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UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

NOTICES

Calendar

- 24 November, *Monday*. Ballot of the Regent House, voting opens at 10 a.m.
 29 November, *Saturday*. End of third quarter of Michaelmas Term. Congregation of the Regent House at 10 a.m.
 3 December, *Wednesday*. Ballot of the Regent House, voting closes at 5 p.m.
 5 December, *Friday*. Full Term ends.

Discussions (Tuesdays at 2 p.m.)

9 December

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

29 November

Cambridge University Endowment Trustee Body

10 November 2025

The Council has reappointed Mr Mark Lewisohn, *CHR*, as Chair of the Cambridge University Endowment Trustee Body (CUETB) from 1 November 2025 until 31 December 2029. This will correct an error made when making the first appointment, which should have been set to expire on 31 December 2025, and bring the appointment in line with the Ordinance for the CUETB, under which appointments run from 1 January.

Election of a member of the Council's Finance Committee in class (b)

A vacancy will arise on the Council's Finance Committee for a member of the Regent House elected by representatives of the Colleges, to serve for three years from 1 January 2026.

The election is conducted in accordance with the Single Transferable Vote regulations.¹ Voting is by postal ballot. Nominations should be made in writing and received by the Director of Governance and Compliance by **12 noon on Friday, 21 November 2025**. They can be submitted by email to HdGCDEA@admin.cam.ac.uk or c/o University Offices, The Old Schools, Cambridge, CB2 1TN, and must include a statement by the person nominated that they are willing to serve on the Finance Committee. Nominations should be supported by the signatures of two members of the Regent House.

If a ballot is necessary, papers will be dispatched by Friday, 28 November, for return by 12 noon on Tuesday, 9 December 2025.

¹ *Statutes and Ordinances*, p. 121.

Fellowship Programme for Emerging Academic Leaders

In July 2024, the Council approved a new scheme to provide emerging academic leaders with experience of working at a senior level, facilitating an internal pipeline of potential future academic leaders at the University (*Reporter*, 6751, 2023–24, p. 859).

Four new Fellows have now been appointed, each supported by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and with a designated portfolio as follows:

- Professor Jess Gwynne, supported by Professor Bhaskar Vira, has taken up the Teaching Review portfolio, leading reforms to ensure teaching and learning systems at the University are sustainable;
- Professor Bartomeu Monserrat, also supported by Professor Bhaskar Vira, has taken up the portfolio for Education Innovation with oversight of digital and non-traditional education and the diversification of teaching, learning and assessment models;
- Professor Róisín M. Owens, supported by Professor John Aston, has taken up the Research Income Review instigated by the Research Policy Committee, examining all sources of income and cost recovery; and
- Dr Pieter van Houten, supported by Professor Kamal Munir, has taken up the Collections Review to maximise the contributions and successes of the University's many noteworthy collections.

More information on these new Fellows and their responsibilities within the Programme can be found on the Staff Hub at: <https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/StaffHub/SitePages/Two-more-Fellows-appointed-in-programme-for-emerging-academic-leaders.aspx> and <https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/StaffHub/SitePages/Fellowship-programme-for-emerging-academic-leaders-launches.aspx> (University account required).

VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

Electors to the Professorship of Economic History

The Council has appointed members of the *ad hoc* Board of Electors to the Professorship of Economic History as follows:

Professor Simon Franklin, *CL*, in the Chair, as the Vice-Chancellor's deputy

(a) *on the nomination of the Council:*

Professor Toke Aidt, *JE*

Professor Maristella Botticini, *Università Bocconi*

(b) *on the nomination of the General Board:*

Professor Meredith Crowley, *JN*

Professor Manali Desai, *N*

Professor Bishnupriya Gupta, *University of Warwick*

(c) *on the nomination of the Faculty Board of Economics:*

Professor Helen Bao, *N*

Professor Vasco Carvalho, *JE*

Professor Constantine Yannelis, *PEM*

Electors to the Herchel Smith Professorship of Molecular Integrative Biology

The Council has appointed members of the *ad hoc* Board of Electors to the Herchel Smith Professorship of Molecular Integrative Biology as follows:

Professor Dame Ann Dowling, *SID*, in the Chair, as the Vice-Chancellor's deputy

(a) *on the nomination of the Council:*

Professor Paul Riley, *University of Oxford*

Professor Jon Simons, *EM*

(b) *on the nomination of the General Board:*

Professor Muzlifah Haniffa, *Newcastle University*

Professor Andrew Murray, *TH*

Professor Emma Rawlins

(c) *on the nomination of the Faculty Board of Biology:*

Professor Sarah Bray

Professor Sadaf Farooqi, *MUR*

Professor Alex Schier, *University of Basel*

Vacancies in the University

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

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Innovation in the Vice-Chancellor's Office; tenure: three years in the first instance; closing date: 8 December 2025; further details: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/jobs/pro-vice-chancellor-for-innovation-ae47853>; quote reference: AE47853

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.

NOTICES BY FACULTY BOARDS, ETC.**Annual meetings of the Faculties****History**

The Chair of the Faculty Board of History gives notice that the Annual Meeting of the Faculty will be held at **2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 November 2025**, in Room 4 in the Lecture Block. The agenda for the meeting will be circulated to each member of the Faculty. One of the items of business will be the election of one member of the Faculty Board in class (c) to serve for four years from 1 January 2026, in accordance with Regulation 1 of the General Regulations for the Constitution of the Faculty Boards (*Statutes and Ordinances*, p. 601).

Nominations, for which the consent of the candidate must be obtained, signed by the proposer and seconder, and notice of any other business should be sent to the Deputy Faculty Manager (Undergraduates and Facilities) at the Faculty of History, West Road, not later than 9 a.m. on Monday, 17 November 2025.

Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics

The Chair of the Faculty Board of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics gives notice that the Annual Meeting of the Faculty will be held at **12 noon on Monday, 24 November 2025**, in Room 1 of the Lecture Block on the Sidgwick Site.

Interested members should contact Lucy Matthews, Secretary of the Faculty Board (email: bom@mml.cam.ac.uk) for agendas. Notice of any business should reach the Secretary no later than 9 a.m. on Monday, 17 November 2025.

OBITUARIES**Obituary Notices**

PROFESSOR RONALD HYAM, M.A., Ph.D., Litt.D., Emeritus Fellow, Emeritus Archivist and formerly President, College Lecturer in History, Librarian and Admissions Tutor of Magdalene College, member of St John's College, Emeritus Reader in British Imperial History, died on 27 October 2025, aged 89 years.

WILLIAM JOHN HUDSON, M.A., formerly Senior Assistant Registrar (Deputy Director) in the Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities Division of the University Offices, died on 30 October 2025, aged 74 years.

ACTA**Approval of Grace submitted to the Regent House on 29 October 2025**

The Grace submitted to the Regent House on 29 October 2025 (*Reporter*, 6801, 2025–26, p. 87) was approved at 4 p.m. on Friday, 7 November 2025.

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

END OF THE OFFICIAL PART OF THE 'REPORTER'

REPORT OF DISCUSSION

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

A Discussion was held in the Senate-House. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Ms Alison Rose, *N*, was presiding, with the Registry's deputy, the Deputy Junior Proctor, the Junior Pro-Proctor and twenty-one other persons present.

The following items were discussed:

Joint Report of the Council and the General Board, dated 7 October 2025, on standing and ad hoc Boards of Electors (*Reporter*, 6798, 2025–26, p. 38).

Dr W. J. ASTLE (MRC Biostatistics Unit):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, despite being a member of the Council, I did not sign this Report. Whilst acknowledging that its recommendations do little more than make the *de facto* position *de jure*, because the General Board no longer chooses to use standing Boards of Electors, I am not convinced that the Board's practice is in the best interests of the University.

When *ad hoc* Boards were originally proposed in 1971, Professor O. L. Zangwill, a member of the (then) Council of the Senate raised two objections in the Discussion of the Report.¹ The first was that 'if a Board is constituted specially to fill a particular vacancy, electors may be nominated with the names of particular candidates in mind'. The second was that 'such electors may be nominated without the names of other candidates in mind'. 'In one case known to me', he remarked, 'the *ad hoc* Board was so constituted as to reflect one type of approach to the subject only, thus gravely impairing the chances of the candidates, however worthy on intellectual grounds, whose approach did not fit in with the viewpoint of this particular Board'. Professor Zangwill's concerns surely remain valid.

Another concern is the extent to which *ad hoc* Boards are able to make elections purely on academic grounds, without being influenced by financial, political or 'strategic' considerations. That must be a stronger worry today than it was in 1971, because of the various constitutional reforms that have since concentrated decision-making in the University, in the words of the Board of Scrutiny, 'within small groups of senior management'² and because of the increasing influence of internal and external financial pressures on University decision-making.

The General Board recently delegated its authority to nominate members of Boards of Electors to the Schools, transferring the responsibility from its Committee on the Membership of Committees. The Council has followed suit, albeit by delegating its authority to the Councils of the Schools rather than to the Heads of Schools, as the Schools (other than the School of the Physical Sciences) originally proposed. Nevertheless, under the new system, the Heads of Schools are likely to have a lot of influence over the nominations of most members of *ad hoc* Boards of Electors, whilst at the same time having financial responsibilities for their Schools under Statute A V 10. The latest version of the HR document Procedures for Boards of Electors to Professorships, recently approved by the Council, states that the 'Electors should also include the Head of the relevant School, or a designated representative'. But shouldn't a University aspiring to the highest academic standards insulate its processes for making academic appointments from the influence of those with responsibility for managing the financial consequences of them?

¹ *Reporter*, 4750, 1970–71, p. 707.

² Thirtieth Report of the Board of Scrutiny (*Reporter*, 6800, 2025–26, p. 64) at para. 52.

Professor G. R. EVANS (Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History), read by the Deputy Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on standing and *ad hoc* Boards of Electors recommends that an *ad hoc* arrangement should become the norm. Is that safe, separating as it may the general considerations attaching to qualifications for a Professorship to the requirements for appointments to a specific example?

Statute C XI identifies the Professorships for which there are standing Boards of Electors, and which are 'required to be maintained' as University Teaching Offices in Faculties or Departments. These remain to be filled by their Electors when they are vacated and their holders may remain in post until the Employer Justified Retirement Age. Professorships at Grade 12 may also be attained by promotion, in the form of 'personal Professorships' for individuals, to be held until the Professor's retirement under the EJRA. For these *ad hoc* Boards of Electors are expected to enforce the EJRA by excluding anyone 'who at the commencement of their period of service or further period of service, as the case may be, would have attained the age of seventy years'.¹ Might the period of service be at the discretion of the *ad hoc* Board and become a factor in the decision to appoint?

The role of Electors will be affected under these recommendations. This Report proposes deletion of several sections of Special Ordinance C (vii) including the wording of the provision that when a personal Professorship or Professorships is established under a University promotions scheme the relevant authority 'shall publish a Report'. That would in future be replaced by a Grace 'published with a Notice' to explain 'the arrangements for funding the Professorship' and, 'in the case of a Professorship to be established for an individual, the process by which the individual was selected', and there would therefore not be a Discussion unless one was called for the purpose. It is true that there have rarely been any remarks when such a Report has been published. The list has gone through unchallenged. How often and why might such a Discussion properly be called now that that would need to be justified?

One general point seems worth making here. A good deal is left vague in the specification of the duties of a Professor. Under Special Ordinance C (vii) 9:

The University may from time to time prescribe the minimum amount of instruction to be given by a Professor and the character of such instruction.

The 'character' of the instruction is nowhere defined. Nor is it considered in the present proposed revision. Does 'instruction' mean 'by lecture?' by 'demonstration' by 'supervision' or all three? In what respects does supervision of research students count as 'instruction'?

In describing the duties of the Office of Professor Special Ordinance C (ix) 8 sets 'teaching' over against 'administration' in terms of the time it takes. Both teaching and administration for Colleges may be taken into account. Special Ordinance C (ix) 9 limits teaching for Colleges to a maximum of twelve hours a week (extendable to fifteen), or eight hours (extendable to ten) if administrative work as a Tutor or Bursar is involved.

'Teaching' is taken to include preparation time and there is provision for a 'University Associate Professor, University Lecturer or University Assistant Professor' to appeal to the General Board that the load is 'unreasonable'.

A research element is not quantified or its character described, though the supervision of research students and working with students in a team would seem to make ‘teaching’ relevant.

Might some of this vagueness be tidied by further clarification?

¹ Statute A VI 3.

Thirtieth Report of the Board of Scrutiny, dated 16 October 2025

(*Reporter*, 6800, 2025–26, p. 64).

Mr R. J. HOPWOOD (Murray Edwards College and outgoing Chair of the Board of Scrutiny), read by Dr Plummer Braeckman:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as outgoing Chair of the Board of Scrutiny, I am pleased to introduce the Board’s 30th annual Report to the Regent House. While scrutiny is an essential function for good governance, perhaps especially so for a self-governing organisation, the privilege afforded to the Board in being able to question senior officers and follow lines of enquiry on behalf of the Regent House is one of great value. Last year my predecessor as Chair noted the great vitality of the University. Once again this was demonstrated this year with increased interest and correspondence from members to the Board.

The Board took time to scrutinise its own effectiveness, possibly for the first time, this year. The Report notes some of the issues identified. I am pleased the Board will continue to reflect on its effectiveness in this coming year and observe that a positive and constructive spirit in which the Board delivers its work remains an important aspect of that work. Historical perspectives are almost always necessary and helpful in coming to an understanding of current issues. However, they sometimes lose relevance when the purpose is to consider current challenges in the context of much-changed circumstances.

One circumstance which has appeared as a constant through recent times though is the high aspiration and hitherto sub-optimal clarity and delivery of essential projects, often billed as transformational. The Board noted ongoing difficulty with transparency of finances, the pausing of a ‘transformational’ change HR project and problems with communication of projects’ progress and goals more widely. In short, despite some progress, many of the issues raised in respect of operational effectiveness discussed in the Board’s Twenty-ninth Report remained.

The Board was keen to point to success in some areas – for example reforming academic career pathways. However, when it came to financial savings the picture seemed altogether unclear. While there has been some reorganisation of posts, there still seems to be considerable doubt about how necessary savings or room for essential investment (for example on estates or sustainability) will be achieved. There remained too the ongoing concern about increasing reliance on the currently strong income stream from Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

The Report refers to the tension between Council aims and the need to devolve important decisions to achieve them. As noted last year, setting a broad goal of 5% savings without a meaningful steer or incentive as to where those cuts might come from was likely to lead to so called ‘salami-slicing’ or unstrategic, financial decision-making. The Board heard evidence that relying on reserves has been one way of achieving such ‘savings’. In reality, of course, these are not savings at all and decisions are merely being deferred.

Finally, I would like to thank the Vice-Chancellor, particularly for her openness in engaging with the Board, and all the other officers who gave their time to take part in the Board’s discussions. I would also like to thank fellow Board members and administrative staff who supported us. On behalf of the Board of Scrutiny as a whole, I would like to thank the Regent House for its increased engagement this year. Long may that continue.

Dr J. K. PLUMMER BRAECKMAN (Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Newnham College, and current Chair of the Board of Scrutiny):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this is an appeal to the Regent House. The Board’s Report rightly highlights communication as a recurring challenge. I want to acknowledge that the University is genuinely trying to communicate better, through open meetings, reports, consultations and new digital channels. Yet despite these efforts, it is clear that communication is not always being received effectively. Too often, messages from the centre are seen as opaque, overly complex or one-directional, and the result is a growing sense of distance between the University’s leadership and the Regent House.

Communication is a two-way process. The University can and must do more to share information in plain language, and to listen and respond openly to legitimate concerns. For example, there are many examples of consultation with staff, but rarely any feedback as to the results of those consultations and the impact on the project concerned. At the same time, members of the Regent House must recognise their own responsibility to take part in this dialogue. It is not enough to feel excluded; we also have to make use of the channels that exist: to attend Discussions and Open House meetings, to raise questions, to respond to consultations, and to raise issues with senior officers when opportunities are offered.

We are in danger of entering a vicious circle of disengagement at present. Breaking that cycle will require effort and goodwill on both sides to engage more positively. The Board’s recommendations for more transparent reporting, clearer accountability, and opportunities for genuine conversation – whether through open office sessions, or simply more straightforward language – all point in the right direction. If we are to sustain the democratic model that defines us, communication cannot be an afterthought; rather, it must be a shared and continuous commitment between the University and the Regent House. I address these comments to the University and the Regent House because the Board of Scrutiny is elected by the Regent House, but I commend the message to the entire University community.

Dr N. M. OLIVEIRA (Department of History and Philosophy of Science and Christ’s College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I have been a member of the University since 2016. I am currently a member of Christ’s College and the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, but between 2016 and 2024 I was a postdoctoral research fellow at DAMTP, the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics.

As this is my first time speaking at a Discussion, I paid special attention to the rule that ‘Remarks should aim to be accurate and must not be defamatory’. As I am sure you know, truth is a complete defence to defamation, and I can support every statement I make here with documentation.

My remark concerns the *People* section of the Thirtieth Report of the Board of Scrutiny, though I wish first to commend the Board's broader efforts to identify areas of concern across Cambridge. Given the University lacks an independent Ombudsman, the Board's work is especially valuable.

I strongly agree with the Board's points on openness, transparency, and accountability – particularly regarding the Staff Culture Survey of February 2024. Like the Board, I am troubled that previous survey data remain largely unanalysed. More concerning still, the University held the results for a year without publishing them, and only a Freedom of Information request revealed part of the findings, as reported by *The Guardian* in April 2025. When I shared that article on Viva Engage on August 4, my post was deleted by the Head of Internal Communications one day after. My complaints about this censorship – an issue of both transparency and free expression – remain unanswered.

Para. 48 of the Report resonates deeply with me. It reads, 'The Board continues to be made aware of a range of human resources issues... The Board emphasises the importance of resolving grievances promptly to minimise stress and avoid unnecessary waste of time, money and resources'. Members of the Board know how my experience in DAMTP in June 2023 has harmed my career, education, and health. Despite whistleblowing and safeguarding referrals supported by detailed medical evidence, the University has taken no action. I remain restricted from contacting hundreds of people, cannot use my @cam account freely or have access to my research materials that remain at DAMTP against my will, and am blocked from making formal complaints – including under Statute A IX. Importantly, these measures followed my reports of misconduct involving senior members of the University when I had never complained before. I understand the measures as a form of reprisal against me. My experience painfully confirms the Board's view that unresolved grievances cause prolonged harm and waste.

I fully support the Board's call for stronger communication and transparency. Regular open office sessions with senior leaders would help bridge the growing divide between decision-makers and staff. Leaders who understand the daily realities of their colleagues are better placed to build a safe and inspiring community. As I told recently the Chancellor, Lord Smith, the reputation of an institution should never outweigh the wellbeing of its members, but I feel it does so presently at Cambridge.

However, I must question the Board's commendation of the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) in para. 49. Although OSCCA publishes data on student grievances, it neither analyses nor corrects important errors. According to analysis by the 21 Group, while the number of investigated complaints has sharply risen, the proportion upheld has collapsed from 50% in 2016–17 to 13% in 2023–24 – a trend that cannot be ignored as it undermines confidence in the system.

When I submitted a Freedom of Information request for clarification, the data I received from the Information Compliance Office conflicted with OSCCA's published reports. More troublingly, I was told that OSCCA had received no safeguarding referrals since its creation, which is demonstrably untrue. Despite multiple requests, OSCCA has provided no correction or explanation about these issues. This experience shows that the Board's call to 'strengthen cohesion, improve communication and enhance transparency' must apply to OSCCA itself, despite its publication of annual reports.

Professor M. W. GEHRING (Faculty of Law and Hughes Hall):
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I was a member of the Board of Scrutiny for this last Report but am speaking in a personal capacity. I would like to comment on the sustainability section of the Report.

In my view the urgency of addressing climate change cannot be overstated. The recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has reinforced the legal and moral obligation of all States and their institutions, which includes public universities, to take meaningful and timely action to mitigate climate change. The University's commitment to achieving a 72% reduction in energy-related carbon emissions by 2030 and reaching full carbon neutrality by 2036 is commendable, but these goals must be matched by clear, transparent, and adequately resourced implementation strategies. Climate change is not a distant threat – it is a present reality that demands decisive leadership and investment, even in the face of financial constraints.

The Board of Scrutiny Report rightly in my view identifies a lack of clarity and coherence in the University's sustainability planning and decision-making processes. However, the ICJ's advisory opinion underscores that climate action is not optional – it is a duty grounded in law and human rights. Therefore, sustainability investments should not be viewed as competing with deficit management but as essential to the University's long-term viability, ethical and legal responsibility. The creation of a dedicated sustainability budget, independent of capital works, is a necessary step to ensure that climate commitments are not sidelined by short-term financial pressures.

Moreover, the University must move beyond planning and into implementation. The proliferation of strategies without corresponding action risks undermining trust and momentum. As the ICJ has emphasised, delay in climate action exacerbates harm and disproportionately affects vulnerable populations. The University must prioritise projects that deliver measurable impact and ensure that governance structures are streamlined to support timely decision-making. A single, actionable sustainability plan with clear milestones and accountability mechanisms would be far more effective than multiple uncoordinated initiatives.

Transparency and communication are also critical. The failure to publish the promised update to the Regent House and to appoint the individual responsible for the sustainability strategy sends a troubling signal. In light of the ICJ's opinion, such delays are not merely administrative – they represent a failure to uphold the University's duty to contribute to global climate mitigation efforts. Regular, public reporting on progress, budgets and outcomes is essential to maintain credibility and foster a culture of shared responsibility across the University community.

Finally, the University must empower its staff and students to be active participants in its sustainability mission. Signing the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice is a positive step, but it must be backed by resources and clear guidance for all Faculties, not just the natural sciences. The world court made it clear that all actors, including educational institutions and even businesses, have a role to play in safeguarding the planet for future generations. The University must embrace this role with urgency, transparency and resolve – climate change is real, and the time to act is now.

Professor G. R. EVANS (Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History), read by the Junior Pro-Procutor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, conscious of ‘the growing complexity of the management of such a large institution’, the Board of Scrutiny recommends ‘that there be a clearer way for staff to understand progress on all the transformational change programmes, perhaps a regularly updated dashboard showing progress on various projects, both in terms of time and cost’. It suggests the publication of more details of the Council’s business and decision-making by Departments etc.

To be effective that will require ‘staff’ and others to read this additional information. If it is published in the form of Reports they will be able to respond in a Discussion.¹ The Board puts down ‘a lack of effective communication’ in part to the ‘University’s drift away from traditional Discussions as a forum for open debate’. Yet the *Reporter* lists forthcoming Discussions and when the *Reporter* is published an email arrives as a reminder to read it. It could hardly be easier to contribute to a Discussion now that ‘remarks’ may simply be emailed to the Proctors who will helpfully read them into the record.

It has always been the case that contributions to Discussions are few, except when there is a matter of strong general interest to be discussed. At a Discussion on amendments to the Statutes on 24 October 2000 when the Board of Scrutiny was still new, its former Chair, the Junior Proctor at the time, noted that even on that occasion there were ‘not many people present’.² When this Discussion is published the Board will be able to take a view on how many readers attach sufficient importance to its Annual Report to take the trouble to contribute to a Discussion.

The Board mentions with approval ‘the extension of the Professional Services Recognition Scheme’. There is an awakening awareness that the longstanding categories of the University’s staff (academic, academic-related and research) are no longer entirely distinct. On 18 September 2025 the University advertised a fixed-term post for a ‘Research and Business Engagement Manager’, who was to provide ‘strategic leadership’ in ‘translational research’, so as to deepen ‘research/business engagement’. The advertisement explained that the postholder would be positioned at the intersection of ‘academia, industry, and policy’. With such overlapping with the academic why do contributions to Discussions from academic-related staff remain vanishingly rare?

The Board suggests ‘that decision-making has become concentrated within small groups of senior management rather than being exercised through the University’s democratic structures’. Since 2003 there have been five Pro-Vice-Chancellorships with portfolios. More recently ‘Fellows’ with ‘portfolios’ have been – and continue to be – created, though it is always emphasised that these are not employments or Offices. Appointments to Fellowships simply amend the responsibilities of certain existing employees, who are normally expected to hold senior posts already. Portfolios may be significant in importing an element of ‘management’ where executive powers have formerly been strictly limited in Cambridge.

The Chancellor is the University’s ceremonial head, but has no executive powers. The Vice-Chancellor is principal academic and administrative officer but not Chief Executive. Both are possessed of only the limited personal powers outlined in Statute C III.

That had to be insisted on in the period of the Post-Wass reforms when a Unified Administrative Service was created in 1996 and adjusted under a Report of 21 March 2001. The Report stressed:

a need to strengthen the capacity to guide the development of policy on the part of senior officers and also a need for a greater clarity so far as management of the administrative Divisions is concerned.³

The holders of the then offices of Secretary General and Treasurer were ‘to devote more time and energy to their advisory roles as well as providing a clearer management structure within the University Offices’. The Treasurer was to concentrate on ‘the acquisition, development, exploitation, sale, and use of the University’s assets (understood for these purposes to include money, investments, and property, real and intellectual)’.³ At a Discussion of the Report on the UAS held on 1 May 2001⁴ an advertisement in the *Economist* for a Director of Development was quoted. It had sought a candidate competent to ‘ensure that the University is able to leverage its global reputation and prestige to maximize its potential to raise significant funds’.

Would it be wise to ensure that Fellows straddling academic and research activities where their portfolios may extend across categories have their roles defined in Statute? At present the Statutes seem worryingly vague at Statute C III 17 which merely says ‘a Pro-Vice-Chancellor 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’. There is no University legislation covering Fellows of the University, only Fellowships of Colleges.

The Board of Scrutiny points to unfinished business which seems relevant to ‘staffing’ questions. A particular concern is the delay in the introduction of the new Human Resources payroll software system, ‘myHR’. The system was ‘originally due to be operational in Summer 2024’ but on 24 January 2025, it was announced that its introduction was to be postponed ‘for a period of around two to three years’ and ‘there is now no firm date for its implementation in the public domain’. Meanwhile the University is still running the Oracle-based ‘Jackdaw’, ‘the old HR system’, which is being re-developed. Jackdaw provides a database that ‘holds consolidated user administration records for staff and students in the University. Jackdaw gets daily feeds from CamSIS, CHRIS, the Card Office and daily feeds out to a variety of services/systems’. The application has been moved to more stable hardware, and the database has been split away from the application.

With a risk of ‘significant difficulties in integrating myHR with legacy software’ and ensuring ‘coordination between UIS and the HR Division’, the Board now recommends ‘that a new implementation date now be provided’. This would give confidence that the structural foundations are in place and that the project management is on track. Similar optimism launched CAPSA precipitately.⁵ It was quickly found to be ‘unreliable and unsuitable for its needs’ and ‘in August 2000 it failed to operate for its first six weeks, to the great disruption of the work of the University and distress of the administrators who were unable to do their jobs’.⁶ Is there a case for a fundamental reconsideration before the new scheme goes forward?

The University's Teaching Review (conducted from December 2023 until March 2025) concentrated on undergraduate teaching for the Tripos and fears are expressed of a danger of 'stalling the professional progress of especially early career academics'. 'The supervision system has also come under considerable scrutiny in recent years'. The QAA abandoned an attempt to test the 'quality' of Cambridge's teaching a quarter of a century ago, but it seems likely to be about to try again.⁷ The Board may therefore wish to comment on what another Report for Discussion today has to say about teaching.

¹ See Regulation 1(b) of the Ordinance for Discussions, *Statutes and Ordinances*, p. 111.

² *Reporter*, 5824, 2000–01, p. 145.

³ *Reporter*, 5842, 2000–01, p. 560.

⁴ *Reporter*, 5845, 2000–01, p. 661.

⁵ *Reporter*, 5831, 2000–01, p. 300.

⁶ *Reporter*, 5865, 2001–02, p. 282.

⁷ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/national-student-survey-2026/>.

Dr S. J. COWLEY (Faculty of Mathematics):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am the current Secretary of the Board of Scrutiny but I make these remarks in a personal capacity.

I think a key point to make today is that this is a Discussion. A Discussion is not just a list of speeches read out. It means that people can reply. I'm actually not going to reply, but I'm making the point that if you want to reply to something which has been said, you might want to wait to the end, as used to be the case twenty years ago.

I note today is the day when the government is discussing the Public Office (Accountability) Bill, which places a duty on public authorities and public officials to act with candour, transparency and frankness, a matter which has been discussed earlier. And I note that this morning, Rachel Reeves has decided that she would act with a bit more candour, transparency and frankness, and the country is going to have to get used to the fact that taxes are going up.

Can I say that I was on the Board of Scrutiny twenty years ago for four years, and I've been on it two years now. Practically everybody we meet does act with candour, transparency and frankness and for that I am grateful; because for effective governance, people have to be able to tell the Board of Scrutiny what's going on. I make one comment that quite often if the Board of Scrutiny asks a question, maybe somebody on the Board knows what is the answer. It would be nice if the answers given were given with candour, transparency and frankness.

I want to make one more comment. For effective governance, we all – that's members of the Council, of Boards, etc and committees – need to be aware of actual conflicts of interest, but also perceived conflicts of interest. And if there is a perceived conflict of interest, maybe one has to recuse oneself.

Report of the Council, dated 20 October 2025, on the proposed disposal of land and buildings at 1–3 Hills Road (*Reporter*, 6800, 2025–26, p. 73).

Professor G. R. EVANS (Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History), read by the Deputy Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, 'Innovate Cambridge' holds an annual Summit, this year on 23 October,¹ a day when Government announced a £500 million investment package for the 'growth corridor' between Oxford and Cambridge. The Treasury 'put forward plans for the money to create thousands of new jobs and affordable homes'.² On the same day a Government grant was announced for Cambridge's own plans to deliver a large-scale innovation hub in the city centre.

Cherwell quoted Lord Vallance as Science Minister who had said that the 'vast economic potential of the site underlines precisely why we are determined to fully unlock the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor'.⁴ *Varsity* was not slow to comment, though it put the funding at £400m, forming part of the 'larger £500 million Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor project'.³ This Report is confident that it is desirable 'to leverage city centre landholdings' as proposed, so as 'to generate forecast commercial returns and strategic benefits at scale for the University'.

Statute F II 3 specifies the need for a Grace only in the case of buildings. However the Report is concerned with the use of the University's *land* for the creation of 'an innovation hub, with investment from external partners'. It is accepted that recommending a Grace is a decision based on the view that 'as a central city site, 1–3 Hills Road is of present and prospective use to the University'. 'Therefore the Regent House is being asked to approve the present recommendation'.

However the Property Board plans 'to work in partnership with private sector investors' not yet identified, and on 'a commercial basis' not yet clarified. For that purpose it is proposed that a central city site be 'transferred' to a newly formed joint venture company comprising the University as one member and up to two other entities. This seems to differ from a decision to hand over next steps to a specified officer for which there is precedent. For example on 21 March 2001 the *Reporter* carried a 'Report of the Council on proposed building extensions and alterations for the Faculty of Music'. The Regent House was asked to approve an arrangement:

I. That the Director of Estate Management be authorized to apply for planning consent for the extension and alterations to the Faculty of Music as proposed in this Report.

II. That the Treasurer be authorized in due course to accept a tender(s) for the works within the funds identified.⁵

On 15 June 2016 and 15 February 2017⁶ the *Reporter* serially published a proposal in 'stages' for the construction of a new building for the Department of Engineering in West Cambridge. First the Director of Estate Strategy was authorized to apply for detailed planning approval in due course. At the second stage the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) was 'authorized to accept a tender for the works, within the available funding, in due course'.

Under the present proposal a lengthy period is envisaged for the completion of the proposed plan so questions may arise about the need for further opportunities for Gracing. Funding seems a case in point. In its own Report for Discussion today the Board of Scrutiny notes a concern about funding arrangements, pointing out that ‘the Strategic Estate Framework is a welcome move to provide clarity’ for the University, except that ‘the extent to which any of these investments can be afforded has not been well explained to the University as a whole’. Moreover:

The University’s sign-off process is not laid out clearly, and stakeholder engagement makes it clear that decisions must pass through numerous committees and other interest groups with conflicting objectives.

Statute F is rather sketchy in its provisions about that, leaving a good deal to be dealt with through unspecified committees of the Council and General Board.

If the Regent House approves the recommendations of this Report, the Finance Committee will take over decisions about the detail, ‘including the terms under which the joint venture company is established and any conditions to be met’. That seems to set a great deal beyond the need to get the further necessary permissions from the Regent House. Here too recollections of the CAPSA disaster may be relevant.⁷

¹ <https://innovatecambridge.com/previous-event/innovate-cambridge-summit-2025/>.

² <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/update-major-plan-europes-silicon-32734138>.

³ <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/30524>.

⁴ <https://cherwell.org/2025/10/30/oxford-new-crown-estate-science-park/>.

⁵ *Reporter*, 5842, 2000–01, p. 566.

⁶ *Reporter*: 6430, 2015–16, p. 643 and 6455, 2016–17, p. 364.

⁷ *Reporter*, 5865, 2001–02, p. 282.

COLLEGE NOTICES

Electitions

Pembroke College

Appointed as a Postdoctoral Research Associate (PDRA) from 14 October 2025:

Vincent David Beiler, B.A., *Eastern*, M.A., *Rutgers*, Ph.D., *ED*

Berta Cava Cami, B.A., *Rovira i Virgili*, Ph.D., *Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Huang Jin, B.E., M.E., *Renmin University of China*, Ph.D., *Amsterdam*

Catherine Elizabeth Klesner, B.A., *Grinnell College*, M.S., Ph.D., *Arizona*

George Wise, M.A., M.Sci., Ph.D., *CAI*

St Catharine’s College

Elected to an Official Fellowship with effect from 24 October 2025:

Sungkyung Kang, B.Sc., M.Phil., *KAIST*, Ph.D., *Oxford*

James Lello, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., *CTH*

Awarded the title of Honorary Fellow with effect from 24 October 2025:

Eilis Ferran, M.A., Ph.D., *CTH*

Vacancies

St Edmund’s College: The John Henry Newman Research Fellowship; tenure: three years from 1 October 2026; stipend: £25,000 plus collegiate benefits; applications open: 14 November 2025 at 12 noon; applications close: 2 January 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/the-john-henry-newman-research-fellowship/>

Trinity College: College Lectureship and Fellowship in Modern History and Politics (12 hours); tenure: five years from 1 September 2026 in the first instance; salary: £57,556 plus collegiate benefits; closing date: 18 December 2025 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/vacancies/college-lectureship-and-fellowship-in-modern-history-and-politics/>

EXTERNAL NOTICES

Oxford Notices

Department of Politics and International Relations and Nuffield College: Postdoctoral Prize Research Fellowships in Politics (up to three available); tenure: three years from 1 September 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter; salary: £41,700; closing date: 4 December 2025; further details: <https://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/the-college/jobs-and-vacancies/postdoctoral-prize-research-fellowships-in-politics/>

Department of Psychiatry and Linacre College: Professorship of Old Age Psychiatry; tenure: from 1 April 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter; closing date: 5 January 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk>, vacancy ID: 183167

Mathematical Institute and Merton College: Regius Professorship of Mathematics; tenure: from 1 October 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter; closing date: 12 January 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk>, vacancy ID: 173845