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| **Meeting title:** | | Council | | |
| **Date:** | | Wednesday 18th March 2020 | **Time** | 12.30pm |
| **Location:** | | Room 2207, Building 85, Highfield | | |
| **Present:** | | Mr P Greenish (Chair), Ms F Barnes, Ms E Harrison, Professor J Holloway, Dame J Macgregor (Vice-Chair), Professor R Mills, President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor P Reed  On Conference Call: Mr G Hobbs, Mr P Hollins, Prof. Dame M Atkins, Mr S Young, Mr A Reyes-Hughes and Mr W Shannon.  On Video Conference: Vice-President (Research & Enterprise), Mr R Cartwright, Dr A Vincent and Ms H Pawlby. | | |
| **In attendance:** | | Clerk to the University Council & Senate, Chief Operating Officer (Interim), Executive Director - Finance & Planning. | | |
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| **66** | **Apologies**  An apology for absence was received from Dr D Price. | | | |
| **67** | **Minutes**  **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed. | | | |
| **68** | **Actions and Matters Arising**  Council noted the Annual Calendar of Business.  Council then noted a full update on the outstanding actions as follows:  (i) 109/1819 – International Strategy: In abeyance  **ACTION:** Interim VP (Int) to provide update on international activity  (ii) 29/1920 – Deep Dive on Enterprise Strategy: To be arranged for July 2020  (iii) 33/1920 – Annual Academic Assurance - Report back to Council on degree awarding analysis and assignment ghost writing: To be reported in May 2020  (iv) 57/1920 – Sustainability – on the agenda for this meeting  (v) 58/1920 – Student Recruitment – To be reported in July 2020  (vi) 59/1920 – ED&I – Progress on points raised to be reported in May 2020  (vii) 60/1920 – Council Operation & Cycle – Cross Cutting themes to be added to Council agenda as appropriate – Sustainability on the agenda for this meeting  Progress was noted on the actions following the Council Effectiveness Review and a document entitled “Council Responsibilities” was commented upon. The Clerk would continue to work on these matters and report back to Council. | | | |
| **69** | **Declarations of Interest**  University employees declared an interest in any matter related to the USS pensions scheme. | | | |
| **70** | **Publication of unrestricted papers**  RESOLVED That the papers circulated that were not deemed “Commercial in Confidence” or Restricted be made available for view by the University wider community. | | | |
| **71** | **President and Vice-Chancellor’s Report**  Council noted highlights from the last two monthly Vice-Chancellor and Executive reports.  Council then went on to hear a comprehensive update on all measures and activity being actioned by the University in response to the developing coronavirus (COVID19) situation. The Vice-Chancellor began by paying tribute to the excellent leadership executive colleagues had shown over the past few weeks. Council noted that the University was following Government advice extremely thoroughly and carefully. The first major decision to be taken was to end the spring term a week early. This was not a decision taken lightly, but was considered a sensible option. The campus was now in the process of reducing activity and closing down. Staff were predominantly working from home using the University secure IT network. Only essential activity would continue on campus with most buildings closed to all staff, students and visitors. It was noted that estates and facilities staff would remain on campus where an essential activity (such as security and monitoring of essential equipment) would continue. Staff members would be appropriately supported while on campus by line managers. University student accommodation remained open, but a large number of students had left. Guidance about students returning home was changing constantly and the University would always adopt the official line and communicate it appropriately.  With regards to teaching and assessment it was becoming clear that students and staff would most likely not be able to return to campus for the start of the coming term on 20th April. Work was underway to deliver teaching and assessment via online and remote methods. It was also clear at the current time that student fees would still be payable although accommodation fees were less clear. It was also noted that staff on casual contracts would continue to be paid for the next month. It was agreed that the move to online teaching and assessment was a huge undertaking and that academic colleagues were working extremely hard to ensure that students would continue to receive quality teaching, effective assessment and would receive a degree of good standing.  The President of the Students’ Union then provided an update on Union activity. Student Union staff were now working from home and all Union buildings and facilities were now closed. Clubs and societies would also close over the coming days and all forthcoming trips and events were cancelled.  An FAQ page for students had been published to offer advice and guidance. The Graduation Ball had been cancelled as had graduation and other award ceremonies. It was noted at the current time that the university library was still open, but was substantially shrinking activity. It was agreed that effective communication of the University’s activity around closures and cancellations was of paramount importance to ensure the wider community were kept up to date. It was noted that the main priority for academic staff was to develop online teaching, assessment and to support students who were due to graduate this summer. It was further noted that the emerging situation was a huge opportunity to develop online learning for the future.  Staff morale was discussed and it was noted that line manager support was being improved and well-being advice and guidance was being developed as a staff resource. Council was pleased to note that the University was in line with Russell Group peers and all institutions were learning from each other.  With regards to University finances it was noted that outstanding fee income from individual student sponsors would be difficult to track and international students who had returned home may also prove to be an issue. Council was reminded that no student with outstanding fees could graduate. With regards to research income UKRI was being lobbied for assistance in order to gain certainty for research staff and students. It was projected that there could be an operating deficit of around £17M. Financial covenants would not be breached this year, but there remained a possibility for breaching next year. Scenario planning for student recruitment for the coming intake was currently underway which would be based on a mix of online and campus teaching.  With regards to communication, Council was pleased to note that daily emails were being issued to staff and requested sight of this.  **ACTION: Clerk to the University Council & Senate**  It was noted that all senior team recruitment that had recently begun was now working on a significantly lengthened timescale.  Council was reassured to hear about the actions being taken and thanked the Executive team for their hard work and leadership through this difficult situation.  **RESOLVED** that the update be noted. | | | |
| **72** | **Report from the President of the Students’ Union** | | | |
|  | Council considered a report by the President of the Students’ Union which provided an update on recent SUSU activity including specific updates from each of the Sabbatical team members.  **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **73** | **University Economy Model** | | | |
|  | Council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning which outlined the outputs from the 2020 UEM update and details the assumptions that underpinned it. The model provided a 5-year forward financial projection and was a framework by which it could be better understand the impact of changing key financial drivers, such as student numbers, on the future financial position. It formed the basis of the business planning framework, as well as the forecast submissions to the OfS and to Moody’s for the annual credit rating review.  It was noted that due to the current situation the intention was to bring a budget based on the UEM to Council in July, but that the ability to deliver that would be monitored as the situation develops. The final budget process in the autumn would be the more critical process as the outlook for 2020/21 becomes clearer. It was again noted that UKRI would be lobbied to give clear help and guidance on research activity. It was noted that before the emerging COVID19 situation, all predictions and forecasting had proved to be robust. Council was asked to approve the model as set out.    **RESOLVED** that the University Economy Model be approved prior to submission to Moody’s and use in the annual business plan cycle. | | | |
| **74** | **Cross-Cutting Theme Discussion: Sustainability**  Council was reminded that arising from the Council Effectiveness Review that had been held in autumn 2019 that it had been agreed that certain cross-cutting issues be considered by Council by way of either a discussion at the meeting or a guest speaker for the Council dinner. The first issue had been identified as Sustainability and an update on activity and progress in this area. Professor Rachel Mills was the University lead for sustainability and provided the update.  It was noted that while many staff and students cared deeply for sustainability issues, active participation was patchy and there is a real need for leadership in this area to drive through change in behaviours in our staff and student communities. It was agreed that the University should commit to net zero carbon (Scope 1 & 2 emissions) by a date well in advance of 2050 required by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. This will require us to invest wisely in our estate, energy generation and procurement, and we will need to change all of our behaviours.  Our agreed principles are:   * Ensure transparent emission accounting, reporting and communication of progress against clear sustainability targets on an annual basis. * Mitigate emissions at a rate that contributes to the global imperative to achieve climate neutrality. * Develop documentation to capture how every decision harms/benefits sustainability.   Our competitors have set a date of 2030 for net carbon zero (Bristol, Exeter, Cardiff, Warwick), Nottingham has set a date of 2028 and Sheffield & Birmingham are yet to state a date. Setting a credible date for net carbon zero requires a detailed piece of work on our current emissions, feasible routes to significant reduction of Scope 1 & 2 emissions, offsetting options to meet net zero and this work requires targeted effort and resource and an initial tranche of funding has been approved by UEB and PRG.  Exeter, Leeds and Warwick had made additional commitments for significant scope 3 emission reductions by 2050 and we should think about doing the same for a meaningful impact on emissions.  One of our biggest assets over time is our graduates – and we have the opportunity to ensure that our graduates leave us knowing exactly how they can impact and change the world for the better. It was noted that we have several MSc courses in the area of sustainability/energy and there is an opportunity to develop something overarching that makes the University distinctive in this area. It was also essential to communicate our activity clearly on the University website and in other communications.  Council noted the activity and supported the work being undertaken. It was agreed that a great strength would lie in our graduates helping to tell the story. Council asked for a further update in 12 months. **ACTION: Dean of Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences**  **RESOLVED** that the update be noted. | | | |
| **75** | **Nominations Committee Matters**  **RESOLVED** that Dr Alison Vincent and Hannah Pawlby both be reappointed to Council (and Dr Vincent as Chair of the Health & Safety Audit & Assurance Committee) for second terms from 1 August 2020 until 31 July 2023. | | | |
| **76** | **Banking Tender**  Council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning, which set out the contractual position following the tender for banking services and requested that Council approved the appointment of Barclays Bank as our Banker. Finance Committee had recommended the appointment.  **RESOLVED** that the contract award decision leading to the appointment of Barclays Bank as University Bankers with effect from April 2020 be approved. | | | |
| **77** | **Pensions Report**  Council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning which provided an update on the report of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) on phase 2 of their work and the current employer consultation from UUK. A response to the consultation was requested by 28th February and UEB and Finance Committee agreed the response for submission.  **RESOLVED** that the process for the consideration of the JEP phase 2 with the USS valuation due this year as at 31st March 2020 be noted. | | | |
| **78** | **Change to the University Ordinances – Senate Terms of Reference**  Council considered a report by the Clerk to the University Council and Senate which presented, for approval, updated terms of reference for the University Senate which would be included in the University Ordinances.  Council noted that this updated terms was only to be implemented for a short period while a Senate Effectiveness Review was to be carried out and where a further updated terms of reference would be presented to Council for further approval. Council requested that any new terms of reference consider making reference to Council members being invited to attend and observe Senate meetings and that an Annual Senate report to Council be made explicit in Senate Terms of Reference. Both of these measures were to strengthen links between Council and Senate. The Vice-Chancellor undertook to include those matters for consideration.  **RESOLVED** That the terms of reference included in the report be approved. | | | |
| **79** | **Key Outcomes from Council Awayday**  Council received a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning which set out a summary of the key takeaways and outcomes from the January 2020 Council Away day.  Council reiterated its support for a dashboard approach for key performance indicators and vital monitoring information in order to keep track of progress on various matters and to observe trends. **ACTION: Chief Operating Officer**  **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **80** | **Staff Engagement**  Council received a report by the Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) which provided Council with an update on staff engagement activities following the November report to Council.  **RESOLVED** that the report, and its contents, be noted. | | | |
| **81** | **Management Accounts – November 2019**  Council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Planning which presented the management accounts for financial year 2019/20 as at January 2020. Faculties and Professional Services had produced full outturn forecasts for the year and the report focussed on variances between those forecasts and the full year budget.    **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **82** | **Annual Research Integrity Statement and Research Policy, Governance and Ethics Update**  Council received a report by the Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) which provided Council with an annual update on Research Integrity in accordance with the requirements of the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity and also presented the latest Annual Research Integrity Statement and the most recent version of the internal Research Policies Action Plan.  **RESOLVED** that the report be noted. | | | |
| **83** | **Sealing of Documents**  Council received and noted a report detailing the documents sealed since the last report to Council. | | | |
| **84** | **Chair’s Actions**  **RESOLVED** that the following actions be noted:  (i) Nominations Committee membership increased to include the President of the Students’ Union  (ii) Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th March 2019 to include the following minute:  “78a Restricted Senate Matters  Council considered a restricted report by the President & Vice Chancellor which set out level 6 promotions and nominations for the conferment of the title of Emeritus Professor for Council approval.  **RESOLVED** that the level 6 promotions and the nominations for the conferment of the title of Emeritus Professor be approved. | | | |
| **85** | **Committee Minutes**  Council received and noted all the Committee minutes from meetings that had been held since the last meeting. | | | |
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**Restricted Items**

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| **86** | **Restricted HR Matters**  (i) Senior Appointments  **RESOLVED** That the senior appointments as set out in the report be approved.  (ii) Level 6 Promotions  **RESOLVED** That the level 6 promotions be approved. |

**The meeting concluded at 4.10pm**

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**Actions**

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| **Min No./Year** | **Minute Title** | **Action Summary** | **Owner** | **Report Back Date\*** |
| 109/1819 | Int Strategy | Presentation of International Strategy with priority timeline | Vice-President (International) | ? 2019 |
| 29/1920 | Research Strategy | Deep Dive on Enterprise in next 12 months | Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) | July 2020 |
| 33/1920 | Annual Academic Assurance Report | Report back to Council on degree awarding analysis and assignment ghost writing | Academic Registrar | May 2020 |
| 58/1920 | Student Recruitment | Consider a more strategic approach to address the need to increase the diversity of the student intake and of their chosen subjects | Vice-President (Education) | July 2020 |
| 59/1920 | ED&I | Consider the points raised by Council | Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) | May 2020 |
| 68/1920 | Actions | Interim VP (Int) to bring an interim update on International activity | Dean of FSS | July 2020 |
| 71/1920 | VC Report | COVID19 Staff emails to be sent to Council weekly | Clerk to the University Council & Senate | March 2020 |
| 74/1920 | Sustainability Discussion | Update in 12 months | Dean of FELS | March 2021 |
| 79/1920 | Awayday Outcomes | Executive to consider developing a dashboard of key info for Council | Chief Operating Officer | Ongoing |

\*Given the developments of COVID19 post the meeting all these dates are subject to significant change