

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 09 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Temi Adebayo, Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Phil Cusack, Dr Tony Coombs, Garry Dowdle, Ben Gallop, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Adedapo Oni, Sam Plant, Professor Susan Price, Alan Roff, Dr Karen Stansfield, Rik Sterken, Helen Taylor, Professor Mike Wood.

Apologies: Councillor John Merry.

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Louise Edwards-Holland (Director of HR and OD), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience), Janet Lloyd (Interim University Secretary), John McCarthy (Executive Director of Marketing, Recruitment and External Relations), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development), Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer), Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary) and Martin Toner (QEO).

By Invitation: Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer, USSU) [COU.20.78].

COU.20.61 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Noted: that in accordance with Covid-19 pandemic guidelines (England) the entirety of the meeting was to be held via video-link utilising the encrypted software technology of Microsoft Office365 Teams.

(Secretary's note: Dr Karen Stansfield was welcomed to her first meeting later in the proceedings).

COU.20.62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reported: that no declarations of interest had been received.

Noted:

- i) that with regard to Item 12: Total Reward Framework Gateway Review, Professor Mike Wood and Dr Karen Stansfield did not feel conflicted but highlighted their status as employees of the University;
- ii) that the Chair would monitor the discussion as it was held and would take appropriate action if any conflict arose.

(Secretary's note: no action was taken during discussion for Item 12 [minute reference COU.20.72] below).

COU.20.63 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2020 (COU/20/48).

COU.20.64 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted: that there were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

COU.20.65 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

Noted: that Item 20: Use of the University Seal (COU/20/62) would be noted without discussion.

COU.20.66 RESPONSES TO COVID-19 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received: a presentation on Salford students' response to the Covid-19 student experience, led by Ade Oni, University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) Sabbatical

Officer for Science, Engineering and Environment.

Reported:

- i) that the announcement of the national lockdown in March 2020 had brought about an abrupt change to the student experience;
- ii) that the USSU had conducted a survey in June 2020 which had covered a range of issues;
- iii) that no definition was given for value for money (VfM) in the questionnaire but the issue of financial re-imburement of course fees was raised;
- iv) that, overall, students understood that the University had also been affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- v) that during the earlier months of national lockdown when delivery had been moved online there were student concerns with regard to consistency of quality and digital access;
- vi) that many students had childcare or caring responsibilities;
- vii) that safety was the greatest concern with regard to a return to campus;
- viii) that high levels of anxiety were recorded at that time;
- ix) that a pre-recorded interview with the USSU Women's Officer, Anna Gregory, gave a personal review of the experience, which included how Ms Gregory's placement had been extended and she was able to contribute support to the NHS.

Noted:

- i) that members thanked the Officers for a candid review of their experience and for sharing the results of the student survey;
- ii) that the report of the Women's Officer reminded members of the contribution made by students and staff towards the fight against Covid-19;
- iii) the view that the survey highlighted mental health and wellbeing issues and, if it were to be repeated, it might be useful to include a question regarding what students had learnt about themselves during the period; and that this would help reflect back to students their strength and assist tutors by providing enriched information beyond students' coping mechanisms;
- iv) that the survey response rate was 5% and that respondents were not representative of student body diversity, and that the USSU was committed to improving return rates;
- v) the view that it would be useful to receive similar data collected from students' unions in other institutions, and this would assist the USSU to understand if the Salford experience was collective or unique and if any learning could be shared;
- vi) that the National Union of Students (NUS) was collating views on national student experience issues, such as fee rebate;
- vii) the view from the student members that the University had worked hard to create a digital delivery culture and processes, for example lecture recording, but that at the start of the lockdown did not have a comparable infrastructure to some other institutions and was not able to make a quick transition to digital delivery;
- viii) that the University was in the early stages of the return to campus, and had received positive responses to the blended learning delivery it had put in place and that all academic members of staff had undertaken significant development in the digital tools and the University virtual learning environment;
- ix) that the University had learned a great deal from the experience of moving to blended delivery in terms of pedagogical approaches and continued to draw on this learning as it progressed with blended learning;
- x) the view that the shift to blended learning had provided an opportunity for the University which was both transformative and exciting;
- xi) that there was anecdotal evidence coming forward that students who had returned to their studies were more comfortable with the blended learning approach and this was in view of the restrictions of the external environment, but there remained concerns about further potential lockdown (national or local) that could potentially lead to a move to full online delivery;
- xii) that the student experience presentation and survey results had been shared across the University;
- xiii) the view that the relationship between the University and the USSU was stronger from their joint response in preparation to return to campus.

RESOLVED: that the presentation be recommended to the next meeting of the Senate.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/20/49).

Reported:

- i) that, prior to the Report, the Chair personally thanked the Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team for exemplary leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic, and on behalf of the members noted that the University was in a good position under the circumstances;
- ii) that the response to Covid-19 had been a whole university effort, but the Vice-Chancellor also commended the executive team;
- iii) that higher education institutions (HEIs) were more complex than schools or colleges due to their varied programmes and size, and consequently it had been a significant challenge to the sector to address the changes required in the delivery of provision;
- iv) that the Government U-turn on the calculation of A-level awards during the clearing period had resulted in the University losing some applicants who had previously confirmed their acceptance of a place;
- v) that this was largely due to students' grades being raised which allowed them to accept offers from institutions with higher entry requirements in a very competitive marketplace;
- vi) that despite some losses the University had gained students through the clearing process and/or due to a higher award being made and the applicant thus being able to accept a conditional offer previously made by the University;
- vii) that the University was unlikely to achieve its undergraduate student recruitment target, but student recruitment overall was stable, and gains had been made in postgraduate and international recruitment;
- viii) that the next challenge would be to enable successful student engagement such that those students recruited would not seek to defer or withdraw from studies;
- ix) that the University and student body would continue to be impacted by local or national Covid-19 restrictions which were outside their control;
- x) that the University had started to increase recreational facilities outside on campus, but that these could only be offered if national guidance allowed;
- xi) that the Office for Students (OfS) and the Department for Education (DfE) were to finalise a new regulatory framework which was expected to focus on value for money (VfM) expressed as high-quality provision and graduate outcomes;
- xii) that the University had been working on improvements relating to VfM for the past six months;
- xiii) that a White Paper was due to be published in the Autumn which would contain comprehensive details of the new framework;
- xiv) that following the Prime Minister's speech to the House of Commons on Further Education (FE), bidding for the Institute of Technology tender had opened;
- xv) that strategic projects under the Campus Masterplan continued to be implemented, for example build work for EnergyHouse2;
- xvi) that the University had partnered with Manchester Metropolitan University, Lancaster University and the University of Manchester to deliver the European Research Development Fund (ERDF) scheme for advanced manufacturing – the Greater Manchester Artificial Intelligence Foundry;
- xvii) that the Vice-Chancellor had been invited to join the Board of the Graphene Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Alliance (GAMMA);
- xviii) that the impact on colleagues' capacity during the past months was significant and the University was mindful of this;
- xix) that the Report detailed several other successes and members were invited to make comments directly to the Vice-Chancellor or the executive team.

Noted:

- i) that it was a risk that local or national Covid-19 restrictions would increase deferral or withdrawal from studies by students, especially if students returned to (or stayed at) home for a period of time;
- ii) that the University was constantly monitoring the safety of students and colleagues;
- iii) that increased Covid-19 restrictions on the local hospitality sector would also impact on the student body;
- iv) the view that students' experience of starting or attending University during this time

could build personal resilience and lead to a positive outcome in the future, but that it was very difficult for students to understand this when the immediate reality was so challenging;

- v) that Universities UK (UUK) was modelling financial scenarios for the sector which could arise from increased deferral and withdrawal rates;
- vi) that the University remained committed to the activities and interventions proposed under its applications to the Race Equality Charter and Athena Swann Awards, despite the understanding that the future standing of both frameworks was under review;
- vii) the view of the University that, whilst useful and valuable, external validation or adoption of external frameworks was not as important as the impact of real improvement through its work on equality and diversity.

COU.20.68

RETURN TO CAMPUS

Received: a presentation on the University's preparation for, and recent experience of, returning to campus (COU/20/50).

Reported:

- i) that the return to campus planning had comprised four phases, and the final phase was to be completed shortly before the focus settled on daily operations;
- ii) that the work had been undertaken over a six-month period and represented a significant workload for both colleagues and partners of the University;
- iii) that there had also been a closer relationship formed with Salford City Council over this time;
- iv) that there had been an additional spend of £3m, but where possible expenditure had been aligned to existing strategic plans, for example the planned upgrade of staff hardware had been expedited by the bulk purchase of laptops;
- v) that £0.5m had been reprioritised from IT expenditure and made available to students via a technical support fund;
- vi) that, in deployment of offsite IT solutions, software had been introduced and cybersecurity processes implemented to support risk mitigation;
- vii) that a Covid-19 test centre had been established on campus with a capability to conduct 260 tests per day;
- viii) that risk assessment had been completed for all staff, alongside an induction programme undertaken by all colleagues involved in delivery (or supporting delivery) on campus;
- ix) that student induction had largely taken place online and had included significant preparation on what to expect when on campus;
- x) that, in the view of the University, improved student communication channels and practices for the management of Covid-19 had been developed over the Summer period;
- xi) that the University had offered a track and trace application for its open access areas in advance of the availability of the NHS application;
- xii) that the impact of student and colleague behaviours would be a measure of success for returning to campus and the University had adopted the 'Four E's' utilised by Greater Manchester Police (Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce);
- xiii) that the USSU had participated in planning groups and would continue to be involved with operational groups;
- xiv) that care packages had been provided to students on arrival and this included a copy of the Community Pledge made by all Greater Manchester universities;
- xv) that scenario planning had taken place in anticipation of future enhanced restrictions or 'lockdown';
- xvi) that data had been compiled showing a rolling 7-day average infection rate, which evidenced a flattening out of the early peak;
- xvii) that stewards had been introduced in high footfall areas at peak times to support positive behaviours;
- xviii) that the University had a more diverse mix of resident locations (being a high commuting student body) than other institutions reported by the media;
- xix) that the University had recorded 266 confirmed cases as of today's date.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair had toured the campus and confirmed the level of safety measures that

- had been put in place;
- ii) that, as of today's date approximately 300 students were in self-isolation as a result of contact;
- iii) that the student technical support fund had mainly provided hardware, and to respond to connectivity issues the University had invested in safety measures and additional hardware to ensure open access IT suites remained available on campus;
- iv) that the University had engaged with its provider of student halls of residence, Campus Living Villages (CLV), at an early stage to support the creation of appropriate environmental protocols;
- v) that there had been incidents in halls of residence whereby students had not followed safety procedures, but that weekly meetings with CLV and an increase in CLV staffing had resulted in positive impacts on behaviour;
- vi) that the University had satisfied itself safety protocols were in place with its main private landlord provider (Manchester Homes), but was not in a position to be able to test these, nor was it able to verify individual private landlord protocols;
- vii) that the University continued to promote and emphasise Covid-safe behaviours with the aim of supporting safe practices across all home environments;
- viii) that students and staff were able to make confidential reports of malpractice;
- ix) that approximately 40-50% of delivery was currently undertaken via online delivery;
- x) that the virtual learning environment (VLE) platform was the latest version of Blackboard (Blackboard Ultra);
- xi) that online materials had been designed to be synchronous (i.e. live participation in group learning) and asynchronous (i.e. learning materials available for access at any time);
- xii) that it was mainly delivery of large-group lectures that was online with smaller tutorials and practical workshops being held on campus but observing social distancing measures;
- xiii) that campus remained fully active, with social learning spaces available and promoted for student use;
- xiv) that the University was mindful of both technical and space poverty and sought to address both in its response to the changes in delivery;
- xv) the view that there would inevitably be a large impact on mental health from the changes described and that an early 'deep dive' be undertaken and presented to a future meeting;
- xvi) that there had been a significant amount of contact made with students affected by the pandemic, and this included daily calls to students in self-isolation;
- xvii) that a dedicated triage process had been put in place to ensure students were referred to specialist services if this were needed;
- xviii) that outreach food support had also been implemented, and this also included for international students who were required to quarantine on arrival;
- xix) the view that support colleagues also required mental health and wellbeing provision;
- xx) that members were assured the University was continuing to support such needs.

(Secretary's note: the presentation COU/20/50 had been updated since it had been circulated with the issue of papers in order to keep members apprised of the most recent management responses to Covid-19).

COU.20.69

ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET), a report on the key policy developments across the Office for Students (OfS) and Department for Education (DfE) over the last year (COU/20/51).

Reported: that the Review had been shared across the University and that it provided evidence the external policy environment remained focused on low-value provision.

Noted:

- i) that the confirmation of the minimum thresholds for quality was of greatest import to the University;
- ii) the view that, notwithstanding the work on strategic projects and a safe campus environment, it was in the University's interest to prioritise its performance with regard to student retention and perceptions of value for money.

COU.20.70

HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20 CLOSED

Considered: on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Health and Safety Annual Report 2019/20 (COU/20/52).

Reported:

- i) that the Report had been updated on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and now included information on fire risk assessments;
- ii) that the closure of the campus in response to the Covid-19 pandemic had prevented compliance with the undertaking of fire risk assessments, but this had been rectified as soon as campus had re-opened;
- iii) that one major accident had been reported and this was classified under a 'slip, trip or fall' description;
- iv) that accident near miss data had been appended, also on the recommendation of ARC;
- v) that near miss data had been reviewed and no evidence of any systemic issues had been found.

Noted: the view from the Chair of ARC that the reported sickness absence data had improved, but there was a likelihood that this data might deteriorate in future due to the unpredictability of the working environment during the pandemic.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Health and Safety Report 2019/20 be approved.

COU.20.71

CAMPUS MASTERPLAN

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Risk Committee, the Campus Masterplan refresh (COU/20/53).

Received: a report on feasibility assessment of potential funding sources for the Masterplan refresh (COU/20/53a).

Reported:

- i) that the detailed Campus Masterplan documentation was available to review if members so wished;
- ii) that the refresh document presented included the proposed estates principles, which were intended to act as a reference framework for future proposals;
- iii) that a calibration to benchmark exercise had been undertaken and that further reconciliation was planned in Spring/Summer 2021 to refine understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on long-term space requirements;
- iv) that the supplementary paper (COU/20/53a) had been provided to evidence the proposed process and approach to the assessment of fundability.

Noted:

- i) the view that the refresh evidenced a clear evolution in the approach to the Campus Masterplan;
- ii) that the digital commons had been combined within the core central space for students and staff, and this was partially an early response to anticipated changes in the requirements for space planning but also to ensure adequate space for commuting students (the 'sticky' campus);
- iii) that long-term space planning would take several years and be developed in parallel to inform the proposals coming forward;
- iv) the view that the Council Engagement Group (CEG) had been sighted on the large volume of work undertaken by the Estates team to reach this refresh point;
- v) that the private sector partner (The English Cities Fund) had already input into, and impacted on, strategic planning in the short time since their appointment;
- vi) that the Campus Masterplan and its wider implications had been recognised in the property press and was gaining a regional profile;
- vii) the view that the refresh was highly ambitious but that it was good to have an ambitious vision, and component parts of the Campus Masterplan would be considered on their merits and achievability;
- viii) that the proposal retained the high degree of flexibility required for an estates development plan that would resonate for the University and local community for

- several years into the future;
- ix) the view that the estates principles provided a clear basis for consistent decision-making;
 - x) that USSU was represented on the steering group and there was scope for it to have a presence at several locations on campus (in addition to the central hub building);
 - xi) the view that there remained a natural tension between ambition and achievable funding, and that clear economic challenges were presented by the current external environment;
 - xii) that potential expenditure across the Masterplan was significant and detailed financial information would be provided to the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) in order for it to make considered recommendations to Council on individual proposals;
 - xiii) the view that it would be more challenging to gain external funding in the current external environment, but that opportunities which arose and could be afforded should be taken;
 - xiv) the view that the vision for the campus was a manifestation of the ambition for the University;
 - xv) the view that development of the campus included a philanthropic element;
 - xvi) that the Campus Masterplan was the largest capital programme in the Salford region;
 - xvii) that the refresh presented was focused on the main campus, but that MediaCityUK campus was included where applicable and this would be made explicit in future presentations;
 - xviii) that FRC had discussed the tension between ambition and affordability for the detail of the Campus Masterplan and that the estates principles were critical to future decision-making, and consequently the Committee recommended endorsement of the refresh;
 - xix) that the Chair of FRC assured members that affordability would be carefully scrutinised during consideration of component proposals;
 - xx) that realistic alternative plans would be developed if ultimately components could not be achieved.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Estates principles be approved;
2. that the direction of travel provided by the Campus Masterplan refresh proposal be approved.

COU.20.72

TOTAL REWARD FRAMEWORK GATEWAY REVIEW - CLOSED

Considered: the gateway review on implementation of the Total Reward Framework (TRF) (COU/20/54).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

- i) - redacted -

v) - redacted -

RESOLVED:

1. - redacted -

COU.20.73 **STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL**

Noted: that the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee for a proposed amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/20/55) was withdrawn and would be re-presented as one of a package of proposed changes to the ARC terms following a review against the Committee of University Chairs (CUC)'s new Code of Practice for Audit Committees.

COU.20.74 **INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY**

Considered: on the endorsement of the VCET, a proposal in relation to the development of University inclusion and diversity metrics and priority action plan (COU/20/56).

Reported:

- i) that the Plan had drawn together all aspects of inclusion and diversity (I&D) activity in the University;
- ii) that work was underway to similarly draw together and present consistent metrics, and time was to be taken to fully understand the intersectional points between data reported under conditions of registration (i.e. Access and Participation Plan) or for other purposes (i.e. Race Equality Charter, Athena Swann);
- iii) that Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) awards was a focus of the Plan and would be incorporated in corporate key performance indicators;
- iv) that the appended document showed a template for local I&D action plans, and their preparation would be supported by the I&D Team;
- v) that it was anticipated some actions would take longer to achieve, for example the rate of staff turnover was low and consequently changes in the composition of the staff profile would take longer.

Noted:

- i) the view that the Plan presented a clear approach to I&D action, and that the Council should also continue to hold itself to account;
- ii) that the current independent member recruitment cycle was aligned with the I&D commitments laid out in the Plan, and that this could be made explicit in recruitment and succession planning;
- iii) that oversight for I&D of Council membership was under the purview of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC);
- iv) that suggestions for a lead member responsible for I&D should be considered by GNEC in the first instance;
- v) that the executive role responsible for submission of statutory I&D data was the

- Interim Director of DSSASS
- vi) that the executive lead responsible for I&D reports to Council would be the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Development, who was also the appointed Chair of the University's I&D Committee;
 - vii) the view that Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or equality impact narrative should be consistently applied and included in the proposals and reports recommended to Council;
 - viii) that the University had not yet considered how the commitments and goals in the Plan could be used to evidence a corporate strategy which might appeal to student and/or staff applicants;
 - ix) that GNEC and Council had received social impact reports published by the University.

RESOLVED:

1. that the holistic I&D Action Plan be approved;
2. that the proposed progress reporting format be approved;
3. that the receipt of quarterly management update reports be entered onto the schedule of business;
4. that the following items of business be referred to GNEC for consideration and appropriate recommendations or reports made back to Council:
 - 4.1 a benchmark report for I&D of Council membership (as part of wider governing body data);
 - 4.2 a statement of protocols for member recruitment and succession planning, that was aligned to the commitments approved in the I&D Action Plan;
 - 4.3 a proposal to establish and appoint a Lead Member for I&D;
5. that VCET consider the establishment of a University corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.

**ACTIONS (3), (4.2) & (4.3): INTERIM UNIVERSITY SECRETARY
ACTION (4.1): I&D COMMITTEE CHAIR
ACTION (5): CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

COU.20.75

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 4 and year-end 2019/20 Finance Report (COU/20/57).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted: - redacted -

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT

COU.20.76

Received: on the endorsement of VCET, a detailed report on outcomes from the National Student Survey (NSS). The Top 10 Risk Profile was appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/20/58).

Reported:

- i) that there had been performance improvements in the NSS results for some academic areas, but that the responses to the questions under the section 'Organisation and Management' were poorer than in the 2018/19 survey results and below the sector average;
- ii) that this was an institution-wide issue and evidenced there was an inconsistent interface between services that supported the student experience;
- iii) that the following item [minute COU.20.77 below] addressed the actions that would be taken to improve the student experience.

COU.20.77

QUARTERLY REPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Received: on the endorsement of VCET, a report on the University's action plan for enabling student success, in the context of value for money (VfM) (COU/20/59).

Reported:

- i) that there were nine goals presented in the Plan which the University viewed as the critical cultural step-changes to enable student success;
- ii) that the actions were collectively owned and sponsored by VCET and had been cascaded across all performance development plans and as a consequence gave a clear 'line of sight' for the Plan;
- iii) that it had been agreed previous ways of working had resulted in limited success and that a new operational underpinning was required to make a long-lasting change;
- iv) that the external environment with regard to VfM was expected to become more data driven;
- v) that the Report highlighted four key areas of student experience (academic success, customer service, leadership and environment);
- vi) that the VfM Assurance Group included academic and professional leads;
- vii) that the aspirational target was for Salford to be listed as a top 50 institution.

Noted:

- i) that the Plan detailed important work for all staff;
- ii) that programme teams had been included in the development of the Plan as it had been created from a 'bottom-up' approach;
- iii) that the nine goals had been triangulated with School action plans to ensure consistency and a single focus;
- iv) that where the Plan noted 'no further action required' this should not be taken to mean the activity was completed but rather that the underpinning culture was in place and would be overseen for continual practice;
- v) that it was recognised in some instances that University structures did not facilitate collaborative working between academic and professional staff, and that the University was committed to development of 'one voice' and removal of the artificial divide (for example, nomenclature);
- vi) that the input and relationship with the USSU was important to the Plan, which aligned to parts of the Sabbatical Officer manifestos for 2020/21.

COU.20.78

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, an update on the operations of the USSU (COU/20/60).

Reported:

- i) that since the last update, the impact of Covid-19 to the operation of the USSU had been significant;

- ii) that the financial support of the University meant USSU remained a stable entity;
- iii) that one redundancy had been made, but that this was an unavoidable action as the role was no longer required;
- iv) that governance meetings and services for USSU had moved wholly online;
- v) that prior to the restrictions of the pandemic USSU had prepared to incorporate and this had now been completed;
- vi) that a new company registration number had been issued (company limited by guarantee);
- vii) that 8,000 students attended the virtual Freshers' Fair, which was in comparison to a normal physical attendance of 5,000;
- viii) that USSU's Rafiki service (sub-clinical mental health and wellbeing) had made support calls to approximately 100 students in self-isolation;
- ix) that sports teams and societies had commenced face-to-face activities again under the supervision of dedicated Covid-19 Officers;
- x) that the appendices to the Report included the Sabbatical Officer objectives for the year ahead.

Noted: that members thanked the USSU for its support and collaborative relationship with the University in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

COU.20.79

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/20/61).

Reported:

- i) that ARC had met three times since the last Report, and this included one Special Meeting convened to consider the CUC Code of Practice for Audit Committees;
- ii) that GNEC had considered the Members' Annual Evaluation Survey at its recent meeting and had noted the key issue highlighted was the lack of a diverse composition of membership;
- iii) that GNEC had commissioned a steering group for the recruitment of independent members and proposed succession planning for membership, and that increasing member diversity was a priority;
- iv) that the steering group had reported that a number of high-quality applications had been made and that it was anticipated interviews would be held in November 2020 for appointment from January 2021;
- v) that GNEC was assured from the report of the steering group that applicants were representative of diverse backgrounds and appointees would add value;
- vi) that FRC had undertaken substantive consideration of the Financial Report;
- vii) that FRC had received an update on the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Education Tender Framework bid, and expected to receive the full business case shortly;
- viii) that ARC would also consider risk aspects of the GMP bid to make a joint recommendation with FRC to the next meeting of the Council;
- ix) that FRC had received data on student entry tariffs and was assured grade inflation resulting from the central assessment of A-level awards this year had been managed;
- x) that FRC had received its regular report of Salford Professional Development (SPD) Ltd and that whilst SPD had recorded a better year-end result than forecast, it was anticipated the University would be asked to provide a letter of support again this year;
- xi) that Mr Garry Dowdle had been appointed to the board of University of Salford Enterprises (USE) Ltd, and this would provide FRC with greater insight and assurance for USE's work;
- xii) that RemCo had endorsed the recommendations from the Vice-Chancellor's annual review;
- xiii) that RemCo had approved the pay and performance review for the Executive and, in doing so, acknowledged that two executive roles had been vacated during the review period (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University Registrar and Secretary) with responsibilities subsequently shared across the executive team;
- xiv) that RemCo had reviewed the Settlement Scheme and agreements made during the year;
- xv) that RemCo had approved the Remuneration Annual Report for 2019/20.

Noted:

- i) that Ms Merlyn Lowther had assumed the interim Chair of ARC, and Ms Helen Taylor

- had assumed the Chair of RemCo;
- ii) that in relation to members' annual review, the Chair was to commence individual member reviews, and these would be preceded by circulation of a set of questions to inform discussion.

COU.20.80 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted: that there were no further items of business raised.

COU.20.81 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted: that the next meeting would be held on Friday 20 November 2020, followed by a Special Meeting convened on Friday 11 December 2020.