

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2024

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Simeon Anyalemechi (via Microsoft Office Teams), Professor Nic Beech, John Bland, Dr Tony Coombs, Cllr Phil Cusack, Sara Das, Ben Gallop, Stephen Gleave, Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Peter McDermott, Sam Plant, Alan Roff, Helen Taylor, Professor Katherine Yates, and Dr Elsa Zekeng.

Apologies: Angela Adimora, Professor Dame Susan Bailey, Ian Moston, Micheal Omoniyi, Cllr Theresa Pepper, Claire Sproston, and Anuoluwapo Ubikitan

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), Emma French (Executive Director of Governance and Assurance & University Secretary), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), and Lesley Horne (committee secretary).

By invitation: Professor Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience, -via Microsoft Office Teams), Claire Hamshire (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience), Carly Hick (Programme Manager, Education and Employability Strategy Project), Elizabeth King (Student) and Kevme Olomu (completed PhD Student and hourly paid Lecturer) [COU.24.06], Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development), and Anna Dawe (Principal and Chief Executive Officer Wigan and Leigh College) [COU.24.08], Matt Mealing (Head of Campus Services) and Mark Wantling (Chief Information Officer) [COU.24.14]

COU.24.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reported

- i) that Philip Green and Dr Elsa Zekeng had an interest in Item 6, Re-appointments to the Membership and would withdraw from the meeting during considerations;
- ii) that Simeon Anyalemechi and Professor Peter McDermott had an interest in Item 17, Standing Committees of Council and would withdraw from the meeting during considerations;
- iii) that Stephen Gleave had an interest in Item 18, Lead Members and would withdraw from the meeting during considerations.

COU.24.02 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2023 (COU/24/01), subject to:

- i) minute reference COU.23.99 reported ii) being amended to read '*that an annual student self-assessment and feedback form had been built into SkillsForge, PGR Management software package*';
- ii) minute reference COU.23.115 being amended to include as noted vii) '*that*

securing successful industrial collaboration was a key focus for the leadership team’.

COU.24.03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Reported:

- i) that regarding the action on the University’s commitment to the Greater Manchester Universities Student Mental Health Service [minute reference COU.23.103], that a rolling annual contract was in place to support the service;
- ii) that in terms of the contractual costs, these were based on the total number of student body (i.e., the ‘size of the University’) and not the actual number of referrals to the service in the contracted year;
- iii) that each member institution made a proportionate contribution to costs, reviewed on an annual basis;
- iv) that the presentation, held prior to this meeting, on student mental health and well-being had been informative and very well received, with thanks to the Student Experience and Support team;
- v) that the Chair would be writing to the Mayor of Greater Manchester to highlight the transport cost issues and to request that the bus transport scheme be extended to support students.

COU.24.04 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

Confirmed:

- i) that Item 21 (Financial Regulations; COU/24/16) was approved without discussion;
- ii) that Item 22 (Use of University Seal; COU/24/17) was noted without discussion.

COU.24.05 MEMBERSHIP

(Secretary’s note: Philip Green and Dr Elsa Zekeng left the Chamber and were not present for the item)

Considered: on the recommendation of Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (COU/24/02):

- i) the re-appointment, for a second term of three years of the following independent members of Council: Angela Adimora, Philip Green, Michael Omoniyi and Dr Elsa Zekeng;
- ii) the re-appointment, for a second term of three years of Nigel Wilcock as a co-opted member of Audit and Risk Committee.

RESOLVED: that the reappointments to the membership be approved.

COU.24.06 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Received: (in advance) a presentation (COU/24/03) regarding student consultation as part of the development of the Education and Employability Strategy.

Reported:

- i) that in the development of the Education and Employability strategy, focus groups had been introduced to improve student engagement, student experience and student voice;
- ii) that the two personal experiences had centred on the support received from staff and the concept of belonging and feeling part of the University.

Noted:

- i) the collective view that the personal stories shared by the students had provided members with an excellent insight and understanding of their student experience;
- ii) that the students (employed via Unitemps) received payment to attend the focus groups and that the students' honesty, openness, and diverse perspectives had provided valuable input in the continued development and improvement of the strategy;
- iii) that survey data and feedback was continually analysed to ensure student focus groups were effective in helping to address the concerns raised;
- iv) that further work was being progressed to develop an online tool and matrix that would enable continued evaluation across wider groups;
- v) that the presentation had provided assurance to members that the University had acknowledged and responded to the data and feedback received from National Student Survey (NSS);
- vi) that the students' personal experiences had placed a lot of emphasis on having a sense of belonging and that this was a key aspect of the strategy;
- vii) that the strategy needed to be fully aligned with the Campus Masterplan in a collaborative approach;
- viii) that student engagement and student voice was pivotal in the successful delivery of every project;
- ix) that connection to industry and development of life skills was also integral to the strategy, in providing personalised, mentoring support to students;
- x) the view that increased staff and student engagement would enable further enhancement of student experience;
- xi) that it would be beneficial to assess aspects of the strategy as part of the internal audit process;
- xii) that the Chair sincerely thanked the student guests for sharing their personal experiences that enriched the discussion.

RESOLVED: that aspects of the education and employability strategy be assessed in the future as part of the internal audit process.

ACTION: AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

COU.24.07 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on key activities of the University.

Reported:

- i) that the Vice-Chancellor was delighted to report on students' achievements that had been recognised nationally and internationally;
- ii) that three awards had been presented to Journalism students at the British Journalism Training Council Awards;
- iii) that an MSc Biotechnology student had been named Best UK-based Female Entrepreneur at the International Achievements and Careers Awards;
- iv) that the British Computer Society had been successfully launched on campus, with thanks to Dr Elsa Zekeng and the Digital IT team for their support;
- v) that Simeon Anyalemechi, University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) President had been appointed as the Project Sponsor for the development of a new student app;
- vi) that the new student app would enable use of artificial intelligence (AI) to personalise student information and recommend courses, clubs, societies, food options etc;
- vii) that a Government-led independent review of the Office for Students (OfS) was being conducted to examine efficiency and governance and it was pleasing to note that the review team would be visiting the University for input into the review;
- viii) that there were concerns regarding financial sustainability within the sector;
- ix) that the University's financial position remained strong and reflected the robust financial management practices in place;
- x) that industry collaboration and research connections continued to be a key focus for the University;
- xi) that the University had committed to make a cost-of-living payment to all staff Grade 10 and below, on a tiered basis, and that the recognised trade unions had welcomed this approach;
- xii) that the Dean of Salford Business School (SBS), Professor Janice Allan, had secured a promotion at another institution and although the University would be sad to see the Dean leave, this reflected the development opportunities available to senior staff in the sector;
- xiii) that careful consideration would be given to the recruitment of the two Dean appointments (the other being the permanent appointment to the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Environment (SSEE));
- xiv) that an interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost had been appointed and that the recruitment process for the permanent appointment would be progressed;
- xv) that since commencing his role, the Vice-Chancellor had been very privileged to meet with a significant number of colleagues and had been overwhelmed by the great enthusiasm and positivity seen.

Noted:

- i) that members commended the students on their awards and achievements;
- ii) the members' congratulations and thanks to Professor Allan, for her contributions to the University.

Received: on the recommendation of the University Leadership Team, a presentation of the progress of the GMIoT (COU/24/04) and an external update from Anna Dawe, Principal and CEO Wigan and Leigh College / Lead Partner of the GMIoT.

Reported:

- i) that the Government aimed to put technical and academic education on an equal footing, with a new concentration on Higher Technical Education and a focus on apprenticeships;
- ii) that the University had taken a strategic decision to invest in the development of Higher Technical Education;
- iii) that the Department for Education (DfE) had awarded funding for the GMIoT hub building on campus and the build was expected to start in spring 2024;
- iv) that – *redacted* - a;
- v) that – *redacted* - the;
- vi) that – *redacted* - it;
- vii) that – *redacted* - the;
- viii) that – *redacted* - the.

Noted

- i) the view that members had strongly supported this partnership and that it was excellent to see the potential the GMIoT could bring, as it developed further;
- ii) that the collaboration extended beyond GMIoT in terms of sharing good practice and learning;
- iii) that – *redacted* - further;
- iv) the view that construction would be a key area for the GMIoT and the University's links with 'Build Salford' would support this further;
- v) that the Chair thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development and the Principal and CEO Wigan and Leigh College for attending the meeting and providing members with an informative update on the work and progress being made.

COU.24.09 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: on the recommendation of the University Leadership Team, a detailed report on educational sustainability (student recruitment, progression, continuation, and degree outcomes). Also included, the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 1 2023/24, with the Top 10 Risk Profile appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/24/05).

Reported:

- i) that – *redacted* - a;
- ii) that – *redacted* – key;
- iii) that – *redacted* - analysis;
- iv) that – *redacted* - risk.

Noted:

- i) that the impact of the interventions and support strategies during recruitment were being seen and that this would impact positively on progression;
- ii) that work continued to ensure students were academically prepared to enter high education;
- iii) that it was important to ensure support was also in place for final year students;
- iv) that work was progressing with the aim to improve recruitment and retention and to increase international recruitment.

COU.24.10 SENATE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent meeting from the Chair of the Senate (COU/24/06).

Reported:

- i) that Senate had received an update on the work of the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) to enhance student engagement through societies, clubs and social events;
- ii) that a presentation on Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) had informed Senate of the work to promote collaboration across subject areas and discipline areas.

Noted: that work continued to ensure effective communication between Senate and Council.

COU.24.11 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee (COU/24/07).

Reported: that the Committee had been reassured by the work being undertaken to progress the Campus Masterplan and that the refreshed programme and reshaped principles would be presented to Council in due course.

COU.24.12 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter 1 2023/24 Finance Report (COU/24/08).

Reported:

- i) that – *redacted* - the;
- ii) that – *redacted* - the;
- iii) that the overall financial position remained strong, and that the University was compliant with its banking and pension scheme covenants as at July 2024.

Noted: that the University continued to be prudent in all areas of financial management and that the budget continued to be closely monitored.

COU.24.13 ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN WORKBOOK AND COMMENTARY

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the annual Financial Return Workbook and Financial Commentary for submission to the Office for Students (COU/24/09).

RESOLVED: that approval of the Return be ratified.

COU.24.14 CATERING CLOSED MINUTE

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the business case for catering (food and drink) services on campus (COU/24/10).

Reported:

- i) that the catering offer was a key priority for the University and was fundamental to student experience;
- ii) that a detailed review of the offer, including consultation with key stakeholders had been undertaken;
- iii) that the review had aligned to the Campus Masterplan and student personas;
- iv) that the introduction of a strategic food board would ensure continued monitoring of the food and drink offer;
- v) that – *redacted* - the.

Noted:

- i) that the recommendation made at the Finance and Resources meeting had delegated further oversight to the committee Chair, and that the Chair had considered and supported the iteration of the business case presented, subject to the benefits being quantified and key performance indicators being presented to the Committee;
- ii) that risk perspectives had been sought from the Audit and Risk Committee and that further consideration would be given to the associated risks at the Committee's next scheduled meeting on 24 January 2024;
- iii) the view that the revised business case provided further assurance that the hybrid model was the most appropriate option to pursue;
- iv) that – *redacted* - a;
- v) the view that the food and drink offer and physical space requirements were integral and needed to be fully aligned with the Campus Masterplan;
- vi) the view that further detailed information on the capital investment costs and financial implications was required;
- vii) that it was difficult to determine the exact levels of capital investment due to there being so many variables at present, in terms of the Campus Masterplan;
- viii) the collective view that – *redacted* - the.

RESOLVED:

- i) that a hybrid model for the University's food and drink offer be approved, subject to individual business cases being developed to determine capital investments costs and risk profiles;
- ii) that the initial expenditure to support the cessation of the contract with Chartwell's and the appointment of key roles to progress the hybrid model be approved.

COU.24.15 GOVERNANCE, NOMINATIONS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (COU/24/11).

Noted:

- i) that the Committee had considered the scope of the Council Effectiveness Review (CER) and had agreed that the focus of the next CER be in relation to the interaction of governance structures between the Senate and Council;
- ii) the Committee's thanks to Andrew Hartley, Director of Legal and Compliance, who was retiring from the University in February 2024, for his exceptional work and contributions to the University.

COU.24.16 STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

(Secretary's note: Simeon Anyalemechi and Peter McDermott left the Chamber and were not present for this item).

Considered: on the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC), the expanded constitution and membership of the Committee (COU/24/12).

RESOLVED:

- i) that Professor Peter McDermott be appointed as the internal member;
- ii) that the constitution of the Committee be expanded to include a student member, and that Simeon Anyalemechi be appointed as the student member.

COU.24.17 LEAD MEMBERS

(Secretary's note: Stephen Gleave left the Chamber and was not present for the item).

Considered: on the recommendation of the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee, the appointment to the Lead Member for Estates (COU/24/13).

RESOLVED: that Stephen Gleave be appointed Lead Member for Estates.

COU.24.18 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Remuneration Committee (COU/24/14).

Reported:

- i) that the Committee had considered the proposed leadership structure and the appointment of new roles within the structure;
- ii) that there was some flexibility in the revised structure with the removal of the Chief Operating Officer role.

COU.24.19 Honorary Degrees Committee Report

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee (COU/24/15).

Reported: that the introduction of University Medals would provide the University with further options to recognise individuals or groups.

COU.24.20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Reported: that no other items of business had been notified to the Chair.

COU.24.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted: that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 26 April 2024.