



Keele
University

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL

Held on Thursday 15th February 2018

The Chair welcomed Greg Dargue (Deputy Director of Estates & Development, Operations) and Chris Fogwill (Head of Schools of Geography, Geology & the Environment) to the meeting as observers.

For a record of attendance, apologies and absences, see attached list.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Harris declared an interest as KPMG are his personal accountants and the law firm in which he is a consultant acts for USS. Mr Clark declared an interest as a Trustee of Caudwell Children.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

(a) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2017 were approved, subject to an amendment to include the delegation of authority from Council to the Student Numbers & Fees Group to approve unregulated fees and that the Students' Union and KPA would be represented at meetings for that particular item.

(b) Actions List

Council received and noted the actions list. It was noted that a report on the Keele Superannuation Scheme would be presented to the Business Review Committee on 23rd March 2018, prior to coming to Council.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Item commercial in confidence

(b) Item commercial in confidence

PART 1 – THEMED DISCUSSION ITEMS

1A. JOINT VETERINARY PROGRAMME UPDATE

Council received a presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean of Natural Sciences on developments on the proposed joint undergraduate Veterinary programme with

Harper Adams University ahead of being asked to make a final decision at the meeting on 3rd May 2018.

Council welcomed the comprehensive update and noted the progress made. The full business case would be presented to the Harper Adams board in April 2018 and to Council on 3rd May 2018.

PART 2 - REPORTS

2A. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor, which provided an overview of major issues and activities since the previous meeting, including:

- The University Executive Committee held an Away Day earlier in the week that had been extremely fruitful and a decision had been taken to refresh the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Council would, of course, be included throughout the process and would be asked to approve the final version at its meeting in September 2018.
- A number of new senior appointments were reported and it was noted that shortlisting for the Chief Financial Officer would take place on 16th February 2018 and that a new Chief Information Officer position was shortly to be advertised. It was also reported that Ms Gemma Lowe (Head of Legal Services) and Mr Ian Munton (Head of Student Services) would be leaving Keele in February and March 2018 respectively. Council wished them both well.
- Council received an update on the admissions position.
- It was reported that the University and Colleges Union (UCU) had notified the University that they intended to hold 14 days of strikes and continuous action short of strike from the week of 22nd February 2018. This was in response to the decision of the Trustees of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) to consult on modifications to the benefits of the pension scheme. The proposed changes would increase the University's contribution by c£3.5m per annum and the employees' contribution by 3%. The University had formed a working group to address the situation, which was meeting on a weekly basis to seek to mitigate the impact on students.
- Council requested at its previous meeting a report on the outcomes of the Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys (PTES & PRES), which are carried out by the Higher Education Academy and operate in a similar way to the National Student Survey. PTES runs annually, whilst PRES runs biennially. The response rate at Keele for PTES this year was 42%, which was slightly lower than in 2016 but significantly higher than the national participation rate of 23%. Our overall PGT experience score was 82%, which was 3% higher than the sector and our benchmarking group and an increase from 2016. Schools had been provided with the data and asked to reflect on and consider areas for development. In addition, a major review of all aspects of our PGT provision was a key priority for the new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). Participation in the PRES was 60% against a sector response rate of 46%. Our overall PGR experience score was 82%, which was 3% higher than the sector and our benchmarking group but slightly lower than in 2015. PGR Directors in Faculties and Schools were considering the results and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) was leading a review of PGR provision and a

strategic led for postgraduate research (Professor Paul Horrocks) had recently been appointed. Council welcomed the report.

- Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations showing the pay gap between their male and female employees. This was a measure of the difference in the average pay of men and women across the institution regardless of job role. The mean gender pay gap at Keele had been calculated at 22.1%. It was noted that the Equality & Diversity Committee would be reviewing the results and that the narrative would be circulated to Council once it was available.
- The Office for Students (OfS) officially came into existence on 1st January 2018.
- The Vice-Chancellor noted that, since the papers had been circulated, the University had received a letter from HEFCE on its annual assessment of institutional risk. HEFCE uses two categories of risk, 'not at higher risk' and 'at higher risk'. The latest assessment of Keele's institutional risk was issued in a letter dated 7th February 2018, which indicated that Keele was not at higher risk. This was based on the 2016-2017 accountability returns. A copy of the letter was on the password protected section of the Council website.

2B. FINANCE REPORT

(i) Management Accounts

Council received the period five management accounts for the month ended 31st December 2017.

(ii) HEFCE Annual Efficiency Return

Council received the University's Annual Efficiency Return, which was a new report to HEFCE in order that it could report to the Government on the efficiency of the HEFCE-funded HEIs. The return had been submitted by the deadline 31st January 2018 but noting that approval was being sought from Council in 15th February 2018, which was in line with HEFCE's guidelines given the late production of the return guidance.

Council **resolved:**

That the Annual Efficiency Return be approved as submitted to HEFCE.

2C. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Council received a report from the Secretary to Council, which included the following:

- The Appointment Panel established to appoint a new Pro-Chancellor had shortlisted two candidates for interview. The interviews would take place on 7th March 2018 and the Panel would present its recommendation to Council for approval by correspondence.
- The Appointment Panel established to appoint a new Honorary Treasurer and lay member of Council had shortlisted one candidate for the position of Honorary Treasurer and five candidates for the position of lay member. The candidates would be interviewed on 21st February 2018.

- Council received the report of the 2017-2018 Review of the Effectiveness of Council, which had been led by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE). Council had participated in a workshop facilitated by the LFHE that morning on the report and its findings, which had been an extremely useful session. The findings of the review were:
 - Endorsement that the University complies with the CUC HE Code of Governance;
 - Particularly impressive features of governance at Keele include the spirit and commitment to operating as an open and transparent governing body, the culture of the governing body and the quality of secretarial and clerking support provided;
 - The report also included 14 recommendations that Council had begun to reflect on, the most notable related to its own diversity and further steps to strengthen academic governance;
 - The report captured a number of areas where the performance of the Council and governance generally was regarded as sector leading;
 - An action plan would be developed and shared with Council.
- A Council Panel had considered a Stage 3 staff grievance on 25th January 2018 and the recommendations of the Panel were presented for approval.

Council **resolved**:

That the recommendations of the Panel be approved.

- Council received a revised Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

Council **resolved**:

That the policy and procedure be approved.

- Council received the University's Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2017, which was a requirement of The Modern Slavery Act 2015 and needed to be approved by Council each year. It was noted that, from next year, it would be presented in November with the statutory accounts and accountability returns.

Council **resolved**:

That the statement be approved.

- It was reported that the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had published a draft Remuneration Code for consultation on 9th January 2018. The proposals had been reviewed by the University and, on the whole, seemed fair and appropriate. It was noted the decision had already been taken to remove the Vice-Chancellor as a member of the Senior Remuneration Committee and that he should not be in attendance in meetings when his own remuneration was under discussion, which was presented to Council for approval elsewhere in the Secretary's Report. The Senior Remuneration Committee would receive a copy of the draft Code at its meeting on 23rd March 2018 and further details would be presented to Council once the final Code has been issued.

- Council **resolved**:

That the amendments to the following Regulations be approved on the recommendation of the Senate:

- (i) Regulation 17: Senior Remuneration Committee

- (ii) Regulation 17: Nominations Committee
- (iii) Various Regulations referring to the Head of Governance & Student Conduct

- Council **resolved:**

That the following appointments be approved:

- (i) Professor Helen O’Sullivan as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- (ii) Rachel Adams as Director of Human Resources

- Council **resolved:**

That the rewards and promotions presented be approved.

- Council noted that 61 documents were signed under seal since the previous meeting.
- To note that Chair’s action was taken on two occasions since the previous meeting. It was agreed that, in future, details of the action taken be provided in the report

PART 3 - STRATEGIC UPDATE REPORTS

3A. STRATEGIC PLAN, KPI & RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Council received a report providing an update and overview of progress against aim three of the Strategic Plan, updates to the key performance indicators (KPIs) and changes to the Corporate Risk Register.

The paper provided a commentary on progress against aim three, which was “To deliver international excellence and impact in focused areas of research”.

Updates were provided on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, providing a supportive and focused research environment, international research partnerships, the postgraduate community, research integrity, research performance and funding to support research activity. Council was also briefed on the Research and Innovation Support Enhancement (RaISE) project, which was undertaken in 2017 to restructure research support services to improve the effectiveness of research administration.

Council noted the report.

3B. CAPITAL PROJECTS – COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

- (i) Capital Projects Update Report
Council received and noted an update on current, future and non-capital projects.
- (ii) Item commercial in confidence

PART 4 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

4A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) Report of the Meeting of the Senate

The Vice-Chancellor presented the report of the meeting of the Senate held on 6th December 2017, which included a copy of the 2016-2017 Library Annual Report as requested by Council. He once again extended his gratitude to the staff in the Library (and their families) whose response to the flood last year had been exceptional. Council asked whether they could be recognised for what they had done and it was noted that they could be considered for an award under the new Staff Award Scheme that was running for the first time this year.

(b) Report of the Meeting of the Senior Remuneration Committee

The Vice-Chancellor left the room for this item.

The Chair of the Senior Remuneration Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 23rd November 2017. She reported that a greater emphasis was placed on teaching than research in promotions, which needed to be addressed. She confirmed that the Vice-Chancellor had not been present in the meeting when his own remuneration had been discussed and the Pro-Chancellor confirmed that this had always been the practice at Keele. The Pro-Chancellor also reported that he undertook the Vice-Chancellor's appraisal and Mrs Bucknell chaired the Senior Remuneration Committee that recommended his pay award in order to provide a separation between the two. Council welcomed the new, more comprehensive report.