

Minutes of the Cardiff University Council Meeting held on 27 April 2023 at 10.00 in room 0.27A and 0.27B, Hadyn Ellis Building, Maindy Road, Cardiff.

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Vice-Chancellor, Angie Flores Acuna, Professor Rudolf Allemann, Professor Rachel Ashworth, Paul Baston, Judith Fabian, Professor Dame Janet Finch, Michael Hampson, Jan Juillerat, Jeremy Lewis, David Selway, John Shakeshaft, Dr Pretty Sagoo [Minutes 2127-2133], Professor Damian Walford Davies, Jennifer Wood, Agnes Xavier-Phillips.

Attendees: Eileen Brandreth [Minute 2126], Katy Dale [Minute taker], Laura Davies [Minute 2130], Rashi Jain, Sian Marshall, Claire Morgan [Minutes 2129-2131], Claire Sanders, Darren Xiberras, Professor Ian Weeks [Minute 2133] and Professor Roger Whitaker.

2118 Welcome and preliminaries

All were welcomed to the meeting.

2119 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor Marc Buehner, Gina Dunn, Christopher Jones, Dr Joanna Newman and Suzanne Rankin. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2120 Declarations of interest

The Chair reminded the Committee members of their duty to disclose any potential conflicts of interest. No declarations of interest were noted.

2121 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 February 2023 (22/536) were confirmed as a true and accurate record and were approved to be signed by the Chair.

2122 Matters Arising

Received and considered paper 22/538, 'Matters Arising'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

2122.1 that Council requested an update on the maintenance backlog programme and the dates for completion of this work; it was noted that work was underway for a condition survey of the estate.

2123 Items from the Chair

Received paper 22/534C, 'Chair's Action'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

2123.1 Council members were reminded of the deadline to express an interest in partaking in graduation ceremonies and events;

- 2123.2 that the deadline to submit expenses claims was now 60 days from the date of the expenditure/return date;
- 2123.3 that Varsity had taken place yesterday and Cardiff had won; thanks were extended to the Students' Union, Athletics Union, Claire Morgan, Stuart Vanstone and the team who had arranged the events; the range of activities on offer was also commended; it was noted that behaviour had generally been very positive and there had been no complaints to the Security team as yet;
- 2123.4 that the Chair's objectives had been set for the coming year and would be shared with Council.

2124 Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Received and considered paper 22/563C, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2124.1 [Redacted]
- 2124.2 [Redacted]
- 2124.3 [Redacted]
- 2124.4 [Redacted]
- 2124.5 that research awards were performing well, at £144m after 8 months; the best performing year previously totalled c.£150m for the full 12 months;
- 2124.6 that recruitment figures were positive, with undergraduate home doing particularly well; admissions processes had been reviewed in the light of the issues experienced last year; it was clarified that the University was not allowed to charge differing tuition fees for different regions or areas;
- 2124.7 a query was raised in regard to the falling trend in postgraduate research applications in the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences in recent years (detailed in Appendix A of the report) and the possible explanations for this.
- Resolved
- 2124.7 to clarify if there are explanations for the falling trend in postgraduate research applications in the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences.

2125 Risk Register

Received and considered paper 22/453HC, 'Risk Register.' The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2125.1 [Redacted]
- 2125.2 [Redacted]
- 2125.3 [Redacted]
- 2125.4 [Redacted]

2125.5 [Redacted]

2125.6 [Redacted]

2125.7 [Redacted]

Resolved

2125.8 to approve the updated risk register;

2125.9 to review the additional risk identified in 2125.6 for inclusion on the register.

2126 Cyber Security Business Case

Received and considered paper 22/458HC, 'University Cyber Security Programme.' The Chief Operating Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

2126.1 the Chief Information Officer joined the meeting;

2126.2 [Redacted]

2126.3 [Redacted]

2126.4 [Redacted]

2126.5 [Redacted]

2126.6 [Redacted]

2126.7 [Redacted]

2126.8 [Redacted]

2126.9 [Redacted]

Resolved

2126.10 to approve the business case, specifically:

1. creation of an appropriately resourced Cyber Security Programme to mitigate the cyber risks faced by the University;
2. an initial investment of [Figure Redacted] across a 3-year implementation programme (spanning 2022/23 to 2025/26) funded from cash surplus generated in 2021/22;
3. the need for additional recurrent revenue expenditure of [Figure Redacted] over the same period, with incremental uplifts of [Figure Redacted] in 2023/24 rising to [Figure Redacted] in 2025/26 to safeguard the University's cyber security posture;

Eileen Brandreth (Chief Information Officer) left the meeting.

2127 Report from the Students' Union President

Received and considered paper 22/561 'Report from the Students' Union President'. The Vice-President Postgraduate spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2127.1 that Spring elections had been held and details of next year's team was contained in the paper; Angie Flores Acuna was welcomed as next year's President; it was noted that the VP Welfare role would not be appointed to, and the responsibilities of the role distributed between other officers; a VP Welsh Language, Community and Culture had been introduced;
- 2127.2 that the Students' Union had joined with the University to support this year's Pride Cymru;
- 2127.3 that work had been undertaken to progress motions from the AGM; the membership and terms of reference for the task and finish group for the "cops off campus" item had been finalised; this group would look into achieving what students had asked for whilst maintaining the relationship with the police;
- 2127.4 the Students' Union had continued feed your flat events, supported LGBTQ+ History month, held a Palentines event and extended their cost of living support with free hot drinks at Heath Park and in Postgraduate Study Zones;
- 2127.5 that upcoming events included Heath Park on tour, continued revision aid and support, and the Enriching Student Life Awards.

Resolved

- 2127.6 for Council members to inform the Chief Operating Officer should they wish to attend the Enriching Student Life Awards.

2128 Students' Union Block Grant

Received and considered paper 22/461C, 'Students' Union Block Grant 2023-24'. The Chief Operating Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2128.1 that the paper had been produced in partnership with the Students' Union and reviewed by UEB and Finance and Resources Committee;
- 2128.2 the paper requested an in-year payment of [Figure Redacted] to bring this year's grant to a total of [Figure Redacted] (as last year);
- 2128.3 a request had been made for a Block Grant of [Figure Redacted] for 2023-24 and this had been agreed by UEB and Finance and Resources Committee at [Figure Redacted], with the possibility of an increase reviewed later in the year once the University's financial position was better known;
- 2128.4 that the Students' Union was reviewing its costs and discussions were being held around a way to enable easy production of a Block Grant ask;
- 2128.5 that despite an increase in student numbers, students were spending less due to the cost of living crisis;

2128.6 that it was suggested sustainability of the current funding model is reviewed, given circumstances such as students spending less, a reduced reliance on alcohol sales, the need to engage more with postgraduate and international students, and the change to music venues in Cardiff;

2128.7 that the Students' Union should review the possibility to pay the living wage, given the University was a Living Wage employer.

Resolved

2128.8 to approve that the Students' Union receives:

1. an in-year payment of [Figure Redacted] (in-line with similar payments made in 2020, 2021 and 2022) to bring the SU block grant for 2022-23 to £3.3m (the same as 2021-22);
2. a base block grant of [Figure Redacted] for 2023-24 and the possibility of this being increased to [Figure Redacted] be reviewed once the financial position of the University was better known;
3. consideration for the application processes for capital grants;

2128.9 for the financial model for the Students' Union to be reviewed;

2128.10 for the Students' Union to investigate whether the Living Wage can be paid.

2129 Update on Education and Student Experience Enhancement Activity

Received and considered paper 22/562 'Update on Education and Student Experience Enhancement Activity.' The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience joined the meeting to speak to this item.

Noted

2129.1 that there were no new areas of concern or surprise to raise to Council;

2129.2 that postgraduate students were being surveyed via the national Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and an internal survey; the results of these would be provided to Council in July to allow for two years of results;

2129.3 that the date of publication for the NSS survey was as yet unknown; sample data had also not yet been shared which prevented reports being built in advance; it was therefore unlikely results would be ready for the next meeting of Council;

2129.4 that the Education Performance Oversight Group were continuing to meet and focusing on the 7 subjects with higher levels of monitoring; there remained concerns around the Schools of Law and Politics, Computer Science and Informatics and Social Sciences, and work was being undertaken to determine how to build sustainable student experience in these areas to address concerns;

2129.5 that good progress had been made with the Business School on a number of areas and in relation to the Economics plans;

2129.6 that immediate action had been taken following the internal audit on results and marks; a Task and Finish Group had been established to review summer results and work towards ensuring a single process; the impact of the marking and assessment boycott was yet to be seen and could result in manual inputting of marks which was not desired; in order to address concerns for this year's results,

marks would be added to the system in plenty of time to allow checking and review before the issuing of transcripts.

2130 Closing the Feedback Loop

The Director of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment joined the meeting to present this item.

Noted

- 2130.1 that the campaign intended to demonstrate how feedback from students (both formally and informally) was being acted upon to improve their experience; this would be both physically (banners and posters) and digitally (social media and TV screens) and centred on the use of graphics;
- 2130.2 that good examples included installation of plugs at Arts and Social Sciences Library, new pitches at Llanrumney, capacity checks at libraries and free language lessons for all;
- 2130.3 that messages would be relevant to the locations and students in those locations;
- 2130.4 suggestion points would be added across campus to show feedback in action and also allow for further student feedback;
- 2130.5 the project had initially been delivered via a soft launch and its impact was being reviewed (e.g. through open rates, click-through rates etc.); the campaign would be extended into other areas and allow for students to vote for preferred ideas;

Teaching Excellence Campaign

- 2130.6 another project had been launched to celebrate the quality of teaching staff;
- 2130.7 this was mainly delivered through genuine and passionate videos which could be accessed by all, to inspire students, provide learning opportunities for staff and to celebrate teaching staff; it was intended to reflect the importance of teaching and research alongside each other, rather than being in competition;
- 2130.8 students had been approached to nominate great teaching staff;
- 2130.9 at present, there was no cross-over with the Enriching Student Life Awards; it was suggested videos from the award ceremony could be shared further to inspire more.

Laura Davies (Director of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment) left the meeting.

2131 Annual Enhancement Report

Received and considered paper 22/565 'Annual Enhancement Report 2021-22'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2131.1 that this was inaugural report and was not produced to meet a regulatory requirement;

- 2131.2 this this was intended as a comparator document to the Annual Quality Report (which centred on quality assurance) to provide detail of quality enhancement activities (i.e. how the student and academic experience was being improved);
- 2131.3 that quality enhancement was not developed in Wales and this report aimed to help the institution become more mature in evidencing its quality enhancement activities; this would prove very beneficial for future QAA visits and it was hoped these reports could be used as future evidence;
- 2131.4 the report centred on the strategy and its themes, and reviewed activities undertaken and how the impact of these activities was evidenced and evaluated; this showed differing levels of maturity in different areas;
- 2131.5 that the report was incorrectly marked for approval; this paper was for discussion as it was not required to be issued to a regulator;
- 2131.6 that the report was at an institutional level as methodologies for school, college and Professional Services levels were not yet developed;
- 2131.7 that the Education and Student Experience Committee had suggested a format of the measures of success following by narrative and this may be adopted for future versions;
- 2131.8 that the report provided evidence of good work undertaken and detail on the onward trajectory;
- 2131.9 that the Report from Senate (paper 22/535C) noted that Senate had wished Council to be informed of a perceived lack of engagement with School Education and Student Experience Committees and Boards of Studies on inputting to and developing strategy; it was noted that this note from Senate had centred on a particular School and this would be reviewed with that Head of School; the newly implemented education structure would be reviewed in the summer and this would help identify any issues with the relationship between School Education and Student Experience Committees and Boards of Studies;
- 2131.10 that the paper was well received by Council.

Claire Morgan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience) left the meeting.

2132 Finance Report

Received and considered paper 22/462C, 'Finance Report.' The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2132.1 that as at January 2023, there was a [Figure Redacted] YTD operating deficit which was [Figure Redacted] adverse to budget; this was due to income [Figure Redacted] lower than budget and research income [Figure Redacted] lower than budget, offset by [Figure Redacted] higher income from services rendered, [Figure Redacted] of funding body grants and [Figure Redacted] additional investment income;
- 2132.2 that pay costs were [Figure Redacted] lower than budget, though this had been impacted by the ex-gratia payment to staff in November 2022; further savings were expected due to a reduction in NI contributions;

- 2132.3 that non-pay costs were higher than budget, mainly due to increased premises expenditure of [Figure Redacted] from increases in SLA and utilities costs;
- 2132.4 that costs in relation to the STIP were higher than budgeted but underspends in 2021/22 had been rolled over to offset some of this;
- 2132.5 that investment losses were [Figure Redacted] YTD, with unrealised gains of [Figure Redacted] in January 2023;
- 2132.6 that the YTD deficit was [Figure Redacted] adverse to budget;
- 2132.7 that total operating funds were [Figure Redacted] at the end of January 2023, which was higher than the budgeted amount of [Figure Redacted], and reflected a strong cash position;
- 2132.8 that a full year operating deficit of [Figure Redacted] was being forecast at Q2, which showed a [Figure Redacted] positive variance to the Q1 forecast; this was [Figure Redacted] adverse to budget;
- 2132.9 that a pay uplift for all staff had been implemented in March 2023 of 2% or £1000 (whichever was greater);
- 2132.10 that there was cautious optimism that the end of year position would be better the budgeted but unlikely to be in a positive position; this was positive given the significant decrease in tuition fee income; the hard work to achieve this position was noted by Council;
- 2132.11 that a discussion was held on whether the cost savings were embedded long-term or due to delaying future costs; it was noted that there was work to do to ensure the institution had the right workload and contribution models; it was also noted that the funding model was not shared in advance which meant budget planning was further complicated; a discussion was held on the need to attract international students across all schools or to invest further in disciplines which did.

2133 Pro Vice-Chancellor College of Biomedical and Life Sciences presentation

The Pro Vice-Chancellor College of Biomedical and Life Sciences joined the meeting to present this item.

Noted

- 2133.1 that the schools within the College were mainly clinically focussed, apart from the School of Bioscience which included more nature and animal focussed disciplines;
- 2133.2 that the College was very large and bigger than some medium-sized Universities;
- 2133.3 that there were lots of complexities in regard to the College's work with outside bodies (health boards, Welsh Government, HEIW, plus other professional and regulatory bodies), such as their stipulations on staff-student ratios;
- 2133.4 that there had been a large influx in research awards, totalling £80m at the end of March 2023; this represented 56% of total awards to the University and c.28% of the University's research income; the College undertook a large amount of research for charitable recipients, which needed to be carefully balanced as these often did not include overheads;

2133.5 that key upcoming innovation activities centred on the cease of funding from WEFO for the Clinical Innovation Accelerator and future commercial exploitation for the Medicines Discovery Institute (MDI);

2133.6 that key education points of note within the college were:

- .1 the c.20% drop in applicants for nursing and the perceived lack of attractiveness to the profession;
- .2 that the Schools of Psychology and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Studies were performing well in terms of student numbers;
- .3 that a clinical performance platform had been implemented in the Schools of Healthcare Sciences, Psychology and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Studies and work was underway to apply to other schools;
- .4 that a Flexible Distributed Learning / Modular CPD offering could increase income and this required agility to be fully exploited in a timely fashion;

2133.7 that key risks related to the condition of the estate, especially at the Heath Park site where the University was a tenant, and in particular:

- .1 the inability to satisfy GDC training requirements in the School of Dentistry as often dental chairs were removed;
- .2 failure to comply with Home Office regulations for biological services and animal research;
- .3 water ingress and humidity on the Cathays campus especially for the Schools of Psychology and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Studies;

2133.8 that future potential opportunities were:

- .1 a possible relocation of the School of Healthcare Sciences to buildings on the Heath Park West site;
- .2 movement to the Cardiff Edge Life Science Park which would allow for the University, business and the health board to be co-located;
- .3 a University Hospital of Wales and Academic Health Sciences Hub, which would redevelop the Heath Park site and involve a partnership between the University, Cardiff and Vale Health Board and the Velindre Cancer Centre; a business case was being reviewed by the Welsh Government and the location for this was still undetermined; the lack of a decision for the location of the hospital was a key risk, as it created a delay in any improvement works to the Heath Park site, which impacted experience and retention for both students and medical professionals.

Dr Pretty Sagoo, David Selway, John Shakeshaft and Professor Ian Weeks (Pro Vice-Chancellor College of Biomedical and Life Sciences) left the meeting.

2134 Any Other Business

Noted there was no other business.

2135 Items received for approval

Resolved

- 2135.1 to approve the following papers:
- Paper 22/377R Changes to Ordinances
 - Paper 22/540C Council Lay Membership - Retention and Member Reappointments
 - Paper 22/448R Audit and Risk Committee Constitution and Membership
 - Paper 22/449R Policy on Non-Audit Services
 - Paper 22/424 Strategic Partnership with University of Illinois (UI)System
 - Paper 22/460C Renewal of the Max Planck Centre (MPC) on the FUndamentals of Heterogeneous CATalysis (FUNCAT)
 - Paper 22/535C Senate Report to Council
 - Paper 22/416R Research Integrity Concordat Action Plan

2136 Items received for information

- Noted the following papers:
- Paper 22/532C Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee
 - Paper 22/564C Report from Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
 - Paper 22/539 Report from Chair of Governance Committee
 - Paper 22/574C Report from Redundancy Committee
 - Paper 22/451HCR Major and Serious Incident Update Report
 - Paper 22/463C Update on University Pensions Schemes
 - Paper 22/465C HR Dashboard
 - Paper 22/284 Strategic Equality Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22
 - Paper 22/464 Taith update
 - Paper 22/537 Sealing Transactions