherine Ngai, and Jane Clare (Secretary).

1064) Apologies were received from Dr Bill Nolan and Prof Nick Butterfield.

1065) Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2021 were approved.

1066) Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda

i. Minute 1055)ii 23 Feb refers, IA allocator update.
The Chair reported that Professor Ian Leslie, Director of UIS is in the process of hiring a business development manager to further the development of an alternative to the IA allocator. The alternative will be tested alongside the current allocator in Michaelmas 2021.

1067) Reported and Straightforward Business
The Committee noted the following:

i. Minutes of the Biological Sciences Committee meeting held on 10th March 2021.

ii. Part II restricted subject update – the CamSIS system would close for the first round of choices on 14th May 2021.

iii. The 2021-2022 Committee meeting dates, all to be held on Tuesdays at 2.15pm:

   12th October 2021
   23rd November 2021
   1st February 2022
   15th March 2022
   10th May 2022
   12th July 2022

1068) Revisions to the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos
Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant introduced the proposed changes and outlined the impact on the Natural Sciences Tripos.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

i. It is sensible to move students from NST to PBS to study Psychology.

ii. Timetabling against any biology or neurobiology subjects should be avoided.

iii. Some preparation work would be required to enable NST students to move to Part II PBS, although much recorded material is now available.

iv. It is intended that papers centred on mental health will be developed for Parts IB and II PBS with the aim of inspiring medics to go into psychiatry.
The Committee noted the amount of work that had gone into the proposal and offered its strong support.

1069) Mitigation for Part III Physics Students
Mr Raymond Ramm, the student representative for Physical Sciences, reported that he had been approached by several Part III Physics students who were concerned about the department’s approach to implementing cohort equity.

Dr Ulrich Schneider (Physics) explained that until final marks are available it is impossible to predict whether cohort equity would be required, but that it would be implemented if necessary. The department expects the same number of Class 1 and 2.1s to be achieved as in previous years. Dr Schneider and the wider examining team had already talked to some of the concerned students and intend to continue communicating with them. The Committee expressed both its understanding of student concern and its support for the department’s approach.

1070) Future Arrangements for NST Support
The Chair told the meeting that the current Secretary, Jane Clare would be leaving the role of NST Administrator in mid-July, after which NST support would be taken over by the relevant Schools.

The Committee thanked Mrs Clare and wished her every success in her new role.

1071) Open Days
The Committee noted that the 2021 University Open Days would again be held virtually. Departments are encouraged to engage using either pre-recorded content, or by taking part in the live Q&A sessions.

1072) Any Other Business
i. The Committee was asked to confirm whether pre-planned in person exams would go ahead since the recent government announcement that university students were permitted to return. Dr David Summers suggested that an announcement would shortly be made by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education.

ii. Dr Summers gave a brief update on proposed amendments to the University’s Data Retention policy, which would become available to examiners once approved by the General Board’s Education Committee. In essence, exam boards would be advised to keep examiner comments for a minimum of 6 months after the final meeting.

1073) Date of next meeting
The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place at 2:15 pm on Tuesday 13th July 2021 via Teams.