

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
23 APRIL 2015**

Present: Baroness Beverley Hughes (Chair), Derek Antrobus, Martin Bull, Mike Burrows, Garry Dowdle, Jill Evans, Julia Fawcett, Amina Helal, Helen Marshall (except for item COU 15.22), Sean O'Hara, Jasmine Pokuaa, Joyce Redfearn, Tom Russell, Ruth Turner and Tony Warne

Apologies: Alun Francis, Fiza Ikram, Jane Luca, Claire Moreland and Stephen Sorrell

In attendance: Vikki Goddard (Registrar; except for item COU.15.22), Julie Charge (Executive Director of Finance; except for item COU.15.22), Mark Rollinson (University Secretary), Andrew Hartley (General Counsel; item COU.15.22 only), Peter Holliday (Consultant; items COU.15.23-26 only) and Chris Larkin (Director of Communications; items COU.15.23-26 only).

COU.15.22 VICE-CHANCELLOR RECRUITMENT

The Chair reported;

- i) on the outcome of the Vice-Chancellor recruitment process and advised that the Recruitment Committee was recommending the appointment of Prof Helen Marshall as Vice-Chancellor.
- ii) that the recruitment process had been thorough and robust and had benefitted from the involvement of specialist recruitment consultants, Saxton Bampfyld (appointed after a competitive process) and external membership of the interview panel; this external involvement had enabled appropriate benchmarking and calibration.
- iii) that the assessment process had been rigorous (including psychometric testing, discussions with focus groups comprising Council members, students and staff as well as a presentation and interview) and had resulted in the identification of an excellent candidate.
- iv) that the agreed contract for the appointment contained clear and measurable performance criteria.

Council unanimously **resolved** to appoint Prof Helen Marshall as Vice-Chancellor with immediate effect. Once the appointment was confirmed and necessary formalities concluded, Prof Marshall joined the meeting. She was honoured and delighted to accept the role; she looked forward to enabling the University to meet the challenges ahead and fulfil its potential.

COU.15.23 MINUTES (COU/15/16)

Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2015.

COU.15.24 STARRED ITEMS

Council noted the items that would be approved or noted without discussion.

COU.15.25 CHAIR'S ACTION (COU/15/17 and COU/15/17A)

Noted: the Chair's actions below;

- i) confirmation of the following honorary degree nominations after approval by Honorary Degrees Committee, Governance and Nominations Committee and Senate;
 - Liam Fray DArt
 - Alan Henning DUniv (posthumous)
 - [REDACTED]
 - Dr David Nott DSc

The redaction above has been made as the names of honorary graduands are only disclosed when they receive their honorary degrees. Consequently, as this is information that will be published at a future date, it is exempt under s22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- ii) temporary waiver of financial regulations regarding investment limits with individual banks during the period of the loan drawdown for the New Adelphi building.

COU.15.26 **UNIVERSITY VISION (COU/15/18)**

Considered: a brief report and a presentation outlining progress towards the development of a University Vision Statement.

Reported:

- i) an extensive consultation process was underway to inform development of the Vision;
- ii) the importance of developing a Vision which was sufficiently distinctive to enable clear differentiation of the University;
- iii) parallel work was underway to improve planning and delivery of strategy and, to this end, a Strategy Map had been developed (tabled at the meeting) based on the Balanced Scorecard approach which set out the current position (and included a mixture of project based and "business as usual" activity).

Noted:

- iv) the process to develop the strategy was generally sound; in addition to staff and student consultation (including via social media), external engagement was taking place with a range of stakeholders and this process would be concluded in time to inform the Council workshop in May;
- v) in relation to the proposed criteria for the Vision;
 - the respective advantages and potential risks of differentiation;
 - the need for the statement to be authentic, meaningful and inspiring;
 - the importance of accessible language and the avoidance of "management speak"
 - the inclusion of a realistic timeframe for delivery;
- vi) factors and issues to be taken into account when drafting the Vision should include;
 - the University's commitment to the city-region;
 - engagement with employers, student employability and future workforce development;
 - the evolving student learning environment;
- vii) the 19 May workshop would allow further consideration of the Vision (members also submitted individual written suggestions for further consideration at the event); the final version of the Vision would be submitted for approval to the next Council meeting on 2 July;
- viii) once the Vision was agreed the sub-strategies and enabling strategies would be revisited to ensure consistency.

ACTION (AP1): P Holliday (consultant)

COU.15.27 **2015/16 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN AND 2015/16 TO 2017/18 BUDGET (COU/15/19 and 20)**

Considered:

- i) the 2015/16 Annual Operating Plan setting out overall objectives and targets;
- ii) the 2015-16 to 2017-18 budget.

Noted;

- iii) that the Annual Operating Plan was presented for the first time in this format, included targets against the four academic sub-strategies and five enabling strategies and identified proposed deliverables to achieve objectives;

- iv) the budget represented the financial articulation of the Annual Operating Plan and had received rigorous scrutiny and challenge at Finance and Resources Committee;
- v) the plan and budget had challenging but achievable targets and assumptions with prudent contingency arrangements (for example, in the event of potential post-election HEFCE clawback). In addition to contingency, there was recognition of the need for in-year flexibility and agility; for example, the appointment of over 50 new academic posts was flagged within the plan but appointment to a proportion of these posts was dependent on achievement of student number and income targets;
- vi) in future, it would be helpful to highlight variances against the budget agreed 12 months previously (it was noted that the development of a more appropriate and intelligent School contribution model meant that there were variances from the budget agreed at the end of 2014/15);
ACTION (AP2): Director of Finance
- vii) the 8% increase in professional services costs over the period of the budget was in part attributable to increases in pay, pension and national insurance costs; some functions had also been transferred from schools and former colleges to the centre. To ensure transparency in this area, it was agreed that Finance and Resources Committee should receive a “like for like” analysis at its next meeting;
ACTION (AP3): Director of Finance
- viii) achievement of challenging targets (for example, in relation to NSS) was not incompatible with an environment where greater staff autonomy was encouraged; for example, devolution of responsibility from the centre to local areas would facilitate speedier resolution of issues and improve student satisfaction;
- ix) achievement of targets as set out in the plan would not necessarily close the performance gap with competitor institutions; it was hoped that achievement of the targets would remove or at least reduce the gap but it was not possible to predict with great certainty the performance of peer universities;
- x) the NSS was completed by final year undergraduate students, some of whom had been adversely affected by programme and structural changes at the start of their studies. The University planned to minimise the length of time required to turn round and improve satisfaction rates by addressing issues arising from other forms of student engagement (including annual, internal surveys of all undergraduate students) and by paying particular attention to programmes with the lowest satisfaction rates;
- xi) in relation to the International Priorities sub-strategy, there was a pause on further hub development given the need to assure capacity and capability to effectively manage existing arrangements; however, the sub-strategy continued to recognise the importance of increasing and diversifying international activity. Future budget reports would enable analysis of international activity margin/profit as well as income;
- xii) the importance of ensuring staff were aware of action taken in response to the most recent Staff Experience Survey was emphasised;
ACTION (AP4): Director of Human Resources
- xiii) the format of both reports was clear and helpful and aided Council understanding of key issues.

Resolved: that the Annual Operating Plan and the 2015-16 to 2017-18 budget be approved.

COU.15.28 INTERNATIONAL UPDATE (COU/15/21)

Considered: a report for information setting out the current position regarding the University's UKVI (Home Office) Licensed Sponsor (Tier 4 status) status and recent Home Office audits.

Noted: actions in train to ensure that the University maintains its Tier 4 accreditation

Resolved: that Council be kept apprised of progress and developments

ACTION (AP5): Registrar

COU.15.30 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (COU/15/22)

Considered: the quarterly performance report for the period November 2014 to January 2015 (Quarter 2).

Noted:

- i) the format of the report was much improved and benefitted from the inclusion of benchmark data from Alliance Group competitors;
- ii) there was scope to reduce some of the detail in the report under sub-strategy/school headings;
- iii) in relation to the Academic Improvement Sub-Strategy, appointment of recent graduates to student progression and retention officer roles was underway;
- iv) an update on the Gateway Review of the Enabling the Student Journey project, together with a "get to green" proposal, would be submitted to the next meeting of Finance and Resources Committee.

ACTION (AP6): Registrar

COU.15.31 FINANCE REPORT AND UPDATE (COU/15/23)

Considered: the financial report and commentary for the period November 2014 to January 2015 (Quarter 2).

Noted:

- i) the increase in favourable forecast outturn variance from £8.3 million to £10.15 million;
- ii) the consequent review of budgets to bring forward expenditure from Quarter 1 in 2015-16 to Quarter 4 in 2014-15 where this was appropriate and would have a beneficial impact on the student experience;
- iii) the increase in expenditure on agency and contract staff and professional fees reflected the need to bring in expertise in particular areas of activity and was partly offset by an underspend on pay. Management was cognisant of the need to maintain and ensure robust controls in this area.

Resolved: that the format of the report be reviewed before the next quarterly update.

ACTION (AP7): Director of Finance

COU.15.32 REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/15/24)

Received: the report from the meeting of Senate held on 25 February 2015.

Noted: that the final report from the Senate Review Task Group would be considered by Senate at its next meeting on 20 May 2015.

COU.15.33 REPORT FROM AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (COU/15/25)

Received: the minutes of the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 24 March 2015

Noted:

- i) the appointment of KPMG as external auditors following a thorough and robust appointment process;
- ii) the next meeting of the Committee would consider the draft Internal Audit Plan and alignment of the Plan with the Risk Register.

ACTION (AP8): Secretary

COU.15.34 REPORT FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (COU/15/26)

Received: the minutes of the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee held on 23 March 2015.

Noted: that material issues and matters requiring approval had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

COU.15.35 **REPORT FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (COU/15/27)**

Received: the minutes of the meeting of Student Experience Committee held on 18 March 2015

Noted: that the Committee would focus in future meetings on areas of highest priority and significance (for example, student attrition and improvements to the timetabling service).

COU.15.36 **REPORT FROM GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (COU/15/28)**

Received: the minutes of the meeting of Governance and Nominations Committee held on 27 March 2015.

Resolved: (in accordance with recommendations in the minutes of the Committee):

- i) Mike Burrows and Stephen Sorrell be reappointed to Council for a further three year term (until 31 July 2018);
- ii) Jill Evans be appointed as Chair of Remuneration Committee;
- iii) Tony Warne be appointed as a co-opted member of Audit and Risk Committee;
- iv) to establish a revised Honorary Degrees Committee as a joint committee of Senate and Council, comprising members from both bodies (Council membership to consist of existing Governance and Nominations Committee members);
- v) that the joint Honorary Degrees Committee be given full delegated authority to approve candidates for honorary degrees (noting that a revised set of honorary degree regulations would be brought forward, with a greater emphasis on due diligence and scrutiny).

Noted: that a proposal for recruitment of new independent members was currently with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Chair of Governance and Nominations Committee.

ACTION (AP9): Secretary

COU.15.37 **SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES (COU/15/29)**

Received: the report on subsidiary company activity.

Noted: that a more substantive report, enabling discussion and engagement with members would be brought to the next meeting on 2 July 2015.

ACTION (AP10): Secretary and General Counsel

COU.15.38 **USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/15/30)**

Received: a report setting out use of the University Seal since the previous Council meeting.

COU.15.39 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Delegation

Reported: that the remaining outstanding element from the Council Effectiveness Review was the review of delegated authority and further work on this would take place in the next few months.

ACTION (AP11): Secretary

2. Industrial Action

Received: an oral update from the Vice-Chancellor on the industrial action taken by UCU members that day in connection with the redundancies of two staff in Marketing and Student Recruitment.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 2 July 2015 at 2.00pm.