

# Gazette Supplement



## Question and Reply, Legislative Proposal and Resolution concerning Parks College

### Congregation

7 May

The following text is of the meeting of Congregation at 2pm on 7 May. For further information please see *Gazette* Supplement (1) to *Gazette* No 5237, 1 May 2019.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** There are three items of business before Congregation today: the first a question and reply, the second a legislative proposal and the third a resolution, all relating to the proposed establishment of Parks College. Would you please be seated.

The first item of business is the question and reply. The question was published in the *University Gazette* on 21 March and the question and reply were published there on 25 April and 2 May. Under the regulations governing the conduct of business in Congregation, the question and reply are read in Congregation and no debate is permitted upon the reply. Supplementary questions may be asked to elucidate the reply given. The regulations state that, when questions are asked, they and the Council's replies to them shall be read in Congregation. Out of respect for the time members are spending here today, and given that members each have a copy of the question and reply in their hands, in the copy of the *Gazette* Supplement, we asked the questioner - Professor Edwards, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry - to agree that the question and reply be taken as read. Although he is not here today, he objected. However, out of deference to people's time, we would like to take it as read, but if six people here stand to object, the Registrar will read aloud the complete question and reply. Do six people object? If so, could you please stand.

I take that as no objection, so we will take the question and reply as read. You have them in your hands, so do please read them.

I now invite supplementary questions on the reply. If there are any supplementary questions, these will be noted and published in the *Gazette*. Replies to such supplementary questions may be taken and considered by Council at its next meeting on 20 May and published in the *Gazette* shortly after that date. I would be grateful if any member of Congregation who poses a supplementary question would afterwards provide a copy of that text to the Council Secretariat, as this would be of assistance in preparing the note of the meeting for publication in the *Gazette*. It would be helpful if those wishing to ask a supplementary question could stand, and when invited to speak, come forward to the microphone and introduce themselves by giving their name and college or department. Dr Georgy Kantor.

**Dr Kantor:** Georgy Kantor, St John's College. The reply states that a 'Strategic Plan Programme Board will assume collective responsibility for implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-23'. Given that the Strategic Plan covers most areas of our activities as a collegiate university, would Council explain what 'collective responsibility for implementation' means and whether the Programme Board has been given any decision-making powers in addition to the advisory? Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Professor Julia Bray.

**Professor Bray:** The reply states the space allocation provides for '157 units of graduate accommodation to Parks College, in Farndon Court and the redeveloped Wellington Square. Further consideration will be given to the accommodation needs of Parks College as its student numbers increase.' Given that sustainability of Parks College as projected depends on 500 students, have the costs of providing the

additional accommodation been calculated so as to ensure the promised sustainability, or does this remain a work for the future?

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Mrs Juliane Kerkhecker.

**Mrs Kerkhecker:** Juliane Kerkhecker, Oriel College. The reply states that 'it is not intended to publish consultative notices on every step that will be taken to implement the Strategic Plan 2018-23'. On what 'steps', if any, is it intended to publish consultative notices? Would they include such preliminary consultation on 'steps' to requiring Congregation's consent to legislative proposals or space allocations under Statute XVI A 4?

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Professor Stefan Kiefer.

**Professor Kiefer:** Stefan Kiefer, Department of Computer Science. The reply states 'The terms of reference and membership of the Strategic Plan Programme Board were published on the Council website following Council's meeting of 29 October 2018 and are as follows'. They include '(d) The development of Key Performance Indicators and targets against which to measure progress in delivery of the Plan'. What are the Key Performance Indicators and targets against which progress in delivery of Parks College is meant to be measured?

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Let us now turn to the second item on the agenda: the legislative proposal concerning Statute V. The legislative proposal was placed on the agenda of this meeting in the *University Gazette* together with an explanatory note published on 21 March. Three members of Congregation have given notice that they intend to vote against the legislative proposal. The procedure will be as follows: I shall first call Professor Lionel

Tarassenko to move the legislative proposal on behalf of Council, and Professor Matthew Freeman to second it. In the absence of Professor Edwards, I shall then call upon Professor Duncan Robertson to oppose the proposal, and Professor Alex Schekochihin to second the opposition. There will then be further speeches on the legislative proposal, as time permits. A number of speakers indicated by the deadline published in the *Gazette* that they would like to speak in the debate.

When called, please would speakers come forward and speak into the microphone, first giving their name and college or department. The anti-loquitor device will indicate a speaker's final minute with an amber light and then turn red at the end of that minute. Speakers are also asked to confine their remarks to themes relevant to the legislative proposal. In light of the volume of business on today's agenda and the number of speakers who indicated by the deadline published in the *Gazette* that they would like to speak in the debate, I do not anticipate taking questions or comments from the floor.

At the conclusion of the debate, the legislative proposal will be put to Congregation and a vote will take place by paper ballot. A member may not leave a completed voting paper with another member; only a member's personal voting paper will be accepted. Any member who cannot stay until I call the vote will not be able to vote.

I call on Professor Lioniel Tarassenko to move the proposal on behalf of Council, followed by Professor Matthew Freeman.

**Professor Tarassenko:** I am Professor Lioniel Tarassenko, Head of the Engineering Science Department, Fellow of St John's College, Chair of the Programme Board for Parks College. Vice-Chancellor and colleagues, I have been a member of the Medical Sciences Divisional Board for the last ten years, and of the MPLS Divisional Board for the past five years. Every year without fail a board meeting debates why we cannot recruit more graduate students. In my department the cap on the annual intake of graduate students has recently been lifted from 73 to 90 for 120 academics, which means that colleagues are still not able to recruit one new graduate student each year. In the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, with which I collaborate, the cap is 28 for 112 academics.

If we accept – and I am sure that we all do – that belonging to a college is an intrinsic part of an Oxford education, then we have

to make more college places available for graduates to meet the demand, certainly in the MPLS, Medical Sciences and Social Sciences Divisions. Since 2008 – the last time there was a major initiative for graduate students with the merger of Green and Templeton Colleges – the number of applications for graduate study at the University has grown from 13,500 to nearly 30,000. Mixed colleges are understandably reluctant to add more graduate students so as not to upset the balance between graduates and undergraduates. Likewise, the existing graduate colleges and societies have limited capacity for expansion.

The establishment of at least one new graduate college or society is one of the education priorities in the University's five-year Strategic Plan, which was approved in this very place by Congregation on 30 October 2018. So a Programme Board was constituted in November to develop the plans for the new graduate society, ideally within or close to the Science Area. One of the first tasks was to explore how the setting up of this society could be integrated with the existing plans for the redevelopment of the Radcliffe Science Library. The discussions with the GLAM Pro-VC, Bodley's Librarian and Deputy Librarian were, from the very beginning, collaborative and harmonious. In parallel, the RSL Redevelopment Project Board continued to meet with the Deputy Librarian as its Chair. Rumours about these weekly meetings began to spread, and so we decided to make an announcement on the University website before Christmas.

In Hilary term the Programme Board created a Parks College website, which provided detailed information on the plans. We published two articles in the *Oxford Magazine* and held four Q&A forums. The plans were also scrutinised by University committees as well as the Conference of Colleges, its Graduate Committee and its Estates Bursar Committee. The Finance Committee recommended to Council the spending envelope of Parks College. The figures are presented in the *Gazette* of 25 April, so I will not go through them here. Suffice it to say that they include the previously agreed budget of £15.8 million for the redevelopment of the Radcliffe Science Library, including extensive work for the museum collections, and so the Parks College element of the overall budget is nowhere near the sum of £40 million quoted elsewhere.

Today there are more than 200 RSIVs and more than 400 Grade 9 or Grade 10 researchers, many with the title of Associate

Professor, in the University. Parks College will be proud to follow in the tradition of St Cross, Wolfson and Kellogg Colleges, set up to provide a college home for University researchers and teachers. As with other graduate colleges, college activities will be organised around a number of research clusters. We have announced our three initial clusters, chosen for their wide reach across the four divisions, but both the numbers and topics for these clusters will naturally evolve over time. One distinctive feature of Parks College will be that the research seminars, workshops and reading groups will be organised and led by at least two fellows from different disciplines.

A new graduate society cannot be born perfectly formed, but there has been a lot of input from colleagues in the University during the gestation period. Nearly 400 signed up for the Q&A forums and 90 for the focus group discussions. Parks College answers an acute need for new graduate students expressed by three out of four divisions. It will provide a college home for academic researchers with no college affiliation and form a community in which postdocs will be welcome and given a clear role. As well as being multidisciplinary, the ethos will be collaborative, as has already been demonstrated in the way that we have worked with the libraries and museums. I urge you to support the legislative proposal to establish Parks College. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call upon Professor Matthew Freeman to second it.

**Professor Freeman:** I am Matthew Freeman, Head of the Dunn School of Pathology and Fellow of Lincoln. I am also a Congregation-elected member of Council. Vice-Chancellor, colleagues, I speak as someone who honestly has been critical of some earlier aspects of the Parks College plan and the way it has been handled. By thus putting my head above the parapet I broke one of the cardinal rules of a quiet life and I found myself put onto the Parks College Programme Board. Since then, I have been impressed by the extent to which the core Parks College team have shown themselves to be flexible and responsive to concerns, and, while I continue to believe that the process could have been handled better, I am now a supporter.

As head of a research-intensive department in the Medical Sciences Division, I get to see the reality of accepting too few graduate research students. Our faculty, particularly the younger ones, struggle to get the students they need to build their own success. Our research effort

is compromised. Of course, it would in principle be possible to expand student numbers without establishing a new college, but it would be a sad day when students arrived in Oxford with no college association. The alternative of growing existing colleges would risk harming what makes colleges collegiate; they are not infinitely expandable. There is also an issue of the many postdoctoral fellows – future academic leaders – who do not have the opportunity to experience the collegiate University, the thing that makes Oxford special. In the Dunn School, for example, we have over 100 postdocs with no college association. And it is not just postdocs: as is fairly typical for the Medical Sciences departments, more than half of our group leaders at the Dunn School do not have official University positions that come with college affiliations. Some are RSIV research professors; the rest – disproportionately young, disproportionately female – are on externally funded and very elite independent career fellowships. These are full-time academic leaders at Oxford University who may never have the chance to contribute to college life nor receive the benefits.

My sense is that the most substantial underlying concern about Parks College is growth: that phrase, slightly cryptic to newcomers, ‘size and shape’. Although legitimate, this does need to be balanced against the risk that we lose our edge, that in a rapidly changing global environment we fail to stay at the top. My own conclusion is that controlled and well-managed expansion – including, crucially, housing provision – is necessary and desirable. I note that Congregation also supported this goal as part of the University’s Strategic Plan last year. Will Parks College offer the same experience as other graduate colleges and societies? Probably not. But surely that is not intrinsically a bad thing. The experience of students and faculty in different colleges is already very diverse. Christ Church or Kellogg, Linacre or Lincoln, they all provide significantly different experiences. But few, I think, would argue this is a weakness. The collegiate University is greater than the sum of the parts. Diversity of experience promotes diversity of intake, and different people will seek different niches.

In my role as Congregation’s Representative, I am pleased to report the importance being placed by both Council and the Programme Board on ensuring the overall quality of the student experience. And importantly, the Student Union is involved with this consultation and planning. None of us can predict how Parks College will develop

over the next decades and centuries if we give it the go-ahead today, but as a natural scientist I think the concept of evolution is fundamental. Selection is powerful in institutions as well as in nature. If there are aspects that do not work well, they will be modified. If there are innovations that improve the student or faculty experience, they are likely to spread. Throughout history that has applied to the rather narrow religious institutions from which our broad, free-thinking collegiate University has evolved. Parks College is part of a long and honourable tradition of educational research innovation that started here in the 13th century, and which has been extended and enhanced in every century since. In conclusion, whilst of course critically challenging and assessing these plans, we should be bold and seize the opportunity, not shy away from progress and innovation.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call upon Professor Duncan Robertson to oppose the proposal.

**Professor Robertson:** Duncan Robertson, St Catherine’s College. Vice-Chancellor, members of Congregation, I look around this room and see privilege. Every one of us here in the Sheldonian Theatre is privileged. Every member of Congregation reading the *Gazette* is privileged. We are privileged not by our past, but by our present. We all have the power to share in the democratic self-governance of the institution of the collegiate University of Oxford. But democratic self-governance is hard. It is time-consuming and troublesome and most easily left to specialists – specialists with a track record of delivering strategic plans at high speed. The Vice-Chancellor warned us of the dangers of high speed in her 2017 oration: ‘Over 2,000 years ago, Tacitus pointed out that “truth is confirmed by inspection and delay, falsehood by haste and uncertainty”’. It is tempting to react quickly to short-term opportunities in order to gain transient rewards, but this is – as my strategic management colleagues will confirm – often at the expense of more attractive opportunities foregone.

We must at the very least be able to give *ad hoc* proposals the service of being fully inspected. The proposal to establish a new society – or is it a college? – is a significant one, particularly when it is to have its own distinctive culture, as was the case with Templeton College before it. The reason that an education priority within the Strategic Plan has abruptly become a press release announcing Parks College without the knowledge of Congregation is that such proposals are now increasingly made

without such scrutiny. While the Strategic Plan was put to Congregation for approval, the implementation plan referred to within the Strategic Plan was not. This plan within a plan is administered by programme boards whose agenda and minutes are secret. In short, Congregation does not know what is going on, and its ability to give informed consent is subverted.

One of the strengths of Oxford that sets it apart from its competitors is its self-governance. This has allowed the University to evolve and adapt to a changing environment, and mercifully not be suffocated by the latest management fads and fashions. It is bewildering that senior managers do not appear to recognise the capabilities available to them within Congregation, preferring to operate in a more comfortable ‘command and control’ top-down fashion. If strategy is imposed, we as a University lose the ability to adapt and to take advantage of opportunities that may emerge – opportunities that may not be visible from the boardroom, but are visible from the diversity of perspectives that each one of us holds as a unique member of Congregation. The combined organisational capabilities of Congregation – all members of Congregation, experts in their own field, whatever they may be – are truly awe-inspiring. It is not easy to find consensus, but that does not mean this University should give up and follow the lowest common denominator of managerial hubris.

Congregation must be allowed to review and guide the legislative proposal to create Parks College prior to giving its approval. The Strategic Plan spoke of creating a new college by 2023, not a new society in 2019. The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life was established 25 years ago. The principles of openness and accountability which it set out are as relevant now as they have ever been. I urge you to vote against the legislative proposal while we still have the right to exercise that privilege.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Professor Alex Schekochihin.

**Professor Schekochihin:** Alex Schekochihin, Professor of Theoretical Physics, Merton College and Department of Physics. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, students, Congregation, I second the motion to oppose the legislative proposal. I do not believe we have a choice today. In different circumstances and in a different time frame, we might have discussed whether there is a case for establishing a new college, or what kind of new college there is a case for establishing. We might have discussed whether there is a case for establishing it in

this reduced society format, with limited self-governance, no independent resources and the relatively narrow ambition in its subject spread – and the distinctly inferior offer, as far as Oxford’s collegiate experience is concerned, to its future graduate students. We might have discussed whether, having been told last year – and be in no doubt, about to be told again – that the University cannot afford its staff pensions. Having been told for ten years that the University cannot afford to maintain its staff’s pay in line with the rising of cost of living, we should not be relaxed about the University telling us that it can easily afford to spend £40 million here and now on this initiative. We might have discussed whether there is an intellectual, or indeed business case for expansion in graduate numbers. To quote Pro-VC David Prout from his now famous email to the VC on this very subject: it is ‘a bit late for that’ – it is indeed a bit late for that.

All these substantive points are unfortunately rather moot today in the face of the constitutional shambles that this process has been so far. In another one of those extraordinary emails obtained by Gill Evans, via her forensic freedom-of-information requests detailed in last week’s *Oxford Magazine*, the VC says that she ‘wouldn’t feel too strongly about the absence of a reference to Congregation’, as she is about to announce the intention to establish Parks College as a *fait accompli* to the press. It seems that she didn’t feel too strongly about letting Council know either. She might have been right about that, as Council does not appear to have minded. It was happy to approve allocating the said £40 million when belatedly asked, and to put it all to Congregation today without, it seems, being unduly worried about sorting out the details – the rather weighty details, procedural and substantive, that have been or will be raised in other speeches today. Was she right about Congregation too? Make no mistake: we are supposed to rubber-stamp this today.

So Congregation, in our role as guardians of this University’s welfare and reputation, as well as of its centuries-old proud tradition of academic governance, are we relaxed about giving up our duty to scrutinise and deliberate? But perhaps even this point is in fact moot. I urge you to parse those freedom of information disclosures, the sloppiness of it all, the inattention to detail, the ‘we will figure it out as we go along’ attitude. The depressing takeaway from all this is not just that we are run by specialist managers who are trying to rush through a major initiative and show little respect for academic self-governance, but that we are

run by these specialist managers in such an extraordinarily amateurish way, vividly, if trivially, exemplified by them being oblivious that off-hand emails they write to each other are always one freedom-of-information request away from becoming public. Does this matter? Do we hand them a blank cheque now and trust them to sort out the details later? Does the level of competence displayed so far fill us with optimism that this will be done well, or do we stop this train in its tracks, reset the process and ask for it all to be done properly this time? Congregation, I do not believe we have a choice today. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. The debate on the legislative proposal is now open to the house. I call on Professor E J Milner-Gulland.

**Professor Milner-Gulland:** E J Milner-Gulland, Tasso Leventis Professor of Biodiversity in the Zoology Department and Merton College, member of the Parks College Programme Board. Vice-Chancellor and colleagues, last week MPs passed a motion to declare a climate emergency, while their Committee on Climate Change recommended that this country should achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, recognising that achieving this would be a huge societal and technical challenge. Next year global leaders will sign up to a global deal for nature and people, which is likely to have grand ambitions to restore nature while meeting the sustainable development goals, and will require major changes in how we live our lives. Environmental issues are close to my heart, but they are just one example of the huge societal challenges for which this University is providing world-leading cutting-edge research. There are many others. These types of wicked problem require input across disciplines across the University, from Humanities, Social, Physical and Life and Medical Sciences. They also require us to engage with the external world, with innovators, entrepreneurs, media and the creative arts, as well as with policymakers and the general public.

When I first saw the vision for Parks College I was hugely excited about its ambition to provide the fertile ground that would support this University’s students and researchers to contribute to addressing global challenges, such as climate change. Much of the focus of the discussions of Parks College is in its important role in enabling us to expand our graduate provision within a broad set of research clusters. But, just as importantly, it will provide a college home for postdocs and research fellows, whose

energy and creativity is a huge contributor to our University’s research excellence. We will also welcome into the University, through the college, people who are traditionally excluded from the collegiate system, such as course directors, research co-ordinators and collaborators from industry, government and NGOs, both locally and internationally.

This vision for Parks College has two really important elements for me. The first is the opportunity to link research directly with practice. For example, we have the research excellence in this University that would enable us to set and report against bold environmental targets, and Parks College can take the lead in demonstrating how an institution can do this. I hope that Parks College can pledge to reach net-zero emissions within a few years of opening. More than that, I would like it to commit to no net loss or net gain for all our environmental impacts, for example by working with other colleges and parts of the University to source food as sustainably as possible. We need to start flipping our defaults. For example, Parks College could serve food that is default vegetarian and vegan, with meat as the alternative. It won’t be easy, but how can we expect others to implement our own researchers’ recommendations if we can’t do it ourselves? The second element is that Parks College has the opportunity for thinking innovatively about how to support the University to change its composition so that it is more reflective of society at large. If in our research we aim to bridge the gap between addressing big global issues and issues which matter to the people in our own backyard, then we need to ensure that the college membership is similarly diverse at all levels. That means we need to make everyone feel welcome, regardless of their social, cultural, religious and geographical backgrounds, their gender, personal and family circumstances. We need to open up our physical spaces and our intellectual life to the city and to the county. Our intimate physical association with the Bodleian, museums and public engagement will be a huge asset here. We need to work actively to find funding, so that people from less privileged backgrounds can join the University and contribute to our world-leading research, whether they be from Oxford or Ouagadougou. This vision will need a transparent, open and non-hierarchical governance structure and a positive can-do attitude. We have great role models to draw on already from across the collegiate University. Parks College’s research themes, governance structures and physical spaces will not be for everyone,

but in the rich diversity of this University's ecosystem there is surely a niche for a college like this, and one that I would be hugely proud to be part of. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Dr Georgy Kantor.

**Dr Kantor:** Georgy Kantor, St John's College. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, members of Congregation, the legislation put in front of us today can be summarised very simply: Parks College means Parks College. This leaves us little scope for amendment or further input of any meaningful kind once we approve it; and no, 'sent in proposals via the project website' is not quite the same. Many of us meant to vote for an amendment today that asked Congregation to hold a separate vote on the new society's readiness to start, but it was disallowed on procedural grounds and it proved impossible to come with an alternative form of words in the short time frame available for that. This raises significant questions for another day, about a relegation of substantive rules for new societies from statutes to regulations, in the framing of which Congregation appears to have no direct say.

For today, however, the impossibility to amend leaves us with little choice beyond returning the proposals to the drawing board and asking for the proper consultation process to be conducted first. Too much remains opaque or problematic at this stage to give the new society full go-ahead just yet. Questions about the current proposals are twofold. First, as the senior tutor of Oriel is going to address in her speech, are they good enough for academics and graduates in the planned research clusters? I will focus on the second aspect myself. Can we be satisfied that our existing provision is not compromised and that all the knock-on effects have been properly considered? I fear that it is, at best, too early to be assured of that. I am sorry that Council didn't fulfil its obligation to publish a notice where proposals may lead to loss of existing services, but even Council's own explanatory notice makes it abundantly clear that a considerable degree of uncertainty remains in this respect.

It is only two months from now, on 15 July, that Council expects to know whether students can really be admitted to the new society from 2020. A replacement building for our Chemistry colleagues is yet to be found. The space-sharing agreement between Parks College and the Bodleian Libraries is yet to be agreed with the curators, and it seems perverse to give it a final stamp of Congregation's approval in advance of that, particularly in the light

of warnings from the RSL librarians in last week's *Oxford Magazine*. As we now know from a freedom-of-information request published in the same magazine, some of the new graduate accommodation to be allocated hasn't yet received planning permission. As for how the 200 graduates a year to be admitted in 2023 and subsequent years are to be housed in 157 flats, and how much of the already existing graduate accommodation will need to be requisitioned for these needs, we haven't so far got a clue. Perhaps even more importantly, since the college contribution scheme is rightly meant to include any University societies, we need to have a clear explanation of how will the colleges and societies currently eligible to fund under the scheme be affected, particularly if they are going to lose University accommodation for their own graduates to Parks College, which looks eminently plausible at the moment.

The question is given a particular edge, as we were led to believe the funds for the new Access and Participation Plan – another crucial part of the University Strategy – are coming from the same source. A meeting of Congregation I hope to come soon is one in which, after the proper process of consultation, a set of proposals fully answering these concerns is presented to us, and in which our colleagues in the Department of Chemistry and in the Radcliffe Science Library feel able to support these proposals. And if that will require changes, then so be it. This is much too important, both for the new society and for the University at large, to be done on the back of an envelope. In the meanwhile, members of Congregation, we need to retain our powers of oversight. No one will exercise them for us. There is much wisdom and experience spread across the collegiate University. They should be allowed to have their proper say through channels carefully set up for that in our statutes. I will vote against the legislative proposal today.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Professor Christiaan Monden.

**Professor Monden:** Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, dear colleagues, I am Christiaan Monden, Nuffield Fellow and Head of the Sociology Department. Our college system is unique; it gives unique challenges and unique opportunities. From my perspective in the Social Sciences, I believe Parks College gives us exciting and much-needed opportunities. Places for graduate students, meaningful college affiliation for young faculty, and a natural home for interdisciplinary research shaped for impact and public engagement. The case for extra

places has been made in our Strategic Plan, but let me add why I think it is important. The way we do Social Sciences evolves; not everybody changes, not everybody has to change, but increasingly we work in larger and more diverse teams. In these groups, research students and early-career researchers play a vital role, especially when the research goes beyond the borders of one single discipline. Increasingly, we need to bring in people with different disciplinary backgrounds and mixed disciplinary backgrounds. It has been difficult to find enough college places for them. Parks College can be a home for these people.

The research portfolio of the Social Sciences has grown enormously over the last decade. When I joined my department ten years ago there were just a few postdocs; now they are the largest group in my department. But not all of them have found meaningful college affiliation, and this is true much more so outside my department and other divisions. With Parks College, more postdocs and more young faculty can really benefit intellectually from this college system. Now if Parks College was only about adding extra places, I would still support it, but I'm not sure I would be speaking here. Parks College is and has to be about more than just adding extra places. It has to be about cross- or multi- or interdisciplinary research, including input from the Social Sciences. Whether it is the impact of artificial intelligence or climate change, the great challenges of the 21st century need this type of research. We have to learn from each other, work with each other. A sociologist with a computer scientist, a geochemist with an economist, a demographer with a geneticist. Such cross-disciplinary scholarship requires actual spaces and intellectual spaces, and Parks College can provide just that.

A new college also means shaping a new culture. The problem-driven nature of scholarship at Parks College provides a real opportunity to ingrain impact and public engagement into the ethos of the college from the start. Let me end with a practical example of the demand. We have just received a £10 million grant from the Leverhulme Trust to establish an interdisciplinary centre on demographic science. Led by Professor Melinda Mills, this will span sociology, demography, economics, history, philosophy, statistics, informatics, molecular genetics and biology. The grant provides for new graduate scholarships. The grant provides for new early-career positions. But can we attract the best? Can we place them? Can we offer them college affiliation that helps them thrive?

This is just one of many examples across the University of how Parks College brings much-needed opportunities to students and early-career faculty. Let us seize these opportunities. I urge you to support the legislative proposal.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Mrs Juliane Kerkhecker.

**Mrs Kerkhecker:** Juliane Kerkhecker, Oriel College and the Faculty of Classics. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, members of Congregation and student representatives. Notes of the meeting of the Executive Project Board for Parks College held on 12 December 2018 state, and I quote: 'It was noted there would be issues if the experience for students at the outset is not what is expected. A parallel was drawn with overseas students who do not specify a college and are allocated to one, and then find out after they arrive that the offerings to students differ from college to college.' There is little sign so far that this problem has been fully addressed. Members of Congregation, the rules of entitlement to college association have been a fundamental part of our institutional set-up since they were introduced in 1963. And the aim of guaranteeing college association to colleagues and students in new disciplines is one we can all agree with. But it will not be enough to declare them members of a new society. It falls on us, as members of existing colleges, to guarantee that both the students and academics at a new foundation get a proper deal, and it is far from clear that this will be the case with Parks College.

Even on the optimistic scenario presented to us in the explanatory note, provided that suitable alternative premises can be found for the Chemistry Doctoral Training Centre in time, and provided there will be no delays in the planning permissions of building works, students will not have a hall of their own for the first two years, nor any facilities we would normally associate with an Oxford college experience. And one may legitimately ask whether we should hurry to admit students before the buildings are ready. But problems extend beyond this initial period. Even in its full state, the new foundation will have no on-site accommodation, no uninterrupted use of the meeting and seminar rooms, no personal working space for fellows in college, and no library of its own. One could argue that sharing a space with the Radcliffe Science Library could solve this last problem, but will it have space for the 500 extra students who might want to study there? If that is what we now call a University society, should the Manor Road Building for Social

Sciences or the projected Humanities building in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter be made University societies as well? At least there people have work spaces, meeting rooms and some library provision, and therefore actually spend time there together. Would that be true of the proposed Parks College? In the absence of much practical need to come to Parks College, with both research and accommodation situated elsewhere, neither students nor fellows may feel part of the same community. And I take it that is the main reason why we have colleges and societies, as my quote from the beginning shows.

The flysheet in support of the legislative proposal rightly refers to successful examples of new University societies, some of them later becoming colleges. We need to recall, however, that these successful projects were given a much greater level of scrutiny and more detailed planning than the current proposals. Indeed, what is now regulations to be approved by Council was then part of the Queen-in-Council Statutes. And not every project passed muster: the proposals to create Southgate College were rejected by Congregation on 7 May 1972. One of the speakers for the opposition quoted a 'tightly controlled, much limited and emasculated new society, so unlike a real college'.

Members of Congregation, in creating a new society we need to avoid what our predecessors rightly warned about. We owe that much to our colleagues and students in the fields proposed for Parks College. The reform of Statute XII has recently provided us all with a model of good governance, with carefully planned stages of consultation, allowing us to reach a consensual decision. The decisions on Parks College are no less important and they need more thought. We should not approve them yet. I urge you to oppose the legislative proposal today.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Professor Katherine Blundell.

**Professor Blundell:** Katherine Blundell, Department of Physics, St John's College. Vice-Chancellor and Congregation, I should like to make the case that the number of research students needs to be increased. The undergraduate experience is when students learn how to learn for themselves. But what they learn as research students goes way beyond. They are our apprentices; they work closely with us; they grow intellectually in new ways. They become able to hold lots of ideas in their minds at the same time, not just one. They learn details matter; they learn to figure out creative approaches to problems. Given this, I can't be alone

in wondering whether more such highly trained DPhils could be a greater asset to the wider world. Indeed, you might think that having not just PPE and Geography graduates in the Cabinet could be an asset at times of national debate, where clarity of thinking is needed. I couldn't possibly comment.

More concretely, Oxford doctoral students are highly sought after by industry, and thus enrich UK Plc. Nearly half of my own former research students are now overseas doing wonderful things, in no small part due to their training here. I am sure many of you here could quote similar statistics for your own students. Aside from the benefit to the wider world, increasing the number of DPhil students would alleviate pressing problems in research groups where continuity of techniques needs to be preserved. What we do is hard, and cannot be picked up by a novice overnight. Appropriately sized teams are needed to compete with Stanford, MIT and Caltech. I don't mean this merely in terms of faculty retention issues because of having too few students relative to others; I mean that the challenges are large and require multiple focused minds to advance expeditiously. Too few research students means we are throttled back. Earlier this year, I again served on a selection panel for the recruitment of aspiring doctoral students. Again, I saw the same story of way more talented applicants than we had places for. Again, I saw way more faculty wanting DPhil students than we could take. We are nowhere near being able to place one new research student for each faculty member per year. New funding for students can be found, but our numbers are tightly fixed by college caps. I note that in Lord Stern's independent review of REF, he stipulated that the numbers of PhD students per academic was a key metric to be used in both the unit-level and the institution-level environment statements.

I therefore believe as a University we have four credible options. First, do nothing; this would perpetuate the current situation in which we are not allowing many research groups to grow above a subcritical size and reach their full scientific potential. This would be a pity. Second, we could break the link between research degrees and colleges so that research students would no longer need to be a member of a college and pay the college fee. This would go against the grain of the collegiate University that many of us think is one of Oxford's greatest assets. Third, we could increase research student numbers with the help of existing colleges increasing their numbers, but there is little appetite or capacity to increase yet further.

Fourth, we could found a new college or colleges to accommodate more research students. These are our only realistic options to increase the number of research students who are central to our mission as one of the world's great research universities.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Mr Ben Fernando.

**Mr Fernando:** Benjamin Fernando, Worcester College. Thank you, Madam Vice-Chancellor. I suspect I am unique among the speakers today in being the only one who is a current DPhil student, which is perhaps unfortunate given that the DPhil students will indeed make up the lifeblood and the majority of the members of this new college. I would say that wholeheartedly I do support the University's aim to raise the number of graduate students that we have; not for the impact that will have on research, but rather in recognition of the fact that attending Oxford is an enormous privilege, and for many individuals, can be a route to social mobility that they did not have the opportunity to make use of at undergraduate level. For them, their communities and indeed society as a whole, that can only be a good thing.

However, if the most is to be made of this new college, I cannot help but feel that those who will make up the majority of this community, those DPhil students, must be given more of an opportunity to engage. Although, like me, I suspect many students support the idea of giving more people a chance to experience all that is good about Oxford, the feeling amongst the graduate students, as I judge it, is that more needs to be done to listen to and engage our ideas. From what I have heard today, it seems that a similar feeling exists in this room amongst some of the more senior members of the University. Although I do not speak here today as a student representative, earlier this afternoon I met with the postgraduate representatives from the MPLS Division to hear their thoughts before speaking to you. On the whole we do support, I believe, the idea of the establishment of a new college. The idea of giving students a chance to experience all that is good and great about one of the most exciting places to do research in the world can be something that can only do well to be expanded. But nonetheless, I reiterate that I hope moving forwards there will be greater consultation on some specific aims with the graduate student body. To give you an example, the engagement of students in the Programme Board thus far remains limited. To the best of my knowledge, there are no scientists at the level of postdoctoral fellow or below

who are currently members of that Board. We feel that we have much to contribute, many ideas to bring and perhaps a younger vision than might otherwise be achieved and hope that we will be listened to. Now that we come to approving these legislative proposals, one also wonders when the new college will commit to how it will engage students on its governing body once established. Perhaps those are things that will be decided upon later, but I for one would have hoped that some commitment would have been given to us at this early stage.

I must profoundly disagree with an earlier speaker that equity between colleges is not important. I must say that I think that one of the most common concerns I hear as a student representative, from the graduate students, is that the graduate students across different universities, and different colleges specifically, are not treated fairly despite having the same funder. I think it is particularly important that, if Parks College cannot achieve equity, it is entirely clear about what steps it will take to reverse that, rather than just acknowledging that it will be a fact. Beyond this, there are wider concerns. Those of us whose salaries barely make it into five figures, rather than being well into six, wonder how dumping many new graduates into Oxford will affect us. Students in the Chemistry Department expressed concern about how their CDT provision will continue onwards, given that the requisition of part of the new college will be from the Chemistry Department.

However, having said all that, I must say that I think I do support the proposal to establish a new college today, simply because I feel that in this University things often take far, far longer to get done than they ought to do, and we have a chance here today to take a step forward that I hope will benefit not just the current generation of young graduates, but graduate students for many years to come. I will vote in favour of this legislative proposal today, and I do so after having listened to many, many DPhil students, having listened to many of my colleagues and heard what they had to say. However, I would profoundly hope that those in charge of this endeavour will take the opportunity to listen far more to what those students have to say in the coming weeks and months. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Mr Joe Inwood.

**Mr Inwood:** Joe Inwood, Mansfield College, President of Oxford University Student Union. Vice-Chancellor, members of Congregation, today I am speaking in favour

of the legislative proposal to establish Parks College. I do this because I believe it is in the interests of students to establish a new graduate college. I have listened intently to students, staff and academics in my representative role on University and college committees and heard many concerns about Parks College on issues ranging from its naming - will this become Emirates College? - to its financial sustainability. But, as time has passed, I have been surprised and impressed by the evolution of the plans taking all these concerns into account. The voices of students are being heard. This proposal is an opportunity to build a college that can be tailored to the requirements of 21st-century graduate students. With Parks College we can build students' interests into the fabric of a new Oxford college. There is student representation on the Parks College Programme Board. Oxford SU sabbatical officers attend Council and PRAC, where Strategic Plan priorities relating to Parks College are reviewed and progress is scrutinised. We will continue to engage critically with Professor Tarassenko, Professor Trefethen and others. This is the least the students can expect; and meaningful engagement takes place beyond the meeting rooms of Wellington Square. The SU has facilitated this through a comprehensive survey of student expectations from college life and by students from every division, level of study and demographic group. This has already had practical effect on Parks College plans. Students have also been given detailed input through focus groups organised by Professor Milner-Gulland, and there have been Q&A sessions for students to attend and ask critical questions. Engaging with students earnestly and constructively is in the interests of us all, and as such, there must be student representation on the eventual governing body of Parks College.

We must secure high-quality, affordable, accessible student accommodation for Parks College students. An egalitarian ethos can bring students and academics closer together in shared endeavour. There has been a commitment to incorporate a greater capacity to share research with the public, welcoming visitors, rather than hiding behind locked gates and intimidating walls. If the University is to grow, it must grow sustainably and make careful consideration of the affect on student experience. It is clear that there is limited appetite for growth from existing mixed colleges. The message I have heard from students again and again is that the Strategic Plan must not mean packing students into the University and city without thought for the

consequences. Growth in student numbers will bring ongoing costs to the University in essential services and support to maintain a high standard of education and welfare. New graduate colleges are the best way to facilitate growth in these circumstances. Oxford SU continues to advocate for greater attention to and action on student welfare and mental health. Graduate students face particular challenges: funding, international orientation, housing, social isolation, to list just a few. Student representation in the key decisions that lie ahead for Parks College will bring all these questions to the forefront and make them a priority concern.

Council must decide at its July meeting whether to press the pause button on a 2020 intake for Parks College. It is far more important to ensure a quality student experience for the college's first-year intake than it is to meet arbitrary targets. That is why postponing admission remains an option and it should be carefully considered by the Programme Board and Council. The Student Union will closely oversee the content of promotional materials and the prospectus for future students, ensuring that no one will be inadvertently misled as to the practical realities for the first intake. As President of Oxford University Student Union, I wholeheartedly believe that the best thing about Oxford is the students. The students here are critical, engaged and question everything. The active involvement of students will make this proposal a better one for all. I can only hope that future students of Parks College will go on to make the world a better place. I recommend that you vote in favour of the legislative proposal.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call on Mrs Carole Souter.

**Mrs Souter:** I'm Carole Souter, Master of St Cross College, a graduate society of the University. I'm also Chair of the Board of Visitors of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Vice-Chancellor, members of Congregation, as others have said, Congregation has already approved the intention, in the University's five-year Strategic Plan, to increase its graduate intake by up to 450 postgraduate taught and up to 400 postgraduate research students each year. Whilst a number of colleges have the capacity to increase graduate intake to some degree, the scale of the planned growth and the timescale envisaged for its implementation requires the creation of at least one new graduate college. Additional students will work with our growing number of research academics, whose success in attracting major grant

funding will be at risk if they cannot develop teams to work with them. The growth in applications from qualified students who want to study at Oxford because of our research reputation is clearly evidenced. It is essential that those new students are able to benefit from the college, environment and traditions which make Oxford so different from other universities across the world. We do not leave our students to fend for themselves as individuals, but encourage them to see themselves as active members of both their department and their college. The proposed creation of Parks College underlines the importance which the wider University places on this model.

My colleagues at St Cross and I have had very positive discussions with Professor Tarassenko and his team. We have been impressed by their determination to learn from our experience as a current society to ensure that Parks College addresses the practical needs of its members, be they fellows or students. Since its establishment in 1965, St Cross has grown from a college which was primarily a base for senior members of the University without an alternative college affiliation, taking less than a dozen students a year, to a thriving egalitarian international interdisciplinary community whose members are engaged with every aspect of the life of the University. We know from our older fellows and alumni that there is an excitement and an exhilaration that comes from being involved with the creation of something new which lives long in the memory. Not all graduate students would wish to be pioneer members of a new college. Those that do will have a very special experience and will know in advance exactly what will be available to them, as the President of the Oxford University Student Union has just made very clear. Students have no reason to be concerned about the formal status of their college - University society or otherwise - provided that their needs are properly addressed and they have a clear mechanism for engaging with the governance of that college.

Senior staff of the Natural History Museum are also involved in the development of proposals for Parks College and represented on the Programme Board. The plans which are being developed recognise their needs, and they will engage fully with those Parks College students and fellows whose interests are related to, and indeed inspired by, the museum's collections, and the research being led by its own staff. The nature and focus of a college must inevitably change and develop with time. When members of my college first met with

such energy and enthusiasm in the much-revered wooden hut on St Cross Road, they could hardly have imagined that a little over 50 years later we would have 550 current students, over 100 fellows, research fellows and postdoctoral associates, and around 175 members of common room gathering in our buildings in central Oxford to share study and social space, launch new initiatives and create strong networks with alumni and supporters - but we do. When, as I hope, approval is given to Parks College, I am sure that it, too, will develop its own character and make its own unique contribution to the wider University.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Professor Tarassenko, do you wish to reply to the debate?

**Professor Tarassenko:** Vice-Chancellor, colleagues, I am not a specialist manager. I am an academic of 31 years' standing in the University, both as a tutorial fellow and as a professorial fellow, with an h-index greater than my age. The programme board, which I chair, has independent representatives from each of the four divisions, plus other members of Congregation, including from libraries and museums. The Proctors and Assessor can also join in the meetings, and they have access to all the minutes of our meetings. I hope that Congregation will agree that this does not amount to secrecy, and gives independent oversight of the workings of the programme board. It also seems to me that the opponents of the proposal do not believe that their colleagues on Council or on University committees or Conference of College committees, many of whom are elected by Congregation, can exercise oversight. I can assure Congregation that we have been asked searching questions when Parks College has come in front of these committees, and, indeed, we have modified our plans accordingly.

It was good to hear the students' voice in the debate and I take the points made by Ben Fernando. The students have gradually become more involved in the Parks College project since the beginning of Hilary term. They, including Ben, have attended two Q&A forums set up for the students in March. Some have also participated in the focus group discussions led by Professor E J Milner-Gulland last month; and the Student Union's Vice-President for Graduates, who will speak in the debate on the space allocation resolution, is now a member of the Parks College Programme Board.

'The distinctively inferior offer'. Having read the histories of those colleges, I can assure Congregation that almost exactly the same

words were used when Linacre, St Cross College, Iffley College, now Wolfson College, and Kellogg College were being set up. Let me finish with a quote from Michael Brock, the Vice-President of Wolfson in the early days from 1967 to 1976. 'The college was to play a leading part in helping the University to show that an ancient collegiate university could adapt to a world where graduate studies were all-important and where graduate students crossed the frontiers in search of the university which would cater best for their needs.' What was true for Linacre, Wolfson and St Cross Colleges 50 years ago is equally valid for Parks College today, if not more so. I urge you to vote for the legislative proposal to establish Parks College as a graduate society of the University. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** I now call the vote on the legislative proposal. I ask the Proctors, the Assessor, the Pro-Proctors and the Clerks of the Proctors to move to the voting stations at each of the exits to the theatre. When they reach their positions, I shall invite members of the Congregation to cast their votes on the blue, that's the blue, voting paper. I must remind you that only members of Congregation are entitled to vote. Having completed their blue voting paper, those seated on the floor and semi-circle in the Sheldonian should leave via the south exit. Those seated in the lower galleries in the Sheldonian should leave via the east and west exits. In order to ensure the voting process is completed as quickly as possible, please leave the theatre as quickly as possible and return promptly when the doors are reopened. Those seated in the upper galleries are asked to wait until they're called and leave via the east and west exits once those seated in the lower galleries have exited. Members of Congregation should place their blue voting paper in the ballot boxes under the direction of the voting officers. Any members of Congregation wishing to vote who has not received a voting paper may collect them from one of the stewards immediately inside each exit. When invited, members may return to their seats to await the results of the vote which is expected to take about ten minutes. I now ask members of Congregation wishing to vote to do so using their blue voting paper by the exit previously pointed out to you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** The report of the outcome of the vote on the legislative proposal. There voted for the legislative proposal 201. There voted against the legislative proposal 130. The legislative proposal is accordingly carried.

We now turn to the third item on the agenda: the resolution allocating space to Parks College. The resolution was placed on the agenda of this meeting in the *University Gazette* together with an explanatory note, published on 21 March. Three members of Congregation have given notice that they intend to oppose the resolution. Two of those members have also submitted an amendment to the resolution. The procedure will be as follows. I shall first call upon Professor Anne Trefethen to move the legislation on behalf of Council and Catriona Cannon to second it. In the absence of Professor Edwards I shall call upon Professor Fraser Armstrong to oppose the resolution and Dr Varun Kanade to second the opposition. There will then be further speeches on the resolution as time permits. I shall then call Dr Luke Pitcher to make the amendment to the resolution and Dr Paul Yowell to second the amendment. There will then be further speeches on the amendment to the resolution as time permits. Again, in light of the volume of business on today's agenda and the number of speakers who indicated by the deadline published in the *Gazette* that they would like to speak in the debate, I do not anticipate taking questions or comments from the floor.

At the conclusion of the debate, the amendment to the resolution will be put to Congregation and a vote will take place by paper ballot - so that the amendment to the resolution will first be subjected to a vote. Any member who cannot stay until I call the vote will not be able to vote. I must remind you that a member may not leave a completed voting paper with another member: only a member's personal voting paper will be accepted; any member who can not stay until I call the vote will not be able to vote. I call on Professor Anne Trefethen to move the resolution on behalf of Council, followed by Catriona Cannon.

**Professor Trefethen:** Anne Trefethen, member of Council, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People, and Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) and a Fellow of St Cross. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, colleagues, we have just heard the compelling argument for Parks College and agreed to its creation. In recent months, and indeed today, concerns have been expressed that the college will not be in a position to provide a good student experience, and indeed we heard from Professor Tarassenko that a new graduate society cannot be born perfectly formed, but we would like to do all that we can to ensure that it is well formed and able to provide the student experience we would all want our graduate students to have. I am therefore proposing the resolution for

the allocation of space that will allow the college to have appropriate study space, social, dining, library and interaction space, as well as accommodation for students. The proposed allocation includes the Radcliffe Science Library, the Abbot's Kitchen and the teaching labs of the Inorganic Chemistry Building, together with the spaces that joined those spaces, and accommodation units at Farndon Court and Wellington Square. Plans for the refurbishment of the Radcliffe Science Library - that is, the Worthington and Jackson buildings and the two basements, and the lower floor of Abbot's Kitchen - have been underway for three or four years; some of you may have been involved in those consultations. The plan for Parks College builds on and benefits from the surveys, consultations, designs and thinking that has gone into that original refurbishment project.

You will hear more of those plans from my colleagues later this afternoon, but just to say that those refurbishment plans already included a focus on the provision for graduate students, and naturally the needs for a modern science library. The plans included the development of a collection, storage, research and teaching centre in the basements, and that work has already started with storage cabinets in the basement and the completion of a collections lift in the forecourt. They also include spaces to be used for public engagement with research, one of the areas of intersection of GLAM and the academic divisions. These existing ideas and plans will all go ahead in the new configuration. As the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for GLAM, I am delighted that we are able to integrate our development with that of a new graduate college. It opens up opportunities, it brings students and faculty into GLAM spaces and we aim to be an integral part of interdisciplinary research and activities of the college. It is a clear win-win for all involved. The spaces will fulfil the requirements that all require.

As the design of the new college is completed and the flow of people throughout the building is better understood, GLAM and Parks College will develop a space-sharing agreement. The college will require dining and community spaces for students and faculty, and the octagonal-shaped Abbot's Kitchen and old Chemistry teaching lab with its vaulted ceilings have been identified as potentially wonderful spaces for such facilities. We are working in collaboration with the Department of Chemistry and Estates to ensure a smooth and safe transition to the change of use of these buildings. That

transition will not happen immediately. Although the teaching labs are no longer used, thanks to the new Chemistry teaching building, the department has grown in its doctoral training programmes and a time frame has been agreed that will allow those students occupancy until April 2021. Keeping in mind the student experience, the University has purchased additional accommodation at Farndon Court, close to St Hugh's College; it will be refurbished and, through this resolution, will be allocated to Parks College. Also through this resolution, there will be an allocation of 60 units in the redeveloped Wellington Square graduate housing. The aim is to have sufficient accommodation for first-year students. This may increase in due course but this is the initial and very reasonable aim. It should be noted that, at the same time as these developments, the University is working with other colleges to increase accommodation for graduate students in general. At present, these spaces are separate, distinct entities, all in need of revitalisation, all with great potential. Through this resolution we aim to bring them together to create a new, exciting and very valuable entity: Parks College. I ask that you vote to support this resolution.

**Ms Cannon:** Catriona Cannon, Bodleian Libraries and Wolfson College. Vice-Chancellor and colleagues, the buildings that we are proposing to adapt and redevelop go back to the 1860s, with the establishment of the Abbot's Kitchen to house one of the world's first purpose-built chemistry labs. The Science Library was transferred from the Radcliffe Camera to the Museum of Natural History, then on to the newly built Radcliffe Science Library at the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1930s another wing was added, and in the 1970s an underground open stack and reading room. The RSL has evolved over time. In its current form the ground floor houses service desks, a small discussion area and staff offices. The ground floor of the Abbot's Kitchen is no longer used by Chemistry; it is assigned to the library and used for training. The upper floors of the RSL have the book collection and predominantly quiet study areas, historic shelving, some beautifully decorated ceilings, interspersed with offices and informal spaces.

Recently, the two basements were made available for the museums to use as a store. We facilitated this by transferring the journals to the book storage facility in Swindon and moving the book collection upstairs. All of the elements which were previously part of the RSL redevelopment project have been incorporated into Parks

College: a museum's teaching and research centre, public engagement innovation and group study spaces, informal and discussion areas, book collections, quiet study, library offices, and technology to facilitate all of these uses. Added to this are the needs of the college, some of which overlap and some of which are unique: a porter's lodge, social space for students, a meeting room for a governing body and others, a dining hall, bar, common rooms and offices. The redeveloped building will be designed to integrate all these.

As Deputy Librarian and someone who cares deeply about our libraries, gardens and museums and believes that with some strategic investment they could be better exploited for research and teaching, I was very enthusiastic about the RSL redevelopment project. The proposal to incorporate it into a new college was a surprise at first but I could see a lot of advantages for GLAM and reciprocal advantages to the college in integrating GLAM into its academic and social life. At the heart of Oxford's museums, libraries and gardens are its collections and the experts who look after and interpret them: curators, archivists, subject librarians, collections managers and other specialists - people who are experienced and qualified professionally but also embedded in faculties and departments. We are constantly looking for opportunities to engage with the academic community, partnering and supporting academics and students through teaching, research and public engagement, to promote the collections, to make sure we are acquiring the right books, artefacts, specimens, art works, to make all these collections available through catalogues and digitisation, and to train people to use them.

Parks College allows us to reinterpret the idea of a college as a place where everything can be combined intellectually to include unique cultural and scientific collections and the facilities to use them to the full. It provides us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity for GLAM to be located in the midst of a vibrant interdisciplinary community and, in a college where interdisciplinary research and teaching will be crucial, the collections will be invaluable in making connections. Already we can see how they will tie into the three initial themes for the college. In Oxford our buildings are our glory but they can also hinder us from doing what we need to do. I second the proposal to allocate space to Parks College as set out in the resolution and I urge you to support this unique opportunity to redevelop a wonderful but neglected building for the benefit of the

University, its local community and the world of scholarship and science.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I now call on Professor Fraser Armstrong to oppose the resolution, followed by Dr Varun Kanade, to second the opposition.

**Professor Armstrong:** I am Fraser Armstrong at St John's College and Chemistry. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Assessor, student representatives and members of Congregation, the old teaching laboratory dates back to 1878, when it was built as an extension to the Abbot's Kitchen. Oxford's Chemistry Department has produced many landmark discoveries, but three in particular which have changed our world were made within just 25 metres of the iconic room itself. Painstaking development of the use of X-rays to determine the structures of penicillin, vitamin B12 and insulin opened eyes to the molecular world, revolutionised pharmacology, and won Dorothy Hodgkin the 1964 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Like many others who went on to become famous scientists, the then young Dorothy Crowfoot would have received much of her undergraduate practical training in the old teaching laboratory. The crucial research that led to the lithium battery and brought computers to people's pockets was carried out by John Goodenough and his team of postdocs and graduate students in the 1970s, while Allen Hill led the group that invented the world's pocket sensor for blood glucose levels in the 1980s, helping the lives of millions of diabetics.

These discoveries exemplified truly interdisciplinary science as they brought together different fields and experts: physics, medicine, materials, electrical engineering. Hodgkin also became well known as a leading advocate for nuclear disarmament. She was a close friend of US double Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling, who won the Prize for Chemistry and Peace, and she was a long-time president of Pugwash. We might reflect what that invention of the lithium battery could mean to us now we're in the modern context. We perhaps wouldn't be discussing in quite the same way a new graduate college in the present terms. Graduate research leading to the DPhil is a lifeblood of Oxford Chemistry. Young scientists are not only trained in state-of-the-art techniques, but are encouraged to be creative explorers, able to recognise when something is unusual, follow it up and perhaps generate a revolutionary new idea.

These students deserve a working environment to match anywhere in the world, yet quality research space is at a

premium in the Department of Chemistry, with many laboratories in urgent need of renovation, frequent electrical faults and floods, potentially leading to the loss of a year's work. A new Chemistry building to complement and support the Chemistry Research Laboratory completed in 2004 is the obvious way forward and remains a priority for the department. Equally, graduate funding is hard fought for. At the national level, the Research Council support a number of centres for doctoral training, known as CDTs, which are prestigious symbols across the UK of a department's ability to lead and inspire young graduates. A new CDT in inorganic synthesis, to be known officially as the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Inorganic Chemistry for Future Manufacturing, was awarded this year to Oxford in an highly competitive round: 75 CDTs against 115 in previous years. The £10.4 million raised from EPSRC, as well as industrial and institutional sources, will fund 13 four-year studentships per year for a total of eight years, 65 studentships in total, starting in October 2019. An important component in their success was exclusive use of the old teaching laboratory to house the first-year technical classes, year-wise, up to and including 2022 to 2023, and the laboratory is being refitted at a cost of up to £250,000 for this purpose. The chances for renewal in five years' time will be critically dependent on the performance of the centre, which will clearly depend on the facilities, including space, which it has available to draw on.

The proposal for Parks College has meant that Chemistry has needed to rethink. The Department of Chemistry has agreed that the old teaching laboratory can be vacated by the end of Hilary term 2021, and the University has guaranteed to secure a seamless transfer to suitable alternative space that will be available by that time. Future plans for the CDT will obviously need to consider health and safety issues. Chemical research experiments, many of which involve potentially hazardous chemicals, will continue to be carried out by skilled personnel in adjacent rooms to the old teaching laboratory. Those attracted by the superficial appearance of the elegant old hall might wish to think again.

**Dr Kanade:** Varun Kanade, Lady Margaret Hall. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Assessors, student representatives and fellow members of Congregation, I shall be quite brief. Other speakers have expressed eloquently their opposition regarding the process and the wisdom of setting up a new college in the form envisioned in the legislative proposal. It seems clear to me that

Congregation isn't, and I certainly am not, against the general principle of founding a new college; nor is the importance of research in the areas outlined in the Parks College proposal being questioned. The only point that I wish to make is quite simple, and I hope quite uncontroversial: that the Radcliffe Science Library shouldn't be the first victim of the University's expansion plans. Had the amendment to the resolution been accepted by Council there would have been no need to pose a resolution itself. The amendment would have ensured that Council, Congregation and the wider University would have had more time, a delay, to confirm the wisdom of fundamentally restructuring the RSL and potentially reducing its onsite collections. The legislative proposal states, and I quote: "The role of a science library until well into the latter part of the 20th century was to provide access to print books and journals. Now the changing needs of student researchers in the sciences means that a 21st-century library requires a much greater range of services, including high bandwidth Wi-Fi, electronic access to journal and research monographs, technology-assisted seminar and conference rooms and quiet study space."

By these metrics the Radcliffe Science Library is already fit for these 21st century needs, but we should ask what else do students and researchers need from a 21st-century library? First, print books. They are as relevant to the 21st century as they were to any other and having them on stacks in the library is vital. I am sure most of us have had the experience of walking through the stacks and stumbling on a wonderful book that we would simply not have found otherwise. In an article in the *Oxford Magazine*, Horsfield and McMann indicate that, as a result of the Parks College plans, over half of the library's print books may need to be reallocated away from the main site, leading to a significant disruption to graduating undergraduate students. Second, the library needs to be open at times when readers are most likely to want to read. Given the busy term time in Oxford, it is often only in the late evenings that students have time to visit the library. How will the opening hours of the RSL be affected by the planned space-sharing with Parks College? The problem is we simply don't know the answer to these and other questions.

The last of the focus group meetings happened less than a week ago. As of the weekend Oxford Student Union was still collecting feedback from students regarding Parks College. Should we not at least wait to hear the conclusions of these before

making these allocations? In the current environment, where libraries across the UK and the world are stretched for resources and often shutting down, we should bear in mind that the University's gardens, libraries and museums also enrich the wider community with whom we share this city. I will end with a brief quote by Stephen Fry in the documentary *The Safe House*: "There has been a terrible sense that libraries should just be a kind of adjunct to a Council building where you can get free internet access and a free newspaper and that is it, rather than understand it as a source of learning and nourishment for the young and old and everyone else." Without knowing what is to be the future of the RSL, its collections and its opening hours, without knowing the details of the space-sharing negotiated between GLAM and Parks College under subsection (1) of the resolution, by consenting to these allocations at this stage, Congregation would be letting future generations of Oxford students down. In these circumstances, I second opposition to the resolution before us. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. The debate on the resolution is now open to the house. Please could speakers come forward and speak into the microphone, first giving your name, college or department. I call on Professor Karen O'Brien.

**Professor O'Brien:** Vice-Chancellor, colleagues, I am Professor Karen O'Brien, I am head of the Humanities Division and a Fellow of University College. While the Humanities Division is not greatly affected by the establishment of Parks College, we do have a representative on the Parks College Programme Board and, naturally, we will wish to make sure our future graduates will have the option of participating there. The Humanities faculties do not at present wish significantly to increase their postgraduate numbers. Our priorities are rather driving up scholarship funding at both MSt and DPhil levels, and maintaining manageable workloads for our academic staff. As members of the University, however, many of us recognise that some overall expansion of postgraduate numbers is clearly desirable and that a decision not to enable such an expansion might create unwelcome downward pressure on some areas in order to increase others. Not least, this expansion is necessary for meaningful development in the newish areas of Environmental Science, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Our Divisional Board has given formal support to the goals of the Strategic Plan, and we have noted that the plan affirmed a long-held principle, which we regard as

extremely important: that all matriculated students should have a college place. As fellows ourselves, we also know that many colleges are severely constrained in increasing the numbers of such places.

The Strategic Plan's mandating of at least one college to address the situation seems to me both an obvious and welcome course to pursue. This course is not one that is cost-free, and not one without significant and difficult space implications, as we have just heard. And other universities would perhaps envisage expansion of numbers in much more economical ways, but this does not seem to me the appropriate way to approach the question of long-term sustainable growth and space needs. Excellent practical support and excellent welfare provision are paramount, and they are implicit in what it means to be a student at this University. That is why, at its March meeting, Council affirmed that a 2020–21 opening date for Parks College would be conditional upon receiving assurance at its July meeting of the amenities for these things being securely in place. And that is why the provision of space as laid out in the resolution is needed. It is always possible to identify difficulties, but merely identifying these is not an argument against action. And it is certainly not a reason to turn away from what needs to be addressed.

A new college is bound to have teething problems, true. It may feel small and underformed, perhaps less self-confident than longer established societies and colleges, but that would not be a first in the University's history. Here I would like to speak from personal experience, having been a DPhil student at an Oxford college that was at the time a work in progress. In the 1980s, I chose to move from the college where I had been an undergraduate to St Cross College. St Cross College, as we've heard, was not at that time brand new as an institution, but it was very newly located to its current space on St Giles', and undergoing an unprecedented period of expansion and change. It did not match more venerable foundations, and in some ways did not set out to do so. There was, and is, no separate high table. It was, and is, a place of fluid and active dialogue between staff and students, and it was exhilarating, as a graduate student, to feel part of something that all of us were helping to shape. The case then is the same as the case now; it is that traditions are to be made as well as inherited. Congregation has already approved the Strategic Plan and is rightly concerned to oversee its implementation. That implementation will take place in the context of the interdisciplinary strengths

of the colleges, and their defining and enduring sense of community. Parks College has been agreed by the earlier vote and this resolution reflects a university whose pride in tradition entails an imaginative commitment to renewal. I urge you to support the resolution.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call on Ms Allison D'Ambrosia.

**Ms D'Ambrosia:** Hello, I am Allison D'Ambrosia from the Oxford Student Union and Regent's Park College. Vice-Chancellor and Congregation, our college system is a carefully cultivated community structure that combats isolation, loneliness and academic fatigue, and it is my job to ensure that the student voice and priorities are heard. For anyone who has had the misfortune or pleasure of being on a committee with me – and I'll let you make that judgement – you know my unwavering criticism of Parks College from the announcement in December. However, today I stand before you in support of the space allocation to Parks College because of the innovation, creative solutions and flexibility I have experienced since joining the Programme Board. In Hilary term you would have seen me quoted in numerous student publications, including my condemnation of the weekly pizza night and other bizarre facts that made it seem like the project was pushing ahead with no proper student consultation. At each committee I attended and every different paper I received something about Parks College had changed, yet I did not know how to interpret it. From December until mid-March, I did not have any of the answers I was looking for.

However, after Council met in ninth week of Hilary I was added to the Programme Board and we ran two student Q&As. It was in reading through the minutes of the Programme Board meetings that allowed me to understand that what I had interpreted as miscommunications was really evolution, that my comments and committees and interactions with Professor Tarassenko had been considered and implemented where possible. For instance, our exchange on a graduate committee, which led to the SU overseeing and approving all the promotional materials for prospective students. Another example is the original design for the building, which had the porter's lodge tucked away by the Inorganic Chemistry Building entrance across from Rhodes House. Yet after receiving feedback from a survey I conducted through the Students Union on what students think a college is and should be – the responses

from across all four divisions and all levels of study – students stated that the 24-hour porters and pigeonholes are absolutely essential to a college. After telling Professor Tarassenko and Ms Cannon this and showing them the data, the porter's lodge was moved front and centre of the building, to provide a strong presence from porters and accessible pigeonholes for students 24 hours a day. After feedback for the necessity of mobile accessibility, of placements of lifts, ramps in whole areas of the building had been moved around and redesigned so that students with mobility complications could navigate Parks College as easily as possible. Additionally, I am currently working with Ms Cannon to ensure that student parents are looked after in the building and that Parks College can stand as an example of best practice in providing for student parents, as we look into having a lactation room, where mothers know they are welcome to breastfeed and proper cleaning equipment is provided: areas where children can be and play, as well as being proactive in supporting student parents and not just reactive.

There are still a lot of questions left unanswered about the student experience at Parks College, but after seeing the building plans I am hard-pressed to find anything more that the college needs. Yet without Abbot's Kitchen and the Inorganic Chemistry Building, it would be impossible for Parks College to be a college, and it would turn it into what the *Oxford Magazine's* worst thought about it is: just a glorified library. Yet as the adaptation and constructive criticism and suggestions have been taken on board, the Programme Board so far has shown that they want to put students first and they are willing to put in the hard work to ensure the future Parks College students not only enjoy their college experience, but prefer it. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call on Mr Richard Ovenden.

**Mr Ovenden:** Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian, Fellow of Balliol, and elected member of Council. Vice-Chancellor, fellow members of Congregation, I speak in favour of the space allocation, in particular to the issues concerning the Radcliffe Science Library. The RSL needs to change. It has been needing to change for many years. Investment in its physical infrastructure has been long overdue. When I first became Librarian I consulted the heads of MPLS and MSD and won their support to work together to plan a renewed Science Library, one that would enable the library to better serve the information needs for 21st-century

scientists. We looked at developments in other science libraries around the world, such as Harvard or NTU Singapore, making it increasingly clear that we were falling behind. A working group was established with the heads of the two divisions, their associate heads for education, officers from the Student Union, library staff and others. The group captured data from surveys, interviews and other exercises to understand current and potential library use. The group soon established that not all of the space in the building was going to be needed for the library. The underground basement area, which for decades housed print journals, had become redundant.

At this time, the first two major external drivers to adapt the plan came into play. The first was the acute and pressing needs of the museums to vacate their store in the Old Power Station at Osney Mead to make way for the Saïd Business School. The RSL basement, given its proximity to the Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museums, seemed a good fit and the plan was therefore adapted to accommodate those collections. The second of these drivers has of course been the creation of Parks College. I know from being on Council that the pressure faced by the University over admitting postgraduates has been acute, and the University's Strategy, as agreed by Congregation, the approach to deal with this situation is clear: we need new colleges. Given the ambitious targets set in the plan, when the idea was put to me last November about placing the new college in the RSL, I could see the strategic argument. One of the key issues for the Bodleian is the nature of our services to the science community. With the dramatic changes in the way scientific research is communicated over recent decades, the role of the library has also changed; the library now comes to where the researchers are, rather than the other way round. But access to content is not all that scientists want and need. Students in particular value study space, both for quiet study, but also for group work. There remain some textbooks in print that students need to access and where college library provision is not always able to accommodate. New services have been developed with great levels of engagement, such as our 3D printing service. We need more spaces for training and teaching on topics ranging from copyright to working with geo-spatial data and, of course, open access. So we need to continue to provide a variety of study spaces, but we also need to adapt to a model for science that is less dependent on print and enables specialist science library staff to deliver new services.

I believe that the changes that will come about from this project will enable us to better fit the needs of the scientific community and, as we will be much more closely connected to that community, to learn about and respond to those information needs more immediately. Many colleagues in the libraries and in the wider University have rightly asked questions about the size and shape of the reconfigured space. These questions are being answered through a series of detailed data-informed studies. Will there be enough space? Although since the 2013/14 academic year the total number of visits to the Bodleian has increased, the mean use of the RSL has dropped by 23%, peak occupancy dropped by 36%. Although the plans are not finalised, the modelling of our reconfigured space will accommodate enough reader spaces to exceed current peak occupancy, even allowing for additional use from the new Parks College constituency. Will there be enough space for new postgraduates? The spaces are being designed to be flexible and be able to respond to the cadence of the year and the day, looking at usage data, and working with our Parks College colleagues we can make their use of the building work well. There is an element of compromise in the new plans from the Bodleian's perspective, but they are workable, achievable and show great promise for evolving and improving this key aspect of our library services. The Bodleian has been adapted to change over the past 400 years, and it must and will continue this tradition.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Professor Trefethen, do you wish to reply to the debate?

**Professor Trefethen:** I thank the speakers who have spoken with regard to the resolution. You have heard the need for the space included in the resolution and how it would be utilised. You have heard how the libraries will be integrated into that development and will actually benefit, and how researchers and users overall will benefit rather than be hit by that usage. And you have heard from the student voice that the development is taking on board the student views. It was wonderful to hear the history of the teaching lab - and what a history - and it will be wonderful to build on that history because you have heard the arguments for the unique potential we have to breathe the new life into that estate. With that, I would urge you to vote for this resolution. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** We are now going to move on to the moving and seconding of the amendment to the resolution, so I call

on Dr Luke Pitcher to move the amendment, followed by Dr Paul Yowell to second it.

**Dr Pitcher:** Luke Pitcher, Faculty of Classics, Somerville College. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Assessor, student representatives, members of Congregation, a common thread has run through many of the objections that have been raised over recent days to the proposals regarding Parks College in their present form. This thread has been visible in speeches we have heard already in this house, it has also appeared elsewhere, as in the opening letter, which the executive of the JCR at Corpus Christi College sent to the Vice-Chancellor in March, noting that the proposals were to be rushed through Congregation. That thread is the need for rational due process. With your permission I intend to pursue it a little further.

The amendments proposed to this house's business today - both the ones that are the legislative proposal itself, which was ruled out before this meeting, and the one to be considered on the resolution - were united in a common goal. That goal is to ensure the Congregation rules upon these plans after key assessments and due diligence have been performed elsewhere in the University, rather than proleptically in the pious hope that future procedures will indeed give this project a clean bill of health. As we have already heard, Council is scheduled to receive a report from the Parks College Programme Board on 15 July. Then and only then will Council decide whether Parks College would be in a state to accept students for the next academic year. The rational procedure, therefore, would be for Congregation to show its approval or otherwise after 15 July, rather than, as now proposed, to make an under-informed decision in the hope that it will all turn out for the best. Parks College, Congregation is assured, will be a magnificent and glossy cart. That is no argument at all for putting it before the horse. The need for proper procedure and for sign-offs to happen in a rational order is particularly pressing with regard to this proposal. Thus far, the order in which business has been handled, with respect to it, might perhaps be characterised as counterintuitive.

In the response to the question under Part V of Council Regulations 2 of 2002, with which you have all been provided, we heard that the Programme Board for Parks College will report for delivery oversight to the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee of this University (PRAC for short). It is striking that this merited concern for PRAC's oversight was not shown at the

project's inception. As recent freedom of information requests have demonstrated, the contribution of PRAC was originally afforded on the issue of Parks College, in its meeting of 11 December 2018, was to note the announcement which had been shared with the press and the wider world four days previously. Against a background where a key subcommittee of this university – the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (the clue is in the name) – was brought into the loop on Parks College a little while after Fleet Street, Congregation can I think be forgiven for taking precautions to make sure that key information is shared and key decisions made in an appropriate sequence.

Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Assessor, student representatives, members of Congregation, at the end of February, the world lost André Previn, whom, amongst his many attainments, some in this house will remember for his encounter with the piano playing of the equally lamented Eric Morecambe. My objection to the Parks College resolution is rooted in process and rational sequence. The proposal is playing notes. It is playing the right notes, but it isn't necessarily playing them in the right order. A robust proposal has nothing to fear and everything to gain from having the opportunity to meet with full scrutiny before Congregation decides upon it. This, I submit, is the right order and one which I hope this house will support.

**Dr Yowell:** Paul Yowell, Oriel College and the Law Faculty. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors and members of Congregation, it has been a long day and I will be brief. A number of problems with the process of establishing Parks College have been pointed out in speeches that preceded mine. We have heard of the difference between what is currently offered to the members of the new society and what college affiliation means to those of us gathered here. We have heard of the effect that this will have on the University's existing services, notably graduate accommodation, the Radcliffe Science Library and the Department of Chemistry. It is not clear that we are giving Parks College what is sufficient for its needs and we may be taking away too much from other University departments. But the main thread running through all of this has been the rush in process and bypassing our standard procedures in taking it forward. We should not give the new allocation of space a final go-ahead without first having the opportunity to scrutinise and question the report which Council receive on 15 July. I second the amendment.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. I call upon Professor Lionel Tarassenko to oppose the amendment of the resolution, followed by Professor Anne Trefethen to second the opposition.

**Professor Tarassenko:** Professor Lionel Tarassenko, Head of Department of Engineering Science, Fellow of St John's, and Chair of the Programme Board for Parks College. Vice-Chancellor and colleagues, the space resolution does not indicate any starting date because it is meant to have immediate effect if the legislation is passed. The explanatory note to the legislative proposal describes the stages in the development for the greater society, from the implied starting date until the admission of the first graduate students, including the expected timetable for the buildings. As with all building projects, there are a number of complex issues associated with each of the space allocations. Firstly, the allocation of the Worthington and Jackson Buildings is subject to the satisfactory negotiation of a formal space-sharing agreement between Parks College and the gardens, libraries and museums. The agreement will be drawn up with input from legal services, and professional advice from colleagues in estates and in finance, including from the University's VAT specialists, as the way that the agreement is framed, in respect of the space occupied by the museums, may have implications for the payment of VAT. So to be clear, the space allocation to Parks College in the Worthington and Jackson buildings will not take effect unless and until the formal space-sharing agreement between the society and GLAM is signed by both parties. I would like to remind Congregation again that there are independent representatives from the four divisions as well as the Proctors and Assessor on the Parks College Programme Board, who will review this agreement before it is signed.

The western wing of the Inorganic Chemistry lab, the old teaching lab that Fraser talked about wonderfully, is the next building that I would like to mention. It was vacated when the undergraduate teaching lab occupying it moved to a new £30 million building on St Cross Road at the back of the Tinbergen Building. The plan, as agreed with the Head of the Chemistry Department, is for a two-year period of temporary use of that space for the Centre for Doctoral Training in Inorganic Chemistry for future manufacturing until it can move to more suitable space elsewhere in the science area. With respect to Farndon Court, we are at a stage where the certificate of lawfulness application seeks confirmation from Oxford City Council that Farndon Court should be

properly registered in planning terms as student accommodation. The certificate of lawfulness is a legal process which seeks to rectify the planning registration to reflect the actual established use. There will be a delay, for complicated reasons which I do not have time to explain, before the certificate can be issued, but there is no fundamental obstacle to it being issued.

Finally, with respect to the 60 accommodation units in the redeveloped Wellington Square, that particular building programme is entirely in the future.

Colleagues, I apologise if I have gone into some detail, but the space allocations for Parks College involves six different buildings: the Worthington and Jackson Buildings; the Abbot's Kitchen; the Inorganic Chemistry lab, the western wing, also known as the old teaching lab; Farndon Court; and Wellington Square. With associated issues, such as VAT registration and certificates of lawfulness, it makes more sense, surely, for the Parks College Programme Board and the RSL Redevelopment Project Board, who are aware of all the underlying complexities that I have hinted at and their impact on the effective starting dates for the building programmes, to decide on the order in which the notes should be played. We will work together and agree a detailed timetable. And it will make more sense for us to do that collaboratively, rather than for Congregation, as a body, to attempt to set a starting date at some time in the future. I therefore urge Congregation to trust the Parks College Programme Board and the RSL Redevelopment Project Board to work on their behalf, and so to oppose the amendment to make the starting date on the space allocations conditional on approval at some later meeting.

**Professor Trefethen:** Vice-Chancellor, colleagues. Anne Trefethen, member of Council, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People, Gardens, Libraries and Museums. Today we have agreed the creation of Parks College, and we have heard the strong arguments that support the allocation of the space to the college. The amendments, as proposed, would, if agreed, mean that we would leave today having created a new society, a college, but not allocated space to it. This would not be a logical place to land after all that we have heard, nor would it be right. Over the last few months, and indeed, today, colleagues have been clear that the college must include social space and activities for the students. It must provide the full collegiate experience. Students must have somewhere to live, and students must have appropriate support and a community to

which they belong. Colleagues are right to insist on all of these requirements and, should we leave the Sheldonian today having agreed the creation of a new college and not agreed any allocation of space, we will, frankly, have let those colleagues down, ignored their pleas and, similarly, not provided all that we should for the potential students of the college. Having agreed the creation of the college, we must agree an allocation of space.

You may say that the amendment is only asking for due consideration of the various elements that make up that total space allocation. The discussion over space has been taken forward in a collaborative and consultative manner. Decisions have not happened overnight. All has been discussed with interested parties, and input and views taken on board. The allocations allow for the shared use and needs of its neighbours. Unless you believe the college does not need a student study space, a common room, a social and dining space or a library, unless you believe that students should not have accommodation, what further due consideration is required? As the plans for the development go forward, it is only through that planning that we can agree the space-sharing agreement. If we walk away now, we will not have given space. Should the amendments be agreed, we could hold a separate vote on each and we could, in future, spend further Tuesday afternoons listening to the arguments for each piece of space again, but unless Congregation wishes to see the development of a virtual college, I urge you to allocate physical space to Parks College today. I therefore ask you to vote against the amendment to the resolution.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Thank you. Dr Pitcher, do you wish to reply?

**Dr Pitcher:** Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, Assessor, student representatives, members of Congregation, I am very grateful to Professor Tarassenko and Professor Trefethen for the insight they have now given us into the deliberations of the board, but I must confess that what one might call the 'attitude to time' seems to be in certain respects what one might consider a little inconsistent. We are told that there is to be a delay for complicated reasons, which we don't have time to explain, and this is seen as an argument for making that decision now. It's a logic which I have - I must confess - a certain amount of difficulty following. I don't think that the fact that we have now made the decision that Parks College is to be means that due deliberation by this house on how the space allocations are to work should therefore be regarded as condemning it to be a virtual college. Camelot was indeed a city built to music, therefore never built at all and therefore built forever, but I think we can all agree that it might have lasted rather longer if this house had had the opportunity to give it the scope of full deliberation. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** Colleagues, just in case anybody might be confused about where we are in the proceedings, I am now going to call the vote on the amendment to the resolution. So we are about to vote, with your yellow voting paper, on the amendment proposed by Dr Pitcher and seconded by Dr Yowell. So I ask the Proctors, the Assessor, the Pro-Proctors and the Clerks to the Proctors to move to the voting stations at each of the exits to the theatre. When they reach their positions, I shall invite members of Congregation to cast their votes using the yellow voting paper - that is the yellow voting paper. I must remind you that only members of Congregation are

entitled to vote. Having completed their yellow voting paper, those seated on the first floor and semi-circles of the Sheldonian should leave via the south exit. Those seated in the lower galleries of the Sheldonian should leave via the east and west exits. In order to ensure the voting process is completed as quickly as possible, please leave the theatre as quickly as possible and return promptly when the doors are opened.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** I now invite you to take your seats for the announcement of the vote on the amendment to the resolution. There voted for the amendment to the resolution 114. There voted against the amendment to the resolution 153. The amendment to the resolution is accordingly rejected.

As the amendment to the resolution has been rejected, we shall now vote on the unamended resolution. That is the unamended resolution as published in the *Gazette* on 21 March, which is to say the resolution that was moved by Professors Tarassenko and Trefethen. I therefore call the vote on the unamended resolution. I ask the Proctors, the Pro-Proctors and the Clerks to the Proctors, and I think you are all familiar with it by now. But the critical issue is the green voting paper - please complete the green voting paper.

**The Vice-Chancellor:** The report of the outcome of the vote. There voted for 150, there voted against 67. So we have just passed the unamended resolution by 150 votes to 67. That concludes the business of Congregation.

