



Summary of Business for
Council Effectiveness and Statutes Review
Project Board

Title	Project Manager's Report
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Status	For decision
Document type	Project update
Summary	This paper outlines the progress of the project since the last board meeting, covering the working groups, communications plan, and progress with outstanding actions relating to remaining issues raised by the Council effectiveness review
Previous consultation	Last project board meeting 24 July 2013
Resource implications	Costs of legal advice, sum to be confirmed
Risk analysis	See attached risk register
Effective date of introduction	Immediate
Recommendation	The Project Board is asked to APPROVE the proposed milestones timescale and the new terms of reference for the statutes working group, APPROVE the approach recommended for the academic governance working group, APPROVE the annual survey for Council members, and APPROVE the publication of the 2010 Council effectiveness review

1. Progress report from statutes working group

The group met for the first time on 21 August 2013, membership comprising Rachel Knight (Chair), Simon Higman, and Professor Anne Sheppard, with Christine Cartwright as Secretary. The President of the Students' Union has declined the invitation to sit on the working group although he will remain on the membership in case he is later able to join us. The revised terms of reference for the group are appended to this report as appendix a.

The group agreed that it was not formed to review how the College conducts its activities, but rather how those activities are expressed in statute. The group also agreed that they wanted the statutes to be transparent, comprehensive and consistent within themselves, with the law and with the suite of documents which govern the College. They must be written in clear, plain English so they can be easily understood by all.

The group discussed the idea of creating a separate statute for academic freedom to make the College's commitment to this crystal clear.

The group agreed on the following fundamental principles which ought to be protected in statute:

- To recognise and protect academic freedom
- To ensure the existence of an effective voice for the College community
- To support the objects of the College in promoting education and scholarship for the public benefit whilst facilitating appropriate governing and management decisions
- To use language which is clear and as simple as possible to ensure that important documents can be understood by all

Before the next meeting, the group will consider a draft Statute structure to provide a framework, (with no content at this stage) and an assessment of how the current Statutes protect the fundamental principles outlined above.

The next meeting of the group will be on 24 October when members will discuss a plain English draft version of the Statutes in further detail, in anticipation of having a full set (except current numbers 16 and 25, the content of which lies outside the remit of this group) completed by the end of October. These will be circulated within the working group, the Project Board, and College Executive, with opportunity for comment before they are sent to Pinsent Masons to check their suitability from a legal perspective. A draft set of Statutes, and Regulations that take account of the changes proposed, will be circulated to Council in November as an indication of intended direction of travel. If Council is happy with the approach being followed, then wider consultation across all stakeholder groupings will open soon after that meeting, with the opportunity for staff and students and external stakeholders to raise questions or request revisions.

Project Board is asked to APPROVE the proposed timescale for these milestones.

2. Progress report from academic governance working group

The academic working group has now been set up. The group, however, is not yet in a position to carry out review of the Academic Board in accordance with 2 of the 3 terms of reference [to receive and consider the views aired by members of the College regarding Academic Board as it currently stands and how it might look in the future, and to receive reports from stakeholder meetings where identified issues and possible solutions have been discussed] as no views or feedback have as yet been provided. It has been decided therefore to follow the model used to obtain the views of Council and to create a survey (based on the form used for the Council review) at the first meeting of the Academic Board in the Autumn Term, 20 November 2013. The survey will be circulated immediately afterward this meeting, with feedback sought by the end of the Autumn Term. This will allow the Working Group to meeting mid to late January 2014. It is anticipated that the working group will need to meet 2-3 times in order to consider the feedback, and it should therefore be possible for finalised recommendations to be produced by the end of the Spring Term.

Emm Johnstone will be preparing a draft survey for Academic Board members week commencing 7 October 2013, for consideration by the Academic Registrar and the Vice Principal for Education. When a version has been agreed by these two, it will be circulated to the Project Board for approval before being issued in November.

Project Board is asked to APPROVE this approach and timescale.

3. Communications update

There are continuing communication difficulties around the project, with members of the UCU and the SU sabbatical officers issuing messages that misrepresent the project and its development to date. Fiona Redding from the Communications department has begun working closely with the project team to devise and implement a far-reaching communications plan for managing the project more proactively, including expanding our project webpages and preparing to publicise draft revised governance webpages to invite staff comment. Her input is welcome and timely. All papers and minutes from previous meetings of the Project Board, save those matters which are FOI exempt, are now online, as is a set of FAQs about the project.

4. Update on Annual Survey of Members

At the last meeting of the Project Board, it was agreed that the annual survey of members would be circulated to all Council members at the beginning of September, with answers being received by the October meeting which would then inform the training sessions at the Strategy Days (M13/53).

The Secretariat realised when compiling the survey that Council members had already indicated where they felt extra training would be beneficial in their responses to the Effectiveness Review survey and so it was felt to be redundant to ask the same question again.

The annual survey of members will still be conducted at the Strategy Day but this will focus on how Council feels the major items of business have been conducted throughout the year and they will be invited to comment, for example, on how well-informed they feel they have been on major issues and any improvements they might wish to see in the servicing or business of Council. The survey that is proposed is appended to this report as appendix b.

Project Board is asked to APPROVE this survey.

5. Report on 2010 Council effectiveness review

The last review into Council's effectiveness was completed in 2010, with the results and actions communicated to and agreed by Council, but the results were not published more widely at that time. In response to queries from staff members, the results of that review have been examined and a new cover sheet prepared to make these suitable for publication on our project website. The report that we would like to see published on our website is appended to this report as appendix c.

Project Board is asked to APPROVE publication of this report.

CESPB/13/24a Revised terms of reference for statutes working group

STATUTES WORKING GROUP

Membership:

Chair	Deputy College Secretary
Members	Academic member College Secretary
In attendance	Lawyers from Pinsent Masons
Secretary	Governance Assistant
Meetings per year	As often as necessary

Purpose

- To prepare drafts of the new Statutes, taking legal advice as necessary.

Terms of Reference

- To receive and consider the views aired by members of the College regarding statutes.
- To receive reports from stakeholder meetings where the identified principles of the statutes have been discussed and elaborated upon.
- To prepare regular reports for the Project Board on progress made.

Reports to

- The Council Effectiveness and Statutes Review Project Board

Council Annual Survey**CESPB/13/24b**

Council has agreed that as part of the ongoing Council effectiveness review, an annual survey of members will be conducted to allow members to express their opinions on the way in which business was handled in the past academic year and to highlight any support needs they may have. Members' responses will be handled in confidence by the Secretariat who will compile an anonymised version of responses to be discussed at the March meeting. The Secretariat will also attempt to address any support issues identified through the survey.

1.	Please comment on the extent to which you feel Council's handling of specific types of business has been effective in 2012-13. Where appropriate, please indicate ways in which this might be improved in future.		
(a)	Major items of business (e.g. the Council Effectiveness Review, new library)		
(b)	The new College Strategy		
(c)	Standing items of business (e.g. VC's report, minutes of Council committees)		
2.	Please provide any other comments on the overall operation of Council		
3.	For new members: Please identify any areas in which you feel you could benefit from additional training		
	Equality & Diversity		Human resources
	Estate management/development		Risk management
	Higher Education management/governance		The Students' Union
	Any other area		

CESPB/13/24c Council effectiveness review of 2010

1. In June 2010 all members of Council were asked to complete a questionnaire asking for them to score and comment on Council performance, their own contributions, and the performance and requirements of a Council chairperson. The results were analysed and anonymised by the then College Secretary Katie Kerr, and were presented to Council in October 2010, along with a set of recommendations designed to address areas of concern identified during the review. This process was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the CUC, and the previous review had been undertaken in 2005.

2. Council was presented with the attached table listing the questions asked with average scores (always out of 4, with 4 representing excellent) and key points noted in members' comments. The numbers in brackets in the 'comments' column represent the number of responses making the same point. Katie Kerr reported to Council that it was evident that some questions were less suitable for numerical scoring than others and some members had declined to offer scores for these.

3. Council was informed that there was a commonly expressed view that it would be valuable to have more information about the academic activity of the College, its weaknesses and strengths and future plans. Council business was reshaped for future meetings to meet this request. Council was also informed that the comments made many references to conflicts of interest and the representation of sectional interests disturbing the perceived effectiveness of Council; a group of Council members was established by Nominations Committee to explore the matter further and report back. The result was that the Conflicts of Interest Policy was examined and modified by this group, with Council ratification in June 2011.

4. A number of other issues were summarised for Council emerging from the survey; these are listed below. Some of these were thoroughly addressed, with recommendations accepted and implemented, but a number remained unresolved when the current review was launched in November 2012; the survey issued in December 2012 was thus explicitly designed to assess whether those issues still required attention. That some issues were not fully resolved in 2010 and 2011 is the result of the College Secretary's office, at that time, being heavily occupied in responding to a number of complex HR and legal cases, and in searching for a new Principal and a new Chair of Council.

5. Issue one: Council accountability and effectiveness - actions and notes arising

5.1: it was decided to deliver a briefing for all Council members on the role of HEI governors at the December 2010 Council away day.

5.2: the committees of Council and the schedule of delegations were reviewed, and a revised Committees Handbook was prepared and accepted by Council.

5.3: performance monitoring against institutional targets was established as routine part of Council's business.

Three suggestions relating to this issue were not fully addressed at the time:

5.4: there was a desire to consider the relation between Council and Academic Board.

5.5: there was a desire to consider how Council can best be informed of stakeholder views.

5.6: there was an approved recommendation that, subject to the normal considerations of confidentiality, Council papers, as well as minutes and agendas, should be published on the intranet following the approval of the minutes at the next Council meeting.

Notes 5.4 and 5.5 are being addressed at the present time through the current Council Effectiveness Review. Note 5.6 was not implemented at the time, but is underway now. Paper authors need to be informed while writing reports for Council that these will be thus published and need to be produced in a format fit for this end. The current work to create a guide for paper authors and a cover sheet for all Council papers is part of the ongoing work within the Secretariat to move to a schedule of paper publication.

6. Issue two: Council composition and meeting progress - actions and notes arising

6.1: the Privy Council asked that Statutes in all universities be reviewed to move nomination rights by external bodies. Royal Holloway's Statutes were modified to remove the right of Runnymede Borough Council following the due process as a result.

6.2: it was recognised that the skills represented and the diversity of members on Council needed to be considered in depth by Nominations Committee, as indeed they were and are.

6.3: some members of Council felt the body was too large to be able to conduct business effectively, but this was not a majority view.

6.4: regular meetings between the Principal, the Chair, and the Secretary were felt to be needed, and were established.

One suggestion was not fully addressed at the time:

6.5: it was felt that consideration should be given to reducing the number of more routine items coming to Council to allow more time for matters of strategic importance.

Note 6.5 is being addressed at the present time through the current Council Effectiveness Review.

7. Issue three: Council information - actions and notes arising

7.1: members asked for papers to be sent in email and by hard copy a week in advance of meetings.

7.2: members asked that tabled papers be avoided where possible though accepted that papers that had been amended might nonetheless need to be tabled.

8. Issue four: Training - actions and notes arising

8.1: all new lay members after this review were offered individual training when joining Council.

8.2: annual training for all Council members became a routine inclusion in the away days.

8.3: the College renewed its commitment to fund governors who wished to attend development days organised by the Leadership Foundation.

In the current review, it has become clear that training needs to be offered to all new members whether lay, staff, or student, and that some comparator universities run induction sessions for groups of new members to allow members to meet and get to know one another.

9. Issue five: Council dynamics - action and notes arising

9.1: members wanted clarity in meetings as to who was a member and who was in attendance. This has been achieved by virtue of the new seating arrangement adopted.