



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

FACULTY BOARD OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY

A meeting was held on Friday 18 November 2011 in the Hoyle Committee Room, Institute of Astronomy.

There were present: Professor GF Gilmore (Chairman), Mrs VR Bennett (Secretary), Dr C Ducati, Mr F Floether, Professor AL Greer, Mr RAC Hay, Dr HRN Jones, Professor RC Kennicutt, Dr W Nolan, Mr J Norris, Professor WJ Stirling, Professor M Thomson. Dr L Friday (for item 11608).

Apologies were received from: Professor C Abell, Professor SM Best, Dr MJ Duer, Professor D Frenkel, Ms J Hlavacek-Larrondo, Dr JM Riley, Professor D Ritchie.

MINUTES

Unreserved Business

11601 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2011 were approved.

11602 **Matters arising from the minutes**

It was noted that the Secretary had written to the Education Section regarding the discussion over a further review of the Nano MPhil arising from the Learning and Teaching Review of the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy.

11603* **Election of student members of the Faculty Board**

It was noted that the election of student members of the Faculty Board would take place on Tuesday 29 November 2011, with the closing date for nominations on 22 November. The online voting system, developed by CUSU and used successfully in 2010, would be used again this year.

11604 **Changes to external examining processes and documentation**

The Faculty Board received as paper FB/11604 a document issued by the Education Section outlining the changes arising from the Education Committee's review of policies for both undergraduate and graduate courses.

The Faculty Board noted the requirement to make external examiners' reports available in full to all students with the sole exception of any confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, and the request that Faculty Boards consider how best to do this.

The Secretary was asked to ensure that the Departments received a copy of the policy document and took appropriate action.

11605 **Reviewers in University complaint and review procedures**

The Faculty Board received paper FB/11605 in which the Deputy Academic Secretary invited to nominations for the above process. It was noted that the Department of Physics was currently underrepresented in the list of available

reviewers, and members from that Department were asked to make appropriate nominations.

11606 **National Student Survey 2011**

The Faculty Board received the results of the National Student Survey 2011 (NSS) as paper FB/11606. The omission of responses from Materials Science students, due to a low response rate, was noted.

There followed a discussion of the reports presented. Whilst it was felt that the statistical results did not reflect a gender difference (which would support the findings of paper FB/11607), the specific comments were thought to be helpful.

The student members asked whether action was taken within Departments on the survey results. It was noted that the survey was something that departmental Teaching Committees would review and act on, in conjunction with the more detailed feedback that was gathered on an ongoing basis, both at College level.

It was noted that the results of the NSS was one of the factors taken into consideration when drawing up the national league tables of UK universities.

11607 **Academic Performance by Gender**

The Faculty Board received, as paper FB/11607, the findings of the Education Section's Working Group on Gender Attainment.

The Faculty Board noted the recommendations listed in the cover letter. The Secretary was asked to check that Departments had received copies of the report and request a report on what action was being taken in relation to these.

11608 **Consultation on a Graduate School of the Physical Sciences**

The Chairman welcomed Dr Laurie Friday, Secretary to the Degree Committee, for this item. The Faculty Board discussed the issues raised in the paper circulated as FB/11608.

It was noted that a response was needed by the School Office by 13 January 2012. After some discussion of the purpose and proposed structure of the graduate school, the Faculty Board agreed to respond with the following points:

- The reporting lines shown in the organisational diagrams should be clarified: in the Faculty of Physics and Chemistry, responsibility for undergraduate matters had already been delegated to the Natural Sciences Tripos Committee, and the Degree Committee – as a sub-Committee of the Faculty Board – would retain responsibility for graduate affairs.
- The Faculty comprised several large and well-run Departments which it was felt already met the needs of its graduate students. The paper did not make sufficiently clear how the proposed changes would improve this situation, or reduce workload at departmental level. It would be beneficial to include more information about areas of responsibility and resourcing.
- The Faculty Board agreed that the development of committees (the School TST Committee, and the Graduate Administrative Forum) to enable sharing of good practice was positive, as was the formation of the Graduate School as a cross-departmental focus for interdisciplinary academic activity.

- In order to focus the developments, it would be helpful to identify those aspects of the School which involve improved communications between current department-based or inter-department activities, and those which involve proposed new activities. It was agreed that identifying which of the proposed new roles for the Graduate School were best done at School level, and with what resource implications, would clarify the benefits the School would deliver. Complementary to that, identifying any new Department-based responsibilities, or implied changes to any extant faculty-level bodies, with their likely resource requirements, would further clarify the way forward.
- The Faculty found the organogram figures helpful. A set of figures for each of information flow, lines of responsibility, and lines of resource would be helpful.

11609 **Students' issues**
None were raised.

11610 **Any other business**
There was no further business.