

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
25 MARCH 2011**

Present: Dr A Mawson (Chair)
Mr C Wells (Deputy Chair)
Cllr D Antrobus
Mr K Brady
Mr T Britten
Prof M Bull
Dr M Burrows (from item COU.11.6)
Mr R Chotai
Mr P Crompton
Ms C Dangerfield
Mr J Greenough
Prof M Hall
Mr M Johnson
Prof H Takruri-Rizk

Apologies: Mr M Appleton
Mr I Austin
Mr N Collins
Ms J Fawcett
Ms F Goodey
Mr E Healey
Mr N Renfrew
Ms R Turner

In attendance: Dr A A Graves (Registrar and Secretary)
Prof G Aouad (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation and Dean of College of Science and Technology)
Mr K Barnes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Partnerships and Development from item COU.11.6)
Mr F Benton (Executive Director of Estates and Property Services)
Ms K Brown (Director of Finance designate)
Mr C Larkin (Director of Communications)
Prof B Longhurst (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Media and Digital Futures)
Prof H Morris (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Dean of College of Arts and Social Sciences)
Mr S Mulholland (Director of Student Information Directorate – item COU.11.3 to COU.11.6)
Mr K Watkinson (Executive Director, Human Resources)
Mr M Rollinson (Head of Governance Services and Deputy Secretary)

COU.11.1 MEMBERSHIP

Council noted the resignation of Caroline Shaw as an independent member of Council and asked that its thanks to Ms Shaw for her contribution to the work of the Council be recorded and conveyed to her.

Council noted further that other recommendations regarding membership were dealt with under the report from Nominations and Governance Committee (see COU.11.12 below). The Chair congratulated Caroline Dangerfield on her election as Students' Union President for the academic year 2011/12.

COU.11.2 MINUTES (COU/11/1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

COU.11.3 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT (COU/11/2)

Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor updating members on developments since the previous meeting of Council on 24 November 2010. The Vice-Chancellor invited comments on the report and the presentations which he and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Registrar and Secretary had made to the Council Conference sessions which had taken place immediately before the Council meeting (Secretary's note; these presentations are available on the Council members' resources section of the website). The following matters were noted in discussion:

- i) the University was playing a key role in working with Salford City Council and other local partners in the development of a model of integrated public service delivery;
- ii) the importance of developing a distinctive and different approach to international partnerships (for example, working with Indian employers to develop an infrastructure which enabled retention within India of an able and qualified workforce);
- iii) that developments with companies in India could be seen as an extension of the University's great heritage of productive collaboration with industry;
- iv) the University was adopting a targeted approach to the development of FE College partnerships; the compact agreements with Manchester and Salford Colleges were a key aspect of this, along with the development of relations with other partners in key subject areas and sustainable geographic locations;
- v) the University's involvement in the development of the proposal for a University Technical College in Wigan;
- vi) the potential for FE College students to avail themselves of University support/co-curricular activities on campus (e.g. careers advice) enabling students to experience life on campus at an early stage and helping to remove perceived barriers to access;
- vii) the generally challenging financial outlook for all HEIs and the need to ensure compliance with banking covenants (it was noted that any action in relation to breach of covenant by an HEI would initially be raised by the banks through informal dialogue);
- viii) that later reports on the agenda emphasised the need for improvements in the areas of quality and speed of feedback to students and the provision of accurate and timely timetables.

COU.11.4 FINANCE REPORT (COU/11/03)

Council received the commentary on the second quarter financial accounts prepared by the Acting Director of Finance and introduced by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Registrar and Secretary. Council noted that:

- i) the latest financial outturn showed a full year trading loss before exceptional items of £2.2 million, which was a deterioration of £3.5 million since the submission of the HEFCE forecast;

- ii) the situation in i) above was the result of approved revisions to the Master Plan costing £1.2 million and additional estates refurbishment costing £1.9 million;
- iii) in addition, HEFCE had notified that the University's appeal against clawback of 2009-10 funds (£850,000 as a result of failure to achieve contract numbers within the permitted tolerance) had been unsuccessful. HEFCE was also making further in year cuts in grant allocation (£534,000 April – July 2011) as a result of reductions in central government expenditure;
- iv) the University was forecast to absorb £1.4 million of the above costs through better than forecast performance of the Colleges;
- v) therefore, on a historical cost basis (the basis of HEFCE monitoring), the University was forecast to break even.

Council noted that the University had the ability to appeal against the HEFCE decision to uphold clawback; however, HEFCE had made some compensatory adjustments which mitigated the overall impact and had increased the cap on student FTEs (by 274). Given this, it had been decided not to appeal against the decision.

Council was advised that the underachievement in undergraduate income was attributable to a failure to achieve target numbers; however, the University was operating within a narrow tolerance band and over-recruitment would have resulted in a penalty, hence a prudent, cautious approach had been taken. The provision of additional student numbers had eased this situation and the University could adopt a less conservative approach in future years.

Council noted further the relatively low return on investment of cash referred to in the report (0.6%) and the limited scope, under current market conditions, to improve this significantly.

Council noted the report and **resolved**:

to delegate approval of the revised Financial Forecasts (to be submitted to HEFCE by 15 April 2011) to a sub-group of the Chair of Council, Deputy Chair of Council and Lead Member for Finance for subsequent report to the next Council meeting on 30 June 2011.

Council noted that finalisation of the Financial Forecasts was dependent on the approval of the paper proposing the level of undergraduate tuition fees and awards from 2012/13 (minute COU.11.7 below).

COU.11.5 **CORPORATE RISK UPDATE REPORT (COU/11/05)**

Council received the revised Corporate Risk Update report noting that the revised presentation covered:

- areas of greatest risk to the University and their relative proximity;
- timeliness and appropriateness of mitigating actions;
- prioritisation and resourcing of specific risk reduction activities;
- potential risk areas not captured or emerging.

Council endorsed the report, welcoming the revised format which provided Council with an excellent overview of key risks facing the University and management actions to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

COU.11.6 PERFORMANCE REPORT (COU/11/04)

Council received a report presenting the second quarter 2010-11 results for the ten Key Performance Indicators and their subsidiary Performance Indicators; the report included commentary against areas of specific concern that were being managed by the Executive together with (as annexes to the report) more in-depth studies of the University's performance on retention and progression, student satisfaction (as measured by the National Student Survey) and space utilisation.

Council noted the definitions of progression, completion and continuation as set out in the report and the slight falls in both progression and continuation rates over the past year. Council was advised that a number of activities were underway to enable the University to better understand current performance and these were set out in more detail in the report. The report contained a detailed breakdown by School and Council was shown copies of posters prepared for each School which set out details of the current performance against progression and continuation indicators, how this compared to average University performance and the level of performance required to achieve top quartile status.

In relation to the National Student Survey, members noted the need to address in particular the indicators relating to "teaching on my course", "assessment and feedback" and "organisation and management", and that, to achieve top quartile status, increases of 7%, 5% and 9% respectively would be required by 2017. In response to questions about whether there were common, identifiable features of areas with relatively good performance, Council was advised that further work was still being carried out but there was a prima facie correlation between better than average performance and academic areas which were effectively and consistently managed. Council noted that the University was moving towards uniform, consistent processes across Schools (encouraged by the Transformation Programme and the development of stronger College structures), for example, to enable intervention at an early stage to ensure student participation and engagement.

Council noted that it was important to bear in mind the significant number of students that came from areas with low participation in HE and the challenges that this presented in terms of continuation, progress and student satisfaction. The University was making efforts to ensure that students were better prepared (for example, through the development of compact agreements with key local FE Colleges) but these measures (which were being undertaken alongside more mechanistic measures such as improvements to the student timetabling process and better turnaround times for student feedback) might take some time to impact upon performance. Council agreed that it was unfortunate that the vast majority of league table indicators did not attempt to measure "value added" by institutions and that this disadvantaged institutions like Salford with a high proportion of students from families with no previous HE experience; Council agreed further that one of the key challenges for the University was to improve overall performance whilst maintaining its record of accessibility for appropriately qualified students from low participation backgrounds.

Council was advised that the indicators relating to Major Incident Planning had deteriorated largely because of delays in updating the IT Business Continuity Plan, whilst the IT Transformation Plan was completed; it was anticipated that this indicator would improve once the Business Continuity Plan was completed.

Council noted that the space utilisation report showed that, although average space per student FTE compared very favourably with the sector median (3.1m² compared to 4.5m²), utilisation of pooled teaching space was poor (13% against a sector average of 31%) and supported benchmarking data which suggested a potential 10% (3,000m²) reduction in core teaching space was achievable; benchmarking data also supported an overall reduction in library space. Council was advised that the Academic Portfolio Review and planned improvements to the timetabling process would effect improvements in this area; it was also noted that anecdotal evidence suggested that non-pool teaching space was used more intensively than pooled space and a planned survey of all teaching space would enable a clearer picture to emerge. Council agreed to keep the space utilisation KPI under close scrutiny.

COU.11.7 UNDERGRADUATE TUITION FEES AND AWARDS 2012-13 (COU/11/6)

The Registrar and Secretary introduced a report setting out proposals from the Executive for undergraduate home and EU fees for 2012-13 and the supporting scholarships and bursary offer. Council was advised that the proposals were based on extensive research carried out by external strategy and marketing consultants.

Council noted that the report proposed a differentiated fees structure (ranging from £8,000 to £8,750 pa) which reflected historical demand, the value proposition of each School and current market conditions. Council was advised that, in setting the fees, the following principles had been taken into account:

- the current costs of delivering programmes;
- anticipated reductions in HEFCE funding;
- the need to reflect market demand;
- the need to generate sufficient surplus to manage risk and cushion against potential market changes;
- anticipated market requirements for investment in staff, new programmes and capital to address the University's strategic goals.

Council was advised further that the following issues had been factored into the fees and awards proposition contained within the report:

- access/OFFA requirements; universities were required to demonstrate that a minimum of 15% of revenue generated by fees in excess of £6,000 was attributed to widening participation. The University had accounted for the cost of its initiatives to widen participation and improve student retention into the fee proposals;
- offset the loss in HEFCE funded research;
- capital costs; estimates of sustainable capital requirements had been built into the proposals;
- quality aspirations; achievement of top quartile status by 2017 required further investment in staff, new programmes and improving the student experience;
- changes in the number of students; the proposals factored in loss of volume and other associated risks;
- inflationary impact.

Council noted the supplementary information set out in the report including the stipulation that, in accordance with OFFA rules, the University will normally charge up to 50% of the full fee for students studying on a placement or sandwich year, or studying abroad (for students entering in 2012/13). Council noted the concerns of the Students' Union about this matter and welcomed the undertaking from management that the Students' Union would be consulted on the detail of any proposals.

Council was advised that, in order to meet OFFA guidance, the following awards (scholarships, bursaries and discounts) were proposed:

- National Scholarship Programme; participation in the programme was a requirement of all institutions willing to charge over £6,000 in 2012/13. For 2012/13, the government will make £50 million available to institutions, with a match funding requirement of 1:1 from institutional funds.

Eligibility criteria were as follows:

- household income less than £25,000 (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills requirement)
- resident in Greater Manchester at the time of application to the University (University requirement)

Level 4 £2,000 discount on tuition fees

 £1,000 bursary (cash award)

(further payments would not be made to students retaking failed level 4 modules in subsequent years)

- Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Scholarship
Eligibility criteria 340 UCAS tariff points
Level 4 £1,000 discount on tuition fees
 £1,000 scholarship (cash award)
(further payments would not be made to students retaking failed Level 4 modules in subsequent years)
- Increased outreach and retention spend (it was noted that the University's proposals for funding widening participation would specifically exceed OFFA requirements).

It was noted that eligible students would receive both National Scholarship and Vice-Chancellor's awards and that these awards would replace all current undergraduate Full Time Home/EU awards (including subject specific awards).

Council was advised that the University intended to explore arrangements for "out of quota" students where fees were paid by sources other than the Student Loans Company (the University already administered international students as "out of quota" provision); Council noted that this model could be applied to home/EU funded students or students sponsored by employers or other means.

Council was satisfied that the fee levels set out in the report (and below) were required to ensure continued financial sustainability. In response to questions, the Vice-Chancellor advised that there had been lengthy discussion at the Executive about the fee level and this had included consideration of the £9,000 maximum level and a “flat fee” proposal rather than a differentiated approach. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the fee proposition as outlined in the report had been the result of extensive market analysis; furthermore, the Executive had concluded that, given the University’s relative market position and the highly volatile political situation, a fee level just below the permitted £9,000 maximum was the optimum solution. Council noted the concerns of the Students’ Union members about the proposal for differential fees. The Students’ Union members noted that very few institutions had indicated a preference for differential fees and the Union was concerned that it would be difficult to justify charging different fees for different programmes.

Council noted the opposing view that differential fees indicated market sensitivity and responsiveness and a willingness to be flexible; Council noted further that fees would be reviewed on an annual basis and that it would be possible to revert to a flat fee (and charge the permitted maximum) in future years, depending on market developments. Council was reminded that collaboration between HEIs in relation to fee setting was strictly prohibited under competition law.

Council resolved:

to approve the undergraduate Full Time Home/EU tuition fees and awards framework as set in the report with fees ranging from £8,000 to £8,750 (Appendix A* sets out the tuition fees by subject areas).

Mr R Chotai and Ms C Dangerfield indicated their disagreement with the principle of differential fees and asked that their opposition to the proposal on this basis be recorded. All other members present supported the proposal.

(*Secretary’s note; a subsequent amendment to the fees structure was agreed by Chair’s action. Appendix A shows the fee structure after this revision, which involved the inclusion of a £9,000 fee for the new undergraduate degree in Petroleum and Mechanical Engineering.)

COU.11.8 UNIVERSITY BRAND PROPOSITION (COU/11/07)

Council received a report and presentation from the Director of Communications updating members on work being undertaken to refresh and redefine the University brand proposition, including corporate identity. Members noted that the final proposal would be formally submitted to Council for approval in June 2011 and the work so far was currently being tested with a range of stakeholders. Given that the new brand would be a key part of the revised University website and provision of new signage (for example at MediaCity) over the summer, there would be limited scope for further revision after the next Council meeting so members were asked to indicate at this stage if there were any substantive comments on the proposals.

Council indicated its support for the principles outlined in the report, including the core proposition of “true depth” and the communication concept of “real world impact”. Further to comments from members, Council encouraged collaboration and dialogue with other local strategic partners to share good practice on the development of the brand and ensure maximum impact. Council was advised that signage change would be carried out incrementally, starting with areas where there was planned refurbishment and any areas of high visibility. The Executive Director of Estates and

Property Services and the Director of Communications were working on a hierarchy of signage removal.

Council noted further that, to encourage engagement from staff, students and all other stakeholders, a “brand room” had been established where those interested could offer comments on the developing brand proposition.

COU.11.9 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – UPDATE (COU/11/08)

Council received the update on the Transformation Programme, noting the planned achievement of £1 million pay savings and £4 million non-pay savings by October 2011. Council was advised that the processes of Business Process Re-engineering were being undertaken by existing University staff (e.g. colleagues from Change Management, IT Services and Student Information Directorate).

COU.11.10 CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN (COU/11/09)

Council received the Carbon Management Plan which set out the target to reduce the University's carbon emissions by 30% by September 2015 and by 43% by September 2020 and complied with criteria stipulated by HEFCE. Council noted that the Plan contained details of the range of projects at implementation or planning stage which would underpin delivery of the Plan and that this included estimates of payback period. Council noted further that the “value at stake” if the University did not act as set out in the Plan and carried on with business as usual was £3 million in energy costs and 22,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in the period 2009-10 to 2014-15; this was a conservative estimate and the financial cost would increase if utilities bills increased further.

Council was advised that both Salford City Council and the local NHS Trust had developed Carbon Management Plans and agreed that there was merit in officers from these institutions meeting to share information and good practice.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships and Development) and the Executive Director of Estates and Property Services stressed the importance of management commitment to the Plan in order to deliver the cultural and behavioural change required; Council noted that managers would be assisted in this task by the appointment of local sustainability officers.

Council **resolved**:

to approve the Plan and consequent actions as recommended by the Executive and noted the need to receive regular reports on progress towards implementation.

COU.11.11 REPORT FROM COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP (COU/11/10)

Council considered the report of the meeting of Council Advisory Group on 3 March 2011, including the reports from the various Lead Member meetings.

Council noted:

- i) that the industrial action referred to in the Lead Member Human Resources report (UCU national action relating to pay and pensions) had taken place on 22 and 24 March 2011.

Approximately 90 staff had taken strike action on each day and disruption to service had been minimal;

- ii) that, in relation to the ICT Transformation Programme (referred to in the Lead Member IT report), an ongoing issue with Unisys relating to migration to the new platform was in the process of being resolved. The matter was being actively controlled by the Project Board and the relationship with Unisys remained sound; there was a degree of flexibility in the roll-out of the programme and it was not anticipated that the current issue would impact on overall cost.

COU.11.12 **REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/11/11)**

Council received the report of the meeting of Nominations and Governance Committee on 3 March 2011. Council **resolved** that:

- i) the outcomes of the Council Effectiveness Review be endorsed;
- ii) the start time for Council meetings from 2011/12 should be 4.00pm, with consideration given to a regular “pre-Council” presentation by a senior member of staff and an informal supper for Council members after the meeting;
- iii) Dr A Mawson be appointed for a further three year period (i.e. until July 2014) and that his appointment as Chair of Council be confirmed for the same period;
- iv) Mr C Wells be appointed for a further six months (i.e. until 31 January 2012), enabling the appointment of a replacement Lead Member for Estates before his departure from Council; Mr Wells had served for eleven years on Council and had indicated a wish to step down after this further extension;
- v) Mr P Crompton be appointed for a further two year period (i.e. until July 2013);
- vi) Ms F Goodey be appointed for a further one year period (i.e. until July 2012); this would take Ms Goodey’s service as a member of Council to nine years;
- vii) Mr J Greenough be appointed for a further one year period (i.e. until July 2012); this would take Mr Greenough’s service as a member of Council to nine years;
- viii) Mr N Renfrew’s membership of Council cease at the end of his current term of office; Mr Renfrew had served on Council for approximately ten years and had made a significant contribution to the work of Council during that time;
- ix) noting the resignation of Ms Linda Doyle (elected non academic member of Council), further consideration be given to the method of filling the vacancy following the receipt of further advice from the Registrar and Secretary;
- x) Mr E Healey be appointed as an independent member of Council with immediate effect. Mr Healey was currently a co-opted member of Audit Committee;
- xi) Mr W Smith (Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester and currently a co-opted member of Nominations and Governance Committee) be appointed for a three year term (from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2014) and that Mr Smith be invited to attend the final meeting of 2010/11 session (on 30 June 2011) as an observer;

- xii) a skills audit and review of current membership profile be carried out to identify attributes and competencies required to establish a “model” balanced Council (in accordance with the recommendations in the report on Council effectiveness prepared by John Lauwerys);
- xiii) the Registrar and Secretary bring forward proposals to the next meeting of the Committee for possible measures to recognise the contribution of members of Council following their resignation or retirement from the Council;
- xiv) the amendments to the Code of Conduct for Members and Senior Officers as set out in the report from the Head of Governance Services and Deputy Secretary be approved;
- xv) the proposed change to the regulations for the award of Honorary Degrees as outlined in the report from the Head of Governance Service and Deputy Secretary be approved.

COU.11.13 REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE (COU/11/12)

Council considered the report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 24 February 2011.

Council was advised that, since the Audit Committee meeting, the Chair of the Committee had met with the Registrar and Secretary, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Executive Director of Human Resources to consider further planned implementation of audit recommendations relating to the audit of Quality of Teaching (Recruitment, Induction, Probation and Appraisal).

The Registrar and Secretary reported:

- the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (with Human Resources Division and Academic Development Unit) was developing a proposal detailing academic staff expectations; this will explicitly cover ten areas which all academic staff are expected to address (e.g. in relation to student feedback, planning, availability outside timetabled events, support to students as personal tutors etc);
- the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had established a working group with the objective of developing standardized role descriptors for key academic jobs/roles (e.g. Associate Deans, Associate Heads, Directors, Personal Tutors);
- the University was committed to teaching experience/qualification being a pre-requisite for academic roles; on an exceptional basis, in certain disciplines, vocational or industrial experience and expertise may be seen as a proxy for this;
- a systematic “progress tracker” for those on probation was to become standard;
- all academic staff would be required to undertake mandatory training in “teaching basics” (e.g. appropriate use of IT and AV equipment).

COU.11.14 SENATE (COU/11/13)

Council received the report of the meetings of Senate held on 8 December 2010 and 2 March 2011.

COU.11.15 USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/11/14)

Council noted the report outlining use of the University Seal since November 2010.

COU.11.16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 30 June 2011 at 2.00pm

APPENDIX A – TUITION FEES BY SUBJECT AREAS

Tuition Fee	Subject Areas
£8,000	Acoustics; Audio Technology; Business; Business Information Technology; Computing; Digital Broadcast Technology; Economics; Environmental Studies; Finance; Geography; Hospitality; Housing and Regeneration; Human Resource Management; International Foundation Year; Leisure/Sport/Tourism Management; Management; Marketing; Mathematics; Multimedia and Internet Technology; Physics; Professional Sound and Video Technology; Psychology; Social Care; Social Policy; Sport; Tourism
£8,250	Computing and Video Games; Film Studies; Music
£8,500	Architectural Design; Art; Bioscience; Construction; Contemporary History; Criminology; Design ;Engineering (excluding Petroleum and Mechanical); English as a Foreign Language; Environmental Health/Management; Fashion; Languages; Law; Linguistics; Performance and Performance Arts; Photography; Politics; Property Management; Social Work; Sociology; Surveying; TESOL; Theatre; Translating and Interpreting; Wildlife and Zoo Biology
£8,750	Animation; Journalism; Media Technology; Mobile and Internet Television; Television and Radio
£9,000	Petroleum and Mechanical Engineering