

**COUNCIL**  
**26 May 2022 at 9am**  
**Treetops, Wates House**

**MINUTES**

*Sections marked Commercial in Confidence are claimed as exempt from publication under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.*

<b>Members:</b>	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 Tim Dunne
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	President, Students' Union	Ms Ajay Ajimobi
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Esat Alpay
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Karen Bullock
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Daniel Horton
	External member	Mr Elliot Antrobus-Holder
	External member	Prof Julia Buckingham
	External member	Ms Judith Eden (22/058.6 onwards)
	External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	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:** Prof Osama Khan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic (22/059-061)  
Prof David Sampson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation (22/062)

**A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

**22/053 Preliminaries**

- .1 Pam Jestico sent apologies.
- .2 Julia Buckingham and Tim Dunne were welcomed to their first Council meeting.

**22/054 Declarations of Interest**

- .1 None

**22/055 Minutes**

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022 were **adopted** and agreed for publication on the website, subject to recording AA's apologies for the meeting.

**22/056 Matters Arising**

- .1 The updated actions log was **noted**.
- .2 With respect to the action to provide data to the USSU to enable them to complete the TEF submissions, AA reported that it was now complete.

**22/057 Chair's Items**

- .1 None

**22/058 Vice-Chancellor's Report and Performance Monitoring**

- .1 The VC presented the report.
- .2 It was noted that there had been several important visits to the University, including a delegation from Malaysia and from several potential donors to and collaborators with Campaign.
- .3 Council noted the good REF results and the strong response rate to the NSS.
- .4 Council noted that a Director of Sustainability had been appointed to and an announcement would be made shortly. Another very strong candidate for the post had accepted an offer to become the Associate Dean Research and Innovation for FEPS.
- .5 The update on the Medical School was noted. It was noted that there were likely to be additional funded student numbers announced when the national budget could be secured as this was seen as a priority for NHS England.
- .6 There was discussion of the Executive Board gender balance, noting that with the departure of the Chief Student Officer (CSO), there was only one female member. It was reported that both of the candidates in the final CSO interviews were women. With respect to the search for a new Executive Dean of FASS, the deadline had been extended for the search firm to ensure that that we interview the strongest pool of candidates.
- .7 Voluntary staff turnover was outside the target range. The importance of retention of staff talent was recognised and the University was reviewing its promotion and reward. It was noted that staff turnover had increased in part due to a strong employment market. In the research area, the University was investing in staffing through the Surrey Future Fellowships scheme which was expected to recruit circa 40 staff into permanent posts. The voluntary staff turnover for academic staff was lower; the high levels of staff turnover were mainly being seen in the Professional Services area.
- .8 It was noted that the UCU ballot on strike action didn't reach the required 50% response rate, so no strikes would be taking place.
- .9 There was discussion of the government's response to the Augar Review, noting the target to reduce the number of programmes which did not have a good graduate employment rate.

**B ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL****22/059 Education Report and 85 Plan**

- .1 Osama Khan attended to give a presentation.
- .2 It was noted that the response rate to the NSS was 80.7%, the second highest rate for the University. This high engagement level was usually an indicator of good results.
- .3 Whilst the PTES (PG Taught Experience Survey) response rate was just 29.3% to date, this was already 7% higher than the final response rate in the previous year and strong compared to the national average of 25%.
- .4 There was a general increase in satisfaction demonstrated in the Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) results. It was noted that the targets for 'Organisation and Management' and 'Assessment and Feedback' had been met, but the 'Overall Satisfaction' target had not yet been met. There was further investigation taking place of why the FHMS 'Organisation and Management' score was down 2.9%. There was a significant correlation between Semester 2 MEQ results and NSS scores.
- .5 It was noted that there had been a 22% response rate to MEQs and the response rate for Semester 2 was lower than Semester 1. This lack of engagement with MEQs was a national issue. The University had drawn up a seven-point action plan, including the use of technology to encourage students to complete MEQs.
- .6 There was discussion of the data on turnaround times for feedback to students on submitted work with the following points noted:
  - .6.1 The Executive Deans had the discretion to grant extensions to feedback deadlines for members of staff in extenuating circumstances. These extensions were not recorded centrally and therefore not reflected in the analysis of whether targets for feedback had been met. All legacy permanent extensions had now been cancelled and would need to be reapplied for.
  - .6.2 Students were informed of the period of time within which feedback should be provided; it was suggested that it would be useful to specify the exact date.
  - .6.3 The key issues for students were that they got the feedback in time to inform their next assignment, as well as the quality of the feedback. External Examiners were encouraged to be 'critical friends' by highlighting where feedback on assessment was poor.
  - .6.4 It was noted that FHMS appeared to have the weakest performance in this snapshot data. However, the whole year data and year on year trends may show a different picture. There may be other factors impacting the FHMS data, such as NHS related issues.
  - .6.5 It was noted that some students were 'assessment only' if they had failed a module and chosen to resit the assessments without attending the teaching sessions. The University needed to ensure that communications with these students were getting through to them.
- .7 With regard to resits more generally, the University was reviewing whether students failing assessments in Semester 1 should be able to resit earlier than the summer.

**22/060 Progression Report**

- .1 Osama Khan gave a presentation.

- .2 The cycle of continuous enhancement planning and review for the progression and awarding gap was noted. The University did not wait for the end of the academic year to review progression and awarding gaps but kept it under review throughout the whole year.
- .3 It was noted the degree programme progression rate of students who had completed the Foundation programme was higher than students who had come via direct entry. It was thought that this was because they were better prepared for the University pedagogy.

#### **22/061 Student Experience Committee report**

- .1 Osama Khan presented the report.
- .2 There was discussion of online learning, noting that whilst it was discouraged by the government, it could provide a valuable tool if used in moderation and appropriately. The University wanted to keep the benefits of the great innovations brought in as part of hybrid learning, whilst recognising the challenges. Some 92% of teaching at the University is face to face. All lectures are recorded so that those not able to attend are able to view them later.
- .3 It was noted that the Learning Analytics software will keep the University informed regarding students' engagement and provide an early warning system for students who were not engaged.

#### **22/062 Research Report**

- .1 David Sampson attended to present the reports and share a presentation on the REF results.
- .2 Council was pleased to note the strong results and the highlights and congratulated DS and all involved.
- .3 The following points were noted:
  - .3.1 The University currently receives c. £25m p.a. from Research England including QR and HEIF funding – the QR funding in total for 21/22 is c. £17.5m p.a. If the formula for allocation did not change, the University could expect to receive c. £1.4m additional funding p.a. as a result of its performance in REF 2021.
  - .3.2 It was noted that most non-specialist universities in the top 20 of REF rankings had over 1000 FTE of staff submitted to the REF. If the University wanted to further rise up the rankings, it would need to consider the role of scale – it was suggested that with an additional 300 staff submitted, Surrey could move up in the rankings.
  - .3.3 An increase in the size of the pool of impact case studies from which to draw for REF would also be beneficial and an early action was required as it takes time to nurture and mature impact case studies.
  - .3.4 The new institutes should strengthen the next REF submission, particularly if the focus is more on cross disciplinary research.
  - .3.5 Surrey's prediction of what GPA it would achieve had been very accurate, but it was not possible to predict how other institutions would perform.

#### **22/063 Senate Report**

- .1 Tim Dunne presented the report.

- .2 Council noted the approval for Surrey to become a signatory of DORA (the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment), noting that it did not preclude a more holistic view of metrics being adopted in the new academic performance framework.
- .3 It was noted that, as a result of the Student Welfare Report and a review of the warden role in the light of changes to the tax regime, it had been decided to remove the warden role. Professional staff trained to support mental health issues would be part of the Security team and provide a strong service to deal with the more complex needs of students. The University has alleviated the short term financial and accommodation impact on the wardens.
- .4 There was discussion of student welfare more generally, recognising a tightly integrated approach was required. In appropriate circumstances, the University asks students for their agreement to share data with their next of kin or contact them with concerns; the University does not ask for this permission from all students as a matter of course.

#### **22/064 Provost first impressions**

- .1 Tim Dunne gave a verbal update on his initial impressions of the University.
- .2 He commented that he had found the University very generous and welcoming; while there is much to be done, he noted that he feels he has been given the tools he needed to do the job of raising academic standards. He was impressed by the amount of high-level collaboration between staff and by the great job done by the Students' Union. EB is also, in his view, working effectively as a leadership team particularly across professional and academic roles
- .3 In his initial period as Provost, Tim has seen a number of issues that Surrey could do better.
- .4 These observations are examples of the kinds of improvements that will be made when the new academic performance framework comes on stream in 2023. The Vice-Chancellor has made it clear that this extensive piece of work is the Provost's priority which is why it has been elevated to the status of a new workstream of EB.

#### **22/065 Chair of Council recruitment update**

- .1 Judith Eden presented the report.
- .2 It was noted that adverts had been placed on the University, Search Firm, Women on Boards and Committee of University Chairs web sites and with the Times Higher Education Supplement. The Search Firm had engaged with over 40 potential applicants.
- .3 Short listing had been carried out involving the Search Firm, JE, RN, VB and the VC and a diverse short list of four candidates had been invited for interview.
- .4 Candidates would be given a chance to discuss the role with MQ. It was suggested that it would be useful for them to also meet the Provost.
- .5 It was noted that Appendix 2- Draft candidate profile – had been included in error, but members were welcome to advise JE of any attributes they felt were missing.

#### **22/066 Finance Committee report**

- .1 Robert Napier presented the report.

- .2 It was **agreed** that an additional Finance Committee would be arranged to review the Q3 forecast, particularly in view of the forecast increase to the year-end cash balance.

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**C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**22/067 SSPL half yearly report**

- .1 Council **noted** the report and a verbal update from AC and NJ, with the following points noted:
- .1.1 SSP had seen a strong emergence from the pandemic with the membership numbers back up to c. 5000, although there was a lag in student membership. The target was for 60% of students to be members.
  - .1.2 There was a strong engagement with the Faculties, particularly FHMS in sports and exercise science.
  - .1.3 The Sports Park were working on the brand and marketing. It was suggested that there needed to be greater prominence of the University brand as many people did not realise it was part of the University. It would be useful for more events to be held at SSP to raise its profile as part of the University.
  - .1.4 A strategy was in development and would come to the SSP Board in the first instance.
  - .1.5 It was recognised that SSP played an important role for staff experience and in the local community.
  - .1.6 The Surrey Moves app had almost 4,500 staff and students using it. It was suggested that it would be useful if it were more integrated with University systems.

**22/068 Health and Safety report**

Council **noted** the report and that some of the key metrics were improving despite the return to campus.

**22/069 Executive Board report**

Council **noted** the report. It was noted that the Surrey Community Business Case was focused on communications and events to bring together the whole community. The Teaching Block works were in progress to deliver in time for the September start of semester. The main risk concerned the delivery time for the new AVS equipment, so the old equipment was being retained as a fall-back option in case of delay.

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**D CLOSING ITEMS**

**22/070 Any Other Business**

- .1 None

**22/071 Date of next meeting**

26 July 2022

**Mr Michael Queen, Chair**