

CONFIDENTIAL

COLLEGE MEETING

Wednesday 15 February 2017 in the Munro Room at 1330hrs

MINUTES

OBSERVERS: Dr Walker, Dr Tait and Dr Escartin Esteban

JUNIOR MEMBERS: Mr Levin, Mr Albrow-Owen, Miss Whitehead and Mr Collins

NOTE-TAKER: Mrs Pope

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

I THE FUTURE OF THE COLLEGE

The Strategy review group reports (CM3629) and Size of the College documents (CM3626) were noted. The President invited the chairs to introduce their reports contained within CM3629 and invited questions from the Governing Body.

The Senior Tutor proposed that we should grow the undergraduate community slightly. Dr Thompson said this is currently 155 per year – up to a few years ago, we were required to take 142 from within the EU, anyone outside the EU was in addition to this figure and we routinely made 15-20 offers. Since the restriction has disappeared, we have not reduced the number of offers from the EU and does not feel we should do so.

The President elaborated on the space issue, noting that we have identified a problem on the “main site” promise – he had been nervous that this promise was in danger of being broken as early as next year although this problem appears to have been resolved. The key issue is that we have a significant number of inter-mitters who come back and end up on the main site for 4 or 5 years. With next year’s new cohort plus inter-mitters we could easily fill up the main site hence creating an accommodation issue.

Following a request from Prof. Cebon that the discussion needed to focus on strategy, Dr Gog summarised the analysis contained in the three models which had been prepared following a request at the December Governing Body meeting.

Dr Gog reported that the first page presents an alternative as to where we are currently with the present number of undergraduates which includes inter-mitters and exchange students – this has not increased recently. The first model is based on returns from every DOS and is not thought to be ideal – there is no appetite for this, she said this could not be achieved and have all subjects at what DOS define as optimal sizes. Model 2 is to keep every subject and have at least 2 of every subject – the medium and large subjects will be held below optimum and our current policy is

not far from this. The draw-back is keeping numbers down in certain subjects. Model 3 is pruning down subjects and playing to our strengths, we allow those subjects to go whereby we are not getting applications or we do not have the staff. The best approach to small subjects would be to make a coalition with other colleges, this would give us protection, should some students wish to switch to another subject. She added this would have to be carefully reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

The President thanked Dr Gog for putting together this document. A discussion followed on issues such as size of the Fellowship, the ratio of fellows to students and specifically the ratio of fellows to undergraduates.

Prof. Menon asked what Dr Gog envisaged as a fall back scheme to ensure we did not get set in our ways, should something new come along in terms of opportunities – eg a completely new subject area develops. Dr Gog said that Model 3 gives us more flexibility and should be reviewed annually.

Dr Milgate asked how model 3 would work, ie how would the College strike an agreement with other colleges on subjects? Dr Thompson says there are 6 colleges which currently offer all subjects. Prof. Scott suggested it might be easier to think about the cohesion across colleges. Prof. Rex added, given that only 6 colleges offer all subjects, the argument of acting unilaterally fails. Dr Crowley said we need to preserve our right to act unilaterally.

Mr Harling asked the JCR representatives how important the fact that we offered all subjects was to them when they were applying – Mr Levin replied that he did not see this as much of an influence.

The importance of diversity of subjects and community was discussed. Dr Kelly felt it was important to retain small subjects and that any pruning would need careful expertise.

Mr Collins, JCR, felt having a strong subject expertise and departmental expertise was important, and suggested we identify what Queens' is great at and invest in how this can draw admissions.

Dr Walker commented that the Fellowships were supposed to be discussing strategy, not how we do it before having agreed the strategy first. He also felt we are neglecting the one issue that has driven us into an accommodation crisis – which is not a change in number of students being admitted; what has changed is the higher proportion of inter-mitters, who instead of taking up 3 years on the main site, they will take 4 or 5 years. We have a strictly limited number of beds on main site, and having that volatile number of inter-mitters returning is what seems to have caused the accommodation crisis. He felt that the question is not about academic make-up, it is more about reducing the numbers being admitted in order to make head room into our three year main site commitment. We need to take a caring approach on these students by deliberately reducing the numbers we admit.

Dr Kelly said he agreed with the need to take a caring approach but we need to be realistic on inter-mitters. We must assume they are fit and able to come back, but this does not necessarily mean they need rooms on main site. He added that if we did decide to lose some subjects, this would not be an attractive option when trying to recruit fellows.

Prof. Menon asked if there might be an option to increase capacity on rooms and increase fellowships. Mr Spence said the reality is we may be a large college in terms of student numbers, yet we are approximately 20th in terms of financial resources therefore given the size we are, we are trading significantly above our capacity in financial terms. The college is significantly under-endowed and this must be taken into consideration. Whilst progress is being made, there is no way we can make a significant expansion – every undergraduate student costs the college which is supported by the endowment. When asked if there was scope to change this, he said that teaching associates costs us an inter-collegiate rate, whereas fellows have significant overheads of top of this. He suspected that we could not reduce the number of undergraduates whilst keeping the same amount of fellows.

Dr Crowley said we need to see more data on the number of inter-mitters when making these decisions. Mr Spence said this data is only available since the 2012/13 academic year.

Dr Campbell wondered whether there is a case for growth or whether the case is to stay the same size.

Dr Milgate said that these numbers are useful but we need to devote more resources to a larger graduate body than we have been used to. 150 works well assuming we have 20 graduates on site – however, when inter-mitters go and return, we end up forcing those graduates off site and we need to think about avoiding this in future. Staying where we are in the size of undergraduates is not compatible with everything else which feeds into the numbers of undergraduate admissions. We are ranked 24th in terms of ratios of fellows to undergraduates - the constraints are real in terms of teaching resources, accommodation resources and difficult in relation to the graduate community and the delivery of this community's coherence. He felt there was a strong case for tweaking undergraduate numbers to achieve our aspirations, but staying where we are is not compatible given the existing resources.

Prof. Dixon felt a sensible place to start would be to have a discussion and agreement on the size of the college as a policy decision. As an example, start with 3 years undergraduates on the main site, then 20 graduates on the main site – this by definition defines our principal. If we can start with this, this means our admission numbers this year would change in light of that.

Dr Crowley said we need to understand that if we are thinking about trimming numbers, what this will mean will be trimming across the board in all subjects and everyone must be prepared to understand these consequences.

Prof. Nickl said that in the growing post-doc community we already rely on teaching which is not provided by fellows, but by those seeking an involvement in colleges which means teaching for current numbers can be maintained. Therefore the ratio might not concern us so much if we recruit TA's and post-docs. He added that he was against trimming the number of undergraduates.

Dr Kelly said that post-docs and TA's are under discussion by the working group.

The President said that we have focused so far on two proposals – (a) the proposal that we should admit 155 undergraduates per year, which is the current strategy, with the issues of intermissions which has led to a current number of 523 undergraduates in residence. (b) The counter proposal is that we should aim to have a target of 500 undergraduates in residence and the admissions numbers be adjusted to achieve that target.

Mr Spence reminded the Governing Body that the decision to house 20 graduate students on the main site was made in 2006 when the Cripps Fourth floor was built. The decision was that we would have no less than 20 graduates on main site – yet this year we have just 4 graduates living on the main site. In 2007 there were 30. It is important to have a small core of its membership on the main site. The idea that somehow the graduate number is a balancing figure was not the way it was considered in 2006.

Dr Crowley reiterated that Fellows need to understand what we are all committing to – it will mean that fellows will not get the number of students they want, and it would be wrong to sign up to something and not be prepared to accept those consequences when it comes to the next admissions round.

The President summed up the discussion so far – he asked the Fellowship to reflect on the issues raised and that they will return for a short and focussed discussion at the next meeting before making a decision. In the meantime, if anyone requires any more detailed information, they should let the President know.

Dr Muldrew, Dr Allison and Dr Bekinstein left the meeting

There followed a discussion on graduate numbers. Prof. Hall summarised her paper, suggesting these figures give us the trend, rather than day to day analysis, adding that her impression was that we are over trading on the business finance economics cluster which dominates the student community.

The MCR President said for a lot of graduates, the issue of living on the main site does not appeal to them – the type of accommodation available does not really suit

them. Having said that, he felt there are enough graduates who do want to live on the main site and therefore feels this is important. Where there are no graduates on the main site, this does not send a positive message about inclusion in the college community. He said there seems to be a critical mass in University communities as to actual numbers needed to forge a social community - certain colleges do not but Queens' does have a strong social graduate community. He felt that the actual size of the graduate community is what appeals to prospective applicants. He felt the critical point to note is that we seem to be at limits as to what the college can practically provide in terms of accommodation, adding that a number of incoming graduates were not offered accommodation and needed to apply for their own – this does not send out positive message and is an important consideration. Assuming we have resources we have at the moment, accommodation has to be at forefront of discussion.

Prof. Terentjev left the meeting

Prof. Nickl asked whether we ought to be treating one-year and research students differently. Mr Spence said that costs are not hypothecated. What is likely to happen as departments invest more resources in supporting graduates, is that the college fee element will be negotiated out. Dr Walker said that if that were to be the case, there would be no motivation for any college to take graduate students.

The President moved the discussion back to the actual size and make-up of the graduate community and a discussion followed about how the different type of students should be treated differently. Prof. Hall said that a much larger proportion have no interest in college accommodation, they are coming back from having careers and the idea of living in college accommodation is not appealing but it does appeal to others. She said that it is difficult to get any one year students getting involved in college and agreed that we should not treat master and PhD students as the same 'being' - they have different needs and often this makes the cohort very different. The value of the interaction is quite significant.

Dr Denyer Willis said there had been a discussion in the graduate review ad-hoc committee about one-year graduates – because they are coming for a short period, what a college can offer is a real value add-on. Therefore the issue of accommodation is important – it is an attractive option to rival scholarships which we cannot offer.

Prof. Menon said that many clinical students would not want main site accommodation. They have a less rich experience in Cambridge to those who do get involved in college life. If a community can be created in West Cambridge this would be valuable for students on the biomedical campus. If the college or University could offer a stock of accommodation, this would be huge benefit. Some will be already working here and have accommodation therefore it will be difficult to judge numbers.

Dr Milgate asked what the composition should look like in terms of students/overall size of community. He said he was surprised to note that we are the 2nd largest in Cambridge, we are growing quite significantly and the size of that community measured against our ability to offer accommodation is unmanageable. He added that many years ago, the Senior Tutors Committee were told that colleges should not admit graduate students beyond being able to offer 65% with accommodation and we currently offer 45%. The composition of graduates is crucial, but we also need to look at constraints we face for graduates.

Prof. Glover said she has never understood the discrepancy that we aim to offer all undergraduate students 3 year's accommodation, yet 1 year to all graduates.

The President summed up the issues raised which need further consideration – the size of the graduate community, with respect to the tipping point of creating a community; the composition between 1 year students and the relation of the overall number to the service we provide in terms of accommodation. Whilst we have not discussed the involvement of fellowship with graduate community and what that service should be.

The Governing Body agreed to move on and deal with the rest of the formal Governing Body business.

II UNRESERVED MINUTES of the Meeting of 16 January 2017

The Unreserved Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2017 were approved.

III MATTERS ARISING

Referring to the discussion about the Nursery at the end of the last meeting, the President said that there will be a report to the Nursery Committee and if there are any further questions, these will be brought back to the Governing Body. Dr Denyer Willis added that there are still uncertainties which have yet to be addressed in terms of affordability of the Nursery, which will mean parents may look for other options. Mr Spence said he had received some information that day and is now in a position to report to the Bursarial Committee, which will include a report from Dr Bickerton. He hopes that before the end of term that there will be some concrete information for consideration.

IV COLLEGE OFFICERS' AND FELLOWS' BUSINESS

1. Dr Kelly informed the Governing Body that he and the Chaplain had attended a radicalisation conference and would be reporting their findings to the Prevent Committee.
2. The Dean noted there have been recent incidents in the Common Room in Owlstone Croft, mainly noise issues and a basic lack of consideration for others.

Dr Tiley left the meeting.

3. Dr Walker reported that the repairs to the riverbank continue and that he remains hopeful the works will be finished by Easter.
4. The Praelector reminded Fellows of the forthcoming MA Graduation on 25 February, commencing with drinks at 11.15am in the Old Hall.
5. Mr Levin introduced Miss Hope Whitehead who will be succeeding him as JCR President. The Governing Body recorded its gratitude to Mr Levin.

V RESEARCH STUDENTS APPROVED FOR DEGREES BETWEEN 1 JULY AND 31 DECEMBER 2016 (CM3622)

CM3622 was noted.

VI ADMISSION STATISTICS: JANUARY 2017 (CM3623)

CM3623 was noted. Dr Thompson drew the Governing Body's attention to the number of offers made, adding that a similar number of offers were made last year, which resulted in 150 admissions.

VII MINUTES OF THE TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

The Minutes of the Teaching & Learning Committee meeting held on 26 January 2017 were noted. The Senior Tutor drew attention to the changes in the Data Protection law, adding that the College will need to conduct a data audit. There will be more pressure in future to have an active policy as to why we hold data on individuals.

VIII PREPARING FOR THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) – 12 steps to take now

The information from the Information Commissioner's Office was noted.

IX EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL BOARD – DEGREE CLASSIFICATION AND RANKING: CONSULTATION PAPER

The BA Degree Classifications and Ranking consultation paper was noted.