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

# Draft minutes of the forty-second meeting of Council

#### Saturday, 13th November, 2010, 11 a.m.

#### Room G34, Senate House, London.

**Present**: Robin Osborne (Chair, Cambridge), Bruce Gibson (Secretary, Liverpool), Miriam Leonard (Acting Treasurer, UCL), Andrew Bayliss (Birmingham), Charlotte Behr (Roehampton), George Boys-Stones (Durham), Armand D'Angour (Oxford), James Davidson (Warwick), Glenys Davies (Edinburgh), Steven Green (Leeds, Elections Officer), Steve Hodkinson (Nottingham), Elena Isayev (Exeter, SC), Csaba La'da (Kent), Nick Lowe (Webmaster, RHUL), Neville Morley (Bristol), Henrik Mouritsen (KCL), Tim Parkin (Manchester), Phil Perkins (Open), Ian Rutherford (Reading), Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge), Anne Sheppard (RHUL), Daniel Stewart (Leicester).

## 1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from: Alan Beale (JACT Rep., SC), Mike Edwards (Director, ICS, SC), Matthew Fox (Glasgow), Stephen Halliwell (St Andrews), Peter Jones (Friends of Classics), Fiona McHardy (Roehampton, SC, Editor of the *CUCD Bulletin*), John Morgan (Swansea), Christopher Pelling (Oxford, SC), James Richardson (Lampeter), Ulrike Roth (Edinburgh, Statistics Officer), Catherine Steel (Glasgow, Classics Subject Centre, SC), Jakob Wisse (Newcastle, SC), Matthew Wright (Exeter, SC).

## 2. Minutes of the last Council (14th November 2009).

These were approved.

## 3. Matters arising.

**Item 3: MA Benchmarking**. It was noted that SC had decided not to address this issue for the time being, in view of the diversity of M-level provision within UK Classical departments, and the rarity of MA benchmarks in the humanities more generally.

**Item 4, i): European Reference Index in the Humanities (ERIH).** Though this project had appeared to have run into the sand, there were renewed signs that a new index would be compiled: CUCD would need to maintain vigilance.

**Item 4, iii): AHRC research leave schemes and panel structures.** It was acknowledged that departments had been largely unwilling to co-ordinate deadlines and information for potential graduate students, and that local timetables within institutions were also a major hindrance. It was, however, agreed that it was not ideal to tell potential graduate students that they had only 48 hours in which to accept a place.

## 4. Chair's Report.

**British Academy Small Grants.** The Chair reported that there was pressure from BIS against the continuation of small-scale grant funding which was deemed to be excessive in terms of administrative costs. After discussion, it was agreed that the Chair should write to BIS urging them to allow this important line of funding to continue.

## 5. Research Excellence Framework.

1. **Composition of sub-panel.** The Chair reported that CUCD had decided on nominations for the sub-panel in September. He himself had recently accepted HEFCE's invitation to be sub-panel chair, and would be meeting the Chair of Panel D in due course.
2. **Impact.** The Chair noted that reports on the pilot assessments of impact were now available. The impact panel in English had argued that educational impact should be counted, and that publishing sales could be recognised as a potential indicator of impact. Metrics in the humanities was now a dead letter.
The Secretary reported on a meeting of subject associations in humanities and social sciences he had attended at the British Academy on 27 October: while it had been acknowledged by all that the methodologies in use were developmental, there had been no serious attempt to resolve possible issues such as imperfect guidelines, the lack of history of data collection for the long period of perhaps 15 years which was likely to be the defined period for consideration of research impact, the double-counting of individuals who had worked in more than one institution. Research would have to be of at least 2\* quality to be eligible to be considered in terms of impact (though 4\* work was likely to be defined as 'transformational' rather than 'ground-breaking'), but members of the pilot panels had taken the view that the 'reach' of research impact should not be seen solely as geographical. More heartening had been the view from the English pilot exercise that impact could be demonstrated in terms of the work of individual scholars, and not just through larger collaborative projects, but it had also been pointed out that institutional statements about impact were as likely to be as rhetorical in character as statements about research environment in previous RAE exercises.
In discussion, concerns were expressed about: whether international impact was likely to be taken into proper consideration, given the emphasis on 'benefit' within the UK (it was also noted that this was also potentially likely to cause problems for those publishing in languages other than in English); whether appropriate methodologies would allow for proper assessment of the impact of interdisciplinary work.

## 6. After Browne

The Chair reported that the effect of the Browne Report and of the decisions announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review was effectively the introduction of an entirely free market for undergraduate degrees in all areas except the sciences and those other subjects such as nursing which were deemed to be socially significant. After discussion it was noted that the position of part-time students was unclear, as was the position for students in Scotland; there were also likely to be serious consequences for recruitment of students from elsewhere in the EU. It was agreed that CUCD should try to be involved in co-ordinated opposition to the likely loss of government funding to support teaching, which the Chair would be able to take forward through A-HUG.

## 7. Threats to UK Classics Departments.

There were brief updates on departments where posts had been reported as under threat. Dr Green reported that at the University of Leeds the UCU and the University had put forward a ground-breaking review process which would crucially involve consultation with key stakeholders. Council was unanimous in its view that CUCD was such a stakeholder and would need to be fully involved in the review process.

## 8. Institute of Classical Studies and the Joint Library.

The ICS Director having sent apologies, it was noted in a brief discussion that there was some hope that the new head of the UoL Library Services was less committed to seeking convergence of libraries. There were however concerns expressed over the possibility that room charges in Senate House might adversely affect ICS activities.

## 9. Shortlisting of non-EU citizens for academic posts.

It was noted that the new system of Home Office quotas for non-EU nationals were beginning to cause problems for departments making appointments. In discussion it was suggested that making 'international excellence' a requirement might be one possible strategy. It was agreed that CUCD should monitor the situation, and that departments which experienced such interference in making appointments should alert CUCD. It was also noted with relief that the appointment of non-EU PhD examiners was still unaffected by such quotas.

## 10. Classics Subject Centre.

The Secretary, reporting on behalf of the Director, gave a summary of activities which had been planned up to May 2011. The Director was hoping that CSC would be able to offer some grant funding, and that projects involving more than one institution would be particularly welcome.

There would, however, soon be an announcement that funding for the network of subject centres outside the HEA headquarters in York would come to an end in July 2011. Though there might be some transitional funding available for the next academic year, the Director had noted that CUCD would need to consider how pedagogy in the discipline could be supported from 2011 onwards, and would be tabling a proposal to CUCD in the New Year. In discussion the possibility of such activities being based in the School of Advanced Study in London, subject to the possibility already noted of room charges, was cautiously noted, and it was agreed that CUCD would write to the HEA expressing grave disquiet at the end of financial support for the CSC.

## 11. Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer was welcomed to her post. She reported that the current balance was £4158.43, though various travel expenses and the costs of the *Bulletin* were outstanding. Subscriptions for 2009-10 had not been collected earlier in the year but would be collected before Christmas, with 2010-11 subscriptions to be collected in summer 2011 in the normal way. In discussion it was agreed that a potential use for CUCD funds would be to help fill the gap following the end of HEA funding for Classics Subject Centre activities.

## 12. CUCD *Bulletin*.

The Secretary reported that hard copies of the *Bulletin* would be posted to departments that had requested them, and that the electronic version would be placed on the CUCD website by the Webmaster.

## 13. Statistics.

The Chair noted that the new Statistics Officer would be revisiting the question of the how the statistics might be most usefully presented. In discussion, the increase in student numbers over the decade was welcomed. It was also suggested that employability data could become more and more important, though the difficulties in collected such information consistently were universally acknowledged.

## 14. Elections.

Since the Elections Officer was himself a candidate for re-election, the Secretary acted as Elections Officer. He reported that there were six candidates for four ordinary vacancies on the Standing Committee: Dr Susan Deacy (Roehampton), Professor Edith Hall (RHUL), Dr Steven Green (Leeds), who was standing for election to a second term, Professor Christopher Pelling (Oxford), who was standing for election to a second term, Dr Edmund Thomas (Durham), and Professor Stephen Todd (Manchester). The elections were then conducted according to the Alternative Vote method laid down by the constitution. The Secretary agreed to count the votes after the meeting and to report to the Chair on the results. The Chair expressed thanks on behalf of CUCD for those whose terms on SC were coming to an end, Dr Fiona McHardy (Roehampton, Editor of the *Bulletin*) and Professor Jonathan Powell (RHUL).

## 15. 2012 Olympics.

It was agreed that the 2012 Olympics were an important opportunity for the Classics community, and that co-ordination between departments and / or subject associations arranging any activities was essential.

## 16. Date of next meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place on Saturday, 12 November 2011 in the afternoon.