

19 October 2023

Council

Minutes

Minutes of Council held on Thursday 19 October 2023 at 1.30 pm in Austen/Blake Conference Room, Canham Turner.

Present: George Garlick (Chair), Heidi Broadhead, Professor Rob Dover, Andrew Haigh, Matt Jukes, Professor Kevin Kerrigan, Vanessa Lee, Ursula Lidbetter, Dr Catherine Murray, Professor Dave Petley, Raji Destiny Ibrahim Raji, Rashmi Rungta, Neil Robinson, Rosalyn Schofield, Denise Wilson

In attendance: Joanne Gibbons, Jeremy Hartley, Professor Stephen Hardy, Professor Becky Huxley-Binns, Dr Chris Ince (Secretary), Professor Fiona Matthews, Professor Darren Mundy, Derek Ord (Assistant Secretary), Deborah Robinson, Lilly Rockett, Professor Dirk Schaefer, Sarah Wilson

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		Action by
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declaration</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Professor Kevin Kerrigan, Andrew Haigh and Dr Catherine Murray (subject to approval at Item 2) to their first meeting.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed new attendees: Joanne Gibbons, Professor Fiona Matthews and Professor Dirk Schaefer.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Professor Philip Gilmartin</p>	
2	<p>Approval of New Member</p> <p>Council received details of a recommendation from Governance and Nominations Committee for a new lay member of Council, made following an interview process.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the appointment of Dr Catherine Murray as a lay member of Council for a period of three years be approved.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 were approved as a correct record.</p>	
4	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>(a) <u>Action Summary</u></p> <p>It was noted that progress on Freedom of Speech would be discussed the next meeting of the University Ethics Committee, before coming to ULT and then Council.</p> <p>It was reported that the Ferens Education Trust accounts had been completed and submission to the Charity Commission was delayed due to issues with the Commission website. The submission date would be backdated to when this was highlighted to the Commission.</p>	
5	<p>Chair's Action</p> <p>(a) <u>Approval of Senate terms of reference and composition 2023/24</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Terms of Reference of Senate had been amended over summer and approved on Chair's Action. The changes had been made to reflect the results of a review of the education sub-committees of Senate.</p>	
6	<p>Programme of Work</p> <p>(a) <u>Programme of Work 2023-24</u></p> <p>The Programme of Work 2023-24 was received for information.</p> <p>It was noted that the Sustainability Report would come to Council in December and the Programme would be updated to reflect this.</p>	GovMgr

7	Chair's Report (a) The Chair had recently attended two CUC events. (b) A recruitment interview had taken place for the new lay member (see Item 2).	
8	Management Report The Vice-Chancellor presented the Management Report, covering a wide range of key topics. Highlights included: <u>Higher Education Policy</u> It was reported that there had been several outcomes to the DfE consultation on Higher Education reform. There was as yet no movement on the issue of student tuition fees. It was noted that there would be a General Election in the next 18 months and that horizon scanning of changes to policy would continue. <u>Industrial Action</u> It was reported that the local UCU had balloted its members and had decided not to take part in the industrial action at the end of September. The UCU was balloting nationally for a new mandate for industrial action. It was confirmed that the University will maintain its existing position with regards to industrial action including action short of a strike and will continue to work proactively in those areas of concern for UCU that are outside of the national framework agreement and so in the control of the University. It was confirmed that the proposed changes to USS benefits were likely to be approved, with a financial benefit to both staff and the University. <u>Student Recruitment</u> It was reported that there remained many uncertainties around student numbers, particularly international PGT. The issues caused by the Nigerian currency devaluation continued to impact the University and the wider sector.	

<p>Changing patterns of behaviour by applicants had been identified, with increasing numbers considering clearing as an option when their results were better than anticipated. More institutions had opened to clearing than normal, thus reducing recruitment for others. The increased number of Russell Groups behaving in this way had impacted adversely on the University.</p> <p>It was noted that fewer 18-year-olds were choosing to go to University and that this may be a longer term trend. It was confirmed that the data was being analysed closely and that any insights would be reported to Council.</p> <p><u>RAAC</u></p> <p>It was reported that the first surveys of the estate had been completed, with a small number of buildings to have further detailed investigation.</p> <p>Four buildings had been found to have been affected, with only the Media Hub having significant issues. The building had been made structurally safe and the first two floors had been reopened for use. The top floor would not immediately reopen.</p> <p>RAAC had been found in two plant rooms, which did not affect the use of those buildings. It had also been found in the Acoustic Lab, but no remedial work was required in that instance.</p> <p>The Estates Team was thanked for its quick and efficient work in arranging surveys and remedial work.</p> <p><u>University Performance</u></p> <p>It was reported that the University had achieved significant success in the recent TEF, the NSS, and the KEF, which would be covered later on the agenda. The University had also achieved record research income.</p> <p><u>Projects</u></p> <p>It was noted that student recruitment processes remained an issue and that the University was now in a consultation exercise to restructure the Admissions area, which would address some of the issues identified.</p> <p>It was noted that there were many projects ongoing, and that the Estates team had expanded to include extra project management expertise.</p>	<p>PVC(Ed)</p>
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	<p>It was reported that work was progressing with the solar farms but that planning problems and issues with grid connections had introduced delays. It was confirmed that the on-campus project would continue, and that a new business case and technical review would be put forward for approval.</p> <p>It was reported that plans would be developed for the Wilberforce Building to undergo a full refurbishment and that to facilitate this, the Dennison Centre would receive a 'light' refurbishment to provide decamp space for activities currently based in Wilberforce.</p> <p>It was reported that there would be a light refresh of the University Strategy and KPIs.</p> <p><u>League Tables</u></p> <p>The University standing in various league tables was discussed, with clarification given on the different methodologies used and the effect of a lag in data use.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>a) Finance Update</p> <p>Council received a presentation on the 2023/24 financial year in the light of current recruitment, and update on the USS pension scheme and a capital programme update.</p> <p>It was reported that the approved budget would be a challenge to achieve and that student numbers were in line with previous year, rather than the planned growth. It was confirmed that the financial impact of student numbers being below target was mitigated in part by increased international fees. It was confirmed that a new forecast was in production, with a target operating surplus of £15.7m.</p> <p>It was reported that the USS scheme latest valuation shows the scheme is 111% funded and that a consultation was underway, with staff supported by advice sessions.</p> <p>An update on major projects planned and underway was presented and noted.</p> <p>b) 2022/23 Full Year Financial Performance</p> <p>Council received a presentation of the 2022-23 year-end financial performance.</p>	

	<p>It was reported that the University had achieved total income of over £200m for the first time, with record research income.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the financial covenants were all being met and that to continue to do so would require continued careful financial management.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the current interest yield from the Private Placement funds was above the interest rate on the loans.</p> <p>It was reported that the debtor amount had increased due to increased students and the changing student mix, but that there were no major issues around debt collection, rather than it was taking longer to receive.</p> <p>It was clarified that the original budget had been produced based on a high number of applicants from Nigeria but that the currency issues late in the application cycle had affected this planning. It was also noted that energy costs had increased by £11m, with a £5m government subsidy in the last financial year.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the external audit process was underway and that the annual report and financial statements would be presented to the joint ARC and FIC meeting in November and Council in December.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Student Market Segmentation</p> <p>Council received a presentation on Home UG and PG Segmentation, from the Director of Strategy and Insight.</p> <p>It was noted that the segmentation had been designed on several attributes, to help us better understand our applicants and students. Several groups had been created based on shared characteristics of demographics, behaviour, and attitudes.</p> <p>The difference in the market proportion of each group and the University student proportion was examined.</p> <p>It was noted that the segmentation should not just be used for recruitment, but also to help target student support and a range of wider issues.</p> <p>It was suggested that pen-pictures of each group could be useful, and it was confirmed that further work on this would take place along with the launch of the new brand.</p>	

	<p>It was confirmed that certain groups tended to study certain subjects and that this information may be useful to inform decisions around which subjects to offer, or to tailor courses to better fit our students' needs.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>KPIs and League Tables</p> <p>Council received and noted the latest KPIs, performance indicators and university rankings.</p> <p>Council received a presentation on KPIs. It was reported that the current KPIs were numerous and did not give a clear enough view of performance, with some indicators being out of date or no longer produced.</p> <p>Example KPIs were discussed and the requirements for future KPIs considered.</p> <p>It was felt that KPIs must clearly link to the University Strategy, showing progress against those goals. It was noted that current KPIs are linked to People, Place and Partnership. KPIs should where possible be leading rather than lagging.</p> <p>The need to link KPIs to actions was noted, so that KPIs, risk management and activity could be aligned.</p> <p>It was noted that Council would need different KPIs to ULT, so that Council could focus on strategy and ULT could examine a wider range of issues in more detail. Council could receive highlights of the KPIs that are considered by ULT, and where it becomes clear that a KPI is not, or is at risk of not being met, Council may wish to examine the issue in more detail.</p> <p>There was felt to be a need for a balance between KPIs linked to the Strategy and those linked to external requirements such as covenants, OfS requirements etc.</p> <p>It was noted that KPIs vary in the frequency of updating, such that some only change annually whereas others are changing frequently. There would be a requirement for lead indicators to be frequently updated.</p> <p>It was noted that in addition to KPIs, there would be a requirement to monitor targets.</p>	

	<p>It was felt that the issue was complex and may merit a specific session outside of a formal meeting, to discuss in greater depth.</p>	<p>GovMgr</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>NSS Results</p> <p>Council received and noted the NSS results and received a presentation on the details.</p> <p>It was reported that the methodology used in the NSS had changed significantly, and that the University had received a much-improved result, being above the benchmark in 25 of 27 measures.</p> <p>It was reported that whereas the NSS is a survey of final year students, the University runs a similar internal survey of students in earlier years of study, to help identify issues and put solutions in place earlier.</p> <p>It was felt essential to communicate with students to inform them of improvements that are made in response to their feedback.</p> <p>It was reported that in addition to keeping the excellent results achieved, work was underway to better understand the lower scored measures, so that interventions can be put into place early.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>TEF Results</p> <p>It was noted with great pleasure that the University had achieved TEF Gold standard, confirming that the student experience and student outcomes are typically outstanding.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the rating will remain in place for four years, and that it was essential to maximise the potential gains that this can bring to the University.</p> <p>It was confirmed that work had started to carefully position ourselves, using the TEF result as a marketing tool.</p> <p>It was noted that although it was not known how or if the result would change student demand, it does have a positive impact on the pride and morale of students and staff.</p>	

<p>14</p>	<p>KEF</p> <p>Council received and noted a paper outlining the recent KEF result which was a significant achievement for the University.</p> <p>It was reported that the University is placed in 'Cluster X' and achieved a result of second within that cluster. The University was in the top 20% of all English universities in three measures.</p> <p>It was reported that in common with most universities, there is a need to prioritise activity, and our decision to give CPD a lower priority is reflected in the result for that measure.</p> <p>It was noted that work was underway on the next KEF.</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>Office for Students (OfS) and Institutional Prevent Return</p> <p>Council received an update on OfS activity, including its consultation of sexual misconduct and harassment, the recent House of Lords review of the OfS, and Freedom of Speech.</p> <p>It was reported that the University must submit an annual Prevent Return to the OfS and that the format had not changed significantly from previous years.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the approach to the University's Prevent Return be approved. The final submission would be authorised by the Chair of Council.</p>	
<p>16</p>	<p>Hull Alumni Association Annual Report</p> <p>Council received and noted with interest the Annual Report.</p>	
<p>17</p>	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>Council received the latest version of the institutional risk register. It was noted that there had been a few minor changes to the register.</p> <p>It was reported that the risk register is considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at each meeting and in addition was discussed in detail at the ULT Away Day. It was noted that the register does link to the University Strategy and current KPIs.</p>	

<p>18</p>	<p>HUSU Report</p> <p>Council received and noted the HUSU Report.</p> <p>In particular, the need for new bikes in the Bike Hub, the lack of family accommodation and the issues caused by the cost of living were highlighted.</p>	
<p>19</p>	<p>Ferens Education Trust Nomination</p> <p>Council received a request for an extension for three years to the appointment of Professor Mark Lorch as Council nominated Trustee of the Ferens Education Trust.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the nomination of Professor Mark Lorch as Council nominated Trustee of the Ferens Education Trust until August 2026 be approved.</p>	
<p>20</p>	<p>Minutes of Committees</p> <p>Council received and noted the following minutes:</p> <p>a) Senate – 9 August 2023 (Terms of Reference approved at minute 5)</p> <p>b) Audit and Risk Committee – 11 September 2023</p> <p>c) Finance and Investment Committee – 28 September 2023</p>	
<p>21</p>	<p>Honorary Awards Committee Terms of Reference and Composition</p> <p>Council received a proposal to amend the Terms of Reference and Composition of Honorary Awards Committee, to improve the efficiency of the work of the Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that the Committee was a joint committee with Senate, which had approved the changes.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the amended Terms of Reference and Composition of the Honorary Awards Committee be approved.</p>	

22	Dates of Meetings 2023-24	All members										
	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Date of Meeting</th><th><i>Deadline for papers</i></th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Thursday 14 December 2023 at 1.30 pm</td><td><i>30/11/23</i></td></tr><tr><td>Thursday 22 February 2024 at 1.30 pm</td><td><i>08/02/24</i></td></tr><tr><td>Thursday 25 April 2024 at 1.30 pm</td><td><i>11/04/24</i></td></tr><tr><td>Thursday 4 July 2024 at 1.30 pm</td><td><i>20/06/24</i></td></tr></tbody></table>	Date of Meeting	<i>Deadline for papers</i>	Thursday 14 December 2023 at 1.30 pm	<i>30/11/23</i>	Thursday 22 February 2024 at 1.30 pm	<i>08/02/24</i>	Thursday 25 April 2024 at 1.30 pm	<i>11/04/24</i>	Thursday 4 July 2024 at 1.30 pm	<i>20/06/24</i>	
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Other dates to note:												
<u>Council dinner</u> Wednesday 3 July 2024, 7.00 pm												
<u>Council Away Day</u> Wednesday 22 May 2024, 11.30 am												