

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
1 MAY 2014**

Present: Alan Mawson (Chair)
Mohammad Amin
Derek Antrobus
Tony Britten
Martin Bull
Mike Burrows
Nick Collins
Martin Hall
Eric Healey (except for item COU.14.25)
Amina Helal
Baroness Beverley Hughes
Mark Johnson
Jane Luca
Gai Murphy
Joyce Redfearn
Tom Russell
Mishal Saeed
Stephen Sorrell
Ruth Turner

Apologies: Julia Fawcett
Alun Francis
Todd Hewitt
Claire Moreland
Warren Smith

In attendance: Vikki Goddard (Registrar)
Helen Marshall (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
David Reeve (Interim Executive Director of Finance)
John Forshaw (Director of Planning)
Andrew Snowden (Chief of Staff)
Keith Watkinson (Executive Director of Human Resources – item 14.30 only)

COU.14.22 MEMBERSHIP (COU/14/20)

Council confirmed that, following the recommendation of Nominations and Governance Committee and subsequent circulation to Council members, Baroness Beverley Hughes had been appointed as an independent member with immediate effect and to the position of Chair of Council with effect from 1 August 2014.

Baroness Hughes thanked Council for confirming her appointment, commenting that she was pleased and honoured to join Council and contributing to the future success of the University.

Baroness Hughes commented that the values of the University and its distinctive position in the marketplace would enable her to continue her contribution to social and economic wellbeing which had been a key focus of her work over the past three decades. The strengths of the organisation, including Council, meant that the University was well placed to meet the challenges of the future.

Baroness Hughes had asked the Secretary to arrange one to one meetings with Council members and she looked forward to meeting them individually over the coming weeks and months.

COU.14.23 MINUTES (COU/14/21)

Council confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2014.

COU.14.24 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

Council confirmed that the following items would be approved or noted without further discussion:

- University of Salford Enterprises and Subsidiary Companies
- Report from Council Advisory Group
- Report from Senate
- Use of University Seal

COU.14.25 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This minute is exempt from publication under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act.

COU.14.26 PRESENTATION FROM DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR – ACADEMIC FUTURES

Council received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on “Academic Futures – Building the Strategy for Academic Growth and Diversification”. The presentation covered the following:

- the importance of becoming a business like University with “academic value” as the core product;
- ensuring the University’s sustainability by determining how its distinctive capabilities generate value for others;
- the need to develop a coherent academic agenda across the following four “academic value” areas:
 - academic growth and diversification
 - academic improvement
 - research and enterprise
 - international priorities
- in each of the above areas, identifying clearly where the University planned to be in three years’ time and ensuring that the transition to that position was monitored on an ongoing basis;
- that, across all four areas, the academic agenda would need to be firmly underpinned by the following:
 - recruitment
 - retention
 - research
 - reputation;
- in order to achieve the agenda across all four academic value areas, it was important for the University to work as a single team of both academic and professional services;
- to ensure future sustainability, the developing strategy was predicated on a University of over 20,000 (headcount) students and £200 million income;
- workstreams already in place to deliver the strategy included:
 - growth in undergraduate numbers

- review of postgraduate taught offer (including identifying the audience, favoured modes of study, funding sources, alignment with industrial demand and involvement with employers)
 - development of three year sandwich degrees
 - development and enhancement of the MediaCity academic offer
 - development of a partner college regional feeder network
 - developing transnational education through the evolving international hub concept;
- the strategy would be built in organic fashion, avoiding a prescriptive approach by premature drafting; this would enable;
 - assessment of the viability of ideas
 - assessment of capability and capacity to develop and deliver the strategy
 - testing of strategic fit and relevance
 - building workstreams into an overall strategic approach to academic growth and diversification;
 - the importance of ensuring improvement across all four “academic value” areas;
 - delivery of the strategy would be monitored via the following key performance indicators;
 - i) Academic Growth and Diversification
 - total new enrolled students measured against plan (undergraduate and postgraduate taught headcount)
 - ii) Academic Improvement
 - student progression (undergraduate)
 - student satisfaction (measured by NSS scores)
 - number of top quartile programmes in the Good University Guide
 - degree quality
 - iii) Research and Enterprise
 - 3 and 4* publications (per academic FTE over 4 years)
 - new Postgraduate Research enrolments (per academic FTE)
 - Postgraduate Research completion rates
 - Research Income (per academic FTE)
 - proportion of academic staff with a PhD
 - iv) International Priorities
 - total international income
 - Transnational Education income

In response to members’ questions, the following matters were discussed:

- v) the three year sandwich degree would differentiate the University in the marketplace, providing a six month placement opportunity within the context of a three year degree (essentially a seven semester programme). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had experience of introducing such programmes at the University of South Wales, but none of the University’s competitors were offering this. Pilot programmes would be offered initially in Salford Business School and the School of Arts and Media;
- vi) the University’s approach to transnational education, and in particular, the developing concept of International Hubs was also a differentiator; it was noted that the business case for the International Hubs would be considered at the next meeting of Budget Review Group and then at the July Council meeting;
- vii) the need to improve research completion rates was recognised;
- viii) the proposed optimal size and turnover of 20,000 students and £200 million respectively was on the basis that sustainability became problematic below this level and that this target was realistic and achievable;

- ix) the Learning and Teaching Strategy would be reviewed, building on the strengths of the “ASPIRES” approach introduced by Prof Huw Morris; the strategy would be simpler and focus on key themes. Council noted that Lead Member meetings could provide a focus for monitoring achievement of strategy at (or equivalent) College level;
- x) growth in 2014/15 and reducing reliance on recruitment through Clearing were fundamental to the achievement of the strategy.

COU.14.27 VICE-CHANCELLOR’S LEADERSHIP REPORT AND QUARTER 2 MANAGEMENT REPORT (COU/14/23 - 24)

Council received the latest leadership report from the Vice-Chancellor and the Quarter 2 Management Report. The Vice-Chancellor provided updates on two specific issues:

- i) UCU had balloted its membership on the pay offer of 2% (with effect from 2014-15) offered following recent negotiations with UCEA. If the membership voted to reject the offer, the proposed marking boycott would go ahead; if the boycott went ahead, the University had made contingency arrangements including approval of emergency regulations by Senate to enable award of degrees and progression for students with incomplete credit profiles in certain, prescribed situations (with appropriate quality safeguards). In the event that the boycott was enforced, the University would maintain its stance of not recognising partial performance (NB – The outcome of the ballot was known later in the meeting and this is recorded under item COU.14.34 Any Other Business);
- ii) members of UCU had picketed Council members following the recent confirmation of the decision to cease Modern Foreign Languages provision once current students had completed their studies. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated that following the earlier decision of Council to cease Modern Foreign Languages provision, the University had entered into collective consultation. As part of this process, the Vice-Chancellor had commissioned an independent task group to consider whether there was a viable future for Modern Foreign Languages in combination with other disciplines. The Vice-Chancellor advised that, regrettably, the conclusion of this review was confirmation of the original Council decision. The Vice-Chancellor reminded members of the national context of a sector-wide decline in Modern Foreign Languages; Council also noted that languages would continue to be offered to students through an optional module as part of the World Languages Programme.

The Vice-Chancellor invited questions on the reports and the following matters were discussed:

- iii) the Vice-Chancellor emphasised that, as part of measures to ensure financial sustainability, all academic posts would revert in future to entry level when they became vacant (unless a case was made, and agreed, for an exception);
- iv) now that the disciplines of Sociology and Criminology had migrated to the School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work and Social Sciences and English and Creative Writing had migrated to the School of Art and Design, consideration needed to be given to renaming the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences to avoid confusion for external audiences;
- v) there was recognition of the need to ensure downward pressure on the ratio of pay to income in order to ensure future sustainability; however, reference was made to a recent THE article which indicated that, for certain categories of staff (non-managerial academic staff and professorial staff), the salaries paid by the University were below the sector average. This indicated that a nuanced approach might be required in order to ensure that the University remained competitive. The Vice-Chancellor commented that this did not deflect from the need to ensure appropriate Lecturer : Senior Lecturer and academic : professional services ratios to ensure that the University remained sustainable and equipped to meet the challenges of the future (for example, increased employer pension costs, increased employer National Insurance contributions and anticipated future pay increases);

- vi) the importance of ensuring that, in city-regional discussions and consideration of projects, the University's voice and potential contribution was heard and recognised in the context of a fragmented and volatile policy environment. The Institute for Public Policy was now becoming established and its presence would assist in raising the University's profile;
- vii) that the engagement and energy of staff were crucial to delivery of the University's strategic goals and this was recognised in the values proposition that had been agreed as part of the Strategic Plan. This included a commitment to partnership working and a flexible approach to achieve strategic imperatives. The Staff Experience Survey, which was currently underway, provided an opportunity to assess staff opinion and morale;
- viii) the current KPI framework did not allow, in some instances, measurement of in-year progress. Whilst the narrative was generally very helpful in providing context, there was recognition that further refinement of some indicators was required. Council was assured that indicators were available at individual programme level to enable inter and intra School comparison of performance (for example, this had enabled the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's focus on the 15 worst performing programmes as measured by the National Student Survey).

COU.14.28 FINANCE REPORT (COU/14/25 - 26)

Council received:

- i) the report from the meeting of the Budget Review Group (BRG) held on 23 April 2014;
- ii) the Quarter Two Financial Statements, including detailed commentary (Council noted that Budget Review Group had considered the position up to the end of period 8 (i.e. 31 March 2014).

Council noted:

- iii) that a presentation on the business case for International Hubs would be made to the next meeting of the BRG in June;
- iv) that BRG had carefully scrutinised the report on 2013/14 – 2014/15 student recruitment and retention, noting that the attempt by Health Education England to pass on in-year budget reductions would be resisted;
- v) that the Quarter Two Financial Statements and the more recent information considered by BRG confirmed that the forecast £7.4 million surplus was on course to be achieved;
- vi) that the combination of external forces (increase in USS employer contributions, National Insurance Contributions and national pay awards) meant that achievement of targeted surpluses in 2014-15 and (especially) 2015-16 would be more challenging.

Council confirmed that the Quarter Two Financial Statements and forecast were an accurate reflection of the current position.

Part of the above minute has been redacted as it is exempt from publication under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act.

COU.14.29 CORPORATE RISK UPDATE REPORT (COU/14/27)

Council considered the latest Corporate Risk update which set out the ten most significant risks currently facing the University and an indication of movements in the Risk Register since the previous meeting.

Council was advised that the National Student Survey response period was nearing conclusion; the University had currently achieved a 77% response rate against a target of 80% which represented a 6% improvement on the previous year. The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to colleagues, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who had worked hard to achieve this improvement. It was noted that results from the NSS would begin to be available from September.

Council noted the update report; the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the full Risk Register was kept under regular review by Executive.

COU.14.30 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REVIEW – ROAD TO EQUALITY AT SALFORD (COU/14/28)

Council considered the annual Equality and Diversity Review which had been revised following formative comment at the previous Council meeting. Council welcomed the report which had benefited from review and comment from members, including the Lead Member for Equality and Diversity.

The Lead Member commented on the importance of ensuring both the mainstreaming of equality and diversity issues into the business of the University and the collection and maintenance of appropriate and accurate data.

Council was advised that the Equality and Diversity Action Group would prioritise actions emerging from the review, assigning owners to all actions, and Council asked that it be kept apprised of progress.

The Vice-Chancellor commented on the importance of ensuring appropriate policy connections between protected characteristics as designated under the Equality Act and socio-economic status (not recognised as a protected characteristic under the Act), noting that a significant number of the University's students belonged to a minority ethnic community and were from more disadvantaged socio-economic groups.

Council **resolved** to approve the annual review, noting that it would now be timely to review the "Listen!" Strategy to ensure that it was appropriately calibrated with the recently approved revised University Strategic Plan. In particular, Council commented on the need to review the objectives to ensure that these were effective and appropriate (and capable of measurement).

COU.14.31 REPORT FROM STUDENTS' UNION (COU/14/29)

Council received the Annual Students' Union Trustees' Report and Accounts, for the year ending 31 July 2013; this complemented the presentation from the two student members of Council given at the previous meeting (it was noted that, in future years, the presentation and the report would be considered at the same meeting). In response to a question from a Council member, the Students' Union President confirmed that all actions taken by the Students' Union in the year in question had been in accordance with its obligations under Charity Law.

COU.14.32 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD ENTERPRISES AND SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES (COU/14/30)

Council noted the report from University of Salford Enterprises (USE) Ltd.

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COU.14.33 REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE (COU/14/31)

Council received the report from the Audit Committee meeting held on 25 March 2014; arising from the report, Council received confirmation that the newly appointed Dean of Students would be leading on student retention issues, and this work would include liaison with Schools to ensure proactive use of data on student attendance.

COU.14.34 REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/14/32)

Council received the report from the meeting of Nominations and Governance Committee held on 10 April 2014 noting that it had approved Baroness Beverley Hughes' appointment to Council (with immediate effect) and as Chair (with effect from 1 August 2014) under COU.14.22 above.

Council received an oral update from the Secretary on progress towards the appointment of new independent members, the appointment of the Chancellor and the completion of the Council Effectiveness Review. Council agreed that candidates recommended by Nominations and Governance Committee for independent membership of Council be invited to attend the 3 July 2014 meeting as observers.

COU.14.32 REPORT FROM COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP (COU/14/33)

Council noted the report from the meeting of Council Advisory Group held on 10 April 2014, including the appended reports of Lead Member meetings.

COU.14.33 REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/14/34)

Council noted the report from the meeting of Senate held on 26 February 2014.

COU.14.34 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Director of Finance

In response to a question, the Vice-Chancellor advised that the recent recruitment process for a permanent Director of Finance had not resulted in an appointment. The Interim Director has agreed to extend his appointment until the end of 2014 and consideration was being given to next steps.

2. Outcome of UCU ballot

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, during the course of the meeting, the outcome of the UCU ballot (see COU.14.27.1 above) had been announced. Turnout had been 52.6%, with 83.7% in favour of the offer and 16.3% against and, consequently, the proposed marking boycott would not be going ahead.

3. Tony Britten

The Chair advised members that this would be the last Council meeting attended by Tony Britten, who was on holiday at the time of the final meeting of the academic year. The Chair paid tribute to the contribution made by Tony to the work of Council, latterly in his role as Lead Member for IT. Council endorsed these sentiments and formally thanked Tony for his diligent and effective contribution to the work of Council over the past eleven years.

COU.13.35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 3 July 2014 at 2.00pm