

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 at 4.30 pm via Microsoft Teams.

Membership:

Ingrid Barker	A
Luc Brown	✓
Peter Bungard	✓
Paul Crichard	✓
Nicola de longh (Chair)	✓
Chris Fung	✓
Steve Gardiner	✓
Dai Jones	✓
Stephen Marston	✓
Allen Mawby	✓
Steve Mawson	✓
Stephen Maycock	✓
Dr Andrew Misiura	A
Imaani Mitchell	✓
Mehjabeen Patrick	A
Daniel Ramsay	✓
Pam Sissons	✓
David Soutter	✓
The Rt Revd Robert Springett	✓
Dr Peter Warry	✓

Board Apprentice:

Sophie Perret	✓
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In attendance:

Stewart Dove (for C.20.112)	Student Registrar
Jo Evans (for C.20.112)	Head of Employability and Careers
Professor David James	Dean (Academic Development)
Jess Lawson (for C.20.104, 109 and 110)	Head of Planning
Dr Amanda Pill (for C.20.113)	Director (Quality Enhancement)
James Seymour (for C.20.106)	Director (Communications, Marketing, and Student Recruitment)
Camille Stallard	Chief Financial Officer
Dr Matthew Andrews (Officer)	University Secretary and Registrar
Penny Gravestock (Minutes)	Assistant Secretary to Council
Andy Shenstone (Observing)	Advance HE

C.20.96 Prayer

The Rt Revd Robert Springett opened the meeting with a prayer.

C.20.97 Welcome and Apologies

Received: apologies for absence from Ingrid Barker, Dr Andrew Misiura, and Mehjabeen Patrick. It was noted that Andy Shenstone from Advance HE would be observing the meeting as part of the governance review.

C.20.98 Business of the Agenda

Noted: that there had been no requests to unstar any items on the agenda and that therefore it would be assumed that papers C/74/20 and C/75/20 had been noted as stated. It was also noted that the items on the agenda may be moved to make best use of the time available.

C.20.99 Declarations of Interest

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest declared.

C.20.100 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2020

Resolved: the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 30 June 2020.

C.20.101 Matters Arising (C/60/20)

[C.20.81] *CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report*

Noted: that the results of the Graduate Outcomes Survey would be considered under agenda item C.20.112.

C.20.102 Chair's Business (C/61/20)

C.20.102.1.01 Received and noted: the Chair's report, outlining key meetings and focus areas since 30 June 2020, and an update on the work around the University's Vision to 2030.

C.20.102.1.02 Considered: the Vision for 2030 and proposed next steps. Council discussed:

- a. whether reference to the University transforming lives was appropriate;
- b. that the wording of the statement should be empowering for staff and students;
- c. whether the Vision had been tested with staff, noting that it had been discussed with some, but not widely. Time and space would be needed to allow staff to consider and engage with proposals as it was important that a collaborative process was undertaken. The presentation of a statement seen as just being agreed by Council would not encourage ownership. Council discussed the best way to engage staff in discussion, whether it would be better to put a proposed statement for consultation or to use a more 'blank sheet' approach which would allow a sense of co-creation. The potential use of focus groups was suggested;
- d. the role of Council in discussions, and the need to reflect on the process its members had undertaken to get to the current position;
- e. how the Vision fitted with the current Strategy, building on the existing values and strengths, and whether the two documents should be tied to the same five-year lifetime. It was noted that the current Strategic Plan was set until 2022 and that work would start to develop the next Plan for the following five years;
- f. that the Vision should not be considered in isolation, but to note that it was part of a complex framing of the University's purposes and goals to ensure staff understood their part in the Vision and Mission, Strategy, and Operating and Departmental plans. It was therefore important that staff should be allowed to go through a similar journey undertaken by Council Members.

C.20.102.1.03 Resolved: it was agreed that it was important to frame the discussion of the Vision as part of the development of the Strategic Plan and the associated goals, and that the Chairs' Group should work with the Executive to establish the best way to take the process forward.

ACTION: Council Chairs' Group

C.20.102.2 Received: updates from each of the Committee Chairs on key discussions held at recent meetings:

- a. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 8 July and 15 September 2020;
- b. Audit Committee, 18 September 2020;
- c. Remuneration and Human Resources Committee: 6 October 2020.

The Chair updated Members on discussions from the recent meetings of the Chairs' Group, noting that all items would be considered elsewhere on the agenda.

C.20.102.3 Noted: that since the last meeting on 30 June 2020, there had been one use of the Company Seal on 9 September 2020, a licence to assign underlease of part relating to Delta Place in Cheltenham, between the University and Cheltenham Borough Council, Eagle Star (Leasing) Ltd, Zurich Assurance Ltd, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. There had also been one decision made by circulation. In response to an email sent on 28 July 2020, Council approved:

- a. the appointment of David Soutter as Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee from 7 October 2020;
- b. the continuation of Allen Mawby as a member of Finance and General Purposes Committee from 7 October 2020 until the end of his term of office as an External Member of Council on 7 December 2020;
- c. that to improve continuity during the handover period, Allen Mawby would remain a member of the Chairs' Group until the end of his term of office.

C.20.103 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/62/20)

C.20.103.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held on 30 June 2020. The following were highlighted:

- a. potential government policy changes for higher education, noting in particular focus on graduate employment;
- b. the future of the Humanities subject community, noting:
 - recent trends in recruitment and the budget gap for 2020/21;
 - that no expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy had been received in a first round of consultation, and that therefore potential compulsory redundancies of up to 4 FTE were being investigated together with opportunities for redeployment to other

- areas of the University;
- that once the first phase of short-term savings and staff restructuring had been completed, a second phase would review the longer term options to create a sustainable future for Humanities;
- c. the University's position in recent league tables;
- d. an update on industrial relations;
- e. the continued progress with the Swindon and Wiltshire Institute of Technology.

- C.20.103.2 Considered: the current review of Humanities, discussing in particular:
- a. the letter of representation received from staff and others in the sector;
 - b. the financial position for the Humanities area;
 - c. the role of Council in the review in light of the University's Foundation and the Articles of Association, particularly the second phase which would have a longer-term strategic focus. The University Secretary and Registrar confirmed Council's responsibility for the institution's educational character and mission, noting that it would also be appropriate to receive recommendations from the Vice-Chancellor.

- C.20.103.3 Resolved: Council
- a. endorsed the management action being taken to secure the savings needed within the Humanities subject community to address the budget shortfall in 2020/21;
 - b. noted that the issues raised in the letter of representation had been addressed during the consultation with staff;
 - c. requested that the Executive should present to Council options from the second stage review of the long-term viability of humanities within the University. Those options would need to be realistic and evidence-based.

ACTION: Vice-Chancellor

Members were invited to volunteer to act as sounding boards for the Executive prior to the Executive putting forward options for consideration by Council.

C.20.104 CONFIDENTIAL: Covid-19: University Response – update (C/63/20)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.20.105 Students' Union Update (C/64/20)

- C.20.105.1 Received and noted: the Students' Union (SU) update. It was reported that the majority of students were working well with the University during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that any issues were being dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

- C.20.105.2 Considered:
- a. student opinions on the current situation, including the need to pay for accommodation with reduced on-campus teaching. It was reported that students had understood the situation when moving into halls and that the majority were content. It was noted, however, that there was a national movement raising concerns around the amount of money students were having to pay in light of increased online provision and that had led to a number of petitions;
 - b. that there had been no reported incidents of students not being welcomed back to the area by local residents, noting that the University continued to liaise with Cheltenham and Gloucester community groups;
 - c. students were engaging well with online teaching and learning, noting that some preferred to contribute virtually rather than face-to-face;
 - d. professional service staff that were not as involved in student support continued to work at home with new working practices well established;
 - e. the support offered for students, noting in particular the toll on mental health during the pandemic, particularly for those away from home for the first time. It was reported that a campaign would start in mid-November 2020 to check how students were getting on, and that a buddy scheme was being set up. It was also noted that spaces had been created on campus to allow students to meet and interact in a safe manner.

C.20.106 2020/21 Recruitment Cycle Update (C/65/20)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.20.107 CONFIDENTIAL: 2019/20 Draft Financials (C/66/20)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.20.108 CONFIDENTIAL: Final 2020/21 Budget (C/67/20)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.20.109 Operating Plan and Institutional KPIs 2019/20 – end of year report (C/68/20)

C.20.109.1 Received: the end of year report for the institutional Operating Plan and associated key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2019/20. It was noted that overall good progress had been made despite the need to adjust priorities due to the pandemic. Where performance indicators had been reported as red, action was being taken to improve business performance and mitigate or reduce the scale of risk.

C.20.109.2 Noted: the 2019/20 performance to date.

C.20.110 Operating Plan and Institutional KPIs 2020/21 (C/69/20)

C.20.110.1 Received: the draft Operating Plan and supporting institutional key performance indicators for 2020/21, as considered by Audit Committee on 18 September 2020. It was reported that the plan was aligned to School and Departmental business plans and included the key priorities related to managing the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to more blended learning. The Head of Planning outlined key challenges and opportunities for the University over the year, including the move out of the demographic dip and its affect on recruitment, and potential new policy developments related to fees, etc. In response to a query, the correlation between the actions outlined and the KPIs was clarified, noting that actions would drive improvements in the performance indicators.

C.20.111.2 Resolved: Council reviewed and affirmed the Operating Plan and KPIs for 2020/21.

C.20.111 Risk Management Report: Revised Risk Register and Action Plan 2020/21 (C/70/20)

C.20.111.1 Received: the Risk Register and Action Plan for 2020/21, noting in particular the process undertaken (starting with the annual risk workshop held on 12 August 2020), and the summary of changes compared with the 2019/20 Register.

C.20.111.2 Resolved: Council considered and approved the Risk Register and Action Plan for 2020/21 on the recommendation of Audit Committee.

C.20.112 Graduate Outcomes Survey Outcomes (C/71/20)

C.20.112.1 Received: a paper setting out proposed actions in response to the first release of data from the new Graduate Outcomes Survey, published in June and July 2020. The Student Registrar noted that the Survey had replaced the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) exercise which meant it was difficult to compare results, but that the outcomes had been disappointing for the University. It was noted that some sector concerns around coding, data quality, and response rates had been raised. The action plan was presented, highlighting the importance of supporting students' understanding of the survey and encouraging participation.

C.20.112.2 Considered:

- a. the level of ambition to raise the University's position compared with the sector;
- b. whether local industry provided opportunities for students to undertake placements, and whether students were keen to enter the local job market. The effect on the pandemic on placement opportunities was noted, but it was reported that a good proportion of graduates did stay in the county;
- c. plans for the appointment of a 'Director of Employability' to drive strategic development in this area. A concern was raised that the appointment of a role could take ownership away from senior academic leadership and that there may be other ways to use the resource to make a difference in a shorter timescale. It was reported that, whilst there were some immediate action that could be taken to try to improve results, the University felt it would be useful to have additional experienced senior capacity to build its approach to employability to get its students into graduate jobs. It was also noted that employability was included within the business planning process with all Schools and that the new programme board, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, included an academic lead from each School;
- d. the importance of raising understanding by students of the importance of the survey and work being undertaken with the University's marketing staff to identify potential ways to achieve that.

C.20.112.2 Resolved: Council considered the report and supported the proposed next steps.

C.20.113 National Student Survey Outcomes and Follow Up Actions (C/72/20)

C.20.113.1 Received: a paper presenting the outcomes of the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2020, including consideration of the feedback underlying the scores achieved and the refreshed approach to the follow up that would focus on subject community meetings within Schools and separate meetings with Professional Departments.

C.20.113.2 Considered:

- a. the work being undertaken to investigate more deeply where issues had been raised previously and had not been addressed;
- b. the need to be forensic in identifying where there were problems and the challenge for staff and Council to ensure that the next steps were taken. It was reported that there was a commitment amongst staff to address issues differently following the latest survey looking at the subject community level, led by the Vice-Chancellor, and with the professional services;
- c. the continued need to raise awareness amongst students of the subject and course representation system that was coordinated by the Students' Union, so that there was a greater understanding of how feedback was addressed.

C.20.113.4 Received: the NSS outcomes and the analysis of the results. Council also discussed the plans for the refreshed approach to the NSS follow up.

C.20.114 Council Schedule of Business (C/73/20)

Considered: the Schedule of Business, and Council made no recommendations for change.

C.20.115 Council Member Register of Interests* (C/74/20)

Noted: the declarations of interest received from Council's members.

C.20.116 Internal Audit Operational Plan (2020/21) and Audit Strategy to 2022* (C/75/20)

Noted: the internal audit plan for 2020/21 as approved by Audit Committee.

C.20.117 Minutes from Council Committees*

Noted: that the minutes from the following meetings would be available from <https://connectglosac.sharepoint.com/sites/UniversityCommittees>:

- a. Academic Board, 1 July 2020;
- b. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 8 July 2020;
- c. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 15 September 2020;
- d. Audit Committee, 18 September 2020.

C.20.118 Any Other Business

C.20.118.1 Noted: that it was the last meeting of Council for Dai Jones, whose term of office would finish at the end of October 2020. Council thanked him for his support as the Academic Board Member of Council. It was also noted that Dr Adeela Shafi would be joining Council as the new Academic Board Member of Council from 1 November 2020.

C.20.118.2 Resolved: Council agreed to delegate authority to the Council Chairs' Group at its meeting to be held on 21 October 2020 to sign off the fees submission required by the Office for Students. Members were assured that there were no planned changes to the fees structure and that the budget for 2020/21 (as approved under C.20.108) had been based on existing fee levels.

C.20.119 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 24 November 2020, at 9.15 am

C.20.120 RESERVED BUSINESS: Report from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

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Action list for the meeting held 6 October 2020

Minute number	Action	Responsibility
C.20.102 C.20.102.1.03	<i>Chair's Business</i> <u>Resolved:</u> it was agreed that it was important to frame the discussion of the Vision as part of the development of the Strategic Plan and the associated goals, and that the Chairs' Group should work with the Executive to establish the best way to take the process forward.	Council Chairs' Group
C.20.103 C.20.103.3	<i>CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report</i> [Council] requested that the Executive should present to Council options from the second stage review of the long-term viability of humanities within the University. Those options would need to be realistic and evidence-based.	Vice-Chancellor