



## University Executive Board

### Minutes of the meeting of 8 February 2023

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**Present:** Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Neil Crout (PVC RKE), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC EDI and People), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC) via Teams, Professor Jane Norman (DVC), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science).

**Attending:** Rowena Hall (Secretary), Dr Yvonne Mbaki, Dr Helen Henshaw from minute 23.18, Sally Blackamore (Financial Controller) for minutes 23.17 and 23.18, Helen Lawrenson (Director of Financial Management) for minutes 23.17 to 23.19, Jason Phoenix (Programme Director, CMC) for minute 23.19, Helen McNamara, Director of Organisational and People Development) for minute 23.20, Leonie Mathers (Deputy Director Communication and Advocacy) for minute 23.21, Nalayini Thambar (Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change) for minute 23.22, Mick Gash (Team Leader, Getting in Shape) for minute 23.22, Professor Sarah O'Hara (CEO UONO) for minute 23.23, Dr Nick Mount (Programme Director, UONO) for minute 23.23, Jenny Vempati (Director of Internal Audit) for minute 23.24.

**Apologies:** Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Provost UNM)

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#### 23.14 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Dr Helen Henshaw, Principal Research Fellow, MHS and Dr Yvonne Mbaki Associate Professor, School of Life Sciences to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of interest.

#### 23.15 Minutes of 10 January 2023 and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Action Tracker was NOTED.

#### 23.16 Chair's business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated an update to UEB members prior to the meeting.
- .2 UEB discussed the recent cabinet reshuffle and government department reorganisations, as well as the challenges of Trusted Research and the proposed foreign partnerships frameworks.
- .3 The Registrar reminded UEB about the Office for Students plans in connection with Condition of Registration B4, to require universities to retain all students' assessed work for a period of five years after graduation.

#### 23.17 Latest Forecast (LRF1)

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/25) presented by the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Financial Management and the Financial Controller.



- .2 UEB NOTED that LRF1 forecasted an increase in surplus to that budgeted. Although an overall improvement, the increase was as a result of a change in assumptions which exceeded a deterioration in operating performance.
- .3 The University had fallen short of its international student recruitment targets for 2022/2023. To mitigate the impact some over-recruitment of UG home students had been undertaken. UEB NOTED that additional funding had been provided to support the over-recruitment in Arts, Science and Social Sciences, but that funding was maintained and not reduced to those Faculties where international recruitment was below budgeted levels and where limited over-recruitment of UG home students had taken place. This had resulted in additional net cost.
- .4 The importance of meeting student recruitment targets for University finances was acknowledged by all. There was some discussion on how best to support and encourage Schools and Faculties to meet their international student recruitment targets, the future options for Faculty funding, and the approach to be taken where targets were missed.
- .5 There was a consensus that increased Home UG recruitment should not be used to compensate for the failure to meet international recruitment targets. There was also some support for the principle that there be some financial incentivisation for Schools that met or exceeded their international student recruitments.
- .6 UEB NOTED that a Size and Shape review had been concluded which would inform the 2023/24 student target setting activities and that a Faculty funding review was underway.
- .7 UEB RECOMMENDED the LRF1 for APPROVAL to Finance Committee.

#### **23.18 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/18) presented by the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Financial Management and the Financial Controller. The paper reminded UEB of the purpose of the MTFP and the assumptions which were included in the last year's MTFP update.
- .2 UEB NOTED the development of the MTFP would be included as a standing item on the UEB agenda until June when it would be submitted for consideration and recommendation to Finance Committee and Council for approval.
- .3 At its next meeting, UEB would be asked to consider the key assumptions and income drivers including student number target setting, commercial income pipeline, research margin, strategic investment pipeline and analysis of Faculty cost bases. The Director of Financial Management affirmed that there was no scope to increase the cost base of the University, therefore decisions on the prioritisation of delivery would be necessary. The value of the undergraduate fee would continue to be eroded as high inflation continued.
- .4 Work was underway to understand the University's debt capacity and options for fundraising and partnership potential which would have an impact on the prioritisation of strategic investment and the phasing and delivery of large capital programmes. Increased borrowing was not progressed previously as there were no key project drivers.

#### **23.19 Castle Meadow Campus (CMC) Infrastructure Business Case**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/26) presented by the Programme Director for CMC, which provided an update on the programme and included an executive overview of the Castle Meadow Campus Infrastructure business case.
- .2 It was reported by the Vice-Chancellor that Council was keen to develop its understanding of the vision for CMC and how the various CMC strands of activity and business cases would align. It was anticipated that Council would request an update on any plans for Kings Meadow Campus.
- .3 The Programme Director, CMC, and the Director of Financial Management had made themselves available to Council members to provide further information and to answer questions about the vision and plans prior to the Finance Committee and Council meetings.



- .4 UEB RECOMMENDED the Castle Meadow Campus Infrastructure Business Case to Finance Committee for APPROVAL.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.5	To develop the business case submitted to Finance Committee and Council to ensure that it provided an overview of the various elements of CMC activity and plans.	Programme Director, CMC and Director of Financial Management	22 February.

**23.20 Head of School/Department and Dean Development**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/08) from the Director of Human Resources which set out plans to develop and support Heads of School/Departments and Deans, and for developing leadership potential across the University.
- .2 Plans to work with UNM and UNNC to develop and implement a similar approach were underway.
- .3 UEB was supportive of the learning set approach to the development and support for Heads of School/Departments. The following suggestions for further development were made:
- .1 The proposed names of the groups required further consideration.
  - .2 Managerial and financial development should be a focus within the programme alongside addressing the relationship between the research and professional service community, and the inclusion of observation of senior University committees.
  - .3 Development of a plan to support Heads of School to return to a research/teaching focussed roles.
  - .4 Compulsory participation in the programme should be made clear in communications and materials.
  - .5 A process for renewing the term of office for Heads of School which should mirror the process used for PVCs i.e. forward plan development, 360 feedback.
- .4 UEB NOTED the opportunity to develop similar developmental programmes for other staff groups at the University in due course and the option of exploring expressions of interest as a mechanism for identifying potential candidates for roles.
- .5 The paper was AGREED subject to the feedback provided.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.6	To revise the programme in accordance with the feedback provided and circulate details of the revised programme and materials to UEB for information	Director of Human Resources	31 March 2023

**23.21 Vice-Chancellor's Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement Forum**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/19) from the Deputy Director, Communications and Advocacy which included the updated terms of reference for the Vice-Chancellor's Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement Forum and a proposed plan to re-establish the Forum.
- .2 The Deputy Director, Communications and Advocacy was the main point of contact for co-ordinating the University's management of its relationships with institutional stakeholders. Meetings would be arranged with individual UEB members to ensure that they were sighted on the activity of Forum and how to engage with it.
- .3 UEB NOTED the revised Terms of Reference and AGREED the plans to re-establish the forum.



**23.22 Getting in Shape Report**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/20) from the Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change and Programme Director, Getting in Shape. The paper provided an overview of establishment of the Lean continuous improvement service in February 2020 and its delivery over subsequent years.
- .2 UEB was keen to understand why, given the numerous very successful engagements across the University and the increased demand for the service, the initiative was not delivering as widespread an impact as some had perhaps hoped. A number of the same concerns regarding workload pressure and University processes were still received. There continued to be a lack of awareness of the activities and successes of the team.
- .3 The importance of embedding Lean principles and thinking as far as possible across the University was NOTED. Therefore, it was suggested that options for disseminating as much Lean learning as possible across the University should be explored including sessions for Heads of School or Senior Leaders.
- .4 It was NOTED that the professional services’ Operations Board had been recently established, and in order to achieve its objectives, the Board would need access to resource, such as the Getting in Shape team.
- .5 UEB considered the options set out in the paper for the future priorities of the Getting in Shape service. It was AGREED that existing engagements should be re-prioritised to meet Operations Board or other emerging strategic imperatives. This would ensure that the service had the widest impact possible on the operations of the University and the activity of the Operations Board was supported. It was understood and accepted that withdrawal from existing engagements and reduced capacity to meet smaller requests from across the University would cause disappointment.

**23.23 University of Nottingham Online – Quality Assurance and Strategic Oversight**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/21) from the Chief Executive Officer, UoN Online which provided a report on the quality assurance approach for the different strands of the UoN Online activity.
- .2 UEB was reminded that the UoN Online programme had been established to diversify the University’s educational offer. UEB NOTED three strands of business activity: Core, Verification and Partnered Learning. The ‘Verification’ business model was outlined and the differences to ‘Validation’ explained.
- .3 Whilst it was acknowledged that there was a distinction between Verification and Validation, a number of members expressed concern that the distinction would not necessarily be wholly clear to learners and outside bodies. It was NOTED the verified products were able to be brought to market at a greater speed than validated products which would be much more likely to meet the needs of business clients.
- .4 Assurance was provided that the Quality and Standards Committee had fully reviewed the verification model and that quality assurance mechanisms were in place. Additional governance had been put into place to ensure any issues were surfaced early and actively managed.
- .5 Despite assurances, a level of concern remained that the concept of validation versus verification would not be sufficiently understood by those outside the HE sector leading to risks to the reputation of the University and the potential dilution of its brand.
- .6 It was AGREED that more information on the verification business model, including the digital badges of learning, should be shared with UEB at an Away Day.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.7	To deliver a session to UEB on the verification business model including badges of learning.	CEO UON Online	June 2023



**23.24 Fraud Update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/22) presented by the Director of Internal Audit.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the number of reports was lower than the previous year. The Director of Internal Audit did not consider the University’s internal control mechanisms had improved to the extent that would lead to a significantly improved fraud position, therefore expressed concern that an element of undetected fraud was present.
- .3 There was some discussion about the reasons fraud might remain undetected.
- .4 It was AGREED that a fraud awareness initiative should be implemented.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.5	To update UEB on the steps taken to raise awareness of fraud across the University.	Director of Internal Audit	31 March 2023

**23.25 Roundtable**

- .1 The PVC GE provided a brief overview of a visit together with the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor to the University of Tübingen, a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the African Institute of Universities, and a successful funding application to commence a dual Masters degree with the Ukrainian Catholic University.
- .2 The CDO confirmed that three of the four large digital projects had reported red progress scores. As part of the Digital Engagement project, the platform had been delivered by the University’s commercial partner following which a significant issue had been identified connected to the AA standards for accessibility. Go-live of the project would not be affected, but to remain compliant with accessibility legislation, appropriate statements would need to be published on the platform. Contractual negotiations were underway to resolve the issue.
- .3 The UEB/HoS buddy scheme had been relaunched.
- .4 The number of staff who participated on the first day of industrial action on 1 February was reported.
- .5 It was confirmed that the Dean of Nottingham University Business School had stood down. A recruitment process would be initiated to identify an interim followed by permanent appointment.
- .6 The PVC EDI and People reported that the business planning documentation circulated to Senior Leaders had omitted EDI elements. The Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change was working to address the issue.
- .7 Handover discussions between the interim PVC RKE and Professor Sam Kingman were advanced.
- .8 Discussions at the University, and within the Russell Group, to meet the challenge of ChatGPT and similar programmes were referenced.
- .9 A change in the approach to the University’s Diversity Festival was planned and would be communicated to staff.
- .10 A brief overview of a UKRI scoping project would be circulated to members for information.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
11.	To provide an update on the contractual issues related to the Digital Engagement project.	CDO	28 February
.12	To circulate a UKRI scoping project overview.	FVPC Science	28 February