

## ***Open Business***

# *minutes*

**Board Meeting on 15 January 2008 held at 4 Mill Lane**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof WA Brown (Chair), Dr WD Allison, Prof GAJ Amaratunga, Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Prof J Heal, Dr CR Hiley, Ms KA Linder, Mr LS Liu, Prof RG Osborne, Dr J Runde, Prof BJ Sahakian with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary and Dr LM Biggs and Ms SJ Pickard in attendance

Apologies: Dr DA Jefferson and Mr MR Younger

Professor PC Hewett and Professor SK Rankin are on sabbatical leave

### 3156 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007 were signed as a true record.

### **Matters for report**

#### 3157 **Membership of the Board**

The Board were pleased to hear that Dr Gelsthorpe had accepted Class B Membership of the Board and agreed to serve until December 2011 and that Dr Maxwell had been appointed as Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies with effect of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

### **Matters requiring discussion**

#### 3158 **Application for renewal of Non-University Institution status**

The Board reviewed the application and supporting documents from the Degree Committees for the Faculty of Biology and the Chair of the Graduate School of Life Sciences and agreed to renew NUI status for the Babraham Institute until 2012. The Board wished to note the quality of application, the excellent provision made for

research and skills training of graduate students and the extremely high PhD thesis submission rates within the Institute.

#### 3159 UK Thesis Digitisation Project (EthOS)

In response to a query from the University Library, the Board approved a proposal from the British Library for digitisation of theses. The Board wished to encourage submission of electronic theses as soon as possible.

#### 3160 Proposal for an increase in the baseline fee for MPhils etc in the School of the Humanities & Social Sciences

The Board considered a discussion paper received from the Chair of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences regarding the possibility of increasing the baseline Composition Fee for all MPhils and other courses within the School at the meeting held on 20 November 2007. The Board had raised a number of issues to be addressed by the School. The School's response was considered and the Board approved the proposed increase in the baseline fee of £1000 for all one year postgraduate courses within the School.

#### 3161 Hardship Awards under the jurisdiction of the Board of Graduate Studies

The Board approved the recommendation that provided all other eligibility criteria are met, students who face unforeseen hardship as a consequence of maternity or paternity issues would receive a minimum termly maintenance sum, as determined by the Manager of the Hardship Awards.

#### 3162 Admissions Reports 2006-7 and 2007-8

The Board were pleased to receive the reports in a timely fashion and approved the reports for wider circulation. The Board wished to note its concerns regarding the significant decrease in the number of home students who both apply and take up their place at Cambridge. It was acknowledged that the lack of funding earmarked for home students was an area of concern, in the face of decreased studentships from the Research Councils and charitable organisations such as the Wellcome Trust. Consequentially it was necessary to secure funding packages from other sources such as the 800<sup>th</sup> Campaign. The Board encouraged the University to target recruitment and funding of home students as a priority area.

#### 3163 Residence Requirements for part-time students

The Board recognised that improved guidelines regarding the residence requirements for part-time students should be established and requested that the Secretary produce a paper for the next meeting.

#### 3164 Submission Rate Statistics for the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences

Although submission rates are satisfactory for Research Council funded students, the Board were concerned to note the consistently low submission rates for the School when all students were considered. It was noted that Research Councils now require data for all students within the cohort and that low submission rates may have a negative impact on future ESRC and AHRC applications. The Board were pleased to note that the Chair of the School intended to address the issue and agreed to offer guidance and further data if required.

#### 3165 Review of the Results of Postgraduate Studies: Amendment to Regulation 11

In response to a request from CUSU and with the consent of the Graduate Union, the Board approved the proposed change to Review Regulation 11 to include sabbatical officers of CUSU as appropriate representatives for the complainant. The Board recommended the following form of words (with changes indicated in underscored text). The Secretary agreed to liaise with the Review Committee.

When a representation is to be considered by a Review Committee the complainant shall furnish a full statement of the complaint and of the grounds on which the complaint is based, which shall be submitted to the Review Committee not later than a date to be determined by them. The Committee shall appoint a day and time for a hearing at which the complainant shall be entitled to be present and to be accompanied by not more than two advisers, each of whom shall either be an officer of the Graduate Union, a sabbatical officer of Cambridge University Student's Union or a member of the Regent House; one of these advisers shall be permitted to act as the complainant's representative and to speak on his or her behalf.

#### 3166 International Equivalences and Bologna Degrees

The Board considered a discussion paper prepared by the Head of Graduate Admissions, in consultation with the International Office, regarding the equivalence of Bachelors 'Bologna' degrees, and the appropriate University minimum academic qualifications for applicants from countries which are signatories to the Bologna Framework. The Board agreed the following:

- The University will consider Bologna Bachelors degrees for admission to the University, both for masters courses and for PhDs;
- Graduate Admissions should work with the International Office to establish the grade/GPA equivalents to a 2:1 degree class, for Bologna Bachelors degrees;
- Graduate Admissions should work closely with the International Office to compile a list of reputable institutions and grade equivalences, not necessarily restricted to countries which are Bologna signatories. This will enable the refinement of admissions criteria, such that these may vary depending on the institution in question;

- Knowledge of local education systems and individual institutions, as well as information on qualifications equivalences, should be taken into account when making decisions on graduate admission;
- Departments should be advised to contact the International office if they have questions about an applicant's home institution or local education system.

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