



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 2 August 2021

Attending

Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Professor John Atherton (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Dame Jessica Corner (PVC RKE), 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 Andrew Long (DVC), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Interim Provost UNM), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Sarah Speight (PVC ESE), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

Attending

Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Svenja Adolphs (Head of School, English), Professor Chris Denning (Director of the Biodiscovery Institute), Professor Bernadette Youens (Professor of Education), Dr Lisa Carroll (Commercial Director) for minute 21.1, Pip Peakman (Co-Chair, Research Strategy Action Group) for minute 21.101

Apologies

Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC)

21.101 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Svenja Adolphs, Head of the School of English, Professor Chris Denning, Director of the Biodiscovery Institute, and Professor Bernadette Youens, Head of the School of Education, to the meeting as observers.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .3 There were no declarations of interest.

21.102 Minutes of the 30 June and 6 July 2021 Meetings and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meetings held on 30 June and 6 July 2021 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Action Tracker was NOTED.
- .3 Action 19.123.08 was updated by the Director of Human Resources who confirmed that a key action identified as part of the HR Review was to recruit to three senior leadership roles. A copy of the role profile forms for those roles would be circulated to UEB for information prior to the commencement of the recruitment process. A preference to undertake interviews in person was NOTED.

21.103 Chair's Business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated a report to UEB prior to the meeting which focused on the wellbeing of staff and students and considered the challenges of the next few months. A number of subjects were discussed in response to the report.
- .2 UEB discussed how decision-making should be informed by student responses to national and local surveys and be culturally empathetic and inclusive, including investment decisions in connection with mental health, counselling and disability support services. Steps would need to be taken to reemphasise and support the importance of students building relationships with



the University through personal tutors and with each other through peer mentoring, peer support and student societies.

- .3 The Chief Digital Officer’s suggestion for establishment of an operations bridge group to meet daily over the coming weeks would be followed up outside the meeting.
- .4 Consideration was also given to a continued focus on communications and information sharing.
- .5 It was acknowledged that transitioning from a full schedule of MS Teams meetings back to a more normal meeting schedule, including in person meetings and engagement opportunities, would present a challenge for many staff.
- .6 The DVC confirmed his diary had been reviewed to identify groups and meetings that had not existed prior to the pandemic with a view to transitioning their activity to business as usual mechanisms and standing down groups where possible. The COVID-19 Impact Planning Board would continue to meet until the end of the start of session period following which its continuation would be reviewed.
- .7 The importance of the role of Head of School was considered. The approach followed by Heads of School in supporting staff to return to work would need to be consistent to ensure that staff were appropriately supported to do so and the University’s commitments to students were met.
- .8 The Head of the School of English confirmed that the guidance provided to support Head of School with their communications with staff had been welcomed and had proved effective. However, Heads of School were concerned about how they should manage situations where staff had expressed an intention to not return to deliver in-person teaching and, in particular, where occupational health had advised that a reasonable adjustment for certain staff members would be to continue to deliver teaching online. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that advice would be modified accordingly and would be appropriate to the changed circumstances for the start of session 21/22 which included high levels of vaccination.
- .9 It was acknowledged that there would be some difficult conversations ahead for Heads of School, and further thought would need to be given as to how they could be best supported at this time. Heads of School would play a vital role in feeding back the needs of their staff.
- .10 The Vice-Chancellor thanked UEB members for their contributions to discussions and confirmed that further work would be undertaken in preparation for the start of session and the return of greater numbers of staff to campus.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.11	To consider mechanisms to support the role of Head of School to manage staff and students concerns and wellbeing.	Vice-Chancellor, Director of Human Resources	15 September

21.104 Research Strategic Delivery Plan 2022-27 Draft White Paper

- .1 UEB RECEIVED a paper (UEB/21/95) from the PVC RKE which set out a draft White Paper in connection with the 2022-2027 Research Strategic Delivery Plan. The final version of the White Paper would be submitted to UEB for approval in September.
- .2 UEB NOTED that a joint meeting between the AVPCs for Research and for Education and Student Experience had been held during which the identification of clear intersections between education and research strategy was considered. The PVC ESE considered that the intersection had been clearly identified in the Education and Student Experience Strategic Delivery Plan, but that further work was required to establish the same clarity for research in the White Paper. The PVC ESE would provide some suggestions directly to the PVC RKE.
- .3 UEB provided feedback in connection with the further development of the White Paper which included:



- .1 ensuring it was clear that the White Paper was not suggesting additional internal funding and any case for internal funding for research would need to be part of the broader budget considerations as overseen by PRC.
- .2 checking for possible duplication between the six research ambitions and the four research themes.
- .3 reviewing the bullets included in the second theme to ensure that professional services were not singled out and that they focused on research priorities.
- .4 ensuring the appropriate emphasis on external research funding capture
- .5 reconsidering the proposed research vision, its relevance to all faculties and its relationship to the research ambitions.
- .6 reflecting on themes three and four to ensure global engagement was sufficiently represented.
- .7 reviewing the White Paper using EDI tools to ensure appropriate drafting.
- .4 It was AGREED that the comments received as part of the consultation on the research strategy should be made available to the University before the White Paper was published.
- .5 Subject to changes arising from the feedback provided, UEB was supportive of the direction of the development of the White Paper. It was recommended that the draft White Paper was reviewed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, FPVCs and the Communications team before submission to UEB for approval in September.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6	To revise the draft White Paper in accordance with comments made during the meeting before submission to UEB in September for approval	PVC RKE	2 September
.7	To ensure the draft White Paper was reviewed by the DVC, FPVCs and Communications team before submission to UEB.	PVC RKE	2 September

21.105 Roundtable Discussion

- .1 Briefing sessions for staff on the Level 7 pay banding for Research and Teaching staff would begin imminently. The introduction of the new pay banding would bring the University in line with a number of peers in the Russell Group.
- .2 It was reported that the Joint Negotiation Committee still awaited an alternative proposal from UCU in connection with the USS pension scheme.
- .3 A degree apprenticeship event had been held across four Faculties to support preparations for the University's Ofsted self-assessment report and expected inspection.
- .4 Professor Clive Roberts had been appointed as the new Head of the School of Life Sciences and Professor Maire Ní Fhlathúin as the new Head of the School of English. Professor Roberts would assume his role on 1 February 2022 and Professor Ní Fhlathúin on 1 August 2022. Professor Volker Wedekind would be appointed as the next Head of the School of Education.



5. Following a recruitment process in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Professors Mike Randall and Richard Emes had been reappointed as APVC for Education and Student Experience and APVC for Research respectively.
- .6 The Provost UNM reported that COVID-19 cases in Malaysia were high and as a result at least the first six weeks of teaching during the first semester of 2021/22 would have to be delivered online.
- .7 Work continued to develop a framework to manage international security issues related to research.