

COUNCIL
28 September 2021 at 14:00
Oak 1 and 2 and 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	Vacant
	Vice-Provost, Education	Prof Osama Khan
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	President, Students' Union	Ms Ajay Ajimobi (to end of 21/079)
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Esat Alpay
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Amelia Hadfield
	External member	Mr Elliot Antrobus-Holder
	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	Ms Pam Powell

In attendance: Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services
Ms Martine Carter, Vice-President - Strategy, Planning & Performance
Mr Phil Grainge, Chief Financial Officer
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

By invitation: Mr Paul Harvey, Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Admissions (21/081)
Professor Graham Miller (21/082)
Mr Tom Parrott (21/082)
Mr Matt Purcell (21/080)
Prof Christine Rollier (21/085)
Prof Paul Townsend (21/085)

A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

21/071 Preliminaries

- .1 Charlie Geffen sent apologies.
- .2 Ajay Ajimobi was attending virtually.

21/072 Declarations of Interest

- .1 None

21/073 Minutes

- .1 The minutes of the meetings held on 28 July 2021 were **adopted** and agreed for publication on the website.

21/074 Matters Arising

- .1 The updated actions log was **noted**.
- .2 It was noted that an email had been circulated to Council to clarify the level of risk for buildings assigned a moderate fire risk rating. Council noted that all Priority 1 actions were complete, and all Priority 2 actions had a completion date.

21/075 Chair's Items

- .1 Council **ratified** the appointment of Judith Eden as the Senior Independent Member, as approved by Convene resolution on 17 August. It was noted that there would be an item on the next Council agenda to discuss the role.

21/076 Vice-Chancellor's Report and Performance Monitoring

- .1 The VC presented the report.
- .2 Council noted the following:
- A UCU ballot on industrial action had been announced, running from 18 November to 7 November.
 - The UCU had also declared a formal dispute with the University with respect to using MEQs as a measure of academic performance.
 - Blackwell Park Ltd had received a formal proposal from Guildford Borough Council and was considering its next steps.
 - The search process for a new Provost had started.
 - The VC was joining a group of mid-term VCs.
- The university was exploring as part of the strategy refresh, ways to bring 5,000 learners to engage with Surrey education either fully online or in hybrid and blended ways. These learners will be seeking CPD, postgraduate taught programmes, stackable micro credentials delivered with high quality materials on engaging online platforms but also would be curated based on pedagogic design principles to provide an excellent Surrey experience. We are working with two consultants who are evaluating our capability in digital learning as well as helping us with appropriate business model to achieve this aspiration.
- .3 It was noted that whilst the University was forecast to achieve the Level 4 student intake plan, there had been significant recruitment challenges in three subject areas – Music and Media, Chemical and Process Engineering and Mathematics. There were national issues with these three subjects, including the popularity of the subjects with young people and changes to the A' level syllabi. It was recognised that reducing entrance tariff significantly would lead to progression and performance issues. A marketing plan was in place to increase recruitment to these areas.

B ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

21/077 Education Report

- .1 Osama Khan presented the paper.
- .2 The following additional points were noted:
 - .2.1 All teaching staff had been set an MEQ (Module Evaluation Questionnaire) target in their appraisals.
 - .2.2 The national Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was under review and would be likely to be ready for summer 2022.
 - .2.3 The fifteen programmes identified to receive enhanced support covered significant numbers of students. OK would email student numbers to RA to circulate to Council.
Action: OK
- .3 It was recognised that it would take time to get to the ideal staff student ratios. Increased competition for staff was impacting on staff recruitment and retention.
- .4 The Curriculum Design Review included consideration of the integration of aspects such as sustainability and community within all areas of the curriculum. There was more work to be done to increase the cross-disciplinary elements within the curriculum.
- .5 Work was in progress to acquire more academic space and to enable Economics to be brought together and an Economics hub created as a pilot.

21/078 USSU President's Report

- .1 It was agreed to postpone this item to the next meeting, given that the President was not able to attend the meeting in person.
Action: RA to add to agenda of November Council.

21/079 Management accounts – Provisional full year 2020/21

- .1 Phil Grainge gave a presentation.
- .2 Council noted the significantly better surplus than budgeted and the key variances that led to the underlying £2m surplus. Whilst the surplus was welcomed, it was recognised that aspects of forecasting could be improved and noted that this was under discussion at Executive Board and Finance committee.
- .3 It was noted that the year-end cash balance of £101.8m was also significantly higher than had been budgeted due to the SURE loan and debt refinancing, with further improvement on a later forecast due to the surplus strength and timing of capital expenditures. The University proposed to use some of the improved cash position to start an investment fund, towards the eventual repayment of the private placement loans. A paper would be going to Finance Committee in October.
- .4 It was noted that Covid-related exceptional costs of £1.9m had been built into the 2020/21 forecast after the Budget had been set but helped by a £0.7m grant from Surrey County Council, only £1.1m of incremental cost had been incurred. With the return to campus, it was now 'business as usual' with respect to the operational costs of running the campus. The University was protected from increased energy costs until April 2022.
- .5 The planned increase in National Insurance employer contributions from April 2022 would

cost the University an additional £1.5m p.a. However, this would be more than offset by the lower increase than expected in USS pension employer contributions.

- .6 It was noted that the final accounts would come to Audit and Assurance Committee and Council in November.

21/080 Health and Safety report

- .1 Matt Purcell attended to present his report. It was noted that he would be invited to attend Council occasionally to present his report and answer questions.
- .2 It was noted that the Health and Safety Executive Inspection the previous week had gone well, and no issues had been flagged for the focus areas of the report or for the University's Covid workplace measures.
- .3 Council noted the development of an improved Level 2 Health and Safety Risk Register alongside Level 3 Health and Safety risk registers in Faculties.
- .4 Council noted the progress of the Fire Risk Assessment programme and that it was due to complete in November/December. All prioritised actions should then be complete by December 2022.
- .5 It was felt that there was a good culture for health and safety, which had further improved during the pandemic, with staff engaged, especially with respect to risk assessments and within the higher risk departments. It was noted that the areas for improvement were in the tracking of training, auditing capacity, chemical management and document management. With regard to the latter, a document depository has been developed to achieve rationalisation of existing documentation and future cyclical reviews.
- .6 The Health and Safety Strategy was being refreshed and KPIs developed. It would be useful to benchmark against other, similar institutions. MQ may be able to put MP in touch with the Chairs of other institutions.

Action: MQ

21/081 Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Strategy

- .1 Paul Harvey attended to give a presentation outlining his initial observations and deliverables, as well as the short, medium and long-term strategic pillars and measures of success.
- .2 A collaborative effort between the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions department and the academic departments was needed to ensure that marketable programmes were offered and were marketed in the most effective manner. It was vital to engage with academic departments effectively and use academic staff as spokespeople for the University.
- .3 Whilst prospective students were a key target group, there were other important stakeholders such as industry, research councils and prospective employees. The University's marketing needed to encompass all audiences.

21/082 Annual Sustainability Report

- .1 Graham Miller and Tom Parrott attended to present the paper.

- .2 Council noted progress and performance over the previous year and the objectives and developments for the next period. Council were pleased to note progress in this area, building on the University's academic strengths and links to industry. Students were also engaged in sustainability projects.
- .3 It was noted that the USSU would like to discuss the possibility of providing charging points for minibuses in the USSU minibus car park.
Action: TP to discuss with USSU.
- .4 It was suggested that there should be consideration of providing renewable energy through hydrogen fuel cells as a back-up power for the data centre.

21/083 Finance Committee Report

- .1 Council noted the report from the Committee chair. It was noted that an additional Finance Committee had been held on 24 September and had approved the purchase of Millennium House student accommodation. It was flagged that we might also look to purchase International House if a sale could be agreed.

21/084 Academic quality and standards review

- .1 Council noted the paper.

21/085 FHMS Research

- .1 Professor Paul Townsend and Professor Christine Rollier gave an interesting and informative talk on FHMS research and Professor Rollier's research in Vaccinology.

C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

21/086 Annual USSU Oversight report

Council **noted** the report.

21/087 Executive Board report

Council **noted** the report.

21/088 External Engagement annual report

Council **noted** the report.

D CLOSING ITEMS

21/089 Any Other Business

- .1 Noting that it was their last Council meeting, Esat Alpaly and Amelia Hadfield were thanked for their contributions to Council.

21/090 Date of next meeting

25 November 2021

Mr Michael Queen, Chair