

Minutes

Meeting title:	Council	
Date:	Wednesday 19 March 2014	Time 3.00pm
Location:	Building 19, Highfield	
Present:	Dr G Rider (<i>Chair</i>); Professor J Falkingham, Mr D Gilani*, Mr P Greenish, Mr M Killingley, Ms S Kumar, Professor D McGhee, Professor D Nutbeam, Mr T O'Brien, Dr D Price, Dr M Read, Ms R Rivaz, Mrs H Smith, Professor P Smith, Mr J Trewby, Professor A Wheeler and Professor J Vickers.	
In attendance:	Mr L Abraham (Clerk to Council), Mr M Ace (Chief Operating Officer), Mrs T Harrison (Registrar), Professor A Neill (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)), Mr S Peatfield (Director of Communications & Marketing), Professor J Petts (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Ms S Pook (Director of Finance) and Mr M Spearing (Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)).	
Apologies:	Mr Michael Burrow	

* not present for restricted business.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Council received a presentation from Helen Ralph, Strategy and Planning Manager on the operation of UK and international HE League Tables, on Southampton's current position within the tables and outlined actions being taken to improve the University position. Council thanked Helen for her informative presentation.

44 Obituary

None.

45 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014

The following amendments were to the January 2014 minutes were agreed:

Minute 38, second paragraph read "Pro Vice Chancellor (International)"; and

Minute 42(ii), replace the two instances of "November" with "July".

RESOLVED That the amended minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 be approved and signed and that the minutes be published on the open access SUSSED site.

46 Matters Arising

The Chair raised the following matters:

- (i) A brief meeting of the Nominations Committee had been held earlier in the day and had resolved to recommend to Council that Ms Ros Rivaz be appointed as Deputy Chair of Council from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

Ms Rivaz withdrew from the meeting. The recommendation was proposed by the Chair and Council voted in favour.

RESOLVED that Ms Ros Rivaz be appointed as Deputy Chair of Council from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

Ms Rivaz re-joined the meeting.

- (ii) Ms Rivaz had previously indicated that should her appointment as Deputy Chair of Council be confirmed, in order to devote time to her new role she would step down as Chair of the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee. The Nominations Committee resolved to recommend to Council that Mr Philip Greenish be appointed as Chair of the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

Mr Greenish withdrew from the meeting. The recommendation was proposed by the Chair and Council voted in favour.

RESOLVED that Mr Philip Greenish be appointed as Chair of the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

Mr Greenish re-joined the meeting.

- (iii) The Chair then referred to the forthcoming retirement of University staff member and Class 4 (Member of the Non-Teaching Staff) member of Council, Mrs Hilary Smith and outlined the process for replacing the Class 4 member of Council. The Class 4 vacancy would be advertised within the University with applications then considered by the Nominations Committee and an offer made to the preferred applicant.

ACTION: Clerk to Council

47 Declarations of Interest

Mrs Hilary Smith declared that the subject matter of Item 17(i) concerned her department and specifically her role.

Professors Falkingham and Vickers declared that in relation to staffing matters on the agenda, they were both members of the University and College Union.

48 Publication of unrestricted papers

RESOLVED That the papers circulated that were not deemed "Commercial in Confidence" or Restricted be published on the open access SUSSED site.

ACTION: Clerk to Council

49 Vice Chancellor's Report (Agenda Item 6)

Council considered the Vice-Chancellor's report, dated 19 March 2014.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced his report highlighting the following:

STEM Teaching Facilities – it was noted that an additional £200m of funding would be made available nationally to provide modern STEM teaching facilities. The University would submit a bid for funding under the initiative.

Student Number Control – Following the announcement in the autumn statement in December 2013 about an increase in the student number control nationally for 2014/15, the Government had increased the Student number control by 3% from 2012/13 and provided an upper flexibility limit for the University of a further 6% (approximately 205 students).

HEFCE – Advance information from HEFCE had been received regarding the funding settlement. Council noted that the current assessment could result in an overall reduction in grant funding to the University in the region of £600,000 for 2013/2014.

Student Recruitment – Council noted the current pattern of applications, offers and acceptances and to the plans to closely monitor student recruitment.

Office of Fair Trading – A recent Office of Fair Trading investigation into Universities had not found evidence of price fixing or collusion, but signalled concern over the quality of information available to students.

Cancer Immunology Campaign – Progress was noted in the fund raising campaign. Following the departure of the Director of Development and Alumni Relations, the opportunity was being taken by the Registrar to review the structure and functioning of the Development office.

Technology Transfer – Council asked for a report on the current comparative position of the University spin outs and technology transfer operations.

ACTION: PVC Research

National Physical Laboratory – Council noted that a strong bid to establish a partnership with the NPL would be submitted shortly. Council was pleased to note that the proposal would not involve the University in taking an equity stake in NPL. The potential reputational benefits of the partnership were also recognised and welcomed.

Fee Waivers and Bursaries – Recent research from OFFA had concluded there was no evidence that bursaries had an impact on student retention. The data also showed that students from disadvantaged background had lower rates of continuation. Council agreed that a review of the fee waiver and bursary arrangements should be undertaken to make the best possible use of funding in supporting the success of students from non-traditional backgrounds once at university.

ACTION: Registrar

RESOLVED To note the Vice-Chancellor's report.

50 Strategy Vision 2020 (Agenda Item 7)

Council considered a report by the Vice Chancellor and Director of Strategy & Planning which set out the University Vision for 2020. The report set out initial modelling of what successful implementation of the vision would deliver, and provided some early illustrative examples of how plans were developing to implement the vision.

The Vice Chancellor first outlined the Vision which described the strategic direction of the University to 2020 in terms of distinction, globalisation and growth. Council were then presented with a range of projections demonstrating what successful delivery of the Vision could mean in terms of student numbers, finance, the estate and staff. Council was asked for feedback on the vision in terms of its ambition, scale and direction. It was noted that at the May meeting of Council further and more detailed presentations on the Southampton Business School and USMC would be provided in advance of final consideration of the strategy and related plans in July.

Council noted that the Vision 2020 document would be produced in several forms in order to appeal to the various audiences; staff, students and the international market. The Vice Chancellor went on to highlight that the strategy needed to be ambitious to respond to the changing higher education landscape and that long term success would require the University to make a step change in the way it operated.

The Provost & Deputy Vice Chancellor then presented the projected student growth figures up to 2020. In discussion it was emphasised that close attention should be given to the quality of the student experience as numbers increased; and that staff growth continue to be focussed on the core business of research and education.

Council were supportive of the Vision 2020, the strategy and projections and were pleased to note the aspirations they contained. Council raised the importance of identifying and highlighting the distinctiveness of the University, the challenges in delivering the vision and the financial resources required. Council also highlighted the potential risks within the vision including the reliance on the projected growth of the Southampton Business School, the successful fund raising for the Cancer Immunology Campaign, capacity within the senior management team and maintenance of a quality student experience.

It was agreed that University success stories, both in education and research, should be highlighted by using vignettes throughout the vision document in order to further highlight the University's distinctiveness focussing on the student experience, world leading research and the University's economic and social impact.

Council then noted the roadmap of decisions associated with the various major projects over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED to note progress with the Vision 2020.

51 Operational Excellence (Agenda Item 8)

Council considered a report by the Registrar which set out actions being taken by the University to improve operational efficiency with the aim of bringing about a culture of operational excellence.

The Registrar presented the report highlighting that in order to deliver the vision, capacity needed to be released among staff, the cost base should be driven down and the financial surplus increased. The report set out a programme for change with clear targets and members of Council were invited to share experience of carrying out similar work in their own organisations.

It was agreed that interested members of Council meet with the Registrar to offer advice.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) that interested members of Council members meet with the Registrar to offer advice in this area.

ACTION: Registrar

52 Vice Chancellor's Annual Summary Report on Health and Safety (Agenda Item 9)

Council received a report by the Vice Chancellor which set out the annual activities and improvements to the University's management of health and safety.

Council was pleased to note good progress.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) to endorse the further evolution of the University Health and Safety Policy and Management System with an implementation date for the changes of 1 August 2014.

ACTION: Chief Operating Officer

53 Report from the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee (Agenda Item 10)

Council received a report by the Chair of the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee which reported to Council the findings and conclusions of the Health & Safety Audit and Assurance Committee's meeting held on 10 March 2014.

Council were pleased to note the continued improvement of health and safety performance in the University.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the assessment of the University's health and safety performance be endorsed.

54 Report from the President of the Students' Union (Agenda Item 11)

Council received a report by the President of the Students' Union.

It was noted that elections for Union President and sabbaticals for the year 2014/15 had been successfully held, work was continuing with local letting agencies and the community to reduce the amount of "To Let" signs in residential areas close to the University and that the Union sports team had enjoyed success at recent events.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

55 Appointment of External Auditors (Agenda Item 12)

Council considered a report by the Director of Finance which set out the recommendation from the Audit Committee that Mazars be reappointed as external auditors. Council noted that, subject to an annual assessment of performance, formal market testing of external audit services would take place in 2016.

RESOLVED that Mazars be reappointed as external auditors for the audit of the 2013/14 financial statements.

Action: Director of Finance

56 Senate Matters – Recommendations from Senate held on 26 February 2014 (Agenda Item 13)

Council considered a report by the Vice Chancellor which set out amendments to the University Ordinances to reflect changes in terminology and adjustments to processes in respect of external examiners/Boards of Examiners.

RESOLVED that the amendments to Part 7 of the Ordinance, as set out in the report, be approved and be introduced from the start of the 2014/15 academic session.

ACTION: Clerk to Senate

57 Audit Committee Matters (Agenda Item 14)

Council received the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 5 March 2014 and noted the following:

- the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations;
- the Audit Committee request more detail relating to the TRAC return;
- the steps to be taken to address the recommendations following the internal audit of the Student Experience;
- 'capacity within the management team' added to the risk register

RESOLVED

- (i) To note the minutes from the Audit Committee held on 5 March 2014; and
- (ii) To approve the changes to the Financial Regulations as set out in the appendix to the Audit Committee minutes.

ACTION: Director of Finance

58 January 2014 Management Accounts (Agenda Item 15)

Council received a report by the Director of Finance which presented the Management Accounts for January.

RESOLVED that the January Management Accounts be noted.

59 Risk Register (Agenda Item 16)

Council received a report by the Chief Operating Officer which presented the updated risk register for information.

RESOLVED that the risk register be noted.

Restricted Items

60 Restricted Human Resources Matter (Restricted Item 17(i))

Council considered a restricted report by the Interim Head of Employee Relations.

In discussion of the matter, the merit of bringing such items to Council was raised and whether an alternative and more efficient governance arrangement should be in place.

ACTION: Registrar

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

61 Restricted Human Resources Matter (Restricted Item 17(ii))

Council considered a restricted report by the Provost & Deputy Vice Chancellor.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

62 Restricted Senate Matters (Restricted Item 18)

Council considered a restricted report by the Vice Chancellor.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

The meeting concluded at 6.21 pm