

COUNCIL
Thursday 25 July from 14.00-18.00
Oak 1 and 2 and Teams
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.

Members:	Chair – External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	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 Will Davies
	President, Students' Union	Ms Jo Yau
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Josh Andresen
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Charo Hodgkins
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Jin Xuan
	External member	Prof Julia Buckingham
	External member	Ms Judith Eden
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Mr Nigel Jones
	External member	Ms Pam Powell
	External member	Sir Philip Rutnam
	External member	Dr Helen Turner

In attendance: Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services (secretary)
Ms Martine Carter, Vice-President Strategic Growth
Mr Matthew Knight, Chief Financial Officer
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel
Mr Liam White, incoming USSU President

By invitation: Mr Patrick Degg, Vice-President Global (24/105)
Ms Fareen Lalani, Development Director, Blackwell Park (24/100)
Prof Eunice Ma, PVC Education (24/106-108)
Ms Kerry Matthews, Chief Student Officer (24/106-108)
Mr Alex McKee, CEO of Students' Union (24/110)
Mr Chris Tinker, Senior Advisor to the BPL Board (24/100)

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

24/093 Preliminaries

- .1 There were no apologies.
- .2 Matthew Knight and Liam White were welcomed to their first meeting of Council.

24/094 Declarations of Interest

- .1 None

24/095 Minutes

- .1 Council **approved** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 May 2024 for publication, subject to redaction of confidential items. The minutes of the 12 June 2024 meeting on Financial Resilience were **approved**, but not for publication due to their confidential nature.

24/096 Matters Arising

- .1 The updated actions log was **noted**.

24/097 Chair's items

- .1 Charlie Geffen reported on the pre-meeting discussions for lay members, noting that the focus of the meeting had been the lay members' appreciation of the hard work of the executive team and wider University with regard to the financial resilience programme. There was also discussion of how best to provide support and encouragement to the executive for the future.
- .2 It was noted that a dinner for Council and EB members and their partners was being arranged for 17 December and invitations would be coming out shortly. This event is in-line with the decision to keep the staff Christmas dinner budget.

24/098 Vice-Chancellor's Report and Performance Monitoring (STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL)

- .1 The VC presented the report.
- .2 The positive changes arising from the change of government were noted, including the new appointments to the relevant ministries.
- .3 The VC thanked Council for their contribution and support for the financial resilience programme. It was noted that 172 staff were leaving under VS, although around 30 academic colleagues would continue to engage as emeritus staff.
- .4 The NSS results were strong, with the University at 11th for overall satisfaction and 1st for the question regarding student wellbeing services. There is still room for improvement, particularly in Assessment and Feedback. The Students' Union was congratulated for achieving 5th in the country.
- .5 Graduate outcomes are strong. A Professional Training Year review will report in the Autumn.
- .6 The Innovate Surrey Ltd (ISL) Board are discussing the Research Park and its future strategy. The job description for the Management Director of ISL has been drafted.
- .7 The University is focussed on regaining its international league table positions. However, there were excellent results in some subject areas.

24/099 Management Accounts

- .1 Council noted the paper.

24/100 Blackwell Park update – REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

24/101 Surrey Research Park – REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

24/102 Accommodation – REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

24/103 University Budget

- .1 Matthew Knight gave a presentation.
- .2 Council noted the headlines to the 2024/25 financial plan, resulting in a year-on-year improvement of £29m to a £10m surplus in 2024/25, driven by £25m of savings and £5m of new income.
- .3 The underlying five-year financial plan was noted, built from a ‘Sustainable base case’.
- .4 The University 2024/25 budget was **approved**.

24/104 University Strategy and Draft Strategic Plan

- .1 Martine Carter gave a presentation.
- .2 The existing strategic workstreams have almost been completed and a report will come to Council. The priorities for 2024/25 were noted, recognising that there is limited financial capacity in 2024/25 for strategic investment. However, this provides for careful planning of the programme of investment. There is a need to prepare for more challenges in 2030-35.
- .3 The following points were noted:
 - .3.1 Surrey outperforms Oxbridge in some respects.
 - .3.2 Many of Surrey’s key strengths, such as Space, do not tend to attract many students. This is partly due to fewer students taking STEM subjects nationally. This suggests that there should be a focus on recruiting overseas students into STEM areas, potentially through TNE opportunities. Council acknowledged that Surrey has other strengths apart from STEM subjects.
 - .3.3 The Sustainable Base Case (SBC) is not presented as an acceptable plan but is an achievable starting point to build the growth plan to achieve an 8% surplus.
 - .3.4 Surrey’s strengths, particularly the student experience and graduate employment, need to be emphasised.
 - .3.5 The eight ‘ambitions’ were discussed. It was noted that some of the ambitions reflect what it is to be an excellent university rather than a point of distinction.
 - .3.6 The proposed research tower in the health area has been defined more specifically with the draft title of ‘Ageing Futures’, but there would be further consideration and a business case in due course.
 - .3.7 The strategy delivery plan would be the focus of the next Strategy Away Day, and further work was underway to develop an external communication plan to use the Strategy as a vehicle to build the University’s brand and reputation.
- .4 Subject to the suggested changes and any other minor amendments the Strategy Vision 2041 was **approved**.

24/105 Branding and Reputation

- .1 Patrick Degg attended to present the paper after an introduction from Charlie Geffen about the need to increase the visibility and reputation of the University.
- .2 Scott Williams, the new Director of Marketing and Communications, will be invited to present to October Council. A staff member responsible for rankings and awards will be recruited.
Action: RA to add to October agenda.
- .3 According to a YouGov survey a few years ago, only 22% of respondents knew of the University of Surrey and, of these, 50% thought it was quite good of which only 20% would recommend Surrey.
- .4 The key message from student recruitment agents is that Surrey is not well known enough in the market. The challenges for Surrey are to get its merited market share and build its reputation. The University needs to address the fact that many top schools encourage their students to go to a Russell Group university, as this is one of their KPIs.
- .5 The University has worked with an agency on various campaigns and slide 21 in the pack shows a summary of their feedback on the University's identity. The Students' Union noted there had been some negative comments regarding the 'We can do it' campaign. It was requested that the SU be consulted on future brands before they are finalised.

24/106 Education and Student Experience update

- .1 Eunice Ma and Kerry Matthews attended to present the paper.
- .2 Eunice Ma gave a presentation on the NSS results and the following points were noted:
 - Surrey was ranked 11th in the country for overall positivity, calculated using a subset of questions.
 - Surrey was ranked 56th for assessment and feedback and dropped 21 places so this will be an area of focus over the next year. It was noted, rather than any systemic issue with assessment and feedback, several big schools dropped significantly, pulling down the overall rank.
 - Two schools and several underperforming courses have been identified for enhanced support over the next year. There is review of all programmes in terms of factors such as NSS scores, graduate outcomes and retention, to identify areas which need more support.
 - The Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) process is under review.
 - There is a risk that the financial resilience programme may impact on the NSS results next year.
 - The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) achieved 87% satisfaction level which was particularly pleasing in the context of its big organisational change programme.
 - Satisfaction with resources appears to have reduced, possibly partly due to the exceptional experience during Covid when the online resources offered by Surrey represented a step change, which is now reverting to more normal levels as online becomes the standard. There is also an issue of consistency across programmes.

24/107 Degree Outcomes Statement

- .1 Eunice Ma presented the paper.
- .2 Council noted that drop in FASS for good degrees was due to an easier process for students to transfer to an integrated masters degree leading to more of the top performing students transferring.
- .3 Council **approved** the Degree Outcomes Statement.

24/108 Student Protection Plan

- .1 Kerry Matthews presented the paper.
- .2 It was noted that the OfS require the plan to be updated annually. Surrey is seen as a model for excellence in the sector and there are no significant amendments to the plan.
- .3 Council **approved** the Plan.

24/109 Research and Innovation

- .1 Council noted the report.

24/110 USSU Annual Presentation

- .1 Jo Yau gave a presentation with Alex McKee in attendance.
- .2 Council noted the achievements in each of the five areas and congratulated the Students' Union on a successful year.
- .3 It was noted that academic misconduct cases were rising, particularly in relation to the use of AI. A working group has been established to ensure that students understand how AI can and cannot be used in relation to their academic work. It was agreed to request a report on academic misconduct, including the workload implications and plan of action.
Action: RA to ask Eunice Ma to provide a report to Council.
- .4 Jo Yau expressed her sincere thanks to Council and the Executive for all their support over the year.

24/111 Appointment of Matthew Knight as a Director of Innovate Surrey Ltd and Blackwell Park Ltd

- .1 Max Lu presented the paper.
- .2 Council **approved** his appointment to both boards.

24/112 Council Effectiveness Review recommendations

- .1 Charlie Geffen presented the paper.
- .2 It was noted that more conversations need to take place on the Vice Chair and SIM roles.
- .3 It was **agreed** that Finance Committee and Audit and Assurance Committee should remain and that members (apart from the Chairs) should be able to sit on both committees.

- .4 It was **agreed** to stagger the terms of Senate members.
- .5 With respect to the items to note:
- Lay members will be asked to provide their CVs for Convene and updates to their web bios. A communication to staff regarding the Council web pages will be sent out.
Action: RA
 - Some further conversations on Council agendas are required, in particular with respect to Education and Research and Innovation.
 - Council reiterated the need for papers to be short and provided on time.
- .6 It was noted that Vib Baxi attends the Student Experience subcommittee and the Student Forum as an observer. When he steps down from Council, there should be consideration of having another lay Council member take his place.

24/113 Nominations and Governance Committee report

- .1 Charlie Geffen presented the paper.
- .2 Membership of Nominations and Governance Committee and its role in the appointment of the Campaign Board chair was **approved**. It was noted that further conversations were taking place on the role of Nominations and Governance Committee and Council in the appointment of subsidiary chairs and directors.
- .3 The appointment of Steve Myint as a Pro-Chancellor was **approved**. There are not enough pro-chancellors currently, resulting in the VC and colleagues having to step in to confer degrees this year. The University needs at least one further Pro-chancellor, preferably female. The requirements and contributions were noted.
- .4 The recruitment of new lay members in 2025 were noted.

24/114 Surrey Sports Park Governance Agreement

- .1 Sarah Litchfield presented the paper.
- .2 Council **approved** the Governance Agreement amendments.

24/115 Emeritus Professors

- .1 Tim Dunne presented the paper.
- .2 It was noted that Surrey is making it more attractive for emeritus professors to remain engaged. Council asked to see a list of emeritus professors.
Action: TD
- .3 Council **approved** the appointments.

24/116 Items for future meetings

- .1 Council noted the paper.

C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

24/117 Biannual Risk Management update

.1 Council noted the paper.

24/118 Information Security Annual Report

.1 Council requested more information about post cyber-attack measures.

Action: WD to provide.

24/119 Freedom of Speech Annual Report

.1 Council noted the paper.

24/120 Retention of non-contracting authority status under PCR

.1 Council noted the paper.

24/121 Health and Safety Report

.1 Council noted the paper.

24/122 Committee Reports

.1 Council noted the reports.

24/123 Information Pack for Reference

.1 Council noted the pack.

D CLOSING ITEMS

24/124 Any Other Business

.1 Noting that it was Jo Yau's final meeting, Council took the opportunity to thank her for her contribution.

24/125 Date of next meeting

3 October 2024

Mr Charlie Geffen, Chair