

COUNCIL

16 July 2020 at 14:00

Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

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Members:	Chair – External member	Mr Michael Queen
	Joint Vice-Chair – External member	Mr Vib Baxi
	Joint Vice-Chair - External member	Ms Rachel Hubbard
	Treasurer - External member	Mr Robert Napier
	President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Max Lu
	Provost & Executive Vice-President	Prof Michael Kearney
	Vice-Provost, Education	Prof Osama Khan
	Vice-Provost, Research & Innovation	Prof David Sampson
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	Vice President, External Engagement	Mr Patrick Degg
	President, Students' Union	Ms Lizzie Rodulson
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Esat Alpay
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Helen Griffiths
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Amelia Hadfield
	External member	Mr Elliot Antrobus-Holder
	External member	Dr Tony Bragg
	External member	Ms Judith Eden
	External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	External member	Dr Mike Goodfellow
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Mr Nigel Jones
	External member	Mr Peter Maskell
	External member	Ms Pam Powell
	External member	Ms Jan Sawkins
	External member	Mr Nick Standen

In attendance: Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services
Ms Martine Carter, Director of Strategy and Executive Officer
Mr Phil Grainge, Chief Financial Officer
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

By invitation: Dr Emily Williams, Academic lead for EDI (minute 20/072)
Ms Helen Baird, SUMS consultant
Ms Gemma Paine, President Students' Union 2019-20 (minute 20/080)
Mr Alan Sutherland, CEO Students' Union (minute 20/080)

A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

20/065 Preliminary items

- .1 The Chair welcomed Lizzie Rodulson to her first Council meeting.
- .2 It was noted that Helen Baird from SUMS Consultancy who were carrying out an effectiveness review of Council was attending as an observer.

20/066 Apologies

- .1 None

20/067 Declarations of Interest

- .1 None

20/068 Minutes

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held 7 May 2020 were adopted and agreed for publication.
- .2 The minutes of the Council extraordinary meeting held on 1 July 2020 on strategic priorities and financial planning were adopted. It was agreed that they would not be published given the highly confidential nature of the discussions.

20/069 Matters Arising

- .1 The updated actions log was noted.
- .2 Given other priorities, the Marketing Strategy had been postponed to the November meeting. This would also enable it to be discussed in the context of the latest round of student recruitment.

20/070 Chair's Items

- .1 Council ratified the resolution passed by Chair's action remove James Robertson as a Director of Research Park Developments (a dormant company). He had been a director since 1992 and is now in his eighties and we have lost contact with him. Greg Melly is now the sole director of the company.

20/071 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- .1 The VC presented the report.
- .2 The VC expressed his disappointment with the NSS results, recognising that action needed to be taken to address the issues.
- .3 With respect to the recent Government decision to limit the role of Huawei in the 5G network, the University would continue to review guidance from the Government.
- .4 The University preparations for the return to campus in the Autumn were well underway. Universities UK were working closely with the Department for Education to ensure that campuses could be opened in September in a safe and secure way. Contingency plans were being made in case of another lockdown. Surrey was also introducing space monitoring measures and would be providing face coverings for all students and staff.

- .5 Council were pleased to note that the University had ranked well for highly skilled employment in the latest Graduate Outcomes Survey which relates to those who graduated in the summer of 2018.
- .6 Council noted the recently announced Research Sustainability Package that will provide loans and grants to support universities to protect their research base. Surrey would receive c. £4.4m in the first tranche. There would also be £476k of reallocated funds allowed by UKRI.

B ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

20/072 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update

- .1 Emily Williams joined the meeting to present the item. OK introduced the item.
- .2 It was noted that final BAME Student Experience Report and Recommendations from Ajay Ajimobi, outgoing USSU VP Voice, had been appended to the report. There was discussion of the BAME awarding gap with the following points noted:
 - .2.1 BAME students are not a homogeneous group. The data are disaggregated in routine analysis so that groups with the largest gaps could be targeted. For example, black male students with a BTEC as their highest qualification on entry were the group who receive the lowest average awards and as such, this group of 66 students had been offered personal peer mentoring and support.
 - .2.2 The Universities of Manchester and Kingston have particularly strong institutional programmes to close their awarding gaps and lessons were being learnt from their approaches.
 - .2.3 Most of the data included only UK domiciled students so it was not thought that English proficiency explained differences in observed BAME awarding gaps. Socio-economic group also affected performance but even when this was accounted for, there were still unexplained gaps.
- .3 Dr Williams was thanked for an informative report and assured of Council's support. She was asked to provide regular updates to Council.

20/073 Emeritus Professor and Reader Nominations

- .1 It was noted that there was a process for nominating any staff member who had had a long relationship with the University and had made a significant contribution. There was also an annual event to recognise retired staff. Council member suggestions for potential visiting academic staff would be welcomed.
- .2 The proposed nominations were **approved**.

20/074 Honorary Degree nominations

- .1 The proposed nominations were **approved**.

20/075 Latest Financial Estimate 2019/20

- .1 Phil Grainge gave a presentation on the University finances. The presentation had been reviewed by Finance Committee the previous week.
- .2 Refinancing options were under consideration, with initial indications that the debt although

high is well structured. One option might be to refinance the amortising debt into a new private placement with a bullet repayment that would reduce the University's short-term repayment profile.

- .3 Council noted that c. £1m of the travel costs had been saved through the lockdown. A 50% saving on travel costs had been included in the 2020-21 budget and it was likely that savings would also be targeted in subsequent years.

20/076 Arnaud budget and forecast

- .1 Martine Carter and Phil Grainge gave a presentation.
- .2 Council noted the updated forecasts of student numbers.
- .3 Council noted the proposed interim budget for 2020/21.
- .4 There was discussion of the loan repayment costs and the potential impact of refinancing the debt.
- .5 It was noted that the Change Programme would continue to review improvements over the next few months.
- .6 Council recognised the extent of the challenge over the next three years and the sensitivities to current plans. The disappointing NSS results had led to more caution with regard to the student numbers for the current year and the following two years.
- .7 Council **approved** the 2020/21 budget.

20/077 Annual OJEU opt out confirmation

- .1 Council **approved** the opt out for 2020/21.

20/078 NSS outcome and key highlights

- .1 Osama Khan gave a presentation.
- .2 Council were disappointed in the NSS overall results but recognised that the institution needed to move forward positively and constructively engage on making improvements.
- .3 Council recognised the contribution of the leadership of the Students' Union who had worked very constructively with the University.
- .4 It was noted that action plans currently were reliant on accurate reporting of progress against actions; there was a need to have better data to confirm progress.
- .5 Amelia Hadfield, as Head of Politics, shared her experience of turning the Department around in terms of student satisfaction. Her advice included looking in great detail at what had gone wrong, ensuring that there was strong sense of connection between Heads of Department and the Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching, assigning a staff champion and a student deputy to each area.
- .6 Lizzie Rodulson, as President of the Students' Union, shared her thoughts on the results and

the implications. Her advice included the need to focus on every student's experience and ensure that every personal tutor and teaching staff was able to deliver the level of service that was required.

- .7 It was recognised that students did not necessarily understand how the NSS works, in particular that a neutral rating was actually counted as a negative score.

20/079 Degree outcomes statement

- .1 Osama Khan presented the paper.
- .2 Council **approved** the statement, noting that it had been peer reviewed by the PVC from University of Essex.

20/080 USSU Annual presentation

- .1 Gemma Paine gave a presentation with Alan Sutherland in attendance.
- .2 The presentation was focused on what students most cared about, the student satisfaction pitfalls and what Council could do to avoid them. The key messages that Council took out of the presentation were:
- It is imperative for Council to understand the student day to day experience
 - That the small things counted – we needed to get the basics right
 - That everything we did needed to be considered in terms of its impact on the student experience
- .3 Council recognised the challenge and that this was a moment of opportunity for the Board and the University. Student experience must be at the core and perhaps start of every Council agenda.
- .4 Gemma was thanked for her thought-provoking presentation and wished well for the future.

20/081 University preparation and procedures for a major incident on campus

- .1 Andy Chalklin presented the paper.
- .2 It was noted that Surrey was one of the few universities to have ISO 22301 certification for business continuity and therefore was in a good position to deal with the effect of the pandemic and lockdown. However, the University was not complacent and had learned and improved in response to the recent challenges.
- .3 The Board noted the structures, plans, timeline and roadmap, specifically in response to COVID 19, as well as the planning underway for the return to campus. It was noted that the Chair of Council had attended most Gold Command COVID 19 meetings.

20/082 Annual IT report and Digital Strategy update

- .1 Andy Chalklin presented the paper.
- .2 Council noted the work and great progress that had been made to embed a high standard of customer service into IT Services. The department had successfully reduced costs whilst increasing customer satisfaction and decreasing the number of help desk calls by anticipating

issues.

- .3 Whilst the COO did not see the cost cuts as presenting a risk to the budget and services, the cash generating targets were more challenging.

C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

20/083 Health and Safety Report

Council **noted** the report.

20/084 Student Staff Partnership Manifesto

Council **noted** the paper.

20/085 Latest Balanced Scorecard

Council **noted** the report.

20/086 Summary minutes of sub committees

Council **noted** the report.

D CLOSING ITEMS

20/087 Any Other Business

.1 Divestment Statement

It was noted that Finance Committee on 9 July had approved a proposal to publicly declare that the University would not invest in fossil fuels in the future. Executive Board approval was also required and then a final statement would come back to Council electronically for consideration.

- .2 Noting that it was Helen Griffiths last meeting of Council before she left the University, she was thanked for her contribution to the Board and the University.

- .3 Noting that the next Council meeting was not scheduled until the end of November, it was recognised that an additional meeting may need to be arranged given the exceptional circumstances.

20/088 Dates of next meetings

2020

26 November (meeting plus strategy away day)

Mr Michael Queen
Chair