



Meeting
Place
Date

BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 14:15

Present	Professor N Brook	Dean of Science (Chair)
	Dr R Bradford	Department of Computer Science
	Dr Z Burke	Department of Biology and Biochemistry
	Professor A Burrows	Head of Department of Chemistry
	Miss M Crossman	Students' Union Sabbatical Officer (Community)
	Mr J Dean	Postgraduate Taught student representative
	Professor K Edler	Associate Dean (Research)
	Dr N Fotaki	Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology
	Professor M Fraser	Department of Computer Science
	Dr A Gorbach	Department of Physics
	Professor M Hejmadi	Associate Dean (Education)
	Dr R James	Head of Department of Physics
	Professor M Jones	Department of Chemistry
	Professor T Mays	Faculty of Engineering and Design
	Professor N McHugh	Head of Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology
	Professor P Milewski	Head of Department of Mathematical Sciences
	Dr T Shardlow	Department of Mathematical Sciences
	Dr G Shermer	Department of Chemistry
	Professor J Sivaloganathan	Department of Mathematical Sciences
	Dr C Todd	Department of Biology and Biochemistry (alternate for Professor D Tosh)
	Professor S Ward	Associate Dean (International)
	Dr M Wright	Department of Computer Science
In attendance	Mrs M Hallett	Faculty Assistant Registrar (Secretary)
	Ms A L Harper	Faculty of Science (Observer)
Apologies	Dr F Bisset	Learning Partnerships Office
	Professor C Frost	Deputy Dean of Science
	Mr K Maharaj / Mr J Ogunyemi	Undergraduate student representative
	Dr F Qin	School of Management
	Dr G Stothart	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
	Professor D Tosh	Department of Biology and Biochemistry

Action

7227 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting of the Board held on 18 November 2021 (Paper 112).

7228 MATTERS ARISING

M7208 2021/22 STAFF STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE (SSLC) TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Board noted that the Department of Computer Science PGT programmes SSLC terms of
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reference and membership 2021/22 had been approved under BoS Chair's action on 7 December 2021 (see Paper 143).

7229 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair had no matters to bring to the attention of the Board.

7230 LIFE SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

The Board considered a paper on the creation of a new Life Sciences Department (Paper 113) for 2022/23.

The Chair explained that it is proposed to bring into fruition a new department, bringing together the Departments of Biology & Biochemistry and Pharmacy & Pharmacology. The driver is to enable an increase in size of synergies and to bring a single focal point to Life Sciences within the Faculty. The merger will also help create an environment to be more competitive on the national stage.

Over the summer, the Departments compiled self-assessment and future looking documents for a Review Panel which met on campus in October to review Life Sciences in the Faculty. The Panel included four External Reviewers put forward by the respective Departments. The Panel made a number of recommendations, to:

- Progress with the creation of a new Life Sciences Department.
- Develop a common research strategy across the two Departments.
- Establish a clear identity for Pharmacy at the University as the merger moves forward.
- Review the teaching portfolio, and particularly synergies, across Life Sciences.
- Consider external leadership of the new Department and other senior appointments.
- Create a common programme of engagement across the Departments and co-location of research groups.
- Commit to a common space with a shared identity for Life Sciences.
- Be ambitious around the aspirations for Life Sciences, with a clear and strong focus.

The Chair reported that working groups of members from the two Departments had been established to consider two strands: the organisational structure required under the leadership of a single Head; a strategy to embed synergies in research and education across the Life Sciences over the next 18 months.

The objectives of the new Department are to:

- Create stronger research synergies and critical mass to deliver research competitively and consistently on the national and international stage.
- Build greater opportunities to engage with the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industrial sector, as well as the NHS.
- Enhance a dynamic, supportive learning environment for students.
- Create an ambitious integrated teaching programme, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Support the research leaders of the future in a strong, nurturing environment.

The Chair stated that improved vision, coming from developed strategies, is expected to improve the Department's financial position and create greater external investment opportunities. The new University strategy until 2026, which sets a new direction, is an internal driver; there is a strong role for Life Sciences in all of the new University research themes, and a need to increase research income by 50% across the Faculty, with less reliance on UG fees. An external driver is that Life Sciences has been given greater priority on the Government agenda, particularly in light of Covid, and there are greater opportunities for industrial, biotech and pharma collaborations, including greater links to the public sector, with the NHS and other non-profitable organisations. UKRI and other charitable funders are looking for greater critical mass internally within organisations and working together externally as well.

Next steps include:

- Organisation of a series of small workshops designed to bring together the organisational

structure.

- Defining the vision and blueprint for research and education in the new Department, which will be driven initially by small working groups and workshops and will then be broadened out for further discussion within the Department.
- Development of change plans, a risk register and a communication plan to be shared, once finalised, with academic, technical and professional services staff within B&B and P&P.

Professor McHugh commented that staff from both Departments were behind the proposal and highlighted the challenge of recruiting a new Head in time for 2022/23. The Chair acknowledged that an interim arrangement would be necessary. Professor McHugh echoed the need to be ambitious and for investment in infrastructure, equipment and senior appointments. Dr Todd commented that B&B had already demonstrated ambition in its recent development of BSc Biomedical Sciences and more recently developed new PGT portfolio, as well as through Curriculum Transformation. The Chair clarified that while the Review Panel had found the programmes currently offered to be of high quality, as supported by student feedback, it had identified opportunities to develop programmes that may be more attractive to overseas students.

Professor Mays highlighted natural synergies between the new Department and the Department for Health in the Faculty of H&SS, as well as with programmes and research activities in the Faculty of E&D, e.g. in Mechanical Engineering; there are a range of cross-Faculty collaborative opportunities. The Chair reported that all stakeholders had been, and would continue to be, kept informed of the new Department's development, e.g. Professor Gillison, Head of the Department for Health, was consulted at the outset.

Professor Burrows noted that the Review Panel did not take a firm view of where Pharmacy should sit within the University and sought clarification as to whether Pharmacy would become part of new Department. The Chair confirmed that this was indeed the case.

Professor Burrows enquired as to whether the Chair foresaw any impact of the new Department on the other Departments in the Faculty. The Chair stated that currently there were no plans to draw wider staff into the creation of the new Department, but there was a need to strengthen links to elsewhere in the Faculty and University, including ensuring strong links were built with academics in Chemistry.

Professor Sivaloganathan enquired as to whether staff would be co-opted, or appointed specifically into, the new Department. The Chair clarified that the staff in B&B and P&P would move to one umbrella Life Sciences Department, with additional strategic appointments made to build on research strengths and enhance Life Sciences activities at the University.

Professor Sivaloganathan highlighted the importance of getting buy-in from staff. The Chair explained that in order to give B&B and P&P ownership, the research vision and objectives of the new Department would be built bottom-up, from the grassroots.

Dr James enquired as to the feasibility of mitigating risks as detailed in section 5 of the Paper. The Chair reported that the research vision would be developed and delivered by September 2023, by which time the new Head would be in post, following any interim arrangement, and would have taken ownership of aspects such as space. A Project Manager had already been appointed from the new Strategic Projects Office: Mrs Dragana Houston, Deputy Director, Strategic Change. Dr James flagged the importance of communication and engagement over the coming months. The Chair concurred and reported that the Project Manager was driving discussions forward. Professor Milewski echoed the need for in-person collaborative discussions. The Chair reported that stakeholder meetings had, and would, be run face-to-face (where possible) to develop plans; the first of which, around organisational structure, had taken place face-to-face before Christmas. Professor McHugh reported that plans were in place for shared research meetings, the first of which had been organised by PhD students for late January. The Athena Swan committees of the two Departments had also met and were liaising with each other. The Chair reported that staff were liaising across the two Departments, e.g. around how they would work together in a co-located space.

Dr James enquired as to how many Departments the Chair envisaged the Faculty comprising

in 5 years' time. The Chair reported that there would be likely 5 Departments, but the success of this new Department would be reviewed; if successful, consideration may be given as to whether there were other opportunities. There were particular drivers for addressing Life Sciences first.

Professor Mays highlighted the need to manage, carefully, situations where one Department is much larger in terms of staff numbers than others in a Faculty, in terms of balancing appropriately the allocation of professional services and technical staff. The Chair stated that the new Department would become the Faculty's largest Department and this matter would form part of ongoing discussions around organisational structure.

The Board noted the Review Panel report and approved the underpinning case to support the creation of the new Life Sciences Department, for subsequent approval by Senate and Council in February.

7231 REPORT ON RESEARCH GRANTS

The Board received details of awards accepted by Research and Innovation Services from 10 November 2021 until 4 January 2022 (Paper 114).

The Chair highlighted that since the last meeting just under £2m had come into the Faculty, over 17 grants. The Chair congratulated in particular:

- Professor Samuel Sheppard, Department of Biology and Biochemistry, for his award of £447,320 from the Medical Research Council for research into Genomic Epidemiology and Transmission of *Campylobacter* in Africa.

7232 UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES

The Board noted that all Centre reviews had been on hold during the pandemic.

The Board approved, following review by the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (FRKEC) on 13 December 2021, the continuation of the **Research Centre for Mathematical Biology (CMB)**, from 1 December 2021 until 30 November 2024 (Paper 115), subject to a review of the research income target, given the need for the Faculty to increase research income by 50% over the next 5 years. Professor Milewski commented that research income targets do not necessarily reflect the value-added by a Centre, e.g. creativity and new collaborations generated, and new members joining the Centre. Professor Milewski suggested that a lower target of explicit interdisciplinary grants may be more appropriate than a simple higher target of 'associated' grants. Professor Milewski agreed to share with the CMB an IMI report, which included examples of how to capture / measure value-added. The Chair agreed to liaise with Professor Edler to collate suggestions of how to improve the Centre review report template, including incorporation of value-added metrics, for approval by Senate.

FRKEC

7233 2020/21 REPORT TO EQSC ON THE OPERATION OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

The Board approved the annual evaluation of the operation of Boards of Examiners, based on the reports of Independent Observers (Paper 116). The Chair commented that the Independent Observer reports had been positive.

7234 NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL: MSc Biotechnology (with Healthcare Technologies / Sustainable Biotechnologies / Entrepreneurship)

Dr Zoe Burke presented this item. Dr Burke reported that currently the Department offers a suite of four Curriculum Transformation vanguard courses that sit under the umbrella MSc Molecular Biosciences; students can follow either Bioinformatics, Biotechnology, Medical Biosciences or Microbiology as their specialism. The new programme will replace MSc Molecular Biosciences (Biotechnology) as a more specialised course in Biotechnology since Biotechnology has been identified as an area of demand and the new course will help make Biotechnology more visible to the market. The aim is to bring in some expertise from across the University from other Departments; discussions are ongoing with P&P, the School of Management, Department for Health, and the Departments of Chemical and Electrical

Engineering.

The Board considered the following documentation:

- QA3.1 Resource Implications (Paper 116A).
- QA3.2 Programme Specification (Paper 116B).
- QA3.3 Market Information (Paper 116C).

The Board agreed Stage 1 Initial Approval (prior to consideration by APC on 10 March) of the proposal for a new MSc Biotechnology degree in the Department of Biology and Biochemistry, for commencement from 2023/24.

7235 FACULTY LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 24 November (Paper 117A) and 8 December (Paper 117B) 2021.

7236 UNIVERSITY BOARD OF STUDIES (DOCTORAL) (BoSD)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2021 (Paper 118).

7237 FACULTY DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE (FDSC)

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 (Paper 119).

7238 FACULTY RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings held on 8 November (Paper 120A) and 13 December (Paper 120B) 2021.

7239 FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 (Paper 121).

7240 STAFF STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE (SSLC) MEETINGS

The Board noted the minutes of the following Department SSLC meetings:

Department of Biology and Biochemistry 10 November (UG) (Paper 122A), 22 November (PGT) (Paper 122B) and 1 December (UG) (Paper 122C) 2021.

Department of Chemistry 8 December 2021 (Paper 123).

Department of Computer Science 5 (Paper 124A) and 30 (Paper 124B) November 2021.

Department of Mathematical Sciences 10 November 2021 (Paper 125).

Natural Sciences 10 November (Paper 126A) and 15 December (Paper 126B) 2021.

Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology 3 November (UG) (Paper 127A) and 25 November (PGT) (Paper 127B) 2021.

Department of Physics 3 (Paper 128A) and 24 (Paper 128B) November 2021.

7241 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.