

University of London

SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN NURSING STUDIES

Friday 14 May 1982

ADDENDUM TO AGENDA

9. SUBJECT AREA REVIEW COMMITTEES

TO CONSIDER: The second Report of the Subject Area Review Committee in Biological Sciences.

TO REPORT: The Subject Area Review Committee in Biological Sciences has been continuing its discussions under the Chairmanship of Professor D C Smith, FRS (Oxford) and a second Report was issued at the end of April. Copies have been sent to Schools for distribution to teachers in the subject areas covered by the Report. As time does not permit this second Report to be given the same preparatory consideration throughout the University as the January SARC Reports received, copies of the second Report have not been accompanied by a request for comments by a specific date. The Vice-Chancellor has however, suggested that Schools and Boards of Studies concerned should send their observations to the Academic Registrar as soon as they are available, as the Report is an important document in the continuing process of review and will be studied in the first instance by the Academic Council. The following paragraphs are of the most relevance to the SAC in Nursing Studies:

1.4 The subjects that were reviewed by members of the Committee were Biochemistry, Botany, Genetics, Microbiology and Zoology. Subjects discussed but not analysed in detail were Biophysics, Physiology, Pharmacology, Food Science, Nutrition and Nursing Studies.

3.6 How many 'core' sites? A majority of the Committee believed that FIVE was the optimum number of 'core' sites for Biological Sciences. None favoured four sites: this would produce some departments which would be too large and unwieldy, and it would not necessarily result in a higher level of academic achievement. Five sites would produce departments comparable in size to those British Universities adjudged successful in Biological Sciences. A minority of the Committee favoured six sites, but the majority believed that this might risk too much dilution of resource.

3.7 Which five sites? The Committee unanimously agreed that four of the five sites should be: Imperial, King's, Queen Mary and University Colleges. There was extensive discussion on the relative merits of Chelsea and Royal Holloway for the fifth site. Eventually, a majority favoured Royal Holloway. Its larger area and semi-rural setting offered better potential for the facilities needed for the study of 'organismal' biology and it also had a better balance of arts and science subjects. There is compatibility with the biology departments at Brunel University were there to be an eventual merger with that Institution.

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5.3 Physiology, and other subjects (including 'paramedical') such as Nutrition, Food Science, Pharmacy, Nursing Studies. The Committee were not able to give proper consideration to the disposition of these subjects during redeployment for two reasons: (a) the Committee itself lacked expertise in these fields; and (b) the problem clearly requires joint study by a working party of subjects falling within both Biological Science and Medical interests. These matters must be resolved quickly in order to formulate sensible general policies for the development of the Queen Mary and Royal Holloway sites. For example, both King's and University Colleges each benefit from having Departments of Physiology which are distinguished academically as well as providing pre-clinical teaching in this subject. If Queen Mary College acquires a pre-clinical medical school, should it also expand from pre-clinical teaching of physiology into an academic Department (eg by a combination of the Departments at Bedford, Chelsea and Queen Elizabeth Colleges)? Or should Royal Holloway College have such a Department to strengthen its experimental biology? The virtue of physiology as an academic discipline in its own right must not be forgotten. Again, should paramedical subjects such as Nursing Studies (Bedford, Chelsea) be concentrated close to existing medical schools, or would they flourish better at the Royal Holloway site which already has good connections with local hospitals. There are also matters which do not affect the University of London only. For example, the Queen Elizabeth Department of Nutrition and Food Science is one of the only two undergraduate teaching departments of nutrition in the whole country; the UGC has stated that Nutrition should be protected, and that 'other technologies' (which include Food Science) should be maintained. We recommend that a Working Party be established as a matter of urgency to examine this range of problems.