

**St Edmund's College****Governance Consultation Document (Reporter 132, 18, 508)**

The Council of St Edmund's discussed the consultation document on Governance at a recent meeting and I write to give you the outcome.

The Council welcomed many features of the document because it seeks to improve the way that the University carries forward its business. Understandably, the item of greatest concern related to the plan to dilute the College influence not only by reducing the number of Heads of Houses on the Council but by an expansion of the size of the Regent House. It was proposed that the number of Heads of Houses should remain at four.

Increasing the number of Pro-Vice-Chancellors to a figure of up to five was welcomed but it was recommended that up to three should be Heads of Houses. This would help to rectify what is seen as a downgrading in the role of the Colleges in University affairs, clearly not what was intended according to your letter to me dated 5 February 2002.

Expansion of the Regent House to include many postdoctoral researchers was seen as a positive step in the direction of democracy and inclusiveness but more Colleges need to find ways to embrace such individuals within their cohort. At St Edmund's we have created an Associate Member category with such candidates in mind and have recruited some excellent people. If developed more widely this would help to counteract any feeling of dilution of the status of Colleges within the Cambridge system.

It was generally agreed that 50 would be an appropriate figure for signatories needed to amend or challenge a Grace in the Regent House, but there was uncertainty expressed about the idea of an external appointment as Chair of Council. My personal view (but not that of my Council) is that an external person appointed as Chair would be a very sensible and timely move for all the positive reasons debated at our last Heads of Houses meeting.

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From the Master, Professor Peter Goddard ScD CBE FRS  
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19 March 2002  
PG/sd

The Registry  
The Old Schools  
University of Cambridge

Dear Tim,

Consultation Paper on University Governance

I write with the response of St John's College to the Consultation Paper, dated 4 February 2002, published by the Council of the University and the General Board on University Governance. The College's comments are divided according to the separate sections of the Consultation Paper.

**Principles**

A1 The College agrees with the principles stated in paragraph 4.1 of the Consultation Paper.

**The Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors**

B1 The College agrees with the proposal that the Vice-Chancellor should cease to chair the Council.

B2 The College believes that careful consideration should be given to the actual duties undertaken personally by the Vice-Chancellor in order to ensure that his or her effectiveness as principal academic and administrative officer of the University is maximised, and that his or her time is not spent on matters most appropriately delegated to other persons.

B3 The College agrees in principle with the proposal for an increase in the number of Pro-Vice-Chancellors and that they be appointed on the basis of limited-term part-time secondment from within the University.

cont./2

- B4 The College believes that further thought should be given to the pattern of remuneration of individual officers for additional work, bearing in mind the substantial nature of responsibilities associated with guiding the work of the central bodies of the University, and the need to ensure a fair system of reward for comparable duties. A coherent approach should be formulated for the remuneration and relief from other duties of Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Chairmen of the Councils of the Schools, Heads of Department, and other officers assigned substantial specific additional tasks.

#### **The Council and the General Board**

- C1 The College agrees with the continuation of the General Board as a body providing strong academic policy direction in the University.

#### **The composition of the Council**

- D1 The College believes that the limitation of the size of the Council is of essential importance in maintaining its cohesion and effectiveness as the principal body of the University responsible for the formulation of policy. The size of the Council should not exceed 20 members.
- D2 The College does not believe that the Chairmen of the Council of the Schools should become *ex officio* members of the Council, in view of the proposed retention of a strong General Board and the fact that the Chairmen of the Council of the Schools will be *ex officio* members of that body. Their *ex officio* membership of the Council would both unbalance the composition of the Council and add an unnecessary additional burden to the already heavy duties of the Chairmen of the Council of the Schools.
- D3 The College supports the proposal for external membership of the Council along the lines proposed in the Consultation Paper, with external members chairing the Council and the Audit Committee. The College thinks it probable, and desirable, that excellent external members can be recruited without the necessity of remuneration, but believes that the Regent House will expect reassurance on this point.
- D4 The College is not satisfied that the proposals to extend the membership of the Regent House and to introduce a category of assistant staff membership to the Council have been considered in a sufficiently broad and principled context. If the leading principle stated in the Consultation Paper of academic self-governance is accepted (as it is by the College), then the inclusion of those without an academic rôle in the governance of the University should be questioned. Thus membership of the Regent House might be extended to include academic staff not currently included, but non-academic officers currently members might be taken out. Moreover the distinction between officers and assistant staff should be reviewed and a division adopted based on principle as it applies in modern circumstances.

- D5 The College believes that membership of the Regent House and of the Council should be confined to those having a clear established commitment to the University, normally reflecting their function and length of service in the University.
- D6 The College believes that the composition of the Council proposed in the Consultation Paper gives insufficient representation of the University and College officers providing the academic leadership of the University.
- D7 The College believes that induction should be made generally available for new members of the central bodies wishing it, who have relatively little experience of how the University works.

#### **The General Board and the Chairs of the Councils of the Schools**

- E1 The College agrees generally with what is said in the Consultation Paper. Particular attention is drawn in this context to comment B4 above in relation to the Chairman of the Councils of the Schools (who might appropriately be renamed Deans of the Schools).

#### **The Regent House**

- F1 See comments D4 and D5 above.
- F2 The Consultation Paper cites no evidence of abuse of the system of requesting a ballot on a Grace, and the College is aware of none. The constitution of the University should provide a balance between the need for an efficient legislative process and the need for a democratic one. A minor increase in the number of signatories required for a ballot, say to 20, would be acceptable. More would not.
- F3 The College has no objection to the number of signatories to require a Discussion being equal to that to require a ballot on a Grace.
- F4 Whereas the College is unaware of evidence of abuse of the system of requesting a ballot on a Grace, the system of Discussion has been grossly abused in recent years, without any action by the Council of the University to prevent that. The College is disappointed that the Consultation Paper is similarly silent on the matter.

Yours sincerely,



**Selwyn College: University Governance**

I am afraid Selwyn College Council have yet to debate this paper fully, so this should be considered merely an interim response. We presume that this is the beginning of a long process that may well develop into another 'Wass' and that there will be many further occasions to comment in detail. Certainly a number of us hope that we do not rush into reform simply because of what happened with CAPSA, since it is not clear how any of the proposals in this paper would have stopped that particular fiasco happening. The devil is always in the detail, and since detail is lacking at this early stage, we shall limit ourselves to generalities.

1 Colleges receive mention in 2.5 as 'major constituents' but fade into the background thereafter. 4.1 (iii) talks of 'the need for the Colleges to be appropriately involved in University affairs'. This is an extraordinary phrase, which suggests that we continue to think of the two as different entities instead as one indivisible whole. Colleges should be locked into the system at every point. Indeed it could be argued that the whole paper is far too timid in this regard. Take, for example, the new Resource Allocation Model, which is so blunt a tool that it condemns as 'over-funded' precisely those faculties that rely on the Colleges to provide a large number of CTOs to survive. It is difficult to believe that a model that is so out of kilter with practice would have been proposed if some senior tutors and bursars had been involved in its drafting.

2 It is proposed (5.3) that the Vice Chancellor cease to chair Council because he is the Chief Executive answerable to Council. Many companies and all colleges manage to square this particular circle and so the rationale here is not entirely clear. 5.4 states that the five Pro-Vice-Chancellors would derive their authority by delegation from the VC. Should they not derive their authority from Council? It would be unfortunate if an incoming Vice Chancellor could simply appoint a Cabinet. The same section talks of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for internal University affairs. It is unclear what this means. What other areas are there apart from 'finance, planning and resource allocation, personnel, research and education'? If this is a veiled reference to 'dealing with Colleges' then, yet again, it is unfortunate and will simply enshrine a divide. The role of the proposed Pro-Vice-Chancellors will have to be tightly defined if they are not simply to add another layer of decision-making. What would a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research actually do and how would he or she interact with the increasingly powerful Chairs of the Schools?

*Cont.*

3 The proposal to have external members on Council is of interest but suggests that we cannot look after our own affairs. If they have the time to devote to this job, what kind of person will they be and will they expect remuneration?

4 It is clear that Chairs of the Councils of the Schools are indeed evolving in the direction of Deans with appropriate executive powers. This is perhaps an inevitable result of devolution but needs to be handled with very great care. The method of appointment and length of service of these Chairs need to be carefully defined. 8.3 (ii) says that they should 'continue to be elected by the Councils of the Schools' but in reality there are no elections; it depends on who can be persuaded to take on the role. And is it realistic to suppose that Chairs could fulfil this expanded role and then be on both Council and the General Board all in a third of their time? It sounds more like a full-time role.

5 The proposal to open up membership of the Regent House to all those with research contracts seems difficult to argue with, although this may increase the likelihood that the emphasis on the sciences at Cambridge will accelerate. As for the increase from 10 to 50 in the numbers needed to call for a ballot on a Grace, there are conflicting views. It may be that in these days of e-mail it will not take very long to accumulate signatures, but the fact remains that the problem lies not in the way in which discussions are called but in how they are misused.

Richard Bowring  
17.03.02



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13 March 2002

Professor Sir Alec Broers FRS FREng  
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### **Proposed changes in University Governance**

The College Council has discussed the proposals for changes in University Governance. It is broadly sympathetic to the thrust of the proposals, namely that the University's system of governance is in need of an overhaul and it broadly supports the objectives on which the proposals are based. It felt that the impact would be revealed in details which are not yet specified in the proposals. This response concentrates on those things which it felt were most likely to effect Colleges.

It felt that the document as a whole placed too little emphasis upon how the unique strength of the University as a collegiate university was really to be supported. It found statements to that effect but little evidence on what they would mean in practice. It is particularly concerned that there is insufficient evidence that the voice of the Colleges is going to be heard in matters of shared strategic and financial interest. The College Council appreciates that the Councils of the Schools will become extremely important decision making bodies and it would like to be assured that there will be College representation on each Council, since it is here that issues will be decided which will have direct impact on the requirements placed on Colleges for teaching. Similarly College Council considers there should be clear College representation on the General Board's Education Committee. We already have experience of decisions made by Faculties (in terms of requirements placed upon students, College facilities and college teaching arrangements) which require College investment (if our students are to be adequately prepared for exams and equipped to follow courses) which the Colleges have had no effective opportunity to influence or question. The need for greater College involvement in decisions over the deployment of teaching activities and resources within a faculty is already in evidence; under the new governance proposals, that need should be utterly compelling.

Our main concern therefore is to ensure that there is a College voice in the decision making bodies of the University where matters of academic development and resource allocation are determined. This requirement will be even stronger in the future if a devolved Resource Allocation Model is adopted. For example it is possible that particular Schools will decide that they are unable to make appointments to teaching officer posts and the burden of the required work (if the curriculum and methods of teaching stay the same) would then fall on the Colleges. The Colleges, in a sense, could then be seen to provide a silent buffer against the effects of some of the more difficult decisions which may have to be made. It therefore seems to us imperative that the Colleges should be involved at the point where such decisions are made, rather than just being the recipients of the decisions after the fact.

Given the central role of Council in University decisions the College Council regretted the reduction in the number of seats for Heads of House at a time when the membership of the Council would be increased overall.

The College Council's last comment is of a more general nature. It welcomes limited involvement of a small number of outsiders in University governance as fulfilling enormously important roles, in particular the role of an external independent chairman of Council. It notes that the responsibilities will be onerous and that there is no suggestion that such outside appointees will be paid for their services. It wonders whether those drafting the proposal have considered remuneration for the outside members?



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THE MASTER'S LODGE  
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12 March 2002

Sir Alec Broers  
Vice-Chancellor  
The Old Schools  
Cambridge

Dear Alec,

I am writing to you about the consultation paper on Governance which we received from you. The College Council considered the statement by the Council with great interest, but I am afraid with some disagreement. We did take the matter very seriously (as you would expect), and a sub-committee looked into the detailed provisions. On the basis of its report the College Council, last Friday, had a full discussion. I enclose a copy of the College Council's statement, which meanwhile would have been sent to your office by the Secretary of the College Council, Mr John Easterling. I am sending it to you just in case it did not reach you.

Since this is a consultation document, we have spelt out the reservations in some detail. Perhaps I should add that the College Council was unanimous on each of the points.

Yours ever,

Enc.

c.c. Mr H.J. Easterling  
Secretary of the College Council

## STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL OF TRINITY COLLEGE ON UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

In general we find the consultation paper of 4 February an unconvincing document. It relies on assertions, with little argument or evidence to support them, and it fails to explain how the proposals put forward are likely to address the problems cited.

*The need for change (§3)*

We question the analysis of the problems facing the University. It may be true that the University's administration needs more people with expertise in finance and accounting, but apart from that we are not convinced that it is under-resourced or under-developed. The paper does not provide evidence of inability to adapt quickly to changing demands and circumstances. If the problems cited are real ones, we see no reason to believe that the changes proposed will help to solve them.

*Principles (§4)*

The principles set out in the consultation paper are unexceptionable, but the proposals that it presents bear little evident relation to them. Everyone in Cambridge will no doubt approve principle (i) (the importance of academic self-governance). Principles (ii) and (iv) (the need for executive responsibility to be clear, and the importance of accountability) are admirable, but there is little in the proposals that stems from these principles. We applaud principle (iii) (the importance of College involvement), but we note that the proposals in the paper seek to reduce the amount of formal College involvement in University business by reducing the number of Heads of Houses on the Council from four to three.

*The Vice-Chancellorship and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (§5)*

In our view it is important that the Vice-Chancellor should continue to be clearly seen as the head of the University. We are not convinced by the reasons given for demoting him/her from the chairmanship of the Council; we are concerned that a separate Chairman, especially if someone from outside Cambridge, might in time become a second significant power in the University, expected to speak for the University to the press on matters of importance. We should have no objection to an arrangement under which the Vice-Chancellor was free to ask another member of the Council to take the chair on occasion, so as to allow him/her to speak more freely. We support the proposal to specify the Vice-Chancellor's responsibilities in more detail, and we see no harm in extending the Vice-Chancellor's tenure to a fixed term of seven years.

We question the need for as many as five Pro-Vice-Chancellors. The number seems somewhat arbitrary; there is nothing in the paper to suggest that five areas of University business have been identified as each needing the attention of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Further, we note that the proposal would be very expensive, if the Pro-Vice-Chancellors' time is to be paid for and if they are to be given 'research' (*sic*) assistants; we wonder whether any cost/benefit analysis has been undertaken to determine whether the overall advantage to the University would be worth the additional expense.

*The composition of the Council (§7)*

Adhering to principle (i), we are opposed to the suggestion that the Council should include external members. It is no doubt true that the University can benefit from advice given by people from outside, but the Consultative Committee already exists to provide such advice. We do not believe that it would be easy to find people of the right calibre, experience, and sympathies who would be able to spare enough time to understand the complex working of the University, and we are concerned that captains of industry or business might come with preconceived ideas that are inappropriate to a university. The consultation paper notes that the Councils of other universities commonly include external members; given the special character of Cambridge, we believe that the practice followed by other universities is irrelevant.

We are sympathetic to the suggestion that members of the assistant staff should be given some recognition, but we are not convinced that representation on the Council is the appropriate way to achieve this.

As we have implied above, we are opposed to the suggestion that the involvement of the Colleges should be diminished by reducing the number of Heads of Houses on the Council.

We think it undesirable that the Chairmen of the Councils of the Schools should be *ex officio* members of the Council. Their main functions are related to the General Board, and we believe that it would make them altogether too powerful if they were to be members of the Council as well. We do not consider it appropriate that such a large proportion of the members of the General Board should also be on the Council.

In our view the Council is already too large to provide an effective forum for discussion, and we are opposed to any increase in its size. We believe that the proposals in the paper need to be radically re-thought.

*The Regent House (§9)*

We see that there is an argument for giving membership of the Regent House to senior contract research staff, but we are concerned at the shift in the balance of the governing body that this would produce. It would give much more weight to research at the expense of teaching, and to the sciences at the expense of the arts. We believe that the present proposal has implications which have not been fully evaluated, and that further thought needs to be given to the problem of maintaining an appropriate balance of interests within the Regent House.

We are strongly opposed to the suggestion that 50 signatures should be required to support a request for a ballot. It is facile to suggest that the overall size of the Regent House should be the determining factor in this context. Given the pressures of Full Term, we think it unreasonable to expect anyone to canvass 50 people within the nine days that are available; we see this proposal as an attempt to suppress legitimate dissent. We think it important that, if the central bodies are to see their decisions as subject to the approval of the Regent House, the machinery for expressing dissent should be able to operate effectively from time to time. We would not oppose an increase from 10 to 20 in the number of signatures required, but we should deplore any figure greater than 20.

8 March 2002

The Vice-Chancellor  
The Old Schools  
Cambridge  
20 March 2002

Dear Alec

#### UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The Master has asked me to respond to the consultation paper on University Governance on behalf of the Governing Body. We had intended to discuss it at the final Lent Term meeting of the Governing Body on 12 March, but unfortunately weight of business led to the postponement of several important items. This response should therefore be regarded as the College's interim view compiled from individual submissions. Further comments will be made, as appropriate, through the Colleges' Committee, seminars and web site.

We would particularly wish to express a view on the following:

#### 7. The Composition of the Council

7.10 Considerable disquiet has been expressed about the proposal to reduce the representation of Heads of Houses from four to three, especially at a time when the constituency is being enlarged. In a collegiate University it seems an unfortunate move and one likely to deprive the Council of a member who could be expected to bring some distinction and breadth of experience to its deliberations.

#### 8 The Regent House

9.2 Opinions vary about the proposal to increase the number of signatories required to challenge or amend a Grace from 10 to 50, but there is a significant body of opinion which is strongly opposed to it. A compromise figure of perhaps 20 or 25 is suggested. The possibility of vexatious challenges under existing arrangements are appreciated and some concerns about the proposal might be allayed by an extension of the time frame within which signatures have to be collected or allowing them to be submitted (with suitable safeguards) via e-mail.

I should perhaps add that, although the matter is only touched upon in 3.3 and 4, the question of accountability and concrete proposals as to how it might be improved so that the administration can operate more speedily and efficiently, is regarded as a top priority.

yours ever

Sandra

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20 March 2002

Dr T Mead  
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*Dear Tim*

### **University Governance**

The College Council and the Governing Body of Wolfson College have considered carefully the consultative document about the future governance of the University.

At its meeting on 6 March 2002 the Governing Body agreed to give general support to the proposals in the paper. In particular the Governing Body is in favour of including external members on the University Council and in a revision of membership of the Regent House so that it will encompass the large number of postdoctoral research workers who are at present disenfranchised within our system and also senior staff who hold academic related and administrative posts.

The Governing Body also believes that further attention should be given to ways in which appropriate college interests can be made more coherent and represented in the main structures of government of the University. The Governing Body noted that some significant steps had been taken in this direction during the last two or three years and believes that these should be made explicit and well known.

Yours sincerely

*V. John*

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22 March 2002

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Sir Alec Broers,  
Vice Chancellor,  
The Old Schools,  
CAMBRIDGE, CB2 1TN.

Dear Vice Chancellor

You wrote to me as Principal of Wesley House, and to the principals of some of the other Cambridge Theological Federation institutes asking our institutes to respond to the university's consultation on Governance. I have discussed this with the President of the Federation and with the Principals of all the members and associates of the Federation. They have asked me to make a response of their behalf.

1. We wish you well in your endeavour. Your process is in many ways closely parallel to our discussions within the Federation in the three years since our ecumenical inspectors asked us hard questions about our own governance structures. Like the university, the Theological Federation is composed of individual colleges and institutes each with their own teaching responsibilities, but also delivering much teaching centrally. It has been a long and difficult process to devise a governance structure for the Federation in which efficient decision making is balanced with effective consultation. Unlike the university, the Federation is only thirty years old but already has its own ingrained traditions. We reached the climax of this process on March 12 when the first ever joint meeting of all the governing bodies of Federation institutes gave their informed consent to our proposals, and renewed their covenant to God and each other in an act of worship.
2. In total the Federation is composed of seven full members (Westcott House, Ridley Hall, Westminster College, Wesley House, the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course, the Margaret Beaufort Institute and the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies) and two associates (the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations and the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity).
3. There are the equivalent of between thirty and forty full time members of academic staff. Together the Federation numbers 407 students (including part time students and those

completing MA dissertations), with 190 students registered for University of Cambridge courses (the BTh and Certificate in Theology for Ministry, the BA in Theology and Religious Studies and research degrees).

4. Thus in the day to day interaction of Federation students and academic staff (many of whom teach within the University) with the University, and in regular structural contacts we recognise many of the problems identified in Section 3 of the Consultation paper. We might highlight in particular: lack of clarity in dealings with the central organisation (3.3.i), a sense of exclusivity in governance (3.3.v) and general problems that are cultural as much as structural (3.4). Thus the proposals to simplify and streamline the University structures are welcome. The consolidation of the role of the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, and the redefinition of the University Council would seem to serve this intention very well.
5. More positively, we would wish to reflect upon our experience where a large number of our students are entered for courses either within the Faculty of Divinity, or delivered by the Federation in partnership with the Faculty. We wish to record the growing closeness of our relationship with the Faculty, and the importance to both the Faculty and the Federation of the contribution which the other makes to our overall programmes. In recent years the Faculty and Federation have successfully co-operated in the introduction of the Bachelor of Theology for Ministry degree. Perhaps surprisingly the experience of the Faculty's recent QAA inspection has both brought the Federation and Faculty closer together, and also provided independent affirmation of the educational value of our partnership.
6. In addition to our partnership with the Faculty of Divinity, many of our students matriculate for degrees through colleges of the university. We value the good relationships which we have established through several generations with many of the individual colleges. Some of the member institutes of the Federation have formal relationships with individual colleges. Wesley House, for example, has been since its foundation an approved lodging house for Fitzwilliam College. In other cases the relationships are more informal.
7. Likewise, some but not all, of our institutes are recognised in the university statutes, for example, in connection with reading rights at the University Library. As the Federation has grown, however, the formal recognition of the individual members has not kept pace. This perhaps explains why your letter of invitation to comment only reached some of our members.
8. Currently the Federation works with a number of other universities in order to provide validation for the variety of courses which we need to provide in order to serve our partner churches. We would, for example, wish to affirm our extremely positive relationship with Anglia Polytechnic University through the well respected MAs in Pastoral Theology and Jewish-Christian Relations.
9. In the light of all the above points, therefore, we would hope that the Governance process can find time to address the question of the relation of organisations like the Cambridge Theological Federation, and its constituent members, to the University. Can new mechanisms be found through which the Federation, preferably as Federation, perhaps as individual institutes, can relate to the university? For example, might it be possible for the Federation to be represented alongside the Colleges of the University in their structures,

and, in parallel, perhaps for the Federation to gain representation in the Regent House, or at some other appropriate place in the new structures.

10. Few of our students fit into the classic school leaver model. Many train with us after successful careers in other fields. Many are married. Others do not live near Cambridge. Others again can only train part time. In the past the university has often found it difficult to admit such students. Yet they are precisely the groups which the government is keen to target in its current drive to expand opportunities in Higher Education. Can a new structure allow for the potential of a creative dialogue with the university centred around the importance of such students? The Federation has considerable expertise in the provision of part-time postgraduate programmes (and in Distance Learning) an area into which universities are currently being encouraged to move.
11. Similarly, several of our sponsoring churches are currently engaged in reviews of their patterns of training. Between them, these reviews will affect the vast majority of our sponsored students. The churches are certain to demand more flexibility in the modes of training for students for ministry. This is likely to imply a greater concentration on part time training and regional delivery of courses. Much as we value our links with the university, the churches provide our reason for existence. We hope that there will be the possibility of creative dialogue about the issues relating to flexible delivery.
12. We have begun to explore with the University the possibility of the Federation (or individual institutes) achieving Approved Society status, and thus matriculating our own BTh students. Under the current structures any such negotiation is long and intricate. We hope that new structures will both safeguard the possibility of such applications, but also make possible more direct and expeditious relationships between organisations such as the Federation and the University.

We look forward to a continuing partnership with the University of Cambridge, and hope that the current review will make the partnership both easier to achieve and more rewarding for both partners.

With all good wishes,

Philip Luscombe  
Principal, Wesley House,  
On behalf of the Cambridge Theological Federation.