

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Cardiff University Council held on Wednesday 14 January 2026 at 16:30 via Microsoft Teams

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Dr Andrew Glanfield, Dr Mario Gualano, Professor Urfan Khaliq, Stephen Mann, Liz McKenzie, Professor Wendy Lerner, Dr Ana Oliveira, Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo, Maria Pollard, Suzanne Rankin, Dr Siân Rees, John Shakeshaft, Professor Katherine Shelton, Sean Strong, Professor Damian Walford Davies, Craig Watkins, Dr Catrin Wood, Jennifer Wood.

Attendees: Laura Davies, Sally-ann Efstathiou, Thomas Hay, Victoria Holbrook, Siân Marshall [Minute taker], Dr Paula Sanderson and Darren Xiberras.

2405 Welcome and Preliminaries

All were welcomed to the meeting.

2406 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Beth Button, Louise Casella, and Dr Robert Weaver.

2407 Professional Services Transformation: Business case

The Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary gave a presentation.

Noted

- 2407.1 that a 45 day consultation had been undertaken on the proposed organisational structure; that this included around 200 engagement events, regular meetings with the Trade Unions and Students' Union, and c.1000 written responses; that a range of revisions had been made to the proposed organisational structure based on the consultation feedback received;
- 2407.2 that the revised business case had been reviewed by UEB and approved; that the senior leadership group and the Trade Unions had been briefed earlier in the day and the business case would be shared with Council and the wider University the following day; that meetings would be held with the Trade Unions and the Students' Union and an all-staff briefing held;
- 2407.3 that risks had been identified and risk mitigation strategies implemented;
- 2407.4 that there would be a further 45 day consultation period with individual staff affected during which regular meetings would continue to be held with the Trade Unions and the Students' Union; that a mapping of staff to the new roles and an analysis of training needs would be undertaken; that a transition plan would be developed and published; that it was planned for the new organisational structure to be in place by 01 August 2026;
- 2407.5 that a reduction of 365.5 Professional Services staff or c.11% of the PS workforce had been achieved through the Voluntary Severance Scheme and the operation of recruitment controls; that this had resulted in an annualised underlying saving of £13.8m (before pay inflation and increased costs of National Insurance); that further savings would be required from the review of Corporate and Technical Services planned for early 2026-27;
- 2407.6 that early student feedback on the hybs and hyb enquiry points had been positive;
- The following points were noted in the discussion and challenge from Council:
- 2407.7 that it was anticipated that the majority of staff would have minimal or no changes to their job roles; that a mapping exercise would be undertaken by HR in conjunction with managers;
- 2407.8 that there could be an impact on the delivery of some key activities in Schools, such as exam boards, from the range of transformation activities being undertaken at the same time;

- 2407.9 that the model for each hyb was based on student and staff numbers, expected footfall and location; that the new job descriptions for hyb staff had been designed to allow for the flexibility to move staff between hybs if required;
- 2407.10 that twenty-two staff had been accepted for voluntary redundancy where their roles had either changed significantly or no longer existed within the new structure; that some staff were not accepted for voluntary redundancy and may be disappointed by the outcome; that voluntary redundancy may be offered to some staff in limited circumstances, but would not be offered on a further open basis;
- 2407.11 that the combined impact of the changes to academic leadership roles, School structures and Professional Services had been considered; that transition plans would be key to mitigating the impact; that staff champion roles had been introduced to enable early identification and feedback of any issues; that regular feedback from staff and Heads of Schools would also be important to enable issues to be addressed at an early stage;
- 2407.12 that School staff were anxious about the changes to structures and roles and this was exacerbated in Schools also subject to mergers;
- 2407.13 that culture change would be required to ensure teams did not continue to work in silos; that matrix management and leadership structures were being clearly defined;
- 2407.14 that a commitment to ensuring no grade deflation had been made to the Trade Unions, unless staff requested to move into a lower-grade role;
- 2407.15 that Council commended the work being undertaken to standardise the structures and approach; that the importance of implementing an effective service model was acknowledged;
- 2407.16 that a six-month communications strategy and engagement plan had been developed, including to academic staff and staff in other Professional Services areas;
- 2407.17 that the required savings had been achieved; that payroll would need to be held at this level in future and would require close monitoring; [Part-Redacted]

Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo and Dr Catrin Wood left the meeting.

- 2407.18 that key external stakeholders had been notified of the changes; that the communications strategy included both proactive press notification and reactive communication responses;
- 2407.19 that the Students' Union was pleased that feedback had been taken on board regarding terminology and the location of the Centre for Student Life hyb; that the Students' Union would continue to share feedback collected from students;
- 2407.20 that the Students' Union was aware that students did not appear to fully understand the role and purpose of the hybs; that further communications would be provided to students directly as well as via student representatives and Schools in order to address this.

Resolved

- 2407.21 for the business case to be shared with the Chancellor and Pro Chancellors;
- 2407.22 for a summary of the savings achieved and further savings required to be provided to Council.