Amendments to Legislative Proposal:

Statute XII (Academic Staff and the Visitatorial Board), Statute XI (University Discipline), Statute XIV (Employment of Academic and Support Staff by the University)

A legislative proposal and explanatory note on changes to Statute XII, Statute XI, Statute XIV (together with associated regulations) were published as Supplement (2) to Gazette No 5127, issued with the Gazette of 24 March 2016.

Amendments have been received to that legislative proposal and are now published here.

The meeting will be held at 2pm on Tuesday, 3 May, in the Sheldonian Theatre. Given the number of proposed amendments that have been received, and to enable Congregation to give full consideration to both these and the legislative proposal, the meeting will be adjourned following the speeches and voting on the proposed amendments. A second meeting, to consider the legislative proposal in light of those decisions, will therefore take place on 31 May.

Arrangements for the meeting

Attendance and timings

Attendance at the meeting is open to members of Congregation and to nominated representatives of the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) as agreed in advance by the Vice-Chancellor. Admittance to the theatre will be on the production of a valid University card and will be on a first-come, first-served basis (places will be reserved for scheduled speakers).

The doors of the Sheldonian Theatre will open at 1.45pm and will remain open throughout the meeting except when voting is taking place. The proposed amendments to the legislative proposal will be put to Congregation throughout the meeting (see below).

The Vice-Chancellor has decided that the wearing of gowns shall be optional on this occasion.

Further information about the meeting can be found on the Congregation Meetings website at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/governance/congregation.

Advance notice by speakers

The debate will include speeches by proposers and seconders as well as an open debate on the proposed amendments. Proposers and seconders will be contacted separately. Those wishing to speak in the open debate will be expected to limit their contributions to five minutes. It may not be possible to call all those who wish to speak (on the other hand, if time permits, those who have not indicated in advance may have an opportunity to speak).

Members of Congregation who wish to speak in the open debate are asked to indicate this intention in advance by emailing congregation.meeting@admin.ox.ac.uk preferably by 2pm on Friday, 29 April and at the latest by 9am on Tuesday, 3 May. It would be helpful if members of Congregation could indicate which of the proposed amendments they wish to speak to, and whether they intend to support or oppose it, as this will help to determine the order in which speakers are called.

Order of business

The Vice-Chancellor will open the meeting at 2pm and set out the procedure and order of business to ensure that Congregation has the opportunity for full debate.

The procedure and order of business will be as follows:

• The legislative proposal will be moved and seconded on behalf of Council.
• Each of the proposed amendments will then be considered in turn, as follows:
  ◦ The proposed amendment will be moved and seconded.
  ◦ Where Council has indicated that it opposes a proposed amendment, the opposition will be moved and seconded.
  ◦ Further speeches will be invited in support of or in opposition to the proposed amendment as time permits (the ‘open debate’).
  ◦ The mover will be given the opportunity to respond.
  ◦ The proposed amendment will be put to Congregation.

Voting

Depending on the views expressed at the meeting, it may not be necessary to proceed to a vote on every proposed amendment. If, having taken into account the response from Council and the speeches at the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor considers that a consensus may have been reached, she may announce that, in her opinion, the proposed amendment is accepted or rejected as the case may be. If, however, six members of Congregation rise in their places (for example, if they disagree), a vote will be taken.

Where a vote is taken, the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors have determined that this will take place by paper ballot. A full set of voting papers will be handed out.
on arrival (some of which may therefore not be used if an amendment has been accepted or rejected), and voting papers will be handed in and be counted at the end of all of the speeches (ie after all of the proposed amendments have been put to Congregation).

Members of Congregation will be required to identify themselves on their voting slips by name and signature and by college/department or faculty and to deposit their own voting slips in ballot boxes at the doors of the House. Slips will be sorted and counted by the Proctors, and will subsequently be kept confidentially by the Proctors for six days, after which they will be destroyed.

Transcript

It is intended that a transcript of the meeting will be published in the Gazette of 12 May and, before then, on the Congregation website. As a result of time constraints, it will not be possible to check the report of the proceedings with individual speakers before publication. Speakers are asked to provide their written texts by email to congregation.meeting@admin.ox.ac.uk by 9am on Wednesday, 4 May.

Further information on Statute XII

The Statute XII consultation website can be found at: www.ox.ac.uk/staff/consultations/statute-xii.

Notice of Amendments

Under regulations 2.6 and 2.9 of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the Proctors, has reported the following amendments to Council as in her judgement being true amendments which are not inconsistent with or irrelevant to the principles of the proposal as set out in the preamble. Council now forwards these amendments to Congregation. The order of the amendments shown below is that in which they will be taken at the meeting.

Please note that in some cases changes to regulations are set out but these do not form part of the Legislative Proposal. If any of the amendments to the Legislative Proposal are carried, Council will need to republish its proposed changes in regulations.

(1) Equality and Diversity

Explanatory Note

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires the University to consider the potential and actual impact on equality of all their policies, procedures, decisions, and informal practices. This involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation), and taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. In applying dismissal (including redundancy) procedures, the University should pay due regard to its obligations in these respects.

In its Strategic Plan 2013–2018, one of the University’s core strategies is to work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile, and this aim should be enshrined in the Statute.

The University has created various working and advisory groups to pursue this objective. One such group is the Equality and Diversity Panel, which the University has charged with the responsibility of embedding awareness of equality and diversity across all its activities. This commitment to support equality of opportunity is expressed again in the University’s Equality Reports in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, and in the Athena Swan Charter and is also reflected in the University’s declared intention to apply for the Race Equality Charter in 2017. While it is commendable that the University is committed to its equality and diversity objectives, and is achieving success in some of them, this is not reflected in the proposed changes to the Regulations relating to Statute XII. There is a weak commitment towards equality, and none shown towards diversity in the composition of the Visitorial Board, Staff Employment Panel, Redundancy Panel and University Appeal Panel. There should be a requirement that these bodies be as representative as possible of the full range and balance of University staff. Training on equality and diversity should be included in the training required for panel members, and an expert adviser on any one of the protected characteristics should be available to the panel where appropriate.

Amendment

Part A: Construction, Application, and Interpretation, Section 1

1 In subsection (2) remove the final ‘and’.

2 In subsection (3) replace ‘fairness’ with ‘fairness; and’.

3 Add after subsection (3): ‘(4) to promote equality and diversity among all the University’s staff’.

[Further information related to the associated regulations]

Regulations for the Staff Employment Review Panel and University Appeal Panel.

1 In regulation 2 (2), after ‘Services’ insert ‘. The panel shall take advice from an appropriate adviser in cases where a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) has been raised as an issue or at the request of the staff member concerned.’ Replace ‘and appropriate’ with ‘Appropriate’.

2 In regulation 17 (2), after ‘Services’ insert ‘. The panel shall take advice from an appropriate adviser in cases where a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) has been raised as an issue or at the request of the staff member concerned.’ Replace ‘and appropriate’ with ‘Appropriate’.

Regulations for Constituting Panels convened under Statute XII Parts B, D and H

In regulation 5, after ‘training’ insert ‘, including on equality and diversity.’

Proposed by: C Wairimu Gatome, Department of Biomedical Services
Seconded by: Stuart White, Jesus

Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that the amendment is acceptable to Council.

(2) Academic Freedom

Explanatory Note

Problem 1 – Range of protection of VB

We have been assured that the proposed new Statute XII preserves a high degree of protection of academic freedom, but many people may be surprised at how it is actually supposed to work. The problem arises from the broad common use of the term ‘academic freedom’ contrasted to the narrower definition used in the new Statute.

The Statute starts out to ensure what is later referred to as ‘freedom of expression’ saying ‘1. This statute and any regulation made under this statute shall be construed in every case to give effect to the following guiding principles, that is to say: (1) to ensure that members of the academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, including their opinions about the University, without institutional censorship.
and without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges, and as further provided for in section 4 below.

However in section 4 we then find ‘(2) In this statute, “academic freedom” means the particular freedoms pertaining to research and teaching in the University and to which Parts C and D accord protection through the Visi-atorial Board’.

So it turns out that only the freedoms listed in the rest of 4 (2) are accorded the protection of the VB. Those in 1 (1) are not. Apparently the idea is that 1 (1) forbids the University from prosecuting someone for use of the freedoms in 1 (1), so no assignment to the VB is needed. However life is often not simple, and one can imagine that a person might feel a case is being brought against him nominally for some other reasons but really because of his actions under 1 (1), but he would not be able to claim access to the VB. If the University really believes that a disciplinary case for 1 (1) would never be pursued because it isn’t allowed by the Statute, they shouldn’t mind changing the Statute to give such ‘non-existent’ cases the protection of the VB. The same holds for the additional freedoms given in 4 (1).

This problem can be fixed by re-ordering text in section 4 to bring all the types of freedom under the VB as done in the amendment below.

Problem 2 - restriction to teaching and research staff

Section 4 (2) grants the protection of the Visi-atorial Board exclusively to ‘particular freedoms pertaining to research and teaching in the University in the case of those who are required to engage in academic teaching and/or research either by their written contracts of employment or by established and agreed practice’. Nominally this sounds OK, but some staff who are not included in that may be concerned that the University could try to fire them because of views that they express in the context of their University employment; his situation, members of staff will exercise their right to academic freedom only within the law.

(3) All members of the University must observe University policy concerning behaviour at work and the conduct of their duties.

2 In section 12 (2), replace ‘As a safeguard of academic freedom’ with ‘As a safeguard for freedom in matters of teaching and research as described in section 4 (1) (c)’.

Proposed by: Susan Cooper, Emeritus Fellow, St Catherine’s Seconded by: Patricia Thornton, Merton Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that the amendment is acceptable to Council.

(3) Confidentiality

Explanatory Note

The Statute and Regulations themselves don’t constrain the member of staff from discussing his case with colleagues, but the only thing that is ensured is the ability to discuss his case with his single chosen representative. It is well known that the administration tends to impose confidentiality in various areas. A person who is in danger of losing his job may be easily intimidated by even an implication of a constraint of confidentiality. If he doesn’t have a real expert available among his colleagues to represent him, he may want to discuss his situation with various people to assemble advice. He might benefit from asking people to act as witnesses in his defence but feel constrained by confidentiality from doing so. He may also simply need moral support from friends. This applies to the VB, SERP and UAP. It is more plausible that some degree of confidentiality may be required in a grievance case so we do not propose an amendment to that part of the Statute; however, we hope the University will consider reasonable allowance for
personal discussion in the Regulations and procedural guidelines.

A similar protection from an imposition of confidentiality is needed for staff threatened with redundancy, but it is more difficult to see where to put it. Staff threatened with redundancy should have been informed of that before the case goes to the Redundancy Panel, as the procedure is to first try to find possibilities for redeployment. Already at that stage, and throughout the proceedings, such staff need support unconstrained by confidentiality.

We suggest that it would be helpful for the administration to organise a discussion among people who have served on the Visitatorial Board to get their experience of these and similar issues to improve the final formulation of the Regulations.

Amendment

1 In section 33, renumber the existing (d) and (e) to (e) and (f) and insert:

'(d) that during preparation for the hearing and the hearing itself, the member of the academic staff has the right in strict confidence to discuss the situation with and obtain advice and moral support from colleagues in the University and outside it, personal friends and family.'

2 In section 36, renumber the existing (d) and (e) to (e) and (f) and insert:

'(d) that during preparation for the hearing and the hearing itself, the member of the academic staff has the right in strict confidence to discuss the situation with and obtain advice and moral support from colleagues in the University and outside it, personal friends and family.'

We propose that the member reasonably represent him. For the Visitatorial Board panels to bring someone else to assist and

representation (and argument on the size of panels)

Explanatory Note

Representation

The proposed new Statute XII allows a member of staff brought before the various panels to bring someone else to assist and represent him. For the Visitatorial Board and Appeal Court, both the existing and proposed Statute places no restriction on this representative, saying 'another person, whether such person is legally qualified or not'. However in most other cases the proposed Statute restricts it to a 'colleague in the University or trade union representative', as shown in the Table. No such restriction is placed on the person who presents the case for dismissal. Informal discussions have indicated that the University doesn't intend to use professional lawyers for the SERP, but what is intended now will not necessarily be practiced in the future if it is not embedded in the Statute or at least the Regulations. Even if the University doesn't use a professional lawyer, it can choose from a group of trained and experienced people in Personnel Services. In comparison, the member of staff is limited to the range of people he knows within the University, especially if he isn't a member of the union. This doesn't seem fair.

A useful comparison can be made to the established procedure for disciplining students. The Student Disciplinary Panel operates on a semi-legal pattern. The chair is a member of Congregation who is legally qualified (normally a member of the Law faculty) with two other Congregation members as additional members. The Proctors present the case for the prosecution and the student can be represented by someone he chooses without restriction: 'another person, who need not be legally qualified' (see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/234-062.shtml 3.16).

Comparison of allowed representation in old and proposed new Statute XII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Old Statute</th>
<th>Proposed new Statute</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sec.</td>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelim. Disciplinary</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Panel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitatorial Board (VB)</td>
<td>22 (a)</td>
<td>another person, whether such person is legally qualified or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERP and UAP</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grievance, dep/div</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Comm.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>friend or representaive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal Court</td>
<td>44 (2) (a)</td>
<td>another person, whether such person is legally qualified or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The restriction to a ‘colleague in the University or trade union representative’ is probably acceptable for the newly added provisions for the initial disciplinary procedures within a department or division and for the grievance procedures. It is probably also acceptable for the Review Panel (which decides whether a case goes to the VB or SERP) if that is how ‘colleague’ without specific restriction to ‘in the University’ would be interpreted – the omission may be an error rather than intentional.

VB and Appeal Court both have no restriction in the new and old Statute. We agree with the intention that the SERP and the UAP not normally use lawyers, but appropriate protection is needed to ensure a fair balance of representation.

The difference between 36 (a) and (b) for the SERP in the proposed new Statute is probably also an error and would be very difficult to use in practice.

**Argument on Panel Size**

The new Statute specifies only three members of the SERP, UAP, and Redundancy Panel, compared to five on the VB (both old and new). The reason given was that a panel of three is less intimidating and it is also easier to find a mutually agreeable meeting date for the smaller number. However, the meeting date problem could be solved by incorporating availability for a given date in the selection by lot described in the proposed Regulations, which already provide for drawing again if a drawn member has a conflict of interest or all three members a panel are of the same sex. The advantage of a larger panel, especially as it is a ‘lay’ panel more similar to a jury than a panel of professional judges, is that a broader range of experience and viewpoints can be brought to the deliberations. Also there is less danger of it being overly influenced by a single dominant member. The character of the SERP panel would still be distinct from that of the VB since all of its members would be internal to the University, rather than having a distinguished external legal chair.

This argument on Panel size complements those in the separate amendment submitted by Wairimu Gatome and Louise Upton. Their amendment proposes all the necessary textual changes that are needed to satisfy us, and so they are not repeated in our amendment below.

**Amendment**

1. In section 36 (a), after ‘by a colleague in the University or trade union representative’ insert ‘or by a legally qualified person provided that, given the nature of the case, the Registrar so agrees.’
2. In section 36 (b), replace ‘any person whom the member reasonably requests’ by ‘the person appointed under section 36 (a).’
3. For the avoidance of doubt in section 28 (3), insert the words ‘in the University’ after ‘colleague’.

[Further information related to the associated regulations]

If this amendment is carried, consequent changes are needed to the Regulations for the Staff Employment Review Panel and University Appeal Panel. In addition, section 3 of those Regulations should be expanded as follows:

> ‘The Registrar shall appoint a suitable person to present the case for the dismissal before the Panel (the “presenter”). The intention is to avoid the need for legal representation before the Panel. Only in cases where the Registrar has agreed that the person before the Panel may use legally qualified representation will a legally qualified presenter be used by the University. In cases when the Registrar has refused an application for the use of legal representation, he or she shall submit to the Panel for their information that application and the reasoning for the refusal.’

Proposed by: Susan Cooper, Emeritus Fellow, St Catherine’s
Seconded by: Johan Fopma, Physics
Department

Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that the amendment is acceptable to Council.

**Part B: Redundancy**

1. In section 14, subsection 6, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

**Part D: Discipline and Dismissal**

2. In section 35, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

[Further information related to the associated regulations]

If this amendment is carried, consequent changes to Regulations for the Staff Employment Review Panel and University Appeal Panel are proposed.

1. In section 2 (4), replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.
2. In section 17 (1), replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

**Regulations for the Redundancy Panel**

1. In section 2, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

**Regulations for Constituting Panels convened under Statute XII Parts B, D and H**

1. In section 2, replace ‘eighteen’ with ‘twenty-four’ and replace ‘three panel’ with ‘four pool’.
2. In section 7, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.
3. In section 9, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’ (twice) and replace ‘third’ with ‘fifth’.
4. In section 10, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

Proposed by: Wairimu Gatome, Department of Biomedical Services
Seconded by: Louise Upton, Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics and Lecturer, Christ Church

Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that it opposes this amendment.

**(5) Size of the Panels and the Pool**

**Explanatory Note**

No reason is given for the smaller size of the Staff Employment Review Panel, University Appeal Panel, and Redundancy Panel compared to the Visitatorial Board, which has retained a membership of five. The seriousness of both the issues to be considered by the panels and the consequences of those decisions will be as great as in the case of the Visitatorial Board. A panel size of five would surely increase the variety of views among the panel members, better ensure fairness, and provide a greater opportunity for equality and diversity representation. An increase in the size of the panels will make an increase in the size of the pool desirable, but with a Congregation membership of over 4,500, panels with five members and a pool of twenty-four seem easily achievable.

**Amendment**

**Part B: Redundancy**

1. In section 14, subsection 6, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

**Part D: Discipline and Dismissal**

2. In section 35, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

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4. In section 10, replace ‘three’ with ‘five’.

Proposed by: Wairimu Gatome, Department of Biomedical Services
Seconded by: Louise Upton, Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics and Lecturer, Christ Church

Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that it opposes this amendment.

**(6) Part B: Redundancy**

**Explanatory Note**

To ensure that all academic staff as defined in Part A section 3 retain the same level of protection against redundancy as they are assured of under the present Statute and to apply the principles of justice and fairness equally to all such staff;

To ensure that Congregation retains all the powers of governance that it holds under the present Statute without those powers being in any way diluted or diminished.
**Amendment**

Replace existing Part B: Redundancy as follows:

10. This Part enables a Redundancy Panel, to be constituted in accordance with regulations governing the membership of panels convened under Parts B, D and H of this Statute, to dismiss any member of the academic staff by reason of redundancy.

11. (1) Nothing in this Part shall prejudice, alter, or affect any rights, powers, or duties of the University or apply in relation to a person unless:

   (a) his or her appointment is made, or his or her contract of employment entered into, on or after 20 November 1987; or

   (b) he or she is promoted on or after that date.

(2) For the purposes of this section in relation to a person, a reference to an appointment made or a contract entered into on or after 20 November 1987 or to promotion on or after that date shall be construed in accordance with subsections (3) to (6) of section 204 of the Education Reform Act 1988.

12. This Part applies only where a decision has been taken that it is desirable that there should be a reduction in the members of the academic staff

   (a) of the University as a whole; or

   (b) of any division, faculty, school, department, or other similar area of the University by way of redundancy.

13. A decision under section 12 shall be referred to a Redundancy Panel selected by lot by the Registrar in accordance with regulations as set out in section 10, to consider proposals for such reductions as may be referred to it from time to time. The appointment of a Redundancy Panel shall require a prior decision of Congregation except in those instances involving employees on open-ended contracts where the need for redundancy arises through the withdrawal of external funding.

14. (1) Where a Divisional Board or equivalent University authority for a department, institution, or body proposes a reduction in the academic staff in a department, institution, or body, the proposal shall first be dealt with under the University’s personnel procedures as published from time to time, up to and including consideration of alternatives to compulsory redundancy.

   (2) Where following consideration under section 14 (1), it is not considered possible to achieve the proposed reduction in the members of the academic staff without dismissal(s) of such staff, the Divisional Board, or equivalent University authority shall refer a formal proposal for dismissal of members of the academic staff to the Director of Human Resources, in accordance with regulations for the procedure to be followed by a Redundancy Panel.

(3) The Director of Human Resources shall refer a proposal under section 14 (2) to the Registrar who, having sought and obtained the agreement of Congregation as required under section 13, shall appoint a Redundancy Panel according to the provisions of section 10 to consider such proposal in accordance with regulations for the procedure to be followed by a Redundancy Panel.

(4) In cases where a prior decision of Congregation under section 13 is not required, if a Redundancy Panel appointed to consider a particular redundancy proposal forms a majority view that for any reason it would be inappropriate to proceed without the approval of Congregation, the Panel should advise Council to that effect and await such approval before proceeding further.

(5) A Redundancy Panel appointed under section 14 (3) shall:

   (a) scrutinise the proposals in accordance with regulations for the procedure to be followed by a Redundancy Panel;

   (b) select and recommend the requisite members of the academic staff (if any) for dismissal by reason of redundancy; and

   (c) report its recommendations to the relevant Divisional Board or equivalent University authority.

(6) A Redundancy Panel shall comprise three members of Congregation elected and selected under regulations governing membership of panels convened under Parts B, D and H of this statute.

15. (1) Where the Redundancy Panel has selected and recommended the dismissal of a member of the academic staff under section 14 (5) (b), it may authorise an officer of the University as its delegate to dismiss any member of the academic staff so selected.

   (2) Each member of the academic staff selected shall be given separate notice of the selection approved by the Redundancy Panel.

(3) Each separate notice shall sufficiently identify the circumstances which have satisfied the Redundancy Panel that the intended dismissal is reasonable and in particular shall include:

   (a) a summary of the action taken by the Redundancy Panel and Congregation, under this Part;

   (b) an account of the selection processes used by the Redundancy Panel;

   (c) a reference to the rights of the person notified to appeal against the notice and to the time within which any such appeal is to be lodged under Part H; and

   (d) a statement as to when the intended dismissal is to take effect.

Proposed by: Alan Bogg, Hertford
Seconded by: Rafael Ramirez, Green Templeton

Under regulation 2.24 (c) of Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002, Council gives notice that it opposes this amendment.