

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2023

- Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Angela Adimora [until COU.23.35], Simeon Anyalemechi, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Jennifer Bayjoo, Dr Tony Coombs, Cllr Phil Cusack, Garry Dowdle, Ben Gallop, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall [until COU.23.38], Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Micheal Omoniyi [until COU.23.33], Festus Robert, Alan Roff, Professor Mike Wood, and Dr Elsa Zekeng.
- Apologies: Philip Green, Cllr John Merry, Sam Plant, Helen Taylor and Dr Katherine Yates.
- In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Emma French (Executive Director of Governance and Assurance), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), John McCarthy (Associate Chief Operating Officer), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development); Neil Scott (Chief Operating Officer), and Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).
- By invitation: Professor Claire Hamshire (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Employability and Student Experience [COU.23.29; COU.23.36], Josue Losasa (student representative) [COU.23.29]; Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer, University of Salford Students' Union) [COU.23.29; COU.23.30], Pradeep Passi (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity) [COU.23.23.32], and Emily Jones (School Business Manager, Salford Business School) and Dr Sara Namvar (Reader, School of Science, Engineering and Environment) [COU.23.36].

COU.23.23 WELCOME

- Noted:
- i) that Mr. Neil Scott was welcomed as an attendee to the meeting as the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer;
 - ii) that Ms Emma French was welcomed as an attendee to the meeting as the newly appointed Executive Director of Governance and Assurance (incorporating the role of University Secretary).

COU.23.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Noted:
- i) that Councillors Cusack and Merry had declared interests in Item 12: Travis Perkins Land Acquisition and had not received a copy of the proposal;
 - ii) that Cllr Cusack would be asked to leave the Chamber for the duration of Item 12, and not participate in the making of a resolution;
 - iii) that Professor Marshall and attendees (except the University Secretary and committee secretary) would be asked to leave Chamber for the confidential update to members on the Vice-Chancellor recruitment and selection process under Item 18: Committee Chairs' Reports.

COU.23.25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2023 (COU/23/15).

COU.23.26 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted: that no matters arising from the previous minutes were raised.

COU.23.27 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

- Confirmed:
- i) that Item 19 (Financial Regulations and Policies, COU/23/28; COU/23/29) was approved without discussion;

- ii) that Item 20 (Salford Rise Site Business Plan, COU/23/30); Item 21 (Environmental Sustainability Annual Report, COU/23/31); Item 22 (Gender Pay Gap Report, COU/23/32); and Item 23 (Use of University Seal; COU/23/33) were noted without discussion.

COU.23.28 CHAIR'S ACTION

Received: a report of Chair's Action taken since the previous meeting regarding approval for submission of a bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council regarding a research facility for convergent screen technologies and performance in real time (COSTAR) (COU/23/16).

Reported: that the University had been shortlisted for final interview on Tuesday 02 May 2023.

Noted:

- i) that if the University were successful at interview, a detailed business case would be required;
- ii) that the Treasury would hold the right of approval for the successful bid;
- iii) that there remained a lack of detail on the terms of the award at this stage;
- iv) that however, a successful bidder would be expected to have a facility open quickly and that the University was currently finalising its heads of terms with MediaCityUK in order to meet a potentially demanding timeline.

COU.23.29 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received: an oral presentation on 'getting the right support at the right time to achieve my full potential' followed by a deep dive discussion with a student on their experience.

Noted:

- i) that members thanked Mr Losasa for sharing his personal experience;
- ii) the view that the example given of development of a piece of accessible sports equipment demonstrated links to the principles in the Corporate Strategy;
- iii) the view that there was greater potential for the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) to play a role in this;
- iv) that it was already the intention of USSU to facilitate a 'golden thread' between the University's mission and the activities and academic societies it supported;
- v) that USSU was keen to highlight learning outside the classroom, for example leadership and employability skills gained through membership of its sports clubs;
- vi) that USSU was considering an 'opt out' system whereby new students were automatically enrolled on their programme subject society at registration;
- vii) that there was a greater opportunity to focus on learning outside the classroom now that the pandemic crisis had passed;
- viii) that USSU and the University met regularly at Partnership Board to facilitate greater alignment in creating opportunities for student success;
- ix) that commercial firms were also studying and researching the impact of degree or non-degree outcomes on attainment at work, and the view that there was a developing 'whole learning journey' view;
- x) that there was emerging evidence that those who achieved a good work/life balance were more successful, and that the use of clubs and societies could play a vital pre-career role;
- xi) that there was a diverse student population at the University, and that the value added through extracurricular activities and engagement were critical enablers for success;
- xii) that in addition, wider engagement helped to combat feelings of stress or loneliness and improve mental health;
- xiii) that connection either inside or outside the classroom was invaluable;
- xiv) that the Chair thanked members and guests for an inspiring debate.

COU.23.30 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, an update on the strategic operation of the University of Salford Students' Union (COU/23/17).

Reported:

- i) that the Report highlighted the breadth of additional activities undertaken by USSU, and in particular the changes following the experience of the pandemic;
- ii) that all additional activities were linked in some way to supporting retention, satisfaction and future employability of students;
- iii) that the staff team were similarly aligned to these goals through their individual performance objectives;
- iv) that the staff engagement survey results had just been published and would be included in the next report, but that USSU had achieved its best results to-date;
- v) that 44 student unions completed the annual survey, and that USSU was 15 percentage points higher than the average sector result;
- vi) that the survey was also benchmarked across the third sector, and USSU was higher than the benchmark in these results;
- vii) that the strategy refresh continued, and that this was being developed in close collaboration with the University using a change theory framework;
- viii) that regarding the financial forecast, the block grant from the University would decrease this year by approximately 10% due to the effective repayment of the USSU pension scheme financial support.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair congratulated USSU on the staff survey results and looked forward to an update in the next report;
- ii) that some academic societies were not as active as others, and that inevitably this impacted on representation across the whole population;
- iii) that volunteers' time amounted to 1500 hours per month and had been calculated to cost the equivalent of £150k per annum, and this gave an indication of the value provided by those persons;
- iv) that however, volunteer attrition was high and especially where short programmes were represented;
- v) that USSU's ethos was 'to be student-led' and that consequently volunteers were critical to success;
- vi) that the USSU business model was predicated on volunteer time, and that it was challenging to try to establish equivalent hours to pre-pandemic contributions;
- vii) that demand for clubs and societies had started to increase again following the pandemic and the return to campus life, and that currently approximately 3.5k students were members of a society;
- viii) that the 'opt out' approach was not preferred, but was a way to explore how to 'nudge' students towards engagement;
- ix) that regarding the record turnout for the sabbatical officer elections, this had been only 19% turnout but was still an average turnout for the sector and provided a clear mandate for the elected officers;
- x) that increased turnout was a proxy measure for the success of USSU, and that further strategies were being developed;
- xi) that the USSU continued to have some challenge in comparison to other student unions, for example in sports facilities and in a solely occupied union building;
- xii) that a single union building would provide a central hub and focus for USSU on campus, and that consideration of the range of facilities was underway;
- xiii) that regarding alternative sources of funding there was 'more to do', but that for example Manchester Football Association had paid for football referee training;
- xiv) that the Chair thanked Mr Festus Robert as outgoing USSU President and in his final meeting as a member of the Council, and noted Mr Robert's extensive contribution to Council during his terms in office;
- xv) that members wished Mr Robert good luck in his next appointment and future career;
- xvi) that Mr Simeon Anyalemechi succeeded Mr Robert as President from July 2023, and congratulations on his appointment were given.

COU.23.31 **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/23/18).

Reported:

- i) that the Office for Students (OfS) had assumed the role of designated quality body and that audit visits had started but no outcomes had been published yet;
- ii) that the University continued to closely monitor metrics under the B3 condition (student outcomes) and address issues of concern;
- iii) that several institutions were being reviewed by the OfS regarding financial sustainability;
- iv) that the message from Government remained very clearly that no financial 'bail out' would be provided, but that students would be supported to move to an alternative institution;
- v) that the OfS had published its annual report on financial sustainability including analysis of the 2021 annual financial returns, and that 31 institutions were in formal engagement with the OfS and a further 51 institutions engaged informally;
- vi) that the University was not part of either group and on the basis of the analysis presented, would also not enter into engagement from the 2022 financial results;
- vii) that the Vice-Chancellor sat on the Universities UK (UUK) Finance Group;
- viii) that the University continued to pursue student number growth to remain financially viable.

Noted:

- i) that the University was mindful of the potential impact of being asked to take in students as an alternative provider in its student number growth planning;
- ii) that however, there were three large institutions in the region who would assist with the spread of relocation of affected students;
- iii) that there had not been an example of institutional failure in this manner in the sector to base real experience on, but that the University had considered a range of scenarios;
- iv) that regarding the implementation of the lifelong loan entitlement from 2025, the University was working with Advance Data HE to understand and plan for future recruitment trends;
- v) that what was known of the loan so far indicated that it was structured to avoid an 'explosion' of unmanageable recruitment;
- vi) that the University was congratulated on achieving a share of the artificial intelligence (AI) and data science bursaries;
- vii) that following the successful Research Excellence Framework (REF) outcome, the University had invested additional funding in the establishment of University Fellowships;
- viii) that over 441 applications had been received when the scheme launched, 86 interviews had been conducted and 19 offers made and accepted;
- ix) that the recruits were high quality, and that the single cohort would commence in the Autumn;
- x) that the University Fellows were expected to make a major contribution to the University;
- xi) that there was evidence to demonstrate an increased profile for the University and greater interest in other academic role vacancies following the recruitment drive for the scheme.

COU.23.32 EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI) STATEMENT OF AMBITION

Considered: on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, the proposed EDI Statement of Ambition (COU/23/19).

Reported:

- i) that EDI was complex and that it had touchpoints in all University activities;
- ii) that the challenge was to distil the complexity into a set of key focused goals, and then to focus the whole institution on those goals;
- iii) that the proposed Statement of Ambition (SoA) had been widely consulted upon, and that there had been excellent engagement from students and colleagues;
- iv) that the timeline for the SoA framework was from 2023 to 2028;
- v) that the document was intended to be both internal and external facing, and included both explicit commitments and goals to achieve, aligned to the University's key strategies;
- vi) that overall, it was the intention to deliver change across the institution;
- vii) that the proposal had been presented through the executive and governance committee structures, including the Senate;
- viii) that the SoA covered four areas – student experience and success; colleague outcomes for a more reflective workforce; culture and an enhanced inclusive culture; and research;
- ix) that it had been the intention to limit the number of goals to give greater opportunity for success, but that the goals would be reviewed annually;

- x) that implementation would be through a 'whole institutional approach' whereby ownership and actions would be embedded across all areas;
- xi) that the network of EDI leads would be fully utilised;
- xii) that the University had good processes in place but that these required strengthening through an EDI lens;
- xiii) that there would be some institutional initiatives which would be co-produced by colleagues and students;
- xiv) that evaluation would be conducted on each section, using principles of change theory;
- xv) that a specific goal had been included for strategic delivery of the Campus Masterplan (CMP);
- xvi) that an operating and governance framework had been proposed in the framework organogram;
- xvii) that the Equity Assurance Committee would report to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET) and make quarterly reports to VCET meeting alongside providing reports to University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) and Research Ethics Committee (REC) to provide assurance to the Senate;
- xviii) that the Committee had three task and finish groups in its reporting line for a period of 18 months (or until 'business as usual' operations were confirmed), and a standing sub-committee for the Access and Participation Plan (APP);
- xix) that it was proposed a bi-annual report on progress be made to the Council;
- xx) that subject to approval, the next steps would include commencement of the senior leader engagement programme for which members would also be welcomed to participate.

Noted:

- i) the view that sector-wide EDI challenges had been known for several years, and that this document represented an important ambition to create change in the University;
- ii) that however, change was also challenging to achieve;
- iii) that leadership and ownership was critical for success, alongside open and honest conversations;
- iv) that it was important the Council hold the University to account;
- v) the view that the targets met the principles of the University, and that the University should also drive out change externally through its partners and wider communities;
- vi) that an independent equality impact assessment (EIA) had been commissioned for the CMP to ensure that inclusive design principles cascaded across partners and projects undertaken over the coming years;
- vii) that it was important not to focus simply on physical accessibility or meet minimum building regulations, but to connect the estate in a meaningful way;
- viii) that the University's procurement frameworks had already set explicit EDI expectations;
- ix) the view that there was a risk the University missed opportunities to effect change;
 - x) that in the example of the research fellow scheme, the University had taken decisive action to ensure an inclusive process;
- xi) the view that it was possible some student success goals would be outside the control of the University, but that the ambition reflected a level of realism in the timeline;
- xii) the view that use of the term 'minoritised' was divisive, and not used in the commercial sector;
- xiii) that terminology used in the SoA had been consulted upon, and that the particular term had been more widely consulted upon in the sector without a collective ethnicity definition being agreed;
- xiv) that however, the view was gratefully acknowledged and that there would be further opportunities to consider terminologies as the SoA progressed;
- xv) the view that the Council should be appropriately inducted on the detailed action plans with a view to furthering members' ambassadorial roles;
- xvi) the view that (from professional experience) the goal for increase in female professors might potentially be too high, and conversely the goal for declaration of colleague disabilities potentially too low;
- xvii) that the latter metric was a good indicator in particular for demonstrating a shift in culture in that persons felt able to trust an organisation;
- xviii) that there would be collaboration between the SoA and the strategic project portfolio, including the proposed student journey customer platform.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the EDI Statement of Ambition be approved and published;

- ii) that the EDI governance and operating framework be approved;
- iii) that a seminar be organised for members to engage with the SoA;
- iv) that biannual reports to Council be made a standing item on the schedule of annual business.

ACTION iii): UNIVERSITY SECRETARY
ACTION iv): COMMITTEE SECRETARY

COU.23.33 CRM STUDENT JOURNEY PROJECT

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the business case for the customer relationship management (CRM) student journey project (COU/23/20).

Reported:

- i) that the pre-Council meeting session had received a 'deep-dive' into the change aspects of the project;
- ii) that a proof-of-concept trial had been successfully run;
- iii) that the intention for the platform was to implement a systematic approach and to build on support for the student experience;
- iv) that significant resource would be released following the implementation to be reinvested in the University and student support;
- v) that the overall cost was estimated at £6.7m, but this included a contingency fund;
- vi) that Finance and Resources Committee had ensured inclusion of costs associated with supporting cultural change for the project;
- vii) that the project team had been very cautious in proposing benefits realisation in the business case, and had developed a timeline up to five years ahead;
- viii) that the project was presented in phases, but that there were interdependencies across the phased implementation;
- ix) that the student record system would continue to be in place.

Noted:

- i) the view that the technical abilities of the platform were proven, but that in proposing implementation of an enterprise-wide process and platform this would be the largest project undertaken by the University which remained a cause for concern;
- ii) that there would need to be regular governance oversight on key risks and on the parallel cultural change required;
- iii) the view that it would be useful to find a way to undertake the implementation of cultural change in an actionable and comparable manner;
- iv) that the potential challenges in effecting cultural change were discussed at length at Finance and Resources Committee (FRC);
- v) the view that measurement would also assist in providing assurances of success, and that this should be at both phasing gateways and for the whole project;
- vi) that the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) proposed ARC be involved from a risk governance perspective;
- vii) that it was included in the proposal for student representation on the project board;
- viii) that the whole development would be co-created with students as the key stakeholder;
- ix) the view that the USSU could become a test partner for the project;
- x) that professional service colleagues would likely be the primary users of the platform, but that this would also be a new system for academic colleagues too;
- xi) that lessons had been learnt from the user acceptance testing pilot;
- xii) the view that adoption should not be underestimated.

RESOLVED: that the proposal to develop a CRM Student Journey as set out in the business case be approved.

COU.23.34 LAND ACQUISITION: TRAVIS PERKINS SITE CLOSED MINUTE

(Secretary's note: Phil Cusack exited the Chamber for the duration of the item) .

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, a proposal to purchase land currently owned by Travis Perkins PLC (COU/23/21).

Reported:

i) – redacted -

Noted: that the land valuation had been confirmed in writing.

RESOLVED: that the acquisition of land owned by Travis Perkins PLC be approved.

COU.23.35 **EXEMPTION FROM AUDIT: UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD ENTERPRISES LTD CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the joint recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee, the proposed exemption of University of Salford Enterprises Ltd from audit by parent guarantee (COU/23/22).

Reported:

i) – redacted -

RESOLVED:

- i) that exemption of audit for USE for 2022/23 be approved;
- ii) that a parent company guarantee for liabilities of USE as at 31 July 2023 be provided when the University of Salford accounts are approved (December 2023).

COU.23.36 **ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS**

Received:

- i) a presentation on the University's strategic action plan for enabling student success (ESS) (COU/23/23); and
- ii) an oral update from academic colleagues working on implementing the ESS actions.

Reported:

- i) that the graduate outcomes data was embargoed until formal publication by the Office for Students (OfS);
- ii) that the ESS action plan was impacted by some risks outside its control, for example in colleague recruitment;
- iii) that the National Student Survey (NSS) reporting metrics had changed;
- iv) that personal narratives from colleagues working on ESS activities in biosciences and professional services were received.

Noted: the members thanks to the academic colleagues for sharing their experiences, and commendation for the outcomes from their endeavours.

COU.23.37 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a detailed report on 'size, shape and efficiency'. Also included was the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 2 2022/23, and the Top 10 Risk Profile was appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/23/24).

Reported:

i) – redacted -

Noted:

- i) that the proposed five-year student number strategy would be received and debated by Council;
- ii) the view that it was critical to ensure support for existing students before planning further growth;

- iii) that support would need to expand if further growth were to be pursued;
- iv) that due to recent student number growth, the University was in a position to be able to make choices regarding future size and shape of the student body and how best to provide support;
- v) the view that intersectionality of characteristics provided challenges for staff, and created complexity in agreeing a way forward;
- vi) that the adopted Access and Participation Plan (APP) had made a commitment to eliminate attainment gaps;
- vii) the view that the right mix of programmes was also important to achieve sustainability in the marketplace, alongside quality of programme and quantity of registered students.

COU.23.38 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 2 (Q2) 2022/23 finance report (COU/23/25).

Reported:

- i) – *redacted* -

Noted: - *redacted* -

COU.23.39 SENATE

Received: Chair's reports from the meetings of the Senate held on 12 January 2023 and 27 February 2023 (COU/23/26).

Reported: that the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission was expected in July or August 2023.

COU.23.40 COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: a report (COU/23/27) from:

- i) Audit and Risk Committee (25 January 2023 and 08 March 2023);
- ii) Finance and Resources Committee (27 January 2023 and 16 March 2023);
- iii) Remuneration Committee (02 March 2023);
- iv) Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (08 March 2023);

Reported:

- i) that Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had approved the annual Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return to the OfS;
- ii) that ARC had received the internal auditors progress report;
- iii) that a pre-emptive internal audit had been conducted on 'IT Enterprise Architecture' which had resulted in a medium risk finding, and that the Committee would follow up on this later in the year;
- iv) that ARC had discussed the proposed bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for a national research centre in screen and performance technologies, and had provided an opinion regarding risks to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC);
- v) that at the further meeting, ARC had received the findings from the internal audit of course portfolio management, whereby it was evident that the operation of a first year of a new programme required careful review;
- vi) that the analysis was to be shared with Academic Development and Number Planning Committee (ADNPC) of Senate;
- vii) that FRC had received confirmation of the successful waiver of the restrictive covenant regarding the second phase of the student residences build;
- viii) that the Committee had congratulated the negotiating team on the challenging and lengthy task, and looked forward to being able to pursue mitigation against the increasing risk of limited student accommodation;
- ix) that the annual report of the Environmental Sustainability Plan had been very well received by FRC and was recommended to members;
- x) that Remuneration Committee had approved the Gender Pay Gap Report.

COU.23.42 **COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS CLOSED MINUTE**

(Secretary's note: Attendees (except the University Secretary and committee secretary) exited the meeting).

Received: an oral report of the Vice-Chancellor Recruitment and Selection Sub-Group, incorporating the special meeting of Remuneration Committee (February 2023 to April 2023).

Reported:

- i) that the Sub-Group had shortlisted applications to proceed to a combination of candidate assessment and interview;
- ii) – redacted -

COU.23.43 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted: that no additional items of business had been notified to the Chair.

COU.23.44 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Reported:

- i) that special meetings had been tentatively scheduled for Friday 26 May 2023, Friday 02 June 2023, and Friday 09 June 2023 to consider the preferred candidate in the appointment of the next Vice-Chancellor, but that only one meeting would take place from the dates held;
- ii) that the next ordinary meeting was scheduled for Friday 14 July 2023.