

Paper D4

Governors of Westminster College

The Cambridge Theological Federation

United Church 2017
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018



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Basic Information

Contact	The Revd Nigel Uden, Convenor of Governors nigel.uden@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	The college's ecumenical and academic relationships.
Main points	This is a time of change, but also of continuing ecumenical commitment and collaboration.
Previous documents	Nothing at all recent.
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of Impact

Financial	No impact on budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	This paper tells of a long-term ecumenical commitment in theological teaching and learning, through which the URC has given and gained much.

The Cambridge Theological Federation

1. Westminster College has been part of the Cambridge Theological Federation (CTF) since the 1970s. This holds together nine institutions in ecumenical theological endeavour; several of these are engaged in ministerial formation. Two other institutions are advanced in their applications to join CTF. The traditions currently include Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Orthodox and Reformed as well as the Woolf Institute (Christian, Jewish and Muslim relations) and the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide.
2. We live in a world of rapidly evolving religious culture, theological education, ecumenical relationships and tertiary education compliance requirements. For these reasons and others, over recent years it has been apparent that CTF needed to make a significant transition away from systems of relating, financing and governance that worked well in the past but are no longer sustainable. Towards the end of 2017, an external consultant was engaged to offer objective analysis and counsel about the way forward. A report on the first stage of his work was considered by the CTF Governing Council on 27 February, and with the unanimous support of all nine 'houses' the Federation has committed itself to an immediate and interim way ahead, that includes:
 - (a) strong commitment to CTF, and its continuing development and flourishing
 - (b) moving to a funding model that is based upon set fees from each member institution rather than variable sums depending upon their student number
 - (c) a different model of governance, that shifts the role from two representatives of each member plus three independents, to a much smaller group that whilst elected by the members, is not representative of them
 - (d) following an earlier reduction in numbers, a further review of the Federation's central support staff to ensure adequate and appropriate levels.
3. A great deal of work remains, both to implement what has already been decided and to continue the process of review. I will report further in due course, as appropriate. The current CTF President is the Revd Neil Thorogood, Principal of Westminster College. He has been a fine ambassador for the United Reformed Church in his sacrificial dedication, wisdom and grace.
4. Amid all of these changes in the Federation, a high priority for Westminster's staff and governors remains safeguarding the quality of the formation for Christian faith and service that the College offers. In this, as a versatile Resource Centre for the Church's life and learning, we hold together the preparation of people for the Church's ordained ministries with meeting the wider needs of the United Reformed Church.