

Minutes of the Meeting of Cardiff University Council held on Thursday 28 April 2022 at 10.00am in room 2.25 and 2.26 of the Centre for Student Life and via Zoom

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Professor Colin Riordan, Professor Rudolf Allemann [Minutes 2023-2038], Professor Rachel Ashworth, Professor Marc Buehner, Ricardo Calil, Hannah Doe, Gina Dunn, Judith Fabian, Professor Dame Janet Finch [Minutes 2023-2034], Professor Ken Hamilton [Minutes 2023-2038], Michael Hampson, Christopher Jones, Jan Juillerat [Minutes 2023-2031 and 2035-2042], John Shakeshaft, David Simmons, Judge Ray Singh, Dr Janet Wademan, Professor Damian Walford Davies, Agnes Xavier-Phillips.

Attendees: Katy Dale [Minutes], Bruna Gil [Minutes 2033-2042], Rashi Jain, Ben Lewis [Minute 2039], Claire Morgan, Claire Sanders, Darren Xiberras, Simon Wright [Minute 2039].

2023 Welcome

2023.1 All were welcomed to the meeting.

2024 Apologies for Absence

2024.1 Apologies were received from Paul Baston, Dr Joanna Newman and Dr Pretty Sagoo.

2025 Declarations of Interest

Noted

2025.1 that there was a conflict of interest for Professor Dame Janet Finch and John Shakeshaft in relation to agenda item 19 [Lay Member Appointments and Reappointments]; the named members would not take part in the approval of that item;

2025.2 that Professor Dame Janet Finch noted an interest in relation to the item 7 [Vice-Chancellor's report]; there was a reference within the report to a collaborative bid with Birmingham University for UKRPIF funding and Professor Dame Finch noted she was a member of the selection panel for UKTPIF;

2025.3 that the Students' Union President noted an interest in relation to item 20 [Students' Union Budget Forecast and Block Grant].

2026 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 February 2022 [21/635C] were confirmed as a true and accurate record and approved by Council.

2027 Matters arising from the Minutes

Received paper 21/84, 'Matters Arising' from the previous minutes. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2027.1 that the action in relation to the Staff Survey [Minute 1944.1] had been closed due to the length of time since the survey; discussions were being held on proposals for the next Staff Survey and a number of pulse surveys had been held during the pandemic.

2028 Chair's Action since last meeting

Received paper 21/685, 'Chair's Action since last meeting'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2028.1 that since the last meeting, the Chair had approved the following via Chair's action:
- Canada Life - Deed of Participation for Risk Benefits
 - Appointment of Professor Roger Whitaker to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise with effect from 1st June 2022.

2029 Items from the Chair

Noted

- 2029.1 that the Chair had visited the new Abacws and sbarc I spark buildings and encouraged lay members to also visit these buildings;
- 2029.2 that Varsity had been held yesterday and Cardiff had won, and thanks were extended to the Students' Union and all involved;
- 2029.3 that income to the University was flat and would likely remain flat going forward, whilst cost pressures on students, staff and the university continued to increase; Council members were encouraged to have this in the forefront of their minds when considering any of the business in the meeting and making decisions.

2030 Monitoring the Critical Success Factors

Received and considered paper 21/689C, 'Monitoring the Critical Success Factors'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

Noted

- 2030.1 that this paper had not yet been reviewed by University Executive Board (UEB) and was therefore a draft proposal for discussion;
- 2030.2 that the Council Away Day in February had agreed that the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) were the appropriate strategic pillars and the paper provided

discussion points to determine the best metrics for assurance and visibility of the CSFs; this included a number of KPIs that had been measured before the pandemic;

- 2030.3 that Council members were supportive of the proposal for metrics to be measured and regularly reported to Council;
- 2030.4 that it was important to take a holistic view of the University's strategic direction to identify the indicators, to ensure these were the most appropriate rather than the easiest to measure;
- 2030.5 that the National Student Survey (NSS) was a difficult indicator as it was a backward-look survey, however, it did indicate a downwards trend which needed to be addressed; a number of other indicators in relation to student experience were being examined (e.g. staff-student panel feedback) which would provide more in-year data going forward;
- 2030.6 that a basket of metrics may be a more suitable option;
- 2030.7 that the University had undertaken a number of pulse surveys during the pandemic, on topics such as health, wellbeing and home working; the response rates to these pulse surveys had been lower than the wider staff survey and so the executive was being careful on the conclusions drawn from these surveys; financial wellbeing was suggested as a possible topic to include in a future pulse survey;
- 2030.8 that academic standards were covered by a range of systems and metrics already in place and overseen by the Academic Standards & Quality Committee and the Education & Student Experience Committee.

Resolved

- 2030.9 for any suggested additional areas to be measured to be issued to the University Secretary;
- 2030.10 for a further paper to be brought to the next meeting of Council, following review and development by UEB.

2031 Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Received and considered paper 21/641C, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

Noted

- 2031.1 that the University would provide 10 undergraduate and 10 postgraduate fully funded scholarships to applicants from Ukraine; the University also continued to support fellow academics through CARA and had made donations to the group to support its good work;

- 2031.2 the University continued to offer support to those affected by the war in Ukraine and was considering what support could be offered once peace was restored;
- 2031.3 that the risk around industrial action had increased; UCU had announced action short of a strike in relation to last year's pay negotiations; there may be further action in relation to the pension dispute and more information would be known on the 12th May;
- 2031.4 that the first paragraph under the Civic Mission heading was under the wrong header in the report;
- 2031.5 that it was not believed the drop in domicile student applications was due to the pandemic, as the University had intensified its work with schools during this time; recent figures indicated this gap had narrowed but did suggest uncertainty around the Chinese markets, with local lockdowns proving a disincentive to students to travel internationally for study;
- 2031.6 that the University would not consider scaling down its research endeavours, as this was a key part of its operation and a very large reputational asset for the University;
- 2031.7 it was believed the drop in research grant applications was due to staff continuing to juggle the provision of in-person and online teaching and being exhausted from the pandemic;
- 2031.8 that REF results would be communicated to Council.

Jan Juillerat left the meeting during this item.

2032 Risk Register

Received and considered paper 21/523C, 'Risk Register'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

Noted

- 2032.1 that three new risk had been included within the risk register, focussing on internationalisation, changes to working patterns and the biological service;
- 2032.2 that the written mitigations in relation to student welfare and wellbeing centred on physical health rather than mental health and these should be included in future iterations;
- 2032.3 that a regulatory risk assurance map was being developed, to identify the key risks and areas for focus in relation to regulatory compliance;
- 2032.4 that due to an increase in the number of the University's partnerships, there were also increased risks around the legal requirements and regulation of these partnerships; Academic Standards & Quality Committee was undertaking a review of the educational risks around collaborative partnerships;

- 2032.5 that it was queried whether the Student Experience: Teaching and Assessment risk should be rated red, given the HEFCW intervention (NSS) risk (to which it fed into) was classified as red; it was noted that actions put in place in relation to the student experience item were calculated to have reduced its risk;
- 2032.6 that a recent review of progress attainment data had not shown that students were performing worse academically than in previous years or before the pandemic; however it was noted there were issues in specific schools and subjects which were being reviewed.
- Resolved
- 2032.7 to add mitigations in relation to student mental health to the student welfare and wellbeing risk;
- 2032.8 that cost of living increases should be reflected in the staff wellbeing risk, as these were likely to impact this area;
- 2032.9 to approve the current risks, their score and the mitigating actions as an accurate reflection of the risk profile of the University.

2033 Graduation 2022

Received and considered paper 21/692, 'Graduation 2022 briefing'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience was invited to speak to this item.

Noted

- 2033.1 that the Principality Stadium had been identified as a venue large enough to hold the three cohorts of students graduating and allow for social distancing, should measures still be in place at that time; the initial plans had not allowed for students to walk across the stage in the stadium and this had led to some negative publicity around the event and a petition from students;
- 2033.2 in light of this, the University had reviewed the arrangements for the event and incorporated the ability for students to walk across the stage within their Academic School on-campus events; the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience had written to students to apologise and explain the changes to arrangements;
- 2033.3 that students were pleased with the new arrangements and feedback had been positive;
- 2033.4 that the impact on academic staff who were involved in the graduation events would be considered by schools, dependent on their events;
- 2033.5 that thanks were extended to the Students' Union for their support in this matter;

- 2033.6 that Council members were invited to attend graduation events and information would be shared in due course;
- 2033.7 that thanks were extended from Council to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience and team for their efforts in organising these events.

Bruna Gil joined the meeting during this item.

2034 Student Experience

Received and considered papers 21/688, 'Report from the Students' Union President' and 21/698, 'NSS Update'. The Students' Union President and Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2034.1 that the Students' Union President noted the following from their report:
- .1 that the funding received from HEFCW had been used on a number of activities to support students; the Students' Union were now reviewing these events to determine what could be taken forward;
 - .2 that the Vice-President Societies and Volunteering had resigned from the role for personal reasons; the role would remain vacant until the new elected officer commenced in July 2022;
 - .3 that Orla Tarn was a candidate for the NUS Wales President elections;
 - .4 that Gina Dunn had been elected as the Students' Union President for 2022-23;
 - .5 that the Union had seen good engagement with the elections which then fed through to good engagement throughout the year; other Welsh universities had noted poor engagement with elections;
- 2034.2 that the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience provided an update on the National Student Survey (NSS):
- .1 that the paper presented progress against the key themes of the NSS and changes to the monitoring and administration of the NSS;
 - .2 that in the last year there had been significant movement against the key themes of the survey; this included work with teaching staff to progress accreditation, CPD, etc. and there had been very good engagement with the accredited Education Fellowship programmes; work was now being undertaken with schools to review what was required in terms of CPD provision;

- .3 that the business case presented to Council overlapped with the key themes of the NSS and thought would be given on how to present on these areas without repetition;
- .4 that the paper also contained detail on the assurance structures required to be put in place to ensure monitoring and oversight of the NSS cycle and noted the process to inform academic staff on the current levels of monitoring from HEFCW around NSS;
- .5 work had been undertaken around action plans, including reviewing these in line with the integrated planning process and looking at governance structures; this has centred on school action plans and allowed for targeted support;
- .6 an audit had been undertaken by the Internal Audit Team on the NSS action plans; this had returned a limited assurance which had been disappointing but had identified a need to formalise the layers of monitoring and oversight which had been introduced; the recommendation had been accepted and a framework for the NSS was being developed;
- .7 that threshold risk-based reporting was being considered, to enable celebrations of programmes above threshold and targeted support for those below threshold; in-year data would also provide early warning indicators for risk areas;
- .8 that the next key area centred on ensuring the new resource would effect change in the right areas and in the right direction;
- .9 that Council welcomed the regular reporting and noted that the results of the NSS would be the key indicator of progress, especially as they would be in the public domain; it was noted the NSS results would be disaggregated by programmes to enable Council to see more detailed data;
- .10 that some schools were seeing low levels of student attendance which may equate to poor engagement with student voice mechanisms; the University wished to maintain the benefits of blended learning but was pushing for teaching to return to campus and there was a need to diagnosis the reasons some students were not engaging.

Resolved

- 2034.3 to approve the recommendation to provide members of Council with an update on the NSS at all meetings of Council in 2022/23.

Professor Dame Janet Finch left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

2035 Update on University Pension Schemes

Received and considered papers 21/687C, 'Update on University Pension Schemes' and 21/701, 'University response to USS consultation on the Statement of Investment Principles'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

USS

2035.1 that since the previous meeting of Council, the University has responded to two short consultations; the first on the modification of future benefits and application of the 2.5% inflation cap had been supported by the University; this had proposed employer contributions increased by 0.2% and a modest extension to the recovery plan as opposed to an increase in employee contributions; these changes had been adopted by USS from 1st April;

2035.2 the second consultation referred to a UCU proposal on the USS 2020 valuation and proposed to increase both employee and employer contribution rates to maintain current benefits; the University had not supported this proposal as it was considered unaffordable and unsustainable, with costs to the University rising to c.£15m per annum by 2024 and costs to members increasing from 1.2% in April 2022 to 4.1% in April 2024; USS had not adopted this proposal;

2035.3 the March 2020 valuation had now concluded and benefit changes had been implemented with effect from 1st April 2022;

2035.4 that the University's response to the Investment Principles consultation centred on three main themes:

- .1 carbon net zero timing at 2050 being longer than the University considers reasonable;
- .2 whether self-sufficiency was the correct metric for the scheme to be targeting from a risk perspective;
- .3 whether now was an appropriate time to be adding more leverage and bond acquisitions into the scheme;

CUPF

2035.5 that benefit changes to the CUPF scheme had been implemented from the 1st January 2022 and the scheme closed to new members from 1st March 2022; the new CUPS scheme was now in operation;

2035.6 that the letter included in the meeting papers noted that Council had not been supportive of the UCU proposal, but that was not correct at the time of the letter being written;

- 2035.7 that a paper was tabled at the meeting which queried the figures provided in the University's response to the UCU proposal; the University had indicated in an earlier response to a previous consultation on the indicative outcomes of the 2020 USS valuation they would be prepared to accept an increase in rates to a total of 34.7%; the UCU proposal had suggested rates of 25.2% for employers and 9.8% for employees, providing a total of 35%; the response to the UCU proposal in paper 21/867C also quoted figures of 43% which were claimed to be incorrect;
- 2035.8 it was confirmed that the correspondence referred to was written by UUK and that any queries on the information contained therein should be directed to UUK; however, as part of its deliberations, the University was mindful that the UCU proposal in the paper could result in approximately £15m annual costs to the University and significant cost increases to USS members during a time of living cost pressures;
- 2035.9 it was agreed that a chronology of the consultation exercises carried out by the University with its staff, and UUK with institutions may assist in clarifying the status of the content of the exchanges between UCU and UUK;
- 2035.10 that the University had an internal USS Actuarial Valuation Technical Group who would respond on technical aspects of the scheme; however decisions around whether proposals would be supported rested with UEB.
- Resolved
- 2035.11 that the University would review the paper tabled and provide a written response.

Jan Juillerat re-joined the meeting during this item.

2036 Budget Planning

Received and considered paper 21/560C, 'Budget Planning'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2036.1 [Redacted]
- 2036.2 [Redacted]
- 2036.3 [Redacted]
- 2036.4 [Redacted]
- 2036.5 [Redacted]
- 2036.6 [Redacted]

2036.7 [Redacted]

2036.8 [Redacted]

2036.9 [Redacted]

Resolved

2036.10 [Redacted].

2037 Capital Investment Plan & Short Term Investment Plan Update

Received Paper 21/690C Capital Investment Plan Update. Darren Xiberras, Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

2037.1 [Redacted]

2037.2 [Redacted]

2037.3 that spark I sbarc had been handed over in March 2022 and TRH had been handed over in April 2022;

2037.4 [Redacted]

2037.5 [Redacted]

2037.6 that it was important for focus to shift to benefit realisation.

2038 Relocation of the School of Healthcare Sciences and exit of Eastgate House

Received and considered Paper 21/559C Relocation of the School of Healthcare Sciences and exit of Eastgate House. Professor Damian Walford Davies, Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2038.1 that original proposals had been value engineered both financially and strategically, to take into account the future use of the Heath Park site and use of estate already owned by the University;

2038.2 that the School of Healthcare Sciences required refurbished and expanded space, as their current space was not fit for purpose; the School had also won a 10-year contract with HEIW that required specific space (e.g. for simulated practice and immersive spaces) and therefore works were required to ensure compliance and the ability to fulfil the contract;

2038.3 that the business case also provided for rationalisation of space and for the University to move out of leased space;

- 2038.4 that £[Redacted] had been approved by UEB for design; Council was asked to approve a budget of £[Redacted], giving a total investment of £[Redacted]; it was proposed that £[Redacted] of the project would be funded from the Short Term Investment Plan and the remaining from reserves;
- 2038.5 that the School contribution was £[Redacted] in 2019/20, increasing to £[Redacted] in 2024/25;
- 2038.6 that the case returned a negative NPV over a 10-year investment period; this period had been chosen to reflect the HEIW contract period which had shortened the usual NPV period and there was expected to be residual value within the buildings at the end of the period; it was also noted that previous lack of investment had increased the cost of the current investment;
- 2038.7 that the executive was developing a refreshed estates strategy;
- 2038.8 that it was not anticipated there would be significant changes to the provision of medicine at the Heath Park site within the next 10 years; there had been no further plans in relation to the provision of medical education at Bangor University; the University had had reassurance that support to Cardiff and Swansea University would remain should a medical school be created at Bangor University;
- 2038.9 that an update on the Heath Park site would be presented to a future meeting of Council; it was also suggested a future meeting of Council would be held on the Heath Park site.

Resolved

- 2038.10 to approve a budget of £[Redacted] to enable the full exit of Eastgate House and the relocation of the School of Healthcare's teaching activities (along with essential practical / simulation activities from Ty Dewi Sant (TDS)) to the former Department for Works & Pensions site by Spring / Summer 2023.

Professor Rudolf Allemann & Professor Ken Hamilton left the meeting during this item.

2039 Student Mental Health

The Director of Student Life and Academic Registrar joined the meeting to present on this item.

Noted

- 2039.1 that the Student Life department (which had recently been renamed) included Health & Wellbeing, Advice & Funding, Student Connect, Disability & Access Support and Student Futures and most of these services were based in the new Centre for Student Life (CSL) building;

- 2039.2 that the University offered a tiered support model which was bespoke; the services offered were not intended as a replacement for NHS or other statutory services;
- 2039.3 that it was often assumed counselling was the basis of support offered, whereas this was only one element of it;
- 2039.4 that HEFCW had provided direct funding to Higher Education Providers in Wales to support the implementation of mental health strategies; this had commenced in 2020 and there were indications it would continue in the 2022-23 academic year; this funding had been a great support in meeting the demands and pressures created by the pandemic; it was yet to be determined if the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research would have a duty around student mental health; the University had also undertaken a self-assessment audit of its Mental Health Strategy (which had been a condition of the funding from HEFCW) and was working through the recommendations;
- 2039.5 a South East Wales Mental Health Partnership had been created and launched last month, which consisted of Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, the University of South Wales and Cardiff & Vale Health Board; this created a new clinical service to students presenting as mentally unwell and was delivered through the CSL; the service was receiving referrals around the rate of one a day;
- 2039.6 that there were changes to the funding for Disabled Students and the University was working through the implications of those changes;
- 2039.7 that figures for engagement with student health and wellbeing during the current academic year were c.30% higher than the previous year, and reflected a c.70% growth in the last 5 years; similar growth had been seen across the sector; the University had not seen a drop in engagement during the pandemic;
- 2039.8 that the University had a unique crisis intervention model which had introduced in 2018-19 after a pilot in 2017-18; over 40% of student interventions were an emergency or of concern (i.e. required an ambulance or posed an imminent risk to self);
- 2039.9 that a disclosure response pilot had been launched in 2017-18 in partnership with the Office for Students and the University of Birmingham; this had seen a growth in disclosure responses, however, this was seen positively as students were encouraged to disclose and the service covered both historic and current events, that may have occurred both at university or outside of it;
- 2039.10 that the University had managed the growth in demand for counselling by using external private sector partners and launching Talk Campus which was a tool that allowed students to talk anonymously and safely online with moderation; this had meant there had not been long waiting lists for counselling seen at other institutions;

- 2039.11 that future priorities were:
- .1 sustaining the South East Wales Mental Health Partnership which was funded until Christmas 2022;
 - .2 continuing to meet the demand for student intervention;
 - .3 ensuring staff retention and service viability; the sector was seeing a drop in applications for some roles and given their often specialist nature, a drop in staff could mean services becoming no longer viable to run;
- 2039.12 that key impacts of the pandemic included an increase in students expecting an instant resolution and a growing trend around unmanaged mental health issues become more apparent once at University; this later issue was seen across the sector;
- 2039.13 that it was felt students were aware of the support they could access via Student Life; the team continued to work on ensuring students were clear on what support was available and where it could be accessed, and also ensuring students at the Heath Park site felt supported;
- 2039.14 that Student Life linked to academic study by promoting services across all Schools, to ensure all students were aware of the support available wherever they were studying; a review of mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum was also being progressed and the University had piloted a Signs of Happiness scheme which aimed to target students often harder to reach through the student support services (e.g. men from the Middle & Far East); it was noted that it was not for personal tutors to provide student support but to be aware of where to direct students should they need it;
- 2039.15 that for students with conditions which were not currently medically managed, the University had a partnership to enable students to be referred to a nursing team; this ensured they were captured in the NHS system and supported medically should they need to pause their studies.

Ben Lewis and Simon Wright left the meeting.

2040 Any Other Business

- 2040.1 that any suggestions for the lay member vacancies arising from 1st August 2022 should be shared with Judith Fabian as the Chair of the Nominations Committee;
- 2040.2 that a wholesale review of the Ordinances would be of benefit;
- 2040.3 [Redacted]
- 2040.4 that thanks were extended to Hannah Doe who was attending her last meeting of Council.

2041 Items Received for Approval

2041.1 The following papers were approved by Council:

- Paper 21/575R Amendments to Ordinances
- Paper 21/642C Senate report to Council
- Paper 21/691C Lay membership appointments and reappointments
- Paper 21/551C Students' Union budget forecasts and block grant

2042 Items Received for Information

2042.1 The following papers were received for information:

- Paper 21/647C Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee
- Paper 21/682C Report from Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
- Paper 21/648C Report from Chair of Governance Committee
- Paper 21/634C Report from Redundancy Committee
- Paper 21/594C Report from Remuneration Committee
- Paper 21/686 Sealing Transactions
- Paper 21/683C HR Dashboard Summary