

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

26th November 2014 at 9.00am

MINUTES

Members present: Mr Ed Smith CBE (Pro-Chancellor, in the Chair); Professor Kathleen Armour; Ms Joulie Axelithioti (Postgraduate Officer); Dr Chris Banks CBE (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Dame Christine Braddock; Mr Alan Davey; Mr David Davies OBE; Mr Martin Devenish; Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Professor Peter Fryer; Mr Robert Halton; Mr Malcolm Harbour CBE; Mr Richard Haywood; Ms Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs; Mr Richard Keys; Mrs Caragh Merrick (Treasurer); Dr Norman Price OBE; Professor Adam Tickell (Provost and Vice-Principal); Ms Poppy Wilkinson (President, Guild of Students).

Also present: Professor Jeff Bale (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Mrs Gill Ball OBE (Director of Finance); Professor Saul Becker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr Chris Granger (Director of Finance-designate); Professor John Heath (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor Eric Jenkinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mrs Colette McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Professor Myra Nimmo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Heather Paver (Director of HR); Professor Malcolm Press (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Mr Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor Michael Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Richard Williams OBE (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Apologies: Mr Derrick Anderson; Professor Jon Frampton; Professor Andrew Sanders; Dr Ranjit Sondhi CBE.

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

14/77 Membership

Reported: that Ms Joulie Axelithioti had joined the membership of the Council following her election as the Guild Postgraduate Students' Officer. She was welcomed to her first meeting of Council.

14/78 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2014 be approved (CO.14.11.01). There were no matters arising from the minutes.

14/79 Pro-Chancellor's Items

Reported that:

- (a) the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill 2014-15 was due to be debated by Parliament on 2nd December 2014. The Bill included higher education institutions on the list of authorities who would have a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Home Secretary had explained that this would mean, for example, universities

- being required to have policies in place to address the issue of extremist speakers on campus. It was noted that the University already had a Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech on Campus, which covered arrangements for external speakers, and worked closely with the Guild of Students and the police on campus extremism. However, the progress of the Bill would be monitored and further guidance from Universities UK was anticipated in due course;
- (b) the Minister for Universities and Science would be visiting the University later in the morning to formally launch the national network of Quantum Technology Hubs which would be led by the universities of Birmingham, Glasgow, Oxford and York. The aim of the network was to explore the properties of quantum mechanics and how they could be harnessed for use in technology.

14/80 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: a report from the Vice-Chancellor (CO.14.11.02).

Reported that:

- (a) in relation to Paragraph 7, USS Reforms and Industrial Action, Council thanked all those who had been contributed to the contingency arrangements made by the University to mitigate against the impact of the assessment boycott by UCU, noting that the University would be well positioned to respond if the boycott was reinstated by UCU in the future;
- (b) in relation to Paragraph 8, Corporate Public Affairs Strategy, it was important to ensure that the University engaged with politicians at national level as well as with local and regional MPs, noting that a wider stakeholder mapping exercise was currently being undertaken by the University which would inform such engagement.

14/81 Defining Our Identity

Considered: the recommended organising idea of 'Purposeful, Pragmatic, Pioneers' which had emerged from the Defining Our Identity project (CO.14.11.03).

Reported that:

- (a) the aim of the Defining Our Identity project was to define and differentiate the University by developing an organising idea which identified the key strengths and unique characteristics of the University;
- (b) implementation of the organising idea would include the development of case studies to illustrate how the idea could be translated into specific initiatives and to target key audiences. This would include translation of how the idea could be applied to student recruitment and delivery of the student experience and to reflect the alignment of the University with the City of Birmingham (working closely with Marketing Birmingham);
- (c) the organising idea would be embedded in the development of the Strategic Framework and inform the development of forthcoming key strategic projects;
- (d) the academic community had responded positively to the recommended organising idea;
- (e) the overall reaction of Council to the recommended organising idea was also positive (although some felt that the use of 'Pragmatic' was not consistent with the dynamic and innovative nature of the University and that more work was required to develop the organising idea further);
- (f) it was suggested that expression of the organising idea would be improved by substitution of the positive verb of 'Pioneering' for 'Pioneers'.

Resolved that:

- (i) the organising idea be approved, subject to its slight amendment to become 'Purposeful, Pragmatic, Pioneering' as at (f) above;
- (ii) a report on progress with implementation of the organising idea would be made to Council in November 2015.

14/82 Undergraduate Applications Update 2015

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: a summary of the home undergraduate applications received by 12th November 2014, comparing the University's performance with that of its UCAS competitor group and nationally (CO.14.11.04).

Reported that:

[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

14/83 National Student Survey Results

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the results of the National Student Survey 2014 (CO.14.11.05).

Reported:

- (a) that the University had achieved its highest-ever overall satisfaction score of 89%, Russell Group ranking and response rate;
- (b) that the majority of subjects achieved an improvement in their 'overall satisfaction' score;
- (c) that the University's lowest scores were again in assessment and feedback and, relative to other institutions, in the learning resources section;
- (d) that the University was setting targets for further improvement at School level as part of its strategy for the 2015 NSS;
- (e) to (i) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

Resolved that:

- (i) the achievements of the University in respect of the 2014 NSS were formally recognised by Council;
- (ii) the aim of achieving the institutional target of 90% for overall student satisfaction in the 2015 National Student Survey be endorsed.

14/84 Our Research Performance, Aspirations and the National Funding Landscape

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the challenges of the national research funding landscape, the University's research grants performance for 2013/14 and the strategy for enhancement of research performance for 2014/15 and beyond (CO.14.11.06).

Reported:

[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

Resolved that:

- (i) the strategy for raising the research performance of the University be endorsed as set out in Paper CO.14.11.06;
- (ii) where members of Council believed they could assist the University as set out

at (h) above they would approach the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer) or the Director of Engagement.

14/85 Report of the Audit Committee

Considered: a report from the meetings of the Audit Committee held on 23rd October and 17th November 2014 (CO.14.11.07).

Reported:

- (a) that the Committee was satisfied that the responsibilities of the Council as stated in the Annual Report and Accounts had been adequately discharged and that the University's risk management and internal control systems were adequate and effective;
- (b) that the Committee had noted the feedback received from members of Council in their annual one-to-one meetings which confirmed that Council and its sub-committees were operating effectively;
- (c) the extensive work being undertaken by the University in respect of data assurance. This included information security training, cyber security measures and specialist computer audit work being undertaken for the University by PwC, as well as data protection training for individual staff.

Resolved that:

- (i) the re-appointment of Deloitte as External Auditor for the year ending 31st July 2015 be approved;
- (ii) the Annual Assurance Return as at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.14.11.07 be approved.

14/86 Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st July 2014

Considered: Paper CO.14.11.08 which comprised the:

- (a) final report from Deloitte, the external auditors for the University;
- (b) University letter of representation for submission to the external auditors;
- (c) University Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st July 2014, confirming that the Council had discharged its corporate governance responsibilities;
- (d) mapping of responsibilities of Council to Sources of Comfort.

Reported that:

- (a) the Annual Report and Accounts had been subject to a high degree of scrutiny, including consideration by Audit Committee (17th November 2014) and Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee (11th November 2014);
- (b) the governance statement would be refreshed further for the 2014/15 Annual Report and Accounts, noting that the new CUC Code was due to be published in 2015 and the University would undertake an effectiveness review of Council in 2015.

Resolved that:

- (i) the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st July 2014 be approved as set out in Paper CO.14.11.08, confirming that Council had discharged its corporate governance responsibilities;
- (ii) the University letter of representation be approved for signature by the Pro-Chancellor and submission to the external auditors.

14/87 Report of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: a report from the meetings of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 14th October and 11th November 2014 (CO.14.11.09).

Resolved that:

- (i) the financial tables for 2013/14 and the commentary explaining material variations be approved as set out in Appendix 1 to Paper CO.14.11.09;
- (ii) the Annual Monitoring Statement 2013/14 be approved as set out in Appendix 2 to Paper CO.14.11.09;
- (iii) the submission of the ASSUR takes place as planned, despite HEFCE's making the process voluntary for a second year;
- (iv) the University was sustainable, in light of institutional performance, the 2013/14 year-end outturns, and the updated set of KPTs;
- (v) the ASSUR letter as set out in Appendix 3 to Paper CO.14.11.09 be authorised for signature by the Pro-Chancellor and submission to HEFCE in early December 2014.

14/88 Advancing Equality in Employment (AEiE) Final Report 2014

Considered: the Advancing Equality in Employment Final Report 2014 (CO.14.11.10).

Resolved: that the review of the performance of the Advancing Equality in Employment initiative be approved, noting that Council was pleased with the detailed evaluation and progress in the report.

14/89 Property Transactions

Resolved that:

- (i) the sale of 78C Alderbrook Road for the best price attainable on the open-market, and in any event, not less than £900,000 be approved;
- (ii) the grant of a lease to Subway Realty Ltd be approved on the terms set out in Paper CO.14.11.11.

14/90 Report of the Senate

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Senate held on 5th November 2014 (CO.14.11.12).

Resolved that:

- (i) the University's Annual Research Integrity Statement to Council be approved as at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.14.11.12;
- (ii) the proposed academic term dates 2017/18 to 2019/20 be approved as set out at Appendix 2 to Paper CO.14.11.12;
- (iii) the proposed procedure to revoke Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, Distinctions and Honours in accordance with Ordinance 4.8 be approved as set out at Appendix 3 to Paper CO.14.11.12.

14/91 Guild of Student Bye-Laws

Considered: amendments to the Guild of Students Bye-Laws as set out in Paper CO.14.11.13.

Resolved: that the amended Bye-Laws for the Guild of Students be approved as at Appendix 2 to Paper CO.14.11.13.

14/92 Report of the Membership Committee

Reported: the recommendation of the Membership Committee that Mr Malcolm Harbour be appointed to the vacancies for a lay member of Council to serve on the Research Committee and Knowledge Transfer and Engagement Committee.

Resolved: that Mr Malcolm Harbour be appointed to serve on the Research Committee and Knowledge Transfer and Engagement Committee to 31st July 2017.

14/93 Report of the Remuneration Committee

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report from the meetings of the Remuneration Committee held during 2014 (CO.14.11.14).

14/94 Capital Projects over £5m

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report from the Director of Estates (CO.14.11.15).

14/95 Affixing of the University Seal

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.14.11.16).

14/96 Any Other Business

(1) Equality Monitoring Survey

Reported: that members of Council were reminded of the need to complete the survey so that the return could be made to HEFCE on 1st December 2014.

(2) Deputy Pro-Chancellor and Director of Finance

On behalf of Council, the Pro-Chancellor thanked:

- (a) Dr Chris Banks for his tremendous service as a member of Council since 2008 and as Deputy Pro-Chancellor of the University for the past five years;
- (b) Gill Ball, Director of Finance, who would leave the University in December after thirty years of distinguished service. Gill had been Director of Finance since 1995 and served as Acting Registrar and Secretary between October and December 2003 and October 2007 and September 2008.

14/97 Programme of Meeting 2014/15

Noted: the programme of meetings of Council for the remainder of 2014/15 as follows:

3rd February 2015, 5.30pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

4th February 2015, 9.00am, Council Meeting

21st April 2015, 6.30pm, Council Dinner

22nd April 2015, 9.00am*, Council Strategy Day

30th June 2015, 5.30pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

1st July 2015, 9.00am, Council Meeting

*The start time had been brought forward from 10.00am at the request of the Pro-Chancellor.