

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2022

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Angela Adimora, Simeon Anyalemechi, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Jennifer Bayjoo, Brian Boag, Dr Tony Coombs, Garry Dowdle, Ben Gallop [until COU.22.64], Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Sean O'Hara, Micheal Omoniyi, Festus Robert, Alan Roff [until COU.22.65] and Professor Mike Wood.

Apologies: Councillor Phil Cusack, Councillor John Merry, Ian Moston, Sam Plant, Helen Taylor and Dr Elsa Zekeng.

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience) [until COU.22.64], John McCarthy (Associate Chief Operating Officer), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Dean Pateman (interim University Secretary and Director of Academic Quality), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic Development), Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer) and Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).

By Invitation: Dr Katherine Yates (Director of the Doctoral School) [COU.22.55].

COU.22.47 **WELCOME**

Noted: that Simeon Anyalemechi, University of Salford Students' Union Sabbatical Officer for Salford Business School, was welcomed to his first meeting as a student member.

COU.22.48 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Noted: that Alan Roff and Ben Gallop declared their interests in Item 7: Membership.

COU.22.49 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 08 April 2022 (COU/22/37), subject to an amendment to minute reference COU.22.38 – Environmental Sustainability Plan Annual Report 2021- specifically that Noted, xxii) read 'that the Annual Report had also been well received by Finance and Resources Committee *and Audit and Risk Committee at their recent meetings*'

COU.22.50 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Reported:

- i) that the action arising under minute reference COU.22.23 – Matters Arising – from the previous meeting (to provide a report on the status of work undertaken on the relationship between Council and the Senate) had not been captured on the action log;
- ii) that however, the review of the relationship between Council, the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET) had not yet commenced for a variety of reasons including staff leave, sickness absence and further external delay in publication of the consultation outcomes by the Office for Students (OfS);
- iii) that following the interim appointment to the role of University Secretary, it was proposed that those long outstanding actions be consolidated and a report by the University Secretary be made at the next scheduled meeting in October 2022;
- iv) that this consolidation included roles and responsibilities related to academic quality and standards, expectations of the OfS regarding the governing body, the appointment and use of Lead Members; and governance arrangements for equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI);
- v) that the intention was for the reconsolidated action to be concluded by the end of the calendar year.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair acknowledged the challenges in closing the long-standing actions and endorsed the proposed consolidated approach;
- ii) that the University Secretary had discussed with the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) the schedule of topics for the lead item on student experience during the 2022/2023 year, and that the schedule would be presented to GNEC for information at its meeting in September 2022;
- iii) that also, operation of equality impact assessments (EIA) and conclusion of the approach to membership diversity would be updated on at the next scheduled meeting.

COU.22.51 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

Confirmed: that Item 22 (Criminal Finances Act Policy/Anti-Money Laundering Policy; COU/22/57) and Item 23 (Use of University Seal; COU/22/58) would be approved and noted respectively without discussion.

COU.22.52 REPORT OF CHAIR'S ACTION

Received: reports of Chair's action taken since the previous meeting, regarding: Honorary Degrees Committee: Regulations for the Revocation and Rescindment of Honorary Awards (COU/22/38); Appointments to the membership (student representatives); (COU/22/39); and Office for Students' Capital Funding Bid (COU/22/40).

COU.22.53 MEMBERSHIP

Considered: on the recommendation of Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, the re-appointment of those members whose term of office was due to expire in July 2022 (COU/22/41).

Reported: that the recommendation was to re-appoint those members and co-opted members on the terms outlined in the proposal.

Noted:

- i) that there were no opposing remarks;
- ii) that the Chair thanked those members present and Sam Plant in absentia, for their contributions to-date and expressed delight that they had all wanted to continue as members.

RESOLVED: that the extensions to terms of office be approved with effect from 1 August 2022.

(Secretary's note: Mr. Roff and Mr. Gallop were not asked to leave the Chamber during consideration).

COU.22.54 CORPORATE LOANS

Received: a report of the decisions made by the Corporate Loans Subgroup regarding options to restructure the corporate loans, under delegated authority of the Council (COU/22/42).

Reported:

- i) that the decision to convene a sub-group to consider the options had been very useful, and had allowed detailed review;
- redacted -

Noted: that the Chair thanked those involved in the work to develop the proposal, and the members of the sub-group, in achieving a beneficial outcome for the University.

COU.22.55 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received: an update report on the wellbeing experience of postgraduate research students studying at the University (COU/22/43)

Reported:

- i) that following the presentation received on the same topic earlier in the year, colleagues had reflected on the comments made [COU.21.101];
- ii) that the Doctoral School was resourced by a director and eight dedicated colleagues, and that its purpose was to support postgraduate research (PGR) students from expressions of interest through to graduation;
- iii) that the PGR cohort experience was different to taught students as each was pursuing a unique degree without the same structures or assessments to complete;
- iv) that the median age range for a PGR student at the University was 30 to 39 years;
- v) that a high proportion were international students and that most were registered full-time;
- vi) that approximately eight per cent of the current cohort studied at distance;
- vii) that PGR student numbers were in decline at the University, and that this compounded the issue of isolation;
- viii) that a recent survey had found that the cohort was predominately satisfied, but that feelings of isolation and lack of a sense of community were issues;
- ix) that not all PGR students would progress into an academic career, and the Doctoral School was focused on developing transferable skills as well as training in research;
- x) that an interactive events calendar had been created in conjunction with the Library, University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) and other partners;
- xi) that an annual conference was held where attendance could be physical or online, and that this simulated a real-world research conference experience;
- xii) that the conference was very successful;
- xiii) that PGR students had access through participation in the School conference to funding for international conference attendance;
- xiv) that wellbeing and support events had taken place and further events had been scheduled into the future;
- xv) that where possible these events were held in the same venue to develop a sense of place and to enhance networking;
- xvi) that fortnightly drop-in sessions were held in the School office, but that there was also an open-door policy in place;
- xvii) that the School had paid to join the Frazzle Café which provided mindfulness services and space to connect with other PGR students;
- xviii) that the Café was held fortnightly in conjunction with the University of Huddersfield;
- xix) that the Café provision would be reviewed at the end of the initial 12-month trial;
- xx) that turnout was low for makerspace and wellbeing sessions, and that increasing attendance was challenging;
- xxi) that the events were proving beneficial for those students attending, but that too few students were being reached;
- xxii) that there were six PGR student representatives who met monthly as a steering group, but that any student could take part in the group;
- xxiii) that a key issue was the lack of dedicated space for PGR students in both the school and across campus;
- xxiv) that limited access to campus had been exacerbated during the pandemic;
- xxv) that booking rooms was difficult when research was not currently part of the broader timetabling process and therefore not automatically part of the room allocation process;
- xxvi) that it was always challenging to create a 'home' for PGR students as they did not benefit from the same cohort experience as undergraduate and postgraduate taught students;
- xxvii) that the School was in discussion with the University's research centres to partner on space allocation;
- xxviii) that the School had condensed the volume of email communications sent out into one weekly newsletter;
- xxix) that regarding student representatives, the School was working with the USSU to expand the number and to develop a descriptor for the role, and that providing an appropriate PGR student experience was a challenge across the sector;
- xxx) that the School had changed the structure of core PGR training to create distinct cohorts, whereby a two-hour session was held for an incoming cohort for the first 13 weeks of study;
- xxxii) that the School was considering out-of-hours support for part-time and at-distance

- students;
- xxxii) that monthly online meetings had been scheduled for at-distance students;
 - xxxiii) that international students were collaborating on suggested support requirements, and that this was to allow them to apply their lived experience to the support offer;
 - xxxiv) that supervisors provided primary support to PGR students and that several had been trained as mental health first aiders;
 - xxxv) that the School was also investigating the possibility of providing maternity leave provision for home PGR students;
 - xxxvi) that the School was working with the USSU to put in place revised reasonable adjustment plans for those PGR students who required an individual adjustment based on their needs;
 - xxxvii) that prior to this, PGR students had been considered as part of the University's standard processes for identifying and agreeing reasonable adjustments and that these had not proved to meet the full range of research students' needs.

Noted:

- i) the view that it was very pleasing to understand support that was being put in place for one of the hardest to reach groups in the University;
- ii) the view that PGR students were heavily reliant on their supervisor and that the supervisor group must receive support and appropriate training too;
- iii) the view that to identify a dedicated PGR space should be within the control of the University and could be resolved quickly;
- iv) the view that dedicated space was especially important for international PGR students;
- v) that a dedicated space could also be promoted to prospective applicants;
- vi) that the USSU had been very supportive of the need for a dedicated space for PGR students, and also any dedicated spaces that international students could utilise;
- vii) that PGR students were registered for lengthy programmes at the University, and that a full-time research programme would last between three to four years;
- viii) the view that maternity policy should be extended to international students, but that it was the case it would affect their visa and potentially require them to leave the country which would significantly impact on their studies and support network;
- ix) that often international PGR students moved to the UK to study with their families, and that any change to the study visa would also impact the other parties;
- x) that the only option for an international PGR student wanting to break from studies for caring duties was to request an interruption, and that this was governed by UK visa policy;
- xi) that the University could provide an extension to assessment and submission deadlines, but that this did not wholly resolve the issue where a break from studies was needed;
- xii) the view that this issue created an unacceptable disparity in student experience and discriminated against new mothers;
- xiii) that the situation was the same in other sponsorship arrangements;
- xiv) that under visa requirements the University had to confirm monthly attendance and make reports on absences;
- xv) the view that the University must make direct representation to policy makers and lobbying groups on this issue;
- xvi) the view that it might be useful to try to confirm a sector benchmark from isolation data, and that this could help the University to make improvements;
- xvii) the view that the communications strategy could be improved to effect better connection with the PGR cohort;
- xviii) the view that the decline in PGR student recruitment was a potentially worrying trend;
- xix) that the School provided exemplary support to the PGR cohort, and that it was building a good relationship with the USSU to join up the support offer;
- xx) that a recent example of this was sharing of the USSU commissioned survey on how to engage with different types of students;
- xxi) that regarding the decline in the PGR student population, the University faced challenges in building an international reputation for the Doctoral School;
- xxii) that the sector-wide PGR population was predominantly made up of international students, and that external funding had reduced dramatically and especially following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- xxiii) that reduced individual PGR funding had made access to study very competitive;
- xxiv) that the majority of domestic and international PGR study was not self-funded;
- xxv) the view that student experience should be balanced across capacity for student numbers, and that the University should be realistic in its ambitions for the size of the PGR cohort;
- xxvi) that a capacity review was underway with each academic School;

- xxvii) that the PGR population was split equally between male and female students;
- xxviii) the view that talent was highly sought after in the commercial world, and that the University should do all it could to strengthen pathways in to careers outside academia;
- xxix) that the University had already developed a number of specific programmes with industrial partners, but that it also sought opportunities for PGR students to interact with enterprise and provided placement opportunities;
- xxx) that placements were of varying lengths and had been designed to avoid negative impact on studies or visa restrictions;
- xxxii) that the School worked closely with the Enterprise Team;
- xxxiii) that PGR students utilised WhatsApp to communicate amongst their cohort, but that the School was prevented by University information security policies from using that application;
- xxxiv) that however, the School was to trial an alternative secure application;
- xxxv) the view that the University should promote academic research opportunities to its undergraduate and postgraduate students, and actively provide pathways to pursue an academic career at this University on completion of a doctoral programme;
- xxxvi) that the University was looking at a career pathway as an alternative method of investment by the University in its PGR students, for example through the graduate teaching assistant (GTA) role;
- xxxvii) the view that supervisors might require additional training and support to build relationships with international students;
- xxxviii) that most appointed supervisors had gained PhD's themselves, and on that basis were able to empathise on the PGR student experience and journey;
- xxxix) that however, the supervisor training offer had been updated and revised, for example to include decolonisation of research;
- xl) that supervisors could also experience isolation, and that the University created supervisor teams to alleviate this;
- xli) that supervisors underwent re-training every three years;
- xlii) that a learning agreement was drawn up between the student and the supervisor team at the outset of research studies, and that this laid out obligations on both sides and a framework for the student experience;
- xliii) that the University created an expectation that full-time research study should be completed within four years (comprising three years research and one year 'writing up');
- xliv) that evidence demonstrated that in cases where PGR study went beyond four years, wellbeing became a greater issue;
- xlv) the view that the discussion had provided valuable insight on the Doctoral School for independent Council members;
- xlvi) the view that a further update be scheduled in 12 months, but that in the meantime key performance indicators be established to enable progress and performance to be measured;
- xlvii) that regarding dedicated PGR space, this was a current consideration being taken forward under the Campus Masterplan as part of the move toward developing flexible use of space and a 'sticky' campus;
- xlviii) that the Chair thanked members and attendees for the stimulating and interesting discussion;
- xlviiii) that the Chair thanked the Doctoral School and the USSU in progressing and developing support for the PGR student experience.

RESOLVED: that the report was noted, and that the undernoted issues be addressed with immediate effect:

- i) that direct representation be made to the Home Office and to the Government through the Universities UK (UUK) International Group on the issue of maternity leave for students permitted residency in the UK on a student visa;
- ii) that a dedicated PGR space be identified and made available;
- iii) that the opportunity to receive a further presentation be scheduled at a future event;
- iv) that consideration of how to measure progress and performance for the PGR student experience be undertaken by the Doctoral School.

ACTION i): CHAIR
ACTION ii): CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
ACTION iii): UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)
ACTION iv): DIRECTOR OF THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/22/44).

Reported:

- i) that there had been a significant amount of political turbulence at the time of writing the Report arising from the Cabinet re-shuffle and Prime Minister's announcement on resigning leadership of the Conservative Party;
- ii) that this had led to three successive Education Ministers in position across three successive days;
- iii) that despite the ongoing leadership contest, the Office for Students (OfS) continued to progress its new regulatory regime from September 2022;
- iv) that the majority of the regime had been published except for condition of regulation B3 which related to the proceed metric;
- v) that the proceed metric would determine minimum thresholds for a viable academic programme;
- vi) that however, the University had been preparing for the proceed metric under the information provided by the OfS in the consultation documents for regulation B3;
- vii) that there were a small number of programmes which did not currently meet the proposed minimum threshold;
- viii) that it was expected that in the first year of operation of the regime judgement and intervention would be made by the OfS at an institutional level, but that following this work interventions would increase at subject-level;
- ix) that it was not yet clear if the proceed metric would be wholly implemented from September 2022, or if 2022/23 would be a transitional year;
- x) that the University continued to work towards the refreshed regulatory framework and felt that it was prepared;
- xi) that a further potential change arising from condition B3 was that the governing body would be required to report on academic quality to the OfS;
- xii) that Senate was aware of the need to revisit assurances for academic governance, but that this change would also require a review of the relationships between the Senate, the Council, and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET);
- xiii) that members would be kept informed of changes in responsibilities as these became clearer;
- xiv) that the University had achieved a successful outcome from its Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission, and had risen in the rankings for the first time in nearly 20 years;
- xv) that the University had achieved the second biggest increase in research impact across the sector;
- xvi) that the University was now ranked 65 out of 157 institutions, which was a rise of 22 places;
- xvii) that the future goal was to achieve a place in the top 50 institutions, but that it was more challenging to enter this elite group;
- xviii) that the University had continued to support colleagues and students affected by the conflict in Ukraine, and the country itself for example in supporting emergency supply deliveries;
- xix) that Lucy Meacock had been installed as the Chancellor, and that Ms. Meacock was a great asset to the University.

Noted:

- i) that members congratulated the University on the REF outcome;
- ii) that the REF exercise was to mark quality of research through the number of staff submitted, and that unfortunately it would not therefore lead to a higher research funding allocation;
- iii) that the University had been considered much better in terms of its research quality, but had submitted fewer staff this time;
- iv) that it was highly likely institutions who had achieved lesser quality rankings but had submitted more staff would receive higher funding allocation;
- v) that however, recognition for greater research quality would mean commercial partners would be likely to be interested in working with the University and provide alternative funding streams;
- vi) that an example of this was Energy House 2, there had been significant new commercial interest in both accessing the facility and partnering with the University on future research;

- vii) that the University had received a confirmation letter outlining the details of the block grant system from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the public funding body;
- viii) that the individual allocation for the University was expected to be confirmed later this month;
- ix) that the University was confident it had capacity to receive and respond to greater activity arising from the successful REF outcome;
- x) that regarding Ukraine, there was potential for in-country students to transfer studies to a UK institution dependent on the programme, and that this was being managed through a central service facilitated by Universities UK (UUK);
- xi) the view that it was an accolade to the University that the new Science, Engineering and Environment building was to be completed and opened ahead of schedule, and that it was important for members to visit the building and see the product of such a large and critical investment;
- xii) the view that a Council and a Finance and Resources Committee meeting should be hosted in the new building;
- xiii) that members would receive invitations to the building opening.

RESOLVED: that the Report be noted and that a tour of the new SEE building be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

ACTION: UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)

(Secretary's Note: the OfS announced implementation of its new approach to regulation of student outcomes on Tuesday 26 July 2022).

COU.22.57 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2022-2027

Considered: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 (COU/22/45).

Reported:

- i) that the proposed Strategy had been widely consulted upon, through several iterations over the past 18 months;
- ii) that members were reminded that it had been agreed prior to the event of the Covid-19 pandemic that the University's strategy continue to pioneer real-world experiences for students;
- iii) that throughout the consultation period this direction had continued to resonate with colleagues and students;
- iv) that undertaking consultation during the pandemic had been challenging at times but that the Strategy Directorate had been able to complete a far-reaching exercise;
- v) that feedback had included strong challenge to include sections on equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI), values, and environmental sustainability (which had subsequently been developed);
- vi) that the previous strategy document had not included a section on finance which had also been rectified;
- vii) that the most recent iteration had been circulated again and further challenge had been received on finding an appropriate balance between sections and themes;
- viii) that the intention was to achieve a strategic framework which had capacity to flex and be agile through its supporting pillars;
- ix) that members would receive an opportunity for a detailed discussion on delivery of the supporting pillars at its pre-session meeting in October 2022;
- x) that the learning and teaching strategy would underpin the piece, and that feedback had been incorporated within that Strategy proposal to target specific subjects towards achieving top ten ranking;
- xi) that the Strategy would be the means by which the University could judge all its endeavours and the framework within which all corporate decisions should be made;
- xii) that case studies had been included to bring the Strategy 'to life', but that on the feedback of the USSU more would be included;
- xiii) that the exercise to refresh the Strategy had not been to create a document, but rather to bring together the University community with a common focus on preparing students for life.

Noted:

- i) that the pre-meeting session scheduled for 21 October 2022 was to include an opportunity

- to contribute to the underpinning pillars of the Strategy;
- ii) that members were invited to reflect on the Strategy before attending the session;
- iii) that the narrative highlighted in boxes with a blue background in the document was intended to provide clear statements of intent;
- iv) that detail of targets and goals to achieve the strategy would be provided alongside the Strategy when it was circulated to the internal audience, but that the main document would be a public-facing piece;
- v) that it was intended there would be an interactive webpage available to all colleagues once the Strategy was published;
- vi) the view that it was very useful to provide the Strategy map on one page, and that an executive summary could accompany this to make clear the University's values and where it wanted to be in five years' time;
- vii) the view that the University should demonstrate that it was proud of its values and future direction;
- viii) the view that greater impact could be achieved by committing to the University's ambition in the language used in the document;
- ix) the view that the University's successes should be highlighted;
- x) the view that not all colleagues were equally confident of the University's successes, but that a greater balance could be sought in the narrative;
- xi) the view that objectives were required for equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI), as well as inclusion of a case study;
- xii) that the Executive had discussed at length the best treatment of EDI in the Strategy narrative and had agreed to progress a hybrid approach (both in a separate section and throughout the narrative), but that a case study should also be included;
- xiii) the view that the Strategy's measures should be clarified for lay-readers;
- xiv) the view that the University was too modest and did not provide a clear vision or dream, although it was widely accepted that companies did not always reach a perfect vision;
- xv) the view that it was good to celebrate success and values, but that care should be taken on terminology, for example not making the narrative too 'macho' or characterised in a particular way;
- xvi) the view that the University had scope in this document to be more imaginative on direction of travel;
- xvii) the view that it might be advantageous to identify a 'line of sight' through the document to enable staff to better understand the whole journey, particularly given the multitude of contributing strategies;
- xviii) the view that this could be achieved once the underpinning delivery plans were fully developed, and that it was beneficial to the University to define a single corporate strategy across its nomenclature;
- xix) that the University had received similar feedback on the use of the title 'strategy' during the consultations;
- xx) that the Strategy was to provide a single source to cascade objectives across all roles;
- xxi) that a member had shared parts of the document with their user group, and that the group had understood the Strategy narrative;
- xxii) the view that in the next five-years the University was anticipating greater commercialisation of its research and intellectual property (IP), and that this should be included;
- xxiii) that the Chair thanked members for the useful discussion.

RESOLVED: that the Corporate Strategy be approved, subject to the undernoted amendments and inclusions:

- i) that an executive summary accompany the Strategy map;
- ii) that University successes be highlighted at the beginning of the document;
- iii) that objectives and a case study be included in the section on EDI;
- iv) that the narrative and measures be adjusted for a lay audience;
- v) that commercialisation of research and IP be included.

ACTIONS: DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY

COU.22.58 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, the Quarter 3 2021/22 report on the University's action plan for ensuring equality, inclusivity, and diversity (EDI) and to consider the University's proposed EDI Statement (COU/22/46).

Considered: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Report 2022 (COU/22/47).

Reported:

- i) that multiple stakeholders had been consulted to achieve a proposed EDI statement;
- ii) that the University had received a letter from Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Further and Higher Education, regarding freedom of speech and the Race Equality Charter (REC);
- iii) that the letter suggested institutions should make their own decision about applying to the REC;
- iv) that the University was to reflect on the content of the letter for the next update and that it was mindful in the changes to political leadership, but that the REC reflected its values and did not bring the University into conflict regarding freedom of speech;
- v) that unfortunately the University had been unsuccessful in its application to the REC, but that the submission process was challenging, and the University had been provided with detailed feedback for a further application;
- vi) that the submission had been prepared during the period of the pandemic and during lockdown restrictions, and that a further application would be prepared encompassing greater student feedback;
- vii) that it was anticipated the University would need to rely on the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) for support in facilitating student feedback;
- viii) that the University had successfully appointed an Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for EDI – Pradeep Passi – whose expertise was warmly welcomed by the Executive.

Noted:

- i) that decisions to apply for membership to charters and awards were voluntary, and were normally selected and progressed via individual business units;
- ii) that in the instance of the application to REC that the decision had been taken by the Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Committee (IDEC);
- iii) that if a strategy regarding applications were to be proposed, or if an individual award was of strategic significance the decision to submit an application would be recommended to the Council through the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team;
- iv) that this governance procedure had been in place for some time, but that the University had not been required to apply it for those awards aligned to its values;
- v) that view however, that given the prominence of EDI across the Corporate Strategy the governance procedure would likely be followed in the future;
- vi) the view that the implication of Ms. Donelan's letter [to reconsider the need to apply to membership of REC] had been largely rejected by most staff;
- vii) the view that the University collected a large amount of EDI data, but that it struggled to put the intelligence to best use;
- viii) that Brian Boag invited the University to join with other institutions in public rejection of LGBT+ conversion therapy;
- ix) that the procurement regulations and processes included requisite EDI values of contractors, but that breach of contract power was challenging in cases of large framework consortiums;
- x) the view that there was potential for the University to share learning regarding the REC application rejection more widely with staff, and to invite more exposure of issues;
- xi) that more support and inclusion was required to re-apply for REC membership, and that the next submission would be co-aligned with the EDI Statement;
- xii) that the appointment of the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for EDI was critical to development of a strategic direction;
- xiii) the view that the University could be held accountable for providing protection from exposure to non-inclusive views [EDI Statement, paragraph 4], and that it was not clear what was meant by use of the term 'protect';
- xiv) that the University's Counsel had provided advice on the wording of the Statement;
- xv) that there was an element of concern that freedom of expression as prescribed in the new Freedom of Speech Bill being considered by Parliament, could be breached by the new Online Harms Bill that was also being considered by Parliament;
- xvi) the view that the University could only make a statement that offered to 'aim to protect' students;
- xvii) the view that the preferred scenario was to prevent exposure rather than control behaviours;

- xviii) the view that the University should state its pride in its commitment [paragraph one] to EDI, and that it had a strong record of delivery to principles of EDI;
- xix) that the Online Harms Bill had been deferred for debate by the House of Commons, and that it had received a high volume of challenge both in the House and in the media;
- xx) that however, the Council should monitor the range of challenges to inclusivity at any given time and that the EDI Statement could be further reflected upon as a policy direction became clearer;
- xxi) the view that whilst the University might state its pride in commitment to EDI, that the environment experienced by staff was not always felt to be inclusive;
- xxii) that the University had conducted a belonging survey and that the responses raised challenges in the culture of EDI, and that some challenges had also been identified in the internal audit on culture that had been conducted by PwC;
- xxiii) that management actions from each event had been amalgamated and would be reported on through Audit and Risk Committee.

RESOLVED: that the EDI Report be noted, and that clarification regarding the status of EDI commitments and procedures to check breaches by framework consortium suppliers be provided in the next management report.

ACTION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

RESOLVED: that the EDI Statement be approved, subject to the undernoted:

- i) that sentence one, paragraph one read 'At the University of Salford we are *proudly* committed to being inclusive,';
- ii) that sentence two, paragraph four read '...we will *aim to* protect our students and staff from being exposed to views and behaviours that are not respectful and inclusive,'.

ACTION: PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

RESOLVED: that the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Report 2022 be approved.

(Secretary's note: the EDI Statement was included in the Annual Report at pg. 2 and was adjusted as per the resolution prior to publication).

COU.22.59 **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Considered: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, proposed variations to the Access and Participation Plan (COU/22/48).

Reported:

- i) that the new Director of Fair Access and Participation at the OfS - John Blake - had taken a revised approach to access and participation and institutions had been issued with new guidance and requirements;
- ii) that the University was required to submit a variation to its existing Access and Participation Plan (APP), followed by a newly proposed five-year Plan by May 2023;
- iii) that a new Plan would require approval from the governing body and the process to compile a new Plan would commence in Autumn 2022;
- iv) that for variation of existing plans institutions had been directed to respond in five areas – to make APP's more accessible to students and stakeholders; to develop and enhance partnerships to address the pre-16 years attainment gap; to set out how access to higher education leads to participation and graduate outcomes; to develop and expand level three and level four provision and apprenticeships; and to evaluate APPs;
- v) that a conversation had taken place between Mr. Blake, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Associate Chief Operating Officer, where Mr. Blake had encouraged the University to highlight its external partnerships as an exemplary model;
- vi) that following the conversation, the document narrative had been adjusted to promote the partnership model;
- vii) that members were reminded the current APP continued to be in place.

RESOLVED: that the variation be endorsed for submission to the OfS.

COU.22.60 **FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27 CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the proposed Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 (COU/22/49).

Reported:

i) - redacted -

Noted:

- redacted -

RESOLVED:

- i) that the Financial Plan be approved and that the 2021/22 statutory accounts continued to be prepared under the going concern principle;
- ii) that the opportunity to receive detailed capacity and scenario plans be scheduled at a future event;
- iii) - redacted -

**ACTIONS ii) & iv): UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)
ACTION iii): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

COU.22.61 **University of Salford Enterprises Ltd CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, proposed amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Salford and University of Salford Enterprises (USE) Ltd (COU/22/50).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

RESOLUTION: that the amended MoU be approved with immediate effect.

(Secretary's note: Mr. Garry Dowdle was noted as a permanent observer of the USE Board).

COU.22.62 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Considered: on the recommendation of Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, proposed revised wording for the Committee's terms of reference regarding equality, diversity and inclusivity and the Prevent Agenda (COU/22/51).

Reported: that two additions were proposed that included an additional term covering responsibilities for EDI (Term 8) and addition of a reference to safeguarding (Term 14).

Noted: the view that safeguarding was key to the University's values and should come before adherence to the Prevent Duty in the wording of the Term.

RESOLUTION: that the terms of reference be approved, subject to a final check on the ordering of assurances under Term 14.

ACTION: UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)

COU.22.63 **ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS**

Received: a presentation on the University's action plan for enabling student success (COU/22/52).

Reported:

- i) that the outcome of consultation on Office for Students' B3 Condition of Registration was expected imminently;
- ii) that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercise had been dormant for the past few years but would commence again in the Autumn for submission in January 2023, which was a particularly short timescale for preparations;
- iii) that the TEF measured excellence above minimum threshold;
- iv) that activities under the enabling student success (ESS) action plan continued to deliver improvements;
- v) that there had been improvement by 1% in graduation outcomes;
- vi) that there had been an overall improvement by 3% in National Student Survey (NSS) results;
- vii) that student attrition was broadly the same as previous years, and focus had turned toward supporting assessment submission and a return to studies for the 2022/23 academic year;
- viii) that these were consistent incremental performance increases;
- ix) that the University had improved results in all measures for the NSS except one;
- x) that the University had ambition for greater gains, but that this was viewed as sustainable performance;
- xi) that the University remained behind the sector in the NSS outcomes except for feedback on assessment;
- xii) that the NSS results had confirmed the University's focus on organisation and management, and student experience was appropriate because performance had improved;
- xiii) that there continued to be some activities 'in train' which would impact on future surveys,

- for example work to improve student voice;
- xiv) that the emergent learning and teaching delivery plan would provide further groundwork to ESS performance;
 - xv) that it was the intention to transition ESS to 'business-as-usual' work from January 2023 and that this was to be coterminous with the delivery plan.

Noted:

- i) that the idea behind a transition to normal business was to further establish practice at the University;
- ii) that where changes had been made in response to the pandemic and that had positive impact, such as the changes to inclusive assessment, these had been kept and incorporated in support of the student experience;
- iii) that the 7% improvement in attainment was to be analysed, and that it was expected following consideration of intersectionality across all factors the baseline would be reviewed;
- iv) the view that following the regular updates demonstrating progress, it would be useful to hear from staff on the journey and challenges expected ahead;
- v) that the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience assured members that he met monthly with all programme leaders to progress the ESS action plan.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted, and that the opportunity to hear from staff regarding enablement of student success be facilitated at a future event.

ACTION: UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)

COU.22.64 **SENATE**

Received: the (unconfirmed) minutes of the Senate Meetings held on 27 April 2022 and 08 June 2022 (COU/22/53).

Reported:

- i) that implementation of changes to the shape of the academic year were underway;
- ii) that the main focus of the project was to remove a mid-semester break of three weeks in semester one, and ensure that end of semester one assessment occurred before the end of the calendar year;
- iii) that the change had been mapped against the sector to ensure best practice had been adopted;
- iv) that the implementation would lead to a different student experience which should foster greater engagement with assessment and improve performance and outcomes.

COU.22.65 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a detailed report on the outcome of the REF2021 submission. Also included was the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 3 2021/22, and the Top 10 Risk Profile had been appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/22/54).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

- ix) that assessment was through subject level peer-review, and that subjects had been allocated to 34 units of assessment;
- x) that scoring was out of four and demarcated by a star, and that a result of 4* had true value and confirmed world-leading research;
- xi) that very good research was proven by a 1* (recognised nationally) or 2* (recognised internationally) result, with both classifications deemed to be of high quality, but that to obtain funding research had to be rated 3* (internationally excellent) or 4* (world-leading);
- xii) that ergo an institution could be supporting SMEs in their local region with a very high level of quality research, but that unfortunately no wider impact could be demonstrated;
- xiii) that the REF was not intended to create a league table of institutions, but that ranking was produced by other bodies through grade point average (GPA) scores and most notably in an annual publication by The Times Higher Education (THE);
- xiv) that the ranking was produced through a calculation between GPA and 'research power', which included the number of researchers in a subject;
- xv) that following the results of the REF2021 exercise, the University had outperformed the sector in improvement to GPA scores in the league tables;
- xvi) that previously the University had struggled to perform in the cohort of pre-1992 institutions, but this was no longer the case;
- xvii) that the University had narrowed the gap between itself and Aston University and Keele University which were both comparative institutions and consistent performers;
- xviii) that the University was looking ahead to the next submission which was expected to be 2027-2028;
- xix) that this included effecting a balance between quality and quantity;
- xx) that the research produced by the University was paramount to the Corporate Strategy, and that consequently research impact was an important measure in the REF exercise;
- xxi) that the University had ambition to improve results in the research environment too;
- xxii) that preparations towards the next submission were both strategic and tactical.

Noted:

RESOLUTION: that the Report be noted, and that the opportunity to discuss the University's ambitions and strategic planning for the REF2027 submission be scheduled at a future event.

ACTION: UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (INTERIM)

COU.22.66 **QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 3 2021/22 finance report (COU/22/55).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

i) - redacted -

COU.22.67 COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/22/56).

Reported:

- i) that due to a timing issue, preceding the meeting today available members of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had held a discussion regarding the report of the internal audit on culture;
- ii) that PwC had undertaken the audit and had joined the discussion;
- iii) that the Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice [issued by the Committee of University Chairs, May 2020] included culture as an area for audit committees to be aware of;
- iv) that the internal audit had been a very interesting undertaking, and that members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team and the Dean of the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology present for the discussion were thanked for their time;
- v) the view that the report of the audit was likely a difficult read for the senior management team, but that reviews of this nature often led to challenging outcomes;
- vi) that however, the internal audit had been a worthwhile piece of work and had provided very useful information;
- vii) that ARC was to formally consider the report at its next scheduled meeting in Autumn 2022;
- viii) that the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) had received the updated position regarding student recruitment and had noted its thanks to the Associate Chief Operating Officer and the recruitment teams for a successful outcome to the 2022/23 campaign;
- ix) that the meeting had also received a deep-dive presentation on income diversity and financial sustainability which included a range of potential future scenarios;
- x) that the Chair of FRC confirmed that a robust discussion had been held and that members had tested the University's agility and flexibility;
- xi) that FRC planned to discuss scenarios outside of the core financial plan on a regular basis, and that future Chair's report on this topic should provide greater assurance for the Council.

COU.22.68 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

- i) that this was the final meeting of the 2021/22 academic year and that under the remit of the Council's responsibilities toward senior officers, the Chair wished to thank the Vice-Chancellor and her team for another successful year of operations under challenging circumstances;
- ii) that all staff were also congratulated for a successful academic year;
- iii) that the Chair thanked members for their contributions and in volunteering time and commitment to the role;
- iv) that Brian Boag was to leave the University shortly to take up a new position at the University of Greenwich;
- v) that members thanked Mr. Boag for his contribution to the Council as representative of academic staff and wished him luck in his new position.

COU.22.69 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported: that the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 21 October 2022.