

Sidney Sussex College

The Minutes of
COLLEGE COUNCIL
Held in the William Mong Hall
on Wednesday 4 May 2022

In attendance:

Senior Members Present

The Master, Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Dr Bordin, Dr Doran, Dr Groom,
Prof Eilstrup Sangiovanni, Dr Ranasinghe, Prof Reynolds, Prof Sepulchre, Dr
Stasch, Dr Sumnall

Student Members Present

Ms Dadiya, Ms Kazani, Mr Lu, Ms Mahmood

Also Present

Ms Harkin (College Registrar/Council Secretary)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Bursar; Dr Fulda; Dr Garcia-Mayoral;
and Dr Oner.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved subject to the addition of an item of AOB
relating to the feasibility of hosting a Ukrainian refugee.

1.3 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the Meeting of Council on 16 March 2022 (CC.220504.1.4)

The minutes were confirmed.

- a) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda
None

2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

2.1 Master's Business

- a) Intercollegiate business

The Master reported on the key items discussed at the meeting of the Colleges Committee on the 19 March:

- Size and shape of the University – the University has agreed an expansion of one hundred postgraduate students, with Sidney agreeing to increase its postgraduate intake by the respective pro rata amount. Four colleges intended a larger expansion but had concerns about their investment in additional accommodation, should the University not be able to deliver on the recruitment or if the other colleges took more students than had initially been foreseen. In view of these concerns, a financial backstop had been agreed with compensation paid if this scenario materialised.
- University's Ukrainian taskforce – the taskforce had been set up to ascertain what resources were available to support refugees. The Ukrainian government are slightly concerned about a brain drain from the country and for this reason, there should be consideration of support which would help retain academics in Ukraine.
- Government's auger review - the main effect on Sidney is the fact that the regulated fee will be kept constant with no rises to take account of inflation. There is also unlikely to be any new money in the Spring budget review for universities. The post qualifications admissions proposal has however been shelved indefinitely.
- Congregations for Easter term and the long vacation – there is a backlog of students who have not yet had a graduation event and some planning issues in relation to these. The intention is, however, that by the end of the year, this back log should be gone.
- PG funding proposals – the consultation looks as if it will produce a set of uniform proposals for full funding of postgraduate study.

b) College Calendar (CC.220504.2.1b)

The Master noted that the committee chairs and secretaries had all had the opportunity to comment on the timing and venue of their meetings so we should be close to a final version of the College Calendar which will be signed off at the next Council meeting.

2.2 Senior Tutor's Business

a) Examination term – Education and Pastoral arrangements

The Senior Tutor outlined the arrangements for additional study spaces this term, adding that the JCR were also providing additional space. He said that the Mong Hall was being made available during the exam period as a space for students to take online exams if they do not want to sit these in their rooms. The Head of Student Wellbeing was focusing on offering time limited short breaks/provision for students

during the exam period. One issue that had arisen was in relation to a late change in exam format for the Natural Sciences due to technical issues, but this was outside the College's control. A Council member raised a concern about an increase in gatherings and consequent noise on the Blundell terrace. The Senior Tutor informed Council that he had made students aware of the College's policy relating to events and gathering in the Easter Term so they should be aware of the restrictions and need to be considerate of others studying. However, if this is a specific issue that needs further action, he would discuss with the Fellow concerned outside of the meeting.

2.3 Bursar's Business

a) COVID update

The Master provided a COVID update to Council on the Bursar's behalf. He reported that the University's COVID Gold team had held its last meeting within the context of infection rates falling and no widespread issues at the moment. Likewise, the College had held its last COVID operations working group on the 20 April. The group had noted the Government's new COVID guidance and its main message that COVID infection, going forward, should be managed the same way as other respiratory infections – i.e., if you have symptoms, stay at home, and avoid contact with others. The group's specific decision in relation to Sidney was that the spread of communicable diseases will be the responsibility of the health and safety committee going forward and that that committee will report directly to Council. All remaining Covid protocols in the College are lifted so that there is now no requirement to test regularly or report infections to the College. Space capacity limits across the College have been lifted, as has visitor restrictions, although exam term restrictions in relation to visitors are currently in place. Face coverings are a personal choice, and all COVID signage throughout the College has been removed.

2.4 Development Director's Business

There was no business.

2.5 Steward's Business

There was no business.

2.6 Student Business

a) JCR report and plan for Easter term (CC.220504.2.6a)

The JCR President outlined key activity from his report, which Council was interested to note.

b) MCR report and plan for Easter term (CC.220504.2.6b)

The MCR President outlined key activity from her report, which Council was interested to note.

c) Proposal for May Ball Additional Capacity (CC.220504.2.6c)
The JCR President explained the reason behind the new proposal, which was that, as the Master's lawn would now be available for the event, the May Ball committee would like to increase the number of tickets so that they could use the additional revenue raised to outsource the creative work for the event. The benefits of this would be the professionalism of the work produced, as well as release of additional study time for the May Ball organisers.
Council **approved the proposal.**

3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

There were no reports.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Any other business

a) Hosting a Ukrainian refugee

The Master explained that a Fellow had asked whether the College could host a refugee composer from Ukraine; the Fellow wanted to know whether Council would support this as a feasible proposition. The Master reported various efforts and enquiries to see if this would be possible. Two major issues have arisen; the first is whether it is possible for an institution to sponsor a Ukrainian refugee through a Government scheme; at the minute, it does not look as if this is possible despite the lobbying of Government by universities for the support of academic refugees. The second issue relates to the question as to whether hosting a refugee would require additional funding to be made available, and if so whether this could be sourced internally. At the moment the budget is not known, although a refugee could be supported in the first instance through accommodation, and perhaps some meals; a stipend on the other hand would be much more expensive. Enquiries are being made to see whether some of the money that the University put towards supporting the Ukrainian crisis could be available to the colleges. Enquiries are also being made of the Council for Refugee Academics.

In discussion the point was made that the scale of need of refugees was large and that it might be useful to explore broader approaches to supporting, alongside the pooling of resources across the inter-collegiate university, rather than one college focusing efforts on just one individual. It was recognised that the university and colleges should think about what they can do structurally for at risk academics in the longer term – e.g., offering non-stipendiary post graduateships to refugees. In the meantime, it was agreed that the College would continue to explore the feasibility of hosting a Ukrainian refugee and report back with more details at the next Council meeting.

- b) Finally, the Master noted that it was Ms Dadiya last Council meeting as the MCR representative; Council members thanked her for all her work.

4.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 25 May 2022 in the William Mong Hall following Governing Body