

Minutes of Council

Friday 5 July 2013

- Present: Ms A Berti, Mr D Burn (Chair), Professor D Clarke, Councillor S Cook, Mr R Cowap, Dr E Crawley, Professor G Foster, Mrs S Goymer, Mr C Green, Mr R Griffiths, Dr M Hamlin, Sir R Kerr, Professor N Lieven, Mr T Macdonald, Mr J Manley, Professor R Middleton, Mrs D Moore, Mr B Morton, Mr D Ord, Mrs C Peck, Mr A Poolman, Mr B Ray, Mr M Saddiq, Ms A Stephenson, Professor E Thomas, Dr T Thompson, Mr J Wetz
- In attendance: Mr P Adams, Mr P Finch, Dr H Galbraith, Ms R Geller, Mr G Gregory, Dr R Hooper, Mr H Martin (Clerk), Professor P Mathieson, Mr A Nield, Ms I Palmer, Mr T Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Professor J Squires, Sir J Tidmarsh
- Apologies: Mr T Flynn, Mr A Garrad, Ms P Lawrence-Archer, Professor G Orpen, Ms V Stace

1. Welcome and announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the UBSU President to his first meeting of Council, and the UBSU Vice-President (Activities) as an observer.
- 1.2 The Chair congratulated the Vice-Chancellor on his recent knighthood and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on his recent elevation to Judge.
- 1.3 The Chair thanked the Director of Planning and Deputy Secretary, for whom this would be her last meeting.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 NOTED.

3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1 Members were reminded that they had an obligation to disclose any pecuniary, family or other personal interest that they had in any matter under discussion at any meeting of Council as soon as practicable.

4. Minutes of meeting on 10 May 2013

- 4.1 CONFIRMED.

5. Matters arising and actions

5.1 None.

6. Presentations

6.1 The Dean of Medicine and Dentistry gave the Faculty's biennial presentation (on file).

The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- Proposed reforms in the NHS, potential budget cuts in NHS academic programmes as well as research, the reorganisation from a regional to a national and local structure, and possible privatisation of certain medical procedures would have significant impact on the University's medical teaching and research and were therefore of considerable concern.
- The Faculty had performed poorly in some recent league tables; it was noted that some of the data used was up to two years old but much work was being undertaken to improve and there was no room for complacency.
- The main student society for medical students, Galenicals, was praised but it was noted that the society did not include all medical students and therefore its relationship with UBSU was complex and required scrutiny; an offline conversation would be held to discuss possible further funding and social space for the society.

6.2 The Director of IT Services gave a presentation on the IT Review (on file).

The Registrar introduced the presentation, noting that:

- SPR had had a significant impact on the provision of IT, especially with regard to the centralisation of services and the use of zonal teams;
- dissatisfaction existed among users, specifically with regard to the reduction in IT resources;
- IT was a rapidly changing environment, and obtaining value for money had to be balanced with existing financial pressures as well as the resource-intensivity of IT provision;
- the IT Review by KPMG had not provided major surprises; its remit did not include projects such as ERP, SITS, and technology-enhanced learning, or the Strategic Projects Office;
- IT Services was made up of talented and committed staff, but its structure had been identified as needing improvement;
- a short-term advisory group, including Mr J Manley, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Registrar, and the Finance Director, had been convened to review IT strategy and governance.

The subsequent discussion highlighted the following points:

- There was concern from two Council members that the KPMG report was not significantly substantive, had not proved value for money, and had not provided sufficient benchmarking.
- Council appreciated the hard work put in by IT Services staff.

- Discussions were underway with UWE regarding shared services and system hosting as part of ongoing disaster recovery plans and in order to avoid a single point of failure.
- It was acknowledged that problems existed with the current structure and that a series of appropriate and necessary fixes were sought and applied swiftly.

7. Chair's report

- 7.1 APPROVED: the appointment of two Visiting Professors (reference **CN/13/046**).

8 Vice-Chancellor's report

- 8.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/13/047**).

It was noted that at a ceremony in Beijing on 20 April 2013, acting on behalf of the University and its Council, the Vice-Chancellor conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on Professor Wei Yang of Zhejiang University and newly appointed head of the National Science Foundation of China.

Spending Review

- 8.2 The Vice-Chancellor noted the relatively favourable results to the HE sector of the Spending Review announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 26 June.

GW4 – collaboration with Bath, Cardiff and Exeter

- 8.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated Council on the progress of the GW4 collaboration. Two informal board meetings had been held; a formal meeting would follow in October. An autumn Away Day of the Vice-Chancellors would also take place.

Admissions update

- 8.4 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) updated Council on the progress with Admissions, noting that a full picture would become clear in August. A discussion would be held with the Deans regarding PGT growth.

Recent Grants and Awards

- 8.5 The Vice-Chancellor congratulated Jenny Donovan, Professor of Social Medicine in the School of Social and Community Medicine, who had been awarded an OBE to acknowledge her outstanding contributions to health research and advancement of medical science.

League tables

- 8.6 It was noted that the University chose not to make any comment on league tables, in order not to lend credibility to data which was often variable in quality and collected for commercial reasons. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) noted that the University had created an SPI for the NSS, and a committee had been set up to examine the student experience as part of that.

9. Financial Matters

Monthly Financial Report

- 9.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/048**).

The Finance Director noted that the Finance Committee had reviewed the ERP project at its last meeting and approved proceeding with the project subject to a £5m implementation cost and approval of the business case by the Portfolio Executive. The preferred supplier had been selected. The Finance Director and HR Director were the joint sponsors of the project.

Current year financial performance remained relatively strong. The forecast operating surplus for the year of £9.5m (compared to the budget of £6m) was likely to improve slightly.

The Finance Director explained that a substantive agreement had been reached with the UBPAS trustees regarding the July 2012 actuarial review. The deficit recovery plan would involve payments by UoB of £6.9m pa. A further advance payment of £6.9m would be made in July bringing the total prepaid to £1.9m.

After extensive discussions with union representatives a proposed set of fundamental changes to the future structure of UBPAS was now being consulted on with staff. The changes would be effective from November 2013.

The Chair thanked the Finance Director, the HR Director, and the unions for their constructive work in developing a proposed way forward for the future structure of UBPAS.

9.2 HEFCE financial forecast
APPROVED (reference **CN/13/049**).

The Finance Director explained the background to the HEFCE forecasts. They were based on the budget/plans approved at the May meeting of Council and had been reviewed by the Finance Committee, which recommended their approval to Council.

10. Council effectiveness review

10.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/050**).

The Registrar noted that the University had run a successful media campaign to widen the applicant pool for new Council lay members and lay committee members; further focus would be applied to widening the diversity of Council in future campaigns.

It was noted that emphasis on governance rather than management was a priority for Council; the Clerk would circulate the Leadership Foundation's 2013-14 governance programme to members. A full review of Council effectiveness would be undertaken with external involvement in 2-3 years.

The new boardpack (electronic and hard copy) style of Council papers was welcomed by members, as was increased use of email and electronic distribution where possible.

11. University statement on research integrity

11.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/051**).

12. **SPI in detail: Income per square metre of Estate**

12.1 The Director of Planning and the Bursar gave a presentation (on file).

The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- Management reports would aspire to be presented in the dashboard format demonstrated.
- A library of set reports would be built up for the use of regular Council and committee meetings; specific reports could be designed where necessary using specialised units of expertise.
- There had been significant investment in the estate and therefore growth in income per square metre was expected.
- It was not possible to analyse income per square metre in individual buildings using current systems but more specificity in identifying what was meant by the term 'Other' was being sought.
- A key issue was to identify a comparator group made up of institutions with similar estates as well as similar learning, teaching and research.

13. **Committee reports**

Audit Committee

13.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/052**).

The Treasurer noted that Mr J Manley would be joining the committee.

Estates Committee

13.2 NOTED (reference **CN/13/053**).

The Bursar would update Council on Long Ashton in due course.

Ethics of Research Committee

13.3 NOTED (reference **CN/13/054**).

Finance Committee

13.4 NOTED (reference **CN/13/055**).

The Finance Director would update Council on the Fry Building in the next session.

Nominations Committee of Court

13.5 NOTED (reference **CN/13/056**).

The Chair noted that the media campaign had attracted a strong field of which seven applicants would be interviewed for the two Council lay member vacancies in the following week. More work was needed on trying to achieve a gender balance.

Personnel and Health & Safety Committee

13.6 NOTED (reference **CN/13/057**).

It was noted that the University understood the importance and funding implications of renewing its Athena SWAN Bronze Award and therefore was taking a robust approach and working actively with Athena SWAN to that end. The Dean of Social

Sciences and Law had met with representatives and had agreed to pilot a new application process which the University would trial.

Remuneration Committee Annual Report

- 13.7 NOTED: the paper tabled by the HR Director.

Student Affairs Committee

- 13.8 NOTED (reference **CN/13/058**).

It was noted that the UBSU budget had not been prepared in time for Council to scrutinise at this meeting; this would now happen at the next meeting in November. In the interim the Finance Director would review the budget once available and it was agreed that subject to this UBSU should operate as if Council had undertaken its review.

14. Faculty annual reports

Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

- 14.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/059**).

Faculty of Medical and Veterinary Sciences

- 14.2 NOTED (reference **CN/13/060**).

15. Other reports

Health & Safety annual report

- 15.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/061**).

It was noted that processes were now in place which were improved and more robust. The Vice-Chancellor met regularly with the Director of Health & Safety, health and safety issues were regularly discussed and monitored by the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, and the increased expectations and supportive influence of Council was maintained effectively through the Personnel and Health & Safety Committee.

Convocation Chair's report

- 15.2 NOTED (reference **CN/13/062**).

The Chair thanked the Convocation Chair and those involved in organising Convocation for their efforts over the year.

Senate report

- 15.3 NOTED (reference **CN/13/063**).

Centre for Deaf Studies

- 15.4 NOTED (reference **CN/13/064**).

It was noted that the recommendations had been considered by Senate and Council in May 2010; this report was for information only.

16. Council statement of primary responsibilities, roles and responsibilities, and standing orders

16.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/065**).

17. Standing Items

Equality and Diversity Implications

17.1 Council did not feel that the business discussed at the meeting had raised any equality and/or diversity issues which had not been appropriately addressed by report authors and/or relevant sub-committees.

Communications and Consultation

17.2 Council did not feel that the business discussed at the meeting had raised any communications and/or consultation issues which had not been appropriately addressed by report authors and/or relevant sub-committees.

18. Date of next meeting

18.1 The next meeting of Council would be held on Friday 15 November 2013, venue to be confirmed.