

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
5 FEBRUARY 2015**

Present: Baroness Beverley Hughes (Chair), Derek Antrobus, Martin Bull, Mike Burrows, Garry Dowdle, Jill Evans, Julia Fawcett, Amina Helal, Fiza Ikram, Helen Marshall (item COU 15.2 onwards), Claire Moreland, Sean O'Hara, Jasmine Pokuaa, Joyce Redfearn, Stephen Sorrell (until item COU.15.11), Ruth Turner (until item COU.15.11) and Tony Warne

Apologies: Alun Francis, Eric Healey, Jane Luca, Tom Russell

In attendance: Vikki Goddard (Registrar- item COU 15.2 onwards), Julie Charge (Executive Director of Finance- item COU 15.2 onwards), Mark Rollinson (University Secretary), Andrew Hartley (General Counsel – item COU.15.1 only), Keith Watkinson (Executive Director of HR – item COU.15.1 only), Chris Larkin (Director of Communications-item COU 15.1 only), Nigel Mellors (Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise - item COU.15.2 onwards), Julie Byrd (General Manager, Students' Union-item COU.15.13 only)

COU.15.1 VICE-CHANCELLOR RECRUITMENT

The Chair introduced this item which was supported by a draft proposed process for the recruitment and selection of a new Vice-Chancellor. The Acting Vice-Chancellor and all other officers apart from the Executive Director of Human Resources, the General Counsel, the Director of Communications and the University Secretary (whose professional expertise was required) were absent during this item. The Chair advised that a range of potential approaches had been considered during informal discussions with all Council members. These discussions had been against the background of the unique context of current HE sector market conditions and the University's current position and requirements.

The Chair outlined the proposed approach to the recruitment and selection process that had been formulated during these discussions and as outlined below;

- in the first instance applications would be sought only from suitably qualified staff currently employed in the university;
- the internal process would be thorough and robust, including rigorous assessment criteria and external evaluation to ensure the appointment of an excellent candidate meeting all essential criteria;
- in the event that the internal process did not result in a recommendation for appointment, the matter would be referred back to Council.

Council noted the following rationale for the approach;

- prevailing market conditions in the sector with approximately 15% of institutions involved in Vice-Chancellor recruitment processes;
- the existence of a strong, internal talent pool;
- given the University's recent history, the requirement for stability, continuity and clarity;
- the avoidance of a potentially disruptive lengthy external recruitment process.

Following discussion and contribution from a range of internal and independent members, Council unanimously **resolved**;

- i) to endorse the proposed approach outlined above and invite applications only from suitably qualified staff currently employed by the University;
- ii) to establish a Recruitment Committee with membership and terms of reference as outlined in the proposed process, but with scope for inclusion of another readily available independent external member;
- iii) to engage an executive search company (following a selection process) to assist the Recruitment Committee in its work by ensuring appropriate external professional advice (including calibration and benchmarking);

- iv) to endorse the indicative timeline as set out in the process which included provision of regular updates to Council on progress.

**ACTION (AP1): Secretary
General Counsel
Executive Director of HR**

Council noted that communication of the decision would be made initially to the Senior Leadership Group and then (by 9am on 6 February) to all staff and students.

ACTION (AP2): Director of Communications

COU.15.2 MEMBERSHIP (COU/15/1)

Council welcomed Professor Tony Warne as the new nominated academic staff member; Prof Warne's appointment (until July 2017) had been recommended by Governance and Nominations Committee and confirmed following circulation to all members.

COU.15.3 MINUTES (COU/15/2)

Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014 subject to inclusion of reference to a declaration of interest by Councillor Antrobus in respect of minute COU.14.89.

COU.15.3 STARRED ITEMS

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

COU.15.5 CHAIR'S ACTION

Council noted, as confirmed in a brief paper tabled at the meeting correcting an inaccuracy on the agenda, that the Chair had taken action on behalf of Council to confirm the name of the student residences as Peel Park Quarter.

COU.15.6 OPENING OF BANK ACCOUNT

Council **resolved** to open an account for investment purposes with KBC Bank and that relevant officers (Julie Charge, Ian Dempsey, Kerry O'Sullivan and Mark Rollinson) be authorised to set up the account and invest monies.

ACTION (AP3): Executive Director of Finance

COU.15.7 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (COU/15/1)

Council considered the quarterly performance report updating Council on progress towards achievement of strategic objectives. The Acting Vice-Chancellor advised that the next report would include relevant benchmark information to enable direct comparison with an appropriate, relevant peer group of institutions. The following matters were noted in discussion;

- i) there were relatively high staff: student ratios in some schools and this was being addressed through recruitment to vacant positions (although some subject areas had experienced difficulties and delays in recruitment);
- ii) the importance of in-year proxy measures to gauge student satisfaction and enable trend analysis and timely Council evaluation of performance;
- iii) improved integration and coordination of academic and professional services activity and greater clarity around individual autonomy and accountability (underpinned by robust performance management and organisational development) exemplified the culture change necessary to deliver sustainable and enduring academic improvement;
- iv) the Senior Leadership Group had begun work on the development of a distinctive vision for the University, building on the existing strategy and sub-strategies, and following consultation with the broader Executive Board, would consult with Council before its next meeting.

COU.15.8 FINANCE REPORT AND UPDATE (COU/15/4)

Council considered the quarterly financial report, noting that the University remained on course to achieve the budgeted £8.3 million historical cost surplus. The Executive Director of Finance advised that since the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee on 28 January, outstanding bank covenant issues had now been resolved and were awaiting signature. In response to questions, Council was advised that the historical cost surplus took into account accounting conventions such as depreciation and the current operating surplus was more modest; the importance of generating (at least) a 5% surplus to enable orderly and sustainable investment in facilities was reiterated.

COU.15.9 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) OUTCOMES (COU/15/5)

Council received a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the outcomes of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). Council noted that although the University's Grade Point Average (GPA) had improved compared to 2008 (from 2.36 to 2.54), the increase had not kept pace with that in the sector and was not of the order anticipated by the University. The need for robust management and moderation of returns to future exercises was emphasised and the presentation included an analysis of the scale of improvement to GPA that would have been achieved had a smaller proportion of staff been returned to the REF. Council was advised that the likely financial impact of the REF outcome was a reduction of over £2 million in QR funding. The following matters were noted in discussion;

- i) Council's disappointment with the overall outcome and the decision making processes in relation to the REF return. This had resulted in an incorrect assessment of both the predicted GPA and the percentage of staff included in the return with a consequent material and significant impact on outcome;
- ii) the reduction in QR funding would be considered during the current planning process and a report made to the next meeting of Finance and Resources Committee;
- iii) the importance of achieving the strategic target of a GPA of 3.0 which was likely to require a review of the related strategic target of a 40% staff return;
- iv) that the University remained committed to investment in research, targeted on areas of strength; this approach would be flexible and differentiated to enable appropriate support for both REF-returnable and applied, enterprise related activity.

ACTION (AP4): Executive Director of Finance

ACTION (AP5): PVC (Research)

COU.15.10 SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES (COU/15/6)

Council noted the report on subsidiary company activity and was advised that a more substantive report, enabling discussion and engagement with members would be brought to a meeting before the end of the academic year.

COU.15.11 OUTCOME OF EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE REVIEW (COU/15/7)

Council considered a report from the Acting Vice-Chancellor outlining proposed changes to the executive structure of the University following a review conducted in the latter part of 2014 by Alan Roff, a former Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Central Lancashire. The report proposed a smaller Executive Team (meeting weekly) and a larger University Management Team (meeting monthly linking explicitly with School Executives), some changes to Pro-Vice-Chancellor portfolios and realignment of professional services to support delivery of the sub-strategies and provide clear and cohesive reporting lines. It was proposed that the revised arrangements be introduced with effect from 1 May 2015.

Council endorsed the proposal as outlined and the following matters were noted in discussion;

ACTION (AP6): Acting Vice-Chancellor

- i) a key element of the report was the devolution of decision making and accountability to appropriate, suitably qualified members of staff; measures to ensure capability, for example through robust organisational development, were integral to this;
- ii) that, although the changes resulted in a slight increase in the number of senior posts, compared to the rest of the sector the revised management structure was relatively lean;

- iii) that the parallel academic governance review would reinforce Senate's role as the academic authority with the ability to ensure that management operated within the context of the University's academic strategies;
- iv) the potential impact of arrangements for the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor on the proposed changes (and timing of the introduction of those changes).

COU.15.12 REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/15/8 AND COU/15/8A)

Council received the report from the Senate meeting held on 10 December 2014 and an update on progress towards implementation of the recommendations made following the recent review of Senate.

Council **resolved** to approve the award of Emeritus Professorships to Allan Boardman and Richard Knowles as recommended in the Senate report.

ACTION (AP7): Secretary

COU.15.13 REPORT FROM STUDENTS' UNION (COU/15/9)

Council received and noted the Annual Report and Accounts from the Students' Union Trustee Board and a presentation from the student members of Council on current Students' Union activity. Council was pleased to note the complementary approach of the Union and the University's student facing functions and the shared aim of improving the student experience, exemplified by the developing concept of "co-creation". The following matters were noted in discussion;

- i) the importance of an integrated, cohesive approach encompassing both face to face and digital support;
- ii) the need to ensure that the Union's approach captured the needs of distance learning students
- iii) the Union's desire to encourage and improve student participation in the political process.

COU.15.14 REPORT FROM AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (COU/15/10)

Council received and noted the report from the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 14 January 2015, including an update on the external audit tender process. Noting the movement towards more concise, action oriented minutes, Council **resolved** that for future meetings of this and other committees, complete minutes of meetings be submitted to Council, replacing the current system of reports based on relevant extracts from the minutes.

ACTION (AP8): Secretary

COU.15.15 REPORT FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (COU/15/11)

Council received the report from the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee held on 28 January 2015. Council noted and welcomed the reference within the report to the increasingly high level of assurance received in relation to internationalisation activity. Council **resolved** to;

- i) note and endorse the Committee's decision (subject to there being no material change to the project) to authorise the Executive Director of Estates and Property Services and the Executive Director of Finance to confirm and conclude necessary legal agreements in relation to the Castle Irwell Flood Prevention Scheme and the ownership of David Lewis Playing Field (as Assistant Mayor for strategic planning at Salford City Council and in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Antrobus declared an interest in this item and took no part in discussions);

ACTION (AP9): Executive Directors of Estates and Property Services and Finance

- ii) adopt the changes to the Sickness Absence, Grievance and Disciplinary policies outlined in the report, noting the ongoing dispute with UCU and the University's engagement in discussion with ACAS about the University's relationship with UCU;

ACTION (AP10): Executive Director of HR

- iii) in relation to ii) above, to request Audit and Risk Committee to assure itself that the level of risk and potential mitigation were appropriately captured;

ACTION (AP11): Secretary

- iv) approve the interim Health and Safety Report, noting that any health and safety matters requiring consideration before the next annual report would be brought to the Finance and Resources Committee in a timely manner.

ACTION (AP12): Executive Director of HR

COU.15.16 REPORT FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (COU/15/12 AND COU/15/12A)

Council received and noted the reports from the meetings of Student Experience Committee held on 15 December 2014 and 28 January 2015. Council noted the need to improve student retention and to develop a more differentiated, focused approach to effecting improvement. Council noted further that the Committee was considering the most effective method of engagement with schools given that the approach of a Lead Member for each school was unlikely to be scalable. Noting the success of the pre-Council visit to research facilities, Council suggested that the feasibility of a rolling programme of pre-Council visits to schools be investigated. Council asked that its thanks be conveyed to those who had been involved in the organisation of the tours of research facilities.

ACTION (AP13): Secretary

COU.15.17 REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/15/13)

Council noted the report from the meeting of Nominations and Governance held on 14 January 2015 and specifically the draft schedule of Council and committee meetings for 2015-16. Council **resolved** to approve the schedule subject to further consultation with Council members on the proposed dates.

ACTION (AP14): Secretary

COU.15.18 REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (COU/15/14)

Council noted the report from the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 6 January 2015.

COU.15.19 USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/15/15)

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

COU 15.20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. USS and potential UCU industrial action

Council was advised that following a ballot of UCU members, the Joint Negotiating Committee had formally agreed proposals for changes to the USS and consequently the proposed industrial action had been suspended. It appeared likely that the Pensions Regulator would accept the proposed changes to the scheme.

COU.15.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23 April 2015 at 2.00pm.