

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY REPORTER

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UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

NOTICES

Calendar

8 June, *Monday*. End of third quarter of Easter Term.

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

Discussions (Tuesdays at 2 p.m.)

16 June
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

Discussion on Tuesday, 16 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, 16 June 2026 at 2 p.m. The following items will be discussed:

1. Report of the Council, dated 3 June 2026, recommending the budget and allocations from the Chest for 2026–27 (p. 510).
2. Report of the Council, dated 3 June 2026, pursuant to Special Ordinance A (ii) 7 (exchanges of Professorships) (p. 513).

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/.

Dates of Congregations, 2026–27, 2027–28, 2028–29 and 2029–30

The Vice-Chancellor gives notice, in accordance with Special Ordinance A (ii) 2, and the regulations for General Admission to Degrees, that Congregations will be held on the following days in the academic years 2026–27, 2027–28, 2028–29 and 2029–30.

CONGREGATIONS OF THE REGENT HOUSE (on Saturdays unless otherwise stated)

2026–27

MICHAELMAS TERM 2026 <i>Full Term:</i> 6 October – 4 December	LENT TERM 2027 <i>Full Term:</i> 19 January – 19 March	EASTER TERM AND LONG VACATION 2027 <i>Full Term:</i> 27 April – 18 June
1 October (Thursday), 9.55 a.m. ¹ 23 October (Friday), 10 a.m. 24 October, 10 a.m. 28 November, 10 a.m.	29 January (Friday), 2 p.m. (for degrees in absence only) 27 February, 10 a.m. 3 April, 10 a.m. 10 April, 10 a.m.	1 May, 10 a.m. 21 May, (Friday), 10 a.m. 22 May, 10 a.m. <i>Honorary Degrees:</i> 23 June (Wednesday), 2.45 p.m. <i>General Admission:</i> 30 June (Wednesday), 10 a.m. ² 1 July (Thursday), 10 a.m. ² 2 July (Friday), 10 a.m. ² 3 July, 10 a.m. ² 22 July (Thursday), 10 a.m. 23 July (Friday), 10 a.m. 24 July, 10 a.m.

¹ Election and admission of the Proctors.

² General Admission (M.Math., M.Eng., M.Sci., Vet.M.B., B.A., and B.Th. Degrees only).

2027–28

MICHAELMAS TERM 2027 <i>Full Term:</i> 5 October – 3 December	LENT TERM 2028 <i>Full Term:</i> 18 January – 17 March	EASTER TERM AND LONG VACATION 2028 <i>Full Term:</i> 25 April – 16 June
1 October (Friday), 9.55 a.m. ¹ 22 October (Friday), 10 a.m. 23 October, 10 a.m. 27 November, 10 a.m.	28 January (Friday), 2 p.m. <i>(for degrees in absence only)</i> 26 February, 10 a.m. 25 March, 10 a.m. 1 April, 10 a.m.	29 April, 10 a.m. 19 May, (Friday), 10 a.m. 20 May, 10 a.m. <i>Honorary Degrees:</i> 21 June (Wednesday), 2.45 p.m. <i>General Admission:</i> 28 June (Wednesday), 10 a.m. ³ 29 June (Thursday), 10 a.m. ³ 30 June (Friday), 10 a.m. ³ 1 July, 10 a.m. ³ 20 July (Thursday), 10 a.m. 21 July (Friday), 10 a.m. 22 July, 10 a.m.

2028–29

MICHAELMAS TERM 2028 <i>Full Term:</i> 3 October – 1 December	LENT TERM 2029 <i>Full Term:</i> 16 January – 16 March	EASTER TERM AND LONG VACATION 2029 <i>Full Term:</i> 24 April – 15 June
2 October (Monday), 9.55 a.m. ¹ 20 October (Friday), 10 a.m. 21 October, 10 a.m. 25 November, 10 a.m.	26 January (Friday), 2 p.m. <i>(for degrees in absence only)</i> 24 February, 10 a.m. 24 March, 10 a.m. 7 April, 10 a.m.	28 April, 10 a.m. 18 May, (Friday) 10 a.m. 19 May, 10 a.m. <i>Honorary Degrees:</i> 20 June (Wednesday), 2.45 p.m. <i>General Admission:</i> 27 June (Wednesday), 10 a.m. ³ 28 June (Thursday), 10 a.m. ³ 29 June (Friday), 10 a.m. ³ 30 June, 10 a.m. ³ 19 July (Thursday), 10 a.m. 20 July (Friday), 10 a.m. 21 July, 10 a.m.

2029–30

MICHAELMAS TERM 2029 <i>Full Term:</i> 2 October – 30 November	LENT TERM 2030 <i>Full Term:</i> 15 January – 15 March	EASTER TERM AND LONG VACATION 2030 <i>Full Term:</i> 23 April – 14 June
1 October (Monday), 9.55 a.m. ¹ 19 October (Friday), 10 a.m. 20 October, 10 a.m. 24 November, 10 a.m.	25 January (Friday), 2 p.m. <i>(for degrees in absence only)</i> 23 February, 10 a.m. 23 March, 10 a.m. 30 March, 10 a.m.	27 April, 10 a.m. 17 May, (Friday) 10 a.m. 18 May, 10 a.m. <i>Honorary Degrees:</i> 19 June (Wednesday), 2.45 p.m. <i>General Admission:</i> 26 June (Wednesday), 10 a.m. ³ 27 June (Thursday), 10 a.m. ³ 28 June (Friday), 10 a.m. ³ 29 June, 10 a.m. ³ 18 July (Thursday), 10 a.m. 19 July (Friday), 10 a.m. 20 July, 10 a.m.

¹ Election and admission of the Proctors.³ General Admission (M.Math., M.Eng., M.Des., M.Sci., Vet.M.B., B.A., and B.Th. Degrees only).

Graces for submission to the Regent House under Special Ordinance A (ii) 5 (suspension and termination of admissions to courses, and Vet.M.B. admissions)

28 May 2026

The Council has received two Graces, which have been initiated under Special Ordinance A (ii) 5 by members of the Regent House.¹ As both Graces concern the suspension and termination of admissions to courses, the second focusing on admissions to the Vet.M.B. course, the Council is responding to them both in this Notice. It apologises for the delay providing this response.

The Graces purport to create a regulation in Ordinance, and an Order, each of which would, on their terms, be ineffective for reasons set out below. The Council has nonetheless agreed to authorise submission of the two Graces under Special Ordinance A (ii) 7 (Graces 1 and 2, p. 514) on the basis that, if approved, the General Board can decide whether to consider their advice.

The General Board has broad powers vested in it, most notably as set out in Statute A V 1(a), which makes it responsible for the University's academic and educational policy and for the management of the University's academic and educational affairs. This wording dates from revised Statutes approved on the recommendation of the Wass Syndicate, which came into force on 1 October 1994. These powers are not delegated; they are directly vested in the General Board in Statute. It is reasonable, and consistent with the wording of the Statute, to infer that a power to suspend or close a course to new admissions is within the scope of the powers described. The proposed regulation in Ordinance and Order are therefore ineffective insofar as they are inconsistent with the position established by Statute, as neither may take precedence over a provision in Statute. Therefore, even if they are approved, the proposals will not be effective, attracting only such advisory status as the General Board deems appropriate in the fulfilment of its own duties.

The General Board's powers in Statute A V 1(a) are qualified by reference to the powers of the Regent House and the responsibilities of the Council. However, this does not mean that a decision of the General Board to suspend or close a course to new admissions is subject to approval of, or consultation with, either of those bodies. The powers of the Regent House are (in this context) its legislative powers.²

The Council wishes to make some additional observations.

In February, the General Board met to discuss a recommendation to close the Vet.M.B. course to new admissions from October 2027 and received the two Graces in the papers, so the General Board was aware of the views they expressed when considering the matter. The Board had already delayed that meeting so that it could receive the remarks made at the Discussion of a Topic of concern on the same subject. One of the decisions the Board made at the meeting was that admissions to the Vet.M.B. course would continue, having taken into account the strength of feeling in the community on this matter.³

To help the Regent House and others to understand the reasons for the concerns about the future of veterinary education, the General Board plans to share the analyses provided by the School and the Department. The General Board has already acknowledged that it should have been better prepared for the discussion of course closure and has reported on its plan to publish a procedure to govern such an event in the future.⁴

The General Board stands by the statement of intention reproduced in *Statutes and Ordinances*. This statement confirms the commitment of the General Board to consult with the Regent House in cases where there is a matter for decision within its powers but which is likely to prove controversial. However, the Council and the General Board recognise that these Graces were prompted in part by apprehension that that commitment would not be upheld. The Council and the Board have therefore agreed to publish an additional Grace (Grace 3, p. 514) creating a new Ordinance to confirm that it will publish procedures setting out the steps leading to the cessation of admissions to a course and other events.

¹ *Reporter*, 6815, 2025–26, p. 337 and p. 344.

² The Wass Syndicate appears to have included that qualifying wording to reflect the financial responsibilities of the Regent House and the Council. See the Wass Syndicate's Report published on 19 May 1989 (*Reporter*, 5399, 1988–89, p. 613), in particular paragraphs 2.3.2 ('The function of the General Board is to formulate the educational policy of the University and, subject to the powers of the Regent House, to determine the allocation of the resources necessary for the proper implementation of that power') and 9.3.2 ('We envisage that in practice the General Board would enjoy virtual independence and would continue to function much as it does at present, though with two important modifications. The first is that, although constitutionally subordinate to the Council, the General Board would in practice be free to take decisions on matters falling within its own sphere of responsibility, without any need to refer those decisions to either the Council or to the Regent House').

³ *Reporter*, 6816, 2025–26, p. 355.

⁴ *Reporter*, 6821, 2025–26, p. 413.

Report of the General Board on the establishment of a Faculty of Government (Rokos School of Government): Notice in response to Discussion remarks

28 May 2026

The Council has received the remarks made at the Discussion on 12 May 2026 concerning the above Report (*Reporter*, 2025–26: 6821, p. 417; 6825, p. 481). It has consulted with the General Board in preparing this response.

The Council would like to thank those who took part in the Discussion for their comments on the establishment of the Rokos School of Government.

The Council notes the reservations of Professor Bowring, suggesting that there is insufficient information in the Report to explain how the donation is expected to benefit the University. It refers to the comments of Professors Desai, Simons and Peake, who support the plans for the proposed new School, and describe how the donation will enhance and support the core activities of the University. The School within a School nomenclature is already present in the example of the Cambridge Judge Business School. The Council also notes that the University has many Professorships in broad fields of study.

Dr Cowley queries why the funds are to be held in a separate trust. Mr Allen asks for reassurance that the risks associated with the funding arrangements have been thought through. It was a requirement from the donor that the funds be held by an independent charity, governed by an equal mix of University and donor-appointed Directors, who could ensure that the funds were spent in accordance with the donor's wishes. The Directors have no powers to direct the activity of the Rokos School but will oversee alignment with the Trust's charitable objectives.

The objects of the RSG Charitable Trust are:

the advancement of education for the public benefit by the support of the School, such School to be a Faculty or equivalent administrative unit of the University and such support to include but not be limited to the provision of and/or grants for premises, academic teaching, research and other academic activities, and funding for students studying at the School.

The trust deed details how the Trust itself will operate and makes clear that the Directors' powers may be exercised only to further the Trust's charitable objects, as above, and for no other purpose, and that those powers operate within the normal framework of charity and statutory law. Nothing in the deed gives the Directors power to make decisions on behalf of the University, fetters academic decision making or interferes with academic freedom.

Risks to academic freedom and financial planning have been addressed and mitigated in a donation agreement between the RSG Charitable Trust and the University. In response to Mr Allen's specific question around planning, the Council notes that general funding will be agreed on a rolling 5-year basis, and all established posts and endowed Ph.D. studentships will be paid in perpetuity.

Both Dr Cowley and Mr Allen ask for the trust deed to be published. While the trust deed itself cannot be shared in its entirety due to its commercial sensitivity, the Council is publishing an extract from the donation agreement with this response (see <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2025-26/weekly/6827/Rokos-additional-information.pdf>). That extract provides the clause on academic freedom. A summary of the Trust will also be available from the Charity Commission on registration, and the accounts and annual returns of the Trust will be published on the Commission's website in due course.

Mr Allen asks for a breakdown of the allocation of the £130m donation (or income accruing from it) between academic posts, studentships, premises, and other running costs. A final allocation has not been set yet, pending the appointment of a Dean (head of institution) for the Faculty. An outline budget model was created that demonstrated how the funding could be allocated to enable the establishment and rapid scaling up of the Faculty. This included 10 established Professorships, 25 affiliated or joint Faculty from across the University, 20 researchers, a core of professional services staff, plus 20+ funded Ph.D. students (on a rolling basis). In addition, the funding will cover the cost of housing the School in the Triangle Building, programmatic budget, and overheads. The allocated funding to the Trust, which will be paid over the next 8 years, will be split between endowment and spend-down. All funding associated with the School will be allocated in full accordance with the University's usual financial policies, procedures and salary arrangements.

Mr Allen also requests information about the source of the match funding to be provided by the University. The University has committed £26m to match the initial donation of £130m. £20m of this will come from the Investment Fund and was approved by the Planning and Resources Committee in June 2025. Of this, £10m is for endowed Ph.D. studentships, and £10m is for programmatic spend-down. The remaining £6m will come from income from the Vice-Chancellor's Endowment Fund. This funding will be spent over the first 5 years of the Faculty's operation. In addition, the University has agreed to generate up to £60m in additional funding, which will be met by a further donation of up to £60m from the donor.

The Council is submitting Graces (Graces 4 and 5, p. 515) for the approval of the recommendations of this Report and the establishment of a Rokos Professorship of Government.

Appointment to the Cambridge University Endowment Trustee Body

1 June 2026

The Council has approved the appointment of Dr Pieter van Houten to the Cambridge University Endowment Trustee Body (CUETB). The appointment was made on the recommendation of its *ad hoc* Nominating Committee comprising Mr Mark Lewisohn (Chair of the CUETB), Professor Ella McPherson and Professor Garth Wells (members of the Council).

The appointment takes effect immediately and the initial term runs until 31 December 2026, the remainder of the term of the previous member.

NOTICES BY THE GENERAL BOARD

Dobson Professorship of Materials Science and Metallurgy

The Board of Electors to the Dobson Professorship of Materials Science and Metallurgy has reported to the General Board that it has been unable to make an election to this Professorship. Under the provisions of Special Ordinance C (vii) B. 16(a)(ii) (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 81, as amended by Grace 1 of 4 February 2026), the Board has discontinued the Professorship until 30 June 2026.

REPORTS

Report of the Council recommending the budget and allocations from the Chest for 2026–27

The COUNCIL begs leave to report to the University as follows:

Background and context

1. The Council is required to make an annual Report to the Regent House recommending allocations from the Chest to Schools, institutions and centrally administered funds. Chest allocations and associated Chest expenditure cover the majority of the recurrent pay costs of the University's academic and professional services posts; however, Chest financial information excludes all research activity, some teaching activity and some other activities.¹

2. The University currently forecasts using two different approaches; a bottom-up, Chest-focused planning process linked to available funding sources, and a top-down, overall cash flow model (known as the Ten-Year Model) built from most recent actual results. Enhanced Financial Transparency (EFT), once the new finance system has been brought in, will align bottom-up and top-down planning, meaning institutions can plan on an EFT basis and strategic modelling (at the level of the Finance Committee) can be transparently reconciled to the bottom-up approach. EFT will be implemented through a phased approach beginning with a two-year initial phase covering the financial years 2027–28 and 2028–29, followed by an embedding phase from 2029–30 to 2032–33 and a steady state model thereafter.²

3. In Easter Term 2027, the University's finance system will change from CUFS to Oracle Fusion. At the point of the new finance system going live, the accounting basis will change from the historic Chest and related non-Chest to income and expenditure accounting for all activities. Before go-live, prior year financial data will be migrated from the old Chart of Accounts to the new Chart of Accounts, and Schools and institutions will be provided with reconciliation information to allow them to understand how their financial transactions have been translated.

4. During financial year 2026–27, Schools and Non-School Institutions (NSIs) will update their high-level plans for 2027–28. Alongside this, high-level 2027–28 income and expenditure budgets will be co-created between Finance Division, the Academic Planning and Strategy Office, Schools and Institutions. These will be built using migrated financial data for 2024–25 and 2025–26, as well as inflation assumptions from the Ten-Year Model and material items from School and NSI planning submissions. The resulting budgets will form the basis for the Budget Report for 2027–28, published in the new EFT format covering all income and expenditure.

5. In 2026–27, Schools and NSIs continue to be resourced, in part, via Chest allocations, with the Council continuing to make an annual Report recommending allocations from the Chest to Schools, NSIs and centrally administered funds. This Chest allocations Report is made in the context of both the total Academic University position and the financial outlook of the University Group (including Cambridge University Press & Assessment).

The Academic University's financial position

6. The University Group as a whole (including Press & Assessment) generates an annual cash flow surplus from its operations and distributions from the endowment. The operating position for the Academic University remains in overall deficit, however. The overall deficit in 2024–25, as reported to the Finance Committee in October 2025, was £53m. A similar overall deficit is projected for 2025–26. The overall deficit is projected to reduce to ~£35m in 2026–27 and in subsequent years; however, no further, material reductions in the overall Academic University deficit are projected.

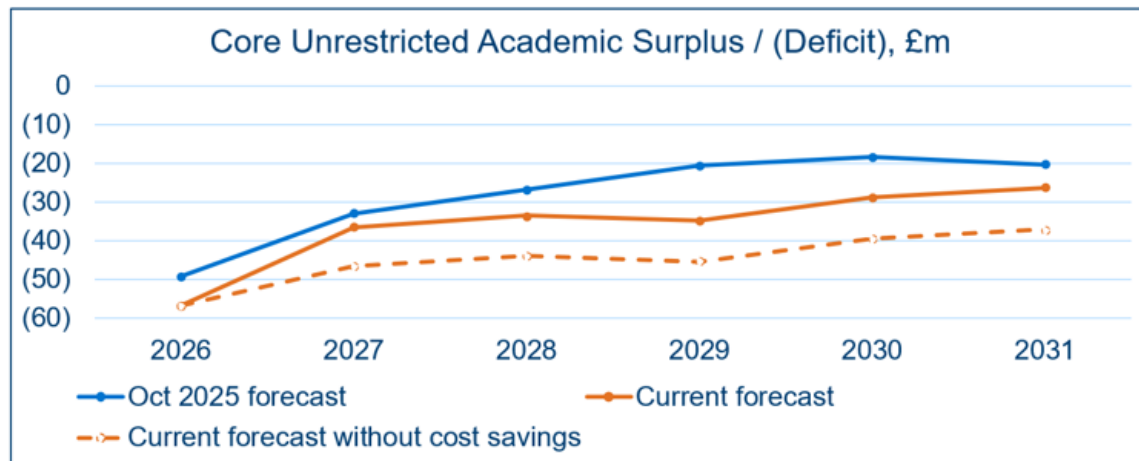
¹ Chest income comprises unrestricted general income to the University principally from Research England and the Office for Students, student fees and endowment income, and a share of the 'overhead' element from research grant income, which is brought into the Chest to offset costs incurred in support of research. Non-Chest income consists principally of research grants, trust funds and other restricted funds, specific donations and trading activity carried out by departments and institutions. It is, for the most part, received and managed directly by relevant local institutions.

² See the Council's Notice dated 23 April 2026 (*Reporter*, 6822, 2025–26, p. 438).

7. Tuition fee income is projected to increase significantly due to a higher proportion of international students, and greater numbers of postgraduate taught students. However,

these improvements are offset by pay expenditure remaining higher than previously forecast, and higher inflation and energy costs because of the Iran conflict.

Figure 1: Academic University financial projections



8. In 2024 the Council and the General Board endorsed a 5% reduction in overall operating expenditure (Chest and non-Chest), and the PRC and the Finance Committee agreed that a 5% reduction in Chest expenditure would be implemented through a reduction in Chest allocations of 5% for all institutions across 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years.

9. Schools and institutions have been encouraged to control and reduce expenditure across their entire range of activities. The principal mechanisms to encourage non-Chest savings in 2025–26 and 2026–27 (i.e. until EFT is brought in) are a 5% overhead to be levied on external trading and Gift Aid³ income, applied to departments with external trading income exceeding £500k p.a.; and a similar levy on the departmental share of research overheads, applied to the departmental share after the usual income allocation policy has been applied to each research grant.⁴

10. Schools and several non-School institutions have cash reserves which are being used in 2025–26 towards expenditure that would otherwise have been funded from Chest allocations or other, non-Chest funding. An exception is the UAS, which has limited reserves and can only manage within its reduced Chest allocation by reducing expenditure.

The Chest position

11. Until the new finance system, with its new chart of accounts, is brought in, Schools and NSIs are partially resourced via Chest allocations. A practical mechanism to drive achievement of the overall reduction in expenditure endorsed by the Council and the General Board has been a reduction in Chest allocations. Chest allocations to Schools, non-School institutions and centrally administered funds were accordingly reduced by 5% in real terms⁵ across the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years. Those reductions in Chest allocations have in large part been sustained in the proposed Chest budget for 2026–27.

³ Gift Aid sources of funds which are specifically related to gift aid associated with external trading, for example subsidiaries such as Judge Business School Executive Education Limited (JBSEEL).

⁴ A 5% tax on the departmental share of research overheads will result in a revised share; for example 81% Chest : 19% department for all sponsors other than Industry.

⁵ After allowing for inflation.

12. Chest allocations are determined by a Chest allocations framework which agrees a baseline and applies an inflation rate aligned to the assumptions for pay and non-pay inflation that drive the Ten-Year Model. The effective rate of inflation on Chest allocations in 2026–27 is 3% for staff costs and 2.5% for non-staff costs. The further inflationary impact of the Iran conflict is difficult to forecast; actual inflation, at least for non-staff costs, may be higher than budgeted, resulting in a further efficiency challenge in these areas.

13. The following paragraphs summarise the current forecast position of the Chest for 2025–26 and 2026–27.

2025–26

14. Chest income in 2025–26 was budgeted at £647.6m, with the 2025–26 in-year forecast now indicating that income at £654.1m, reflecting a modest increase in the Chest share of income from research grants and contracts, and in CUEF investment income.

2026–27

15. The principal increase to budgeted Chest income in 2026–27 is an increase in tuition fee income of £38m compared to Chest tuition fees in the 2025–26 Report. This is driven by a higher proportion of international students; greater numbers of Masters-level taught postgraduate students; and increases in unregulated fees.

16. The University's recurrent funding from Research England and the Office for Students is assumed to be unaltered in 2026–27, pending receipt of grant letters from both organisations in due course.

17. The additional Chest income attributable to the mechanisms for encouraging non-Chest savings, as summarised in paragraph 9 above, is budgeted at approximately £5m.

18. Overall, the combined effect of a budgeted increase in Chest fee income and the expected reductions in Chest expenditure is a projected Chest expenditure deficit in 2026–27 of £10.9m. The Chest expenditure deficit translates to a Chest allocations deficit (Chest income less Chest allocations) of £8m. The impact is summarised in Annex 2.

19. The Resource Management Committee met regularly during Lent Term 2026 to review expenditure plans in Schools and institutions and for centrally administered funds. Planning submissions from each UAS division were reviewed individually, and the RMC was satisfied that each division has credible plans to reduce its expenditure in 2025–26 and to sustain those reductions in 2026–27. The RMC accepted for its part that further, material reductions in professional services expenditure are unlikely without structural and organisational change within the University’s professional services (including those not part of the UAS), which would enable greater rationalisation and economies of scale.

20. The apparently larger increase in the UAS budget than the University budget as a whole is a result of transfers from other budget lines – most significantly the full costs of the in-house model for estates maintenance (for which staff costs are included in the UAS budget, rather than in the centrally administered fund which meets the costs of maintenance projects and contracts); and expenditure to support international student recruitment and admissions, previously funded via the Surplus Improvement Fund.

21. There are a small number of activities whose Chest expenditure is unlikely to be constrained within the expected Chest allocation for 2026–27:

- Cambridge Enterprise required a higher Chest allocation in 2025–26 towards a funding shortfall that has resulted from lower equity realisations. The PRC has agreed that this can continue in 2026–27 pending a review to be led by the incoming Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Innovation.
- University Information Services (UIS) has taken several actions to reduce expenditure in 2025–26 and 2026–27 but is constrained to a significant extent by above inflation increases to the costs of software and other licences on which the University relies. UIS’s expenditure plans have been scrutinised by the Information Services Committee and the Resource

Management Committee. They have accepted that further, near-term reductions in other IT expenditure, to offset increased software and licencing costs, would be damaging and would undermine the Chief Information Officer’s work in progress to develop and secure agreement for a more financially sustainable basis for delivery of information services across the University. The PRC has made provision – to be held centrally in the first instance – for Chest allocation to cover the projected shortfall.

- The University’s expenditure on insurance is projected to increase in 2026–27, driven principally by a 5% increase in the costs of insurance premiums.

22. In addition, some Schools increased non-regulated tuition fees in 2026–27 beyond the standard rates of increase agreed by the PRC, as a partial alternative to reduced expenditure. The PRC has made provision – once again held centrally in the first instance – for Chest allocation which may be transferred to Schools during 2026–27 to the extent demonstrated by actual student numbers and fee income.

Summary and recommendations

23. The University Group as a whole (including Cambridge University Press & Assessment) continues to generate an annual cash surplus from its operations and distributions from the endowment. The Group’s balance sheet remains strong.

24. The cost base of the Academic University remains high. Cash flow deficits from core academic operations continue to be met from unrestricted reserves, and a failure to deliver a cash surplus from core academic operations leaves the University substantially reliant on Press & Assessment and philanthropy for the capital it needs for investment to remain a world-leading university.

25. Schools and institutions have responded to the requirement to achieve and sustain 5% reductions in overall operating expenditure (Chest and non-Chest). The reduction to Chest allocations to Schools and institutions, and the projected increase in tuition fee income in 2026–27, are the principal drivers for a material reduction in the Chest expenditure deficit and the Chest allocations deficit in 2026–27.

RECOMMENDATIONS

26. Taken in the context of both the University Group and the Academic University’s overall financial position, **the Council recommends:**

- I. That allocations from the Chest for the year 2026–27 be as follows:
 - (a) to the Council for all purposes other than the University Education Fund: £225.9m.
 - (b) to the General Board for the University Education Fund: £483.4m.
- II. That any supplementary grants from the Office for Students and UK Research & Innovation (through Research England), which may be received for special purposes during 2026–27, be allocated by the Council, wholly or in part, either to the General Board for the University Education Fund or to any other purpose consistent with any specification made by the OfS or UKRI, and that the amounts contained in Recommendation I above be adjusted accordingly.

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Chest income and expenditure, including recommended Chest allocations for 2026–27, available at: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2025-26/weekly/6827/Annex-1.pdf>.

Annex 2: Movements from the Chest expenditure deficit for 2025–26 to the Chest allocations deficit for 2026–27, available at: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2025-26/weekly/6827/Annex-2.pdf>.

Annex 3: Business information to support the University budget for 2026–27, available at: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2025-26/weekly/6827/Annex-3.pdf>.

3 June 2026

DEBORAH PRENTICE,
Vice-Chancellor

GAENOR BAGLEY

MATTHEW COPEMAN

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GARTH WELLS

STEPHEN WILSON

Report of the Council pursuant to Special Ordinance A (ii) 7 (exchanges of Professorships)

The COUNCIL begs leave to report to the University as follows:

1. The Council has received a proposed amendment to Grace 1 of 2 April 2026, initiated under Special Ordinance A (ii) 5 by 42 members of the Regent House.¹ The Grace recommends that a new provision should be added to Special Ordinance, to enable the General Board to make elections to any vacant Professorship to which the General Board agrees to elect the holder of another Professorship, the election to the vacant Professorship to take effect from the date of resignation from the other Professorship. If the amendment is approved, the Regent House would make the election in such cases following publication of a Report by the General Board.

2. The background information provided with the amendment notes that the amendment is intended to ensure the election is ‘justified’ and that there is no risk of patronage or of lowering academic standards. From this, the Council understands that the primary concern of those who have signed the amendment is with transparency of process.

3. The Council agrees that there should be no lowering of academic standards when making elections in these circumstances. However, it does not agree with the proposers of this amendment that the Regent House is an appropriate body to make decisions on the academic

standing of an individual for election to a Professorship. It also does not consider the amendment to be the best way to resolve the concerns about the election process that appear to have prompted it. The Council has therefore included a recommendation in this Report, as an alternative to the amendment from members of the Regent House, in the hope that this allays those concerns but in a way that the Council is willing to support.

4. In the few cases under Part B of Special Ordinance C (vii) where the General Board already makes elections to Professorships, the General Board determines the most appropriate process for making an election, usually on the recommendation of an advisory committee, but not one necessarily constituted as a Board of Electors in accordance with that Special Ordinance nor following a related procedure approved by the Council and the General Board. In the response to remarks at the Discussion of this Report, the General Board confirmed that it would adopt a similar approach when making elections in these circumstances.² Recommendation II commits the General Board to that process and to publishing the membership of the advisory committee in the *Reporter* at least 30 days before the Board receives that advisory committee’s recommendation.

5. The Council recommends:

- I. That the Regent House approves its decision to withhold authorisation of the initiated amendment, noting the reasons for the Council’s decision as set out in this Report.
- II. That if Recommendation I is approved, Special Ordinance C (vii) B. 1(c)(v) (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 82) be approved to read as follows:
 - (v) any vacant Professorship to which the General Board agrees to elect the holder of another Professorship on the recommendation of an advisory committee appointed by the Board for that purpose, the membership of which shall be published in the *Reporter* at least 30 days before the Board considers its recommendation, with the election to the vacant Professorship to take effect from the date of resignation from the other Professorship;

¹ For the wording of the Grace and the amendment, including the background information provided with the amendment, see: *Reporter*, 6821, 2025–26, p. 410.

² *Reporter*, 6820, 2025–26, p. 399.

3 June 2026

DEBORAH PRENTICE,
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GRACES

Graces submitted to the Regent House on 3 June 2026

The Council submits the following Graces to the Regent House. These Graces, unless they are withdrawn or a ballot is requested in accordance with the regulations for Graces of the Regent House (*Statutes and Ordinances*, p. 111), will be deemed to have been approved at **4 p.m. on Friday, 12 June 2026**. Further information on requests for a ballot or the amendment of Graces is available to members of the Regent House on the Regent House Petitions site.[§]

1. That the following new Regulation 5 be added after Regulations 1–4 of the Ordinance for the General Board (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 120):¹

5. In the case of a course or subject leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree, or to a Bachelor's or a Master's degree established by Special Ordinance:

(a) a decision to suspend the admission by Colleges of students to such a course or subject shall be taken by Grace after the publication of either a Notice or, if the Board is aware that the suspension is likely to prove controversial, a Report;

(b) a decision to terminate the admission by Colleges of students to such a course or subject, or otherwise discontinue such a course or subject, shall be taken by Grace after the publication of a Report.

2. That, with effect from 16 February 2026 and notwithstanding any regulation of the General Board made or to be made, admission of students to the Vet.M.B. course not be suspended or terminated otherwise than by Grace after the publication of a Report on the future of Veterinary Education and Research in the University, and that an Order be issued to this effect.¹

3. That the following new Ordinance be approved:¹

CLOSURE OR MERGER OF A UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION OR COURSE

The General Board shall publish and maintain a procedure or procedures for the steps leading to the permanent or temporary closure or merger of a University institution or course established in General Board Regulations. For the avoidance of doubt, the procedure or procedures shall cover the steps leading to the permanent or temporary cessation of admissions to a course.

¹ See the Council's Notice, p. 508.

[§] Accessible by members of the Regent House at <https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/RegentHousePetitions> [University account required].

4. That the recommendations in paragraph 6 of the Report of the General Board, dated 31 March 2026, on the establishment of a Faculty of Government (Rokos School of Government) (*Reporter*, 6821, 2025–26, p. 417) be approved.²

5. That a Rokos Professorship of Government be established in perpetuity, with the title to be determined by the Council of the School of the Physical Sciences to reflect the specialism of the person elected, placed in the Schedule to Special Ordinance C (vii) 1, and assigned to the School of the Physical Sciences and reassigned to the Faculty of Government, subject to the Faculty's establishment by Grace.²

6. That the Ordinance for the Board of Electors to Livings (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 126) notwithstanding, with respect to the current vacancy in the benefice of the Brickhills and Stoke Hammond in the Diocese of Oxford, the Vice-Chancellor be empowered to take any actions on behalf of the University that may be necessary in the exercise of its patronage in accordance with the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and that the Council retain power to order that the Common Seal of the University be affixed to a deed of presentation once a clerk has been selected and approved for admission to the benefice.³

² See the Council's Notice, p. 509.

³ The Council has received notice of a vacancy in the above group benefice of which the University is a joint patron with three other parties. The appointment is subject to the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, which requires the University as a body corporate to appoint an individual to act as its representative. The relevant Ordinance does not anticipate such a requirement and therefore this Grace proposes an alternative arrangement to enable the University to comply with the Measure.

ACTA

Approval of Graces submitted to the Regent House on 20 May 2026

The Graces submitted to the Regent House on 20 May 2026 (*Reporter*, 6825, 2025–26, p. 479) were approved at 4 p.m. on Friday, 29 May 2026.

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

END OF THE OFFICIAL PART OF THE 'REPORTER'

REPORT OF DISCUSSION

Tuesday, 26 May 2026

A Discussion was convened by videoconference. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Johan van de Ven, *CTH*, was presiding, with the deputy for the Director of Governance and Compliance, the Junior Proctor, the Deputy Proctor and forty other persons present.

The following item was discussed:

Consultation on proposals for changes to senior administrative offices

(*Reporter*, 6823, 2025–26, p. 447).

Mr G. P. ALLEN (Wolfson College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the opportunity to comment on these proposals before the Council publish a report to implement them is welcome. The Council described the proposals as an opportunity, ‘to help modernise the university structures and processes’. Such a bland statement surely requires amplification, given for the last few years the University seems to have been engaged in an endless series of so-called transformation programmes. I hope the proposals aren’t intended to signal a significant shift towards a more managerial approach than has been customary in the University’s academically led culture. That would be unfortunate for both the University and the proposed Chief Operating Officer when they discover they have less power than in the corporate world.

Secondly, the Council asserts there is a need to make the workload of the Registry ‘more manageable’ and propose to do this by shifting a substantial part of that workload, that is the management of most of the Unified Administrative Service with the addition of the University Information Services to a new office of Chief Operating Officer (COO). This transfer risks the creation of another possibly ‘unmanageable set of responsibilities’ and the dilution of the attention the COO could give to the important duties currently discharged by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). These include oversight of the University’s wider operating assets and investment portfolio, as well as its long-term strategic and financial plan.¹ As regards whether the workload is manageable or not, in my 32 years on the staff of the University Offices, I worked closely with three Registrars who successfully discharged the full range of responsibilities through a combination of their personal authority and commitment, effective teamwork and delegation to their senior colleagues. It is also noteworthy that they 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.

Thirdly, turning to structural aspects of the proposals, first and declaring my interest as a former Academic Secretary, the proposed revision of the role of the Registry, analogous to a company secretary, but designated as the principal academic planning officer of the University, to whom the Academic Secretary would report.

This revision will create confusion and asymmetry between the two roles, given the scale and breadth of the Academic Secretary’s existing responsibilities for the University’s core activities of teaching and research, planning and secretaryship of the General Board, while the Registry’s residual core responsibilities, focusing on the Council, legal affairs, ceremonial and governance would be similar to those of the former office of Administrative Secretary. Figure 1.1 in the Notice literally puts the Academic Secretary as falling between two stools.

This apparent downgrading of the office of Academic Secretary sends a confusing message to the University community about the importance of education and research. Accordingly, I would encourage the Council to give further consideration to the triumvirate model referred to in paragraph 12 of the Notice, which would better reflect the weight of the three offices of Registry, Academic Secretary, and COO.

In the Notice seeking applications for the office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources and Operations),² it was stated that the person appointed would provide academic leadership for ‘all estates-related activity’, ‘the University’s ambitious transformation programmes’ and ‘the University’s IT and digital landscape’. The advent of an experienced COO with responsibility for all these areas surely poses a risk of too many chiefs. What are the implications for the PVC role and the proposed COO?

Finally, the proposals place the Division for Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities under the proposed COO. The Division carries heavy legal responsibilities on behalf of the University for *inter alia*, animal houses, health and safety, radioactivity and ionising radiation – all high-risk areas which in the past have brought unwelcome attention and enforcement action to the University. Successfully negotiating the complex compliance requirements without interrupting valuable research activities requires a firm but nuanced approach by highly qualified staff who have the confidence of the scientists. I suggest that the nature of these duties is not operational in the same way as processing invoices or maintaining buildings. I urge the Council to consider shifting this Division to a more cognate area, either the Academic Division where it would fit alongside other colleagues responsible for research and education, or the Registry’s team alongside the Legal Services Division.

¹ *Reporter*, 6759, 2024–25, p. 117.

² *Reporter*, 6736, 2023–24, p. 468.

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Deputy Director in the University Information Services (UIS) and a Fellow of Wolfson College. I speak in a personal capacity in support of the proposal to introduce a Chief Operating Officer to oversee enabling functions, including the current University Information Services.

There are however a couple of aspects directly relating to IT and Digital that might benefit from refinement:

Firstly, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor areas of alignment (shown in Figure 1.2) of the proposal set out in the *Reporter* are, in my opinion, lacking in coverage. As an example, ‘Digital’ (as referenced in the diagram) must be a key enabler for the University and is crucial to both the strategy and operations for both Education and Research. As a minimum, I would suggest that the respective PVC roles for these areas should both also be aligned with Digital.

Secondly, whilst I acknowledge that the suggestion I am about to make would require additional changes to Statutes and Ordinances beyond that currently proposed, 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’.

This change would set a clear agenda for unified and coordinated delivery in support of the University's academic mission. Such a change is far more than branding; it sets a clear remit and focus for activities under the Chief Operating Officer and recognises that supporting Education and Research is central to its purpose.

Finally, taking the opportunity to rename University Information Services to something that better reflects its function as both a Digital partner and IT enabler should also be considered.

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I speak as Chair of the Board of Scrutiny. In its 29th Report¹ the Board of Scrutiny wrote: 'has the administration now grown so large that a substantive post of Chief Operating Officer should be established, with the policy and operations administrative support being separated?'. Following on from this recommendation, we are pleased to see this change gradually taking effect and welcome the current consultative process. Given our usual efforts to keep the Board of Scrutiny report as brief as possible we did not, in the 29th Report, go into any detail as to the organisational structure that would be required to support this change. The current consultation thus seems an appropriate moment for the Board to contribute to the discussion (given that our next report will come too late for this present consultation).

The Board refers back to the report for the Audit Group on North West Cambridge² in 2016 which said that 'The Council should give urgent consideration as to the way in which the need for an individual (a Chief Financial Officer) to take overarching financial and strategic responsibility for large commercial undertakings across the University might be most appropriately met and implemented.'. Nothing has changed in the financial oversight of the University in the past ten years since this report – or if it has changed, it has only become more challenging given our current financial position. Thus, we see it as unfortunate that, in the current reorganisation, the need for a strong CFO has been subsumed within the rest of the reorganisation.

We are also concerned that the COO role as suggested in the consultation paper is too broad and will thus suffer from the same overload which the paper notes for the Registry: 'the office of Registry has had a broad and, at times, unmanageable, set of responsibilities requiring a skillset seldom found in one individual'. As envisaged, the COO would have many of the operational responsibilities of the current Registry together with many of the responsibilities that the Audit Group for North West Cambridge envisaged for the CFO, and more.

The Academic Secretary is the University's equivalent of a Chief Technical Officer. Subordinating the role which incorporates the very function of the University to the Governance function (the Registry) or the operations department sends the wrong message to the staff and students in terms of where value is placed in the institution.

Dealing with the need for a high profile to the Academic Secretary role and the need to reduce the unwieldy remit of the COO as suggested in the current proposal, the Board would suggest that there be a triumvirate structure of three key roles, each reporting to the Vice-Chancellor, consisting of:

1. COO – who manages all the routine internal operational functions of the University, including finance, HR, administration, IT and estates.
2. Registry – who manages governance, compliance and external affairs, including communications, and CUDAR, and provides support to the Council.
3. Academic Secretary (or Secretary General) – who manages all matters of academic operations, planning and policy, and provides support to the General Board.

This triumvirate structure might better map on to the different but complementary skill sets of potential postholders than the proposal, which blurs academic policy oversight with technical compliance support. It would also allow the Pro-Vice-Chancellors to take a more clearly policy-based role. A mapping of the University Committees onto these offices would be required, and some joint committees would clearly, in certain circumstances, require the presence of more than one of these officers.

The Board commends consideration of this tripartite arrangement to the Council, and also urges it to keep the matter of a need for a CFO (whether reporting to the COO or otherwise) under review. We would of course be happy to discuss this further if helpful.

¹ *Reporter*, 6756, 2024–25, p. 65.

² Second Report of the North West Cambridge Audit Group, available at: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/reporter/2015-16/weekly/6421/NWCDAG-SecondReport-2016.pdf> (University account required).

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I am Secretary of the Board of Scrutiny, but I speak in a personal capacity; hence this might be viewed as 'not the Board of Scrutiny's response'. Also, since I refer to Secretaries of Schools, I declare an interest in that my wife is a Secretary of a School (but she has no idea of what I am about to say).

The Chair of the Board of Scrutiny has referred to the Board's question in its 29th Report (which I signed and which I help draft) of whether the administration has 'now grown so large that a substantive post of Chief Operating Officer (COO) should be established, with the policy and operations administrative support being separated'. I am pleased that this question is being addressed. However, while I am favour of a COO, and I am not yet convinced that the current proposals are, in the round, what is needed.

In my Note of Dissent of 4 June 2018 to the Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on the establishment of an Education Division, Research Division, and Strategic Partnerships Division¹, I noted that:

Institutions in the University are either under the supervision of the Council or the General Board; as such University Governance has a bicameral nature. Traditionally the Academic Secretary has been Secretary of the General Board and, more importantly, like the Registry, has been one of the administrative officers in the University with a broad and comprehensive understanding of the University. This arrangement, with both the Registry and the Academic Secretary having the right to attend key committees, has worked well. Whilst the arrangement might suggest an element of duplication, when both posts were filled it meant that an officer with a holistic view of the University was present at key meetings (which has not always been the case in recent months).

I stand by those remarks, and as a subsequent Notice observed:

The Council and the General Board note the concerns expressed in the Discussion about the proposal. The Registry has subsequently explored with a number of academic and administrative colleagues the issues that have been raised. In light of those conversations and the clear disquiet that the proposals have generated and following the Registry's further advice, the Council and the General Board have concluded that it would be prudent to maintain the integrity of the Academic Division. ... The Council and the General Board have therefore agreed to withdraw the Joint Report.

Notwithstanding that the Joint Report was only indirectly concerned with the role of the Academic Secretary; the Council and the General Board wish to affirm the importance it places on that office. For example, it notes the observation in the Discussion that the Academic Secretary has a central role in providing a 'broad and comprehensive understanding' of the University.²

That 2018 Report was an example of muddled thinking, e.g. the elevation to Division level of the Strategic Partnership Office, an Office that has now been disbanded. Unfortunately, there seems to be evidence of muddled thinking in this report.

In a bicameral system, where substantive proposals and decisions are made at both the General Board and the Council, the General Board needs a senior administrator with clout and a broad and comprehensive understanding of the University. As Graham Allen has observed, under the current proposals the Registry's residual responsibilities, focussing on the Council, legal affairs, ceremonial and governance, are little more than those of the former Administrative Secretary; this is the role of a 'Company Secretary'. The responsibilities of the Academic Secretary are far larger and far wider, and as such indicate a more senior post. The Registry's boxes of responsibility in Figure 1.1 include 'Ceremonial Support' and 'Regent House Engagement', while those of the Academic Secretary include 'Academic Planning', and both 'Research Strategy' and 'Education Strategy', while the COO has boxes covering 'Digital', 'Estates', 'Finance' and 'HR'. The scope of the Registry's boxes do not compare. Moreover, surely the qualities that make a good Company Secretary are not necessarily those that make a good Academic administrator (as I think the University may have discovered). I am not advocating that the Registry should report to the Academic Secretary rather than vice versa, but tails should not wag dogs. Also, I do not think that the University should be precious about the pre-eminence of the post of Registry in the University's hierarchy (Cambridge is not Oxford), especially given that the role of 'Company Secretary' is in itself an important post.

As the Chair of the Board of Scrutiny has also observed, the need for a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was identified in the report of the Audit Group on North West (NW) Cambridge. The first phase of NW Cambridge incurred substantial cost overruns. Indeed, a 2020–2022 review demonstrated that the total cost of delivering Phase 1 exceeded the receipts from plot sales, as well as the value of the assets that were created. Further, a modelled repayment trajectory for the bond that funded NW Cambridge and that was meant to be repaid around 2050, predicts repayment around the 2070s with a stronger rental growth scenario, but that date extends much further, out to around 2100 or just beyond, under a lower rental growth scenario. As someone who voted for Phase 1 on the basis that it would wash its face, this is intensely depressing.

According to the Council's Notice of 16 April 2026 concerning the Delivery of the future development of the North West Cambridge site³ the University is embarking on Phase 2. So, is this the time to subsume the post of CFO into that of the COO given that, as envisaged, the COO would have almost all the operational responsibilities of the current Registry together with many of the responsibilities that the Audit Group for NW Cambridge envisaged for the CFO? Compare the recommendation of the Audit Group for NW Cambridge:

The Council should give urgent consideration as to the way in which the need for an individual (a Chief Financial Officer) to take overarching financial and strategic responsibility for large commercial undertakings across the University might be most appropriately met and implemented.

with the proposal from the current report, that the COO should:

take over from the CFO oversight of Cambridge University Press and Assessment, the non-operational estate and financial investments, the capital plan and investment appraisal (supported by a new small directorate – identified as 'Planning and Investments' in the chart in Annex B).

If the current Registry's role has a 'broad and, at times, unmanageable, set of responsibilities requiring a skillset seldom found in one individual', given the recommendation of the Audit Group for NW Cambridge, should not the Council provide a detailed justification as to why the proposed COO role does not have a 'broad and, at times, unmanageable, set of responsibilities requiring a skillset seldom found in one individual'?

The above outlines my major concerns with the proposals, but I have many others. For instance:

- The relative roles of the PVCs, the COO, the Academic Secretary, etc., need to be fleshed out.
 - For example, with the appointment of a COO might it be better to revert to a PVC for Planning and Resources (a role that used to work well in the past), rather than a PVC for Resources and Operations?
- In what way will the COO take 'primary responsibility for the operational planning at Schools and Non-School Institutions (NSIs) through the School Secretaries'; this looks like a potential minefield. It is true that some administrative staff in the Schools already report to Heads of Divisions (e.g. Finance and Human Resources) rather than the School Secretaries, but School Secretaries, for the most part, report to the Academic Secretary. There needs to be clarity of responsibility.

In summary, the University needs an administrative structure that works. If that means a COO, an Academic Secretary, a Company Secretary and a CFO, with clearly defined roles, then so be it, especially if it results in an efficient and effective administration that leads to significant cost savings that outweigh the cost of the extra post(s).

I finish with a further quote from my aforementioned Note of Dissent:

In 2004 there were Reviews of the Personnel and Research Services Divisions, with detailed reports published in the *Reporter* (<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2003-04/weekly/5972/4.html>). By comparison, the case for the changes proposed in this [2018] Report, which are arguably more far-reaching, has not been made.

I understand that there is an urgent need to appoint a person to head the operations of the UAS and UIS, but the changes in this report (small ‘r’) are far-reaching, and a better case needs to be made. The University should beware of acting in haste and then having to repent in leisure ... yet again.

¹ *Reporter*, 6509, 2017–18, p. 679.

² *Reporter*, 6522, 2018–19, p. 56.

³ *Reporter*, 6821, 2025–26, p. 412.

Mr A. ODGERS (Chief Financial Officer), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I have been coordinating work in relation to options for the University’s Senior Administrative Officers. Thank you all for taking part in the Discussion today. We very much welcome and appreciate your feedback on the proposals outlined.

Mr B. WATKINS (University Information Services and Department of Veterinary Medicine), read by the Junior Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, having read the consultation report on the proposed changes to senior administrative offices, including the proposal for UIS to become a new Division within UAS, I am concerned this change may influence how colleagues in research and academia perceive the new Information Services Division. It is worth noting that, over twelve years ago, the academically focused Computing Service and the UAS-focused MISD were brought together to form UIS, in order to provide a more unified service to the University. There is a risk the new Division under the UAS could be seen as primarily focused on delivering UAS administrative services, rather than on developing and providing critical digital services for research and education across collegiate Cambridge.

Additionally, should the change progress as proposed, I wonder whether the new Division might be more appropriately named the ‘Digital Services Division’, as this would better reflect the numerous digital services that Division would provide to the University as a whole.

Dr W. J. ASTLE (MRC Biostatistics Unit), read by the Deputy Proctor:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, although I am a member of the Council, these remarks are made in a personal capacity.

Paragraph 12 of the Report explains that the Council ‘gave serious consideration to a tripartite model in which the Registry, the COO and the Academic Secretary would be peers, all reporting to the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the Council, with the Academic Division as a third pillar alongside the Divisions under the Registry and COO’. I hope that a version of this model will receive further thought, since it appears to imply a clearer division of responsibilities between the Registry and the Academic Secretary than the proposed alternative.

As paragraph 13 of the Report notes, decisions in the University are made by committees, which are ultimately accountable to the Regent House or, through the Councils of the Schools, to the Faculties. It therefore seems sensible for the senior administrative officers to be accountable to their respective senior committees, with day-to-day oversight delegated to the Vice-Chancellor as their Chair. That suggests that the Academic Secretary should be accountable to the General Board, as its senior administrative officer, rather than to the Council through the Registry (primarily) and the Chief Operating Officer (secondarily). For the Academic Secretary to be both junior to and accountable to the Chief Operating Officer suggests a risk of the subordination of the academic to the operational.

The proposed arrangements would put the senior financial officer in the University, the Director of Finance, a rung below the senior officers with responsibility for the administration. Is that wise, when there is an accepted need to make the University’s operations more efficient, and to place a check on the size of the University’s administration?

Finally, I’m concerned that the proposed amendment to Statute C VI would introduce the concept of ‘post-holder’ to the Statutes. The Board of Scrutiny has repeatedly requested that criteria be drawn up to determine the use of unestablished posts. A review of their use by the HR Committee has been repeatedly postponed, but it is now to be legitimised by statute. An administrator sufficiently senior to perform one of the statutory duties of the Registry surely ought to be a University office holder, recognised by the Statutes and Ordinances.

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the proposed changes to senior administrative offices seem both unhelpfully rushed and sparse on key details, as well as a puzzling attempt to include the essentially broad and specialist areas of digital and information technologies in the higher education context. At the very least, that latter area, and the proposed incorporation of the University Information Services (UIS) to be subsumed into the Unified Administrative Service (UAS), need to be extracted from the debate about whether to create a Chief Operations Officer (COO) and taken as a separate item. This latter matter is of course to be taken up as part of the Discussion on a Topic of concern scheduled for next week, so will be further detailed then.

While it is not yet clear how creating a COO, and shifting responsibilities from Registry and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), along with adding even more responsibilities such as for UIS, will either save money, or improve manageability, or increase overall effectiveness for all impacted, it is clear that there has been insufficient time or engagement with the University community to properly explain and explore these significant issues. The All-staff meeting online for an hour on 11 May was a starting point, however the questions and answers following the slide presentations were extremely brief and truncated before all questions were answered and provided no opportunity for real dialogue.

It also is unclear where a COO position has been successfully adopted in any of our peer universities, and which set of roles are covered there compared to the currently proposed set under discussion here. It also is ambiguous how this would be a move toward ‘modernisation’, given its commonality in some industries, and whether it is an appropriate aspect to adopt for our University. As previously discussed when considering adding a 6th PVC, expanding our suite of senior leadership is not always our best option or a persuasive response to resolve existing challenges, especially without sufficient time to properly deliberate together or available evidence to help discern such an important proposed change.

Given the tens of millions 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?

Whatever the deliberations about the proposal for a COO, the considerations about the reporting structures for UIS should be disaggregated from the proposed UAS and COO's structures, as will be further considered in the 2 June Discussion, 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 relies on not acting on this proposed rapid shift of reporting structures for UIS until the University's digital hopes and requirements are made clear to all, and the resulting digital strategy and framework for improvement and related maturity are together made unambiguous.

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this Discussion is prompted by a vacancy in the Office of Registry and the imminent departure of the present Chief Financial Officer. It is proposed that the opportunity be taken to 'reorganise the responsibilities of those two offices', however the confidence that this will 'help modernise the University structures and processes', points to a far bigger objective.

The wording of Figures 1.1 and 1.2 should revive previous concerns about the use of the term 'senior leadership' in a University run by the Regent House as a democracy. The expression has never been approved for use by the Regent House. It is time for it to be asked to do so.

In the published 'charts', Figure 1.1 covers 'Senior leadership roles, reporting lines and high-level departmental structure'. Figure 1.2 relates directly to the topic of this Discussion, depicting 'Pro-Vice-Chancellor areas of alignment with professional services departments/functions'. These are to be divided between the future Chief Operational Officer and the Registry. Between the two is slotted 'School partnering', headed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Secretary. So 'leadership' is taken to include both administrative and academic Officers.

It is implied that the Registry has too much to do, making it sensible to move some of the responsibilities of that Office to the Schools. That requires change to Statutes A and C, so it will also need royal consent. In practice that has always been given but it may take the Privy Council a little time to process. The University already has a petition before it, seeking 'amendments to Statute A IX 10' to 'update the Commissary's jurisdiction, replacing an outdated legislative reference to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Act 2004'.¹ If the Regent House gives its own approval to the present proposal the Privy Council must receive any new petition proceeding from this Grace within eight weeks ('exclusive of any University vacation').

Statute C I lists at 1(a) only 'those persons' who 'hold any of the University offices of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, High Steward, Deputy High Steward, Commissary, Proctor, Orator, Registry, Librarian, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Esquire Bedell, University Advocate, and Deputy University Advocate, but adds 'any other University office established or specified by Statute or Ordinance'. That would include the Chief Financial Officer, holding an Office mentioned several times in the *Statutes and Ordinances*. Must it also include 'Directors' holding a University Office so named though a Director may also hold 'such other title as may be determined from time to time by the Council'.

It is proposed that under an amended Statute C VI the Registry and the Chief Operating Officer may be one or two persons, the Council appointing as it chooses. If it 'determines that there shall be two officers, one designated as the Registry and the other designated as the Chief Operating Officer', the Vice-Chancellor is to choose how to allocated duties not specified by Ordinance, with the condition that the Council may not appoint one of its own members. This seems to involve a significant change to the University's understanding of 'Officers'.

Changing Ordinances requires only the consent of the Regent House. It is being asked to get ahead of itself. Approval of the proposed Grace will rescind the Ordinance for University Information Services, a category to be found in Chapter I of the Ordinances. This is a matter to be considered in a Discussion scheduled for next week on a Topic of concern on the 'pause of UIS reorganisation', called for by 75 members of the Regent House under a longer title: 'Urgent Pause of Proposed UIS Reorganisation and Relegation under UAS'.

In what way does all this involve the 'modernisation' which it is suggested is now needed? Is 'modernisation' necessarily desirable? A speaker in debate on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Bill in the Commons on 22 June 1923 commented that 'these ancient universities are daily proving themselves capable of adapting themselves to the necessities of modern demand' and 'must reflect the modern state of things'. But the 'modern' moves with the times. It may be wise for the University to be cautious about 'modernisation' today.

The Office for Students, now the 'Regulator' of English providers of higher education and their allocator of Government funding, has its own 'strategic roadmap':

Looking to the future, digital technology and artificial intelligence will precipitate potentially transformative shifts in teaching, learning and assessment, accentuated by a demand for lifelong learning and the changing skills needs of the economy.²

So far the OfS has refrained from interfering with Oxford and Cambridge but it may try. But perhaps it will think twice since it had been rapped on the knuckles by the High Court after it fined the University of Sussex.³

¹ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/5111824>.

² The OfS strategy roadmap: 2025 to 2030, available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1b2jnveg/strategy_roadmap.pdf.

³ <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/ofs-criticised-high-court-closed-mind-freedom-speech-fine>.

COLLEGE NOTICES

Elections

Darwin College

Elected to a Fellowship under Title A with effect from 18 May 2026:

Virginia Leavell, B.A., *Georgetown*,
M.A., Ph.D., *UC Santa Barbara*

Vacancies

Fitzwilliam College: Research Assistant in Public Policy; tenure: two years from 2 September 2026; salary: £34,610–£35,608; closing date: 18 June 2026; further details: <https://www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/vacancies-fitzwilliam>

Events

Wolfson College

Lee Seng Tee Distinguished Lecture 2026

‘Reflections of a Lady Law Lord’, by Brenda Hale, Baroness Hale of Richmond, on Wednesday, 17 June 2026 at 5.30 p.m. at Lee Hall, Wolfson College; free and open to all; further details and booking: <https://www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/about/events/lee-lecture-reflections-lady-law-lord>

EXTERNAL NOTICES

Oxford Notices

Jesus College: Career Development Fellowship in Law; tenure: three years from 1 October 2026 or as soon as possible thereafter (not renewable); salary: £39,424; closing date: 26 June 2026 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about-jesus-college/our-community/vacancies/career-development-fellowship-cdf-in-law/>

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