

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

MINUTES

A Stated General Meeting of **GOVERNING BODY** was held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senior Common Room.

Present: Professor S. J. Elston, Professor M. Cannon, Professor K. Nation, The Revd Professor W. Whyte, Professor A. Hills, Professor R. M. Harding, Professor S. Myers, Professor A. Wright (Vice-President), Professor A. Starinets, Professor M-S. Omri, Professor H. Skoda, Professor N. Lübecker, Professor C. Newton, Professor R. Ekins, Professor J. Obloj, Dr G. Kantor, Professor K. Southwood, Professor Z. Olszewska, Professor L. Pratt, Professor C. Beem, Professor G. Rose, Professor S. Kiefer, Professor S. Toussaert, Professor R. Slater, Professor S. White, Professor E. Greensmith, Professor B. McFarlane, Dr M. Nicholls, Professor E. Wonnacott, Professor N. K. Jones, Ms Z. Hancock, Dr S. Campbell, Professor R. Hoye, Professor L. Hunt, Professor A. Lak, Dr L. Flannigan (ECR Representative)

Apologies: The President, Professor A. R. Weidberg, Professor P. K. Maini, Professor D. Martin, Professor H. Bouman, Professor J. Schnell, Professor T. Burt de Perera, Professor P. R. Hayes, Professor A. Russell, Professor G. Gottlob, Professor B. Murnane, Professor J. Stanyek, Professor J. J. Pandit, Professor I. Klinke, Professor L. di Mare, Professor N. Sugimura, Mr R. Crow, Dr K. Doornik, Professor B. Stevenson, Professor K. J. Patel, Professor T. Qutbuddin, Dr. C. He (ECR Representative)

In attendance: Ms. D. Cripps

AGENDA 'B'

ACTION

1. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of Governing Body held on 29th November 2023 were **approved**.

The Vice-President, in the chair on behalf of the President who was away on College business, welcomed Governing Body back for the start of term.

In matters arising he reminded Governing Body to sign up for the Second-Year Undergraduate dinner by 19th January.

The Governing Body **approved** the latest iteration of the Harassment Policy and Procedures (noting that changes from the previous version should be clearly marked).

FELLOW FOR EQUALITY

2. Sibthorpien Professorship of Plant Sciences

The Provost for Academic Affairs reported on plans for the appointment of a new Sibthorpien Professor of Plant Sciences following Professor Harberd's retirement.

The Governing Body **agreed** that it wished to continue the College's association with the post and to offer a Professorial Fellowship to the next Sibthorpien Professor of Plant Sciences.

PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

3. Academic Planning Working Party

The Governing Body **agreed** the terms of reference for the Academic Planning Working Party with a clarification about whose workload was being considered (see the updated terms of reference at Appendix One).

PRESIDENT

4. College Vision and Mission Statements

The Vice-President reported that work was starting on a new Strategic Plan and that Governing Body's views on the vision and mission statements for St John's were being canvassed as input to the process.

It was **agreed** that suggestions should be sent to the President as initial input to the new plan.

Further consideration would be given to how to gather feedback from as wide a group of College members as possible.

GOVERNING BODY, PRESIDENT

5. Official Opening of the Library

The Vice-President reported that the Lord Lieutenant's office had informed the President that the King would be unlikely to visit Oxfordshire next year and invited Governing Body to consider other potential invitees to open the restored Canterbury Quad and the Old and Laudian Libraries. A number of names were suggested and would be polled to establish Governing Body's preference.

GOVERNING BODY

BELOW THE LINE ITEMS – TO NOTE

6. Development Board

The minutes of the Development Board held on 8th December 2023 were received.

7. Conference of Colleges

The unconfirmed minutes of the Conference of Colleges held on 5th December 2023 were received.

APPENDIX ONE

Academic Planning Working Party

Background

The Academic Office oversees and manages all aspects of academic administration for undergraduate and graduate students, from admissions onwards. It is a busy office with a complex and diverse set of responsibilities. Recent years have seen major changes in how academic and academic-related activities are organised in College. Most significantly, we moved to a full-time Senior Tutor model in 2019, with the Senior Tutor having overall responsibility for the provision of teaching and academic-related support across College, and for managing the Academic Office. The Senior Tutor also serves as Tutor for Graduates and most recently as Tutor for Admissions. Other major changes (e.g., dedicated HR department, investment in student welfare infrastructure) also have implications for the work of the Academic Office. This period of change coincided with the pandemic and continues alongside a substantial increase in the size and complexity of students' academic needs, all at a time when support and services from the University are being squeezed. Against this backdrop, it is timely to consider academic administration and the provision of academic-related support within College.

Terms of Reference

The overall goal of this working party is to review current processes and procedures, and to identify any changes that might enhance the academic support provided by the College.

Key objectives will be to:

- Identify the core activities that are currently co-ordinated and delivered by the Academic Office and understand the nature of these activities, and how they interface with other departments.
- Consider whether there are significant gaps in College's academic-related support provision and if so, reflect on how and when these needs might be best met.
- Reflect on the key processes that are needed to ensure smooth and efficient implementation from decision-making through to delivery across all core activities.
- Understand the nature of the skills needed to fulfil the College's academic-related requirements and consider how any gaps in expertise might be filled (e.g., professional development and training opportunities, mentoring, targeting of future posts).
- Understand and appreciate workloads of staff in the Academic Office and how it relates to academics, and consider implications for future planning, along with associated infrastructure and resources.
- Be prepared to build in flexibility to address uneven demands over the cycle of the academic year.
- Review the role descriptions for the Senior Tutor, Provost for Academic Affairs and other relevant College Officers involved with academic provisions.
- Consider if and when a formal review is needed, and whether key objectives for this review can be usefully identified at this stage.

Consideration of these objectives will provide a detailed understanding of College's current processes and procedures, and a clear indication of how to optimise academic administration and academic-related support, building on strengths and key priorities.

Membership

President (Chair)

Vice President

Provost for Academic Affairs (plus Official Fellow in MSD)

Fellow for Equality (plus Supernumerary Fellow in SSD)

Senior Tutor

Academic Administrator

Two members of Governing Body (Professor Jason Stanyek and Professor Stuart White)

The discussion group will consult with members of College (including academic and professional staff and students) and may wish to request external input and advice on specific matters.

The Working Party will be supported by the Bursary Manager.

Timing

The discussion group will begin meeting early in Hilary Term 2024 with a view to reporting to Governing Body by the end of Trinity Term 2024 at the latest. As with all other working parties, papers will be available to all GB members on SharePoint.