

## **Sidney Sussex College**

The Minutes of  
**COLLEGE COUNCIL**  
Held via Zoom at 2pm  
on Wednesday 1 December 2021

### **In attendance:**

#### **Senior Members Present**

The Master, Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar, Dr Bordin, Dr Doran, Professor Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Dr Fulda, Dr Garcia-Mayoral, Dr Groom, Dr Oner, Dr Ranasinghe, Professor Reynolds, Professor Sepulchre, Dr Stasch, Dr Sumnall

#### **Student Members Present**

Mr Lowry, Ms Dadiya, Ms Kazani, Ms Mahmood

#### **Also Present**

Ms Harkin (College Registrar/Council Secretary)  
Mr Lu (JCR President from Lent Term 2022)

## **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

### **1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS**

#### **1.1 Apologies for absence**

Ms Kazani sent apologies for missing the first half hour of the meeting. There were no other apologies of absence.

The Master welcomed Mr Lu, as an observer, prior to him taking over as the new SSCSU President from Lent term 2022.

#### **1.2 Approval of Agenda**

The following changes were made to the agenda:

- An item was added to Matters Arising relating to 2.2a of the 10-11-21 minutes.
- Items 2.2a and 2.2b were removed from the agenda
- Item 2.2c was starred.
- Item 2.2e was unstarred.
- Item 3.1a was removed.

#### **1.3 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the Meeting of Council on 10 November 2021 (CC.211110.1.4)**

The minutes were confirmed.

##### **a) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

###### **2.2a Final Arts panel member**

The Master informed Council that Dr Anna Schneider had agreed to serve on the panel.

###### **4.1 Lateral flow tests and college events**

The Bursar informed Council that the topic had been discussed with the Operations working group and it had been agreed to communicate to the College community, the importance of individuals carrying out a lateral flow test before a College event.

She reported that the College had been notified of a couple of positive cases in relation to people who attended the Carol Concerts on Sunday. She had met with the University's Covid Incident Response team today and had received reassurance that the actions the College had subsequently taken were the right ones.

The Response team did not think that the remaining College events of the term needed to be cancelled at this stage so long as appropriate mitigation in the form of ventilation, face coverings and lateral flow tests were in place.

## **2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

### **2.1 Master's Business**

#### **a) Intercollegiate business**

The Master informed Council that the Senior Tutor's Committee had met last week and discussed the following substantive items which will affect the College:

- The Office for Students has appointed a new director for fair access and participation and that there would be a renegotiation of Access and Participation plan.
- The Suicide Prevention and Response strategy is being submitted for approval to the University Council at its next meeting in December.
- The Senior Tutors Committee has set up a working group to review guidance on paid work during term time.

## 2.2 Senior Tutor's Business

### a) Pastoral report (2020-21)

This item was removed from the agenda and the report will be submitted to Council in the Lent term.

### b) Student Support Report (2020-21)

This item was removed from the agenda and the report will be submitted to Council in the Lent term.

### c) \*Annual Director of Music Report (2020-21) (CC.211201.2.2c)

Council **noted** the report.

### d) Mid-term break proposal

#### (i) Consultation paper (CC.211201.2.2di)

#### (ii) Consultation response (CC.211201.2.2dii)

The Senior Tutor referred to the discussion of this proposal at Education & Pastoral Care Committee, a record of which is included in the minutes (Council agenda item 3.7a). He said that students would speak for themselves but a number of points had been raised:

- Most fundamentally, is the issue of the time profile of term, or the workload and consequent intensity of term? This relates to the issue of weekend expectations as well.
- Mission creep: would the time really be ring-fenced for rest and relaxation when people (including supervisors) are having to push meetings already to the very edge of the day/term?
- Pastoral workload. The proposal perhaps would result in an increase in the burden of work of those supporting students pastorally. .
- The potential for socio-economic divisiveness.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- The JCR President said that students supported the reading week or a reduction in the intensity of the eight week term. However, he made the point that Triposes work in different ways and he felt that the consultation period should be extended to explore this properly.
- Some Council members reported that academics in their subject areas were not supportive of the proposal; another member however felt that a break would provide a better learning environment for students who were under extreme pressure in his subject area, so long as the time was protected from an additional work burden.
- It was felt that if the proposal went ahead a mid-term break should align with school half-terms

- Although student experience should take centre stage, it needed to be recognised that the proposal would have an adverse impact on academics in the sense that a research week in the summer would be lost
- There were various practical issues of other activities (e.g. Alumni weekend, admissions interviews) being affected if term was extended

In summary, it was agreed:

- The consultation response was delegated to Education & Pastoral Committee (which included the student representatives) who would survey the Fellowship to obtain their views.

**Action: Senior Tutor and EdCom**

**e) Safeguarding policy (CC.211201.2.2e)**

The Master introduced the item by noting concerns from Dr Lambert about the policy.

The Senior Tutor explained the background to the policy's recent review, making the following points:

- The review had been undertaken to update the college's practices in this area and bring them into line with best practice elsewhere. The issues involved were complex and there were a variety of arrangements in place across colleges, which the HR Manager had specifically investigated for the original policy approved by Council at the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- There was a tension between the commitments of Fellows on the one hand, and the rising demands of formal compliance and external expectations of increasing professionalisation
- The Senior Tutor apologised for not having consulted with the Dean on the issue, as he had done with the rest of the pastoral team, but he was grateful to the pastoral team, for raising several of the points highlighted in Dr Lambert's note, and these had been discussed during one of their team meetings.
- The main themes of that discussion, and in particular the importance of distinguishing between DBS checks for specific roles as discretionary good practice as opposed to a legal requirement had been taken into account by the Registrar in re-drafting the policy.
- EdCom had discussed the list of roles which ought to carry DBS checks as a matter of good practice, and made one amendment to it. It had also acknowledged that drawing the boundaries was an imperfect science, and that the list would likely be reviewed on the basis of experience etc.

In discussion, Council members made the following points:

- Safeguarding is about best practice and not just about legal obligations, and this distinction is a useful one ]
- Safeguarding is also not just about DBS checks; it is wider and disclosures get made to people who would not necessarily have been DBS checked; they need to know how and to be equipped to respond to these situations.

Council **agreed** to:

- provisionally approve the policy as submitted to them
- task Education and Pastoral Committee to:
  - review further the list of roles for whom it would be considered good practice to DBS check, giving specific consideration to the possibility that Directors of Studies should be included;
  - make explicit the criteria by which the list is arrived at (e.g. in the case of the HR Manager);
  - consider how to start developing an appropriate safeguarding culture
  - come back to Council with an update in Lent Term.

**f) \*\*P7 Fitness to Study regulation (CC.211201.2.2f)**

Council **approved** the amendment. However, it was noted that any future amendments should be submitted for review and finalisation of drafting to Statute & Ordinances Committee before going to Council.

## **2.3 Bursar's Business**

**a) Risk Horizon Scan for 2022 (CC.211201.2.3a)**

The Bursar introduced the paper and asked Council if they had any comments on the College's current risks or any new emerging risks which might impact on the College in 2022. A query was raised as to whether staff mental health was recognised as a risk and the Bursar confirmed that it was.

**b) Q1 Financial Forecast update (CC.211201.2.3b)**

The Bursar explained to Council that as a result of changes to the forecast operational income and expenditure for 2021-22, the forecast operating deficit has improved by £0.7 million to £1.5 million. The movement is accounted for by an increase in the forecast income for conference and student accommodation, and saving in operational expenditure from salary/stipend costs as a result of carrying staff vacancies and a reduction in the budgeted USS employer contribution.

**c) \*\*Appeals – Michaelmas 2021 (CC.211201.2.3c)**

Council **approved** the recommendations of the Appeals Committee.

**2.4 Development Director's Business**

There was no business.

**2.5 Steward's Business**

There was no business.

**2.6 Student Business**

**a) Revised May Ball proposal (CC.211201.2.6a)**

The JCR President provided an update on the queries raised by Council about the proposal at its last meeting. He explained that the revised proposal set out the areas of the College grounds/premises which were to be used for the Ball, and also included a section on the underwriting of losses –the Committee would be taking out insurance and that SSCSU would underwrite any other losses which he envisaged would be small.

The Bursar confirmed that she had spoken to the Presidents of the May Ball Committee and that the Committee was receiving support from the Domestic Bursar. She was supportive of the proposal.

The Master proposed that the detail of the proposal be delegated to the College's Operations Working Group for further discussion when and if necessary. Council **agreed** with this suggestion.

**3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**3.1 Chapel Committee**

a) This item was removed from the agenda.

**3.2 Library Committee**

a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.2a)

Council **noted** the minutes

**3.3 Investment Committee**

a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.3a)

Council **noted** the minutes

(i) \*\*Appendix to the Investment Policy  
(CC.211201.3.3a)

Council **approved** the updated Appendix.

**3.4 IT steering group**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 11 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.4a)

Council **noted** the minutes

- (i) \*\*Terms of Reference (CC.211201.3.4ai)  
Council **approved** the terms of reference.

**3.5 Development Committee**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 12 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.5)

Council **noted** the minutes

**3.6 Buildings & Environment Committee**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 15 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.6a)

Council **noted** the minutes

- (i) \*\*Terms of Reference (CC.211201.3.6b)  
Council **approved** the terms of reference.

**3.7 Education & Pastoral Care Committee**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 17 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.7)

Council **noted** the minutes

**3.8 Staff Liaison Committee**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.8a)

Council **noted** the minutes

**3.9 Finance & Needs Committee**

- a) \*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 22 November 2021  
(CC.211201.3.9a)

Council **noted** the minutes

- (i) \*\*Equal Opportunities Policy (CC.211201.3.9ai)  
Council **approved** the policy.

- (ii) \*\*HR Committee Terms of Reference (CC.211201.3.9aaii)  
Council **approved** the terms of reference.

**4. OTHER BUSINESS****4.1 Any other business**

There was no other business.

The Master thanked Mr Lowry for his contribution as a Council member. Council looked forward to working with Mr Lu as the new JCR President from Lent term 2022.

#### **4.2 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 26 January 2022