
Meeting: COUNCIL

Date and Time: Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 2.00pm

Venue: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present:

Pamela Chesters	Chair
Eve Alcock	Student governor
Maria Bond	Appointed member
Tim Ford	Appointed member
Ruth Foreman	Vice-Chair
Christine Gibbons	Appointed member
Professor Barry Gilbertson	Appointed member
Professor Dot Griffiths	Appointed member
Mesar Hameed	Elected by staff not on Academic Assembly
Malcolm Holley	Elected by staff not on Academic Assembly
Tim Hollingsworth	Appointed member
Catherine Mealing-Jones	Appointed member
Charlotte Moar	Appointed member
Dr David Moon	Elected by staff not on Academic Assembly
Ruqia Osman	Student governor
Kate Robinson	Elected by Senate
John Preston	Treasurer
Professor Danae Stanton Fraser	Elected by Senate
Professor Ian White	Vice-Chancellor and President
Dr Jane White	Chair of Academic Assembly

In attendance:

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International and Doctoral)
Professor Peter Lambert	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Dr Nicky Kemp	Director of Policy, Planning & Compliance
Professor Jonathan Knight	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Francesco Masala	Incoming student governor
Andrew McLaughlin	Chief Executive Officer, Students' Union
Martin Williams	Director of Finance
Annie Willingham	Incoming student governor
Dr Cassie Wilson	Vice-President (Student Experience)
Keith Zimmerman	Chief Operating Officer

Secretariat:

Emily Commander	Secretary
Charlotte Murphy	Member of Secretariat

7177 WELCOME AND QUORUM

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the attendance.

She noted that this was the final Council meeting for student governors Eve Alcock and Ruqia Osman, as they would reach the end of their terms as officers of the Students' Union on 30 June. She thanked them warmly for their full contribution to Council over the course of the previous year and noted that they would be greatly missed.

7178 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7179 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting of 14 May 2020 (Paper C19/20 – 80) were **approved** as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.

7180 ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 1) 7140 (IT security: keep security of information under review in context of widespread home-working). An update had been provided to ARAC at its meeting on 10 June. ***The action was marked as complete.***
- 2) 7150 (Additional meetings of Council and Finance Committee: schedule additional meetings in summer as necessary). Additional meetings had been scheduled for September 2020. ***The action was marked as complete.***
- 3) 7150 (Crib sheet: provide Council members with a financial appendix to the crib sheet on the University's financial position). The Chair noted that she was making some amendments to the document, which would be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***
- 4) 7157 (Equality: consider equality implications of lockdown for male and female academics, particularly researchers, and update Council). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and HR Director would provide update to Council on 23 July. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***
- 5) 7161 (Fire doors: provide assurance to Council on H&S considerations of fire doors being propped open). An update would be provided to Council on 23 July. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***
- 6) 7164 (Ethics: inform Senate of decision taken on Ethics Committee and ensure Nominations Committee makes nominations in July 2020). Senate had been informed, and nominations would be made at the meeting of the Nominations Committee on 1 July 2020. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***

- 7) 7165 (Appointments of Pro-Chancellors: recommend appointment of three new Pro-Chancellors to Court). A decision would be taken by Court by means of correspondence. An update would be provided to Council on 23 July 2020. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***
- 8) 7166 (Top Ten: Create framework for regular review of SU Top Ten between appropriate members of UEB and SABs). An update would be provided to Council on 23 July 2020. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***
- 9) 7172 (Senior appointments: Council to consider how appropriately to receive assurance on issues of equality and diversity in senior appointments). An update would be provided to Council on 23 July 2020. ***The action was marked as ongoing.***

7181 CORONAVIRUS

Update on the current position, recent developments and planning for the next academic year

The Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to the University's strong performance in the QS global rankings, which were available in the Council Reading Room on Convene.

The University campus had entered a period of transition, in which the activities of the silver team were being gradually scaled back and priority was being given to restarting activities wherever possible. The focus was currently on restarting research, but it was hoped that a teaching pilot would be underway in the coming month. The emphasis throughout was on safety and on making staged progress following tried and tested procedures.

A major area of ongoing work was attending to the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff, both those on campus and those at home or furloughed. A wellbeing survey had been distributed to all staff and would be used to help design support.

Three teams had formed to address key areas of work in preparation for the next academic year, namely curriculum, student experience, and carrying capacity. Considerable thought was being given to designing course-delivery mechanisms for the blended learning environment. The Vice-Chancellor was delighted that current analysis suggested that up to eight hours of in-person teaching in some subjects could be delivered per student per week within social-distancing guidelines.

In the context of the coronavirus outbreak, Council considered:

- Financial implications and planning;
- Resulting issues and implications for operating matters;
- Current academic matters; and
- A timetable for further action and decisions.

Council thanked all those who had presented on Covid-19 related issues for their comprehensive overview and the assurances which had been provided. It then

took the opportunity to place on record its thanks to the staff body as a whole, recognising the individual contributions being made across the organisation at what was undoubtedly a challenging time.

The Vice-Chancellor spoke about the tragic death of George Floyd in the US. He commended the Students' Union for their response, noting that they had reached out very effectively to the student population. The University acknowledged that it needed to pay much more attention to the issues that had arisen in this area.

The Vice-President (Student Experience) spoke about the University's response to the death of George Floyd. The University had issued a statement the previous week, which would be followed by a statement from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) and the Vice-President (Student Experience). However, these two statements were just the start of a much longer programme of work, and the recent forum hosted by the Students' Union had made it clear that decisive action was required to tackle racism and inequality. She noted that the University had, in fact, been working to tackle racism for a considerable period of time, but that this work had not been progressing as quickly as might have been hoped. She hoped that recent events would galvanise action and stated there would be more updates in future in this area.

In relation to coronavirus, student support work had initially focused on students remaining on campus, but there was now a clear shift to putting in place support mechanisms for students in the coming academic year. This work would consider the entire student lifecycle, from registration to graduation, and emphasis would be placed on wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Induction would be critical and accommodation also played a clear role. Thought was being given to the reintroduction of current students onto a radically different campus. Particular care was being taken to identify the distinct needs of specific groups of students, including those in the widening participation category, for example.

The following points were made in a discussion about racism, equality and diversity:

- Council members expressed strong support for the comments made about racism and inequality; noted the importance of holding such discussions at Council level; and encouraged the University to seize the opportunity to take strong action in this area.
- It was noted that the experience of black students in particular was difficult and improved attempts needed to be made to understand issues from their perspective.
- It was noted that taking action to tackle racism and inequality was not simply an issue of doing more or doing it faster. Previous interventions had not worked well: a different approach was required.
- It was noted that young people had a different perspective on many issues, including racism and inequality, and that their views and insights should be included in any approach taken by the University.
- Council needed to improve its own diversity. It was hoped that the emphasis on diversity in the recruitment exercise for three new lay members that was currently underway would make a start in addressing this issue.

The Chair of Council undertook to consider, with the Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Student Experience) how best to ensure that the issue of racism, and the broader issue of equality, diversity and inclusion, could be addressed at Council in a meaningful and appropriate way.

7182 SENATE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The Chair expressed appreciation to Senate for the opportunity to comment on its effectiveness review report.

Members of Council made the following points:

- There was strong endorsement for measures designed to improve the working relationship and mutual understanding between Council and Senate. This had been an area that had been neglected in the past.
- There was an ongoing need to close the knowledge gap between student governors and lay members in particular.

Council approved paper C19/20 – 82 on the *Senate Effectiveness Review Report* and agreed to submit it to Senate for discussion at its meeting on 17 June 2020.

7183 PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council noted the programme of forthcoming meetings of Council:

Thursday 23 July 2020 – 9.30 – 12.30am

Wednesday 23 September 2020 (supplementary meeting) – 2.00 – 3.30pm

It was noted that the July meeting would be preceded by a development session the evening beforehand.

7184 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 3.35 pm

N.B. Minute 7181 has been redacted for reasons of confidentiality and commercial sensitivity.