MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

at the

Eighteenth Meeting of the

COUNCIL

of the

IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE

The Eighteenth Meeting of the Council was held in the Council Room, 170, Queen’s Gate at 10:30 a.m. on 18th May 2001, when there were present:

Lord Vincent (Chairman), Mr. G. Able, Professor P. W. Bearman, Professor J. N. B. Bell, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Mr. R. D. Buchanan-Dunlop, Professor I. J. Graham-Bryce, Professor M. Green, Professor M. G. Haines, Professor J. S. Higgins, Professor S. P. F. Hughes, Dr. D. P. Isherwood, Dr. M. P. Knight (from Minute 4. onwards), Mr. H. B. Lowe, The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison, Sir Alan Munro, Mr. H. M. Neal, Professor P. Poole-Wilson, Professor R. D. Rawlings, Dr. C. L. Vaughan, the Rector, the Deputy Rector and the President of the ICU, together with the Clerk to the Court and Council.

Imperial College Union Observer: Mr. E. Pollard (Deputy President, Finance and Services).

In attendance: Mr. D. P. Hearn, the Academic Registrar, the Director of Estates, the Director of Finance, the Director of Personnel, the Director of Planning and MIS, the Director of Strategy Development and the Assistant Clerk to the Court and Council.

Apologies: Dr. E. Buttle, Professor T. J. H. Clark, Mr. A. R. F. Buxton, Sir Stuart Lipton, Mr. R. J. Margetts, Dr. B. G. Smith and the Director of Research Support and Development

CONGRATULATIONS

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman expressed his congratulations to Imperial’s University Challenge team on their recent victory. This was the second time in just five years that Imperial’s students had won University Challenge.

HONORARY TREASURER

1. The Chairman reported that Mr. Lawrence Banks had tendered his resignation, both as the Honorary Treasurer and as a member of the Court and Council. Lord Vincent drew attention to the noteworthy service that Mr. Banks had given the College and the Royal Postgraduate Medical School over the years. In particular, he had done much to smooth
the passage of the medical mergers in 1997 and thereafter. Mr. Banks had been appointed as Honorary Treasurer in 1999 in succession to Mr. John MacArthur, and, in this key role in the Council and the governance of the College, had served Imperial through a demanding period in its recent history. He had also played a notable part as Chairman of the Finance Strategy Committee and as a member of the Remuneration Committee, as well as Chairman of IC Innovations. The Council agreed unanimously to record its thanks to Mr. Banks for all that he had done for the College.

2. The Chairman went on to say that he was anxious to secure agreement to a successor to Mr. Banks as Honorary Treasurer without delay. He reported that, on receiving Mr. Banks’ resignation, he had taken soundings with a number of members of Council as well as with the College’s senior staff and he had then put a proposal to the members of the Nominations Committee by post. He was pleased to report that the Nominations Committee had agreed unanimously to propose Dr. Martin Knight as the new Honorary Treasurer. A copy of Dr. Knight’s *curriculum vitae* was tabled for members’ information.

3. The Chairman reminded the Council that the Honorary Treasurer was appointed formally by the Court on the recommendation of the Council. If the Council was in agreement that Dr Knight’s appointment should be recommended to the Court, he proposed to write to members of the Court immediately following this meeting to obtain their agreement to it.

**Resolved:** That the appointment of Dr. M. P. Knight as Honorary Treasurer be recommended to the Court.

4. The Council having resolved to recommend his appointment to the Court, Dr. Knight was invited to join the Meeting.

**MINUTES**

**Council - 30th March 2001**

5. The Minutes of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Council, held on 30th March 2001, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**The Sale of the Ice Rink Site (Council Minutes, 30th March 2001, Minute 3.)**

6. The Director of Estates, Mr. Caldwell, reminded the Council that at their last Meeting he had reported that the sale of the Ice Rink Site was imminent and that it was hoped that the sale would realise more than the £9M which had been included in this year’s budget forecasts. He said that he was now pleased to report that the sale had been completed for £15.2M, considerably more than originally forecast.
Prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (Council Minutes, 30th March 2001, Minute 7.)

7. The Clerk reminded Governors that the Rector had advised them of a prosecution of the College by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) relating to a research project on the St Mary’s Campus in 1998. He reported that the College had attended Marylebone Magistrates’ Court on 10th April and had pleaded guilty to two charges, one under Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the other under Regulation 12 of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 1992. There had been insufficient time for the case to be heard that day and it had therefore been adjourned until 22nd May for sentencing. However, the nature of the charges was such, he felt, that it was likely that the Magistrates would decline jurisdiction and would commit the College to the Crown Court for sentencing.

ICU Memorandum of Understanding (Council Minutes, 30th March 2001, Minute 31.)

8. The Clerk reminded the Council that, with one small amendment, it had approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the Imperial College Union (ICU) at its last meeting. As the Memorandum had to be approved by both the Council and the ICU Council, the inclusion of this minor amendment meant that it had to be approved again by the ICU Council before it became effective. The Clerk reported that the ICU Council had now approved the amendment to the Memorandum and the finalised document could now be signed by the Rector and the ICU President.

RECTOR’S BUSINESS

Staff Matters (Paper A)

9. The Rector formally presented Paper A, which was received for information, and invited the Council to express its congratulations to Professor John Beddington and Professor Charles Godfray, both of whom had been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society.

Oral Reports

10. The Rector reported that the previous weekend had witnessed the 150th Anniversary of the Royal School of Mines. The Anniversary had been celebrated with a very successful four day programme of events which had culminated with a ball held in the Natural History Museum. The Princess Royal had opened the celebrations and had spent most of the Friday morning at the College when she had also visited the new Flowers Building.

11. The Rector went on to report that the Heads of the new Faculties had now been appointed. Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, the Principal of the School of Medicine, would become Principal of the Faculty of Medicine; Professor Mike Hassell had been appointed as the Principal of the Faculty of Life Sciences; Professor John Pendry had been appointed as the Principal of the Faculty of Physical Sciences; and Professor John Perkins had been appointed as the Principal of the Faculty of Engineering. All these appointments were to take effect from 1st August 2001 and, with the exception of the
Medicine which was already effectively in existence, the Faculties would take shape over the following 12 months and become fully operational by 1st August 2002.

12. The Rector next drew attention to an advertisement which had recently been placed for a Director of Development who would be responsible for the College’s fund-raising activities. He hoped that an appointment would be made shortly. He also informed the Council that the Director of Personnel, Dr. Kimberley, had decided to retire at the end of the present session. Interviews for her successor and for a new Director of Information and Communication Technologies were about to be held and he hoped that appointments to both positions would also be made shortly.

13. The Rector then asked the Director of Planning and MIS, Dr. Eastwood, to report on the recent publication of Higher Education league tables. Dr. Eastwood said that, in the league table published that week by *The Times*, Imperial was third behind Cambridge and Oxford. Ever since the tables had been published, the College had always been in the top three places. In the previous two years Imperial had been second. However, this year the Times had changed its methodology for calculating the scores for individual disciplines and, as a result, Imperial’s position in a number of the subject tables had slipped. Dr. Eastwood had discussed the statistics with the staff at Nottingham University, who prepared the tables for *The Times*, and had expressed his view that the methodology was flawed.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT, COUNCIL AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES (Paper B)

14. Introducing Paper B, the Clerk reminded Governors that it had not been possible at the last Council Meeting to report all of the new appointments. This was because some candidates had not, at that stage, responded to the invitations to become members of the Court, Council and/ or Council Committees. The purpose of Paper B was therefore to inform Governors of those outstanding vacancies which had now been filled. The Chairman noted that, with the resignation of Mr. Banks and other changes, the Nominations Committee would need to reconvene to consider further appointments to the Court and Council.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL (Paper C)

15. Introducing Paper C, the Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison reminded the Council that one of the recommendations of the Governance Committee for improving the effectiveness of the Council had been the creation of a new Finance Committee to replace the existing Finance Strategy Committee. Following the Council’s acceptance of these recommendations, the Governance Committee had been charged with drafting terms of reference for the Finance Committee. However, in undertaking this task, it had become apparent to the Committee that there was also a need to review the terms of reference of the Council’s other Committees to ensure, first, that no conflicts or overlaps were caused by the creation of the Finance Committee and, second, that the Committee structure remained coherent and appropriate to the College’s needs. Having done this, the Governance Committee believed that changes to the terms of reference of, in particular, the Audit Committee and the Health and Safety Audit Committee were...
required. Reviewing the proposed changes, she advised that the new terms of reference of the Audit Committee would bring it into line with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) Audit Code of Practice, while the strengthening of the membership of the Health and Safety Audit Committee was, she felt, especially important, given the Council’s responsibilities in this area.

16. Mr. Able queried whether membership of the Audit Committee and the Finance Committee would be mutually exclusive. The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison confirmed that this was the case.

17. Professor Graham-Bryce noted that both the Estates Committee and the proposed Finance Committee would have some responsibility for considering proposals for major capital projects and asked how this was to be handled in practice if overlaps were to be avoided. The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison stated her view that the Estates Committee was charged in particular with considering proposals in the context of the College’s Estates Strategy and would also have regard to the architectural and other merits of particular project plans. The Finance Committee would, on the other hand, consider the financial viability of proposals, both in terms of their individual business cases and the College’s overall financial position. In practice, she believed that there would be an iterative process between the Committees before proposals were finally presented to the Council for approval.

18. The Chairman agreed with this assessment, stating that the Capital Investment Plan, which was updated annually, should also be subject to a similar process. It would initially be developed by the Estates Committee, but, before it came to the Council for approval, it would also have been scrutinised by the Finance Committee which would comment on its impact on the College’s finances. Furthermore, where there had to be changes to the Plan (as there had been, for example, because of the problems with the Beit Project), the Finance Committee would have to consider how any revised costings would impact on the Plan and on the College’s finances.

19. Turning to the revised terms of reference of the Audit Committee, Dr. Vaughan noted that HEFCE had, at the time of its previous audit of the College, recommended that the Committee’s terms include consideration of the College’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council had, at that stage, rejected the suggestion because it believed that, for it to have been implemented, significant additional resources would have to have been devoted to internal audit. Since this responsibility was now to be included in the Committee’s terms of reference, she queried whether these additional resources had now been found. The Clerk replied that, as compliance with the Audit Code of Practice was a requirement of the Financial Memorandum with HEFCE, the College would have to find the resources to undertake this additional activity.

20. The ICU President, Mr. Common, noted that the Governance Committee had decided not to include a student member on the Finance Committee but had included one of the elected staff members of the Council. He acknowledged that, because the ICU’s sabbatical officers were only appointed for a year, the quality of the student representative might be variable. However, he believed that, in the main, a student member would make a positive contribution to such a Committee. Furthermore, he was
concerned that it had been decided only to exclude students from this Committee when, as was acknowledged in the Paper, a number of institutions excluded both staff and students. The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison stated that, while she was sympathetic in principle to the inclusion of students on Council Committees, she believed that the inclusion of a student on this particular committee could present real practical difficulties. She noted that the ICU President had regular meetings with the Rector and there were already a number of other fora in which students could make their views known.

Resolved: That the revised terms of reference of Council Committees, as set out on Paper C, be approved.

ATHLETICS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (Paper D)

21. Introducing Paper D, the Chairman of the Athletics Committee, Dr. Knight, informed Governors that the School of Medicine Rowing Club still used the University of London Boat House rather than the College’s Boat House at Putney. However, the fees for the University’s Boat House were increasing and it was likely that it would soon be too expensive for the ICSM Rowing Club to continue to make use of this facility. Although this was still the subject of much debate by the Club, Dr. Knight hoped that they could be persuaded to join the Imperial College Boat Club in using the College’s Boat House. Moving on, Dr. Knight reported that, somewhat unexpectedly in view of a long history of delays, Richmond Council had recently granted planning permission for a major development at the Barn Elms Sports Ground. If current proposals came to fruition, there could be merit in the College participating in this scheme. Concluding his report, Dr. Knight highlighted the support provided for sporting activities across the College by the Harlington Trust. A number of proposals for funding were being actively considered by the Trustees and he expected that this year’s funds would be fully allocated by the end of the next week.

22. Taking up this last point, Sir Alan Munro reminded the Council that the Imperial College Trust, of which he was a Trustee, also made a significant contribution each year to supporting the College’s sporting activities. The ICU President, Mr. Common, acknowledged the support of both the Harlington Trust and the IC Trust to the Union’s clubs and societies and, in particular, thanked Dr. Knight for his assistance in the negotiations with the School of Medicine Rowing Club.

FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (Paper E)

23. The Director of Finance, Mr. Cannon, introduced Paper E, noting that the completion of the sale of the Ice Rink Site had improved the College’s financial position significantly. He expected that the College would now generate a surplus of £11M this year. Furthermore, this forecast did not include any income from the sale of shares in TurboGenset, which had been approved by the specially appointed sub-committee prior to the last Meeting of the Council. Moving on, he drew attention to an analysis of the College’s aged debt position which had been included in the Report. This showed that there had been some progress in reducing these debts which had fallen from £15.3M to
£13.8M. However, there was still much to be done. The key to this would be the appointment of a Revenue Controller, whose responsibilities included that of Credit Control. Although he had been unable to fill the position on a permanent basis, he reported that an interim Revenue Controller had now been appointed for a period of 6 months. She had already identified a large number of improvements which needed to be made to both the procedures being followed and to the IT software. Since the College expected to be moving to the next version of Oracle Financials in the short-term, he commented that it might not be economic to implement all the IT changes she had suggested for a relatively short-term benefit. Concluding his report, Mr. Cannon remarked that many of the older debts lay with the College’s associated NHS Trusts. The College’s auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, were reviewing these debts in particular and he hoped to be able to report on this at the Council’s next meeting.

Dr. Vaughan queried the large number of debts related to research. Mr. Cannon stated that it was quite normal for some research debts, being those related to the European Union, to take more than twelve months to collect due to the way in which the EU operated. He concluded by advising the Council that debts identified as uncollectable would have to be eliminated in one of two ways - either by the issue of credit notes or by writing them off, according to the circumstances in each case. The issue of credit notes (which had to be approved by the departments concerned) would create a reduction in departmental income whereas to write-off the debts would be a central cost. Department Heads had been alerted to this point.

THE BEIT REFURBISHMENT PROJECT (Paper F)

Introducing Paper F, the Director of Estates, Mr. Caldwell, reminded Governors that, at the last Meeting of the Council, he had advised them that the additional costs of the Beit Refurbishment Project might be £1.5M. Since then, he and the Chairman of the Estates Committee, Sir Stuart Lipton, had had a number of meetings with the contractors, Bovis Lenniot, and had gone through the projected costs with them in fine detail. In the light of this close scrutiny, he believed that the additional costs that could, at this stage, be identified accounted for at least £1.5M. Bovis Lenniot’s estimates suggested that the final costs might be £600K more than this, although they had not demonstrated to his satisfaction on what these further costs were based. In order to be prudent therefore, he suggested that the Council should agree to additional funding of £1.5M with a further contingency of £600K to cover additional claims.

On a happier note, Mr. Caldwell reported that the West Wing of the Beit Hall had been completed in the previous week and that the contractors were on track for final completion on 4th June 2001. He assured the Council that Sir Stuart Lipton was receiving regular progress reports and would apply personal pressure on the contractors if there was any slippage. The Chairman agreed, stating that he had spoken to Sir Stuart and that the latter had devoted a great deal of time to the College to assist with the Project. He had visited the site on a number of occasions and had met personally with Bovis Lenniot’s Directors. Prior to this Council Meeting the Chairman had asked him for his comments as the Chairman of the Estates Committee. Sir Stuart had said that there was still a degree of uncertainty about completion and that the position the College was in was regrettable. However, he believed that the actions being taken were positive and were those needed if the Project was to be completed on
time and to the College’s satisfaction.

27. Mr. Neal reported that he had visited the site himself that week and that the rooms in the completed West Wing appeared to be of a high standard. Mr. Able suggested that, given the size of the Project, the suggested contingency of £600K was relatively small. He asked what assurance could be given to the Council that there would not be additional costs outside this envelope. Mr. Caldwell reported that the costs had been reviewed very carefully with Bovis Lelliot and he was reasonably certain that all the potential expenditure had been included. Sir Alan Munro queried whether any conference bookings would be jeopardised if the Project was not completed on 4th June. Mr. Caldwell responded that the first guests were due on 2nd July and that this was why pressure was being brought to bear on the contractors to complete on time. He reiterated that he was reasonably confident that the Project would be completed on schedule.

28. Professor Haines asked whether there were any lessons to be drawn from the Project’s difficulties. Mr. Caldwell replied that a review had already been conducted of the events leading up to Longley’s failure. This had concluded that, at the time, the College had acted properly. If he was to draw any lessons from what had happened, these might be that the College should only use large firms of contractors; that there should be fewer contractors used overall; and that only firms with a good financial record which were making a healthy profit should be employed. The Chairman agreed, stating that, he had asked that the Estates Committee should review the whole Project, once it was completed, so that lessons could be learned. He acknowledged though that the first priority was to ensure that the Project was completed on time.

29. Dr. Knight reminded the Council that when the Boathouse Project had gone over budget, it had been recommended that the resources in the Estates Division be increased so that it could deal with such projects properly. Mr. Caldwell replied that he was now of the view that the College needed fewer, but better trained, in-house project managers and that it should also employ fewer, but bigger, firms to provide additional professional advice and assistance. He suggested that the College should also try to plan strategically so that, wherever possible, multiple small projects were linked together to form a few large ones since these were easier to manage. This would be particularly important, given that the College was, in the next three years, planning to spend an additional £100M on infrastructure projects including its award of £46M under the Strategic Research Infrastructure Fund (SRIF).

Resolved: That the additional expenditure of £1.5M, together with a further £600K as a contingency, for the Beit Refurbishment Project, as set out in Paper F, be approved.

RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2001 (Paper G)

30. The Director of Planning and MIS, Dr. Eastwood, introduced Paper G, noting that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was worth in excess of £275M to the College over five years as all the research money it would receive from HEFCE was directly related to its score in the RAE. Apart from its purely monetary value, the results were also important for Imperial’s reputation which would, in turn, help it to attract high
quality staff and students and additional, external research funding. He went on to report that any university submitting to the RAE had to strike a balance between the number of academic staff submitted in the Exercise and the grade. Including more staff could increase the College’s income but, if in the process staff with weaker research records were included, this could reduce a Department’s grading. On balance, he believed that, because of its impact on the College’s reputation, it was better to aim to achieve the highest grade in each discipline even if slightly less money was received as a result. Indeed, he said, the number of staff that had not been submitted to this RAE was slightly higher than previously. Concluding his report, Dr. Eastwood said that he was satisfied that the College’s submission was as good as it could be.

31. Professor Bell asked whether any staff, who were eligible for inclusion because they had completed the requisite number of publications, had nonetheless been excluded from the College’s submission. Dr. Eastwood said that 167 members of academic staff had not been declared. Of these, some would have met the criterion of four papers, but would have been excluded because these publications were judged not to have been of the appropriate quality. However, he was unable to confirm how many individuals fell into this category without checking the figures.

32. Professor Higgins noted that staff across the College had had to work extremely hard to produce all the information in the format required for the RAE. This showed that the College was still not routinely collecting data in a form which could be extracted easily for such undertakings. She suggested that this problem would have to be resolved before the next RAE submission was due. Dr. Eastwood agreed and said that his staff would now be conducting a review of the RAE process with a view to producing annual statistics for Departments/Divisions. This would ensure that, on the next occasion, all the historical data would have been prepared in advance of the RAE. He noted, though, that one of the reasons the collection of data for this Exercise had been complicated was because of the number of mergers the College had been involved in since the last RAE. The introduction of ICIS between the two Exercises had also made data collection more complicated. It was unlikely that either of these factors would be relevant at the next RAE. The Chairman requested that, when the RAE results were published in December, Dr. Eastwood should also advise the Council on what actions were to be taken as a result of his process review.

33. Mr. Lowe noted that 17 members of the College’s staff were on RAE panels or sub-panels and asked whether or not this was helpful to the College. Dr. Eastwood stated that, although no panel member could be present when one of the College’s submissions was being considered, he believed it was helpful to have this level of input. Professor Higgins agreed saying that panel members had a significant influence on the collective view of research taken by their panels.

34. Professor Haines queried whether any staff had been excluded from the return in order to obtain a higher rating. Dr. Eastwood reiterated his view that it was better to achieve a higher score even if this might mean a slight reduction in income. However, indications across the Sector suggested that, contrary to initial expectations, the number of staff being submitted nationally appeared to have declined marginally. If this was so, it might mean that the unit of resource would stay at about the same level as before given that an increase in the average score achieved nationally was likely. He hoped that the College’s average points score would improve to slightly over 5.
ANY OTHER BUSINESS

First Annual Athena Lecture

35. The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison informed Governors that the first Annual Imperial College Athena Lecture Gender Equity in Academia: Lessons from the MIT Experience had been given by Professor Lotte Bailyn, the T Wilson Professor of Management at the Sloan School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Rector had chaired the lecture and invitations had been sent to every Vice-Chancellor in the Country as well as to all the members of the Council. Regretfully, the Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison had to report that only a few other universities had sent representatives to the lecture and, in each case, this was a female member of staff. Similarly, only a few members of the Council had attended. The Hon. Mrs. Sara Morrison said that the lecture, which had been excellent, would have provided an excellent opportunity to increase senior staff members’ awareness of gender issues in academia had more men attended. The Rector agreed and reported that, as well as delivering this lecture, Professor Bailyn had spent a few days at the College and had met with a number of senior members of staff. He felt that the College had obtained considerable benefits from Professor Bailyn’s visit.