



COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2020

Present: Sir Keith O’Nions (in the Chair), Vicky Bailey, Professor Dame Jessica Corner, Lynette Eastman, Dr Rachel Gomes, Ian Kenyon until minute 3684, Professor Kevin Lee, Sonya Leydecker, Professor Andy Long, Professor Jo Lynn, Sherry Madera, Carolyn Morgan, Trevor Moss, Dr Hamid Mughal, Dr Gabriele Neher until minute 3687, Richard Newsome, Professor Sarah O’Hara, James Pheasey, Professor Clive Roberts, Nora Senior, David Tilly, Cassie Ulrich, Professor Shearer West

Apologies: Simon Amess

In attendance: Dr Paul Greatrix, Rowena Hall, Margaret Monckton, Tim Watkinson, Rebecca Craven save for minutes, Madeleine Fox save for minutes 3679 and 3694, Jason Carter for minutes 3668 and 3681, Neil Hawthorne for minute 3668, Professor Nick Miles and Professor Graham Kendall for minutes 3670 and 3671, Helen Pennack and James Tomkinson for minute 3675, Andy Nolan for minute 3680, David Hill and Michael Skinner for minute 3681.

STANDING ITEMS

3662 Welcome and Quoracy

- .1 The meeting was declared quorate.
- .2 The Chair reported that it was the last meeting for a number of Council members. Hamid Mughal had served as a Council member for twelve years and Carolyn Morgan for four years. Simon Amess who had given his apologies, had also completed a four year tenure. Professor Sarah O’Hara’s term as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience was due to end on 31 July. It was also the last meeting of Council for both of the student members, James Pheasey and Cassie Ulrich. The Chair thanked all the outgoing members for their support and contribution during their time on Council.
- .3 The Chair welcomed Rebecca Craven and Madeleine Fox to the meeting to observe. They would be joining Council in September as student members.

3663 Declarations of Interest

The Chief Financial Officer declared an interest in Item 33 – Digital Nottingham. There were no further declarations of interest.

3664 Minutes

Council AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2020 were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3665 Chair's Business

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Board for ensuring that Council members were kept informed of the challenges facing the University as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the developing plans for its response. The provision of circulations and additional update meetings was welcomed

3666 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- .1 Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor's Report (paper C/20/64).
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor reported that in the last few days UKRI had confirmed costed extensions to UKRI-funded grants. A formula would be announced in due course, but it was clear that it would not be sufficient to mitigate for all impacts. A support package for research had also been announced by the Government. Further details were awaited but the package appeared to consist of a mixture of 25% grant and 75% loan support.
- .3 Significant preparatory work had been undertaken in readiness for exam boards which had started the previous day. It was expected that there would challenges during the course of the period. Preparations for the confirmation and clearing period were well advanced.
- .4 In response to a Council member's question about how the University would respond to intermittent interruptions during the next academic year, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed details of some of the plans and mitigations developed of which Health and Safety remained a central thread. The University was working closely with local agencies and Public Health England to develop its outbreak plan which would be implemented to manage virus outbreaks amongst staff and students. A policy on the use of face coverings on campus was being prepared. Term dates had been extended to support socially distanced teaching and provide further flexibility in the event of cancelled teaching.

3668 Health and Safety Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED paper C/20/44 presented by the Director of Governance and Assurance and the Director of Health and Safety.
- .2 The paper provided an update on the initial progress of the health and safety remediation plan and the shift to focus on supporting the University's response to the pandemic. The Health and Safety team had supported staff to move to working from home through the provision of guidance, provided advice on campus close down and was now at the centre of supporting recovery plans including producing COVID-19 policies and guidance to support building reopening, resumption of activities and the return of staff to campus. Routine health and safety testing and monitoring had been maintained.
- .3 In response to questions raised by Council members, the Director of Governance and Assurance confirmed that students would be made aware of their personal responsibilities in connection with reducing the spread of the virus and the University's expectations of them behaviourally. Guidance would be provided to both students and staff. The health and wellbeing of those living, working and studying on campus would be paramount.

3669 COVID-19 Response Planning

- .1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the recovery activity being led by the COVID-19 Recovery and Start of Session Programme Board.
- .2 Work had begun to undertake the process to reopen buildings. To date the School of Chemistry, Advanced Manufacturing and the Bio Discovery Institute had reopened. The next phase would include further research facilities and the retrofitting of buildings that had not closed. It was planned to have all buildings open by the middle of September.
- .3 The reopening of the Vet School for the April cohort of students had been approved and was scheduled for 27 July. It was intended that students lived and studied on the Sutton Bonington campus. The University was working closely with the Department for Education to ensure that accommodation could be reopened. Any students who were unable to attend the campus due to healthcare reasons would be offered an online learning option.
- .4 Student accommodation would be able to reopen at full capacity in September with some changes to operation.
- .5 For the moment it was intended to continue with 2m social distancing as far as possible, but health and safety guidelines would be reviewed in light of the Government's announcement of 1m+ distancing.
- .6 There would be changes to the ways of working both for professional and academic staff. Students were keen to receive face to face teaching, so teaching staff would need to be on campus as far as possible. An extension to teaching hours had been agreed by Senate to support the additional timetabling capacity required to accommodate socially distanced teaching.

3670 UNNC Report

- .1 Professor Nick Miles, Provost for UNNC provided Council with a presentation (circulated as paper C/20/45).
- .2 UNNC had been fortunate in term of the timing of the lockdown as students had not been on campus. The campus had started to reopen in mid-February with staff returning by mid-May. Over 5,000 students had now returned. There were some international students and Chinese students who were still abroad and not able to return. They were receiving online provision. In person and online examinations had just been completed.
- .3 The campus would close the year in a strong position including financially. There was the ever present threat of secondary infections which would result in a further period of lockdown. Municipal Government attention was reengaged on progressing the development of the China research beacon.

3671 UNM Report

- .1 Professor Graham Kendall, Provost and CEO for UNM presented his update paper (C/20/51).

- .2 The Provost reported that the 20th anniversary plans for the campus had inevitably been postponed. Malaysia had been in various states of lockdown since mid-March and the campus had instigated emergency finance controls to protect its financial position.
- .3 The UK5 had received permission from the Ministry of Education to deliver their education programmes in the same way as their home campus
- .4 UNM's Asean programmes would be developed to provide more online teaching in light of the continued challenges to face to face delivery.
- .5 Student recruitment would be a top priority for the next few months. Research was a strength of the campus as it was the only international University in the Malaysian market with a 5* MyRA rating.

FINANCE MATTERS

3672 Financial Overview and Forecast

- .1 Council NOTED the financial update provided in paper C/20/46. The £28.7m surplus expected in the original pre-pandemic forecast had become an expected deficit of £4.3m.
- .2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer had delivered finance roadshows to over 3,000 staff. The roadshows which highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on the financial position of the University and the challenges that would be faced throughout 20/21 and beyond.
- .3 Negotiations were underway to secure an increased credit facility with NatWest who were currently reviewing their sector limit for Higher Education.

3673 Approval of Budget 2020/21

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/60 which proposed the budget for 202/21 including items related to COVID-19. Finance Committee had AGREED at its meeting on 9 June 2020 to RECOMMEND the budget to Council for its approval.
- .2 The Chief Financial Officer reported that the proposed budget looked very different to the one that she had expected to present a few months ago. The budget included the expected savings as a result of the 15% budget saving plans.
- .3 The Chair of Finance Committee confirmed his support for the budget and considered that it was well constructed and took a prudent position on research income and international student numbers.
- .4 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee confirmed the importance of the positioning on the 15% budget plan to ensure that it was clear its delivery was not just a matter for the Finance team. Ongoing repeated conversations with staff and students and the clear support of Council would be required. A Council member recommended maintain the current financial controls for a long as possible in order to develop the culture in connection with spend.
- .5 The Chief Financial Officer reported that Standard and Poors had issued its rating and report on the University was confirmed its A+ with a stable outlook rating. The report would be shared with the Finance Committee.

- .6 The Chair thanked all those involved in development of the Budget and gave his full endorsement to the continued transparency of the work across the University.
- .7 Council APPROVED the budget for 2020/21.

3674 Benchmarking – HESA Statistics

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/47 which contained an analysis of finance-related HESA benchmarking data. The analysis had been discussed by Finance Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2020.
- .2 Notable points from the analysis included that the University's surplus was below average as was its cash generation. Its position in connection with international tuition fee income had dropped back. Research grant income per £ of academic pay had declined and this was recognised in the TRAC return. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University was below a number of its peers in research cost recovery.
- .3 A Council Member suggested that whilst benchmarking analysis was an ongoing exercise of discovery and recognition, the issues should be captured in a formal sense and presented to Council in order that steps could be implemented to address concerns.

ACTION	Owner	Due
.4 CFO to consider appropriate ways to address the issues surfaced by the HESA finance benchmarking activity and report to a future meeting on the proposed approach.	CFO	December 2020

3675 Digital Engagement Business Case

- .1 Council RECEIVED paper C/20/62 which was business case for the procurement, implementation and associated business change of a digital engagement solution focused on student recruitment. Council had approved a strategic outline case in November 2019 and since then a tender process had been undertaken. At its meeting on 9 June 2020, Finance Committee had AGREED to RECOMMEND the business case for approval by Council.
- .2 Council NOTED the overarching aim of the programme was to deliver a university marketing service fit for the future.
- .3 The recommended delivery partner had the strongest technical experience and the most extensive experience of successful integrations with Campus Solutions. The 10 year cost of the project was £32.3 with a payback of £43.1 over the same period.
- .4 Council members were supportive of an investment in technical capability to support recruitment, but one Council member reiterated the need for the technology to be supported by a clear international recruitment strategy. The Chief Marketing and Communications Officer confirmed that a new recruitment strategy was under development.
- .5 Council's attention was drawn to the staff who would be most impacted by the change programme, those in External Relations. Academic colleagues would be less impacted but would see the benefits.

.6 Council APPROVED the business case.

3676 Updates to the Financial Regulations

Council AGREED the updates to the Financial Regulations as set out in paper C/20/48.

3677 Delegated Authorities

Council RECEIVED paper C/20/49 and APPROVED the revised Schedule of Delegated Authorities.

3678 Council Emergency Finance Group

Council NOTED the minutes of the Council Emergency Finance Group held on 6 May 2020 (C/20/50) at which a proposal for PGR extensions with associated costs up to the value of £3.14m was agreed.

Rebecca Craven and Madeleine Fox left the meeting.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3679 RESERVED

The meeting broke for lunch. On resumption Rebecca Craven and Madeleine Fox rejoined the meeting

3680 Estate Development Framework

- .1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Development and Sustainability provided an overview of the development of the Estates Development Framework (EDF). Council had been provided with links to the full framework and a copy of a full supporting presentation as part of paper C/20/61.
- .2 The EDF was developed in parallel with the University strategy. It was not intended to be a capital plan but a set of principles used to support and guide the decision making on business cases with an estates impact as they progressed through the governance process. The principles had already proven themselves to be flexible as they remained relevant to the development of the campuses as the University responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EDF supported the development of blended learning, changes to the use of space and the need to work in a more agile way.
- .3 A Council member was keen to see a stronger manifestation of EDI principles within the guiding principles. Areas such as recognising diversity through catering and leisure offering would be vital. The Director of Development and Sustainability confirmed the catering strategy would include EDI objectives.
- .4 Council members were keen that the EDF supported the University to achieve the right balance in its agile working aspirations. The estate needed to support agile working and ensure that spaces provided value to staff when they were on campus.
- .5 Whilst Council acknowledged that there would be need to adjust the guiding principles over time, it was content to AGREE the current draft of the principles as set out in the Estates Development Framework.

3681 Information Security Risk Review

- .1 The Director of Governance and Assurance REPORTED that an examination of the information security risk at the University had been conducted by the Audit and Risk Committee. Council NOTED a summary of the key risks and progress made against them (paper C/20/63).
- .2 The Director was confident that the risks were recognised, there was a coherent plan in place to ensure continued development against them and an assurance programme to monitor progress.
- .3 A Council member was keen to understand the University's plans to use its buying power to provide opportunities for students to buy IT equipment directly from it thereby providing more control over the devices attaching to the network both in terms of quality and security. The Chief Digital Officer explained the virtual desktop initiative which provided access to University software and systems via the user's own device, reducing reliance on large onsite computer rooms. The implementation of the IT Operating Model would allow the University to secure more advantageous arrangements for the supply of end user devices.
- .4 The Students' Union representative drew attention to the need to maintain onsite computer access as there would be a number of group of students who would still require access to University supported IT equipment.
- .5 The Chair thanked the Director for the update. Council was keen to receive regular updates on progress.

ACTION	Owner	Due
.6 To ensure that Council is provided with regular updates on the progress on information security activity.	Secretary, Director of Governance and Assurance	Ongoing

3682 Proposition to Improve Council Effectiveness

- .1 Council RECEIVED paper C/20/66 and NOTED the self-appraisal process for Council members conducted earlier in the year, had resulted in a number of comments and suggestions connected to the operation and size and constituency of Council.
- .2 Council AGREED the development and circulation of an additional questionnaire to explore the views of Council members on the topics further. The results of the questionnaire would be used to develop a proposition on Council's future size and shape for members to consider in the autumn.
- .3 Council further AGREED that Nominations Committee should begin a process to recruit new Council members.

ACTION	Owner	Due
.4 To conduct a questionnaire exploring Council members' view on effectiveness topics.	Vice-Chair of Council, Secretary	August 2020
.5 To prepare a number of recommendations on Council effectiveness for consideration at Council at its next meeting	Vice-Chair of Council, Secretary	September 2020

REPORTS**3683 Finance Committee**

- .1 Council NOTED papers C/20/52 and C/20/65 including minutes of the meetings of Finance Committee held on 29 April and 9 June 2020.
- .2 The Chief Financial Officer REPORTED that all matters that required Council approval had been considered earlier in the agenda. It was also REPORTED that work was ongoing to develop the revised Medium Term of Financial Plan

Ian Kenyon left the meeting.

3684 Audit and Risk Committee Report

Council received and NOTED the report from the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 19 May 2020, as set out in paper C/20/53.

3685 Health and Safety Committee

Council NOTED paper C/20/54 including minutes of the meeting of Health and Safety Committee held on 14 May 2020.

3686 Remuneration Committee

The Chair of Remuneration Committee REPORTED that at its meeting on 29 June 2020, the Committee considered the performance reviews of the Vice-Chancellor and members of UEB and received details from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Level 7 capability and promotion framework.

Dr Gabriele Neher left the meeting.

3687 Senate Report

Council NOTED the report from the meeting of Senate held on 11 June 2020 (paper C/20/67).

3688 Suspension/Discipline Cases

The Registrar reported that since the last meeting there had been no student suspensions or exclusions.

3689 Student Cases Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED papers C/20/55 and C/20/56 annual reports on OIA and student cases.
- .2 The Registrar REPORTED that the University continued to experience yearly increases in the number of complaints made about it to the OIA, which was broadly in line with the general increase in the total number of complaints received by the OIA about higher education institutions. In the last year, 75% of complaints made about the University were found not justified, were withdrawn or considered to be in eligible, 18% were settled and in 5% of cases the complaint was considered to be justified.

- .3 The student cases report included statistics on Student Complaints, Academic Appeals and Academic Misconduct. The Student Advice Centre was able to provide advice and support to students with cases being considered under the processes.
- .4 A Council Member recommended that a holistic review of student processes was undertaken in due course in view of the inevitable rise in student cases and their potential for both financial and reputational damage.
- .5 The Students' Union Education Officer highlighted the recent positive change to the Exenuating Circumstances Policy which now provided for self-certification by students for examinations.

3690 University of Nottingham Prevent Monitoring Outcome

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/57 confirming the outcome of the Office for Students Assessment of the University's Prevent Duty Annual Return. The University had been assessed as not at higher risk of non-compliance – the highest rating possible.

3691 Degree Outcomes Statement

- .1 Council RECEIVED the University's draft Degree Outcomes Statement (paper C/20/58). Council NOTED that universities were encouraged to publish a degree outcomes statement analysing their institutional degree classification profile and articulating the results of internal institutional review.
- .2 Council NOTED the progress of a working group established to review the impact of the Academic Progression and Award Regulations which had been introduced in 2015/16. It was expected that a set of recommendations would be produced later in 2019/20 for implementation in 2020/21.
- .3 Council APPROVED the University's Degree Outcomes Statement.

3692 Council Members' Attendance 2019/20

Council NOTED the membership attendance figures for the 2019-20 session to date (paper C/20/59).

3693 Dates of Council Meetings 2020/21

- .1 Council NOTED the dates of Council Meetings for 2020/21.

Rebecca Craven and Madeleine Fox left the meeting.

3694 Any Other Business

RESERVED: Digital Nottingham

USS

- .3 The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on USS developments.