

Discussion Speech— 23rd January 2007

Joint Report of the Council and the General Board, dated 11th and 4th December 2006, on the Councils of the Schools and related matters

Mr. Deputy Vice-Chancellor,

This remarks were originally intended for the Standing Advisory Committee on Student Matters. However, it was suggested to me it would be worth also raising them at this Discussion, for wider comment.

As I am sure you are aware, there is currently no student representation on any of the Councils of the Schools. This contrasts with the “rung below” where all Faculty and independent Departmental Boards have student members, and the “rung above”, the General Board, which has two student members.

In the past, this lack of representation could be explained by the nature of the business that was discussed. The majority of it seems to have been concerned with personnel, which would automatically be “Reserved” under Statute K,20. Having members *in statu pupillari* would have therefore been a rather futile exercise as they would not have been able to be present at the majority of the meetings. However, if the Councils of the Schools are to take a more active part in setting the academic vision for the School, as is suggested by this Report, then having a student contribution will certainly be worthwhile. A continuing lack of representation the Councils might also start to appear anomalous and lead to the odd situation whereby a paper on, for example, “institutional and School academic plans”¹ might have student involvement in the consultation stage (in the Faculties) and the final discussion stage (at the General Board) but not at the important middle stage where drafts of the paper would be discussed in detail by the Council of the School.

I would therefore suggest that each Council could co-opt one or two members *in statu pupillari* by a method of its choosing. Having two members would allow one graduate and one undergraduate to sit on each Council, as occurs elsewhere. There are various methods by which the students members could be chosen but it seems that the simplest method would be to run a ballot at the same time as the elections for the student members of the faculty boards. This would require a small number of changes to Chapter VIII of the Ordinances (which details the composition of the Councils). It therefore seems that now, when the composition and *rôle* of the Councils and their governing Ordinances is being reformed would a good time to implement these additional changes.

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¹Proposed Statute C, II, 3, d