

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY REPORTER

No 6829

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026

VOL CLVI No 34

CONTENTS

Notices

Calendar	538
Discussion on Tuesday, 30 June 2026	538
Environmental Policy	538
Christmas and New Year closing: University Offices	538
Environmental Sustainability reporting: Our progress, 2024–25	539
Regent House membership for retired University staff: 15 August deadline	539
Senate-House Yard and the University Combination Room: Notice of closure on Wednesday, 24 June 2026	539

Vacancies, appointments, etc.

Vacancies in the University	539
-----------------------------	-----

Obituaries

Obituary Notices	540
------------------	-----

Acta

Approval of Graces submitted to the Regent House on 3 June 2026	540
--	-----

End of the Official Part of the 'Reporter'

Report of Discussion: 2 June 2026

Topic of concern to the University: Pause of UIS reorganisation	541
--	-----

College Notices

Vacancies	568
-----------	-----

External Notices

Oxford Notices	568
----------------	-----



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

NOTICES

Calendar

19 June, *Friday*. Full Term ends.

24 June, *Wednesday*. Scarlet Day. Congregation of the Regent House at 2.45 p.m. (Honorary Degrees).

25 June, *Thursday*. Easter Term ends.

30 June, *Tuesday*. Discussion by videoconference at 2 p.m. (see below).

1 July, *Wednesday*. Scarlet Day. Congregation of the Regent House at 10 a.m. (General Admission).

2 July, *Thursday*. Scarlet Day. Congregation of the Regent House at 10 a.m. (General Admission).

3 July, *Friday*. Scarlet Day. Congregation of the Regent House at 10 a.m. (General Admission).

4 July, *Saturday*. Scarlet Day. Congregation of the Regent House at 10 a.m. (General Admission).

Discussions (Tuesdays at 2 p.m.)

30 June

14 July

Congregations (at 10 a.m. unless otherwise stated)

24 June, 2.45 p.m. (Honorary Degrees)

1, 2, 3 and 4 July (General Admission)

23, 24 and 25 July

Further to last week's note, at the end of the 2025–26 academic year, ordinary issues of the *Reporter* will now be published on 1 and 29 July only. Issues will be published on 8, 15 and 22 July if needed for items of governance business.

Discussion on Tuesday, 30 June 2026

The Vice-Chancellor invites members of the Regent House, University and College employees, registered students and others qualified under the regulations for Discussions (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 111) to attend a Discussion by **videoconference** on Tuesday, 30 June 2026 at 2 p.m. The following item will be discussed:

1. Report of the General Board, dated 10 June 2026, on the outcomes of the Academic Career Pathways (Research and Teaching) and (Teaching and Scholarship) 2025–26 exercises (*Reporter*, 6828, 2025–26, p. 524).

Those wishing to join the Discussion by videoconference should email Discussions@admin.cam.ac.uk providing their CRSid (if a member of the collegiate University), by 10 a.m. on the date of the Discussion to receive joining instructions. Alternatively contributors may email their remarks to Discussions@admin.cam.ac.uk, by no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the Discussion for reading out by the Proctors,¹ or may ask someone else who is attending to read the remarks on their behalf.

In accordance with the regulations for Discussions, the Chair of the Board of Scrutiny or any ten members of the Regent House² may request that the Council arrange for one or more of the items listed for discussion to be discussed in person (usually in the Senate-House). Requests should be made to the Director of Governance and Compliance, on paper or by email to UniversityDraftsman@admin.cam.ac.uk from addresses within the cam.ac.uk domain, by no later than 9 a.m. on the day of the Discussion. Any changes to the Discussion schedule will be confirmed in the *Reporter* at the earliest opportunity.

For general information on Discussions see the *Reporter* website at <https://www.reporter.admin.cam.ac.uk/discussions>.

¹ Any comments sent by email should please begin with the name and title of the contributor as they wish it to be read out and include at the start a note of any College and/or Departmental affiliations held.

² <https://www.scrutiny.cam.ac.uk/> and https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/regent_house_roll/.

Environmental Policy

11 June 2026

The Council, on the recommendation of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Committee and with the endorsement of the Estates Committee, has approved an updated University Environmental Policy. The minor revisions to the Policy ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to align with the University's commitments and the requirements of the International Standard ISO 14001 to which the University's Environmental Management System is certified. The updated Policy is available at: <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/our-policy-and-governance>.

Christmas and New Year closing: University Offices

11 June 2026

The Council has authorised the closure of the University Offices from 1 p.m. on Thursday, 24 December 2026, until 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 4 January 2027. The University Messenger Service will not operate during the period of closure.

Environmental Sustainability reporting: Our progress, 2024–25

The latest reporting on the environmental performance of the University estate is available on the Environmental Sustainability website: *Our progress*. With updated data, graphs and narrative for 2024–25, it brings together the University's progress under each operational area, covering Carbon and energy, Travel and transport, Waste and circular economy, Biodiversity, and Water. A new case study has also been published exploring how the University's Environmental Management System (EMS) is helping embed environmental responsibility into everyday decision-making and operations. Alongside the webpages on the University's commitments and approach, the latest reporting shows what the University is working to achieve on operational environmental sustainability, how it is being delivered, the progress being made, and where further improvement is necessary.

This reporting approach presents information for non-specialist audiences, and to the highest standards in accessibility, following previous announcements that responsibility for helping the University achieve its sustainability ambitions sits across all parts of the University, and that communications must be enhanced.¹ The reporting and new case study are available at <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/our-progress/> and <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/news>. An overview of the University's commitments and approach in relation to operational environmental sustainability is available at: <https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/our-commitments-and-approach>.

¹ See the Council's response to the Board of Scrutiny's 30th Report, *Reporter*, 6818, 2025–26, p. 376.

Regent House membership for retired University staff: 15 August deadline

Under Special Ordinance A (i) (e), retired members of University staff who were previously on the Roll can reacquire Regent House membership (including, for example, those currently working as voluntary Directors of Research). To qualify, University staff:

- will have retired or be about to retire from an office or appointment in the University which previously qualified them for membership of the Regent House; and
- will not be eligible for membership of the Regent House in any other category, e.g. as a Fellow of a College; and
- will need to provide to the Director of Governance and Compliance by 15 August prior to the promulgation of the Roll each year written confirmation from their Head of institution that they are active participants in the University's affairs.

Further information and an application form are available on the Regent House site at <https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/RegentHouse/SitePages/RH-Retirees.aspx>. Applications should be sent to the Director of Governance and Compliance by email to UniversityDraftsman@admin.cam.ac.uk by **Saturday, 15 August 2026**, for inclusion on the Roll from 6 November 2026.

Senate-House Yard and the University Combination Room: Notice of closure on Wednesday, 24 June 2026

Both the Yard and the Combination Room will be closed on Wednesday, 24 June 2026, on the occasion of the Honorary Degree Congregation. Access to the University Offices will be from Trinity Lane. Only those with admission tickets for the Congregation and other authorised persons will be allowed to enter the Yard during the closure.

VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

Vacancies in the University

A full list of current vacancies can be found at <https://www.cam.ac.uk/jobs>.

Unestablished Teaching Associate in Secondary PGCE Science/Biology in the Faculty of Education (part-time, fixed-term); tenure: 0.4 FTE from 1 September 2026 to 30 September 2027; salary: £35,608–£46,049 *pro-rata*; closing date: 28 June 2026; further details: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/jobs/unestablished-teaching-associate-part-time-jr49923>; quote reference: JR49923

The University actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion and encourages applications from all sections of society. The University has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK.

OBITUARIES**Obituary Notices**

Professor PAUL CHARLES HEWETT, M.A., Life Fellow of and Tutor for Advanced Students of Corpus Christi College, Emeritus Professor of Observational Cosmology and Astrophysics, former Director of the Institute of Astronomy, sometime Vice-President of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, died on 4 June 2026, aged 69 years.

DAVID HOCKNEY, OM, CH, (Hon.) Litt.D., RA, winner of the Shakespeare Prize and the Praemium Imperiale, artist, died on 11 June 2026, aged 88 years.

RICHARD ERNEST MCCONNEL, Ph.D., Fellow and formerly College Lecturer, Supervisor and Director of Studies in Engineering, Director of Studies in Management Studies, Tutor and Junior Bursar of St John's College, sometime University Lecturer in the Department of Engineering, died on 13 June 2026, aged 78 years.

ACTA**Approval of Graces submitted to the Regent House on 3 June 2026**

The Graces submitted to the Regent House on 3 June 2026 (*Reporter*, 6827, 2025–26, p. 514) were approved at 4 p.m. on Friday, 12 June 2026.

R. B. SACHERS, *Director of Governance and Compliance*

END OF THE OFFICIAL PART OF THE 'REPORTER'

REPORT OF DISCUSSION

Tuesday, 2 June 2026

A Discussion was convened by videoconference. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Ms Sonita Alleyne, *JE*, was presiding, with the deputy for the Director of Governance and Compliance, the Senior Proctor, the Deputy Proctor and seventy-four other persons present.

The following item was discussed:

Topic of concern to the University: Pause of UIS reorganisation

(*Reporter*, 6825, 2025–26, p. 475).

Glossary

CIO	Chief Information Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
DTS	Digital Transformation Strategy
ISC	Information Services Committee
MISD	Management Information Services Division
UAS	Unified Administrative Service
UCS	University Computing Service
UIS	University Information Services

Ms C. PERRY (University Information Services, currently in redundancy consultation), read by Mr M. B. BECKLES:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UIS is removing practitioner roles – the people who design and write the content for our websites and digital services, test ideas, and use evidence and data to understand how well these are working in practice.

These are the staff who help create the things our students, applicants, Colleges and departments see and use. They help ensure services are based on real user needs rather than internal assumptions, which also helps avoid wasted effort and cost.

At the same time, UIS continues to invest heavily in senior management, product management, planning, oversight and analysis roles.

Those functions are important, but students do not experience a strategy, a spreadsheet, a roadmap or a business case.

They experience what appears on the screen: the information they read, the forms they complete, and the steps they follow when applying to Cambridge.

At a time when improving the digital student experience is being presented as a strategic priority, we should ask whether we are removing the people who do the hands-on work of creating the digital experiences students use.

Mr M. B. BECKLES (University Information Services and King's College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am currently employed as a Senior Data Scientist in the University Information Services (UIS). I am one of those who called for this Discussion, and I am one of those whose role is at risk of redundancy in the UIS reorganisation that is currently underway.

This Topic of concern to the Regent House covers a number of different areas, and I will not attempt to speak to all of them. One of the items of concern is a proposal to make the UIS a Division of the Unified Administrative Service (UAS). I imagine many people will have a lot to say about this – both for and against – so on this point I shall content myself with raising some questions that those affected may wish to consider. As a member of the UIS, I cannot help but be aware that not everyone is entirely happy with the support and services which we provide. There is a perception that the UIS exists within something of an ivory tower, divorced from the realities of either academic or administrative life. And, much as I might wish otherwise, there is some truth in that.

So I can understand that some might feel that the UIS would be more responsive to the needs of at least some of its users if it were to be more firmly embedded within at least one of the communities, such as the UAS, that makes use of its services. The questions for those members of the University who are not part of the UAS – and it's important to remember that the majority of the University is not part of the UAS – are then: Have you come across any situations in which your needs were not perfectly aligned with those of the central administrative offices? If you have, then do you think the UIS is more or less likely to cater to your needs when we are no longer independent of those offices?

And that's as much as I'll say about that particular item of concern. For the rest of my remarks today, I'd like to focus on the current UIS reorganisation and the process by which it's being carried out. I would start by noting that we have just begun the process of consulting on our digital strategy, and although we don't yet know exactly what the final digital strategy will look like, we *do* know that the UIS will be expected to deliver much, if not all, of that strategy. It is therefore at best ill-advised to engage in a major reorganisation of the UIS – and it *is* a major reorganisation, albeit one which leaves some functions of the UIS largely untouched – before we have decided upon that strategy. The current reorganisation proposes to discontinue several services and make a number of staff redundant. So what happens if the digital strategy in its final form requires some of those services or some of those staff?

One of the many concerning things about this reorganisation is the lack of consultation, particularly of meaningful or timely consultation. Because the proposed changes were formulated under conditions of strict secrecy, it has been acknowledged – repeatedly – that they were never able to ask the following question of the relevant stakeholders: What would you do without this service or these members of staff?

And despite claiming to be carried out in accordance with the University's Organisational Change Policy – which not only encourages transparency and early consultation but in some cases actually mandates it – such meaningful consultation with either UIS staff or the recognised trade unions that has occurred did not commence until very late in the day. In particular, at no point during the planning stage were any staff or trade unions consulted. The rationale I have been given for this is that (a) it was to avoid staff panic; and (b) the scope of the proposed changes was not known until the business case for the changes was given final approval, which was shortly before the legally required redundancy consultations began.

The problem with that rationale, and the reason why it should concern the rest of the University, is that such a rationale could be given for *any* proposed organisational change in any part of the University – which means that staff and trade unions would never be involved in shaping these sorts of proposals until after a business case for them has already been approved. And that means that, if this is indeed an acceptable implementation of the Organisational Change Policy, that policy is – at least as far as meaningful consultation of staff or trade union involvement is concerned – regrettably utterly worthless.

And this lack of consultation has other repercussions. One of the services it is proposed to discontinue is the Printroom. Well, you may say, that's no doubt unfortunate for the staff involved, but increasingly less and less material is being printed, so perhaps there genuinely is a reasonable case for discontinuing that service. I can't comment on that, but I can say that the Printroom are also responsible for printing the University cards on which we all depend for identification and for physical access to much of the University estate. That may change in the future, but it certainly won't before the start of the next academic year. And yet as Printroom staff were told they were to be made redundant, the Card Committee had yet to be consulted – or even officially informed – about the proposed closure of the Printroom.

It is also proposed to discontinue the UIS Training Service and make the staff currently employed to manage and deliver that service redundant. But there's been a notable lack of consultation with those development and transformation projects that are depending on there being a UIS Training Service to deliver customised training for the new products, services and processes they are in the process of implementing. I know this because I'm involved with one of those projects.

It's particularly ironic that – or at least so we have been told – one of the main drivers of this reorganisation is cost. Because by failing to consult with those working with its staff and making use of its services, the UIS has produced a situation where the abrupt removal of some of its staff and services – the current date for dismissal for those staff who are made redundant is 14 August 2026 – will result in an unplanned lack of resource for existing projects and programmes. And that's likely to mean the delivery of those projects and programmes is delayed... which will have negative financial implications for the University as a whole.

I'd now like to speak about my own role and the function I represent within UIS. I am a Senior Data Scientist, a manager-practitioner who manages a small Data Science sub-team – for the avoidance of doubt, most of my time is spent on specialist data activities; perhaps 20%, if that, is spent on management. (Until last year my team consisted of myself and two other Data Scientists; at present it's myself and one other Data Scientist.) The current UIS reorganisation proposes to entirely remove the Data Science function from UIS. It is not proposed that the Data Science function be undertaken by other parts of UIS. This is despite the fact that there is at least one major programme of work and another major project currently making use of the Data Science function – and no, they haven't been consulted.

Now, obviously, as a practicing data scientist, I am unsurprisingly biased in favour of my discipline – or at least of its existence as a specialism. So it's entirely legitimate to ask: Well, does a modern IT services organisation really need data science? At this point, I could

quote chapter and verse what organisations such as the Royal Society and the UK Parliament have to say regarding the importance of data science. I could talk about the data services offered by the University of Oxford IT Services. But perhaps a more useful approach might be to briefly describe what it is a data scientist does – and specifically in an IT services context – so that you can decide for yourself.

Typically, a data scientist will take the raw data from various disparate sources, clean, sanitise and sanity check that data, link it together and then synthesise it to produce management and performance information along with data-driven actionable insights. We will use that data to produce statistically sound predictions or forecasts of future demand or performance. Where the data is incomplete, we will interpolate or extrapolate that data using appropriate mathematical techniques. Where the data is incorrect, we will do our best to identify and exclude the erroneous data from our analyses.

We will take business or project goals, work out the appropriate measures or indicators that will show whether or not those goals are being achieved and then work out how to gather the data for those measures. We work with others on designing surveys to ensure that those surveys collect data that answers the survey's research questions, and then we analyse the results and assess their statistical validity. As I said, I am biased, but I am of the opinion that *someone* – who may be called a data scientist or may have some other title – needs to do those things if an organisation is to truthfully describe itself as data-driven and data-centric.

Now, it might fairly be said that – at least historically – the UIS has not been an organisation overly concerned with performance metrics or with measuring its success against objective, pre-specified criteria. So perhaps, given that, one might argue that data science really is superfluous to the organisation. So ask yourself this: Do you think the UIS is more or less likely to produce trustworthy measures of its performance, its services and of user satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with its services if it does not have someone who does all those things I've just described? Do you think the UIS is more or less likely to accurately diagnose when things are starting – or likely – to go wrong if it does not employ specialists in measurement and data collection?

And finally – particularly since it looks likely that this will be my last speech to the Regent House – I want to leave you with some data. On 15 April 2026, UIS staff were informed that the projected overspend of the UIS budget for 2025–26 was £3.6m. According to the Organisational Change Consultation Document for the current reorganisation, UIS' projected overspend for 2026–27 is also £3.6m, which the reorganisation would reduce by £412k. But when we look closer at the costs and savings of the reorganisation, we see that the recurrent saving due to post closures is actually £2.6m but £2m of that is lost due to the creation of a small number of extremely expensive Grade 12 senior management roles, apparently leaving a saving of £412k. (The observant amongst you will note that those last three figures don't quite add up, but I suppose that's what happens when you make all your data scientists redundant.)

The question for the Regent House is – or at least so it seems to me – this: In the current economic environment, how can the UIS justify creating a new layer of more expensive management to manage a smaller service provision and fewer staff – in particular, fewer staff who are directly involved in service provision and delivery? Something just doesn't add up.

Mr C. CHAMBERS (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Head of Communications in University Information Services (UIS).

I declare an interest in the Topic of concern as I have been working with David Hill, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Director of UIS, on the proposed UIS reorganisation and work towards the development of a digital strategy for the University.

First and foremost, I recognise that organisation change is difficult and emotive – especially for those who are directly impacted. I empathise with colleagues whose roles are at risk – including the author of the petition – and intend no disrespect or distress to them personally in my remarks today.

As a communicator, I feel the most important aspects of my profession are to bring clarity to complex topics, to help people understand one another, and to ensure people are well informed during times of change. I am keenly aware of the power of language to enlighten, and strongly oppose its use as a means to mislead. I am concerned that the premise upon which this Discussion is based could foster misunderstanding and cause unnecessary alarm.

The proposed organisational change within UIS is a modest, measured approach towards resolving long-standing interim leadership arrangements, modernising our services and ways of working, and contributing towards the University-wide savings targets for professional services. The proposal places 18 roles at risk of redundancy, and although every single redundancy is significant to the person who holds that role, I believe it is misleading to present this as a significant proportion of the Department's 428 staff. Given the proposal creates 10 new roles, the net reduction in staff amounts to less than 2%.

The proposal also creates a UIS leadership team with clear accountabilities, and strengthened technical and strategic skills. Rather than an inhibitor to the development of the digital strategy, it is an essential enabler of this work. I perceive no strategic contradiction in the Director of UIS taking this reasonable step after a year in post to build the team he needs for the work ahead.

David Hill wants this proposed senior leadership team to take a much more active and direct role in engaging with the wider University, building relationships, and understanding the needs and challenges of the people we serve. The proposal aims for UIS to get closer to the academic communities we support, rather than shift away from them. I particularly welcome this aspect of the proposal because I believe it should yield better outcomes than previous approaches evidently have.

My confidence stems from the progress I have witnessed to date in the work David Hill and his team have been making towards the development of a digital strategy. I agree that this effort will involve at least a year of meaningful consultation with the collegiate University, and am pleased to report that this is well underway.

David Hill and his team met with more than 40 senior stakeholders earlier this year, including Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of School, Heads of Department, College Masters and Bursars, as well as Directors of professional service functions, to gather insights into our current digital landscape and to understand what the University will need for the future. He also hosted a session at the General Board and Council away day in April, featuring speakers representing education, research, libraries and museums, and Schools and Colleges.

During this event, the CIO stressed the importance of creating the strategy in partnership with the University community, and outlined a proposed approach for engaging with the wider University throughout the rest of the year. The need for a strategy, and the proposed approach toward developing one, gained unanimous support from attendees – as well as words of encouragement.

The University's academic mission has been the defining principle throughout this work, and I am confident that this will continue to be the case. Personally, I am optimistic about the opportunity we have as a community to better position the University for the significant challenges it faces in our current sociopolitical and economic climate. For these reasons, I support the statement made by David Hill, who has my full confidence.

Dr M. J. RUTTER (Department of Physics and Queens' College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, it is a good time to consider what sort of Computer Service the University had, has, and wants.

We had one which had an international reputation for technical excellence. My memory reaches back only to the days of Phoenix, an IBM mainframe using an operating system heavily modified by the University. Slightly more recently this University was responsible for producing Exim, a free mail server which captured around half the market for mail servers open to the internet. Some of its staff were internationally-recognised experts on diverse technical subjects such as regular expressions, Fortran, sorting algorithms, LaTeX, etc. Many frequently lectured courses. The main differences between these Computer Officers and University Teaching Officers seemed to be that the Computer Officers were rarely involved in examining, and very rarely progressed even to the point of Reader on the pay-scale, even when their reputations were at a similar level to many Cambridge Professors.

Today's UIS is much more reliant on commodity solutions, outsourcing, and consultants. The REF's eligibility criteria make it hard for IT staff to gain credit for their research, particularly so if they work within the UIS. What is surprising is how few individuals are inconvenienced by this. The era of research-active IT staff, often holding Oxbridge doctorates, is fading. So too is the era in which the Director of the UCS had responsibility for almost all IT-related issues, a responsibility routinely delegated to Established IT Officers within institutions. Now many IT issues seem to fall under Council or the HR Division, with much less local delegation. Policies are created which, at best, fit IT in commercial sectors, and which often fit very little.

In research, there is often a need to run old, unsupported, versions of software, if only to check that old and new versions produce the same results. If the input data is locally created, the security risks are negligible. Unsupported software which provides a world-facing internet service is a serious security issue. Software to which access is already tightly controlled by other, supported, systems less so. The process for obtaining exemptions under the System Management Policy for having unsupported software installed is rather cumbersome for addressing a situation that many would regard as routine. Research progresses spontaneously, often well outside working hours. Exemptions do not.

That the policies are often open to different interpretations is perhaps inevitable, but not ideal, especially when it is hard to obtain a definitive interpretation. One might have thought that, should an ambiguity be discussed on the UIS-run and monitored email list for IT staff in the University, someone who is able to provide a definitive interpretation would indeed provide it. This is not so. One might also have thought that the UIS would be running a series of seminars advising on how to achieve compliance. Again this is not so.

Times change. In the past, computing in the University was dominated by research computing. Today, by most measures, administrative uses of computing dominate, although not in all parts of the University. The extent to which these can be united under a single management and governance structure is unclear.

At times one wonders whether the current management has any idea how computers are used. The recent questionnaire on the *Computing and Data Storage Hosting Strategy* designed 'to shape the University's 10-year hosting strategy' had many questions on data storage and computational hardware, but none on software. It appeared open to the possibility of a strategy providing excellent storage and processing capacity, but with no means to access it via appropriate software. Not all platforms have equal support for commercial software, compilers, common libraries, etc., and this is particularly true when one starts considering cloud providers with cheap and power-efficient ARM-based CPUs.

Until recently, there was a split between academic computing, provided by the UCS, and administrative computing, from MISD. A structure which has the unified UIS reporting as though it were wholly administrative may not be ideal. But that is not to say that the current situation is ideal either.

IT management and policy appears to be increasingly detached from the academic University. A change would be welcome. But the proposed change to the senior management structure may increase the degree of detachment, rather than making the UIS more focused on supporting academic needs and reducing costs. I know that some people doing computational research are already making plans to reduce their reliance on University services for their research computing, as they have concerns about the current trajectory. For some, plans may involve moving to a different University, which would be unfortunate.

But the proposed change may turn out to be quite decentralising. It may encourage some Schools and Departments to strengthen their local support services for research computing, whilst the UIS shrinks to being little more than first-level support for various outsourced cloud services. I leave it for others to consider the desirability of such an outcome.

Professor A. F. BLACKWELL (Department of Computer Science and Technology and Darwin College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Professor of Interdisciplinary Design in the Department of Computer Science and Technology, and a Fellow of Darwin College. I have acted as board member, steering group member, director, and in other roles for many of the University's strategic research, governance and business initiatives across the sciences, arts, humanities and social sciences, especially where these relate to digital technology.

I would like to start these remarks by noting that I am fully in favour of improvements to the administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the UIS, and believe that reorganisation with due consultation can contribute to these. My question for Council does not relate to administrative efficiency, but to the essential role that digital technologies play in modern scholarship, which I believe has been worryingly neglected in the planning and consultation to date.

This University has a proud history of being an international pioneer in scholarly computing, with multiple Nobel prizes, world firsts, and other accolades in many disciplines, resulting from decades of innovation facilitated by its Computing Laboratory and Computing Service. Cambridge research has played a leading role in transforming teaching, research and scholarship through the use of digital technologies in many fields of study.

In addition to that tradition of innovation in scholarship, as business computing has become an important ingredient of routine estate management, finance, student records and personnel administration, the University has also followed our peer institutions in adopting standard business practices.

These two ways of using computers – scholarly innovation and professional competence – are both essential, but also different. For many years, the earlier University Computing Service kept us at the forefront of scholarly computing, pioneering many innovations such as email, networking, electronic publishing, the world wide web, and so on. The earlier Management Information Services Division served the needs of the administrative service, including departmental administrators. However, scholarly innovation demands attention to future opportunities, seeking adventure, innovation and change. These are not necessarily priorities when delivering statutory responsibilities in finance and administration.

Because the needs and culture of digital scholarship and business computing are so different, the decision to merge these two into a single University Information Service following a review of University IT through 2011 and 2012 was undertaken with trepidation. The agreed governance arrangements included critical safeguards to maintain a focus on scholarship, including the constitution of a 'User Needs Committee' to ensure that teaching and research would be represented, as a strategic objective to be maintained alongside business priorities such as efficient office management, accounting, data processing and so on.

In the subsequent 15 years, many of these safeguards for digital scholarship have been dissolved, while budgets for administrative computing have massively expanded. The User Needs Committee has been abolished, as have institutions such as CARET – the Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technology that led international advances in digital pedagogy, digital humanities and other subjects.

The consequences of treating digital scholarship as a subclass of business administration has become evident in debacles such as Talks.cam, a pioneering grass roots initiative to foster interdisciplinary dialogue, that has been undermined by technical neglect, and by commissioning of systems that either ignored or were unaware of the scholarly purpose of the system. A recent attempt to replace Talks.cam with a commercial conference management system without consulting academic specialists was a costly failure. After more than 12 months of investment in the unsuitable replacement, and constant warnings to users that the system would be closed down, it turned out to be more straightforward to continue operation after all.

Although I was previously familiar with many of the advisory and governance bodies advancing digital scholarly resources for teaching and research, most of these have now been dissolved. As a result, I have little personal knowledge of recent developments, beyond this example that happened to come to my attention. However, that case study appears both representative and instructive as a sign of the problems that the University has brought on itself through failure to protect its once-renowned track record in digital scholarship.

From the interactions that I have had as a ‘user’ of UIS services, in both my departmental and college capacities, there appears to have been a steady degradation of scholarly leadership, and little to no scholarly innovation, in our digital services. I understand the value of off-the-shelf standard solutions for efficient administration of the University estate and core business. Of course I would be concerned if the cost of delivering these solutions has not been as efficient as originally promised, especially if the standardised solutions that were expected to be more efficient had actually become a financial drain. I would encourage Council to consider the cost implications of business decisions that have been taken. However, these are not my own areas of expertise.

My greatest concern is to find a means by which the proposed reorganisation might recover what we have lost, by separating the tools of digital scholarship from the tools of administrative business, and ensuring that Cambridge retains (perhaps regains) its ability to be a leader among our global peers. We do not need to be an international leader in financial accounting. We do need to be an international leader in digital scholarship. These two functions are different, and require different qualifications. Any reorganisation must recognise this, creating different bodies, with different advisors, to determine the most effective ways to organise these two very different things.

My question to the Council is how the future governance of UIS can appropriately separate the competent management of critical administrative functions from the University’s core business, which is to be a leading centre of scholarship, and necessarily, in scholarly computing. Rather than reconstituting a token User Needs Committee, this should not be an afterthought, but a central strategic priority.

Mr D. R. HILL (University Information Services and Downing College):

Deputy Vice Chancellor, I am the Chief Information Officer and Director of University Information Services and a Bye-Fellow of Downing College.

I declare an interest in this topic as I am the director who is responsible for designing and implementing the proposed UIS reorganisation.

Since joining the University just over a year ago, I have recognised that we have much to do to deliver the level of IT and digital services that are needed to support the academic mission of the University. Despite the very best efforts of the staff in UIS we need to change the way we work and how we deliver our services. This is our first step in our journey to re-designing our services and preparing for the development of a new University-wide digital strategy. We launched a staff consultation on 27 April 2026 which impacts 42 UIS staff.

While this consultation impacts staff, I believe this is a necessary step to address many of the concerns that have been raised from across the University community, by historical external reviews of the department, recent internal cyber security audits, senior leadership feedback and our own self-assessment.

Context

To help Regent House members understand the rationale for the proposed reorganisation I will summarise the following context:

- I was appointed as Chief Information Officer and Director of University Information Services in April 2025 to help improve the digital maturity and capabilities across the University.
- During my first year I have completed a period of discovery to understand the performance of UIS and the staff experience of using our existing IT and digital services, systems, applications and infrastructure.
- The overwhelming feedback from the University community that I have received is that we need to make a material improvement to the services we provide and the way we work.
- The UIS annual Chest budget operating costs have risen from £23.47m in 2021 to £42.73m in 2026.
- The UIS headcount has risen from 289 FTE in 2021 to 428 FTE in 2026.
- We need to make a 5% contribution to the professional services savings target. The 2025–2026 Chest budget for UIS is £42.2m so we are trying to find *circa* £2.1m of savings.
- Many of the 2025–2026 and future years (26–27, 27–28) budget forecasts show between 5 and 10% cost increases for software licence and support costs for many of our core systems.
- We need to make changes to our staff structure now so that we have the right skills and capabilities to assist with the digital strategy development process.
- The UIS re-structure proposal has the approval of the Information Services Committee which is a joint subcommittee of the Council and the General Board, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Resources and Operations and with academic representation from across the University.

Headlines of the proposed UIS reorganisation

To help Regent House members understand the headlines from the proposed reorganisation I will provide the following detail:

- There are currently 428 FTE staff in UIS.
- This proposal will impact 42 FTE staff within UIS.
 - 18 roles are at risk of redundancy.
 - 24 minor changes are being made to role title, line report or minor change to a role description.
 - 10 new roles are created to strengthen the leadership, commercial, delivery aspects of the team.

The proposed UIS re-structure is seeking to achieve the following objectives:

- An updated UIS Senior Leadership Team to make accountabilities clearer.
- Removal of interim and acting up arrangements which in some cases have been in place for more than two years.
- Recurrent reduction of the UIS pay budget of approximately £0.4m per year.
- Strengthening of our strategy and technology senior leadership by creating a Chief Technology Officer role.
- Progression towards a clearer product delivery approach.

- Reconfiguration of our User Centred Design resources that predominantly focus on design of websites.
 - Reduction in this team is required as the University has over invested in this area. This team was comprised of 34 staff at its peak in 2024 and was grown to deliver the digital presence programme. This proposal will reduce this team from its current size of 22 staff to 11.
 - Despite best efforts of the staff in this area our investment has failed to deliver the expected benefits for the University hence further reductions in this area. We are looking at how to better support our internal and external websites as part of the new digital strategy.
- Service modernisation.
 - Closure of the UIS Print Service which has shown a reduction in user demand of 80% in the past two years. An alternative print service which is based at Old Schools is provided by the Estates Division.
 - Closure of the UIS Training Service which provides foundational training for Office based products (Word, Excel, Office 365) and some HR systems. The demand for these services has declined by two-thirds in the last two years.
- Reduction from two to one Chief Information Security Officer to improve accountability, while we develop our strategy for further strengthening cyber security.
- Creating clearer accountabilities for cyber security technical resources which will report to the one remaining Chief Information Security Officer.
- Strengthening our commercial and contractual skills and capabilities so that we can focus on driving costs down across all elements of our £25m non-pay, largely software licencing, budget.

Response to the Topic of concern

The Topic of concern raises two main issues:

1. *Perceived loss of status of the UIS function due to its proposed merger with University Administrative Service (UAS).* This is not regarded as a problem by the CIO or the VC's Senior Leadership Team because:
 - (a) The CIO will continue to be part of the VC's Senior Leadership Team during this important period of change.
 - (b) The University Chief Operating Officer (COO) will provide much need co-ordination across all professional service functions. UIS will become a closer and more integral part of the professional service central functions.
 - (c) UIS undertakes a small amount of academic research within Research Computing Services which is externally funded. This arrangement is not affected by the proposal.
 - (d) We know of one individual who has chosen to undertake their own academic research which will be investigated further to understand the legitimacy and funding source for this work.
 - (e) The CIO will be held to account for his performance and the performance of UIS by the VC and the Information Services Committee.
2. *The proposed re-structure is premature given we have not created the digital strategy yet.* This is not a concern as this proposal seeks to strengthen our strategic capabilities.
 - (a) We need to strengthen the UIS leadership team in order to be able to develop the digital strategy. This proposal seeks to recruit a Chief Technology Officer who would report to the CIO. The Chief Technology Officer will help define the technology roadmaps for the University.
 - (b) We need to progress with the digital strategy development now in order to address the rising UIS cost base and to contribute to our required 5% savings target.
 - (c) The longer we wait to develop our strategy the further we fall behind in our digital maturity and capabilities. This in turn will limit and start to impact the wider performance of the University and further degrade our student and staff experience.

While I recognise that the proposed restructure impacts on a limited number of individuals, it is important that we continue to modernise UIS, to meet the future needs of the University of Cambridge.

Mr C. J. RUSSELL (University Information Services and Selwyn College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Chief Operating Officer in University Information Services (UIS) and wish to declare an interest in this matter. I co-authored the business case for the proposed UIS changes, and my own role would be subject to a minor change should the proposal proceed.

Alongside UIS senior leadership colleagues whose roles are also affected, I strongly support the proposal and believe it should proceed, with potential adjustments during the current consultation phase before implementation starting in July. I believe that any delay would introduce significant risk to critical UIS services in the short term. It would also further undermine the University's position at a time when it is already lagging behind global peers in harnessing digital capabilities to improve user experience, efficiency, and competitiveness.

The Topic of concern suggests pausing these changes pending development of a wider University digital strategy, implying these changes are a premature opening step on a journey. I take a different view. The proposed UIS changes represent a critical step in a three-year programme of transformation I have led within UIS, designed to ensure the organisation is fit for purpose and ready to help shape and deliver future digital strategy. I see these changes proposed as completing the foundations we need. Without acting now, UIS will not be positioned to support the improvements essential to the University's academic mission. The University is already significantly behind in digital maturity, and the pace of external change continues to accelerate.

Although I joined Cambridge relatively recently, in 2023, I bring over 25 years' experience leading digital transformation in comparable organisations. Between 2000 and 2013 I led teams through the BBC's transition from traditional broadcaster to digital service provider, and more recently I have held similar leadership roles in UK government, driving modernisation, improved user experience, and efficiency.

In all successful transformations I have been part of, outcomes have depended on a strong, well-organised central digital and IT function – what UIS must become. Conversely, failure has often stemmed from the absence of these foundations. When I arrived, I found a UIS organisation staffed by dedicated colleagues, but structurally unsuited to current demands: siloed, insufficiently connected to users, and lacking clarity around priorities, delivery, and funding. It resembled earlier stages of organisations I had seen decades ago, which was unexpected given the University's global standing. Honestly, it felt in 2023 I had travelled back to 2003.

Since then, we have made substantial progress. Within existing structures, we have improved collaboration and culture, reflected in positive staff feedback through regular pulse surveys. We have developed a clearer understanding of our product and service portfolio, identified significant cost savings, and strengthened prioritisation in partnership with academic and professional service colleagues – particularly important in the context of rising costs and constrained budgets.

Over the past six months, we have also recruited experienced leaders in digital capabilities that underpin value creation, realisation and scalability such as enterprise architecture, product and delivery management. These roles are not indicative of a 'top-heavy' model, but are essential to translating user needs into effective support for teaching, learning, and research. We are beginning to see early improvements in user experience, delivery performance, and cost management. A pause at this stage would risk undoing that progress and wasting the investment made so far.

The proposed changes would create a leaner, more accountable senior leadership structure in UIS. After three years, I believe this is necessary and overdue. While the current leadership team includes highly capable individuals, the structure itself is not optimised for effectiveness or efficiency.

We must also respond to financial pressures. This includes closing services or roles where demand has demonstrably declined and viable alternatives exist. While redundancy proposals are regrettable, we have minimised impact – having already removed over 70 vacant roles, only 18 roles are now at risk. The areas identified, including the UIS Printroom and in-person training, have seen sustained demand reduction. Without these measures, we would face either a significant budget overspend or deeper cuts to high-demand services affecting thousands of staff and students.

Finally, I support the creation of the new University Chief Operating Officer role and the alignment of UIS within it. Over the past three years, I have observed inefficiencies not within UIS itself, but arising from misalignment across the Unified Administrative Service and with UIS. My experience shows that clear leadership and alignment across functions are critical enablers of both efficiency and transformation. Addressing this systemic issue is essential if we are to become more effective and better support our academic community. We risk wasting millions of pounds more across the University on ineffective transformation programmes if we do not take this step.

In summary, I believe both proposals for UIS and the new COO organisation are not optional refinements but necessary conditions for progress. Delay carries real and immediate cost. I urge that we proceed.

Ms J. EGAN (University Information Services and Hughes Hall):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a User Experience Design Lead at University Information Services (UIS) and one of the user experience professionals whose role is at risk under the proposed UIS organisational change. I am also a postgraduate alumna of Hughes Hall College and the Department of Architecture. My opinions on this matter are entirely my own.

I have worked as a user experience professional within the University for the past twelve years, with the goal of improving the experience of both staff and students across the collegiate University.

For context, I feel it is worth noting that the impact of my work here extends beyond Cambridge. For example, a user experience colleague and I were invited to contribute a chapter to the book *Transforming Higher Education with Human Centred Design* (which was published in 2025) as a result of our work on the University of Cambridge FutureLib Innovation Programme. This programme aimed to shape a user-centric ecosystem integrating physical and digital library resources and services. Some of the outputs from this work are now being used by several universities in the UK and internationally, including Harvard University.

As part of the proposed UIS organisational change, the User Experience function is among those facing reductions. It risks losing resource in specialisms including user research, accessibility, service design, user experience design and data science.

I would like to make it clear that I am not here to complain about the redundancies, as frustrating and disappointing as they are for those of us who have worked hard to try and make a difference here. Whatever happens, I am confident that I and my colleagues will be able to secure positions supporting other organisations with their user experience.

The reason I am speaking today is because I am concerned about what this particular move means for the future of this University, which I have been a part of for many years as both a student and a member of staff.

These user experience disciplines exist to ensure that products, services and processes are designed around the needs of those who use them. Our work involves engaging directly with administrators, students, academics and service teams to understand their needs and challenges and then use that evidence to represent their needs and inform decision-making and delivery. This is true for all members of the user experience team, regardless of seniority or management responsibilities.

Despite having such a talented user experience team, such work is not always straightforward in a complex institution such as Cambridge. However, the team's core purpose is simple: to improve the day-to-day experience of those who study and work here. We strive for this despite the barriers we face.

I am therefore concerned that the UIS organisational change proposal reduces investment in user experience capabilities, while increasing investment in yet more senior management roles. This appears difficult to reconcile with the stated objective of the new CIO and Director of UIS to 'improve the staff and student experience'.

In my professional opinion, achieving this objective requires not only strategic leadership, but also sufficient expertise and capacity among the practitioners who work directly with users and delivery teams on the front line.

These practitioners identify needs, test assumptions and ensure that products and services are genuinely meeting the needs of those who use them.

I am also concerned by the timing of these proposals given that the University's digital strategy and new UIS Service Offer have not yet been finalised. In many other organisations, user experience professionals play a central role in developing and delivering digital strategies and service offers, particularly when improving user experience is itself a strategic objective.

This raises a fundamental question: how has it been determined that these capabilities are no longer required, or should be significantly reduced, before the strategic direction they would be expected to support has been agreed?

If the University is truly committed to user experience and evidence-based decision-making, then it would seem more appropriate for any significant organisational restructuring within UIS to be informed by the outcomes of the digital strategy, rather than preceding it.

For that reason, I urge members of the Regent House to support a pause to the current proposals until the digital strategy is finalised, the University's future needs (and how UIS can serve those) are more clearly understood, and the evidence base for such changes can be properly scrutinised.

Mr A. KALETZKY (Churchill College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a graduate of Churchill College and retired from DAMTP. Albeit I sit on the University and College Union's Cambridge University branch executive and am a volunteer caseworker and representative for the union, I speak here as an individual.

I commend everything in the Topic of concern statement and its background notes but will add some comments.

The proposed reorganisation further threatens the academic function of the University's computing facilities, already seriously impaired by the merger of the University Computing Service into UIS some years ago and the consequent imposition of the use of proprietary, closed source systems designed for for-profit non-academic organisations such as MS Office, not very suitable for supporting academic work of the collegiate University. The replacement of our internet-standard email system which could support arbitrary, including regular expression, mailfile text searches by the business-oriented, inflexible and highly client-resource-consuming MS Outlook was particularly damaging.

The adoption of proprietary third-party systems makes the University an agent for the commercial interests of the system supplier, embedding students further into those suppliers' 'tools ecology' rather than legitimately fostering critical attitudes to such tooling. It also stifles creativity in students and staff developing their own tooling due to the complicated, proprietary and poorly documented interfaces, if any, of those proprietary tools. It forces students to purchase, often expensively, only such client hardware and software supported by the proprietary tools, discouraging creative solutions such as Raspberry Pi and other kits or the environmentally-friendly and economical use of older hardware. By discouraging familiarity with public, regulated computing standards such as Internet RFCs and instead making captive customers of proprietary market-dominating systems it arguably does a disservice to students.

I also note that UIS has no ability to change those proprietary, business-corporation-oriented systems, it can only request changes from the suppliers. In my experience, such requests, if made, do not succeed.

All this emphasises that the attitude of UIS and its proposed structure need to change from the apparent business corporation model currently proposed. The collegiate University is not a business.

Ms K. LIVINGSTONE (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Head of Digital Transformation at UIS, working with David Hill on the development of the digital strategy. Supported by nine years' experience at the University and a career in user-centred design, I speak in my personal capacity and would like to offer a response to this concern.

I fully support the principle that the University's digital strategy must be academically informed, user-focused, and developed through meaningful engagement with staff and students.

However, I do not share the view that the proposed UIS leadership changes are premature or in conflict with that objective. On the contrary, I believe they are a critical enabler of successful strategy development, because they establish the leadership capacity and decision-making structures required to translate engagement into actionable, prioritised outcomes.

Developing a digital strategy of this scale requires both:

- *Extensive bottom-up engagement*, which is already underway through structured planning with Schools and will continue through formal workshops, surveys, interviews, and partnership activities; and
- *Strong senior digital leadership* to translate that engagement into prioritised roadmaps and deliverable outcomes.

Without the appropriate digital leadership structure in place, there is a significant risk that engagement does not translate into a coherent and implementable strategy. This would represent a considerable waste of staff (academic and professional services) and student time in engagement that does not result in action.

There is no risk that the proposed reorganisation will reduce the user-centred focus of the digital strategy; the approach we are taking is specifically intended to ensure that user needs are more consistently and effectively translated into strategy and delivery through improved operating models. This includes measures such as academic representation on governance boards and working groups, formal user research methodologies, and structured feedback loops to ensure ongoing alignment with academic priorities.

I also do not agree that positioning UIS within an enabling services model inherently shifts focus toward administration or disconnects it from the academic mission.

The alignment of digital services to teaching, learning, and research is determined not by reporting lines, but by:

- The operating model and governance structures in place (where 'operating model' refers to how services are organised, governed, and delivered, including roles, decision-making processes, and accountability structures); and
- The strength of engagement with academic stakeholders.

Embedding digital functions alongside other enabling functions, with explicit and formal alignment to both academic and operational planning, should enhance institutional coordination, reduce fragmentation, and support a more coherent approach to planning and prioritisation. This alignment will, in turn, facilitate more effective end-to-end delivery of IT and digital services across the University.

Conversely, separating digital from other enabling functions risks reinforcing additional complexity and barriers to planning, prioritisation, and delivery. This has been the case since I have worked for UIS and the University and has in fact been one of the most prohibitive factors in coordinating and delivering improved services to the academic community.

Finally, I do not support the assertion that pausing the proposed reorganisation is necessary to create the time required to develop the strategy. Without strengthening leadership capability and operating model alignment in parallel with engagement, there is a significant risk that extending timelines will not improve outcomes but instead delay the University's ability to act on identified priorities.

Strengthening leadership capability and establishing a more coherent operating model is therefore a necessary step in ensuring that:

- Skills and service gaps are addressed in a structured and evidence-based manner
- Innovation is supported through clear prioritisation, governance, and investment
- Cultural and organisational challenges are addressed with accountability and leadership focus
- Accessibility is embedded consistently across services, rather than applied unevenly
- Professional standards are adopted and implemented in a meaningful and sustained way.

Without addressing current gaps in leadership capability and operating model coherence, there is a risk these ambitions remain aspirational rather than realised. In this context, the reorganisation should be viewed not as a constraint, but as a necessary enabler of effective strategy development and delivery.

Delaying these changes risks perpetuating existing structural constraints and capability gaps and limiting our ability to deliver against these shared goals. Furthermore, progressing a joined-up, institution-wide strategy will help contain escalating IT costs by reducing duplication, improving integration, and strengthening the consistency and quality of data across systems.

Mr R. W. H. BRICHENO (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, professional services is a natural home for much of University IT because IT involves provision of commodity infrastructure and business information systems. These are not normally academic-line functions.

The problem would be treating University IT as if it only consisted of professional services.

That would be a mistake for several reasons.

First, IT is now deeply embedded in the academic mission. It shapes virtual learning environments, assessment platforms, research computing, data storage, accessibility, library systems, student analytics, online collaboration, and AI governance. If IT is governed only through an administrative chain, academic priorities can become 'user requests' rather than part of institutional strategy.

Second, IT decisions involve trade-offs that are not merely operational. For example: security versus research collaboration; standardisation versus academic freedom; central procurement versus specialist academic tools; cloud platforms versus data sovereignty. Those choices need academic, research, student, legal, financial, and technical input.

The current proposal is sufficiently imprecise that it could easily be misinterpreted as:

'IT will report through an administrative chain insulated from academic governance, with little formal academic or research input'

and this would be a negative change.

University IT may be professionally managed, but if it is to meet the needs of the whole University, it must be institutionally and academically governed.

The current *Statutes and Ordinances* carefully enshrine this position, using the ISC. Any proposed change which does not continue to do so should be rejected.

If the intention is truly to remove the academic function from central IT provision, this should be clearly stated so that the University can make an informed decision.

Mr A. DOWNIE (School of the Biological Sciences):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Head of Information Technology and Digital Transformation for the School of the Biological Sciences.

The Topic of concern conflates two unrelated matters (the UIS restructuring and the University SLT restructuring).

Colleagues have already articulated very clearly the rationale for the UIS restructuring, so I will skip directly to the University SLT restructuring, specifically the suggestion that the CIO's position in a new reporting line will reduce the capacity of UIS to support the academic functions of the University. I do not subscribe to that point of view. Our current structure of silos within silos (for example) is a much more massive obstacle to engagement with the academic community, and to essential transformation, than the appointment of a University COO.

The Call to Action requests a pause of both restructuring processes, to allow time to address several important elements of the University digital strategy. The elements described are indeed important, but I believe they can be addressed while the CIO and his team continue at pace, and capitalise on the momentum that their work so far has created. I see no strong case for a pause.

Currently, and despite structural and cultural challenges, the CIO is managing to engage very well with the academic, administrative and IT communities within the University to gather information about the current state of our IT landscape, and to develop a picture of what good would look like. It's clear that we are not in good shape and there is a long journey ahead that will require cultural and structural change, as well as technology and service improvements. The CIO has been appointed to lead the University on that journey, and his success will depend upon the University's preparedness to be led.

I urge the Regent House to consider the journey ahead, its importance and its urgency, and to give their support to the CIO.

Dr G. A. AHMADI-ASSALEMI (University Information Services), read by Mr R. L. HEY:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Chief Information Security Officer (Technology Operations) and, within the interim structure, the Interim Chief Operating Officer (Security and Operations) in UIS.

I wish to declare an interest in this matter because my own role is proposed to change materially under the UIS reorganisation. I am therefore one of the members of staff directly affected by the consultation, alongside several highly valued colleagues across the service. Within the interim leadership structure, the Security and Technology Group that I currently lead, seven colleagues are also affected – four colleagues in a major way and three in a minor way, including one member of staff who directly reports to me. I therefore approach this matter with a clear understanding both of the organisational case for change and of the very real effect that such change may have on staff and colleagues, me included.

I bring more than six years of experience at the University and over twenty-five years across information technology, including research, teaching, information security and cyber security. That experience leads me to strongly support the principle that digital strategy should be shaped by the needs of the collegiate University as a whole and should enable teaching, research and professional services in an integrated way.

I do not regard the proposed leadership changes as being inconsistent with those objectives. Strong senior digital leadership is needed alongside substantial bottom-up engagement across all University communities. On the contrary, it is my view that, besides responding to the financial pressures, the proposed changes are a necessary enabler to create the leadership capacity, clear accountability and organisational resilience required to develop and deliver a coherent digital strategy for the University.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, may I offer a perspective through the lens of the interim structure within which UIS has been operating since the retirement of the previous Director in 2024. Although we made meaningful progress over the past two years towards setting the foundational blocks for a future digital strategy, much of that effort has been directed towards immediate and short-term horizons rather than sustained longer-term improvement. In my experience and observation, to remain indefinitely in a holding pattern while awaiting every element of a future digital strategy to be in place would prolong uncertainty, put further strain on leaders and teams, increase the risk of burnout, and leave UIS less able to support the University's academic mission at a time when expectations of digital services continue to rise.

During the past year, the discovery work undertaken to understand the performance of UIS, and the staff experience of our current IT and digital services, systems, applications and infrastructure, has reinforced my observation that a more optimised and sustainable structure with clearer lines of accountability is now needed. This is particularly important during times in which universities face a broader range and higher volume of cyber threats, more frequent attempts to compromise systems and data, and a level of operational complexity distinctly greater than even a few years ago. In that environment, clear leadership, defined lines of accountability and the ability to take timely decisions are not optional; they are essential to protecting the University, supporting staff and students, and ensuring that finite resources are directed to the areas of greatest risk and greatest institutional importance.

May I conclude by saying that for this reason I support the statement made by David Hill, the CIO.

Professor J. S. DENNIS (University Director of Transformation Programmes and Selwyn College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, my current role involves oversight of the University's major digital transformation programmes, viz. in finance, research and HR. This includes the interface with UIS capability essential for the timely and coordinated integration of these new systems with each other and with other University digital systems. I am also fully aware of work aimed at reshaping our approach to the delivery of professional support to the University through the programme on Reimagining Professional Services (RPS). My previous role was Head of the School of Technology (2018–2023); I therefore have reasonable experience of both professional service and academic communities.

I would like to offer the following comments on issues raised by this Topic of concern.

1. *Merger of UIS and UAS*

The 2013 Review of IT Infrastructure and Support was concerned to make changes, relevant at the time, to 'ensure that the University has IT services and support commensurate with its international standing, which provide value for money based on minimum standards for staff and students and which are responsive to user needs.'¹ This framing principle still holds good and so one must examine whether or not the new changes support it.

The view that a merger is deleterious because it would effectively prioritise UAS needs over wider University user needs, particularly academic ones, does not reflect the realities facing the University. This is because we know in today's operating environment that the activities of professional services must be geared to providing effective and efficient support of the academic mission of the University. Achievement of that mission requires close collaboration between professional services and the academic user community.

This becomes obvious if one considers the complicated and seamless interactions involving programme teams, UIS technical support and academic and professional users to ensure satisfactory delivery of the present major digital transformation programmes. Without (i) a culture of real cooperation and (ii) expert leadership and integrated planning, these programmes will not deliver the declared benefits. This applies to both present and future digital programmes. Accordingly, seamless working across cultural boundaries has become the norm; siloed working is a thing of the past and must be eliminated, irrespective of organisational structures. Furthermore, academic priorities must underpin all work; the task must always be effective servicing of the academic mission.

The merger of UIS with UAS in fact offers huge potential for improvement in the cost-efficient delivery of effective services, because

- A Chief Operating Officer (COO) would provide much needed coordination across all professional service functions. UIS needs to be an integral part of this activity to work with professional services to provide a digital environment fit for supporting our academic mission and capable of providing the wider user community with modern IT services. This is amply illustrated by the essential and seamless relationship needed involving UIS, professional service functions and users to deliver our new digital systems.

- The Chief Information Officer remains accountable for his performance, and that of UIS, to the VC and the Information Services Committee (ISC). The Information Services Committee, as required by the 2013 Review, would retain its strong academic, School and NSI representation were a merger to occur.
- Integration would also bring opportunities to revise the end-to-end delivery of services to the academic University, as envisaged under RPS. This would ensure we have optimal services in support of our academic mission, enabled by our future digital landscape.

2. *Should the restructuring precede the creation of the digital strategy?*

There is overwhelming evidence that the University requires a digital strategy, developed with full consultation of the user community. This is clear from (i) the alarming increase in UIS Chest operational costs (e.g. from ~£23m in 2021 to ~£43m currently), (ii) the increasing costs of IT generally – software, hardware, licensing, cyber security etc., (iii) the need to support both the implementation, and the through-life upgrades, to our new, cloud-based digital systems, and (iv) increasing concern from users about lack of timely digital support and delivery. We need an agreed strategic plan and budgetary envelope for the future delivery of services.

To develop the strategy requires focused thinking at the leadership level, backed by extensive knowledge of how the technical landscape is likely to evolve, not least in the light of advances in AI. Of course, the final strategy will need detailed user consultation and ownership. Time is not on our side, so the development of sensible strategic options to inform a wider consultation is indispensable to ensuring we focus our debate and develop our strategy reliably and quickly. Accordingly, I support changes in leadership necessary to bring modern and focused thinking to the problem whilst ensuring that we have informed user consultation and involvement.

The longer we wait to develop the digital strategy, the further we shall fall behind in our digital maturity and capabilities. This in turn will impact negatively the performance of the University and degrade the experience of our students and staff.

3. *Conclusion*

The Topic of concern raises important concerns. However, I am convinced that it would be a mistake to pause the rapid strides that the CIO and his team are planning to develop a shared and implementable digital strategy.

My observations on the progress of the major digital transformation programmes, and the substantial, focused support that UIS has brought to bear on them since the tenure of the CIO, underpins my confidence in the ability of a reshaped UIS leadership to introduce an effective strategy.

I am also convinced that the input and needs of users – professional services and academic – will be at the heart of a new strategy, and indispensable to its implementation. We should, of course, continually seek to strengthen our co-development of the strategy and so, as work progresses, we should monitor activity and ensure appropriate working groups and forums are established to strengthen user need.

¹ Paragraph 3 of the Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on IT infrastructure and support: *Reporter*, 6302, 2012–13, p. 418.

Mr R. L. HEY (University Information Services and Wolfson College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Deputy Director in the University Information Services (UIS) and the IT Fellow at Wolfson College.

I declare an interest in the Topic of concern as my own role will be subject to a minor change under the proposed UIS reorganisation. Therefore, I am one of the staff members impacted and I am, like other impacted staff, being consulted on the changes. Additionally, six staff members who report to me (three directly and three indirectly) have roles that are at risk of redundancy under the proposals, including the author of the petition calling for this Discussion.

I would like to acknowledge that organisational change can be emotive and that where redundancy is on the cards, it inevitably has a direct impact on real people. I am therefore pleased that the process that has been initiated within UIS has been delivered and managed in a highly professional manner to date. I intend no upset to any of those colleagues impacted, or any other colleague in what I am about to say in support of these necessary changes for UIS and in opposing any delay or pause of UIS reorganisation.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, may I begin by referring to the information within the petition that has led to this discussion. The narrative stated is both misleading and incomplete in what it states about the UIS reorganisation. It has misinformed and misled UIS staff, the University IT community, and the entire Regent House. The petition states that there will be ‘significant staff redundancies’ whereas there are just 18 roles at risk, which equates to just under 4.5% of the total UIS headcount. The petition makes no mention of new roles being created as part of the proposal (10 in total) to enable UIS to be better positioned to serve the Academic University.

The petition also refers to ‘the reduction or closure of long-standing UIS services’ but fails to mention that these are services that are either duplicated within the University, have seen demand fall, or have been rendered redundant by changes to ways of working. The petition also mentions ‘the recruitment of new, top-heavy and very expensive administrative roles’ and yet none of the new roles proposed is described as ‘administrative’. Indeed, the proposal calls for one current administrative role to be closed.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this Discussion is not about the petition, but it is important that we recognise that the picture it paints is an inaccurate representation of the proposed UIS reorganisation, which is anything but ‘a shift away from user-led, academic-focused IT development’.

The overwhelming feedback that UIS leadership has received from the University community over the past 2 years is that we need to make a material improvement to the services we provide and the way we work. We need to update the UIS staff structure now so that we have the appropriate skills and capabilities to assist with the digital strategy development process and to improve how we work with, and listen to, our academic colleagues. To delay this change risks our ability to do this important work and delays the material improvement that is so sought after for at least another 2 to 3 years.

Additionally, the argument that UIS should pause its current reorganisation plans and remain as it is pending the development of a University-wide digital strategy is deeply flawed, unless you apply this same reasoning across the entire University. That would mean no new recruitment or changes in IT teams across all areas of the Academic

University until the strategy work is completed. It is inappropriate to paralyse UIS and, by association, the entire IT community by delaying these changes.

Cost pressures also require UIS to act now. UIS is required to make a 5% contribution to the professional services savings target. That equates to £2.1m of savings this year. To pause the UIS reorganisation would cost the University millions in overspend with nothing to show in return other than increased costs. It should be noted that UIS has conducted an exercise over the past 2 years to reduce costs wherever possible. The plans for cost savings as part of the current reorganisation are not a first attempt at making savings, but a necessary next step on the route to financial sustainability.

The UIS organisation change proposal has the approval of the Information Services Committee, which is a joint committee of the Council and the General Board, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Resources and Operations, and with academic representation from across the University.

The Director has my full confidence and support in what he proposed. I fully support and endorse the remarks he has made.

I will now turn to the proposed move of UIS to sit alongside other enabling services under a University Chief Operating Officer (COO). This proposal has my personal support and is arguably a long overdue improvement to how professional services should be configured to be better aligned with the University's mission.

As I remarked previously (at the Regent House Discussion on senior administrative roles held on 26 May), formally renaming the current Unified Administrative Service as the Unified Enabling Service would better reflect the actual functionality proposed and its position as an enabler in direct support of education and research. In doing so, the term 'Functions' would far better describe the constituent parts of this service as opposed to the term 'Division.' UIS has already made such a change internally, which has brought cultural benefits and more cohesiveness to how we operate by moving away from the literal divisiveness of the term 'Division'. This change would set a clear agenda for unified and coordinated delivery in support of the University's academic mission and is much more than mere branding; it sets a clear remit and focus for activities under the COO and recognises that supporting education and research is central to its purpose. Tangentially, I have heard suggestions that we should now divide UIS into separate bodies for academic and administrative IT (a return to the past which was far from problem free). Speaking as a previous Division Head of the now defunct University Computing Services, and as someone who has spent the majority of their career focussed on academic IT support including time working within departments, I believe that such a return to the past would be a significant retrograde step and seriously limit how University resources can be applied in modernising our overall digital landscape. I would however propose that we take the opportunity afforded by the alignment of University enabling services under a COO, to also rename University Information Services to something that better reflects its function as both a digital partner and IT enabler of our mission. Finally, I would like to return to the topic of my UIS colleagues, who I applaud for being professional, dedicated, and hard-working irrespective of whether they are potentially impacted by the current proposals or not. We do not always agree as colleagues, but we know how to respectfully disagree.

Professor O. BRANDT (Department of Physics):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I declare an interest in this Topic of concern in my capacity as the Chair of the IT Committee of the Department of Physics and the Academic Chair of the Hosting Strategy Working Group.

I broadly support the Topic of concern, albeit not fully. I will address the two topics it covers separately:

Regarding the UAS / UIS grouping:

- Changing the overall structure so that today's UIS reports to the COO carries a significant and real risk of distancing UIS further from the academic community. Furthermore, changing the reporting structure would weaken the position of the CIO David Hill in delivering a major piece of work this University direly needs – the Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS).

Regarding the UIS restructuring:

- It does seem odd to first restructure an organisation before devising a strategy that should inform this restructuring. The DTS that was promised to be delivered in April 2026 is now delayed to the future, and I am not aware of a concrete timeline. However, the UIS restructuring is already taking place, i.e., before further clarity regarding DTS that it ultimately has to align with.
- While some redundancies for posts with responsibilities for items where a notable decline in uptake by the community can be demonstrated seem reasonable, it is not clear to me whether it is timely to create senior G12 leadership roles at this stage, before the DTS is presented, discussed, and finalised. I see a high risk of these expensive positions not catering to the needs that still are to be outlined in the DTS.
- The additional hires into G12 UIS leadership roles at this intermediate stage would create further imbalance in the top-heavy hierarchy structure of UIS. It is not clear to me whether this will in fact improve the user experience. As a recent example, our Department has been waiting for one year for UIS to switch on a service because there are not enough UIS staff 'on the ground' to make these changes. UIS direly needs precisely these staff 'on the ground'.
- The DTS can be informed by establishing clear Service Level Agreements (SLAs), a standard practice in industry. The delivery of UIS service can then be measured against these SLAs – this will give us a very clear indication of the community needs and will inform the DTS.
- The community engagement for devising the DTS has potential to improve. Representing the IT Committee of the Department of Physics, which is the third biggest Department of our University, I am worried to report that our Department has not been consulted regarding the planned DTS. It is not clear to me how any strategy can be well devised if it does not consider the needs of one of the biggest stakeholders.

Ms J. A. LANGLEY (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, good afternoon and thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. I am the interim Head of Service Management at University Information Services.

I have worked in the University for 23 years, and most of that time, for 15 years, at the Department of Engineering as a regular departmental Computer Officer, so I've never aspired to greatness in my career and though I now hold a more senior role, I am used to thinking of things from a more grassroots perspective.

I welcome the direction that we are going in with UIS. I think that David Hill's vision for the kind of provision that we should have is a sound one and necessary, and I'm excited to be part of that. However, I feel the perception amongst the ordinary staff working in the University is that you're likely to be subject to this, not the senior people, and that we are cutting before measuring by considering redundancies before making the changes. I feel that this is an unhelpful precedent. The University sees itself as a community of scholars, but I think it's more than that. I think it's a community of scholars and students and professional staff, colleagues, all working together. I like to think of all of them as colleagues, whether they're staff or students or senior or junior. To put people at risk of redundancy before developing a digital strategy is hurtful to that community and leaves an unfortunate perception, however well thought out it is, however welcome it is. I appreciate the idea of trying to bring in these changes in one go and I support where UIS is going. However, I have concerns about the perception that changing things in this order gives to the rest of the University.

Mr R. S. HAYNES (University Information Services and Darwin College), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the famous Vassa ship which sits in an impressive museum in Stockholm is both a kind of testimony to technical capabilities and an admonition of administrative overreach. As many will know, the king ordered the completion of the ship by a set date, along with demands of major changes which would prove fatal, and the designer and builder obliged accordingly. At its launch the ship sank before all eyes, extra rows of cannons and insufficient balance and stability ensuring its doom and that of some of the ship's crew who went down with it. An enquiry into the disaster clearly indicated responsibility lay with the king, designer and builder, however there were no penalties set, except of course the enduring acknowledgement that the top-down management style was directly responsible for the tragic loss of lives along with enormous expense consigned right to the bottom.

In a tragically similar way, while there is general agreement that the UIS is not operating as it should, and that changes are needed, there is considerable concern and consternation and conflict over the type of changes needed and the recent but largely sketchy and secretive reorganisation proposals. Yet there is a vital background to all this in the surveying of University staff, which had revealed a serious bullying problem, with around 21% indicating disturbing experiences of bullying, directly or via witnessing it directed at others. Staff surveyed in the UIS reported a much worse witnessing or direct experience of bullying, including particularly alarming concerns expressed by female members of staff.

This serious alarm helped prompt the hiring of work culture consultants, engagement with senior management to help identify areas of damage and difficulty and develop a suitable behaviour charter in response, and to engagement with UIS staff more generally. This evolved into forming a 'Changemakers' group to carry on the work jointly with senior management and staff representation, all of which is commendable and appreciated, if given full support and opportunity to carry out its work. For transparency, I am part of that group, and can report that it has not been provided with the full support required to effect the necessary and broadly staff-verifiable changes, even to the point that some senior managers have suggested that the problems no longer exist or have been addressed. Again, this suggestion on the part of some senior managers is not based on verification or evidence, nor reflective of some of the lived experience reported less formally, nor shown via assessable adoption of all behavioural standards, whether University-wide or locally relevant, nor verified by carrying out another survey to check whether any real changes have been achieved.

In a regrettably related damaging way, the new University CIO and Director of the University Information Services (UIS) has initiated a formal organisational change process of the UIS on 29 April, including proposals for significant staff redundancies and significant recruitment of new (top-heavy, administrative, professorial grade) roles. If adopted, the University community would lose individuals and areas with key domain knowledge and expertise, moving the University away from a focus on academic and user-led IT. There would be a minimal net reduction in staff numbers or overall savings. What is worse, it also would further enshrine the lack of accountability or urgent improvements of the working culture, by expanding some of the top-down style which has been the source of too much of the difficulties which are well known but substantially neglected.

In addition, the proposed significant changes were initiated two days after the CIO launched the development of a University-wide digital strategy and digital maturity model,¹ during the Council, General Board and Senior Leadership Team away day (27 April). After research and input from contributors in the University, high-level themes include:

- How UIS works with the University and delivers IT and digital services
- Operational needs of the University
- Strategic priorities and the University's digital capabilities

The emphasis is on addressing known pain points, and improving the student and staff experience, with plans for next steps to:

- Agree the framework for developing our digital strategy
- Co-create the strategy with the University community
- Review and approval of the digital strategy

Use of a digital maturity model, with support from Gartner,² is key to the co-creation processes, providing common framework, concepts and language for improved deliberations in our diverse collegiate University community. Having just launched these plans, the full needs of staffing, learning and development, and implications for budgets will only be known after developing a mature strategy over at least the next year.

Of additional great concern, is the announced proposal to reorganise the central administration, to include a new Chief Operating Officer (COO)³ which would, if fully adopted, fully disconnect the UIS from the University's 85+ year legacy of a Computing Service uniquely interconnected with a Computer Laboratory. Instead of ensuring academic IT would be advanced by domain specialists and expertise – initially brought by staff from the former University Computing Service (UCS) into the UIS at its formation – adoption of this operational rather than academic-led proposal would lose the essential commitment to a University-wide user-centric development of IT.

A dilution of the academic focus and partnerships, and ignoring the authentic and critical feedback of the user voice across the University, along with an increase in the administrative structures and bureaucratic focus of UIS, have already led, inevitably, to widespread dissatisfaction in the evolution of UIS. It is notable that three successive Directors have each declared that UIS 'had to get the basics right,' in response to negative feedback and expressed concerns about insufficient collaboration, delayed or unaffordable offerings, or lack of generally suitable or innovative solutions in a number of areas. The proposed shift to a top-heavy administrative focus will not resolve this.

Relegating UIS under the Unified Administrative Service (UAS) would be an even greater retrograde step, carried out without suitable evidence, due diligence, or the expected regard for the University user voice and users' expressed needs. If adopted, it would effectively recreate a much-expanded former MISD (even down to calling it ISD, under UAS). This would undermine the clear requirements identified at the time of the formation of the UIS, reached following a rigorous and robust University-wide Review of IT Infrastructure and Support,⁴ still relevant and much neglected, which includes among its key principles and recommendations that:

- As a leading University, in the UK and the world, we should expect the quality of our information services and systems to be commensurate with our standing. The strategy for the management and delivery of those services must be driven by the needs of our users for support of their teaching, research, learning or administration. (A2)
- The University needs information systems that support its central objectives of teaching and research as well as promoting efficient and effective administration. (A5)
- The governance and organisation of information services and systems should be driven by a strategy that is based on a clear understanding of user needs. The strategy needs to respond to and exploit the opportunities provided by technological developments. (A6)
- In order to provide world-class information services and systems, high priority should be given to the support, development, and retention of talented and committed computing support staff. The University should provide these staff with high-quality career opportunities, and make the best use of their skills. (A7)
- In response to the comments in the consultation about the need to strengthen user representation, the panel proposes a strong User Forum. (78) [Systems that will allow for the user voice, from every part of the University, to be clearly heard at every stage of development of provision. (50)]

- The panel also recommends that the new organisation should be outside the Unified Administrative Service, and should be under the supervision of the Council. The panel also considers, in the light of responses to the consultation, that these arrangements should strike the right balance between academic and administrative computing needs. (94)

Suspending both the proposed internal reorganisation within UIS, and the proposed move for UIS to become a division under the UAS, would enable a more robust and reliable gauge and guarantee of the needs of the wider University community, giving an opportunity for the development of a University digital strategy and digital maturity model to be suitably academic- and genuinely user-led. Giving the digital strategy time to be co-created and developed across the University, and then to be a guide for the future of the UIS would also help:

- address the concern that the 'quality of service is inconsistent and lags behind peer institutions' (Review of IT Infrastructure and Support)
- enable benefits from collaborations with peer institutions, including the COGenT – HELD consortia,⁵ collaboration with Harvard's exemplary IT Academy, and the joint development of a map of required University IT / digital skills and CPD categories⁶ to collaboratively develop comprehensive course provision
- restore focus and funding for innovation, such as the UIS' previous 'Bright Ideas' project⁷ of solutions co-created across the University community, and as is enabling effective and efficient digital development in Oxford, Harvard and elsewhere
- resolve sensitive challenges to improve UIS' working culture, where an internal staff survey indicated more than double the University's alarming 21% reporting experience of bullying in some form, which led to UIS engaging culture consultants and training a 'Changemakers' group to continue the work, including development of a localised behavioural charter to commit to better interactions
- clarify a suitable mix of roles and responsibilities, guided by evidenced University needs, ensuring that existing uses of SFIA⁸ and the Government Capability Framework⁹ can appropriately adjust to meet the University's identified needs.

As noted in the Discussion on 26 May 2026, given the 10s of millions of pounds being spent and further committed to the transformation projects for central administrative systems, and the many millions (£2m/year?) previously spent on the 'Our Cambridge' project to use Lean methodology to 'untangle the spaghetti' and reduce bureaucracy, becoming more top-heavy in our leadership does not seem to be a demonstrably persuasive choice. Perhaps with additional time, engagement and discourse with the University community this could be suitably explored?

As also noted, the considerations about the reporting structures for UIS should be disaggregated from the proposed UAS and COO's structures, along with the logical importance of waiting for the guidance to come from the successful co-creation within the University community of a digital strategy and maturity model for the whole of the University. Our productive digital future, and demonstrably healthier working culture, relies on not acting on this proposed rapid shift of reporting structures for UIS until the

University's digital hopes and requirements are co-discovered and made clear to all, and the resulting digital strategy and framework for improvement and related maturity are together made unambiguous.

For the sake of all this, and in the name of natural justice, will Council and all involved please pause the UIS-related reorganisations, as a matter of urgency, to focus on listening to the needs of the digital users in the wider University, and resolving the technical and informational debts noted herein?

¹ Digital maturity models: McKinsey, BCG, Gartner, Forrester: <https://www.dunnix.com/insights/articles/digital-maturity-models-mckinsey-bcg-gartner-forrester-compared>.

² Gartner Score Diagnostic Family Research Methodology: <https://www.gartner.com/en/research/methodologies/gartner-score-diagnostic-family>.

³ Consultation on proposals for changes to senior administrative offices (*Reporter*, 6823, 2025–26, p. 447).

⁴ Report to the Council and the General Board of the Review of IT Infrastructure and Support: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2012-13/weekly/6302/Revised-IT-Review-Report.pdf>.

⁵ COGEnT-HELD consortia (Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Harvard, Yale, Boston, Virginia, and many other leading US universities): <https://www.cogent-held.org>.

⁶ COGEnT-HELD Collaborative Projects and Work in Progress: <https://www.cogent-held.org/resources/projects>.

⁷ See <https://web.archive.org/web/20160503192301/http://www.uis.cam.ac.uk/features/bright-awards>.

⁸ Skills Framework for the Information Age: <https://sfia-online.org>.

⁹ Government Digital and Data Profession Capability Framework: <https://ddat-capability-framework.service.gov.uk>.

Ms E. BLAIR (Department of Engineering), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, speaking as someone who has worked alongside the UIS since they began, and with the Computing Service for many years before that, I am concerned that this reorganisation is premature, and the UIS risks losing valuable members of staff. Why has the reorganisation been started now, before the Strategy Review is complete?

Professor P. H. MAXWELL (Department of Medicine and Trinity College), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Regius Professor of Physic, and Head of the School of Clinical Medicine. In this role I am responsible for about 3,000 University staff and 2,000 students. I wish to express my strong support, both personally and as Head of School, for the proposed restructuring of the UIS. As a School we are absolutely reliant on excellent information technology. Within the School we have the Clinical School Computing Service, which has an excellent partnership with UIS. However, in my view the proposed restructuring provides an important opportunity to modernise our approach and make the joint IT support provided by the School and the University for our academic mission substantially more effective. I consider that the proposed restructuring will form a strong basis for working more effectively with our School, and improve our ability to convey to our funders which aspects of support should be funded through research grants. In the current environment, improved financial sustainability across all aspects of the University is vital for our future, and I am persuaded that the restructuring of UIS is also necessary from this perspective, and that this can be achieved alongside enhancing support for our academic mission.

Mr A. L. ODGERS (Chief Financial Officer and Pembroke College), read by the Deputy Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Chief Financial Officer of the University of Cambridge and have also been coordinating proposals in relation to the reorganisation of Senior Officer roles and the creation of a new Chief Operating Officer post. I believe the proposal to have UIS report to a newly created COO post will significantly enhance its effectiveness and ability to support the teaching and, particularly, the research output of the University. UIS has long suffered from a confused and confusing budget model which has limited its ability to support the long-term strategic digital investment needs of the University. Reporting to a COO would facilitate greater coordination with other activities supporting the academic endeavours of the University as well as facilitating the development of a strategic digital investment plan that can be considered alongside the University's wider investment plans. While reporting to a COO will improve operational and investment planning, there is no change to the academic governance and guidance on what UIS is seeking to achieve and roles of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and Education and Environmental Sustainability and the ISC will remain pivotal.

In my nine years as CFO, I have seen many occasions where UIS reporting to a COO would have helped its cause and not one occasion where reporting to the Vice-Chancellor has done so.

Professor A. PHILPOTT (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources and Operations), Chair of the Information Services Committee and Clare College), read by the Deputy Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a Fellow of Clare College and a Professor in the Cambridge Stem Cell Institute. I am also Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Resources and Operations and Chair of the University Information Services Committee.

I am writing to strongly support the proposed plans for UIS.

As we adapt to our rapidly changing digital environment, UIS must adapt too to make sure it is offering the services needed, supporting our research in all its forms and improving the staff and student experience. Widespread consultation makes clear that we need a step change in digital delivery that also provides greater value for money, demonstrably using our resources for the things that bring us maximum benefit.

The University hired David Hill just over a year ago as Chief Information Officer (CIO) to develop a strategic vision for digital services in their broadest sense across the University. Even in this brief time he has built trust and confidence that comes with widespread consultation and a deep sympathy with our academic mission. I chair the Information Services Committee (ISC), the primary University committee that oversees all aspects of our digital footprint and development of the digital strategic plan, which has wide representation from both our IT and academic communities. The ISC has been walking side by side with David and his colleagues as they develop a new way forward for UIS that is intended to provide a step change in provision and value for money.

Our CIO needs an appropriate team around him as he develops the future digital strategy for the University, one aim of the current restructuring. At the same time, UIS has been required to chart a path to delivering the 5% efficiency savings that have been required by all parts of the organisation. In an environment where software licence

costs are rising much faster than inflation, restructuring and reducing staffing in areas that are not giving us value is necessary to allow UIS to meet financial targets and to demonstrate that they are mindfully providing value for money. If restructuring is not possible, UIS will be severely restricted in its ability to deliver savings without cutting services that may result in further pressures across the organisation.

The University is aiming to recruit a new Chief Operating Officer (COO) to oversee our professional services and University support functions. The CIO's voice within the University has been significantly amplified over the last year, now meeting weekly with the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of School and Professional Service leads to make sure digital is aligned with other University priorities, and this is expected to continue. The status of the CIO will not be diminished by an official reporting line to the COO; on the contrary, having the CIO formally reporting to a new COO will bring a level of co-ordination and support for professional services underpinned by a modern approach to digital tools, and will be a hugely important voice as we modernise and embed new ways of working.

In summary, having listened to a wide range of University stakeholders, UIS has begun a major journey of modernisation. Its strategy development will be highly consultative and it will be overseen at every stage by academics from across the disciplines and University/College landscape, as well as professional services colleagues and IT professionals. All stages will be shaped by the Information Services Committee. If we want to have digital services that work for us and that deliver value for money, we must support David Hill and UIS in developing their strategy, where this is the first step. As Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Resources and Operations, I will also be personally working closely with David to make sure academic value and research support are central to our future direction.

Dr S. J. COWLEY (Faculty of Mathematics and Emmanuel College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Secretary of the Board of Scrutiny, but I speak in a personal capacity.

There have been references to the Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on IT infrastructure and support of 18 March 2013. As members of the Council at the time, Ian Du Quesnay and I signed a Note of Dissent to that Report.

In our Note of Dissent *inter alia*, Ian and I noted that the proposal that the Director of IS reported to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) looked, superficially, attractive, but that the VC might not always be someone with any significant interest in the development of IS or have the time to give it any priority. Instead, we proposed that the Director of IS might instead be responsible to the ISC and the VC.

As regards the ISC we noted it must have the necessary financial control over the IT budget, the necessary University and collegiate representation and, crucially, the necessary technical expertise. Further, we noted that the proposed membership and terms of reference would ensure that the ISC would be heavy with 'men of standing', but there was no guarantee that there would also be persons who would be competent overseers of Information Services (IS).

From the tone of this Discussion, it would appear that the management structure set in place has not worked particularly well, e.g. the cost and time overruns of the IT change programmes, and the explosion in UIS expenditure.

Hence, refining the reporting line of the Director of IS would seem advisable (it would appear that I agree with the CFO on that). However, reconstituting the ISC, despite the positive comments made today, might also be advisable to ensure that the committee has sufficient technical expertise so that IT expenditure, which should I be trendy and say 'digital' expenditure, is far more cost-effective.

Professor R. V. PENTY (Department of Engineering and Sidney Sussex College), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Head of the School of Technology, but I speak in my role as a member of the Information Services Committee.

Ever since I have been a member of ISC, which predates the arrival of the CIO, it has been clear to me and to other members of the committee that the University is in urgent need of a coherent digital strategy. The University spends a vast amount of money on IT, around £65m in UIS and £30m across the wider University, this having grown rapidly over the last 5 years. The growing budget has been deployed without a clear strategy and as a result it has not been spent as effectively as it could have been. Plenty of people in my School are asking for improvements in, for example, compute capacity, storage, learning and assessment systems, and cyber security as a matter of urgency.

The ISC has been calling for a digital strategy for several years now, and it is good that the CIO and colleagues have started the process of developing one in consultation with the University. This strategy is urgently needed so that we can develop the IT services that we need to deliver effectively the academic mission of Cambridge and so that our professional services colleagues can carry out their roles as efficiently as possible. A delay in developing and ultimately delivering the digital strategy will damage that academic mission and will mean that funds will continue not to be spent to the greatest effect.

Of course our colleagues in UIS work hard to provide the best service that they can under the circumstances. However our IT systems are not yet providing the services we need. We have too many applications (over 800) and our systems are often fragmented and open to cyber-attack, as sadly evidenced in the School of Clinical Medicine in the not too distant past. External assessment of our IT maturity by Gartner has not been positive. Hence I fully support the CIO and his colleagues in UIS who are working hard to develop options on improved UIS structures and on how to deliver the systems that we need to thrive.

The Topic of concern attempts to put a halt to this important work by conflating it with the proposed reorganisation of senior administrative offices. The IT services provided by UIS are of course vital to the academic University, but these are support services and so it makes sense that UIS comes under the COO if Council's proposals are implemented. The CIO, just as he is now, will remain responsible for digital services and for the operation of UIS, and for the development of the digital strategy.

Ms L. BOZOVIC (University Information Services), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, User-Centred Design (UCD) is essential to creating digital services that reflect the quality and ambition of a world-leading university. By designing services around the needs of students, academics, staff, and researchers, we improve accessibility, satisfaction, engagement, and efficiency. If we aspire to be a world-leading university, we must invest in UCD expertise that enables us to understand our users and deliver world-class digital experiences.

Dr A. R. JACKSON (Research Office and Selwyn College), read by the Senior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Head of Research Services and wish to offer my support for the principle of professional services transformation and for the continuation of work currently underway to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and integration of the University's professional services.

The Topic of concern raises important questions about the future direction of digital services and the need to ensure that they remain responsive to the needs of the academic community. I share the view that any future digital strategy must be informed by meaningful engagement with researchers, students and staff, and that academic priorities should remain central to the development of our services.

However, I do not believe that organisational change and strategy development need to be treated as sequential activities. In practice, institutions often need to clarify accountabilities, strengthen leadership and create organisational capacity while strategy development is underway. Taking forward these changes now need not diminish the importance of consultation or the role of the academic community in shaping the University's digital future.

Across the University, professional services face a common challenge. Demand for our services continues to increase in both scale and complexity, while financial pressures require us to use resources as effectively as possible. In a constrained financial environment, we cannot assume that rising demand can continue to be met through proportionate growth in professional services staffing. The University therefore needs the ability to evolve its structures and ways of working so that services can be delivered more efficiently, priorities can be aligned more closely with institutional needs, and resources can be directed towards areas of greatest value to our academic community.

Many of the challenges facing the University are increasingly interconnected. Digital services support research, education, administration and institutional resilience, and their success depends on effective collaboration across professional service functions. Greater integration should therefore be seen as an opportunity to improve coordination, prioritisation and service delivery in support of the academic mission.

For these reasons, while I understand and respect the concerns that have been raised, I do not believe that pausing organisational change would be in the University's best interests. The University should continue to develop its digital strategy while also taking practical steps to strengthen its operating model and build a more effective, integrated and efficient professional services environment.

The following remarks were received by the Proctors and are arranged in alphabetical order of the contributors' last names:

Ms J. ALLAN (Clinical School Computing Service):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I do not support the proposal to pause the UIS reorganisation and proposed realignment under the UAS. While the concerns raised are understandable, they do not fully reflect the nature of the challenges the University currently faces. Because these challenges are systemic – relating to fragmentation, diffuse accountability and coordination – a pause is unlikely to resolve them and would instead interrupt significant work already underway, create further uncertainty, and defer action on issues that are already well understood.

1. Suggested disconnection from academic priorities

The claim that relocating UIS under the UAS would disconnect it from academic priorities is not evident to me. UIS materials describe a four-portfolio model – including Education, Research, Business Systems, and Infrastructure and Generic Services. Given that education and research are explicitly recognised as core domains it appears well aligned to those needs. Changing the reporting structure and a COO does not remove this focus.

2. Strategic sequencing and the digital strategy

It is suggested that restructuring is premature in advance of a fully developed digital strategy. However, work towards a co-created shared strategic direction has already been underway for a considerable period, including engagement between UIS and School IT leads. The challenges identified through this process – including fragmentation, duplication, and uneven service provision – are precisely those that structural change is intended to address. It is therefore reasonable that organisational change and strategic development proceed in parallel, particularly where changes are intended to strengthen the capacity to deliver that strategy.

3. Fragmentation and the need for central accountability

The current model of highly distributed decision-making and accountability for IT has led to inconsistent outcomes, duplication of effort, and difficulty in coordinating activity across the University. Without clearer accountability at the level of the University as a whole, it is challenging to prioritise investment, manage trade-offs, or rationalise services effectively. A more centralised model of accountability should improve coordination, consistency of support and the effective use of resources. The proposed changes represent a step towards achieving this.

4. Loss of expertise and organisational impact

The risk of losing domain knowledge and expertise is a valid concern in any organisational change. However, this risk must be weighed against the limitations of the current model, which constrains the University's ability to sustain and develop IT capability at scale. The focus should be on managing transition risks, including the retention of critical expertise, rather than deferring necessary structural change.

5. Characterisation of the proposed model

The comparison with a return to a more administrative or 'MISD-like' model does not recognise the extent to which UIS has evolved, including the introduction of portfolio-based governance and stronger engagement with academic stakeholders. Organisational alignment within a broader administrative structure does not, in itself, determine priorities; governance, leadership and accountability arrangements do.

In summary, I consider the proposed direction a necessary first step towards improving coordination, accountability and the effective delivery of IT services across the University and I support its progression.

Mr D. BENHAM (Interim Director of Finance):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in a university setting, a modern fit-for-purpose IT and digital services function must have at its core a focused support to the academic community notwithstanding the need to provide appropriate services to all organisational activity. The best way of doing this is to have a professionally led function which is enabled to modernise, including the implementation of practical restructure needs, to meet the demands of its academic and wider community. Assuming strong demand levers for the academic community are in place, a COO would offer the best practical support to the CIO.

Mr E. BUNKER (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Head of Product for Research within University Information Services and write in my personal capacity as a relatively new member of the UIS community.

Having joined the University recently, I do not have the long institutional history that many colleagues contributing to this Discussion bring. What I do bring is nearly 30 years of experience working in digital, technology, product and organisational transformation across large and complex organisations.

During my time at Cambridge so far, I have spent my first weeks listening carefully to colleagues across UIS, the Research Office, Libraries, Collections, Research Computing and wider University stakeholders. The consistent message I have heard is that there is significant opportunity to improve how digital and technology services are planned, prioritised and delivered in support of the University's academic mission.

From that perspective, I support the proposed organisational changes within UIS.

My view is that strengthening leadership clarity, improving accountability, reducing duplication, and continuing the move towards a more coherent product and service-led operating model are necessary steps if UIS is to deliver the level of service, partnership and strategic capability the University now needs.

I do not see these changes as being in conflict with the development of a University-wide digital strategy. Rather, I believe they create stronger foundations from which that strategy can be developed and delivered successfully.

I would also separate this from the wider discussion regarding proposed University administrative structures. While others will rightly comment on those broader institutional matters, my support here relates specifically to the proposed changes within UIS itself and the need to continue building a modern, effective digital organisation capable of supporting research, teaching and administration across the University.

Based on my experience to date, and on comparable transformation work I have led elsewhere, I believe proceeding with the proposed UIS changes is both reasonable and necessary.

Ms S. CARLSON (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a Data Scientist at University Information Services, where I have been employed since 19 April 2022. I attend this Discussion as a University employee. I declare my interest at the outset: as a direct consequence of the internal UIS reorganisation currently under consideration, my fixed-term contract is not being renewed, and my employment ends today, 2 June 2026.

I wish to speak about the treatment of employees on fixed-term contracts within the current UIS organisational change process, and to raise what I believe are serious concerns about whether the University has met its legal and procedural obligations. My own situation forms part of what I bring to this Discussion, but my concern extends to a number of colleagues in similar circumstances – and, I would argue, to the University community more broadly.

I will begin briefly with my own situation. On 21 April 2026, having reached four years of continuous service on successive fixed-term contracts, I formally wrote to UIS HR to confirm that my contract would be converted to permanent status. Under the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, after four years of continuous service on successive fixed-term contracts, an employee's contract automatically becomes permanent unless the employer can demonstrate objective justification for maintaining fixed-term status. My letter set out the several distinct projects to which I have been assigned over four years, each funded from a different internal source. The work itself has been continuous; only the projects and their associated funding sources have changed. That pattern is difficult to reconcile with genuinely discrete, time-limited engagements – it was instead an ongoing institutional need staffed through successive fixed-term contracts, which is the very arrangement these Regulations exist to address. The University did respond, but its answer addressed only the current funding of my present project – the reason my contract is now ending – rather than whether my engagement on successive fixed-term contracts was ever objectively justified. It did not, in my view, provide that justification.¹

Before I reached four years' service, I was consulted individually about my then-current contract and its expected end, and I take no issue with that. My concern is with what came after. One day later – on 22 April 2026 – a group consultation process was initiated for employees affected by the UIS restructuring. I was excluded from that process entirely. I was not notified, not copied on any communications, and not invited to the consultation meeting held on 29 April. I was on annual leave at the time, but annual leave does not explain or justify exclusion from a legal consultation process. I learned of the details of the restructuring only when colleagues informed me directly.

A number of colleagues on fixed-term contracts across UIS have been told by the HR function that they are not part of the collective consultation process. I would ask the University to consider carefully whether this position is legally sound – and whether it is consistent with the University's own conduct.

My exclusion from that process was not, I believe, a separate decision. It followed directly from the University's refusal to confirm my permanent status. UIS's own restructuring documentation places my role, alongside other fixed-term roles, within the same organisational change as the permanent posts under review. Had my status been recognised as I contend the law requires, UIS's own documentation denotes that I would have fallen within the consultation. Yet fixed-term employees have been told

they are not part of the redundancy process – and have accordingly been denied the benefits and protections that permanent colleagues in the same process receive.

I raise this not only as a matter affecting me personally, but because I believe it speaks to something of wider concern for this University. The Regent House represents the academic and professional community of Cambridge. Many members of that community are employed on fixed-term contracts. The situation I describe – in which an employee reaches a statutory entitlement to permanent status, asserts that entitlement in writing, and is then excluded from a major consultation process – is not an isolated grievance. It is a question about how the University treats a significant portion of its workforce during a period of organisational change. That is a question in which all members of the Regent House have an interest.

The Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 prohibit treating fixed-term employees less favourably than comparable permanent employees without objective justification.² I would ask the University to explain how denying fixed-term employees these protections – while simultaneously including their roles in the same restructuring documentation – constitutes treatment that is not less favourable. The University cannot have it both ways: either fixed-term employees are part of this process, in which case they are entitled to the same benefits and protections as their permanent colleagues; or they are not part of this process, in which case the University should not be relying on the organisational restructuring as the reason for their dismissal.

The University's position appears to rely on the 2013 amendment to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, which excludes a fixed-term contract from collective consultation where it is allowed to run to its agreed termination point and simply expires.³ Before that amendment, a fixed-term non-renewal driven by the same business reasons as a wider redundancy exercise could itself count towards collective consultation; the 2013 change narrowed that position for contracts permitted to expire. I therefore do not rest my concern on the reason for non-renewal alone. My position turns first on my employment status: if, as I contend, my contract had already become permanent by operation of law, that exclusion does not apply to me, and my removal from the collective consultation cannot be justified on that basis.⁴

In the case of UIS, the reason given in writing for the non-renewal of fixed-term contracts – including my own – is an organisational and financial decision. That is not a reason personal to any individual; it is the same reason being applied to permanent colleagues made redundant through the same process. The University's own communication to all staff described this as a formal organisational change process. The University cannot, in my respectful opinion, rely on that change to end these roles while treating the employees in them as falling outside the process it has set in motion.

Separately from collective consultation, the law governs the fairness of each individual redundancy dismissal. A fair process requires consultation that is genuine and meaningful – occurring while the employee can still influence the outcome – and selection criteria that are objective and capable of being applied independently of personal opinion. The Employment Appeal Tribunal's decision in *Mogane v Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust* [2022]⁵ is directly in point.

The EAT found that using the expiry of a fixed-term contract as the sole criterion for redundancy selection is arbitrary and unfair. That appears to be precisely what the University is doing now. I would ask whether those standards have been met in the current UIS process, for all affected employees, permanent and fixed-term alike.

The consequences of this exclusion are material. Fixed-term colleagues who should have been included in the collective consultation have been denied the opportunity to engage with the collective consultation. They have been denied access to the external career coaching support made available to permanent employees. And they have been denied the security and time that inclusion in the collective consultation process would have provided.

The University of Cambridge rightly prides itself on its values of fairness, transparency, and respect for its staff. The use of successive fixed-term contracts across the University is a matter that has long warranted scrutiny. The concern I raise today is more immediate: that during a significant organisational restructuring, a group of employees has been excluded from the legal protections that the process is designed to provide – and that this exclusion may not reflect the University's legal obligations, nor its values.

I would ask that the University review the determination of my own employment status, on which my exclusion from consultation entirely depends. I would ask that the University reviews whether the collective consultation process associated with the current UIS restructuring has properly included all employees whose dismissals are connected to that process, including those on fixed-term contracts. I would ask that it considers whether the treatment of fixed-term employees in this process is consistent with its obligations under the 2002 Regulations. And I would ask that it considers, more broadly, how it ensures that fixed-term employees are not treated less favourably than their permanent colleagues in future organisational change processes.

¹ Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, Regulation 8.

² Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, Regulation 3.

³ Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA), section 282, as substituted by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amendment) Order 2013 (SI 2013/763), in force 6 April 2013.

⁴ *University and College Union v University of Stirling (Scotland)* [2015] UKSC 26 (concerning events before the 2013 amendment); see also TULRCA, section 195.

⁵ *Mogane v Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust* [2022] EAT 139.

Ms C. L. DALE (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I would like to express my support for continuing with the proposed UIS reorganisation and related structural changes, rather than pausing them.

Having joined the University two months ago, I have been struck by the scale of opportunity to improve how we deliver digital change. There is clear potential to strengthen how work is coordinated and delivered, and to increase both pace and overall impact.

The direction outlined in these proposals feels consistent with how large organisations evolve to improve delivery, accountability, and efficiency. A more unified operating model should help the University better support its broader ambitions, particularly in enabling excellent research and teaching, strengthening its digital capabilities, and operating more effectively at scale.

I appreciate the concerns that have been raised, especially around culture, expertise, and continuity of service. These are important considerations and should be addressed through thoughtful implementation and ongoing engagement.

However, I believe that maintaining momentum is important. It seems reasonable to continue progressing organisational changes alongside the development of the digital strategy, allowing each to inform the other as they evolve.

Overall, I see this as a constructive step forward and would support continuing with the process.

Professor G. R. EVANS (Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, today's Discussion follows hard on the heels of last week's Discussion on Senior Administrative Offices. The impressive efficiency of the *Reporter* team has provided a proof of the remarks made then, in time for today's speakers to be able to refer to it.

This call for a Discussion of a Topic of concern was prompted by the proposals to place the UIS (University Information Services) 'under' the UAS and to create a new 'Senior Administrative Office' in the form of a 'University Chief Operating Officer'. Identifying a Cambridge vacancy does not normally involve such thorough consultation about the responsibilities involved, even if the post is an Office. A brief statement about the 'role' would usually be enough and the status of a 'Job' will usually be matched with the salary offered. But this is a very senior new Office whose place in the 'Academic-related' hierarchy will be important.

There has been some shuffling of hierarchy and categories in this area over the years. In December 2010 the Council appointed a committee to undertake a review of IT infrastructure and support.¹ There were then two distinct services, the UCS and MISD, governed and funded differently, each of which had a Director. There was a clear case for merging them, as had been suggested as early as 2001 during the debate about the future of CAPSA.² There was further review in 2006, but again they had remained separate.³ In 2013, as in the present proposals of 2026, comparison was made with Oxford which had 'merged their central IT services' at the time. A Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on IT infrastructure and support duly appeared on 20 March 2013.⁴ In it the Review Committee made recommendations on IT, its governance, delivery, staffing, and systems. A ballot was called⁵ after a Discussion held on 23 April 2013, a warning perhaps that controversy might be expected over the present proposal.

The Review of 2013 explicitly mandated that 'the central IT organisation must remain outside the UAS and under the supervision of the Council to balance academic and administrative needs'. The seventy-five signatories who called this Discussion have similar concerns. They want the proposed relocation of UIS under the UAS / COO to be stopped so as to allow the University digital strategy to be 'genuinely academically-led and user-driven'.

In his remarks in last week's Discussion Graham Allen expressed a concern on the maintenance of the balance between the academic and the administrative in the present proposals. What he had to say deserves close reading. His long experience as Academic Secretary gives him an unmatched understanding of the load carried by holders of the senior administrative offices and he comments that the Registraries he worked with 'were all Cambridge Ph.D.s, familiar with the workings and values of the University, as well as commanding the respect of the academic community'. As a member of that community I know how well he himself deserves that respect but it should never be lost sight of. Administration in Cambridge should not become top-down 'management' of the University by 'professional administrators' however well-qualified in such fields. There must be resistance to any apparent drift towards the hierarchical governance norms of other English universities under the *Education Reform Act* of 1988, in which (with the exception of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge) a governing body of 12–24 people with a majority of external members exercises ultimate power.

Graham Allen is right about the importance of the Registry, Academic Secretary and Chief Operating Officer forming a triumvirate of the most senior administrative officers. Adding to the number at that level should only be attempted after careful thought. Some of us remember expressing concerns when the single office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor was multiplied to become five and it had to be decided how distinct responsibilities might be identified and defined for them, and how clear it was to be whether these were essentially at least academic 'related' roles. The present Statute C III 17 still seems hazy about the role of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. He or she 'shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by Statute or Ordinance, and such other duties as may be determined by the Council, or the Vice-Chancellor'.

The Vice-Chancellor confers the title of Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor under Regulation 1 of the regulations for Pro-Vice-Chancellors but that is not an Office in its own right.

There is perhaps some danger of confusions arising among the categories of 'academic', 'academic-related' and 'administrative' staff. All three categories potentially include Officers. The 'Senior Leadership Team' includes all three, with the present Chief Information Officer and 'Leader of UIS' a 'Chartered Information Systems Professional' not an academic. New in post, he launched a strategy on 27 April. Then 'on 29 April he initiated a formal organisational change process', affecting the University's digital strategy. This is to result in 'significant staff redundancies', the 'reduction or closure of long-standing UIS services' and 'recruitment of new, top-heavy and very expensive administrative roles'.

The signatories make comparisons with existing programmes at Cambridge's outranking league-table competitors Oxford and Harvard. They also point to 'deep-seated workplace culture and bullying issues highlighted in recent internal surveys'. Either concern would justify pause for further thought. It is always more

difficult to reverse a decision than to prevent it being taken so if this Topic of concern Discussion had not 'urgently' been called that might have been a done deal. Perhaps a pause will allow those 'issues' to be investigated and the Regent House presented with a Report instead of a Notice.

¹ *Reporter*, 6228, 2010–11, p. 901.

² *Reporter*, 5861, 2001–02, p. 153.

³ *Reporter*, 6079, 2006–07, p. 803.

⁴ *Reporter*, 6305, 2012–13, p. 487.

⁵ *Reporter*, 6304, 2012–13, p. 468.

Dr I. H. FAY (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a Senior User Researcher seconded from UIS Product and Service Design team to the Reimagining Professional Services programme. I am impacted with 'minor changes' to my substantive role via the current UIS consultation process. I am currently working on developing the digital strategy. My line manager is Kate Livingstone.

I support the call for meaningful consultation and the protection of staff through established collective processes. It is, however, important to distinguish between several elements within the Topic of concern that are currently conflated: the internal structure of UIS, its reporting position within the wider organisation, the development of the University's digital strategy, the appointment of senior leadership (including the COO), and the specific proposals concerning redundancies and their financial justification. These are related but distinct matters, each with different drivers, and should be assessed on their own merits.

In particular, proposals relating to the financial case and potential compulsory redundancies require careful scrutiny, full transparency, and robust consultation in line with collective bargaining principles. There should be the strongest possible commitment to minimising compulsory redundancies through natural attrition, redeployment, and meaningful engagement with staff and their representatives. Ensuring confidence in the financial rationale is essential, and this is an area where slowing the process to allow proper examination is both appropriate and necessary.

At the same time, not all elements need to be sequenced or delayed in the same way. The development of a University-wide digital strategy, ongoing user consultation, and the appointment of senior leadership are not inherently dependent on the immediate resolution of organisational design or staffing changes. These activities can, and arguably should, progress in parallel, provided that appropriate safeguards are in place. Conflating them risks delaying necessary strategic progress without improving outcomes for staff or users.

Based on experience within a UIS division focused on enhancing user experience, it is clear that valuable work has been delivered, including in areas such as digital admissions. This demonstrates the potential of user-informed approaches. However, such work has often been constrained by organisational structures that limit its broader impact. In particular, there has not consistently been sufficient capacity or positioning to support holistic service design, rigorous benchmarking, or systematic performance assessment across services, with activity often occurring in a more fragmented way.

These limitations have been recognised over time and point to the need for a more strategically enabled, user-informed model of digital service delivery. The scale of transformation required cannot be achieved solely through incremental adjustments within existing arrangements.

Structural, cultural, and technical reform will be necessary if the University is to meet the expectations of its academic community.

Concerns regarding potential disconnection from academic priorities are legitimate and should be addressed directly. However, structural change and academic alignment are not mutually exclusive. With appropriate safeguards – particularly the systematic use of user evidence, benchmarking against peer institutions, and strong governance – there is a realistic prospect of improving, rather than diminishing, the alignment of services with teaching, learning, and research needs. Core administrative functions, when effectively coordinated, can remain largely invisible while enabling more coherent and responsive user-facing services. Those available safeguards may not have been so readily apparent to the authors of the 2013 *Review of IT Infrastructure and Support*, when user experience was not represented in the organisation on any scale. Similarly, changes in senior leadership, including the introduction of a Chief Operating Officer, should be considered in terms of how they enable clearer accountability, improved coordination, and delivery of the digital strategy. Such roles do not in themselves determine outcomes; their effectiveness depends on the frameworks, evidence, and governance within which they operate.

Finally, the digital strategy work currently underway provides an important opportunity to embed these safeguards. Its emphasis on user evidence and benchmarking offers a mechanism to ensure that future changes remain grounded in demonstrable needs and measurable performance. For this reason, its continued development should not be unnecessarily delayed. Rather, it should proceed alongside – while remaining appropriately independent from – those areas, such as the financial case and staffing impacts, where a more deliberate and consultative approach is required.

Dr J. GARDNER (University Librarian and Selwyn College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I gave a lot of thought before submitting these comments as reorganisations are complex and difficult for all concerned. They impact on both individuals and the wider staff community. My remarks are not in any way a comment on the skill and commitment of the staff of UIS I have had the good fortune to work with closely on projects and services over several years. I appreciate very much the contribution, friendships, and collegiality between UIS and library teams, which I know will continue. Nor are my remarks a comment on the process or detail of the UIS reorganisation, in which I am not involved in any way.

My remarks focus on what I have experienced, and welcomed, as a Head of Institution with its own strong digital focus, to be a renewed energy and partnership approach by Chief Information Officer David Hill concerning digital planning and delivery for Cambridge. Current work to develop the digital strategy has been framed by consultation, formal and informal, with many colleagues across the University and the Colleges. The Chief Information Officer was appointed to help improve the digital maturity, co-ordination, and capabilities collectively across the University, areas in which we are currently constrained compared to our competitors. The feedback received suggests that many of us are looking for a material change in digital experience and provision for staff and students to match the excellence of our teaching, learning, and research and our world-class standing.

Change is needed to achieve this goal, and the question is how to do so within financial constraints set across the University. The approach taken by the Chief Information Officer has already begun to deepen partnerships and shared purpose with academic and professional service leaders and to encourage a sense of momentum. The direction of travel is designed to address fragmentation, strengthen cyber security, build partnerships, and develop the digital mindset and capability across our organisation in a way that matches and enables our shared academic mission for excellence. For my own institution (which is increasingly digital in what we acquire, how readers use us, and how we manage our services) preservation, discovery, and access to collections is more reliant than ever on having a shared, secure, trusted, digital infrastructure – a need that will only grow. As a memory institution for the world and for Cambridge (we hold the University's own archive and research outputs), digital capability underpins all we do, and we need a strong, forward-looking, proactive digital strategy for all to help us.

Professor B. GÖTTGENS (Cambridge Stem Cell Institute):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as Director of the Cambridge Stem Cell Institute, I support the proposed changes to the University senior leadership roles including the proposed merger of UIS and UAS, as a result of which UIS will be integrated under the Chief Operating Officer.

We can ill afford delaying a reorganisation that will enable a swift strategic review of all our digital services, when our current setup is too often failing to meet the sophisticated needs of our researchers.

Aligning the CIO with the COO will help to ensure that digital services are central to strategic thinking and decision-making at the highest levels of the University.

Mr S. A. HOENSCH (University Information Services and Christ's College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I fully support the proposal put forward by David Hill, Chief Information Officer, and the direction of travel for UIS. Having worked at the University for 25 years, including 8 years within UIS, I have seen firsthand the scale of change required to ensure we continue to deliver excellent IT services.

The pressures on cost, capability, and expectations from the wider University community, alongside the increasing cyber threat facing the sector, means that continuing as we are is not a viable option.

I believe this restructure is the right step at the right time. Based on my experience working across IT support within the University and its departments, I am confident this approach will enable us to evolve our digital capability, strengthen accountability, and deliver a more effective, secure, and sustainable service. While this level of change is challenging, it is necessary if we are to meet the University's needs both now and in the future.

Dr I. M. HOSKING (Department of Engineering, University Information Services and Darwin College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I write as a Lead User Researcher in University Information Services (UIS) and an Assistant Research Professor in the Department of Engineering.

I am also the current Chair of the British Standards Institute Design for All Committee (DES/1) and Convenor (Chair) for a new European Standard (prEN 18339) that supports the European Accessibility Act.

I am in support of a 'pause in the UIS reorganisation', and I declare that I am part of the current consultation and that my role is at risk of redundancy.

My remark is specific to the call to action in the Topic of concern that states:

Ensure accessibility: Select and develop systems and services that are appropriate and usable by all end users

My considered view is that there has been no meaningful consultation with key stakeholders across the organisation about the loss of key resources regarding digital accessibility. Important stakeholders include, but are not limited to, 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion', 'Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities', and 'Accessibility and Disability Services'.

This has legal implications for the University and it is important to understand the background to this as follows.

A number of the University's websites were audited by Government Digital Services on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2022. They were found to have significant accessibility issues. The University issued a public statement via the accessibility statement on the main website in response to this audit, which said:

What we're doing to improve accessibility

We're working to fix the issues identified in this accessibility statement and aim to fix these by December 2024.

We failed to meet this deadline and at the time of writing we have an out-of-date commitment that has slipped by a year (2025) as follows:

We're working to fix the issues identified in this accessibility statement and aim to fix these during 2025. (accessibility) [Accessed: 21 May 2026])

In addition to this, the University's written response to the EHRC on 8 December 2022 regarding the accessibility of its digital estate also stated that:

... the [Digital Presence Programme] will also replace the codebase behind the University's websites, modernising it and embedding WCAG 2.1 AA compliance by default.

We have failed to do this consistently across the web estate.

A strategy was developed to meet our obligations in a cost-effective manner. This was reviewed with both external and internal legal teams and other key stakeholders across the University. This has made limited progress with the restricted resources available. However, the proposed reorganisation will result in a loss of already stretched key resources as follows:

- The loss of two members of staff with extensive and complementary expertise in digital accessibility.
- Related to the proposed reorganisation is the move of the UIS to a new building, which will also result in the loss of a dedicated Accessibility and Usability Hub.

In the proposed pause, I would argue that a review should pay detailed attention to the accessibility resources to ensure we meet our legal obligations and provide accessible systems for all our users. Consultation should be made with the key stakeholders outlined. Without this, we are likely to place the University at even greater legal and reputational risk.

Mr M. W. KEEN (Clinical School Computing Service):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I cannot support the Topic of concern. We work very closely with colleagues in the UIS, and while it is of course unfortunate to lose colleagues of many years, it is evident that UIS as-is does not have the structure or capacity to engage with the transformational change that a new digital strategy would need to entail to address the concerns which have already been identified through the engagement with Schools over the last few months. Change is urgent, and we do not need to wait for a completed digital strategy to anticipate that a capacity for change will be required.

Secondly, the assertion that organisation under the UAS and a new COO will cause a disconnect from academic needs is in my opinion baseless fear-mongering – there is no reason to believe this will impact the UIS's ability to provide services to academic staff. I speak from the experience of leading CSCS as a School IT division embedded alongside other professional services divisions (such as finance, HR, research operations, education), all of us providing services to the academic community. It is also worth pointing out that UIS maintain education and research portfolios specifically for this purpose. I would argue the reverse, in that an improved management structure, leading to improved service maturity and delivery should benefit all staff.

Mr J. P. KING (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am a Computer Officer working within the University Information Services, and a member of the Regent House. I must also make clear that I am currently involved in a redundancy process where my own job is significantly at risk. However, it is not my personal battle that I seek to fight today. I stand here to speak about the institutional soul and direction of the UIS.

I was first employed by the University Computing Service (UCS) last millennium as a Computer Officer Grade IV, eventually working my way up into management. Back on 20 November 2012, I stood in this very House and spoke in favour of the merger between UCS and MISD. I did so because I genuinely believed that, if done well, there was an opportunity to fundamentally improve IT at Cambridge.

The goal that I was championing was to take the best from each organisation and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Both sides had immense value to offer, and I was hopeful.

I was not blind to the risks, however. I and others pushed back against the concept that the new entity should be a part of the Unified Administrative Service (UAS) or come under the direct control of the Registry. Other colleagues stood up in that same Discussion and warned of their deep fears that the academic side, the very lifeblood that UCS focused on, would inevitably suffer.

Looking back over the last twelve years, those warnings were prophetic.

At almost every subsequent step, the UIS has drifted further away from its core academic mission, turning instead to serve the administrative centre. Today, the vast majority of UIS funding and strategic attention is bound to that centre, leaving teaching and research as an afterthought.

The physical infrastructure that supported our community has been dismantled; the dedicated training rooms that once offered crucial, transferable digital skills to everyone from first-year undergraduates to Professors

have been quietly closed down. Specialised, locally built academic tools, Raven, the Streaming Media Service, the Managed Web Service, all systems I was personally and closely involved with, were systematically starved of resources until dismantling them was framed as the only viable option. There are many other examples of this decline, but I will leave those to other colleagues to detail.

I want to be entirely fair: the old UCS was not perfect. If I had thought it was perfect, I would never have spoken in favour of the merger in 2012. But what we have lost in the intervening years is not just a set of legacy services; we have lost our ambition.

In the name of standardisation, we have embraced mediocrity. The University of Cambridge has historically aspired to be better than that. Time and again, we developed IT infrastructure that was genuinely world-class. I remember friends who came here as undergraduates and grumbled about our IT systems, only to move on to postgraduate courses at other institutions and contact me to admit just how amazing the Cambridge system was by comparison.

We have traded that appetite for innovation for a culture of 'good enough'. And as others will tell you today, we frequently fail to achieve even that modest benchmark.

Focus on the academic mission has been entirely lost, and meaningful engagement with the academic community over these latest structural changes has been near non-existent.

Let me ask the members of the Regent House here today: Are you an academic? Have you been spoken to? Has anyone below the level of Professor or Head of Institution heard a single syllable about these proposed changes before they appeared in the pages of the *Reporter*?

If you feel genuinely engaged with, if you believe your department's academic needs are being met, and will continue to be met, then perhaps you should ignore me.

But if you represent the academic frontline of this University, and you feel that you receive less and less meaningful support from the centre while navigating ever-higher bureaucratic hurdles, then you must act. I urge you to ask your Head of Department, your representatives on Council, and your Principal Investigators to push back. Demand an IT service that supports the actual business of this University, world-class teaching and research, and refuse to accept an administrative model designed primarily to assert control over resources that belong on the academic frontline. Centralised support should be more efficient than everyone doing their own thing. But that is only true if the centre actually tries to understand and address *your* problems. My contention is simple: UIS has largely lost its way.

The mere fact that the proposal to place the UIS under the direct management of the UAS has returned to the table proves my point. It shows that despite all our efforts and arguments a decade ago, the centre has lost its focus on supporting the academic side of Cambridge. To some administrators, it now seems 'obvious' that this is where IT belongs. To me, it flashes as a warning sign that something has gone fundamentally wrong.

We must arrest this drift, reassert the primacy of the academic mission, and fix this governance structure so that the idea of administrative capture stops resurfacing once and for all.

Ms J. MACAULEY (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as a contractor who has previously worked at several leading universities and institutions, I was crestfallen to hear of the proposals to reorganise UIS in such a way that eliminates specialist user-centred design practitioner roles.

This move is tantamount to a regression in digital maturity at Cambridge, and demonstrates the University's sheer lack of technological foresight. Where other universities are investing in the optimisation of digital user experience as a bedrock for AI innovation, this elimination of specialist knowledge signals a grave misunderstanding of how the global digital landscape of 2026 operates.

To be a world-leading organisation is to lead the way: that is not what this proposed reorganisation will facilitate.

Professor R. G. McMAHON (Institute of Astronomy and Clare Hall):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Professor of Astronomy in the Institute of Astronomy in the School of Physical Sciences. I am currently a member of the Information Services Committee and UIS Research Portfolio Board, and Chair of the UIS Research Computing Advisory Group, which has representatives from all Schools.

I am making this contribution in a personal capacity. My opinions are influenced by my experience in developing and delivering scientific research computing infrastructure over the last 20 years, including several national high-performance computing services delivered by the UIS Research Computing Service. In the past, I have also been a Chair or member of various IT-related committees at the Departmental, School and University level since 2009, including during the terms of all UIS Directors since its creation.

In my opinion, the proposed internal restructuring of UIS should be considered on its own merits and separate from the other issues raised for discussion. The case for improving service delivery, organisational effectiveness, and financial sustainability stands independently of the broader senior governance questions, which are best addressed through separate processes.

The need to enhance the effectiveness, delivery, and cost base of UIS is evident, and the steps outlined – strengthening leadership, clarifying accountabilities, and aligning capability with the development of a future digital strategy – are both necessary and timely. Acting now, rather than deferring change until the full IT strategy is complete, appears to be the right and pragmatic course especially in the rapidly evolving digital infrastructure arena.

I also note that closer alignment with UAS has the potential to deliver wider University-wide benefits, including greater coherence in IT support for administrative functions and a reduction in fragmentation across the University. Colleges might also benefit from a more unified and integrated organisational UAS + UIS structure. A more integrated approach to professional services should, over time, lead to improved efficiency and cost savings, particularly in areas where administrative roles and processes are not always coherent. Agility in the adoption of IT infrastructure to support teaching and research is vital, especially in the higher education sector, where we need to adapt to survive.

I spoke at the previous Discussion in favour of the merger of UCS and MISD in February 2013.¹

My final words were:

My main concern is that if the new user-centric structure is to work it will require significant improvements in IT-related communication and co-ordination at the School level, both between the Schools and their Departments, and Schools and the centre. I advise that in the fund for the transition, the University funds IT co-ordinators in all the Schools to make the merger a success.

Thirteen years ago, my view is broadly still the same, whatever governance structure UIS sits within.

I do not see the issues raised regarding research support as being materially affected by the proposed changes as long as there is clear accountability at Pro-Vice-Chancellor level. Accountability for research support will continue to rest with existing committee structures, which should be reviewed regularly. While it may be timely to review the effectiveness of those arrangements, that is a separate matter and does not bear directly on the current Topic of concern.

¹ *Reporter*, 6305, 2012–13, p. 487.

Dr I. D. MORRISON (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the Head of School IT and Digital Transformation for the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences, but I speak in a personal capacity.

I do not believe that the proposal to make UIS a division of UAS under a new COO will have a negative bearing on the transformation of UIS into a trusted partner working with non-UIS IT, AV and digital colleagues to co-create and deliver the digital services the University needs to achieve its academic mission. The move should allow for more effective cooperation, alignment, and engagement with other professional support teams.

It is to be regretted when anyone is made compulsorily redundant. When there are a significant number of such redundancies, that can be indicative of a failure of management and should result in reflection and a review by the management team. Nevertheless, I believe this is an internal UIS matter. Where there are changes to the service offering, there should be a consideration of the impact on the wider University. We need to act holistically for the greater good of the University as a whole.

Mr M. PARSONS (Christ's College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Christ's College relies increasingly on UIS for the provision of the College's infrastructure services (networks, hosting, etc.) and for applications associated with the University's MS Tenancy (Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint, etc.). The reorganisation of UIS is essential to create the technical capabilities and the responsive service provision that the College requires to support our students, academic and non-academic staff. The Chief Information Officer and Director of University Information Services has sought out and listened carefully to extensive feedback on UIS services during his first year in post. The reorganisation now proposed is designed to make the significant improvements that stakeholders have said are urgently needed in ways of working, digital maturity, cyber security, and service management culture. There is no need to delay the reorganisation pending the approval of the digital strategy: the enhanced capabilities and skills will be required in UIS to deliver any strategy – and the improvements to ways of working and service management are required urgently.

Ms J. PHILLIPS (Selwyn College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I write in the capacity of Chair of the Colleges IT Committee, a post I have held since *c.* 2021, having joined it in *c.* 2018. In that role I spend a lot of time listening to both College and UIS staff regarding their experiences of University IT. Whilst the Topic of concern raised is an example of positive democratic process within the Regent House, I would also firmly note that any pause in the current UIS restructuring process would have a disproportionately negative effect on the very many essential and urgent improvements to UIS services that have been commonly recognised as required for many years. Changes are needed. A pause is not warranted.

- The capacity for positive change is contingent on restructuring. As I understand it, 18 roles are ‘at risk’, which represents just 4% of UIS headcount, which itself has grown significantly since 2021. The restructure both delivers cost savings (a pressure point across the University) but also enables the creation of roles better suited to support the needs of the University that the UIS serves.
- The CITC’s experience of UIS-led academic user engagement on digital matters has been increasingly positive since the creation of the CIO role in May 2025. There is an increasingly clear focus on the centrality of a good experience for the user (student, Fellow, staff). This has been strongly welcomed. A sense of a clear and targeted plan to improve service performance is emerging, across a complex estate.
- The strategic process initiated from 27 April 2026 has our strong collective support. The current restructuring represents a step on a journey to address skills and service gaps, and improve user experience by doing so. It will support an evolution of professional standards. And in doing these things it will improve working culture by improving a sense of pride and purpose for the many excellent UIS staff (and others) who recognise how critical digital service quality is to the University’s success.

The UIS is on a positive journey. We support it in that process.

Ms R. RAINA (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this statement is to confirm my support for the proposed changes put forward by David Hill, CIO and Director, UIS, as part of the UIS reorganisation.

In my view, the proposal brings greater clarity to leadership accountabilities and strengthens the focus on the key services and capabilities required to deliver the department’s priorities and support the University’s future direction.

Dr O. G. ROBERSON (University Data Office):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am speaking in my capacity as University Data Lead and head of the University Data Office.

I first joined the University in 2014 as a data analyst. In the last decade, in a range of roles, I have consistently heard that UIS needs to change. Many of those voices calling for change have come from within UIS. Changes have been introduced at greater and lesser scales of ambition, but the underlying messages explaining why change is needed have not disappeared. While there is broad agreement that change is required, there has been little success in establishing a shared vision of the outcome the University seeks to achieve.

The demands placed on IT will continue to increase as the University becomes more digital, while financial constraints mean that these demands must be met with relatively fewer resources in real terms. The effectiveness with which the University coordinates its central functions will determine how successfully it navigates these conditions. I therefore caution against characterising any particular structural arrangement as a ‘relegation’. The critical issue is not position within a hierarchy, but the effectiveness with which each division maintains alignment with the academic mission we all serve.

In my view, the development of a University-wide digital strategy is essential, as it provides the only credible mechanism for aligning institutional ambition with delivery capability and resource constraints. In effect, it defines the relationship between what the University seeks to achieve, what it can deliver, and what it can sustain. Elements of the proposed restructure – particularly the clarification of leadership roles and accountabilities – are necessary foundations for enabling effective and sustained change.

Whatever the outcome of this Discussion, it is imperative that the University community engages fully in the development of a shared digital strategy. The process must deliver a widely understood articulation of priorities and trade-offs that can reach broad consensus across the University. Without this consensus, the University will continue to place inconsistent and unrealistic demands on IT delivery.

Professor S. RUSSELL (Department of Genetics):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I write in my capacity as a Professor of Genome Biology and Head of the Department of Genetics regarding the Topic of concern requesting a pause in the proposed reorganisation of the University Information Services (UIS). With over 35 years’ experience in the University I have obviously witnessed very considerable changes in the digital landscape, particularly in scientific computing – from a very much academic-led endeavour that last century built piecemeal bespoke systems, to the current requirements for extensive computational and data storage infrastructure that must serve diverse and ever expanding needs across all sectors of the University. As we have also recently experienced, the landscape around security has also dramatically changed and we need robust systems to secure our data and infrastructure from constant sophisticated attacks.

Clearly the most important role of any Information Service is in providing a fit-for-purpose IT and digital infrastructure: regrettably my experience indicates that while well-meaning, many of the processes that have been developed, particularly over the last decade, do not fully address the needs of the University. I have found that many of the systems and policies that emerge from UIS do so with a lack of academic or professional services consultation. Ironical then that an issue raised in the Topic of concern is that the current restructuring will disconnect UIS from academics: I find it hard to imagine how it could be more disconnected than it currently is.

Over the past six years in my role as a Head of Department I have witnessed many imposed and unaccountable changes that hard-pressed UIS staff at the coalface have to implement without being able to provide the level of support the Departments and Institutions need. Many of our processes that underpin research, teaching and administration are disconnected and require substantial improvement. I point to one recent example regarding the selection of a digital examination platform that was poorly

consulted on and ultimately scrapped since the selected vendor provided a package that was materially inferior to the one we had piloted in Biological Sciences for a couple of years. The process led to considerable stress for academic and professional services staff tasked with running our examinations since they were operating under conditions of uncertainty.

I have had the opportunity to provide my views to the new UIS Director, the first time I have ever been consulted on my views on University IT infrastructure. I am confident that this consultative approach will continue and I very much welcome the proposals for restructuring UIS and developing a new University digital and IT strategy that is better suited to the needs of the our entire community, is robust and secure, and more in line with growing academic needs for accessible and affordable scientific computing. In my view we need to start the change process now.

Professor A. D. SCADDEN (Department of Biochemistry and Downing College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am writing to express my strong support regarding the proposed restructure within UIS, which follows extensive consultation regarding the performance of UIS and staff experience of the existing IT and digital services, systems, application and infrastructure.

To develop a digital strategy that meets the academic needs of the wider University, it is essential that there is robust oversight from a strong senior leadership team, along with a staff structure that can provide the skills and capabilities to facilitate development of the strategic plan. Whilst this is likely to result in some staff redundancies, along with restructuring of other roles, it is critical that the overall structure and reporting lines within UIS are appropriate to ensure that the digital and technological strategy within the University can be realised. Moreover, as the higher education sector faces ongoing financial challenges, it is prudent that existing structures are reviewed to ensure expenditure is appropriately deployed. In view of the rapidly changing landscape regarding digital infrastructure and provision, this review and restructure of UIS is long overdue.

Implementation of the proposed restructure of UIS is a critical step in ensuring that a digital strategy can be developed to meet both current and future needs in order to facilitate achievement of the University's academic mission.

Professor J. S. SIMONS (Department of Psychology and Emmanuel College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Head of the School of the Biological Sciences and a member of the Information Services Committee.

I write in support of the position articulated by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and of the proposed restructuring of the University Information Services (UIS). The Topic of concern appears, in part, to conflate distinct organisational changes and to infer consequences for UIS that are not substantiated by the evidence. From an academic perspective, it is important to distinguish clearly between structural reporting arrangements and the substantive capacity of a service to fulfil its core mission. There is little reason to conclude that the effectiveness of UIS in supporting research and teaching is determined by its position within the administrative hierarchy, rather than by the clarity of its strategy, the capability of its leadership, and the alignment of its services with academic need.

A central strength of the proposed approach lies in the emphasis on informed diagnosis and strategic coherence. The assessment that the University's existing digital provision requires material improvement is widely shared across the academic community, and reflects both lived experience and earlier reviews. In this context, the proposed restructuring is not an end in itself, but a necessary enabler of a more coherent and strategically driven digital capability. Strengthening leadership capacity, clarifying accountability, and addressing inefficiencies in current provision are all consistent with good organisational practice in complex academic institutions.

It is also noteworthy that since his appointment, the CIO has adopted a visibly engaged and consultative approach, seeking to understand the diverse needs of Schools and Departments, and to involve colleagues in shaping a more effective digital landscape. This mode of leadership is particularly important in a collegiate university, where success depends on trust, responsiveness, and the ability to bridge local and central perspectives. The ongoing work in collaboration with School IT Leads and others to map the current landscape and define what 'good' looks like further reinforces the view that this is a carefully considered and community-informed process rather than a top-down imposed restructuring exercise.

Finally, the scale of the challenge facing the University should not be underestimated. Improving digital capability will require sustained cultural, structural, and technological change over several years. Early steps to ensure that UIS has the appropriate structures, skills, and leadership in place are therefore both timely and necessary. For these reasons, I believe it is important that the University community offers its support to the CIO in leading this programme of change, recognising that meaningful improvement in the services that underpin research, teaching, and administration will depend on collective engagement as well as effective leadership.

Dr J. L. THOROGOOD (University Information Services):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I declare an interest in the Topic of concern as my role will be subject to a minor change under the proposed UIS re-organisation and I am therefore impacted.

The University of Cambridge makes exceptional demands of its technical infrastructure, demands that grow in scope and complexity as the institution's research, teaching, and administrative ambitions evolve. Meeting them well requires not only capable technical delivery but sound architectural practice, namely the capacity to make joined-up, sustainable decisions about systems and technology in a way that serves the institution over the long term. Where that practice lacks organisational clarity, the consequences tend to be invisible until they are costly: technical debt, duplication, and decisions made in isolation that constrain future options in ways that are difficult to reverse.

The proposed restructure of UIS offers an opportunity to address that. By providing greater organisational clarity around how technical strategy is developed and governed, it creates conditions in which architectural practice can operate with the authority and institutional alignment that work of this kind requires, provided, of course, that the restructure is implemented thoughtfully and with due regard for the concerns that have been raised. That is, I believe, a meaningful step forward for UIS and for the University it serves. On the substantive question of direction, I believe the reorganisation reflects a serious and necessary attempt to address structural questions that UIS cannot indefinitely defer.

Ms A. E. TRAUB (University of Cambridge Development and Alumni Relations):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am supportive of the proposed changes to UIS.

A roughly 80% increase in budget and 50% increase in staffing over the past 5 years is significant and concerning, especially given the feedback the new Chief Information Officer has received from the University community since his arrival about the quality of service being delivered. It is obvious that we need to take action.

Given the size of the budget and the team, the University needs an experienced IS senior leadership team who can refine and deliver the type of service we need as a world-leading research-intensive university including a necessary programme of modernisation in some areas.

Changes in technology, and the associated threats, are increasing exponentially. Every year of deferral is a year the service stays as it is, and the cost base keeps rising – with the costs and risks carried by the departments that rely on UIS.

Those who have put forth the Topic of concern concede the reorganisation is about service and customer-centred delivery; thus, I would argue a service model that doesn't yet serve is not the thing to defer; it's the thing to fix.

The objectors are suggesting a strategy be developed first; though given the accelerating pace of change, the key, in my opinion, is having the right leadership team in place to create a more agile and responsive UIS. Whatever digital strategy emerges must be delivered through UIS. Strengthening that delivery capability first is what gives the strategy somewhere to land. Pausing it doesn't protect the strategy – it strands it.

The objectors note 'this reorganisation will result in a critical loss of domain knowledge and expertise' which seems unlikely given the possible redundancies are 4.2% of the entire staff and they will add 2.3% new staff to strengthen the leadership, commercial and delivery aspects of the team.

The proposal has been scrutinised and approved by the Information Services Committee which is a joint committee of the Council and the General Board which is tasked with oversight of this area and as such should be supported in moving forward.

Professor J. M. WYBURD (Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics and Clare College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Head of the School of Arts and Humanities and a member of the Information Services Committee.

The wording of the Topic of concern suggests that the proposed changes to senior administrative offices have been rushed, while also raising concerns about their implications for the UIS. As the Regent House will be aware, interim arrangements have been in place since the departure of the Registry in December. It is vital that the University has senior offices and office-holders in place as soon as possible. The proposals contained in the consultation report published on 7 May¹ have been subject to considerable discussion over the last few months. It is now timely that the Regent House should be consulted on these proposals, in order to inform the direction of travel, and to allow us to make crucial new appointments. As a Head of School, I fully recognise the roles of all administrative divisions in supporting, enabling and facilitating the academic institutions of the University to fulfil our core mission of research and teaching. I also recognise the need for a reorganisation of administrative and budgetary oversight for the reasons outlined in the consultation report.

The authors of the Topic of concern are particularly concerned about the potential of these proposals to disconnect the UIS from its academically-interconnected roots and responsibilities, including in relation to the digital strategy. Work to develop our digital strategy, led by the Chief Information Officer, is firmly grounded in academic needs, as evidenced at the recent Council and General Board Strategic Away Day, and in considerable ongoing engagement with academic Departments and Faculties. It is difficult to envisage how the proposed changes to administrative oversight would impact that ongoing work in any negative way. The University's Schools and academic institutions already benefit from increased partnership working with central divisions which are essential to enable us to research and teach – through Finance, HR and Estates business partners and dedicated CUDAR staff, for example. UIS has to work in partnership with the academic University to support and enable our academic priorities as well as supporting modern and compliant administrative systems. It is essential that any reorganisation of the UIS which may be needed to ensure it is fit for purpose, provides value for money in constrained financial circumstances, and can deliver our digital strategy is taken forward, regardless of the outcomes of the consultation on administrative offices and reporting lines. The Information Services Committee has high level academic representation and will continue to hold the UIS to account to deliver on the digital strategy to enable us to continue to deliver world class research and teaching, as well as to streamline administrative systems to the benefit of us all.

¹ *Reporter*, 6823, 2025–26, p. 447.

COLLEGE NOTICES

Vacancies

Emmanuel College: College Research Associates (several posts available); tenure: three years, with the possibility of renewal; non-stipendiary but collegiate benefits apply; closing date: 1 July 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.emma.cam.ac.uk/people/job-vacancies/college-research-associates>

Wolfson College: College Research Associate Competition 2026 (up to ten posts available); tenure: from 1 October 2026 or 1 January 2027 for up to three years (not renewable); non-stipendiary but collegiate benefits apply; closing date: 24 July 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/college-research-associate-competition-2026>

EXTERNAL NOTICES

Oxford Notices

Department of Psychiatry, Nuffield Department of Women's and Reproductive Health and Wolfson College: Professorship of Women's Mental Health; closing date: 31 August 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk>, vacancy ID: 186963

Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences and Green Templeton College: Dr Sadok Besrou Professorship of Global Primary Care; tenure: from 1 December 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter; closing date: 30 September 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk>, vacancy ID: 186965

New College: The Salvesen Junior Research Fellowship; tenure: four years from 1 October 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter (not renewable); salary: £33,400; closing date: 9 July 2026; further details: <https://talent.sage.hr/jobs/f62a85ce-da82-4204-b5e9-366a57d0a478>

Andrew Chamblin Memorial Concert 2026: the twentieth annual Andrew Chamblin Memorial Concert will be given by David Halls, FRCO, on Tuesday, 29 September 2026 at 8 p.m. in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. It will also be livestreamed online. Mr Halls will play an hour-long programme of organ works by Mendelssohn, Elgar, Bach, Dubois and Boëllmann. The concert is free and unticketed; livestream link: <https://tinyurl.com/oxfordconcert2026>

© 2026 The Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the University of Cambridge, or as expressly permitted by law.

The University is the owner or the licensee of all intellectual property rights in the site and in the material published on it.

Those works are protected by copyright laws and treaties around the world. All such rights are reserved.

Material prepared for the primary purpose of providing information about the University of Cambridge, its teaching and research activities, its subsidiary companies and organisations with which it is associated or affiliated has been placed on the site by the University ('University Material').

Subject to statutory allowances, extracts of University Material may be accessed, downloaded, and printed for your personal and non-commercial use and you may draw the attention of others within your organization to University Material posted on the site.

Notices for publication in the *Reporter*, or queries concerning content, should be sent by email to reporter.editor@admin.cam.ac.uk; messages may also be left by telephone to 01223 332298.

Advice and information is available on the *Reporter* website at <https://www.reporter.admin.cam.ac.uk/>.

Copy should be sent as early as possible in the week before publication; short notices will be accepted up to **4 p.m. on Friday** for publication the following Wednesday. Inclusion of notices is at the discretion of the Editor.