



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 8 March 2021

Attending

Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Professor John Atherton (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Dame Jessica Corner (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, Interim Provost UNM), Professor Todd Landman (FVPC Social Sciences), Professor Andrew Long (DVC), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Kevin Shakesheff (FPVC Science), Professor Sarah Sharples (PVC EDI), Sarah Speight (PVC ESE)

Attending

Rowena Hall (Secretary), Pip Peakman (Director of Research and Innovation) for minute 21.36 and 21.38, John Gathergood (APVC, Research) for minute 21.36 and 21.38, Alex Favier (Director of Global and Political Affairs) for minute 21.37, Alan Kennedy (Director of Supporter Engagement) for minute 21.37, Leonie Mathers (Head of Public Affairs) for minute 21.37, Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance) for minute 21.39, Tony Ludlow (Head of Business Continuity and Incident Management) for minute 21.39, Jenny Vempati (Director of Internal Audit) for minute 21.40

21.33 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Dr Lopa Leach, Director for Postgraduate Research, School of Life Sciences to the meeting as an observer.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest.

21.34 Minutes of the February 2021 Meeting and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 were confirmed as a true record and the Action Log was NOTED.

21.35 Chair's Business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated a report to UEB and provided an update on the Universities Superannuation Scheme valuation. UEB discussed the potential consequences of the valuation and the UUK and UCU positions.
- .2 Concern was expressed about the current affordability of the scheme for employees and the impact of increased contributions on the number of staff who opted out.
- .3 The covenant strengthening options contained in latest USS consultation were considered.
- .4 A recent round of roadshows designed to help staff understand the technical and complicated landscape of USS had been well received and would be followed up by a second round. The roadshows would continue to provide staff with a forum in which to ask questions about the impact of the scheme's valuation. There would also be an update at the next Senior Leaders' meeting.



.5 The topic would be returned to regularly at UEB meetings over the coming months.

21.36 Research Strategy Review

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/34) from the PVC RKE, which provided an analysis of the University’s research performance over the period of the current research strategy to date (2107/18 – 2020/21). The review drew upon a wide variety of inputs collated as part of the immersion phase of the development of the new research strategy.
- .2 With the addition of a SWOT analysis, Council would review the paper at its next meeting.
- .3 UEB considered the challenges highlighted in the paper and there was discussion focused on the quality of the research undertaken at the University and the differing levels of performance across the research footprint. The Director of Research and Innovation confirmed that a work stream within the Research Planning Working Group was in the process of analysing institutional performance data at a more granular level to identify and better understand performance variances across Faculties and Schools with a detailed look at high performing teams.
- .4 Further thought and discussion would be required to consider how to create an ambitious research culture which would be required to drive up performance.

21.37 University Approach to Managing Relationships with Priority Organisations and Influential Individuals

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/21/29 from the Director of Global and Political Affairs which summarised the approach adopted over the previous two years for the management of relationships with priority organisations.
- .2 Following on from the success of the approach, it was proposed to extend the approach to 150 influential individuals, assigning an operational relationship manager to each and where appropriate a senior sponsor.
- .3 UEB members were invited to indicate directly to the Director of Global and Political Affairs if they had any pre-existing or preferred relationships where they would be willing to act as sponsor.
- .4 UEB ENDORSED the project and NOTED the request for members support to build understanding within their teams of the existence of the framework for prioritising requests and managing contacts with prominent individuals.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5	To indicate to the Director of Global and Political Affairs if there were any pre-existing or preferred relationships that they would be willing to sponsor.	UEB members	12 April

21.38 Research Strategy Development Process

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/36) from the PVC RKE, which set out a proposed process for developing a new research strategy for 2022/23 – 2026/27.
- .2 UEB NOTED that the immersion phase of the development process was coming to an end, the results of which would form a Green Paper designed to be an early stage consultation seeking views from across the University. An early iteration of the Green Paper questions would be shared and tested at the next Senate meeting, following which the Green Paper would be refined as required and provided to UEB for approval before further dissemination. There would be a number of further phases of wide consultation across the University.



- .3 UEB further NOTED the governance for the development of the Research Strategy which included the establishment of a Research Strategy Advisory Group and a Research Strategy Action Group. It was further NOTED that a representative of the Global Engagement Strategy Support Unit had been added to the membership of the Advisory Group.
- .4 The Research Strategy would require the approval of the Research Committee and discussion at Senate followed by, as Strategic Delivery Plan, the approval of UEB.
- .5 Feedback provided on the paper included:
 - .1 A reminder about the rich data source elicited as part of the University strategy development process.
 - .2 A request that the consultative approach to the development of the strategy should include FPVCs through the DVC's FPVC Group.
 - .3 A query about the length of time for the development of the strategy. It was confirmed that whilst the strategy development was ongoing, a one year interim plan had been implemented and the Research Planning Working Group would continue its work on finance, cost recovery and performance.
- .6 Subject to the feedback provided during the discussion, UEB AGREED the development process for the Research Strategy as set out in the paper.

21.39 Business Continuity and Incident Management Strategy Proposal

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/32) from the Director of Governance and Assurance and the Head of Business Continuity and Incident Management.
- .2 UEB recognised that the University's pre-pandemic approach to business continuity and incident management was largely unwritten and was dependent on in depth knowledge of a small number of senior staff and their experience of managing a series of incidents over a number of years. During the Head of Business Continuity and Incident Management's first few months in role, alongside supporting the University's response to the pandemic, a strategy and approach to business continuity and incident management was developed as set out in the paper.
- .3 UEB NOTED that the prioritisation of funding for the purchase of the required specialist software to manage the full business continuity lifecycle would require a business case which would be considered by the Digital Futures Committee.
- .4 Expert advice from within the University had been drawn upon in developing the general response plan. Further expert advice would be sought where appropriate when responding to individual incidents. A number of mock incidents would be scheduled over the coming months to test the plans.
- .5 UEB AGREED the recommended strategy and approach as set out in the paper and looked forward to receiving updates on its implementation.

21.40 Internal Audit Six Month Plan

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/21/31) from the Director of Internal Audit which set out the draft audit plan for the next six months and proposed a balance between focus on enterprise levels risk and core controls and processes.
- .2 The Director confirmed that audit of confirmation and clearing would be carefully timed in consultation with leaders in External Relations.



- .3 UEB AGREED the internal audit plan ahead of consideration and approval by the Audit and Risk Committee.

21.41 Roundtable Discussion

- .1 Details of the application window and process for the Turing Scheme had been published. Work had been ongoing for a number of weeks and relevant staff were involved. A single application would be submitted by the University.
- .2 Professor Clive Roberts' term as Head of School of Pharmacy would end on 31 July and he would be succeeded by Professor Barrie Kellam.
- .3 The FPVC Arts had assumed the civic portfolio from the FPVC Science. An announcement was due.
- .4 Digital Futures' projects were progressing well with the development of the Digital Engagement product team in preparation for implementation in the summer.
- .5 UEB was reminded that the regrading and promotions processes had resumed. Applications for promotions included the opportunity to detail the impact of COVID-19. The Director of Human Resources would consider a mechanism for ensuring that any relevant information included relating to health conditions was managed sensitively and only shared where absolutely necessary. Promotions would take effect from January 2022 for the successful applicants from the current round of applications, after which the normal timescale would be resumed with promotions effected from summer 2022. This might require adjustments to the deadlines for the next round of promotions for applicants who were not successful in the current round.
- .6 The movement control order in Malaysia had ended on 5 March and had been replaced with a conditional control order which permitted inter-state travel. Facilities on campus were beginning to open, but teaching would stay online for the remainder of the academic year.