

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2020

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Evangeline Adams, Temi Adebayo, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Geoff Bean, Phil Cusack, Dr Tony Coombs, Garry Dowdle, Andrea Dunstan, Ben Gallop, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Councillor John Merry, Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Sam Plant, Alan Roff, Rik Sterken, Helen Taylor, Professor Mike Wood.

Apologies: Dr Priscilla Nkwenti, Professor Sheila Pankhurst, Professor Susan Price.

In attendance: Alison Blackburn (University Registrar and Secretary), Julie Charge (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research), Louise Edwards-Holland (Director of HR and OD), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience), John McCarthy (Executive Director of Marketing, Recruitment and External Relations), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Regional Partnerships), Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer), Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).

By Invitation: Neil Fowler (Dean of Students), India Booth and Sarah Sousa [COU.20.08] Ed Moloney (Chief Executive, University of Salford Students' Union) [COU.20.11].

COU.20.01 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Noted:

- i) that Dr Priscilla Nkwenti had resigned her membership due to personal reasons with immediate effect but hoped to retain a meaningful connection to the University;
- ii) that members thanked Dr Nkwenti for her contribution and offered best wishes for the future.

COU.20.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Noted: that a declaration of interest was received from Councillor John Merry pertaining to Agenda Item 12: Stage 2 Student Residences and potential conflict with his role as an elected representative on Salford City Council (the landowners).

RESOLVED: that Councillor Merry exit the Chamber for the duration of Item 12 [COU.20.12]

COU.20.03 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2019 (COU/20/01) subject to:

- i) minute reference COU.19.87 Reported vi) being amended for accuracy to read '...that there had been an additional third-party audit of the University's payables which had reported *99% compliance with the University's processes...*';
- ii) minute reference COU.19.102 that it be also noted the view of the student members that student membership of all standing sub-committees of Council should be considered.

COU.20.04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Received: copies of the two responses received from the Office for Students (OfS) in relation to resolutions made at the previous meeting (COU.19.98)

Compliance with Regulatory Guidelines, and COU.19.99 Compliance with Regulatory Guidelines: Annual Financial Return).

Noted:

- i) that the response received regarding the fee payment to the Data Quality Body (DQB) was conciliatory and largely resolved the matter;
- ii) that the response received regarding the timeliness and consistency of statutory guidance for annual financial returns and access and participation plans had been received from Sir Michael Barber, Chair of OfS;
- iii) that Sir Michael had indicated that the financial return was not required to be signed off by the governing body in a physical meeting and could be dealt with in another manner;
- iv) the view that the direction on formal decision-making was not clear and that it did not represent good governance practice.

RESOLVED: that the Chair respond to Sir Michael to note, by way of constructive feedback, the views expressed by the Council that timely and consistent advice from OfS was important to support good governance.

ACTION: CHAIR

COU.20.05 **CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS**

Confirmed: that agenda item 19 - Use of the University Seal (COU/20/14) - would be noted without discussion.

COU.20.06 **CHAIR'S ACTION: DIRECTORSHIP OF NON-UNIVERSITY BODY**

Received: a report of the Chair's Action undertaken since the previous meeting to approve the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer as the director of a non-University Body (COU/20/02).

Reported: that the appointment was to the Board of Directors of The Landing, replacing Professor Richard Stephenson, formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University.

Noted: that the role was non-remunerated.

COU.20.07 **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, a nomination for co-opted appointment to Finance and Resources Committee (COU/20/03).

Noted:

- i) 
- ii) 
- iii) that the University had a clear policy and robust procedures to manage conflicts of interest;
- iv) that the Finance and Resources Committee required co-opted expertise in the skills Mr Gleave was able to offer;
- v) the view that there had been a further opportunity to reflect on the diversity of Committee membership before this nomination but that a more comprehensive review was being undertaken through the Council Effectiveness Review (CER) and the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee and this would be reported to the next meeting;
- vi) the Registrar would respond to the request from the student members to receive further information on the search and recruitment process for appointments.

RESOLVED: to approve the co-opted appointment of Stephen Gleave to the Finance and Resources Committee, subject to agreed management of conflict of interest.

ACTION: Secretary

COU.20.08

SEC+: ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

Received: as part of the 'Engagement with the Student Experience' agenda (SEC+), a presentation on the Five Factors of Success by Professor Neil Fowler [REDACTED] (COU/20/04).

Reported:

- i) that the definition of 'student success' was challenging for the sector;
- ii) that the regulatory body (the OfS) used a range of different measures to build a definition;
- iii) that the University had approximately 20,000 enrolled students who would each have a different life story and experience of higher education;
- iv) that the University had developed what it believed to be five factors for student success: sense of belonging, sense of purpose, self-efficacy, resilience and engagement ;
- v) that student success was not necessarily the growing application of each factor but rather an ecosystem to build resilience and confidence;
- vi) that the University had built tools to assist with measurement of the factors and to review interventions put in place and this data would provide a framework to inform the lead performance indicators;
- vii) that the factors informed but not dictated career outcomes;

viii) [REDACTED]

- x) that affordability had been a critical concern before enrolment and that had led to a decision to attend a university close to the family home but with a vibrant creative industry;

xi) [REDACTED]

Noted:

- i) the view that the presentation showed the student experience was not defined by simple constructs;
- ii) that the first cross-sectional data had been collected at the end of October 2018 and it was anticipated future reports would include information on the University's impact on student success;
- iii) that the role of the 'Salford Academic' which included the factors for student

success had been piloted in the School of Arts and Media (SAM) and was to be implemented across the three remaining Schools; this included contribution measures towards student success;

- iv) that academic staff had a range of tools available to support this implementation which included personal development support and peer-mentoring;
- v) the view that the role of academic lecturer had transformed significantly to include pastoral care and industry collaboration, that the relationship between teacher and student was a partnership;
- vi) that the lecturer staff referred to in the presentations were also professional artists and the view that this had a direct impact on the student experience;
- vii) the view that the factors for success mirrored the clinical stages of adolescence and these delivered a positive social identity approach to student experience which could lead to measurement of improved (or not) emotional health and wellbeing;
- viii) members thanks to the two student representatives for sharing their insightful personal experiences and impactful comments.

COU.20.09

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received: an update report on the first semester of activities intended to engage members with the student experience (SEC+) (COU/20/05).

Reported:

- i) that pilot activities delivered during 2019/20 for Council members to hear the student voice had included a standing item at each meeting, inclusion in the Meet&Eat schedule, and 'shadow' opportunities offered by the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU);
- ii) that a review and evaluation report produced in conjunction with the Lead Member for Student Experience would be received by Governance, Nomination and Ethics Committee before recommendation on the future of the Student Experience Committee was made to Council at its meeting in July 2020.

Noted:

- i) the view that the exposure to the student voice had been reflective of positive experiences and that members needed to be assured that there was a means to hear about less positive experiences particularly from hard-to-reach cohorts and distance learning students;
- ii) that the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) was also challenged to reach some groups and had re-structure its School Representative system to address the challenges and to effect a clearer 'line of sight';
- iii) the view that members had found the School Showcase programme insightful and would welcome re-instatement of similar events;
- iv) the view that members had received more widely disseminated content from the student voice, but this should continue to be balanced with the whole range of performance indicators;

COU.20.10

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/20/06).

Reported:

- i) that the external policy environment was changing at considerable pace since the general election result;
- ii) that a consultation had opened on the future of teaching funding, the top-up funding provided by the Government for programmes that required intensive support such as medical awards, laboratory-based sciences and sports;
- iii) that it was expected the consultation would lead to a reduction in teaching funding and that this was likely to be mid-funding cycle (i.e. within 2019/20 financial year);
- iv) that the University was modelling a range of financial scenarios to mitigate

- against potential impact;
- v) that greater bursary opportunities had been created for allied health professionals and nursing programmes to which the University was seeking to increase recruitment;
 - vi) that the Government had committed to 20 national Institutions of Technology funded through the National Skills Fund, eight more than originally planned;
 - vii) that this announcement was congruent to the work of the University in its establishment of the Greater Manchester Institute of Advanced Technical Skills to address the skills gap, increased apprenticeship offering and its development of Industry Collaboration Zones (ICZ) for Industry 4.0;
 - viii) that representatives of the Department for Education (DfE) had visited the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer for discussions about a proposed Greater Manchester Institute of Advanced Technical Skills. A return visit to the DfE was planned;
 - ix) that the University had conducted a useful visit to the University of Exeter who had established an Institute of Technology with partners in the South West ;
 - x) that the increase in the 18-year old demographic due in 2023 would have an impact on colleges of further education (FE) who had experienced much reduced funding and enrolment over the last decade and who struggled to grow capacity and attract skilled lecture staff as a result;
 - xi) that the University's single corporate strategy – Industry Collaboration – was due for review and the Executive Team had started to produce the next five-year plan which was to be presented to Council in due course;
 - xii) that a graphical representation of the University's key priorities had been produced to assist all colleagues and members with planning and decision-making to ensure alignment with, and focus on, the corporate strategy and the external Industry 4.0 environment;
 - xiii) that Professor Karl Dayson was congratulated on his promotion to the new role of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation;
 - xiv) that a number of key appointments and professorial promotions had been made and the University had successfully retained talented colleagues in an environment of highly competitive corporate salaries.

Noted:

- i) that the value of teaching funding received by the University was approximately £12m for teaching plus an additional £5m for intensive support research activities from Research England;
- ii) the view that there was little individual or combined institutional challenge that could impact on the teaching funding consultation particularly because in-year reductions had been applied previously;
- iii) that the Greater Manchester University Mental Health Service for students was a two-year partnership with the NHS, with an expectation that future funding would be provided by the university institutions and industry, and the University was to host a funding raising event in March 2020;
- iv) that the Greater Manchester Student Assembly was also working towards securing resource funding for the Service.

COU.20.11

USSU MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Considered: the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the University of Salford Students' Union (COU/20/07).

Reported:

- i) that the Education Act (1994) required a code of practice between students' unions and institutions and that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) performed this function;
- ii) that the proposed amendments were minor and had been scrutinised by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET);
- iii) that the recent internal audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had concluded that USSU provided value-for-money to the University and the proposed MoU reflected the recommendations made.

Noted:

- i) that the University was responsible for the facilitation of electoral registration, but the USSU worked with it to encourage students to register;
- ii) the constitution of, and appointment process to, the USSU Board of Trustees;
- iii) that the Partnership Steering Group was co-chaired and provided a forum for practical 'day-to-day' partnership building activities outside the formal committee structures of each entity;
- iv) that the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee supported the recommendation to formalise the MoU review period.

RESOLVED:

- 1. to approve the MoU between USSU and the University, subject to approval from the USSU Board of Trustees;
- 2. to approve the formalisation of a quadrennial review period for the MoU.

(Secretary's note: the USSU Board of Trustees meeting is next scheduled on 12 February 2020).

COU.20.12

[REDACTED]

Noted:

- i) the thanks of members to the Finance and Estates Team for work on the complex negotiations;
- ii) [REDACTED]
- iii) that part of the lease conditions related to cost of the land occupied by the car park;
- iv) that no equality impact assessment (EIA) had been undertaken to address any protected characteristics at risk;
- v) the thanks of the student members for the involvement of the USSU in the

student residences project which had highlighted challenges for student accommodation costs, for example, the funding of rental deposits prior to confirmation of University offer.

RESOLVED:

1. [REDACTED]

COU.20.13

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Received: on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a detailed report on student continuation, including the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 1 2019/20. The Top 10 Risk Profile was appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/20/09).

Reported:

- i) that the University had strong sector growth performance in full-time undergraduate home/EU student recruitment;
- ii) that student progression between levels of study had declined overall by one per cent and student continuation (repetition of some or all of a level of study) had increased slightly;
- iii) that internal measures of progression had mirrored most but not all of the measures set by the Office for Students (OfS);
- iv) that the internal measure Timely Progression Index (Table 5) indicated the timely progression by School;
- v) that the factors affecting progression had been presented individually but there was a high degree of overlap and that students could be affected by one or more factor;
- vi) that there was a cost impact to non-progression for both the student and the University;
- vii) that the University had brought in a revised action plan focussed on progression and continuation as the previous approach had not had the desired impact;
- viii) that the revised action plan had accelerated the institutional response;
- ix) that the performance data had been aligned to the revised School structure through the unification projects.
- x) that the Five Factors for Student Success had been embedded in the framework to ensure flexibility in measurements and to direct resources;
- xi) that the University had recognised improving progression and continuation performance was the single enabler to make a difference to the student experience and outcome;
- xii) that future reports would include in-year intelligence.

Noted:

- i) the view that poor progression was a major ethical and financial failure on the part of the University;
- ii) that there was a level of autonomy for academic colleagues to make changes to curricula and this was described as 'freedom within a framework';
- iii) that there was a challenge within the framework to address the entrance characteristics and needs of students with equivalent BTEC qualifications;
- iv) that members were concerned by the information presented;
- v) the view that there should be greater scrutiny of the underlying variations by school, programme content and the characteristics of tutors (and to support improvement in performance);
- vi) that the Student Experience and Learning Committee (SELTEC) sub-committee of Senate, was undertaking a review of student progression on

behalf of Senate;

- vii) the view from the student members that disability as a factor in progression and continuation was not included and that there was further investigation to be done on the impact of commuting, available facilities and the concept of a 'sticky campus/sticky community';
- viii) the view from the student members that the option for students to suspend studies for a short period could be further promoted and/or understood;
- ix) the view that while the University was confident it had the right interventions in place it needed to be more consistent in its implementation;
- x) the view that unification of schools had exposed the differentials in experience and that there was an opportunity to now push forward action on this priority;
- xi) that professional service colleagues were equally dedicated to focus on the issues of progression and retention;
- xii) that the appended Top 10 Risk Profile did not reflect the increased risk from the UK leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020;
- xiii) that the Audit and Risk Committee had instructed that the risk profile be increased but that the Committee meeting had taken place after the publication of the paper. The Top 10 Risk Profile had been amended accordingly.

COU.20.14

QUARTER 1, 2019/20 FINANCE REPORT

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 1 2019/20 finance report (COU/20/10).

Reported:

- i) that the operating position was in-line with the budget forecast;
- ii) that the proceeds of the sale of Castle Irwell had been reported in Quarter 1;
- iii) that the Universities' Superannuation Scheme (USS) 2018 valuation position was reflected by a £20.1m gain in the overall forecast surplus position and this had been expected;
- iv) that capital expenditure on Energy House 2 was slightly behind due to the length of the technical phase at RIBA Stage 4 planning;
- v) that cashflow was above £20m;
- vi) that the University was compliant with its banking covenants.

(Secretary's note: the title of the non-pay line that will appear in the quarterly finance reports has been amended to the 'Student Experience Project Fund' to accurately reflect the activity and expenditure).

COU.12.15

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

Received: on the recommendation of the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, an oral update on preparations for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission.

Reported:

- i) that there were 308 days until submission for the REF2021 submission deadline;
- ii) that 277 full-time equivalent (FTE) academic colleagues had been selected for inclusion;
- iii) that the staff selection rounds had aligned with the internal implementation of the academic career framework;
- iv) that the selection process had been rigorous and fairly moderated;
- v) that the process had allowed for the next generation of active researchers to be identified (with a view to early preparation of case studies for REF2027);
- vi) that staff within the School of Science, Engineering and Environment (SSEE) made up half of the returning population;
- vii) that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation had increased since the previous submission in 2014;

- viii) that the imbalance in gender ratio of males to females had reduced from 18% to 11% since the previous submission but that it was still more likely that a male would be selected for inclusion;
- ix) that the REF outcome considerations included how the University intended to address diversity and gender gaps and why the University might justify these strategies;
- x) the University was to reflect on how successful it had been at predicting outcomes through internal calibration and external peer review and was to use this learning to inform future strategy.

COU.12.16

SENATE

Received: the minutes of the Senate meeting on 11 December 2019 (COU/20/11).

Reported:

- i) that the Master of Design (MDes) proposal was a good example of an interdisciplinary award and had been approved by Senate;
- ii) that there had been a significant discussion on the 'Salford Academic' pilot undertaken in the School of Arts and Media.

Noted:

- i) that the University had provided a written response to the Office for Students (OfS) on the changes to its degree classifications over time;
- ii) that the University had amended a previous degree classification formula and was now closely aligned with sector norms;
- iii) that the graduating class of 2018/19 had been the first cohort to be awarded under the amended formula;
- iv) the view that members would have expected to see retention and progression as a prominent item for discussions at Senate, given its priority status for the institution and the report made to Council earlier on student progression and continuation [COU.20.13];
- v) that the terms of reference of the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC) had been strengthened to provide assurances to Senate and to refer items to it for consideration by exception.

RESOLVED: to review the annual schedule of business for Senate to provide assurances to Council that the highest standards of academic governance were in place and that there was clear scrutiny of the University's academic priorities.

ACTION: CHAIR OF SENATE (VICE-CHANCELLOR)

COU.20.17

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/20/12).

(Secretary's note: the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee gave an oral update as the meeting of ARC had taken place only the previous day).

Reported:

- i) that the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) was overseeing the Council Effectiveness Review (CER) and that this included composition of Council and its standing committees with a focus on better reflection of the composition of the student body;
- ii) that the GNEC had introduced a more rigorous approach to 'fit and proper' persons testing both at appointment and during a member's term;
- iii) that the GNEC had approved the revisions to the Finance and Resources Committee Terms of Reference;
- iv) that the Report on the regulator investigation at De Montfort University was to be circulated;
- v) that the Remuneration Committee (RemCo) had received the Report on the Gender Pay Gap which had evidenced slow but encouraging improvement;
- vi) that RemCo had approved the continuation of pension compensation supplement for existing recipients and that future cases of compensation in lieu of pension be considered on their individual merit by the Chair and Chair

of Council;

- vii) that the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) had scrutinised the negotiations and proposals for the Student Residences project;
- viii) that FRC had scrutinised the Quarter One Finance Report;
- ix) that the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) was to consider the Access and Participation Plan (APP) monitoring return by circulation due to the late notification of the deadline by the Office for Students;
- x) that ARC had considered the transparency in costings (TRAC) returns;
- xi) that ARC had received an overview of governance and risk for major projects from the Chief Operating Officer;
- xii) that the tender for external audit services provider was to be issued on Monday 27 January 2020;
- xiii) that the Chair of ARC announced with the greatest sadness the death of co-opted member Brent Wilkinson. Mr Wilkson had been a co-opted member for eight years and was a highly respected forensic accounting specialist.

Noted: members condolences and grateful thanks for Mr Wilkinson's contribution.

COU.20.18 **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Received: a report on the approval of the University's Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 and on the monitoring return of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Plans (COU/20/13).

Reported:

- i) that the University had received confirmed approval from the Office for Students (OfS) for the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25;
- ii) that the University had received approval for the statutory monitoring return for the 2017/18 Plan;
- iii) that the OfS had issued its guidance for the statutory monitoring for the 2018/19 Plan with a submission deadline notified of 28 February 2020;
- iv) that due to the late issue of the guidance and the scheduled committee meetings, the Audit and Risk Committee was to consider the monitoring return by correspondence.

COU.20.19 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted: there had been no items of other business received by the Chair.

COU.20.20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was to be held on Friday 20 March 2020.