



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

FACULTY BOARD OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY

A meeting was held on **Friday 16 January 2015**
in the Committee Room, Hoyle Building, Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road

There were present: Professor D Frenkel (Deputy Chair), Dr C Ducati, Dr MJ Duer, Professor CA Haniff, Mr RAC Hay, Mrs M Howe (Secretary), Dr HRN Jones, Dr KM Knowles, Dr W Nolan, Professor MA Parker, Mr NA Peymán, Dr JM Riley, Professor M Thomson.

And Professor T Wilkinson (Observer – Engineering)

Apologies were received from: Professor C Abell, Professor S M Best, Professor M Blamire, Professor AC Fabian, Professor GF Gilmore.

MINUTES

Unreserved Business

15101 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2014 were approved.

15102 Matters arising from the minutes

i. Student Elections 2014 (minute 14610i and 14702i)

It was noted that a single nomination had been received for the undergraduate student representative position. Mr NA Peymán was therefore the sole student representative for the coming year.

Mr Peymán was welcomed to the meeting.

15103 Analysis of Tripos Results by Mr B Rivers

The Board received, as paper FB/15103, a copy of the message sent by Mr B Rivers in relation to analysis he had carried out of Tripos results.

The analysis suggested fewer firsts were being awarded in our subjects than in others. Concern was expressed that our students might be disadvantaged because our grading was too harsh; we risked losing PhD students, and employers might overlook our students if their results were not comparable with those from other HE institutions. The student representative confirmed this was likely to be the case; employers were interested in the grade, not the awarding institution. It was noted that the analysis was based on Part II figures alone; at Part II there was a significant influx of Biological Science students into our Tripos which could influence outcomes.

The Board considered the analysis revealed that consistency within our own subject areas was quite good but that the University might wish to ensure greater internal consistency and also comparability of grades against external institutions.

15104 Membership

*i. Faculty Board membership in class (b) (minute 14604)

The Board noted that the Council, on the recommendation of the General Board, had agreed to reappoint Dr Julia Riley from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016.

- ii. Faculty Board membership in class (d) (minute 14605)
Following item 15104i above, the Faculty Board approved the co-option of Dr C Ducati, Mrs M Howe and Dr HRN Jones to serve for the calendar year.

- *iii. Observers
The Board noted that Professor TD Wilkinson had been appointed as the observer for the Faculty Board of Engineering and Professor Wilkinson was welcomed to the meeting. The observers for the Syndicate of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, Biology, and Mathematics were still to be confirmed.

15105 **NSS Results 2014 – Departmental response (Chemistry)**
The Board received as paper FB/15105 the response from the Department of Chemistry to the NSS Results 2014.

There were no particular comments.

15106 **Students' issues**
Mr Peymán raised his concern that the teaching of Science in Cambridge could be more engaging and enjoyable, and the treatment of students by their teachers could be improved. He was advised to provide a paper to the Board outlining what needed addressing and suggestions as to what could be done about it; he was also advised to consult fellow students. It was evident that feedback mechanisms available to students were not working effectively; it was agreed that the representative should be provided at least with the names of the Chairmen of the main consultative bodies in each Department.

15107 **Any other business**
There was none.