

**Council and Executive Board Awayday
25 November 2021 at 13.00
Oak 1 and 2/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
	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
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Esat Alpay
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Karen Bullock
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Daniel Horton
	President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Max Lu
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education	Prof Osama Khan
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation	Prof David Sampson
	Vice-President - Strategy, Planning & Performance	Ms Martine Carter
	Vice President, External Engagement	Mr Patrick Degg
	President, Students' Union	Ms Ajay Ajimobi
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	Chief People Officer	Mr Will Davies
	Chief Student Officer	Ms Lucy Evans
	Chief Financial Officer	Mr Phil Grainge
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean FASS	Prof Graham Miller
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean FEPS	Prof Paul Smith
	Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean FHMS	Prof Paul Townsend
	Pro-Chancellor	Dame Linda Dobbs
	Pro-Chancellor	Dr Jim Glover
	Pro-Chancellor	Dato Dr Kim Tan
	Pro-Chancellor	Dr Max Taylor
	Pro-Chancellor	Sir David Varney
	Pro-Chancellor	Mr Andrew Wates

In attendance: Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel
Professor Nick Talbot, Executive Director at the Sainsbury Lab, Norfolk (21/123)
Professor Rachel Thomson, PVC Teaching, Loughborough University (21/124)

A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

21/120 Preliminaries

- .1 There were apologies from Lady Ruby McGregor-Smith.
- .2 Karen Bullock, Linda Dobbs, Kim Tan, Max Taylor and David Varney were attending virtually.

21/121 Declarations of conflicts of interest

- .1 None

B ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

21/122 Sector view and growth opportunities

- .1 ML gave a presentation reminding the meeting of the strengths of the University and the Strategy and Vision as well as the priorities over the next three years. He outlined his vision for the more long-term future of the University, recognising that it was a pivotal moment for higher education. Finally, he described the vision for the University in 2030.
- .2 Attendees welcomed the vision and clarity of purpose.
- 3 Any opportunity for merger or partnership with an FE institution would be carefully evaluated but was recognised as having the potential to bring significant benefits.
- .4 Whilst there was a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) focus to many of the University's aspirations, there would need to be collaboration across the University to deliver them.
- .5 The University offered an online module in Global Citizenship and Leadership to all students but may wish to consider offering something more focused on leadership.
- .6 There was discussion of the proposed Medical School, noting that Surrey was the largest county without a medical school and there was a need in the community for more doctors. Nationally, there was a huge demand for medical places The University had engaged with health bodies and had been encouraged to take this forward. A private medical school would put the University in a good position to bid for publicly funded places in the future and would have a beneficial impact on research. The Executive Board were reflecting on the business case for this proposition separately.

21/123 Research and Innovation

- .1 Professor Nick Talbot, Executive Director of the Sainsbury Lab and previously DVC R&I at the University of Exeter, attended virtually to give a presentation focused on how a university like Surrey could enhance its excellence and scale of research and innovation.
- .2 The rigorous research assessment that took place at the University of Exeter was noted – this was an annual process where each director of research presented to the DVC Research (often with the VC in attendance) on research performance and benchmarking. Action plans were then drawn up.
- .3 The steps that the University of Exeter had taken to triple its research income were noted. Additionally, the programme portfolio had been rationalised and the student tariff entry scores

had been increased which had the effect of freeing-up time for academics. A central research support team had been devolved to provide support to academics with their research, including providing intelligence on new opportunities. Some staff had been recruited from the research councils to be part of the support team.

- .4 After the presentation, small group discussion took place before the key messages from the presentation were fed back to the meeting. These included:
- The need to ensure that the estate was fit for purpose in terms of providing the necessary infrastructure for students and research.
 - The need for strong performance management of staff.
 - Clarity of purpose was required along with the courage to take the necessary steps, and patience to see it through.
 - The Research Park is a key asset for the University and in many ways, Surrey is in a stronger position than Exeter was at the start of its journey.

21/124 Education and Student Experience

- .1 Professor Rachel Thomson, PVC Teaching at Loughborough University attended virtually to give a presentation.
- .2 The need to create an environment where the University can listen to all student voices was recognised in terms of meeting student expectations.
- .3 Loughborough has a review process to ensure consistency in the classroom and in the personal tutoring approach.
- .4 The 'Personal Best' programme was noted. It used a combination of existing academic and professional services staff alongside external speakers.
- .5 After the presentation, small group discussion took place before the key messages were fed back to the meeting. These included:
- The need to give students reasons to come onto campus and hence encourage a sense of community and connection.
 - The need to share facilities between departments and enable the repurposing of space.
 - Surrey may wish to consider creating an engagement hub in the town centre.
 - The importance of consistency for the personal tutoring experience.
 - Whether Surrey Sports Park was used enough in terms of embedding sport into the University.

21/125 Operations Opportunities

- .1 Andy Chalklin presented to the meeting on operations opportunities to improve services to meet user needs whilst keeping down costs.
- .2 Three options had been considered:
1. Outsourcing of services

2. Shared services
 3. Setting up a subsidiary company to provide services to University and sell its services to other FE or HE institutions.
- .3 Option 3 was the preferred option but the entrepreneurial risk as well as the opportunity was recognised. The following points were noted:
- .3.1 Given the increasing demands on education, many smaller institutions do not have the resource to meet requirements and so would welcome shared services. This was also corroborated by informal market research.
 - .3.2 There was no intention to invest in the subsidiary so no business plan would come forward.
 - .3.3 Existing staff would be moved into the subsidiary under new staff contracts and pension arrangements. The move should improve staff retention as it will enable staff to progress.
 - .3.4 The University would have a locked-in service contract with the company and would retain majority shareholding and therefore control. A lay member of Council would be invited to chair the board of the subsidiary.
 - .3.5 Only exemplar services would be moved to the company and a cautious approach would be taken in terms of speed at which services would be added.
 - .3.6 If an LLP was set up, it would probably use external services for finance, HR etc; if a Ltd company was set up, it would use University services.
- .4 Council asked to see the first contract to provide services to another institution before it was signed.
Action: AC
- .5 There was discussion of whether an element of competition could be introduced by allowing departments to contract services from outside the University. Whilst this would be considered in a few years, control over quality would need to be maintained.

21/126 Wrap up

- .1 All attendees were thanked for their contribution and the executive team were thanked for a thoughtful and inspiring session which had enabled Council to look more deeply at the challenges and opportunities.

**Mr Michael Queen
Chair**