

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COUNCIL

GENERAL BOARD

NOTE OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL  
AND THE BOARD HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2008.

Present: The Vice-Chancellor; the Master of Christ's, the Master of Clare, the Master of Darwin; Professor Abulafia, Dr Taub; Dr Bampos, Dr Clark, Dr Cowley, Mr Dowling, Dr MacDonald, Dr Reid, Dr Whitehead; Mr Bagshaw, Mr Bortrick; Professor Bell, Professor Sir Richard Friend, Professor Hunter, Professor White; with the Registry, the Administrative Secretary, the University Draftsman; the Academic Secretary; Professor Minson and Professor Cliff (Pro-Vice-Chancellors); the Director of External Affairs, Mr Parsons.

The Junior Proctor was also present.

1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Human Resources had circulated the following papers:

- (a) Introductory paper dated 14 October 2008 entitled 'Review of Disciplinary, Dismissal and Grievance Procedures: a White Paper'
- (b) Text of the White Paper itself (56 page document).

2. Professor Cliff introduced the matter. Simplification, modernisation, and conformity to current employment law should be achieved. Speeding up procedures was in the interest both of staff and the University. The approach taken was to simplify the statute, to have Ordinances (not yet fully prepared) and codes of practice about procedure.

3. Points made in the course of discussion included:

- (a) simplification and modernisation were desirable, as was speeding up of processes;
- (b) safeguarding proper academic freedom for academic staff (that is University Teaching Officers) was essential and was achieved in the draft;
- (c) it was not certain that all categories of University staff now covered by the academic freedom provisions of the existing Statute U need necessarily be covered by academic freedom provisions in the future (this applied to academic-related staff); as at present drafted some categories of staff were not to be covered in future by an academic freedom Statute;
- (d) it would be unfortunate if individual staff had to be named before the Regent House in relation to redundancy proceedings and the proposed procedure should be adjusted in this regard;

(e) the distinction between established officers and holders of unestablished posts, and other staff, complicated matters, and the distinction between these staff and assistant staff caused resentment; there was a perception that some members of the Council were partial in relation to particular categories of staff.

4. Dr Cowley stated that a senior member of staff who was a member of the Regent House had expressed concern to him that he or she feared that how he or she had voted in the Regent House would become known and might be taken into account by his or her management. [Note by the Administrative Secretary, as the normal presiding officer in Regent House voting: stringent procedures are in place to protect the confidentiality of voting. Any complaint or concern about this matter will be vigorously investigated].

5. The draft white paper should be revised in the light of the comments set out in paragraph 3 above, and it should then be considered further by the Working Group chaired by Professor Brown, by the Human Resources Committee, and then by the central bodies.

30 October 2008