

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD  
COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
22 MARCH 2012**

Present: Dr A Mawson (Chair)

Cllr D Antrobus  
Mr M Appleton  
Mr I Austin  
Mr K Brady  
Mr T Britten  
Prof M Bull  
Dr M Burrows  
Mr N Collins  
Mr P Crompton  
Ms C Dangerfield  
Mr T Doyle  
Ms J Fawcett  
Mr J Greenough  
Prof M Hall  
Mr E Healey  
Mr M Johnson  
Mr W Smith  
Prof H Takruri-Rizk  
Ms R Turner

Apologies: Ms F Goodey

In attendance: Dr A A Graves (Registrar and Secretary)

Ms K Brown (Executive Director of Finance)  
Mr K Barnes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Partnerships – item COU.12.12-COU.12.13)  
Mr K Beal (Interim Director, Estates and Property Services – item COU12.8)  
Mr P Cartwright (Head of Change Management – item COU.12.10)  
Mr D Drury (Chief Information Officer – item COU.12.11)  
Mr C Larkin (Director of Communications)  
Mr P Hopwood (Director of Planning and Performance – item COU.12.1-COU12.7)  
Mr S Mulholland (Head of Student Information Directorate – item COU12.1-COU.12.4)  
Mr M Rollinson (Head of Governance Services and Deputy Secretary)

**COU.12.1 STUDENTS' UNION REPORTS**

The Chair began the meeting by placing on record his thanks to the Students' Union for the compilation of excellent, independent reports on the quality of teaching and the student experience in each of the three Colleges.

## COU.12.2 **MINUTES (COU/12/01)**

Council confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2011 as a correct record with the following amendment:

COU.11.61 p4 – final paragraph 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> line delete “approximately 350 undergraduate programmes”, inset “approximately 350 undergraduate places”.

## COU.12.3 **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S MANAGEMENT REPORT (COU/12/02)**

Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor updating members on developments since the previous meeting of Council on 23 November 2011. Before inviting questions and comments on the report, the Vice-Chancellor emphasised the following elements of the report (including some new issues which had emerged since the report was drafted):

- i) the Students’ Union elections had taken place and Christina Kennedy had been elected as Students’ Union President. Tom Doyle had also been re-elected as a sabbatical officer;
- ii) the information in the report about the projected budget position for 2012/13 had been superseded by events and a full report would be included in the report from the Executive Director of Finance (see minute COU.12.5 below);
- iii) in relation to the murder of the Lancaster University student, Anuj Bidve, in Ordsall on Boxing Day, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the University continued to be in close liaison with the police and the City Council. The University had taken active steps to reassure students about their safety on and around campus and testimonials from past and current Indian students had been helpful in this regard. Media coverage in India had been monitored closely; articles about the murder had peaked in the immediate aftermath but the matter was not currently featuring. It was recognised that coverage was likely to be extensive once the trial of the alleged perpetrator began over the summer. The student members confirmed that there was no sense of heightened alarm or worry amongst the student body and the consensus view was that this was a tragic accident which could have occurred in any major city. The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that there appeared to be no credible basis for the murder being racially motivated;
- iv) preparations for the Research Excellence Framework were on a sound footing under the leadership of Prof Jim Yip, the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation;
- v) the Professorial Review had now been completed and indicated that 77% of professors were making a significant contribution to the objectives of the University (i.e. either fully meeting or exceeding expectations);
- vi) the recent visits to Sri Lanka and the Middle East (which were covered in depth in the appendices to the report) presented considerable opportunities for the University.

In response to questions from members, the Vice-Chancellor emphasised the rigorous quality assurance measures being put in place to support the University’s international collaborative partnership activities. Staff recognised the importance of a thorough approach to developing partnerships to ensure appropriate attention on standards and to minimise any potential reputational risk. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the University was focusing its partnership activity in areas where there was a good understanding of the market. In response to a further question, the Vice-Chancellor commented on the gestation period for the development of a flourishing relationship, citing the Sino-British College in Shanghai as an exemplar (increase in number of students progressing to Salford from 2-3 to approximately 50 in a three year period).

Members probed further on the question of the Professorial Review; the Vice-Chancellor noted that the completion of the review provided a clear, empirical basis to assess performance of the professoriate.

In response to further questions, the Director of Communications advised that the University's media strategy in relation to the Ordsall murder had been deliberately low key, in part, in recognition of the fact that the victim was not a Salford student. The Director of Communications advised that a key element of the strategy had been to reiterate and emphasise Salford's reputation as a relatively safe place to study (i.e. there were no Salford specific criteria which made it any worse than other City Centre campus environments) and Council was pleased to note that, to date, there had been no discernible impact on recruitment.

#### **COU.12.4 UK/EU UNDERGRADUATE FEES 2013/14 (COU/12/03)**

Council considered a report from the Director of Student Information setting the rationale for a recommended £9,000 flat fee for UK/EU undergraduate students from 2013/14. The Director of Student Information spoke to the report and Council noted in particular:

- i) that price was increasingly seen as a proxy for quality and, given that the majority of the University's regional competitors were already charging £9,000, there was a risk that, if fees remained at the current level, the University's programmes could be perceived to offer poorer quality than these competitors;
- ii) evidence gathered via both local and national market research suggested that the majority of prospective students were not heavily influenced by price, having realised that student loans operate as a graduate tax rather than a credit card type loan. Consequently, the difference between £8,400 (the University's current average fee) and £9,000 was negligible;
- iii) evidence suggested that students from lower socio-economic groups were most likely to be influenced by price and also by the availability of bursaries and scholarships. The University was developing its awards package for submission to the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) later in the year and a proportion of the additional fee income generated (approximately 30%) would be reinvested in additional or higher awards for students from lower socio-economic groups;
- iv) given the relative lack of price sensitivity, which had emerged from the experience of the past year, there was now a weaker rationale for variable fees, which could be difficult to justify to different student cohorts. There was now strong evidence to suggest that, rather than looking for the cheapest course, students were increasingly basing programme selection decisions on potential return on investment;
- v) based on current academic plan numbers, the increase to £9,000 would generate additional revenue of approximately £2.7 million in 2013/14, approximately £5.4 million in 2014/15 and just over £8 million per year thereafter.

In response to questions, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated the University's commitment to maintaining its position as a widening participation institution (the University was amongst the top 30 Widening Participation institutions, drawing 44% of its students from socio-economic groups 4-7). This commitment was not antithetical to the parallel commitment to maintain and, where appropriate, increase entry level tariffs. The University was committed to working with local schools to ensure that, from an early age, children were aware of the potential to progress to University. The development of access agreements with key regional provider institutions was also integral to this approach.

Members agreed that it would be beneficial for the University to benchmark its current and intended future bursary/support package offer against competitors to ensure that assumptions were well-founded.

Council **resolved** to:

- i) increase full time UK/EU undergraduate fees to £9,000 for all programmes for 2013/14 (noting that this applied to new students only; existing students would continue under the fees regime in place at the start of their programme); the abstention of student members from this resolution was noted;
- ii) ask officers to continue to develop an enhanced package of support for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, to be funded by reinvesting a proportion of the additional income generated (noting that this proportion was likely to be in the region of 30%, subject to the further work on benchmarking referred to above);
- iii) ask officers to ensure that future student recruitment marketing campaigns strongly emphasise the value proposition and return on investment for students at Salford.

#### COU.12.5 **FINANCE REPORT: QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Council considered the report from the Executive Director of Finance on the Quarter Two financial statements.

Council considered in detail the appendices to the report which provided an analysis of movement on the income and expenditure account for 2011/12. This included details of movement (under a range of budget headings) between a) the original Council approved budget (June 2011) and the HEFCE Financial Forecast (December 2011) and b) the HEFCE Financial Forecast and the Quarter 2 Forecast. The Director of Finance explained the most significant movements.

Council noted that the forecasts also included assumptions regarding the contribution to anticipated redundancy costs (from Transformation Phase Two) from non-pay and pay savings; this contribution was likely to be lower than anticipated. Nevertheless, Council recognised the importance of continuing with the necessary adjustment to the University's cost base (both via Transformation and the academic adjustment programme) which would generate significant long term and recurrent benefits.

Council noted further that the Executive Director's report contained a range of opportunities to reduce the anticipated deficit in 2011/12 which had the potential to bring the projected deficit back into line with the HEFCE Financial Forecasts. The ten point plan, which was the result of the recent senior leadership financial planning conference, was designed to address priorities emerging from the 2011/12 budget and to provide a key component to the compilation of the 2012-13 budget and future financial forecasts. The Executive Director advised that the compilation of the 2012-13 budget was still at a formative stage and current indications pointed to a deficit of approximately £3.1 million. It was noted that there was potential to reduce this figure further, given that there had not yet been detailed scrutiny of local budget submissions and that the budget did not include potential income from improved international recruitment and enhanced CPD activity (both of which were included in the ten point plan). In response to questions from members, the Executive Director reported that the 2012-2013 budget position was better than initial projections had suggested (and as reported to Council Advisory Group) principally because of overly pessimistic

initial assumptions of tuition fee income once the impact of variable fees (for 2012/13) and the cumulative effect of the new fee regime were taken into account.

After due consideration of the Executive Director's report, Council **resolved** that:

- i) in order to provide additional support to the Lead Member for Finance and to ensure enhanced scrutiny of the budget in the current, challenging environment, a small ad-hoc group of three members (chaired by the Lead Member (Finance)) be formed (final membership to be determined by the Chair of Council following discussions outside the meeting);
- ii) the group should meet on a monthly basis and provide reports to Council members at regular intervals, between meetings;
- iii) notwithstanding the need for a realistic, evidence based approach to budget compilation, the group be strongly encouraged to help delivery of a breakeven budget for 2012-13;
- iv) the group consider the ten point recovery plan in some detail, quantifying potential savings/benefits wherever possible;
- v) the continued need for the group be reviewed at the conclusion of the 2012-13 budget setting process.

Council noted the potential to draw on additional, professional support to assist in the budget setting process and encouraged the Registrar and Secretary and Director of Finance to explore this possibility further.

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed, in response to questions from student members, that one of the principal aims of the Transformation Programme and academic adjustment was improvement of the student experience (for example, by improving student feedback times and optimising timetabling and room booking functions).

Council **resolved** further to endorse the ten point financial action plan as set out in the Vice-Chancellor's report, noting that further work on quantification of benefits would be carried out; the student members (Ms C Dangerfield and Mr T Doyle) asked that their abstention from the above resolution be recorded.

#### COU.12.6 **PERFORMANCE REPORT (COU/12/05)**

Council considered the latest Performance Report from the Director of Planning and Performance. The Director of Planning and Performance advised that the report had been refined so that, for annual measures (for example, in relation to learning, teaching and research), milestones of improvement activity (derived from the implementation plan for each strategic area) were mapped to the key performance indicators in order to monitor in-year progress.

On a matter of detail and in response to a question, the Director of Planning and Performance advised that the limitations of TRAC as a measure of research performance were widely recognised: the Director was currently engaged in discussions with the Director of Research and Innovation in an effort to develop indicators which would allow greater transparency in relation to research profitability.

Council noted that development of the performance monitoring framework was an ongoing process with further indicators being developed once Transformation Programme related processes (such as Service Level Agreements) were implemented.

Council noted the report and, following a suggestion by the Registrar and Secretary, **resolved** to receive a detailed annual report containing information at a more granular level (including tracked performance between quarters) alongside the regular, summary “dashboard” reports presented on a quarterly basis.

#### COU.12.7 **CORPORATE RISK REPORT (COU/12/06)**

Council considered the latest Corporate Risk update, noting that the most significant risks related to the 2011/12 and 2012/13 budget position and international recruitment. In light of discussions about the 2012/13 budget under COU.12.5 above, Council considered whether the risk rating for the 2012/13 budget was accurate. Council **resolved** that the risk remain at “high” rather than “critical” and the matter be kept under regular review by the ad-hoc finance group.

In response to members’ questions, the Vice-Chancellor advised that it was difficult to access reliable benchmark data which would enable comparison of relative performance in relation to international recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to liaise with the Director of Planning and Performance to consider the scope for further development of this indicator.

In noting the report, Council recognised that the principal risk attached to the Transformation Programme was now around implementation (rather than design) and welcomed the emphasis (in the narrative accompanying the risk summary) on the income generating capabilities of MediaCity UK.

#### COU.12.8 **CAMPUS PLAN STEERING GROUP (COU/12/07)**

Council considered a report from the Campus Plan Steering Group setting out relevant developments since the previous Council meeting. The Interim Director of Estates and Property Services outlined the rationale for a delay in the Arts Building project, as set out in the report.

Council **resolved** to support the recommendation of the Steering Group and extend delivery of the Arts Building by 12 months (i.e. delivery in September 2015), noting that this would enable a full review to take place to secure further significant benefits, greater flexibility and greater levels of occupation, prior to a retendering exercise in Summer 2012. Council noted that the review would enable the recently appointed Head of School of Art and Design to have input into the design specifications for the building; the review would also provide an opportunity to reflect on the needs of Digital Architecture students, given that a new undergraduate programme in this area had recently been approved. In response to questions, members were satisfied that the delay would not impact on academic delivery, noting that one of the benefits of a full 12 month delay would be the ability to maintain the smooth migration of all provision from Adelphi and Centenary Buildings during the summer recess. Council noted that a beneficial side effect of the rephrasing of the project would be to reduce pressure on the 2012-13 budget.

Council noted the other aspects of the report (relating to the student residences, the slight delay to the Chapman Building project, review of the Library consolidation project and refreshment and refinement of Master Plan phases 2 and 3).

#### COU.12.9 **LOAN AGREEMENTS (COU/12/18)**

Council considered a tabled report from the Executive Director of Finance which sought Council's agreement to specific documents and approval for delegated authority for specific transactions in relation to the loan agreement (for the Arts Building and Chapman Building refurbishment) approved by Council at its meeting on 4 October 2011 (see minute COU.11.44.2).

Having considered the report, Council **approved** the resolutions therein (agreeing that a copy of the full resolutions be made available to the Bank).

#### COU.12.10 **UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (COU/12/08)**

Council noted the report from the Registrar and Secretary on the development of the University Transformation Programme.

#### COU.12.11 **ICT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME CLOSURE (COU/12/09)**

Council considered a report from the Chief Information Officer, compiled to formally close the ICT Transformation Programme. The Chief Information Officer spoke to the report, reminding members of the serious ICT risks facing the University at the inception of the Programme and outlining programme governance arrangements and key technical and business improvements and benefits. Council noted that the Programme had been delivered within budget (including staff costs and all change requests received during the project) and noted further the reasons for the delay in completion of the project as outlined in the report.

The Lead Member for Information Technology placed on record his appreciation to the Chief Information Officer and his team for delivery of the project and simultaneous maintenance of business as usual activity. The Lead Member for Information Technology endorsed the comments of the Chief Information Officer that delivery of the project enabled clear focus on supporting the delivery of University strategy.

The Chief Information Officer explained that one of the contributing factors to delay had been failure of the Universal Access Gateway causing connectivity and performance issues for users. This issue had not been anticipated and, whilst a solution had been found (independently from the software provider, Microsoft), the problem had resulted in a longer than anticipated period of migration for users leading to user inconvenience and frustration because of long login times. The student members emphasised that this matter had resulted in significant problems for students and expressed the view that it was likely that the impact on the student experience would be reflected in the latest National Student Survey returns. The Chief Information Officer expressed sympathy for the frustration suffered by users although, in the situation which IT Services had been faced with, no alternative technical solution was possible. The Chief Information Officer emphasised that a full post project debrief exercise was scheduled and this would include consultation with students (this would include reflection on communication with students whilst the project was in progress).

Members commented on the potential for the ad-hoc financial review group to reflect on the scope for further back office efficiencies to facilitate flexibility and agility of service provision. Whilst noting

the potential for this, the Registrar and Secretary reiterated that an important element of the Transformation Programme was quantification of benefits and monitoring of benefits realisation. The Chief Information Officer commented on the potential for rationalisation of overall desktop and software licence provision to ensure optimisation, eliminate redundant and superfluous equipment and drive down energy costs.

Council endorsed the closure report, noting that completion of the programme represented a significant achievement and major contribution to delivery of the University's strategy.

#### **COU.12.12 SALFORD UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE (COU/12/10)**

Council considered a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships and Development) informing members of the University's withdrawal from the Wigan University Technical College (UTC) project, updating members on progress in relation to the Salford UTC and seeking approval for the University to become a member and director of the Salford UTC company.

Ms J Fawcett declared an interest in this item as Chief Executive Officer of The Lowry, one of the project sponsors. Council noted that the curriculum specialisms of the Salford UTC were closely aligned to the University's areas of expertise and, in particular, the MediaCity UK campus. Ms Fawcett commented on the great potential of the bid which would enable the University to fulfil its commitment to engage with the local community and to develop effective pathways for young people from the community into further education, higher education and employment. Council noted that the principal risk to the University was reputational, should the UTC fail; however, there was confidence that the significant preparatory work, the strong and experienced leadership of the project and the ability to tap into the wealth of resources at MediaCity UK should provide adequate mitigation of this risk.

Council noted that the decision to withdraw from participation in the Wigan UTC was primarily a result of the shift in curriculum focus away from areas in which the University had expertise.

Council **resolved** to:

- i) note and endorse the decision that the University withdraw from the Wigan UTC;
- ii) authorise the University to become a member and director of the Salford UTC company.

#### **COU.12.13 SALFORD EDUCATION TRUST (COU/12/10A)**

Council considered a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Planning and Development) updating members on progress regarding proposed academic group structures and seeking approval of the University's membership and directorship of the Salford Academy Trust.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the University's involvement in the Trust was a key element of its strategy, enabling the University to engage with and influence the complete range of education provision and experience in the City. Members agreed that, without the establishment of the Trust, under the leadership of the City Council and with the University and the local authority as active co-partners, there was a danger of fragmentation of School organisation in Salford, with potential damage to educational provision and attainment. Council noted that the main risk for the University in becoming a member and director of the Trust was the reputational damage of being involved with a failing academy, with the early evidence from the academies' movement suggesting



that success was not guaranteed. However, Council noted further that the University would mitigate this risk through effective deployment of resources and expertise to support the successful development of the academies.

Council therefore **resolved** to:

- i) endorse the proposed academy groups structure as outlined in the report;
- ii) authorise the University to become a member and Director of the Academic Trust.

**COU.12.14 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY (COU/12/11)**

Council **resolved** to approve the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy, noting that the adoption of relevant Equality Objectives was a requirement under the Equality Act, 2010.

**COU.12.15 REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE (COU/12/12)**

Council received and noted the report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 7 March 2012. With reference to the TRAC report, Council encouraged the ad-hoc finance review group to give consideration to the possibility of greater clarity around segmentation of income streams.

**COU.12.16 REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/12/13)**

Council considered the report from the meeting of Nominations and Governance Committee on 1 March 2012 and **resolved** to:

- i) approve the appointment of Mr W Smith as Deputy Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor;
- ii) approve the appointment of Mr B Wilkinson as a co-opted member of Audit Committee (noting that, to enable participation of Mr Wilkinson at the meeting of the Committee on 7 March, the Chair confirmed the appointment before that date on behalf of Council);
- iii) approve an amendment to the constitution of the Audit Committee to allow for the appointment of a further independent member and the removal of the ex-officio place for the Deputy Chair of Council;
- iv) approve the appointment of Mr P Crompton to the Audit Committee to fill the vacancy consequent upon the approval of iii) above.

**COU.12.17 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (COU/12/14)**

Council noted the report from the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 7 March 2012.

**COU.12.18 REPORT FROM COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP (COU/12/15)**

Council considered the report from the meeting of Council Advisory Group held on 1 March 2012, including the report from the Lead Member meetings. Further to the notes of the Lead Member (Human Resources) meetings, Council noted the increased risk of industrial action arising from the Transformation and academic adjustment programmes and was advised that Executive was keeping this matter, and potential mitigating actions, under close review.

**COU.12.19 REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/12/16)**

Council considered the report from the meeting of Senate held on 29 February 2012 and endorsed the Student Charter as attached to the report; the Students' Union contribution to the development of the Charter was recognised and welcomed.

In response to a question from a member, Council was advised that students were now engaged in the process of review and further refinement of the Assessment Handbook.

**COU.12.20 USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/12/17)**

Council noted the report outlining the use of the University Seal since the previous meeting.

**COU.12.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 5 July 2012 at 4.00pm.