![[Council of University Classical Departments]]()

**Minutes of the 126th meeting of the Standing Committee**

**Saturday 13 February 2010, 11 am**

**Stewart House, 32 Russell Sq., University of London, London WC1E 7HU.**

Present: Robin Osborne (Cambridge; Chair), Bruce Gibson (Liverpool; Secretary), Adam Bartley (Kent; Treasurer), Sarah Francis (Liverpool; Classics Subject Centre), Steven Green (Leeds), Miriam Leonard (UCL), Nick Lowe (RHUL; Webmaster), Jonathan Powell (RHUL), James Robson (Open; Languages), Ulrike Roth (Edinburgh), Jakob Wisse (Newcastle).

In attendance: Henrik Mouritsen (KCL).

**1. Apologies for Absence**

1. Apologies were received from Alan Beale (JACT), Mike Edwards (Director, ICS), Elena Isayev (Exeter), Peter Jones (Friends of Classics), Fiona McHardy (Roehampton; Editor of the *Bulletin*), Gill Partington (JACT), Christopher Pelling (Oxford), Mirjam Plantinga (Lampeter), Catherine Steel (Glasgow; Subject Centre), Matthew Wright (Exeter).

**2. Minutes of Last meeting**

The minutes of the SC meeting of 17 October 2009 were received and approved. There were no matters arising from these minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**3. Matters arising from the draft November 2009 Council minutes.**

**Item 9: Language ‘boot camp’.** It was noted that both Reading and KCL had summer projects in train. Dr Robson agreed to put both institutions in contact.

**4. Implications of HEFCE grant letter.**

In the light of recent announcements of government cuts to HEFCE funding, and the responses of some UK HEIs, those present reported on their own institutions and on others where they had detailed information.

After discussion, it was agreed that CUCD would write in support of the department at Leeds in response to the proposals to ‘restructure’ classical provision, urging that the independent presence of classics was to the advantage of other cognate subjects. The Chair and Secretary would co-ordinate with Dr Green in drafting an appropriate letter. Prof. Mouritsen, who had reported on the cuts and redundancies being proposed at KCL indicated that at this stage there was no need for action from CUCD, as consultation was still in progress, and it was possible that the specific threats to posts in Classics might be averted.

It was also agreed that CUCD contacts more widely should be reminded that CUCD was most able to offer help when kept informed in the early stages of developing situations at a local level.

**5. Chair’s Report.**

1. **AHRC**: Prof. Rylance had responded to the Chair’s attempts to contact him, and a meeting with members of A-HUG had been arranged for Friday, 5 March. It was encouraging that Prof. Rylance, in correspondence with the Chair, had indicated that he was aware of the extent of concerns about the ERIH and the wider use of citation databases.
2. **Impact**: The Chair had attended a meeting on impact organised by RCUK in early December. RCUK appeared to have shown little attempt to engage with the concerns of arts and humanities disciplines with regard to impact, only appearing interested in examples of impact which were crudely economic. There was also little evidence of AHRC pressing these concerns, though there would be an occasion to raise them directly with Prof. Rylance on 5 March. Much would depend on the imminent response to the REF consultation.
3. **Closure of Roman museum at Canterbury.** It was agreed that the Chair should send a letter of protest on behalf of CUCD.

**6. Institute of Classical Studies and the Joint Library**

The Secretary reported on behalf of the Director the welcome news that there were no matters of concern to bring to the attention of CUCD on this occasion.

**7. Coding of degrees**

The Secretary reported that Dr Isayev had made further enquiries after the November Council meeting to the Head of Corporate Data at UCAS, Bethanie Williams, regarding the JACS coding of Byzantine history (where CUCD has asked for the chronological period covered to be changed). Dr Isayev had also raised the desirability of excluding Ancient History from raw statistics presented for â€˜History’, on the grounds that Classical departments were often not credited for such programmes. No response had yet been received.

**8. Standardisation of contact hours**

It was reported that Newcastle University was considering a template of three contact hours a week, to be imposed across all its 20 credit modules. After discussion, which confirmed that uniformity even within institutions, let alone nationally, did not exist, members of SC encouraged their colleagues in Newcastle to report to their institution on the wide variety of practice across the HE sector as a counter-argument to such a measure.

**9. MA benchmarking**

Attention was drawn to earlier CUCD minutes which had referred to the possibility of addressing MA benchmarking, though it was also noted that the divergent and rapidly changing nature of M level provision might mean that the existence of such a document could potentially be a hindrance to the development of innovative provision in the future. Prof. Powell agreed, as a first step, to look into MA benchmarking in other disciplines, with a view to reporting to SC in June.

**10. Classics Subject Centre**

Dr Francis, attending on behalf of the Director, reported on developments, and tabled a document which listed the extensive range of CSC activities planned for the rest of the year. In general terms, the CSC was keen to continue proven areas of activity such as language teaching days and days for graduate teaching assistants, and was also hoping to develop new strengths in providing support for more senior staff as well, so that the whole of the Classics community might view the CSC as a resource which would be able to offer help and support.

Dr Francis noted that there was however uncertainty over the future of the Subject Centre, especially in the light of a letter which had recently been sent to Liverpool from the HEA, who were facing a 30% cut overall. Though the situation was currently unclear (the HEA had only indicated that interested parties would be informed by 30 June 2010), there was no guarantee of financial support for the CSC continuing after 31 July 2010, and there were also fears that the HEA would concentrate all its activities in York, without differentiated provision at subject level.

It was agreed that CUCD should intervene by writing to indicate that the needs of subject communities could only be effectively met by the current system of Subject Centres with specific focus on individual disciplines. It was reported that the Archaeology subject association, SCFA, would also be making similar representations. CUCD departments were strongly encouraged to indicate where CSC could make a useful contribution to their activities, especially as there was a possibility that CSC might not exist by 2011. It was accordingly in the interest both of departments and the CSC for CSC to put on as extensive a range of events as possible, in accordance with the needs of classics departments.

**11. Treasurer’s Report and discussion of CUCD finances**

The Treasurer reported a balance of £4673.70 on 14 January 2010. It was noted that subscriptions were currently in order. Future changes to payments by bank transfer rather than cheque were likely to be advantageous. The Treasurer suggested that in the current economic climate of HE, it was possible that income from subscriptions might drop in the future. It was noted that funds were available for larger projects organised by CUCD if the demand for such expenditure was there. MA benchmarking was identified as a possible activity which might incur costs.

**12. Membership of SC and Officers**

The Secretary welcomed Dr Leonard and Dr Roth to the SC. It was noted that Gill Partington had now been replaced by Alan Beale as the JACT representative on SC. Annual co-options to the SC for 2010 were confirmed (Prof. Steel, Glasgow, CSC; Dr Jones, Classics for All; Dr Lowe, RHUL, Webmaster; Mr Beale, JACT; Dr Plantinga, Lampeter; Dr Robson, OU, Languages). Dr Roth offered to take over CUCD Statistics from Dr Millett, whose term on SC had come to an end in November 2009. SC thanked Dr Roth for agreeing to take on this role.

**13. Update from Webmaster**

The website would be updated to take account of changes of membership.

**14. *CUCD Bulletin***

The Secretary reported that the Editor would welcome suggestions for articles. A substantial response to the articles on dyslexia in the 2009 *Bulletin* had been received. It was noted that the activities of the CSC thus year might well generate copy, which would be a useful outcome given the uncertainty over its future. Dr Robson's offer to submit an article on the combined teaching of language and literature was warmly welcomed.

**15. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Saturday, 12 June at 11 am.