

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2020**

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Temi Adebayo, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Dr Tony Coombs, Phil Cusack, Garry Dowdle, Ben Gallop, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Councillor John Merry, Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Adedapo Oni, Sam Plant, Professor Susan Price, Alan Roff, Dr Karen Stansfield, Rik Sterken, Helen Taylor and Professor Mike Wood.

Apologies: None.

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Louise Edwards-Holland (Director of HR and OD), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience), Janet Lloyd (Interim University Secretary), John McCarthy (Executive Director of Marketing, Recruitment and External Relations), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer), Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary) and Martin Toner (QEO).

By Invitation: Mohamed Arbi and Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer, USSU) [COU.20.87], Professor Margaret Rowe (Dean, School of Health and Society) [COU.20.91] and Andrew Hartley (Director of Legal and Compliance) [COU.20.96].

**COU.20.82 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Noted: that in accordance with Covid-19 pandemic guidelines (England) the entirety of the meeting was to be held via video-link utilising the encrypted software technology of Microsoft Office365 Teams.

**COU.20.83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Reported: that Dr Karen Stansfield declared an interest in Item 10: GMP Education Framework Tender business case due to her substantive role as Associate Dean, Enterprise and Engagement, School of Health and Society (the proposing team).

RESOLVED: that Dr Stansfield co-present the business case but take no part in the making of a resolution to approve or not the business case [COU.20.91 below].

**COU.20.84 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October 2020 (COU/20/63) subject to the undernoted amendment:

- i) for minute reference COU.20.74 (Inclusion and Diversity) that I&D targets for Council membership had been referred to the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) as part of consideration of benchmark data for governing bodies and this be included in the wording of the resolution 4.1.

**ACTION: COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

**COU.20.85 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Noted:

- i) for minute reference COU.20.74 (Inclusion and Diversity) that it had been resolved to receive quarterly I&D reports (Resolved 3) and the view that it had been agreed that the agenda include a standing item for I&D at all scheduled meetings;
- ii) that the format of such an item could be the quarterly report or an item directly related to I&D;
- iii) that further to the above, equality impact assessments (EIA) had been marked as 'not applicable' for several papers in the proceedings without information on the reasons why;
- iv) that the University had a statutory obligation to complete EIAs for strategy, policy and

formal business cases.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the establishment of a standing item directly related to I&D at all meetings was the responsibility of GNEC, and referred to the Interim University Secretary for scheduling as part of Council business planning;
- 2) that EIAs were confirmed for corporate strategy, policy or business case proposals, and where not applicable a valid reason was to be included in the coversheet.

**ACTION (1): GNEC/INTERIM UNIVERSITY SECRETARY**

**ACTION (2): INTERIM UNIVERSITY SECRETARY**

COU.20.86

### **CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS**

Noted: that Item 18: Use of the University Seal (COU/20/75) would be noted without discussion.

COU.20.87

### **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Received: two video presentations reflecting on Salford students' digital experience during the first trimester of the 2020/21 academic year.

Noted:

- i) that the videos had been presented to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) at its recent meeting;
- ii) that members thanked Mr Shay Wilson (in absentia) and Mr Mohamed Arbi for sharing their personal experiences;
- iii) that Mr Arbi had gathered feedback from his programme cohort;
- iv) that Mr Arbi indicated it had required more effort to undertake online learning but that, overall, it had been a good solution in light of the external situation;
- v) that for those students with caring responsibilities blended delivery offered the benefits of studying from home and provided an opportunity for advance planning for reduced attendance on campus;
- vi) that Mr Arbi reported there was a balance to be struck between long and short sessions on campus;
- vii) that Mr Wilson had provided evidence of the challenges faced this year for a first-year student living in halls of residence;
- viii) the view that the majority of students were abiding by national and University guidance, as best it could be interpreted in this unprecedented student experience;
- ix) that Mr Arbi highlighted the difference between his first- and second-year experience, that his cohort recognised it was different and had extended support to new students;
- x) that the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) had established a Covid-19 listening project to take learning from the current student experience and that USSU was working closely with the Executive to ensure the best possible offer for all students;
- xi) that there had been considerable work already undertaken in the sector to capture learning from the impact of the pandemic and to re-imagine what the future post-Covid landscape might look like;
- xii) that this learning included technical development and improvements and also addressed issues of equality;
- xiii) that the University had contributed to sector feedback on the experience of delivering blended learning during the pandemic and planned to embark on an internal "lessons learned" exercise in early 2021 with the aim of maintaining innovative practice;
- xiv) that whilst it was recognised both staff and students had gone into the online/blended learning and teaching experience without certainty regarding all potential implications for the student experience, the presentations had both highlighted communication issues;
- xv) that USSU Sabbatical Officers and managers had been heavily involved in all decision-making during the pandemic, and the view (seconded by the Executive) that the relationship between the parties had been strengthened in response to the crisis;
- xvi) the view that the stronger relationship had positively impacted on the student experience;
- xvii) that Mr Arbi had consulted with his cohort and it was felt students with disabilities also appreciated the benefits of digital delivery, for example the ability to livestream

- sessions, lecture capture and review, and reduced travel requirements;
- xviii) that further feedback had suggested it would be useful when normal timetabling resumed for use to be made of these digital benefits rather than calling students in to a single one- or two-hour session on a given day;
- xix) that Mr Arbi's cohort had appreciated the ability to be more flexible in synchronous attendance due to lecture capture;
- xx) that teaching staff had also had to adapt and upskill rapidly to be able to provide digital delivery;
- xxi) that members thanked Mr Arbi and Mr Wilson for their valuable contribution and observations.

COU.20.88

## **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/20/64).

Reported:

- i) that the Prime Minister's speech on skills had confirmed the Government's commitment to technical skilling/upskilling at further education (FE) and higher education (HE) levels;
- ii) that the Office for Students (OfS) continued to focus on graduate salary outcomes as a key metric for success and value for money;
- iii) that the approach to address the 'missing middle' curriculum was via degree apprenticeships and establishment of Institutes of Technology (IoT);
- iv) that the University intended to seek approval for the submission of an expression of interest as lead partner for the establishment of a Greater Manchester IoT;
- v) that the University had been successful in its bid for revenue funding for the Robotics Innovation Centre to the value of £3.6m;
- vi) that the financial award would support the appointment of staff over the next three years;
- vii) that the external environment regarding response to the Covid-19 pandemic was fast moving, and the University was drawing up plans for return to campus and academic study for the start of Trimester 2 in January 2021;
- viii) that the University would close for two weeks during the Christmas period to allow colleagues an adequate break following what had been a challenging year for all involved.

Noted:

- i) members' continued thanks to the Executive and all staff for their exemplary response to the challenges raised by the pandemic;
- ii) that negative reporting in the media of the impact of Covid-19 on student populations and universities' management thereof was a challenge, particularly as each institution was working with a number of different variables and the Sector had been successful in many areas;
- iii) that there was to be a special meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee to consider the first part of the bid for a GM Institute of Technology;
- iv) that the University had developed an action plan to address the anticipated student quality metrics in the OfS consultation, and that a copy was appended to the academic quality assurance report (paper COU/20/71) and would be reported against at future meetings;
- v) that the launch event for EnergyHouse2 had taken place, and was of national significance as a key support mechanism to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) environment strategy;
- vi) that in addition to the launch, the University had made a joint bid with the University of Manchester toward funding for advanced material research;
- vii) that the University's contribution to the bid would be the establishment of the Green Construction Academy, for which Energy House 2 would be a testing facility of international significance;
- viii) that participation in virtual open days was high but there was concern that there remained significant impact and interruption in schools and colleges due to the pandemic;
- ix) that the University recruitment and outreach teams sought as much information and intelligence on new and emerging market patterns as possible, and had found there

- were distinct pockets of regional disruption;
- x) that mitigations in place included the launch of a controlled guaranteed offer scheme for the Salford Business School (SBS) and different processes to support those who would normally have an offer made on the basis of portfolio particularly for programmes in the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology (SAMCT);
- xi) the view that universities had been disproportionately portrayed in the media as vectors for the spread of coronavirus, which was not the case for Salford;
- xii) that the issue of disruption in schools impacted all levels and could potentially have long-term impact on access to higher education;
- xiii) that the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Mrs Louise Edwards-Holland, was to leave the University in the new year;
- xiv) that the Vice-Chancellor personally thanked Mrs Edwards-Holland for her contribution to the University and the Executive team;
- xv) that the Vice-Chancellor had not yet read the Guardian newspaper review of the Report 'Unsafe Spaces: ending sexual abuse in Universities' but thanked the student member for bringing it to her attention for response later.

COU.20.89

### **CAMPUS OPERATIONS (COVID-19)**

Received: a presentation on the University's preparation for, and recent experience of, returning to campus (COU/20/65).

Reported:

- i) that the University had good working relationships with the Students' Union (USSU), recognised trade unions and Salford Public Health which had facilitated a strong approach to the management of Covid-19 on campus;
- ii) that the Report confirmed rates of infection were low amongst students and staff;
- iii) that the University had delivered blended learning as planned for its programmes;
- iv) that appropriate action had been taken in response to an isolated incident in halls of residence;
- v) that the pool swab test pilot for proof of concept had gone live, but that take up had been lower than expected with only 100 students being tested;
- vi) that a greater number of students had applied for asymptomatic tests prior to planned travel home at the end of term;
- vii) that 17,500 test kits had been ordered for the test period covering 20 November to 6 December;
- viii) that legal and liability agreements were being drafted, that there had been debate on the correct balance of liabilities for a mass testing programme and the University had sought to ensure it was indemnified;
- ix) that it had been nationally agreed that clinical oversight of testing was a mandatory requirement;
- x) that the operation and management of the mass testing programme would be handled by the University, with testing outsourced to an existing supplier;
- xi) that whilst the University would be able to recover significant costs, the overall testing programme would result in a cost of several thousand pounds to the University;
- xii) that guidance on local and national travel during the travel window would be issued by local government and that the University would provide logistical support wherever possible;
- xiii) that there was a co-ordinated shift to online delivery for the staggered finish of cohorts;
- xiv) that there was a focus on supporting students towards achievement of awards and careful consideration had been taken to ensure no disadvantages had been created by any of the adjustments made, especially in assessment;
- xv) that assessment practices had been modelled against previous years to ensure stability;
- xvi) that pastoral support for students would be available over the break period and that communications had gone out to all stakeholders (e.g. the parent network);
- xvii) that the University thanked USSU for its support and significant collaboration during this time.

Noted:

- i) that the guidance required a 10-day isolation period for students who tested positive for Covid-19;
- ii) that the campus would remain open until 18 December 2020, followed by reduced

- opening for essential facilities;
- iii) that halls of residence and private accommodation did not 'close' and student support was in place for those in situ over the break;
- iv) that it was anticipated some of those remaining in accommodation would be self-isolated and active support would be extended during the break period;
- v) that the student member thanked the University for its efforts on behalf of USSU.

(Secretary's note: the presentation COU/20/65 had been updated since it had been circulated with the issue of papers in order to keep members apprised of the most recent management responses to Covid-19).

COU.20.90

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY CLOSED**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, a revised Treasury Management Policy (COU/20/66).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

- i) - redacted -

RESOLVED: that the revised Treasury Management Policy be approved with immediate effect, subject to inclusion of the University's position on ethical investment.

**ACTION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

COU.20.91

**GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE (GMP) POLICE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK  
TENDER CLOSED**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the business case to tender for the delivery of the new Professional Education Framework Programme for GMP recruits (COU/20/67).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:  
- redacted -

RESOLVED: that the proposed business case be approved and submitted in tender for the GMP contract.

COU.20.92

**INNOVATION ZONE CLOSED**

Considered: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET), the direction of travel for the proposed campus Innovation Zone (COU/20/68).

Reported:

- i) that the University had contracted Oxford Innovation to develop the concept of an innovation zone by 31 December 2020 and that local and national interest had also been generated;

- ii) that there had been an opportunity to present to the Treasury and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- iii) that for both presentations the work of the University had been brought to the attention of a wider audience, signalling its ambition and community offer;
- iv) that the innovation zone was part of the six partnership zones of the new district, and that the presentation focussed on the zone alongside the new transport hub;
- v) that the University continued to explore the broader benefits that could be offered by the innovation zone with the private sector partner, such as job opportunities and regional impacts;
- vi) that it was the intention to create a system-wide approach to innovation that covered applied research, niche industries, a living laboratory concept, development of skills or re-skilling, and further join-up;
- vii) that the potential establishment of a Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (GMIoT) informed the innovation zone;
- viii) that the physical environment had already commenced, for example the build of Energy House 2;
- ix) that a shared space for employability was a logical direction to take for industry collaboration (the single corporate strategy) and the view that there was synergy with emerging Government policy;
- x) that it was estimated Greater Manchester did not realise a potential £250m annual research and development investment, and that an innovation zone on campus would place us within the long-term strategy of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA);
- xi) that there had been particular interest in the University's development of skills for application in acoustics, sound and vision;
- xii) that there were significant growth areas, such as audiology, and potential for spin-out firms or major industrial partnerships;
- xiii) that the concept of a 'collision space' in a central location would be supported by the development of a multimodal transport hub;
- xiv) that the presentations had been well received, recognising the appropriate level of ambition and current delivery against plans.

RESOLVED: that the direction of travel for the innovation zone be endorsed.

COU.20.93

**UNIVERSITY LETTER OF SUPPORT TO SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES CLOSED**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the University letter of support to subsidiary companies (COU/20/69).

Reported: that the following minutes had been prepared and recommended by FRC to be entered into the record:

- i) - redacted -

RESOLVED: that the Executive Director of Finance be authorised to write letters of support on behalf of the University of Salford to the Boards of USE and SPD.

COU.20.94

#### **ANNUAL REMUNERATION REPORT**

Received: on the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee, the Remuneration Report for 2019/20 (COU/20/70).

Reported:

- i) that the Report had been drafted to meet the accounts direction of the OfS and demonstrated the University was compliant with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Remuneration Code;
- ii) that this was an improvement on the previous year's Report where the University had been non-compliant in one policy area;
- iii) that the Report demonstrated pay restraint, particularly in light of the current external environment;
- iv) that the pay multiples against Vice-Chancellor remuneration were included and had been contextualised against the latest available national data;
- v) that this contextualisation further confirmed that the University demonstrated prudence in its pay and performance-related reward.

COU.20.95

#### **ANNUAL ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

Received: on the recommendation of the Senate, the Annual Academic Quality Assurance Report (COU/20/71).

Reported:

- i) that an annual Report had been produced over the past four academic years having initially been mandated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE);
- ii) that the establishment of the OfS as the regulatory body in England and the growing focus on different measures of quality had led to the Report not being required for inclusion in annual return to OfS, but that it had been provided as an assurance tool for Council;
- iii) that it was proposed that this was the last iteration in its current format and from 2020/21 the University would seek to provide quality assurance in alignment with the measures highlighted by the OfS;
- iv) that the action plan at the end of the Report outlined the nine actions the University was collectively working towards to enable student success, and these would form the basis of future reports;
- v) that the University had started to be impacted by its activities to improve value for money, for example progression had improved by 4.6% which was the largest single increase since 2005;
- vi) that it was recognised there were more improvements to be made.

Noted: the view that the current format did not reflect the priorities of the University, ergo Senate's, and that a revision would be welcomed.

RESOLVED: that the Report be approved.

COU.20.96

#### **PREVENT ANNUAL DATA RETURN AND ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT CLOSED**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, the annual report on the discharging of the University's duties under the Government's Prevent anti-terrorism strategy (COU/20/72).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -



ii)

Noted: that specifically Prevent-related data was required to be submitted this year and that data was collected on the volume of contacts and referrals made through the University's AskUS welfare service.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Prevent data return and Accountability Statement be approved in readiness for filing with OfS before 1 December 2020;
- 2) that data on welfare referrals made through the AskUS service be circulated for information.

**ACTION (2): DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE**

COU.20.97

### **SENATE**

Received: the (unconfirmed) minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 21 October 2020 (COU/20/73).

Reported:

- i) that Senate had considered the request received from the Secretary of State for Education that the University adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism;
- ii) that there had been debate on the impact on academic freedom of the adoption of the definition, and the resolution included several caveats to be incorporated into the draft response;
- iii) that Senate had received an update on the University actions on enabling student success.

Noted:

- i) that the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) would consider adoption of the IHRA working definition at its next meeting;
- ii) that the relationship between Council and Senate was also to be considered by GNEC.

COU.20.98

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS**

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/20/74).

Reported:

- i) that the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had continued to monitor information security as a high risk, partly due to current relevance but also due to management actions arising from a previous internal audit;
- ii) that ARC had reviewed its terms against the CUC Code of Practice for Audit Committees and members had concluded that it would be useful to observe the work of other Council committees and Senate to support assurance;
- iii) that the Chair of ARC had found it particularly valuable to observe FRC (on which the FRC Chair concurred), and it was proposed a programme of observations be offered to ARC members;
- iv) that a reciprocal offer was made to observe ARC;
- v) that FRC had considered several items received at the meeting today in more depth at committee meeting level;
- vi) that FRC had received an update on recruitment and thanked the Directorate of Marketing, Recruitment and External Relations (MRER) on delivery of successful recruitment in the challenging external environment;
- vii) that FRC had received an estates presentation that it had recommended for wider circulation because it evidenced commencement in some project delivery and included photographs which gave insight into the current view of campus;

viii) that FRC wished to convey to all members its thanks to the Directorate of Finance for the production of an excellent set of end-of-year accounts during this period of volatility and had particularly noted the positive feedback from the University's external auditors.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair seconded the motion of thanks to finance personnel on behalf of Council members;
- ii) that it was confirmed the University would continue to follow a more lenient approach to recovery of bad debt during the pandemic (as reported in the FRC Chair's Report) and that this approach was highlighted and welcomed by the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU).

COU.20.99

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted:

- i) that whilst the report on the use of the University Seal was not routinely discussed, it would be useful to include contract or other financial values for greater oversight;
- ii) that the reported use of the seal for Ignition Grant Phase 1 was for a research grant valued at £1.2m.

RESOLVED: that financial values be included in future reports of the use of the University Seal.

**ACTION: INTERIM UNIVERSITY SECRETARY**

COU.20.100

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted: that the next meeting would be held on Friday 11 December 2020.