

Council Minutes: 17 May 2024

PRESENT: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); Tania Baumann (lay member); Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears (lay member); Professor Steve Bradley (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Alun Branigan (lay member); Hanah Burgess (lay member); Anthony Carey (lay member); Adrian Jonas (lay member); Claire Leitch (Senate representative); Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone (Senate representative); His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member); Maureen Whilby (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Nick Fragel (Director of Philanthropy, Alumni and Supporter Engagement) (*for item 12*); Claire Geddes (Committee Clerk); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary); Professor Rebecca Lingwood (incoming Deputy Vice Chancellor) (*observer*); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and Secretary); Christine Parker (Head of Engagement: Trusts and Foundations) (*for item 12*); Sabiha Patel (Associate Director of Student Wellbeing and Inclusion) (*for item 11*); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance); Harrison Stewart (incoming Student Council member) (*observer*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cerys Evans (Students' Union President); Josh Newsham (student Council member); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor).

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Chair confirmed the recent resignation of Professor David Adams, and on behalf of the Council extended his gratitude to him for his service to Council.
- 1.2 Council noted that apologies were received for absence for the meeting from Professor Ella Ritchie, Cerys Evans and Josh Newsham.
- 1.3 The Chair thanked Professor Steve Bradley on behalf of the Council, for his long-standing contribution to its work in numerous roles, as he was due to step down as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the end of June 2024.
- 1.4 The Chair confirmed that he would write to Josh Newsham (as his term of office would finish at the end of June 2024) to thank him for his valued contributions to the Council in 2023/24.
- 1.5 The Chair welcomed Professor Rebecca Lingwood (incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor) and Harrison Stewart (the incoming student Council member and Students' Union Education Officer) as observers to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 22 MARCH 2024

PAPER A

3.1 Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 March 2024.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Item 15 Proposed Changes to Governance Oversight of Redundancies (26 January 2024)*: The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and Secretary updated Council regarding the ongoing discussions concerning proposed changes to governance oversight of redundancies with the recognised campus Trade Unions.

4.2 *Item 18 Council Effectiveness Review Report*: The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and Secretary provided an update regarding the development of segmented elevator pitches about the University for use by Council members with different audiences, which was well advanced.

4.3 Council noted that the Nominations Committee was in the final stages of appointing an external search agency to undertake the search for a new high profile lay member.

5. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE AND QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

5.1 Council noted a written report from the Executive circulated to Council on 13 May 2024. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.

- (i) The outcomes of the Migration Advisory Committee Review of the Graduate Review, published 15 May 2024.
- (ii) The Office for Students' publication of its independent analysis into the increased pressure on higher education finances, in which it had cautioned universities against being too optimistic about future student growth.
- (iii) The sad news of the death of the University's fourth Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bill Ritchie.
- (iv) Progress with the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) and Senate's recent approval of a standardised module credit base and a move to a semester system. He highlighted that the next phase of work, that student voice remained central to discussions, and that a presentation on the CTP would be received by Council early in the new academic year.
- (v) The University's performance in the Complete University Guide 2025 with Lancaster placed 11th (10th in 2024) with 15 subjects in the top 10 (13 in 2024) including 1st for Social Work as well as Linguistics' achievement of 3rd in the QS World Rankings.

5.2 Members discussed further government concern regarding foreign state penetration of the UK including its universities. Council received assurance as to how this and similar issues were being managed within the institution, noting recent relevant presentations to the Audit Committee. However, the University was considered in the upper quartile of universities in terms of risk threat and therefore continued vigilance was important.

6. STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT: MARCH 2024 PAPER B

6.1 Council noted the written report from the Students' Union President and the Students' Union Governance Review Effectiveness Report. Due to the absence of the Student Council members, it was agreed that the Students' Union President would be invited to comment on the latter report at the next meeting.

6.2 Council recorded its congratulations to all the University's student competitors for the comprehensive home win at Roses 2024, and its appreciation to the Students' Union for leading the organisation of the event.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7. RUSKIN MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE PAPER C
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence

8. BUDGET SETTING 2024/25: UPDATE PAPER D
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence

9. FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (FASS)/ ARCHITECTURE PHASE 2B PAPER E
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence

10. FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM PRESENTATION

10.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary gave a presentation to Council regarding the Office for Students' draft guidance in relation to Free Speech and Academic Freedom duties. He highlighted the regulator's rationale for the approach and gave a high-level view of the new legal duties and regulation (scope and scale) and the implications of these duties.

10.2 Members attention was drawn to the complexity, breadth, and lack of clarity within aspects of the draft guidance and considered the implications of the additional regulatory burden. Council discussed and acknowledged the risks associated with managing compliance relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom, and accepted that it would be impossible to develop a perfect and fool proof response.

10.3 Council noted the presentation on the OfS draft Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom guidance and the University's proposed approach and timeframe for compliance.

11. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT REPORT **PAPER F**
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12. UNIVERSITY FUNDRAISING: ANNUAL FUNDRAISING AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT REPORT AND MAJOR DONATION **PAPER G**
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*** ITEMS NOT FOR DISCUSSION UNLESS REQUESTED IN ADVANCE TO THE CHAIR**

13.* CONFERRAL CONTINGENCY PROTOCOL: REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS **PAPER 1**

13.1 Council approved the recommendation to renew the Conferral Contingency Protocol, subject to the outlined recommendations including triennial review.

14.* FACULTY CONSTITUTIONS PROPOSAL **PAPER 2**

14.1 Council noted the proposed changes to Faculty governance and management arrangements and the proposal for a Faculty Leadership Group as set out at Annex A and received the recommendation from Senate regarding the removal of faculty constitutions as governing documents.

14.2 Council approved the revocation of Ordinance 19 and the related amendment of Ordinance 5 B.1 as set out in the paper.

16.* WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS **PAPER 3**

16.1 Council noted the following written reports of meetings:

- Audit Committee, meeting of 29 April 2024 (SPG/2024/308)
- Senate, meeting of 24 April 2024 (SPG/2024/309)

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

17. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS **PAPER M**

17.1 Council noted the Forward Schedule.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 There was no further business discussed.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19.1 The next meeting would be held in the afternoon of the Friday 5 July 2024. A joint meeting of the Council and Senate and lunch to be held immediately prior to the Council meeting.