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| **Meeting title:** | | Council | | |
| **Date:** | | Wednesday 25th May 2022 | **Time** | 9.00am |
| **Location:** | | Via Microsoft Team | | |
| **Present:** | | Mr P Greenish (Chair), Prof. Dame M Atkins, Ms F Barnes, Dr V Cardo, Mr G Hobbs, Mr P Hollins, Professor J Holloway, Dame J Macgregor, President & Vice-Chancellor, President of the Students’ Union, Professor m.c. schraefel, Senior Vice-President (Academic), Mr Akshay Thakur, Mr T Whitmore, Dr K Vithana | | |
| **In attendance:** | | Clerk to the University Council & Senate, Executive Director - Finance & Planning, Vice-President (Education), Vice-President (Operations), General Counsel & University Secretary. | | |
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| **77** | **Apologies for Absence**  There was an apology from Ms H Pawlby. | | | |
| **78** | **Declarations of Interest**  Dr V Cardo and Dr K Vithana declared interests related to their faculties and the estates planning. | | | |
| **79** | **Publication of non-commercial papers**  RESOLVED That only papers deemed not commercial in confidence be released. | | | |
| **80** | **Research and Enterprise Plan and Update on REF 2021**  Council received a presentation from the Vice President (Research & Enterprise) which focussed on three main areas:   1. REF 2021 Results and Lessons Learned 2. Annual Report on Research and Enterprise Performance 3. Future Plan 4. REF 2021 Results   Council noted:   * Overall a good outcome, a strong effort from across the whole University * Highlights: 16 Units of Assessment improve ranked position (GPA) out of 25   + Slight improvement in overall quality ranking (up from 15th to 14th in Russell Group   + Strength in impact (7th ranked in UK when excluding specialist institutions, 11th overall)   + Strong performance in many UOAs, particularly:     - Health Sciences, OES, GES, Archaeology, Social Work and Social Policy, Engineering     - Notable improvements since 2014 (GPA rank), Business, Maths, Medicine, Psychology, CS, GES, Law, English, Art, Philosophy, Biology, PHHSPC, Economics * Decline in relative Research “Power” compared to immediate comparators reflects their ability to recruit more students and thus staff over the past REF period * QR funding implications not yet known. Bunching of whole sector, particularly at the high-quality end – our QR/FTE should be comparable with our peer institutions * Lessons learned, final reflections once feedback received, implementation plan defined  1. Annual Report on Research and Enterprise Performance  * Covered year strongly affected by Covid-19 * Research funding down * Subject level funding (2019/20) slightly improved (part of the KPI) * Research publications and citations (and QS ranking - KPI) remain strong * Knowledge Exchange Framework Performance (KEE KPI) is very strong * Good progress made over last five years against 2016/17 R&E strategy * Would value comments on key information to retain in future reports and what could be omitted  1. Future Plan   Council noted the Research and Enterprise Plan ambitions together with the implementation process, which included:   * Regular updates with Associate Deans Research, AVPIRs, Research and Innovation Services, Finance, Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) through 2021 to agree overarching themes and align with University Strategy * UEB/SMP presentation of initial draft in December 2021 * Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG) half day workshop in Feb 2022 to refine vision and agree plan for consultation * Draft word document with detailed action plan – currently 60 actions * Wider consultation across University, via the Strategy SharePoint site and “town hall” meetings * Synthesis and refinement in May/June 2022 * REEG 25th May 2022 * Further stakeholder consultations on current draft in June * Final edits, before presenting to UEB Away Day (21/6) and Council (13/7)   Change and ambition focused on four main areas:   * People: consistent with University Strategy it is about diversity and inclusion, hiring, support, development, transformation leadership   + We need to enhance our reputation for being a great place to work, good at identifying talent and developing people, growing future leaders * Interdisciplinary and mission orientated research – ambition to land one or more major national centres   + Engineering better health, green maritime, sustainability and resilience hub, QT integration centre * Ensure systems, infrastructure and processes support our ambition, manage regulatory and compliance risk   + ALPACA, High Performance Computing, research infrastructure roadmap, professional services support   + Need to ensure our systems and professional services are viewed as enablers * Financial Sustainability   + Significantly improve research funding per FTE to place us in top half of our peer group in ranking per FTE weighted by FTE by discipline – consistent with size and shape ambition   It was further noted that the triple helix approach was reflected in the plan:   * People at the core – fostering of ”balanced academic” development   + Improve balance of CHEP activities into KEE and Research * Strong links with Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise, strengthen further, particularly around research partnerships and working with business, ALPACA * Strengthen links with education and student experience   + Develop overarching strategy for student research and enterprise, in-curricular and extra curricular   + Research and KEE internship (UROP) – particularly EDI focus   Overall the REF outcome had been strong. The modelling done by the University prior to the results being released had been accurate and therefore there were no surprises. It was agreed that subject areas that required improvement should be helped as much as possible and while it was a fine line between areas in the scoring, the importance of the scores was recognized both in terms of student recruitment and financial sustainability. The impact on QR rankings was also discussed.  Individual school performance was then discussed and it was noted that there had been no Southampton subject areas in the fourth quartile. This improvement was welcomed and areas that had shown improvement must be supported to ensure it was sustained.  It was clear that a balance was required between REF and NSS effort as both measures had a major impact on student recruitment. Other universities that had done well were highlighted as potential benchmarks and it was stated that the loss of key staff due to retirements and the 2020 severance scheme had impacted on the process.  For the future it was agreed that KPIs, research funding, involvement of partners and civic activity all required attention and support. Government would still dictate the direction of research to an extent by injecting money into certain areas, particularly areas with strong links to industry.  With regard to the future plan for Research and Enterprise it was suggested that the People element be strengthened and given more purpose. The Audit Committee in its role as assurance provider to Council was able to help with regulatory and compliance issues. The Vice President welcomed this offer. **ACTION: Vice President (R&E)/Clerk to the University Council**  It was recognised as a complex landscape and new emerging direction from UKRI would bring new opportunities. It was agreed that the University should react quickly and build links with industry wherever possible.  Council thanked the Vice President (Research and Enterprise) and team for their excellent work. | | | |
| **81** | **Estates Masterplan**  Council received reports by the Senior Vice President (Academic) which provided an update of estate planning activity together with some project approvals. The reports focused on three main areas:  (i) Estates Strategic Plan 2022-27  (ii) Delivering our Strategic Plan 2022-27  (iii) Sports Phase 2  The first report set out the Estates Strategic Plan 2022-27 and highlighted:   * Vision for the estate * Estate Strategic goals * Key estate challenges * Opportunities, risks and mitigations * Estates solutions   The report provided a detailed Action Plan that set out plans to achieve the goals for size and shape, sustainability, inclusive environment, best use of University resources and provision of space to enable communities to come together. Outline costs were also provided.  It was agreed that the goals and projects all required a cohesive approach to ensure they helped realise the overall University Strategy.  Transport links between the various University sites was discussed and it was agreed that excellent environmental measures would be key to successful sustainable implementation.  Council then made the following points:   * On campus building would be difficult for a busy University. Development of the North East Quadrant would be simpler * Encouragement to consider solar power where appropriate * Review of waste management * Modelling of space usage and future requirements based on size and shape were vital * Co-design with the wider University would help with buy-in and support for projects * Use of graphic information and images when communicating plans to the wider community   **RESOLVED** that the report be endorsed and noted.  The second report detailed the delivery of the Estates Plan and set out the next steps.  **RESOLVED** That the next steps be noted, including:  (i) Progression of the on-boarding of appropriate resources (leadership and project management) to deliver the estates programme as identified in the Strategic Plan.  (ii) Development of a proposal for release of funds to enable us to progress from project concepts to full business case on priority projects for EIC and Finance Committee scrutiny.  (iii) Progression of the plans to engage more fully with the planning environment, including detailed conversations with our local councils.   1. Development of a communications plan to engage stakeholders in this programme of work.   The final report set out the delivery of Sports Phase 2 which included:  1. Add two additional all-weather pitches to Wide Lane  2. Upgrade the Pavilion and changing facilities at Wide Lane.  3. Replace the gas-powered lighting solution at Wide Lane.  4. Upgrade our water sports facilities.  Participation data was raised and particularly the participation numbers from Winchester School of Art. It was agreed these figures would be circulated **ACTION: Executive Director, Student Experience & Campus Life**  In response to a query it was confirmed that the future maintenance costs of the new facilities had been worked into general budgets.  **RESOLVED** that the investment in Sports Phase 2 be approved. | | | |
| **82** | **Council Effectiveness Review**  Council considered a report by the Vice President (Operations). Council was due its periodic Council Effectiveness Review in 2022-23. The paper set out a proposal for the approach to the Council Effectiveness Review.  RESOLVED that it be approved that:   1. the Council Effectiveness Review will take place in the autumn/winter of 2022. 2. the Review will be conducted by a body or individual external to the University. 3. the Vice-Chair of Council will lead the review, supported by a small steering group. 4. the terms of reference for the Review be agreed. 5. the membership of the Steering Group be agreed. | | | |
| **83** | **President and Vice Chancellor’s Annual Report on Health and Safety**  Council considered a report by the President and Vice Chancellor which present a summary report of University health and safety activity and performance during 2021.  Council noted the following:   * Covid was still a challenge * The Fire Safety Act would bring new responsibilities for the University * Health and Safety continued to improve * Need for line managers to identify training needs so that such training can be developed and delivered. * Concerns within Estates and Facilities highlighted by Health & Safety audits were now being addressed with the recruitment of a new quality team supported by the VP Operations and Health, Safety & Risk. * Health & Safety was part of the University staff induction but also subject to local dedicated inductions. Workshops and training on risk were held. Further training for senior leaders will be available shortly.   **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **84** | **Annual Report of Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee**  Council considered a report by the Chair of the Health and Safety Audit and Assurance Committee which provided an update on the Committee’s work in providing Council with assurance on health and safety around the University.  It was noted that the Committee found an improving picture compared to 2021. Training was now the key area for improvement and direction from the committee was provided to ensure the right people were identified with targeted training in vital areas.  Council was pleased to note the positive progress that had been made and welcomed the improved assurance opinion from the Committee.  **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **85** | **Recommendations from the Nominations Committee**  Council considered a report by the Chair of Nominations Committee which proposed two new Council lay member candidates for appointment.  Following a thorough search and interview/selection process, Mr Richard Gledhill was recommended to Council as new lay member and Chair of Audit Committee from 1st August 2022 replacing Mr Graeme Hobbs.  Ms Jenni Douglas-Todd, as the incoming Chair of the Southampton Hospital Trust Board, was recommended as new lay member of Council from 1st August 2022 replacing Mr Peter Hollins.  **RESOLVED** that   1. Mr Richard Gledhill be appointed as a lay member of Council and Chair of the Audit Committee from 1st August 2022 for an initial term of 3 years until 31st July 2025. 2. Ms Jenni Douglas-Todd be appointed as a lay member of Council from 1st August 2022 for an initial term of 3 years until 31st July 2025. | | | |
| **86** | **Global Recruitment & Admissions – Potential Redundancies**  Council considered a report by the Executive Director of Student Experience & Campus Life which provided a summary of the preliminary consultation that had taken place regarding the proposal of a restructure for Student Recruitment Marketing & Events within Global Recruitment and Admissions (GRA). The proposed restructure, which had been approved by Planning and Resources Committee, would affect 39 employees. It was anticipated that after the job matching process, there would be very few employees, if any, who would be placed at risk of redundancy.  **RESOLVED** that the initiation of Stages 3 to 6 of Part IV of Ordinance 3.4 for Level 4 and above staff members be approved. | | | |
| **87** | **PASNAS Valuation**  Council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning which set out the initial draft results from the PASNAS valuation as at 31 July 2021. The deficit had increased to £56m from £38.5m at the 2018 valuation (a funding level of 83% in 2021 cf 84% in 2018). The contribution rate for future service had increased by 6.55% (from 19.55% of salary to 26.1%), and also the cost of scheme expenses with declining active members meant an equivalent contribution rate increase of an additional 1.5% of salary. The report set out deficit recovery payments with a £30m up-front contribution in 2021/22 combined with a ring fencing of that funding for liability hedged assets to increase the scheme’s resilience to interest rate and inflation risks, and to support the scheme moving to maturity. The up-front contribution would, as set out, be combined with a retention of the current deficit recovery plan length for the remainder of the deficit, along with the consultation approach and timeline to make changes to future member benefits and/or contributions to reduce the cost of future service.  RESOLVED that   1. the draft valuation outcomes be noted 2. a £30million contribution in 2021/22 to PASNAS as a deficit recovery contribution to be ring fenced for better management of scheme funding risk and specifically liability hedging assets be approved 3. approval of the member consultation material to the Pensions Committee be approved. | | | |
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**The meeting concluded at 12.22pm**