

On the SD in the University of Cambridge

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The University of Cambridge is one of the oldest in the world---we know that the university was becoming a centre of learning in the 13th Century---the oldest College Peterhouse was founded in 1284. At present 16,500 students (11,600 undergraduates and approximately 5,000 graduates). 17% of student body from overseas with 100 countries represented. The student body is fairly evenly split between arts and science subjects. In arts many have gone on to become prominent figures in arts, print and broadcast media. In the sciences Cambridge has produced over sixty Nobel Prize winners. There are 7,000 Staff including assistant Staff (3,000 teaching and administrative Staff). The annual turnover is £250 million pounds. This does not include Cambridge University Press, The Examinations Syndicate or the Colleges.

BACKGROUND

In Britain the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (known as the 'Dearing Committee') made a number of recommendations, one of which was 'that universities should review and update their policies for staff development and make information about them readily available to Staff'. In 1999 the General Board of the University published the following statement of Policy, which set out existing arrangements for academic staff development---though at that time it was made clear that consideration was being given to the formulation of Staff development policies that would apply to other groups of staff in the University. This indeed is now the case with the formation in the University of a single Staff Development section serving academic and academic-related staff (including administrative, computing, library and museum staff) and support staff (including clerical, technical and manual staff).

GENERAL POLICY

'The General Board are committed to the support of Staff development in institutions under their supervision, both for newly appointed members of staff and as continuing professional development for staff throughout their careers'. The Academic Staff Development Committee are directly responsible for advising the General Board on University-wide policy and procedures for academic staff development and for monitoring the implementation of those procedures. Staff development policy and provision are an integral part of the University's mechanisms for quality assurance in the fields of

teaching and research. I will come back to the matter of teaching and research and attempt to assess these endeavours.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The University's achievements are based largely on the CONTRIBUTION COMMITMENT and ACHIEVEMENTS of individual members of staff. The function of staff development is to support Staff in performance of their designated roles and to help them fulfill their potential during the course of their employment in the university. Staff development makes a positive contribution to success of individuals and ultimately to success of the University as a whole. Important for University in maintaining and enhancing its national and international reputation in teaching and research. Members of Staff in Cambridge are often engaged in more than one capacity in University, carrying responsibilities for Faculty or Departmental teaching, research and administration often in conjunction with College duties. Staff development is seen as including any measure which contributes to the enhancement of their knowledge, skills, competencies and working practices in these areas.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Members of Staff (and others engaged in academic activity) are expected to take responsibility for their own professional and career development. A point that is increasingly being taken by professional bodies (e.g. Royal Society of Chemistry log book). In the University Staff are encouraged to take advantage of Departmental Faculty and centrally-provided opportunities for staff development according to the demands of their particular role. When first invited to undertake teaching or when selected for appointment to office an assessment of the skills of the individual should lead naturally to the identification of their needs (for training and staff development) directly related to the duties that they are to perform.

Staff development needs may be identified in a variety of ways

- e.g.
- by an audit of skills
 - by peer review and feedback
 - by appraisal
 - by student feedback
 - by reflection of current practice

Members of staff can expect encouragement and support from the Head of Department and/or from the Faculty Board in addressing their development needs. The University takes the view that Faculty Boards and Heads of Departments play an important part in the process of ensuring that those engaged in University teaching are suitably prepared for that role. Heads of Departments are also responsible for ensuring that academic staff and research staff employed in their institutions are regularly appraised and receive

appropriate advice on their development needs.

RESEARCH BREEDS EXCELLENCE AT EVERY LEVEL

A recent survey of 123 British Universities by *the Sunday Times* carried an article which made the point that it is no coincidence that universities with the strongest research profile tend to be the one with the greatest strength across a variety of teaching disciplines. The article quoted Dr. Brian Lang, principal of St. Andrew's "Good researchers are clever, stimulating and inquiring people. They want to pass on their findings into a wider body of knowledge---and to do that they have to be good communicators". "Success breeds success. A strong research profile attracts more funding; well endowed research centres attract the best academics; the best academics will maintain and build a University's research capabilities into the future". In Britain evaluation of research has been conducted on a five-yearly cycle since 1986. The Research Assessment Exercise conducted by the national higher education funding councils are used to determine the allocation of central funds for research. In the last review the proportion of research-active Staff working in departments demonstrating international excellence in at least half of the work submitted rose from 32% to 55%. While this is good news on the one hand---on the other hand the long standing formula for allocating government funds has been critically undermined. There was quite simply insufficient money to go around to reward these raised standards. The shortfall in funds has undermined the purpose of the Research Assessment Exercise and in June of this year a full scale review of the research assessment was announced. The Science and Technology Committee of the British House of Commons accepted that there had been genuine improvements in research quality but accused universities of 'gamemanship' by being more selective, which they put forward for assessment in order to boost their ratings. As the article in *the Sunday Times* survey put it 'changes seem inevitable'.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROVISION

Staff development takes many forms. It may include sabbatical leave (this is well established in Cambridge and has been active long before any Staff development programme was instituted), other research leave-structured staff development activities, attendance at meetings and conferences, secondments, development of educational materials and curriculum enhancement, and active association with professional bodies. One of the major ways in which individuals in Cambridge can gain access to staff development activities and specific skills training is via a centrally-funded programme. I have with me some of the publications of the University of Cambridge Staff Development Programme, which give an idea of the breadth and scope of our centrally funded programme. The programme is designed to meet the needs of those taking on new responsibilities or wishing to refresh their approach in the areas of teaching research and

administration.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Seven individuals headed by the University Staff Development Officer, each with different responsibilities concentrate on programmes for academic staff, some for academic-related staff---one is involved in monitoring and administering the University Youth Training programme and another for senior management development---training for graduate students is under two of the team. The staff development team is supported by an Administration Team of three people. The courses themselves involve a number of course leaders---some 48 are listed in the present programme covering a wide variety of skills. The encouragement of career development for all staff is one of the University's core values.

HANDOUT

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Chancellor

The constitutional head of the University. An eminent public figure the Chancellor continues to have important statutory duties.

The Vice-Chancellor

Explicitly the full-time resident head of the University and its principal academic and administrative officer.

The Regent House

The governing body and electoral constituency of the University. It consists of the current teaching and administrative staff of both the University and the Colleges.

The Council

The Council is the principal executive and policy-making body of the University. It has overall responsibility for the administration of the University, for defining its mission, for planning its work and for the management of its resources.

The General Board of the Faculties

The General Board (as it is abbreviated) advises the University on educational policy. It is responsible for maintaining a high standard of teaching and research and for ensuring

that University teaching officers satisfactorily perform their duties.

The Council of the Schools

In Cambridge the term 'School' indicates an administrative grouping of related subjects. The University has five Schools: Physical Sciences; Biological Sciences (including medicine and veterinary medicine); Technology; Arts and Humanities and Social Studies. Each of these bodies covers a group of Faculties and is supervised by an elected body--The Council of the School. Each Council co-ordinates organization of its faculties and filters much academic business before its transmission to the General Board.

Faculties and Departments

Faculty Boards are responsible to the General Board. Faculties are responsible for teaching and research, this work is usually carried out by specific Departments. Each Department has a Head, who in most cases is a Professor.

These notes specifically refer to the organization of the University.

However, Cambridge has a number of Colleges with Individual histories and their own individual procedures. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Colleges are separate corporations despite the apparent symbols of their relationship with the University. *See also the attached additional notes.*

NOTES

- 1) The Chancellor is available to advise as a respected and experienced individual detached from current local controversies, on points at issue, sometimes of sensitivity and delicacy. The Chancellor supports the day-to-day work of the Vice-Chancellor and the Colleges. The Chancellor presides at Honorary Degree Ceremonies. The present holder of the post is HRH, The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.
- 2) The Vice-Chancellor's main task is to provide leadership academic as well as administrative to the whole University. He or she has important ceremonial duties as well as chairing a number of University bodies; the Vice-Chancellor chairs the Council and the General Board. There are two Pro-Vice-Chancellors and a number of Deputy Vice-Chancellors.
- 3) The Regent House is the ultimate governing body of the University. The Council and the General Board work under delegated authority of the Regent House. The process of making and amending the regulations which govern the University involves the Regent House through its effective control of Graces (a formal proposal) and Reports. Meetings of this body are chaired by the Chancellor or more usually the Vice-Chancellor.
- 4) The Council consists 21 members, including 4 elected from the Heads of the Colleges and 12 from the Regent House as well as 3 students (one of whom must be a graduate student). The Council has a Finance Committee and a Planning and Resources Committee to advise the University on strategic questions and the allocation of University funds.

- 5) The General Board with its role in maintaining educational standards has in recent times become much involved in national programmes of assessment and evaluation of teaching and research.
- 6) Unlike most British universities, apart from Oxford there is in general no explicitly 'lay' element in the government of Cambridge. In order to involve non-academic opinion and experience more fully in the policy making of the University a Consultative Committee, of 9 people of whom 6 may not be members of the Regent House, has been established. The role of this committees is to give advice to the Council especially on the objectives and methods of the University and its relationship with the wider world.