

**Minutes of the 335<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL meeting, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in Conference Meeting Room 145 and by videoconference**

PRESENT: Dame Yve Buckland (Chair) Professor Aleks Subic  
Dr Sue Noffke Dr Jason Wouhra\*  
Dr Vij Randeniya\* Kathy Cooper  
Tim Pile Bobby Thandi\*  
Emmanuelle Labeau Atul Rana  
Dr Phil Popham Amardeep Gill

APOLOGIES: Dr Matthew Crummack  
Professor Gill Nicholls  
Shaid Parveen

IN ATTENDANCE: Liam Nevin

**Governance Matters**

22/45 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Matthew Crummack, Professor Gill Nicholls and Shaid Parveen.

22/46 Declarations of Interest

The Pro-Chancellor declared an interest in agenda item 5.4 and advised that she would leave the room for this discussion.

22/47 Minutes

The minutes of the 333<sup>rd</sup> and 334<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Council were agreed as a true and accurate record.

22/48 Matters Arising

The Pro-Chancellor advised that following feedback from members of Council the agenda for the meeting had a stronger focus on strategic planning and delivery and that this would be a feature of subsequent meetings. It was acknowledged that performance reporting was in development as one of the Vice-Chancellor's priorities and arrangements for this would be discussed as part of the agenda for this meeting. Council was advised that a governance review had been commissioned and the outcome of this would also inform agenda planning for future meetings.

**STANDING REPORTS FROM OFFICERS/MEMBERS**

Vice-Chancellor's Report

22/49 RECEIVED:  
Paper CO/23/02 being the Vice-Chancellor's report to Council.

22/50 NOTED:

- Zoe Radnor was welcomed to her first meeting observing Council as the new PVC and Executive Dean of the College of Business and Social Sciences.
- Thanks were given for the contribution made by George Feiger during his tenure with the University and there would be an opportunity for colleagues and Council members to attend a farewell event for him.
- The Vice-Chancellor had now completed six months in post during which significant progress had been made on the development of the 2030 strategy and relevant improvement plans, and the presentation later on the agenda would provide further detail on progress of key projects.
- There had been substantial engagement with the University leadership team and staff across the University and it was pleasing to note the commitment and enthusiasm being demonstrated across the SMG to the developing strategy.
- The Strategy Management System that would support the delivery and management of strategic performance measures was being developed through a Performance Measures Working Group chaired by Gary Hughes. The tool would drive transparency in setting objectives and targets, accountability and interventions to achieve targets at all levels of the organisation.
- There had been considerable external engagement by the Vice-Chancellor since the last report to Council, including at multiple ministerial levels. This had repositioned the University as leader in areas, such as the Knowledge Quarter, that were integral to the University's strategic objectives.
- Estates developments were moving at a pace and Council had been fully engaged in these plans. It was noted that the estates programme would not be funded through loans, and this reflected a prudent approach in the context of wider financial challenges facing the HE sector.
- The scale and pace of the work done by the Vice-Chancellor in this initial period was noted with thanks and support.

#### Pro-Chancellor's Report

22/51 RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Pro-Chancellor.

22/52 NOTED:

The Pro-Chancellor noted her involvement in a number of agenda items that would be discussed during this meeting of Council.  
There was recognition of how busy the Vice-Chancellor and members of the Executive were and it was notable that there was already positive feedback from partners about the role of the University in driving key partnerships.

#### President of the Students' Union Report

22/53 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/23/03 being an update from the President of the Students Union.

22/54 NOTED:

- That the Students Union had recruited to the Sabbatical Officer for Vice-President Communities and that this would help address a key objective which was to ensure that all communities were adequately represented and to continue to improve engagement and meeting student needs and expectations.
- Various surveys had been undertaken to assess student well being and the international student questionnaire had produced almost one thousand responses.

- The results of this were being used to inform the priorities of the SU.
- The results of the Students Union elections were confirmed with confirmation that 2841 votes were cast, being an improvement on the 2500 recorded for the last elections.

## **STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE**

### Strategic Projects Implementation Plan

22/58 RECEIVED:

A presentation from the Vice-Chancellor mapping the delivery of strategic projects across the period 2023/24, noting the enabling strategies that would support the delivery of the University strategy and the Strategy Management System that would drive performance and accountability.

22/59 NOTED:

- The presentation provided a comprehensive overview of the delivery of strategic projects over the period from June 2023 and March 2024.
- In addition, the timeline for strategic estates projects between 2023 and 2026 was clear, with an accompanying narrative relating how each project would contribute to specific objectives. This included the consolidation of executive, support services and academic capabilities and teams, and the growth of commercial performance.

22/60 DISCUSSED:

- That the timetable was ambitious and demanding but the Vice-Chancellor was confident that it could be delivered in accordance with the schedule and without borrowing. The work programme emphasised why it was necessary to develop the leadership capacity of the University and appoint to the senior roles previously discussed with Council.

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

### Referred by Audit and Risk Committee

22/61 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/23/06 being the upward report from the Audit and Risk Committee.

22/62 NOTED:

- The contents of the upwards report with the Chair noting that the meeting involved some good discussion on agenda items.
- That whilst Executives now attend the meeting to address issues within their portfolio, the Committee noted that the designation of a lead Executive officer, whether that was the Chief Executive or Chief Operating Officer was also necessary, and the Committee would be proposing a change to its terms of reference for this purpose.

### Referred by Finance and Infrastructure Committee

22/63 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/23/07 being the upward report from the Finance and Infrastructure Committee from the January and March meetings of the committee.

22/64 NOTED:

- The contents of the upward report with the Chair noting that the Committee had maintained an overview of the strategic estates projects. Members of the Committee would be undertaking a guided walk of the campus to discuss and visualise the plans in context.
- That the Committee were supportive of the work undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor and his team to transform the estates plan such that it was now aligned to strategy being both collaborative and cohesive.
- That Council were grateful to the Committee for its diligence and agility in meeting at short notice to ensure that the estates projects proceeded with the necessary pace.

Referred by Senate

22/65 RECEIVED AND NOTED:  
Paper CO/23/08 being the upward reports from the Senate meetings of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

Senate Annual Report on Academic Quality

22/66 RECEIVED AND NOTED:  
Paper CO/23/09 being the Senate Report on Academic Quality.

Referred by Remuneration and Workforce Strategy Committee

22/73 RECEIVED AND NOTED:  
Paper CO/23/11 being the upward report from the Remuneration and Workforce Strategy Committee

**Date of Council's Next Meeting**

22/74 The next Council meeting is at 1.30 pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.