

Sidney Sussex College

The Minutes of the Meeting of

GOVERNING BODY

Held via Zoom on
Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

Senior Members Present

Master; Vice-Master; Senior Tutor; Bursar;
Professor Armstrong; Dr Aubry; Dr Bordin; Dr Crossan;
Dr Doran; Professor Flewitt; Dr Fruk; Dr Fulda;
Dr Garcia-Mayoral; Professor Greer; Dr Groisman; Dr Muschitiello;
Dr Oner; Dr Ranasinghe; Professor Reynolds; Dr Roberts; Professor Sepulchre;
Dr Seymour; Dr Skinner; Dr Stasch; Dr Wilson-Lee

Student Members Present:

Mr Lowry, Mr Karsberg, Mr Mettry, Mr Velazhahan

Also present

Ms Harkin (College Registrar, as Council Secretary)
Mr Mill (Admissions Director, Maternity Leave cover)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies for absence

Dr Duschinsky.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved. It was noted that the Director of Admissions (maternity leave cover) was in attendance to speak to agenda item 2.2b, the UG admissions report.

1.3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declaration of interests.

1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the Audit Meeting of the Governing Body on 11 November 2020 (GB.210224.1.4)

The minutes were confirmed

a) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising

2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

2.1 Master's Business

a) Update on COVID status in College

The Master reported that the College was still under lockdown so only students who met specific personal circumstances or conditions were in residence. There had been no positive COVID cases in College over the last few weeks. The Asymptomatic testing programme is a good control and needs to continue next term to allow the current level of restrictions to be loosened in line with the new Government guidance and road map out of lockdown. The milestones in this road map mean that there will not be any significant changes to the current situation until 29 March 2021. There may be a slight increase in returning students over the next few weeks following the extension of permitted returns to a broader range of courses with practical elements. The date of a student return for Easter term is still uncertain and the government have indicated that they will only be able to give one week's notice but it is to be hoped that students will be able to return. The University is talking to the Minister about this to try to achieve more certainty.

b) **Amendment to Ordinance B, XI, 1

Council **endorsed** the proposed amendment to the ordinance.

c) Proposed Vice-Master Election process (GB.210224.2.1c)

The Master explained that the proposed 2021 process reflected the process that the College has followed in the past with some minor amendments. Changes included providing for four nominators per nominee and that Governing Body members should each only nominate up to one person. Governing Body **confirmed** the process.

Action: The Master would send out a notice of the impending election.

2.2 Senior Tutor's Business

a) Arrangements for education and pastoral support in the Lent term

The Senior Tutor noted that all college teaching had been fully online this term in alignment with the University. The College had provided some support to bridge the digital gap in the form of tablets, loans for laptops or other necessities. It has also ensured that students were aware of the University's counselling service and other mental health resources. Household bubbles had been created to address social isolation for students in residence, and in some instances students had been moved into different households. The College was also making significant effort to ensure that Directors of Studies were kept in the loop about emerging Tripos requirements, with their queries being fed back to the university.

b) Undergraduate Admissions Report 2020-21 cycle (GB.210224.2.2b)

The Director of Admissions spoke to his report stating that there had been a 12% increase in applications this year, higher than the University's average. The College had made 124 offers, following a strategy to reduce the number of offers within the context of the changes to the A Level assessments this year, with more applicants being likely to achieve their estimated grades.

Where widening participation was concerned, the College had met all of its targets in this year's profile of offer holders, although there was a need to keep an eye on the ratio of state applicants to state offer holders. It was noted that the state applicant/offer holder metric was a target in the University's Access and Participation plan even though OfS did not find it a useful metric, preferring the polar targets.

The online admissions had worked well, with only a 2% failure in scheduled online interviews and these had been able to be quickly rescheduled. Director of Studies were being consulted on online interview arrangements going forward so that the College could respond to a CAO questionnaire.

A Governing Body member asked if the gender distribution figures could be added to the Admissions report and the Director of Admissions confirmed that this was an omission and that the figures would be provided.

The Governing Body expressed appreciation for how effective the online process had been and thanked the Director of Admissions and his team.

2.3 Bursar's Business

a) Kitchen Project update

The Bursar gave an update on the status of the new kitchen, saying that it was largely complete and that the work on the terrace above was in its final stages. There had been some delays to the work in the basement but this was expected to be completed by the end of April or early May. The new facilities should be fully operational within the first few weeks of Easter term, with most of the noisy work completed before Easter. The Kitchen Project constituted a £13.2 million investment, of which the Development Office had raised £4 million.

2.4 Steward's Business

There was no business to report.

2.5 Student Business

There was no business to report.

3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

3.1 College Council

a) Unreserved Minutes of the Meeting of 2 December 2020 (GB.210224.3.1a)

The minutes were **noted**.

b) Unreserved Minutes of the Meeting of 27 January 2021 (GB.210224.3.1b)

The minutes were **noted**.

3.2 Statutes & Ordinances

a) *Minutes of the Meeting of 2 February 2021 (GB.210224.3.2a)

The minutes were noted.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Any other business

There was no other business.

4.2 Date of Next Meeting

2pm Wednesday 26 May 2021 (next main meeting)