

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2021

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Temi Adebayo, Angela Adimora [until COU.21.41], Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Dr Tony Coombs, Phil Cusack, Garry Dowdle, Ben Gallop, Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Councillor John Merry, Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Micheal Omoniyi [until COU.21.34], Adedapo Oni, Sam Plant [until COU.21.37], Professor Susan Price, Alan Roff, Dr Karen Stansfield, Rik Sterken and Dr Elsa Zekeng.

Apologies: Helen Taylor, Professor Mike Wood.

For attendance: Janet Lloyd (Interim University Secretary)

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Peter Gregory (Interim Director of HR and OD), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience), Andrew Hartley (Director of Legal and Compliance), 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) and Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).

By Invitation: Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer, USSU) [COU.21.30; COU.21.39]
Jason Challender (Director of Estates and Facilities) [COU.21.34]
Emma King (Strategic Initiatives Lead) [COU.21.37]

COU.21.26 **WELCOME**

Noted:

- i) that in accordance with Covid-19 pandemic regulations (England) the entirety of the meeting was to be held via video-link utilising the encrypted software technology of Microsoft Office365 Teams;
- ii) that the University had sent a message of condolence to HM The Queen on the passing of the HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, acknowledging his role as previous Chancellor and his longstanding support for the University.

COU.21.27 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Reported: that Dr Karen Stansfield had previously reported an interest in the item for Any Other Business: Greater Manchester Police Education Framework due to her status as a lead for the initiative and would not take part in the resolution.

(Secretary's note: Councillor John Merry also had a standing declaration of interest for Item 9: Strategic Master Programme).

COU.21.28 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2021 (COU/21/19).

COU.21.29 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Noted: - redacted -

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

COU.21.30

Received: [in advance] a video presentation from Natalie Nyamadzi, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voluntary Officer 20/21 and Prody Mpambo, member of the BAME

Student Network, on their experience of being a BAME student at the University.
Received: [tabled] a presentation from Temi Adebayo, Student Representative and President of the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU).

Reported:

- i) the view that all higher education (HE) institutions needed to further tackle racism;
- ii) the view that the recent Government report – '*Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities*' – was not reflective of the lived experience;
- iii) that the report had been widely criticised by activist groups;
- iv) the view that the University's action plan to tackle the BAME attainment gap was still challenged by lack of resources and was slow in making progress;
- v) that the standing agenda item on equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) was welcomed;
- vi) that the University's Anti-Racism Statement, issued after the Black Lives Matter talking event, was welcomed;
- vii) the view that there was a differential between Schools in their work towards reducing the BAME attainment gap;
- viii) that USSU had made clear its position regarding decolonisation of the curriculum;
- ix) the view that the progress to-date had been largely driven by the BAME community on a voluntary basis;
- x) that the Student Representatives made a plea to their fellow members to support action.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair had accepted the tabled presentation, but that without prior notice of the questions posed, members might not be in a position to make full and fair responses and would therefore be asked to make further reflection after the meeting;
- ii) that the video presentations had indicated an important point that the University needed to ensure diverse representation when inviting guest speakers to present;
- iii) the view from the EDI Lead that the University was in frequent contact with USSU and the parties involved to effect sustainable change as part of day-to-day business;
- iv) that there had been a small lag during consideration of how to address the BAME attainment gap, and it was acknowledged as a complex and nuanced space;
- v) that the new role of lead for the Learning and Teaching Network would include addressing the gap as a key part of their role and that this would be a substantive post;
- vi) that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had slowed the progress the University had wanted to make during the previous twelve months;
- vii) the view that the presentation evidenced good practice from the Salford Business School (SBS);
- viii) that the School for Science, Engineering and Environment (SEE) was undergoing some restructure and it was anticipated this would lead to improved outcomes in a number of challenging areas;
- ix) the view that despite the BAME attainment gap being identified over 20 years ago the HE sector had very limited success in reducing it, and that the University should be supported in its aim to make BAME achievement part of its 'business-as-usual' and not a standalone project;
- x) the view that there was clear determination and focus for improvement from the Student Representatives, and that statements of unacceptability resonated strongly with members;
- xi) the view that whilst it was difficult to reconcile issues at pace there was scope to improve energy, resources and focus into improvement, not least from a Council perspective;
- xii) the view that there would also be an opportunity to address demonstrable change during the refresh of the corporate strategy;
- xiii) the view from the Student Representatives that whilst they agreed with the comments made about embedding change within the business, it was felt that the University had admirably demonstrated it could in fact respond very quickly and change itself during the pandemic;
- xiv) that the full reasons behind the 7% drop in the attainment gap in the previous 12 months were complex and likely intersected with work undertaken on other known challenges such as academic progression;
- xv) that an EDI Action Plan had been developed for each School, and were due for review

- by the Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Committee (IDEC) in the next week;
- xvi) that each Dean had the BAME attainment gap specified in their performance development metrics, and that Deputy Deans also had key responsibilities in their performance objectives for EDI in each School;
 - xvii) that EDI formed a part of workload allocations, and thus committed the University to funded time resource;
 - xviii) that this was the final meeting for the incumbent Student Representatives and members commended their superlative contributions and commitment to the University during their time as members and during their tenures as Sabbatical Officers.

COU.21.31

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/21/20).

Reported:

- i) that the incoming Chair of the Office for Students (OfS) had been appointed (James Wharton, Baron Wharton of Yarm);
- ii) that the Government's policy focus on poor quality provision had been confirmed but that the detail on how this might manifest in regulation and in the marketplace was yet to fully emerge;
- iii) that a number of national funding cuts had been made to research which had impacted on existing contracts and put others at risk;
- iv) that guidance for the sector related to the roadmap out of Covid had been lacking, and that announcements due for the 17 May 2021 could be effectively too late in the academic year to impact on current teaching practices;
- v) that the University continued to highlight the need for guidance for September 2021 onwards.

Noted:

- i) that the research funding cuts were not expected to impact on the innovation zone in the Campus Masterplan, being more directed at international research projects, but that the decreases were a worrying trend;
- ii) that the Government's Science and Innovation Strategy had not yet been published, but that the University remained optimistic that innovation would be part of the Industry 4.0 strategy;
- iii) that it was not confirmed yet if the UK would be a member of the successor to the Horizon Europe funding scheme (replacing the pre-Brexit structure);
- iv) that the Government remained committed to a 'levelling up' skills policy as essential to the UK economy and to maintain gross domestic product (GDP) targets;
- v) that there was regional optimism the policy would have a positive impact on innovation.

COU.21.32

CAMPUS OPERATIONS (COVID-19)

Received: an update on the University's management and operation of the campuses during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic (COU/21/21).

Reported:

- i) that since the report had been produced, the levels of reported cases had continued to be very low;
- ii) that the Department for Education (DfE) had written to universities confirming a full return to campus was not imminent, and that this impacted the University for trimester two in its academic calendar;
- iii) that the University was active on campus where programme enhancement activities were allowed and where access to facilities for studies and wellbeing was permitted;
- iv) that there had been no announcements made or guidance given on the potential impact on trimester three and the remainder of the academic year, which also impacted on preparations towards the 2021/22 academic year;
- v) that in the absence of a formal steer, the University was planning toward a continued blended approach which would be as close as possible to a 50/50 percentage split (50% digital delivery, 50% on-campus delivery);

- vi) that the University continued to operate two test centres, and would move to a mixed model where appropriate once home testing kits became available from May 2021;
- vii) that the University was mindful that whilst students and colleagues could collect home testing kits from site, that testing should be undertaken prior to travelling to campus as those kits started to be utilised;
- viii) that the DfE was changing its guidance on testing once home testing kits became available from on-campus tests every three days to home-testing every 4-5 days;
- ix) that the HE sector was expected to report on outcomes and there was an ongoing discussion on how best to support reporting for home testing (which was at the prerogative of those undertaking voluntary tests);
- x) that the University's Covid-response operational structures were expected to continue for several months yet.

Noted:

- i) that there were several programmes receiving delivery on-campus;
- ii) that between 60% and 70% of students contracted to halls of residence accommodation had returned to living in halls;
- iii) that a low number of students were accessing testing, but that the University continued to put out strong communications in support of taking tests;
- iv) that students were also waiting for guidance and the University was preparing to be as responsive as possible to the next announcement due on 10 May 2021.

COU.21.33

CORPORATE STRATEGY

Considered: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a revised timeline for the refresh of the corporate strategy (COU/21/22).

Reported: that the timeline had been delayed due to the priority response required to the Covid-19 crisis, but that there would be greater opportunity for engagement with stakeholders and to take learning from what had happened during the later dates proposed.

Noted:

- i) that the engagement with staff would be held concurrently with the TRF consultation process, but would be carefully aligned so as not to impact on each other;
- ii) that there would be engagement with student stakeholders;
- iii) that members would be included in engagement events, and that it was expected the final recommendation would be made to the late Spring 2022 Council meeting;
- iv) the view that a deferment would be prudent given the level of unknown economic impacts of the pandemic at this stage;
- v) that a broader horizon scan would be of benefit and included in the exercise;
- vi) that a range of industries on the Greater Manchester Index, those in the Oxford model, and other partnerships fed into the external environment considerations.

RESOLVED: that the revised timeline for the corporate strategy review be approved.

COU.21.34

STRATEGIC MASTER PROGRAMME CLOSED

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the proposed Strategic Master Programme (SMP) and Delivery Plan (DP) from the private sector partner, English Cities Fund (COU/21/23).

Reported:

1. - redacted -

Noted:

i) - redacted -

RESOLVED: that the Strategic Master Programme and Delivery Plan be approved in principle, and that the Chair and Deputy Chair/Chair of Finance and Resources Committee be endorsed to take appropriate Chair's Action subject to satisfactory resolution of (or a satisfactory plan to address) the issues outlined in Appendix 6.

ACTION: CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR

COU.21.35

GREATER MANCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CLOSED

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the University's tender to establish a Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (IoT) (COU/21/24).

Reported:

i) - redacted -

Noted:

i) - redacted -

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the University continue with the DfE process with a submission to form an Institute of Technology;
- 2) that the Audit and Risk Committee (or representative member) provide further comment from a risk perspective prior to submission.

ACTION (2): ARC

COU.21.36

ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS

Received: a presentation on the University's strategic plan for enabling student success, in the context of value for money (COU/21/25).

Reported:

- i) that enabling student success was a strategic priority of the University;
- ii) that 65 programmes had been flagged as 'high risk' at the start of the improvement activities, but that 19 programmes had made significant improvements;
- iii) that there had been a 4.6% improvement in progression;
- iv) that the data demonstrated there was a high-level of intersectionality with and between cohorts, for example BAME, entrants with BTEC qualifications, commuting students;
- v) that refreshed social spaces and shared spaces would be in place for September 2021;
- vi) that to ensure a consistent voice from application and through the student journey all communications were led by Marketing;
- vii) that by establishing the 'enabling student success' foundations, the University would be in a better position for sustained improvements, and to capture good practices arising from the Covid-19 pandemic experience;
- viii) that academic quality management and compliance processes were under review;
- ix) that the shape of the academic year was being considered by Senate;
- x) that the facility for Schools and professional services to text students had gone live;
- xi) that development of the programme leader role was to be supported;
- xii) that all colleagues were involved in the activities with a single goal to enable student success.

Noted:

- i) the view that the open and honest approach to what had worked and what was not working was refreshing and welcomed;
- ii) that the enactment of a single focus had started to realise cultural and process change which would gradually transition into business as usual over the coming academic year;
- iii) that it was anticipated the sector would be working very differently within the next two to three years;
- iv) that University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) had been fundamental to the process, and that it was evidence of the maturing relationship between the University and USSU that it had been able to hold such honest discussions.

COU.21.37

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

Received: the Access and Participation Plan annual monitoring return to the Office for Students, for the year 2019-2020 (COU/21/26).

Reported:

- i) that the Access and Participation Plan (APP) was a five-year plan with 'rolling approval' from the OfS, and that this was the second year of operation annual return;
- ii) that the return related to the 2019/20 year;
- iii) that at OfS's request a qualitative section on the impact of Covid-19 to the APP delivery plan had been included;
- iv) that the content had been presented to the recent meeting of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC);
- v) that ARC had noted the different terminology used by OfS, whereby 'progression'

- referred to what was commonly known as 'continuation' by the University;
- vi) that regarding earlier comments made under the Student Experience item [COU.21.30], there was an operational group for implementation of APP targets which was constituted of leads for those areas in each School;
 - vii) that the data demonstrated that 60% of the University's students came from what had been classified as disadvantaged quartiles, and that for quartile one this was double the sector level.

Noted: that the return provided valuable information and that, whilst progress had been made, there remained areas for improvement.

COU.21.38 **ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

Received: a report on a new ongoing condition of registration with the Office for Students (OfS) under the Higher Education regulatory framework for England (COU/21/27).

Reported: that the condition strengthened the OfS's position to intervene in those institutions at significant risk of unsustainability.

COU.21.39 **UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, an update on the strategy and operation of the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) (COU/21/28).

Reported:

- i) that the Board of Trustees passed on their thanks to the University for their additional financial support during the pandemic;
- ii) that there had been financial benefit from utilisation of the Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme and reduced operating costs during the period;
- iii) that there had been a better than expected outturn on investments and that this had positively impacted on the pension scheme position, but that pensions remained a challenging issue to the Union;
- iv) that there would be further detail available on the financial modelling exercise for the pension scheme by the next report;
- v) that the partnership between the University and USSU continued to grow and develop, largely in part to the practices put in place to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic but also as part of the joint liability for the student experience;
- vi) that the returning officer had confirmed the sabbatical officers elect for 2021/2022;
- vii) that the incorporation of USSU had completed and all assets and liabilities had been transferred to the new entity.

Noted: that thanks were also returned to USSU colleagues for their work during this period and that the deepening of the mutual relationship was commended.

COU.21.40 **SENATE**

Received: the (unconfirmed) minutes of the Senate Meeting held on 24 March 2021 (COU/21/29).

Reported:

- i) that the Research Excellence Framework (REF) return was discussed, and the efforts of the team were highly commended;
- ii) that the 'line of sight' on academic governance and assurance between Senate and Schools had been considered and a good conversation had taken place on future shaping of the strategic academic assurance framework.

COU.21.41 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, a detailed report on sustainability. Also included was the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 2 2020/21, and the Top 10 Risk Profile was appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/21/30).

Reported:

- i) that the cash value from tuition fees had declined over the previous decade (fees not having been increased during the period);
- ii) that however, the University's recruitment had grown by 11% in the corresponding time;
- iii) that graphical information had been included on expenditure;
- iv) that Audit and Risk Committee was monitoring recruitment risk as part of the corporate risk register, and that this included a slowly escalating risk for the School of Science, Engineering and Environment (SEE).

Noted:

- i) that the ratio of professional services to academic staff could be an early lead indicator for growth in overheads;
- ii) that in some instances increased administrative resource protected time resource for academic workload;
- iii) that the data in the report was being used to benchmark professional services, and that this was part of the normal budget process alongside planning toward new working practices in the post-Covid environment;
- iv) the view that review of working practices and administrative processes was opportune.

COU.21.42

QUARTERLY EQUALITY, INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, the Quarter 2 2020/21 report on the University's action plan for ensuring equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) (COU/21/31).

Reported:

- i) that the next Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Committee (IDEC) meeting was to consider the individual School and Professional Directorate action plans;
- ii) that the University was in the process of completing its written submission to apply for the Race Equality Charter (RACE);
- iii) that the work to-date had been the first time the University had been in a position to comprehensively map all of its EDI activities in a single framework.

COU.21.43

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 2 2020/21 finance report (COU/21/32).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

- i) - redacted -

COU.21.44

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS – CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Considered: [tabled] a proposal for Chair's Action to be taken around the constitution and membership of the standing committees.

Reported:

- i) that following appointment of new Council members and co-opted members, the Chairs of Council and Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) had discussed proposed deployment among the standing committees;
- ii) that the induction programme for new members and co-opted members was proceeding but would not complete before the end of the 2020/21 committee session and the Chair wished to avoid delay in proceeding towards deployment;
- iii) that it was proposed the next meeting of GNEC considered the expansion of the constitution of GNEC and Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) by one independent member, and that this would enable all new members to be allocated to a committee;
- iv) that discussion had taken place with new members and co-opted members and that a follow-on proposal would be made to GNEC on the allocation of committees at the same meeting;
- v) that in order to ensure all members had the opportunity to attend their respective committees before the end of session, if GNEC recommended the two proposals to Council that Chair's Action be taken immediately to effect the amendments and allocations.

RESOLVED: that the Chair be endorsed to take appropriate Chair's Action for constitution and membership of the standing committees, on the recommendation of GNEC after its next meeting.

ACTION: CHAIR

COU.21.45

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Received: the Committee Chairs' Reports (COU/21/33).

Reported:

- i) that Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) highlighted that, despite having appropriate policies and procedures in place, when these were not followed it could result in a breach in financial controls, and this had been the outcome of a recent investigation;
- ii) that ARC was seeking to gain greater understanding of cultural awareness and assurances for policy compliance;
- iii) that cybersecurity remained a significant risk to the University;
- iv) that there was a large amount of ARC business and that new members would be welcome;
- v) that the substantive items of business considered by Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) had been presented to this meeting.

COU.21.46

USE OF THE UNIVERSITY SEAL

Received: a report on the use of the University Seal since the previous meeting, including the executing of documents in the context of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Restrictions (COU/21/34).

COU.21.47

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK CLOSED

Considered: the contractual arrangements for the Framework (COU/21/35).

Reported:

- i) - redacted -

Noted:

i) - redacted -

RESOLVED: that the proposal be approved, and that delegated authority be given to the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Director of Finance to sign the GMP contract and the UCLan sub-contract on behalf of the University.

ACTION: VICE-CHANCELLOR/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

COU.21.48

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted: that the next meeting would be held on Friday 9 July 2021.