



HUGHES
HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

Confirmed minutes

One hundred-and-seventeenth meeting of College Council 28 February 2023

Council Room at 4.30pm

{} indicates that this item will be removed prior to publication on the College website.

OPEN BUSINESS

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (Chair, President), Miss Kudzai Chivenga (MCR President, to item 17.9), Miss Maxine Henson (MCR Secretary, to item 17.9), Dr Sonia Ilie, Prof Bill Irish (from item 17.2.3, not present for Reserved Business), Ms Mahnaz Malik (via Zoom video conference call, to item 17.12, present for Reserved Business), Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Mr Jonathan Newby (Bursar), Prof Ricardo Sabates, Dr Carole Sargent.

In Attendance: Mr William Conner (Director of Institutional Advancement), Mr Andrew Grieve (Assistant Bursar, from item 17.4 to 17.9), Mrs Wendy Solomou (Secretary).

Apologies: Prof Nidhi Singal (Vice-President), Dr Stephen Axford (Director of Strategy and the Bridge), Dr Lars Vinx, Dr Claire West.

OPEN BUSINESS

At the suggestion of the President Reserved Business items were taken first.

17.1. Introduction

17.1.1. Welcome

The President informed Council that Mr Grieve would be attending Open Business to speak to the bursarial items.

The President asked that Council be mindful of sustainability and EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) issues throughout the meeting.

17.1.2. Declarations of interests

Dr Sargent declared an interest in item 17.11, but was not required to withdraw from the meeting when the item was discussed.

17.2. Minutes and Matters arising from the Open Business of College Council, of 17 January 2023

17.2.1. Approval of minutes (CC17 01)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

17.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business

There were no items outstanding.

17.2.3. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

17.3. President's report

The President reported on progress with the priorities set for determining the future direction of the College (around the broad themes of People, Place, and Purpose [GB85.3]).

- Fireside chats. The fireside chats with Fellows were continuing with more focussed discussion on the Bridge.
- Fellowships Committee. There would be an additional meeting on 22 March to further develop the 'People Vision'; a skills survey for Senior Members had been launched and completed and a diversity survey was to follow.
- Staff wellbeing. The College had recently hosted a Menopause Café which had been well attended and positively received.
- Estates. A proposal to address the shortage of office space in College was on the agenda.
- Governance. Governing Body had established a planning group to undertake a review of the College's Statutes and Ordinances and governance processes [GB86.6].

The President thanked staff in the tutorial and bursarial teams who were experiencing challenging workloads.

17.4. MCR business (CC17 02)

17.4.1. Proposed changes to the MCR constitution

The MCR President reported that at its meeting of 16 February the MCR had approved changes to the MCR Constitution. She requested that Council consider three proposals in principle before detailed amendments were drafted and submitted for final approval.

1. The first proposal - the inclusion of a statement to clarify that whilst individual Officers would take lead responsibility for organising activities it was the expectation that all MCR Officers would assist in the running of events – was approved.
2. The second proposal - to run the tenure of the MCR Committee from Lent rather than Easter term - was positively received. It was noted that this was a common pattern in many of the other colleges. The MCR President explained that a Lent start would give the incoming committee more time to become established as a team and plan for Freshers' week. It would

also allow some of the less central roles to be held by students on one-year courses for the Lent and Easter terms (Michaelmas term to be covered by other members of the Committee).

The Senior Tutor suggested that the MCR might consider an alternative model, whereby the core Officers were elected in Lent Term and the rest of the Committee elected two weeks into Michaelmas term, thereby allowing students on one-year courses to serve for most of the year. She also asked whether a specific role for students on part-time courses might be considered.

The Bursar asked that the MCR consider and propose how the transition would be managed, for example would the incoming committee be elected for a shorter period (from Easter term 2023 to Michaelmas term 2024).

3. The third proposal - the appointment of a College Officer/Fellow to check on MCR business and attend up to three meetings a year- was not approved because the Honorary MCR Senior Treasurer (whose role was not rigidly defined) could perform such a function. The Senior Tutor said that she would follow up the MCR's request for additional support with the Honorary MCR Senior Treasurer.

The MCR President said that she would aim to bring specific amendments to the MCR constitution to the next meeting.

ACTION: The Senior Tutor to discuss with the MCR Senior Treasurer the possibility of providing a greater level of support to the MCR.

17.4.2. Planned use of the Garden Lecture Room

It was agreed that the GLR would be converted into a fully operational gym/space for physical exercise for Hughes students and staff and that it would only exceptionally be used (with advanced notice) for other activities.

17.5. {[REDACTED]}

17.6. Office space proposal (CC17 03)

The Assistant Bursar spoke to the paper, which proposed converting nine student bedrooms, a shower room, and a kitchen on the first floor of the Margaret Wileman Building into office space and converting two offices on the third floor for use as student bedrooms. The aim was to provide 25 additional desk spaces and meeting rooms to accommodate the growing number of staff.

An alternative strategy of renting off-site offices in reasonably close proximity to the College had been investigated, but properties that were available to let were either on too short a lease or too costly to rent and service, especially in comparison with the estimated cost of converting the bedrooms.

{[REDACTED]}

The MCR President expressed dissatisfaction at the loss of seven on-site student rooms. The Bursar agreed that it was not ideal, but said that he hoped to compensate by being able to offer a significant number of additional off-site rooms. {[REDACTED]}

In response to a question the Bursar confirmed that the conversion of rooms on the first floor of the Margaret Wileman Building would be a permanent rather than temporary solution to the pressing need for more office space.

Council approved the proposal noting that the conversion work was planned to start in July 2023.

17.7. Accommodation prices for 2023-24 (CC17 04)

Council considered a proposed increase of 11% for college accommodation charges across all pricing bands from 1 September 2023. The Assistant Bursar explained that the increase and the decision to maintain the same differentials between rent bands had been determined following feedback from students, discussions with the MCR House Officer, a benchmarking exercise against student accommodation throughout Cambridge, and a review of expected costs for 2023-24. The key factors driving the increase included the rapidly rising costs of energy (due to increase by 71% in 2023-24), insurance, wages, and the rents of external landlords.

The Bursar acknowledged that the increase was unusually high, but said that he anticipated that there would be similar increases in other colleges and that some had already introduced substantially increased rents in the previous year. The College would bear some of the rising costs - the proposed increase of 11% fell short of the 12.7% anticipated rise in costs and the budget for hardship funding in 2023/24 would be increased to help provide targeted support to students facing financial difficulties.

The MCR President enquired whether the University bursaries would be increased in recognition of rising costs and the Senior Tutor responded that bursaries would be increased in line with RPI and that the University was investigating ways of giving financial support to those students who needed it but were not in receipt of a full bursary.

Council approved the proposed accommodation fees for 2023-24.

17.8. Accommodation allocation policy for 2023-24 (CC17 05)

The Bursar presented the Accommodation Allocation Policy for 2023-24. The principles of allocation remained unchanged from the previous year, but the detailed procedural guidance would no longer form part of the policy. Instead it would be included in a separate guidelines document to be agreed from time to time between the Student Welfare and Finance Committee, the Head of Domestic Operations, and the relevant MCR Accommodation Officer. It was confirmed that the guidelines would be made available online for student information.

Council approved the Accommodation Allocation Policy for 2023-24.

17.9. Unregulated undergraduate College tuition fees for 2024-25 (CC17 06)

The Assistant Bursar presented the proposed College undergraduate tuition fee for 2024-25 for students paying the unregulated fee (all those with Overseas fee status, and students with Home fee status studying for a second undergraduate degree in subjects other than architecture, medicine, or veterinary medicine).

{{REDACTED}}

Council approved the proposed fee and the associated terms and conditions.

17.10. Charges and fees for Hong Kong University Visiting Fellows for 2023-24 (CC17 07)

Council approved a College fee of £4,698 and an accommodation charge of £53.48 per day for 2023-24. It was noted that the programme had been suspended since 31 March 2020 owing to the COVID pandemic but would be resumed from 1 August 2023.

17.11. Proposal for Deputy Tutor for Admissions (CC17 08)

The Senior Tutor requested that Council approve the creation of a new part-time position of Deputy Admissions Tutor on a one-year fixed-term contract at 0.3 FTE, starting 1 September 2023. The purpose of the new role was to support the work of the Deputy Senior Tutor (Admissions), who would be working fewer hours as part of her phased retirement. The new appointment would report to the Deputy Senior Tutor (Admissions) and the position would be advertised at £40,927 - £46,042, pro rata (University Spine Points 48-52). As with Tutors, if not already a Senior Member of the College the person appointed would be proposed as By-Fellow.

Council approved the proposal.

17.12. Development Strategy (CC17 09)

The Director of Institutional Advancement gave a brief presentation on the work of the Development Office and also spoke to his report (item 17.16). In response to a question he said that it was the intention to focus attention on fundraising in Asia and that he welcomed the chance to engage with alumni following the lack of face-to-face contact during the COVID pandemic. It was agreed that Mr Conner would circulate the '2030 Vision' brochure which had been produced for the upcoming visits to Asia for feedback from Council members.

ACTION: The Director of Institutional Advancement to circulate the '2030 Vision' brochure to Council.

17.13 Annual report of the Data Protection Officer for the Colleges (CC17 10)

Council received the report, which gave details of the College's compliance with data protection legislation. The Bursar noted that Hughes Hall's Accountability Profile (detailed in Annex 2) showed a 100% assurance rating across all areas and that the increase in the number of reported breaches was not of concern to the DPO, and should be regarded as a positive sign that the College had good procedures and training in place to quickly identify any problems. He acknowledged that this was attributable to the hard work of the College's Compliance Officer, Julia Watkinson.

17.14. Bursarial:

17.14.1. Bursar's Report (CC17 11)

Items in the Bursar's report not discussed elsewhere on the agenda included:

- Recruitment and vacancies. Six vacancies being, or about to be, advertised (Bursarial: 1; Domestic Operations: 2; Education: 2; Centre for Climate Engagement: 1). Thirteen new permanent members of staff had been recruited since the beginning of 2023.
- HR. ACAS would deliver an onsite line-management training session in March; the Staff Strategy Committee were considering proposed amendments to the terms of reference; the HR Manager

had received helpful feedback from Fellows for enhancing recruitment and attracting diverse candidates following the circulation of current recruitment practices to Council [CC16.8.1] .

- **{[REDACTED]}**
- Facilities. Improvements would be made to make the seating area in front of the Margaret Wileman Building more attractive; the second phase of improving rooms in the Centenary Building was timetabled to start in August 2023.
- Porters. From July 2023 at least two porters would be on duty for each shift (subject to budget approval) thus ensuring that the Porters' Lodge could be staffed and remain open from 7:00am to midnight.

The Bursar reported that the problems experienced with recruiting staff were beginning to ease and the pool of applicants improving. He acknowledged the good service provided by the IT Team, all of whom had been newly recruited relatively recently.

17.14.2. Management accounts to 31 January 2023 (CC17 12)

Council received the management accounts. The Bursar noted that there were no significant variances to report and no questions were raised.

Council approved the Bursar's proposal that for future meetings the management accounts submitted to Council and Governing Body would no longer include the spreadsheets containing the detailed breakdowns by department. It was noted that the detailed breakdowns would continue to be available to members of the Finance Committee each month.

17.14.3. *IT project update: For information (CC17 13)**

Council received the report without discussion.

17.15. Senior Tutor's Report (CC17 14)

The Senior Tutor's reported the following:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate admissions were tracking well with numbers largely in line with previous years; outreach activity was producing good engagement, and the flagship residential event (Cambridge 21+) had just launched on the college website.
- At the collegiate University level policy decisions would need to be taken regarding the format of undergraduate admissions interviews and the replacement for admissions assessments (which were to be withdrawn in 2024). The Senior Tutor said that following internal discussions with Directors of Studies and Tutors the preferred option was to hold all interviews online. Council approved the Senior Tutor responding positively to a request from Wolfson College for Hughes to join in advocating consensus across the mature colleges for online interviews.
- Tutors had completed a survey asking for a review of their caseload, an assessment of how they were managing in their role, and whether there was a need for further support. It was clear from responses that some Tutors were finding their caseload to be challenging. The most commonly cited categories of student concern were problems with mental health, workload, and finances (the latter particularly a concern for postgraduate students). One Tutor had recently resigned and in view of the weight of the current casework, the Senior Tutor proposed appointing two new Tutors (dealt with in Reserved Business).

- Staffing. A temporary (maternity cover) part-time PA/ Admissions Assistant had been recruited to start in March; the job of Admissions Co-ordinator was being readvertised, and the Head of Education Services role was being advertised.

17.16. Director of Institutional Advancement's report (CC17 15)

Council received the Director of Institutional Advancement's report (discussed under item 17.12).

17.17. Director of Strategy and the Bridge's report (CC17 16)

Council received the Director of Strategy and the Bridge's report. The President noted its reference to consultations with Fellows about future strategy - following on from the fireside chats there had been three in-depth 'workshops' ('People Vision', 'the Bridge' and 'Funding and Development') which had provided opportunities for Fellows to explore the benefits, costs, and risks of differing levels of ambition. To date around 50 Fellows had attended the fireside chats, and 27 the focused workshops.

17.18. *Minutes of committees**

Council received the minutes of the following committees without discussion:

17.18.1. Unconfirmed minutes Finance Committee, of 23 January 2023 (CC17 17)

17.18.2. Unconfirmed minutes Estates Committee, of 20 February 2023 (CC17 18)

17.19. Any other Open Business

There was no other Open Business.

End of Open Business WS