



Unreserved business minutes of College Council on 6 November 2024

Present:

Ex officio members	Master, Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar
Elected members	Professor Biagini, Dr Bordin, Dr Eaton, Professor Fruk, Dr Groom, Dr Harasimov, Mr Ireland, Dr Ranasinghe, Dr Sumnall, Dr Wilson-Lee
Student members	Ms Chen (MCR President), Ms Harrison (Student Representative), Mr Nicholas (JCR President), Ms Woods (JCR Vice-President)
In attendance	College Registrar (Council Secretary)

Introductory business

301 Welcome and apologies for absence

Council welcomed Ms Harrison (Student Representative). Ms Baskerville was on leave and Dr Öner sent apologies.

Council sent its congratulations to Ms Baskerville on the arrival of her baby.

302 Approval of agenda

The agenda was **approved**, subject to:

- Council agreeing to adjourn item 306 (2023-24 Accounts) until after the accounts had been presented to the Governing Body; and
- the addition of one item under Any Other Business to delegate authority for any financial approvals arising during the Bursar's forthcoming leave.

303 Declaration of interests

None.

304 Unreserved business minutes of 16 October 2024

(CC.2425/304)

Confirmed by circulation.

305 Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

(CC.2425/305)

Noted.

Decision items

306 2023-24 Accounts: Annual Report and Financial Statements, Letter of Representation and Auditors' Report (Audit Matters), and appointment of External Auditors for 2024-25 (Bursar)

(CC.2425/306)

This item was adjourned until after the accounts had been presented to the Governing Body and discussed. Council then reconvened to receive the accounts.

Council:

- (a) **approved** the 2023-24 Annual Report and Financial Statements, which were duly signed by the Master and Bursar;
- (b) **noted** the auditors' report (Audit Matters); and
- (c) **confirmed** the contents of the Letter of Representation and **authorised** the Bursar to sign on behalf of the College.

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, Council **agreed** to appoint Peters Elworthy & Moore (PEM) as external auditors for 2024-25.

307 SSSU Budget and Subscriptions 2024-25 (JCR & MCR Presidents) (CC.2425/307)

The JCR President reported that SSSU's plans to run down its reserves in recent years had resulted in a projected deficit for 2025-26. Discussions between SSSU, the Bursar and Head of Finance had resulted in a temporary solution to address the immediate deficit issue, by deducting £2,000 from the sportsground recharges for 2024-25.

Council **approved** the:

- (a) 2024-25 SSSU Budget, subject to £2,000 being deducted from the sportsground recharge to address the projected deficit in the reserves, and
- (b) SSSU Subscriptions for 2024-25.

Council **noted** that the Bursar, Head of Finance and SSSU Officers would meet in Lent Term 2025 to work out a sustainable solution for the reserves for 2025-26 and onwards.

Action: Bursar, Head of Finance, SSSU Officers

308 Student Bar Improvement Fund Proposal and 2024-25 Budget (JCR & MCR Presidents) (CC.2425/308)

Council, noting that:

- (a) the proposal to reduce the improvement fund contribution from 10% to 5% of sales was for 2024-25 only, during which time no major repairs were scheduled; and
 - (b) the final decision was a matter for the Bar Committee
- endorsed** the Bar Improvement Fund Proposal and Budget, both for 2024-25.

309 Risk Register (Registrar) (CC.2425/309)

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee, Council **approved** the 2023-24 Risk Register.

310 Free reserves target, including Finance & Needs Committee unreserved business minutes from 14 October 2024 (Bursar) (CC.2425/310)

On the recommendation of the Finance & Needs Committee, Council **approved** a target free reserves figure of £10.24m for 2024-25, **noting** that the actual free reserves as at 30 June 2024 were £13.4m.

311 Use of future unrestricted donations and legacies (Bursar) (CC.2425/311)

On the recommendation of the Finance & Needs Committee, Council **approved** the proposals for the use of future unrestricted donations and legacies for inclusion in the Donations Solicitation and Acceptance Policy.

312 Annual Prevent accountability and data return (Vice-Master) (CC.2425/312)

On the recommendation of the Prevent Committee, Council **approved** the annual accountability and data return, which was signed by the Master.

313 May Week 2025 Event: start of Michaelmas Term update (JCR President) (CC.2425/313)

Council, noting that all May Week Event Committee members had been appointed, **approved** the proposal to hold a garden party for between 550-650 guests on the first Saturday of May Week 2025. Further details would be brought to Council once the May Week Event Committee had begun to discuss operational details with the Domestic Bursar.

314 Consequential updates to Regulations (Registrar) (CC.2425/314)

On the recommendation of the Statutes & Ordinances Committee, Council **approved** amendments to Student Regulations consequential to Governing Body and Council decisions taken in Easter Term 2024.

315 Fellowship Committee Terms of Reference (Vice-Master) (CC.2425/315)

Council **approved** amendments to the Fellowship Committee Terms of Reference.

316 Data Protection Group membership (Registrar) (CC.2425/315)

On the recommendation of the IT Committee, Council **approved** the Data Protection Group membership: the Registrar (College Data Protection Lead), Bursar (Trustee), Head of IT and Head of Finance.

Policy items

317 Health and Safety Policy – annual review (Bursar) (CC.2425/317)

Approved on the recommendation of the Health and Safety Committee, and the annual Health and Safety Policy Statement was signed by the Master.

318 Food Safety Policy – new (Bursar) (CC.2425/318)

Approved on the recommendation of the Health and Safety Committee.

319 Display Screen Equipment Policy – 3-yearly review (Bursar) (CC.2425/319)
Approved on the recommendation of the Health and Safety Committee.

320 Anti-Bribery and Fraud Policy (Registrar) (CC.2425/320)
Approved on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

321 Cyber Incident Response Plan – annual review (Bursar) (CC.2425/321)
Approved on the recommendation of the IT Committee.

322 Appropriate use of email: supplementary guidance (Registrar) (CC.2425/322)
Approved on the recommendation of the IT Committee as an appendix to the IT & Communications Systems Policy.

323 Internal Contacts Management Procedure – new (Registrar) (CC.2425/323)
Approved on the recommendation of the IT Committee.

324 Acceptable Use of the Network Policy – 3-yearly review (Bursar) (CC.2425/324)
Approved on the recommendation of the IT Committee, subject to:

- removal of the word ‘extremely’ when referring to large amounts of data;
- addition of an explanation that transferring large amounts of data could trigger an investigation into network usage; and
- the policy being reformatted in the correct template.

Action: Deputy Head of IT

Information items

325 Inter-collegiate business and other relevant issues (All) (CC.2425/325)
Heads of Houses

- The University’s review of teaching and workloads was underway; and
- The final report of the University’s review of provision for students with disabilities was nearly ready.

Senior Tutors’ Committee

- Further discussion of proposed new arrangements for undergraduate admissions process was held. Concerns about centralisation measures were heard, and updated proposals were to be brought through all colleges’ governance structures for reporting back by 14 February 2025; **Action: Senior Tutor**
- The Committee had discussed the University’s review of provision for students with disabilities and had asked for recognition of the resource implications, particularly for academics, for making all requested adjustments; and

- The formal College Transfers Panel had been disbanded from the end of 2023-24, following a review which had determined that these arrangements had not resulted in a net benefit from the prior, more informal, structure.

Bursars' Committee

- The cost-of-living pay award had been agreed and details were in the process of being communicated to non-academic staff and directly-employed Fellows.

326 Investments Annual Report 2023-24 (Bursar) (CC.2425/326)

The Annual Report was a new initiative to give Council a more comprehensive overview of performance across a longer period. The Bursar drew attention to the substantial increase in the value of the College's stocks and shares portfolio in 2023-24 which accounted for most of the increase in the total net assets of the College as at 30 June 2024, albeit partially offset by a small drop in the value of its commercial property.

The annual report was **received**.

327 Review of Investment Manager (Bursar) (CC.2425/327)

Council **endorsed** the proposal of the Investment Committee that the planned review of the investment manager would be deferred until Lent and Easter terms 2025 due to the volume of other business.

328 2023-24 Undergraduate Admissions Report (Deputy Senior Tutor) (CC.2425/328)

The Deputy Senior Tutor drew attention to concerns about the reduced breadth of the direct applicant population, details of which had been reported to Council during 2023-24, and that the College's Widening Participation targets had been only narrowly missed.

The report was **received**.

329 Forthcoming Undergraduate Admissions Round (Interim Admissions Director) (CC.2425/329)

The Interim Admissions Director requested assistance, particularly from Directors of Studies, Fellows and student ambassadors, to encourage more direct applications. The College's public profile was not particularly high, and improvements to student facilities were needed.

Council members requested a subject-by-subject breakdown of applicant numbers in recent years, and assessment against Tripos performance to determine if the College had reason for concern and if investment in specific initiatives, such as subject societies, had an effect on direct applications; the Deputy Senior Tutor cautioned a simple solution was unlikely. The JCR President reported that, due to its efforts to run down its reserves, SSCSU would no longer be able to support subject societies to the same extent as it had in recent years.

The report was **received** and Council **noted** that the Admissions Team was preparing an action plan for further consideration at Academic Committee and Council.

Action: Interim Admissions Director

330 Postgraduate Admissions: 2024-25 Entry and Admissions Strategy (Dr Groom) (CC.2425/330)

Dr Groom (Postgraduate Tutor) reported that the postgraduate admissions landscape continued to be similar to that of recent years, with a lower number of direct applications. One of the main challenges, experienced across the sector, was the decline in PhD applicants compared with Masters students, and the consequential impact on continuity within the postgraduate community. Another challenge was the level of resources available for providing reasonable adjustments, studentships and financial bursaries to support postgraduates. Determining the College's preferred postgraduate community size and shape would form part of the Vision & Strategy: Academic Excellence theme.

The report was **received**.

331 2024 Final Tripos Results (including measures to sustain and improve performance) (Senior Tutor) (CC.2425/331)

The Senior Tutor reported that the overall set of results was in line with the College's close tracking of the median, though slightly below rather than above. The previous programme of reviewing all subjects annually had moved, from 2024-25, to a rolling programme of reviews over a longer period, dedicating time for more granular discussion.

The College's ethos for celebrating academic achievement, recognising individual ability and measuring percentile rankings over a student's journey through a degree course, rather than rewarding specific Tripos performance levels, had been recognised positively in the student press. The investment in a wellbeing programme was making a significant difference by increasing both the transparency and the supportiveness of the process of intermission and resumption of studies; while the college's record in course completion was already very high, in line with the rest of the collegiate university, these improvements should also show through in stronger degree results for students whose career had included a period of intermission.

The report was **received**.

Reports from committees

332 Development Committee 10 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/332)

The minutes were **received**.

333 Health & Safety Committee 14 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/333)

The minutes were received.

334 Statutes & Ordinances Committee 22 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/334)

The minutes were received.

335 IT Committee 24 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/335)

The minutes were received.

336 Investment Committee 30 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/336)

The minutes were received.

337 Prevent Committee 31 October 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/337)

The minutes were received.

Other business

338 Any other business

Temporary Financial Approvals Process 7-22 November 2024

Council **delegated** authority to the Head of Finance to sign in place of the Bursar any financial approvals which came due between 7 and 22 November 2024 while the Bursar was on leave. In the case of any approvals for which the Head of Finance was already a signatory, Council **delegated** authority to the Master to sign in place of the Bursar during the same period.

There was no further business.

339 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 2pm in the William Mong Hall.