

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 at 11 am via Microsoft Teams.

Academic Board Membership (for C.21.01):

Rob Blagden	✓
Dr Rachael Bullingham	✓
Andrea Chalk	✓
Anne Dawson	✓
Lorraine Dixon	✓
Stewart Dove	✓
Angela France	✓
David Last	✓
Carol Loade	✓
Neil Leighton	✓
Amanda Pill	✓
Dr Matthew Reed	✓
Suzanne Sheldon	✓
Richard Salkeld	A
Carrie Wasley	A

University Council Membership:

Ingrid Barker	✓
Luc Brown (<i>also on Academic Board</i>)	✓
Peter Bungard	✓
Paul Crichard (from C.21.09)	✓
Nicola de longh (Chair)	✓
Chris Fung	✓
Steve Gardiner	✓
Stephen Marston (Chair of Academic Board)	✓
Steve Mawson (until C.21.17)	✓
Stephen Maycock	✓
Dr Andrew Misiura (<i>also on Academic Board</i>)	✓
Imaani Mitchell (<i>also on Academic Board</i>)	✓
Mehjabeen Patrick (until C.21.17)	✓
Daniel Ramsay	✓
Dr Adeela Shafi (from C.21.09, <i>also on Academic Board</i>)	✓
Pamela Sissons	✓
Elonka Soros	✓
David Soutter	✓
The Rt Revd Robert Springett	✓
Dr Peter Warry	✓

Board Apprentices:

Julia Hopkins	✓
Sophie Perret	✓

In attendance:

Julie-Ann Brooks (for C.21.01)	Director (Human Resources)
Professor David James (<i>also on Academic Board</i>)	Dean (Academic Development)
Jess Lawson (for C.21.01, 11, and 18)	Head of Planning
Camille Stallard	Chief Financial Officer
Julie Walkling (Observing)	Incoming External Member of Council
Dr Nigel Wichall (for C.21.01)	Director (Estates)
Dr Matthew Andrews (Officer, <i>also on Academic Board</i>)	University Secretary and Registrar
Penny Gravestock (Minutes)	Assistant Secretary to Council

C.21.01 Workshop on the lasting Impact of COVID-19 on the UniversityC.21.01.1 Topic 1: Student Expectations for Teaching and Learning

C.21.01.1.1 Received: a presentation from the Dean of Academic Development (AD) on student expectations for teaching and learning.

C.21.01.1.2 Considered points in the presentation relating to the following:

- a. Personal Tutoring, including students currently enjoying the removal of the need to visit an 'office' for meetings, and the change in dynamic with students / tutors being at home. It was questioned whether the University needed to think about how it 'trained' students for the employability skill for conducting a semi-formal meeting in someone else's space.
- b. Module Tutoring, including subject differences in terms of access to specialist facilities / equipment, students were generally enjoying the online (off campus) learning experience but missed the social aspects of being on campus, the 'guided' aspect of independent learning was improving, and the challenge for the University to establish how it would work in future when students were on campus and others chose to continue off-campus.
- c. Learning Design, including technology enabling the University to get close to the actual learning process, students enjoyed being able to engage deeply with resources and collaborate with peers / staff, opportunities for sharing and collaboration in real time in a synchronous session, more opportunities to bring employers / practitioners into the classroom, and how the University could incentivise to keep up the momentum of change.

- d. Student-centred learning, including individual preferences to optimize learning, a focus on the learning process and smaller 'chunks' allowed better pacing, revisiting, revision etc., and as upskilling was critical, the need to consider how to best train academic staff.
- e. Online exams, including semester one of 2020/21 exams conducted online successfully, work to ensure a seamless end-to-end assessment process, cost reductions as a result of using remote proctoring, and it providing a framework for new assessment options.
- f. Collaborative Partners, including technology enabling the University to collaborate more deeply, more opportunities for remote 'guest' teaching and student collaboration / exchange (without the travel), and a framework was needed to realise the opportunities.

C.21.01.1.3 Noted:

- a. The Dean of AD considered the two biggest challenges to be courses that required access to specialist equipment and facilities, and issues facing students who did not have a good remote environment for learning and access to technology.
- b. It was confirmed that the student experiences reflected in the presentation had been gathered through anecdotal feedback from students that had been pulled together by academic staff, but that the University also planned to survey students.

C.21.01.2 Topic 2: Working Practices for Staff

C.21.01.2.1 Received: a presentation from the Director of Human Resources on working practices for staff.

C.21.01.2.2 Noted points in the presentation relating to the following:

- a. The University's approach to flexible working prior to COVID-19.
- b. Reflections on some of the experiences of managers and staff over the last 10 months due to the COVID-19 restrictions, including successes and challenges, such as missing water cooler moments and the physical feeling of being part of a team, and multiple demands of home schooling / caring responsibilities, increased workloads etc.
- c. The next steps in considering future remote and home working arrangements, including the national picture, what the University needed to think about, the vision in order to ensure that the student experience was at the forefront whilst considering how to also meet the needs of staff, and the timeline for the proposed new guidance and / or toolkits and support around remote working.

C.21.01.3 Topic 3: The Future Purpose of the Campus Environment

C.21.01.3.1 Received: a presentation from the Director of Estates on the future purpose of the campus environment.

C.21.01.3.2 Noted points in the presentation relating to the following:

- a. The pandemic highlighted that connection was fundamental, and that future blended delivery needed to provide resilience through agility and flexibility.
- b. The need to be mindful that the change that was occurring was much more than just COVID-19, for example, future carbon targets and the costs to update the existing estate to meet those targets.
- c. Reflections regarding the future estate relating to: Space (e.g. how much space did the University need, did it have space that was fit for purpose, 3rd space or social learning space, support / Helpzone / faith spaces, staff workspace, etc.); Technology (e.g. classrooms being seamlessly connected to digital services, use of virtual and augmented reality, connectivity to systems would be critical, what technology would make a difference to the student experience, recruitment and retention, etc.); and Campus Operations (e.g. would the facilities management landscape change post-COVID).

C.21.01.4 Considered for each of the three areas below, what changes the University should consider to existing practices to meet changed expectations in a post-pandemic environment:

- a. What behavioural changes will the University need to respond to?
- b. What behavioural changes might the University want to encourage?
- c. What developments might the University need to consider to its physical and virtual facilities, or to its ways of working, to accommodate these changes?

C.21.01.5 Resolved: five break-out groups made notes of their discussion regarding each of the three areas.

Subsequent to the meeting, consolidated notes from the break-out groups were circulated to members and attendees.

- C.21.02 Prayer**
The Rt Revd Robert Springett opened the meeting with a prayer.
- C.21.03 Welcome and Apologies**
- C.21.03.1 Received: apologies for late arrival from Paul Crichard and Dr Adeela Shafi.
- C.21.03.2 Noted: that it was the first meeting for the following: Elonka Soros, new External Member of Council from 11 January 2021, Julia Hopkins, new Board Apprentice from 1 February 2021, and Julie Walkling, who would be joining Council as an External Member from 1 August 2021, and was attending meetings until then as an observer. Each gave a brief introduction about themselves.
- C.21.04 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/13/21 – C/18/21 had been approved or noted as stated
- C.21.05 Declarations of Interest**
Received: declarations of interest from Peter Bungard and Steve Mawson for discussions regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme under C.21.10 due to their roles at Gloucestershire County Council.
- C.21.06 Minutes of the meetings held on 24 November and 22 December 2020**
Resolved: the minutes were agreed as accurate records of the meetings held on 24 November and 22 December 2020.
- C.21.07 Matters Arising (C/01/21)**
[C.20.103.3] *Matters Arising: CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report*
Noted: that a further report from the review of Humanities would be presented to Council at the meeting to be held in May 2021.
ACTION: Vice-Chancellor
- C.21.08 Chair's Business (C/02/21)**
- C.21.08.1 Received and noted: the Chair's report, outlining key meetings and focus areas since 24 November 2020. The Chair congratulated the Vice-Chancellor on his appointment as Non-Executive Board Member of the Care Quality Commission.
- C.21.08.2 Received: updates from each of the Committee Chairs on key discussions held at recent meetings:
- a. Council and Foundation Standing Group 24 November 2020;
 - b. Governance and Nominations Committee, 9 December 2020;
 - c. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 19 January 2021;
 - d. Audit Committee, 22 January 2021.
- C.21.08.3 Noted: that since the last full meeting on 24 November 2020, there had been no use of the Company Seal nor any exercise of delegation. There had, however, been a number of matters agreed by circulation. Council agreed the appointment of Elonka Soros and Julie Walkling as External Members (from 11 January and 1 August 2021 respectively), and Julia Hopkins as Board Apprentice (from 1 February 2021). The following Committee memberships were also agreed:
- a. Elonka Soros to join Remuneration and Human Resources Committee;
 - b. Julie Walkling to join Governance and Nominations Committee on her appointment to Council;
 - c. Paul Crichard and Imaani Mitchell to join Honorary Awards Committee;
 - d. Steve Gardiner to join Finance and General Purposes Committee;
 - e. Steve Maycock to join Council and Foundation Standing Group.
- C.21.09 Students' Union Update (C/03/21)**
- C.21.09.1 Received and noted: the Students' Union (SU) update, noting in particular:
- a. the latest campaign to support and reassure students through the third national lockdown;
 - b. the results of the recent referendum, noting that the number of officer roles would be streamlined to allow the resource to be used elsewhere;
 - c. the recent 'town hall' held with the Vice-Chancellor.
- Council congratulated Imaani Mitchell who had been offered a place at the University to study a postgraduate certificate in education from September 2021.

C.21.09.2 Considered: how students were coping during the lockdown, noting the upset and distress that was being caused. It was reported that the town hall had proven useful and that it was hoped that further similar events would be held. It was also reported that additional hardship funding had been announced by the Government that day and that work would be undertaken to identify those who needed it. Council thanked the representatives of the Students' Union for their work.

C.21.10 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/62/20)

C.21.10.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held on 24 November 2020. The following were highlighted:

- a. recent announcements regarding a number of policy developments for higher education. It was noted that an extra meeting would be arranged for Council to allow time to discuss the issues further;
- b. the ongoing process to appoint a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, noting that a final stage of interviews would be held on 11 February 2021;
- c. the update on applications, noting that figures had increased since the publication of the paper, and that conversion work would continue to maximise acceptances;
- d. that the plans to introduce a new defined contribution pension scheme for new professional services staff had been announced in the recent Vice-Chancellor's newsletter. It was acknowledged that the move could cause concern but assurance was given that it would not affect existing staff;
- e. the Executive's response to the letter from the Office for Students instructing the University to review whether what was being delivered to students was consistent with what had been offered and represented appropriate quality, and whether therefore the University was compliant with obligations under consumer protection legislation.

C.21.10.2 Considered:

- a. an update on the Humanities review, noting that the phase 2 scoping paper had been sent to the subject community and that the actions outlined in the paper were in progress. It was confirmed that an update would be presented to Council at the May 2021 meeting, and that the conclusions would be made available to the subject community and then all staff;
- b. the introduction of new pension arrangements for incoming professional services staff as approved at the meeting held in November 2020. It was confirmed that the University was required to offer the Local Government Pension Scheme to staff not on academic contracts, and that therefore it would be necessary to set up a subsidiary company to introduce the new defined contribution scheme. It was noted that there was a concern amongst staff that a separate company would allow different terms and conditions to be introduced, but an assurance was given that the driver to introduce the subsidiary was to allow the University to better manage its pension expenditure and that there would be broad consistency and comparability in the terms and conditions of the new subsidiary;
- c. the variation in student applications between different Schools.

C.21.10.3 Resolved: Council

- a. discussed the developments set out in the paper;
- b. noted and endorsed the Executive's conclusions in response to the Office for Students' letter of 14 January 2021 set out in paragraphs 13 – 23 of the paper.

C.21.11 CONFIDENTIAL: Covid-19 Update (C/05/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.12 CONFIDENTIAL: Estates Opportunity in Gloucester (C/06/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.13 CONFIDENTIAL: December 2020/21 Finance Report and Forecast 1 (C/07/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.14 CONFIDENTIAL: Finance Strategy Review and 2021/22 Budget (C/08/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.15 CONFIDENTIAL: Ofs Long-term Forecast (C/09/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.16 University of Gloucestershire Research Strategy and Action Plan (C/10/21)

C.21.16.1 Received: a document that set out the University's Research Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2021 – 2028. The Dean (Academic Development) reported that the development of the Strategy had involved many discussions across the University and would support the institution as it moved towards the next Research Excellence Framework cycle.

C.21.16.2 Considered:

- a. the position of the University's research ambitions in the sector, noting comparability with many other post-92 institutions;
- b. the desire and drive of academic staff to undertake research activity and to contribute to new knowledge;
- c. how the University was able to ensure that research activity supported its strategic priorities (for example, in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)). It was noted that the agreed research priority areas provided a structure, but that it was important to balance specific work that supported the institution's priorities with allowing staff to be motivated by driving the research agenda in areas of particular interest. It was confirmed that there was direction setting, but supported by working with staff and peer groups of researchers to look at key areas. It was also noted that research themes could only be built where there was a base of students, for example in Nursing and Allied Health where numbers had expanded in recent years;
- d. the University's aims to increase quality-related research (QR) funding as outcomes improved (noting the uncertainty around increased government funding and sector competition), and to maintain as much progress in the next REF as had been achieved for the 2021 round.

C.21.16.3 Resolved: Council:

- a. approved the proposed strategy and action plan;
- b. noted that the strategy will feed into the discussions about to commence to develop the next University corporate Strategic Plan.

C.21.17 CONFIDENTIAL: Annual Review of Partnerships (C/11/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.18 Developing the Next Strategic Plan (C/12/21)

C.21.18.1 Received: a paper that set out the proposed approach and timeline for development of the new strategic plan for approval by Council and publication in Spring 2022. The Head of Planning noted that:

- a. work would be linked with the Ambition Plan with an update presented to Council in April 2021;
- b. activity would be taken forward through thematic working groups, with final approval for the Strategic Plan being sought from Council early in 2022.

C.21.18.2 Considered:

- a. a suggestion that external consultancy could be used to chair working group meetings. Whilst it was accepted that external input was useful to widen discussions, there was a reluctance to commit to any more expenditure than was necessary. It was noted that Members of Council could provide an element of externality;
- b. whether the timing for the review was appropriate, particularly in light of the pandemic and other challenges for the sector. There was a reluctance to delay the work as it was felt to be even more important to have an agreed strategic direction for the University in times of uncertainty. It was suggested that the high-level strategic priorities should be considered first, with underpinning operational structure to be decided later to limit the detail that would need to be undone if the environment changed. It was also suggested that there should be an early focus on building the University's capacity for flexibility.

C.21.18.3 Resolved: Council reviewed and approved the proposed approach and timeline for development of the next University Strategic Plan. It was also agreed that a member of Students' Union staff (for example, the Chief Executive Officer) should be included in discussions.

C.21.19 The Higher Education Code of Governance 2020* (C/13/21)

Resolved: Council received and formally adopted the Code of Governance and noted that the recommendations contained within it would be considered alongside those from the Governance Review to ensure that the University was demonstrating best practice in the

sector. It was noted that the Code was a sector wide statement and that the University outlined its compliance as part of the Operating and Financial Review alongside the annual financial statements.

- C.21.20 Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice 2020* (C/14/21)**
Resolved: Council
 a. received and formally adopted the Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice;
 b. noted the actions agreed by Audit Committee.
- C.21.21 Council and its Committees: meeting dates for 2021/22 and 2022/23* (C/15/21)**
Resolved: Council considered and approved the proposed revisions to dates for 2021/22 and the new dates for 2022/23.
- C.21.22 Governance Review Update: Update on a response to the Advance HE report on governance effectiveness at the University* (C/16/21)**
Resolved: Council:
 a. noted the action taken to date reported in the paper in response to the governance report from Advance HE; and
 b. approved Audit and Risk Committee as the new name for the Audit Committee.
- C.21.23 CONFIDENTIAL: Apprenticeships Update* (C/17/21)**
 This item was discussed under Confidential Business.
- C.21.24 Council Schedule of Business (C/18/21)**
Noted: the Schedule of Business.
- C.21.25 Minutes from Council Committees***
Noted: that the minutes from the following meetings would be available from <https://connectglosac.sharepoint.com/sites/UniversityCommittees>:
 a. Council and Foundation Standing Group, 24 November 2020;
 b. Academic Board, 9 December 2020;
 c. Governance and Nominations Committee, 9 December 2020;
 d. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 19 January 2021;
 e. Audit Committee, 22 January 2021.
- C.21.26 Any Other Business**
Noted:
 a. the challenge from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to include cyber security into the University's teaching environment;
 b. a final welcome to the new members and attendees of Council, noting the opportunity for them to call with the Chair if it would be useful.
- C.21.27 Date of Next Meeting**
 Tuesday, 13 April 2021, at 9.15 am.

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Action list for the meeting held 2 February 2020

Minute number	Action	Responsibility
C.21.07	<i>Matters Arising</i> [C.20.103.3] <i>Matters Arising: CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report</i> <u>Noted:</u> that a further report from the review of Humanities would be presented to Council at the meeting to be held in May 2021.	Vice-Chancellor