

Minutes Unrestricted

Meeting title: Council

Date: Wednesday 28 March 2012

Time: 4.00pm

Location: The Council Room, George Thomas Building

Present: Dame Valerie Strachan (*Chair*), Mr J Boyer, Mr M Burrow, Professor I Cameron, Mr P Greenish, Mr M Killingley, Ms S Kumar, Mr S Ling*, Professor D Nutbeam, Mr T O'Brien, Dr D Price, Dr M Read, Professor P Smith, Mr J Trewby and Professor A Wheeler.

In attendance: The Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Mrs J Williams.

* not present for restricted business.

The Chair welcomed Seetha Kumar attending her first meeting of Council.

Declarations of Interest: Mr Boyer declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item 6 as a member of the Council of ENCIAD in France.

74 Presentation from Professor Daniel Muijs and Dr Martin Dyke – the Impact of Tuition Fees

The Council received a presentation from Professor Daniel Muijs and Dr Martin Dyke, Southampton Education School, on their project on the impact of increased tuition fees in England on the decision to participate in higher education: a study of Year 12 pupils in the Southampton region. The study had consisted of a questionnaire and interviews with students, parents and college staff.

General findings included:

- that the increase in fees is not deterring the majority of 17-year-olds, with 80% of the sample still intending to go to university.
- that the 'university experience' and opportunity to study a subject one enjoys continue to be highly valued.
- that university is very much seen as a risk worth taking to improve life-chances and get a more interesting job; the expectation to go to university is proving resilient to change.
- that a narrative of a graduate tax rather than perception of debt appeared to reassure those interviewed.
- that universities are highly trusted organisations whose information, advice and guidance is valued over and above that of any third party.

The study had made recommendations in relation to the importance of preserving trust and providing information, advice and guidance, including clear and complete financial information, and of continuing University initiatives such as increased modularity.

The Chair thanked Professor Muijs and Dr Dyke for their interesting and informative presentation.

75 Obituary

The Chair reported with regret the death earlier this month of Barbara Green, who had worked in the Catering Department since September 1993, and invited Members to stand as a mark of respect.

76 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2012

Resolved That the Minutes (unrestricted) of the above meeting be approved and signed, and that the non-confidential minutes may now be published on the SUSSED group site.

77 Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

77.1 Progress against actions agreed the Council Awayday, September 2011 (Minute 55)

The timetable for the reporting back of actions agreed at the Council Awayday in September 2011 was circulated to members.

78 **Publication of unrestricted papers**

The Chair advised that the papers for agenda items 8 and 11 were circulated as confidential to Council and should not be published on the open access site.

Resolved That, with the exceptions set out above, the papers circulated for the meeting on 28 March 2012 should now be published on the open access SUSSED site.

79 **2012 Student Applications and Comparison to Market (Agenda Item 5)**

Received A paper from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) informing the Council of the current position on 2012 undergraduate and postgraduate applications at the University of Southampton and at a number of other universities across the United Kingdom.

Council noted that the applications market was very volatile. This made drawing conclusions from the numbers very difficult; between 7 and 22 March 2012 the number of firm acceptances had doubled. In particular the JACS code figures should be viewed with caution because the codes included courses not provided at the University.

Council would be updated as more meaningful detail became available.

Resolved To note the report.

80 **Student Profile and Portfolio Review (Agenda Item 6)**

Received A paper from the Provost seeking an early discussion about growing student numbers in the light of changes to the Government's Higher Education Policy.

Council noted the current position of the University in relation to the student number growth targets set as part of its selective growth strategy. Whilst it was behind the 23,597 target, there were proposals for new courses which would compensate for that. Since the Strategy had been approved Government policy changes had introduced some new constraints not anticipated at the time the targets were set, but had provided some new opportunities as well. Members also noted the results of an exercise carried out in the Faculties in November 2011 to indicate where areas for growth could be found which were summarised in Table 4 of the report.

Members highlighted the importance of targeting the right market (where there were high quality students and high numbers of applications) and of having a fully worked up business case in place for any proposals.

Council agreed that this would be a good topic for its Away-day in September when more considered proposals could be provided. This would need to include the costs of growth across the University as well as the direct costs of the courses.

Resolved (i) To note the report and to schedule a further discussion on this issue for the Council Away-day in September.

81 **Proposals for Student Support and Access Agreement 2013/2014 (Agenda Item 7)**

Received A paper from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) proposing that the 2013/14 Access Agreement should remain broadly similar to 2012/13 but offer eligible students a choice of bursary fee or waiver and identifying the underpinning principles that will inform the development of future Access Agreements for consideration by Council.

Members expressed support generally for the principles for future investment as detailed in the report. However there was some concern about how a scheme linking sustained student achievement to sustained investment in support would work in practice. Whilst it was accepted that the University should have a culture of reward for excellence, there would need to be evidence that the scheme would motivate students to excel and the measure/s of 'sustained achievement' would need to be fair and equitable – not setting higher standards of performance for students from poorer backgrounds. Council would wish to fully understand the likely impact of such a scheme on those students.

Resolved (i) To note the report;

(ii) that the 2013/14 Access Agreement be drafted on the basis of being broadly similar to 2012/13 but offering eligible students a choice of bursary fee or waiver;

(iii) that the Draft 2013/14 Access Agreement be circulated to all Council Members for comment and be approved by the Standing Committee of Council;

- (iv) that further examination take place of the underpinning principles for future investment, informed by the comments of Council as outlined above, for consideration by Council when approving the Access Agreements for future years.

82 Update on University of Southampton Malaysia Campus Project (Agenda Item 8)

Received A progress report from the Chief Operating Officer on the 'University of Southampton Malaysia Campus (USMC) (*This paper was circulated as commercial in confidence*).

Council noted the significant progress being made in relation to the building and site development. The contractor had indicated that it would be delivered on time but University staff still felt there was a risk that this would not be the case. Contingency plans had been made in case they became necessary. Student recruitment had increased, but was still lower than the targets set. The calibre and motivation of staff recruited were exceptionally high.

Potential issues in relation to the option land for Phase 2 were raised and the actions taken as a result were noted. The full proposals for Phase 2, with a full business plan, would be reported to Council in January 2013.

Resolved To note the report.

83 2012/13 Financial Planning including the 2012/13 business planning and budget process (Agenda Item 9)

Received Papers from the Director of Finance and Provost setting out the overall financial environment for business planning and the planning and budget process and timetable.

An additional paper giving the HEFCE recurrent grant details for 2012/13 was tabled. This included a grant level comparison to other Russell Group and sector universities. The grant loss (of £8.4 million) had not been as severe as the assumptions made in the planning process and there had been a net increase in research grant of £1.1 million. Overall the anticipated increase in tuition fees when set against the grant loss would mean that the University remained in a sustainable financial position. There were, however, a number of risks that needed to be considered, including known and possible changes to the T grant in the coming few years. All this information was being built into current work on business planning.

Members received an update on progress in the current business planning and budget setting process. A full business plan and budget will be brought to the May meeting of Council. Members expressed continuing concern regarding the assumptions for pay growth and noted that a major project was in place considering an academic awards strategy.

Resolved To note the reports.

84 January 2012 Management Accounts (Agenda Item 10)

Received A paper from the Director of Finance updating Council on the Management Accounts of the University.

Resolved To note the report.

85 Progress on Halls of Residence Strategy (Agenda Item 11)

[This item is commercial in confidence and a separate confidential minute is circulated to members of Council only.]

86 Gift Acceptance Policy (Agenda Item 12)

Received A paper from the Registrar setting out a revised policy for the acceptance of gifts and philanthropic support.

Resolved (1) To approve the Gift Acceptance Policy and the Code of Practice for the Solicitation of Gifts and the changes to the financial regulations as set out in the report.

(2) That Council receive an annual report on the work of the Gift Acceptance Committee.

87 Amendments to Ordinances (Part 4): Students' Union (Agenda Item 13)

Received A paper from the Registrar seeking approval of amendments to Section III: The Ordinances of the University Part 4: The Union of Students to allow the Students Union to incorporate and to register with the Charities Commission.

Resolved To approve the amendments to Part 4 of the Ordinances of the University as detailed in the report.

88 **Report from the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee on 5 March 2012** (Agenda Item 14)

Received A paper from the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee held on 5 March 2012 on the Committee's consideration of the outcomes of the annual reporting process for 2011.

Professor Spearing introduced the report on behalf of the Committee, in the absence of the Chair. He highlighted the generally improved level of re-assurance regarding health and safety at the University and the ownership and leadership being demonstrated by the Deans. He noted the areas where the Committee would be monitoring to ensure improvements were put in place.

The Council thanked the Committee and Ros Rivaz in particular for its work on their behalf.

Resolved To note the report.

89 **Report from the Nominations Committee 28 March 2012** (Agenda Item 15)

[Mr O'Brien left the room during the consideration of and vote on the item at (2) below].

Received A tabled report from the Nominations Committee on 28 March 2012 recommending the extension of the membership of a Class 2 member of Council and the appointment of a new member.

Noted A report from the Chair of Council regarding the process for appointing a new Chair.

Resolved (1) that Gill Rider be appointed as a Class 2 member for an initial term of three years, commencing on 28 March 2012.

(2) to extend Turlogh O'Brien's Class 2 membership by 3 years to 31 March 2015.

90 **Vice-Chancellor's report** (Agenda Item 17)

Received The Vice-Chancellor's report, dated 28 March 2012.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following areas from his report:

Queen's Anniversary Prize: the delegation of staff and students to receive the prize had thoroughly enjoyed their time at the Guildhall and Buckingham Palace.

The Vice-Chancellor added that the University had recently been given the news that it would be receiving its largest ever philanthropic gift to support medical research. He also noted that David Willets had visited the campus for a second time, on Tuesday 27 March 2012. He had been to the Science Park and attended the launch of the Marine and Maritime Institute.

Resolved To note the Vice-Chancellor's report.

91 **Report from the President of the Students' Union** (Agenda Item 18)

The Chair of Council congratulated Mr Ling on his re-election as president of the Students' Union.

Received A report from the President of the Students' Union on the developments in SUSU since the last University Council Meeting.

Mr Ling highlighted the good turnout figures from the recent SUSU elections. His ambition was to increase turnout at future elections to at least 50%. The new Sabbatical Team was a good balance of officers on first and second terms. He also emphasised the work to establish a joint student association for the EduCity campus in Malaysia and the positive visit to the already established overseas campus of the University of Nottingham.

Resolved To note the report.

92 **HEFCE Assurance Visit and Report** (Agenda Item 19)

Received A report from the Chief Operating Officer attaching the draft HEFCE Assurance Review report from its visit in December 2011.

Resolved To note the report.

93 **Senate Matters (Agenda Item 20)**

Received A report outlining the key topics discussed at the Senate meeting on 29 February 2012.

Resolved To note the report.

94 **Minutes of the Audit Committee 7 March 2012 (Agenda Item 22)**

Received The minutes of the Audit Committee on 7 March 2012.

Noted The Audit Committee minutes.

95 **Sealing of Documents (Agenda Item 23)**

Received A paper listing the documents sealed, dated 21 March 2012.

Noted The list of sealed documents.

CC9/3 JLW 30.3.12

Unconfirmed