UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD COUNCIL

CONFIRMED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2024

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Angela Adimora (via Microsoft Office Teams),

Simeon Anyalemechi, Professor Dame Susan Bailey, Professor Nic Beech, John Bland, Dr Tony Coombs, Cllr Phil Cusack, Sara Das, Ben Gallop,

Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther (via Microsoft Office Teams),

Professor Peter McDermott, Ian Moston, Cllr Theresa Pepper, Alan Roff,

Helen Taylor, Anuoluwapo Ubikitan (via Microsoft Office Teams),

Professor Katherine Yates, and Dr Elsa Zekeng.

Apologies: Stephen Gleave, Micheal Omoniyi, Sam Plant, and Claire Sproston.

In Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer),

attendance: Emma French (Executive Director of Governance and Assurance & University

Secretary), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), and Elaine Pateman Salt

(committee secretary).

By Ed Moloney (Chief Executive Officer, University of Salford Students' Union)

invitation: [COU.24.27; COU.24.28], and

Pradeep Passi (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, EDI) and Neelam Rai

(Chartermark Lead) [COU.24.43].

COU.24.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reported:

- i) that Cllr Pepper and Cllr Cusack had an interest in Item 16: Land Acquisition and Disposal (redacted from their papers) and would leave the Chamber during considerations;
- ii) that Mr Green and Dr Zekeng had an interest in Item 20: Lead Members and would leave the Chamber during considerations.

COU.24.23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2024 (COU/24/18), subject to clarification in minute reference COU.24.03, reported section ii) that contractual costs of the University's membership of the Greater Manchester Universities Student Mental Health Service were based on the total number of student body (i.e., the 'size of the institution') and not the actual number of referrals to the service within the contracted year. That each member institution made a proportionate contribution to costs, reviewed on an annual basis.

COU.24.24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Reported: that the Chair had written to the Mayor of Greater Manchester regarding the possibility of extending the GM bus transport scheme to include students and was expecting a substantive reply but noted that the mayoral

elections were coming up and consequently a report on the reply would be made to next meeting.

COU.24.25 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS

Confirmed:

- i) that Item 24: Tax Strategy (COU/24/37) was approved without discussion;
- ii) that Item 25: Ofsted SAR and Ofsted Inspection Report (COU/24/38) and Item 26: Use of University Seal (COU/24/39) were noted without discussion.

Noted: the thanks of the Chair on behalf of Council to Dr Tony Coombs and Mr Alan Roff for their significant input to the Ofsted inspection.

COU.24.26 CHAIR'S ACTION

Received: a report of Chair's action (COU/24/19) taken since the previous meeting regarding:

- approval to open a bank account for the provision of food and beverage on campus;
- ii) approval to amend the Ordinance for the Senate regarding its terms of reference and constitution;
- iii) approval to amend the Scheme of Delegation regarding terms of reference of the Senate; Officers nominated in the use of the University (common) Seal; and for the presentation/handling of the Scheme to become an operational matter;
- iv) approval of the appointment of a co-opted member to Audit and Risk Committee;
- v) approval of the appointment of the internal audit service providers;
- vi) approval of the appointment of the external audit service providers; and
- vii) approval for expansion to the range of honorary awards conferred by the University; the Regulations and Code of Practice for Honorary Awards; the change in title for the joint committee of Council and Senate to 'Honorary Awards Committee'; and the consequential revisions to the Ordinance for Joint Committees of Council and Senate.

COU.24.27 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: (in advance) a video presentation regarding student perspectives of equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) at the University, and a presentation on actions to address the findings of the University of Salford Students' Union EDI survey (COU/24/20).

- i) that the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) had recently undertaken to investigate experiences on placements;
- ii) that redacted it;
- iii) that redacted the:
- iv) that the USSU had made the presentation to Senate at its recent meeting, and that there had been support for the actions proposed;

- v) that there had been an appreciation of the severity of the issues raised by the students involved;
- vi) that redacted the;
- vii) that *redacted* -there;
- viii) that redacted during;
- ix) that redacted there;
- x) that redacted some;
- xi) that redacted- the;
- xii) that the effect of the experiences continued to impact post-placement;
- xiii) that recommendations to Council had been included in the presentation slide deck;
- xiv) that the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity had also agreed to participate in co-production of a response and actions.

Noted:

- i) that the members formally thanked the USSU for receipt of the findings, and commended the students willing to share their experiences;
- ii) that redacted the;
- iii) that approximately 6,000 placements were undertaken from the University annually;
- iv) the view that redacted there;
- v) the view that trust in coming forward to the University or the placement host needed to be established;
- vi) that redacted those;
- vii) that redacted ;
- viii) that redacted the:
- ix) the redacted ;
- x) that redacted the;
- xi) the view that placement providers should have defined processes relating to placements including escalation of issues, and that students should be apprised of these during induction;
- xii) the view that the University should have a single code of practice for placements;
- xiii) the view that experiences such as these were unfortunately not limited to placements, but that this research opened dialogue on dealing with failings and how to offer meaningful support on that journey;
- xiv) the view that data might be corroborated or considered through placement complaints procedures;
- xv) that the Chair thanked members and attendees for their valuable contributions and reminded of the confidentiality of the Report and discussion at this time;
- xvi) that the Chair thanked Mr Ayo Ubikitan for establishing the survey and bringing forward the findings.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the Report and coordinated actions underway to address the findings be noted;
- ii) that the Chair be delegated to lead the response on behalf of Council [alongside the Vice-Chancellor, USSU and Senate] and to report to the next meeting.

ACTION ii): Chair

COU.24.28 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD STUDENTS' UNION

Received: on the recommendation of the University Leadership Team, an update on the strategic operation of the University of Salford Students' Union (COU/24/21).

Reported:

- i) that the USSU's performance had been good in the intervening period between reports;
- ii) that there had been the highest recorded turnout for Officer elections (25%);
- iii) that the commercial performance of the USSU had been ranked in the Top 15 in the UK, and that included a group of larger student union organisations;
- iv) that core staff engagement had been ranked third highest in the UK;
- v) that more events had taken place;
- vi) that the partnership between the University and the USSU was strong and healthy;
- vii) that the Sabbatical Officers had been given greater opportunity to meet regularly with ULT and to present to Senate;
- viii) that the new strategy had launched, and some elements were behind schedule but that overall, the launch had been impactful, including that the President had spoken at the WonkHE event 'the secret life of students';
- ix) that the USSU had won two awards at the National Union of Students (NUS) Strategy Exchange Conference, including a staff engagement award;
- x) that an assessment of USSU's data maturity was being undertaken through an NUS partner (at discounted rate);
- xi) that the USSU hoped to be progressively data-informed in its approach;
- xii) that the USSU had co-produced the University's Freedom of Speech (FoS) Code of Practice, and would be monitoring the significant risks posed to the student body if FoS was not appropriately managed;
- xiii) that the USSU was in a strong financial position in terms of budget and reserves, and *redacted* was;
- xiv) that redacted the;
- xv) that the Sabbatical Officer campaign to reduce the timeline for the student 'fitness to practice' process had been successful;
- xvi) that the USSU had implemented a 'policy book' approach whereby serving Sabbatical Officers write down their comments about student experience for future Officers to access;
- xvii) that the book would be a line of continuity for the USSU and would also be made available to relevant persons in the University.

Noted:

- i) that members congratulated the USSU for their successes;
- ii) that PGR students were affected by loneliness but that their participation had not been reported on in the implementation of the anti-loneliness strategy;
- iii) the view that the strength of the USSU should be a promoted in student recruitment campaigns, and should feature in the Corporate Strategy;
- iv) that redacted -;

- v) that however, *redacted* consolidation;
- vi) the view that given the resources available, the USSU performance was admirable:
- vii) that during the Covid-19 pandemic there had been a focus on providing funds directly to students, but that this phase had now completed, and focus had shifted to cost-of-living increases for students;
- viii) the view that consideration should be given to identification of financial risk for students in the Corporate Risk Register;
- ix) that a new student centre was a firm ambition in the regeneration of the campus;
- x) that the Chair thanked the USSU for their Report and highlighted the importance of the relationship between the University and the USSU;
- xi) that the Chair thanked Mr Simeon Anyalemechi and Mr Ayo Ubikitan on behalf of the members, both of whom were attending their final meeting as members, and commended their exemplary representation of the student body at Council and positive manner throughout their tenure;
- xii) that members applauded Mr Anyalemechi and Mr Ubikitan.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the Report be noted;
- ii) that an update on the input from PGR students to the implementation of the anti-loneliness strategy be received as part of the next update;
- iii) that consideration of the USSU be included in the refresh of the Corporate Strategy; and
- iv) that financial risk for the Students' Union be reviewed as part of the preparations for the next presentation of the Corporate Risk Register to Audit and Risk Committee;

ACTION ii): USSU ACTION iii): Vice-Chancellor ACTION iv): Director of Strategy

COU.24.29 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key activities of the University (COU/24/22).

- i) that regarding the Ofsted inspection visit, the Vice-Chancellor also offered his thanks to the internal team and congratulations for an excellent result;
- ii) that regarding the Educate North Awards, the School of Arts, Media, and Creative Technologies (SAMCT) had won a Digital and Development Award for their state-of-the-art motion capture unit, and that the University's technicians were deserving of the recognition;
- iii) that feedback for the recent staff cost-of-living payment from the recognised trade unions (TUs) had been positive including that the payment had been well received by union members;
- iv) that the outcomes from the colleague engagement survey (run by an external provider) had been presented to University Leadership Team (ULT), and that it had been agreed to pause the survey timeline to facilitate internal

- analysis and to establish trust in communication between the executive and colleague body;
- v) that this analysis would be undertaken by two panels independent of ULT: one to analyse the data return; and one to consider proposed actions;
- vi) that in conducting this analysis, the panels would also have access to the recent Senate review survey and the advisory audit report on culture conducted by PwC;
- vii) that overall, the intention was to focus on a small number of issues but at pace, and in a transparent manner;
- viii)that the TUs also supported this intervention in the survey timeline;
- ix) that the outcomes would be brought before members shortly;
- x) that financial sustainability was a 'live' issue in the Sector, and that significant financial risks were emerging for a small number of institutions;
- xi) that the uncertainty regarding future Government policy and visa implications on international student recruitment was creating a level of concern across the Sector, particularly for postgraduate study;
- xii) that countries disproportionately affected included Nigeria, Pakistan, and India, that were all key recruitment locations for the University;
- xiii)that the University was monitoring the situation and reflecting on its strategy and approaches.

Noted:

- that Dr Janine Archer, Head of Apprenticeships, and all involved in supporting the Ofsted inspection visit were thanked for their hard work;
- ii) the view that the systemic structure and approach put in place for apprenticeships could be applicable to all students at the University to better create equitable treatment and potentially enhance experience and outcomes:
- iii) that it was the intention, as part of the learning being taken from the preparations for inspection, to shift academic approach towards a coaching style and to develop academic staff skills in that respect.

COU.24.30 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of the University Leadership Team, a detailed report on income diversification. Also included was the University's performance against lead indicators during Quarter 2 2023/24, with the Top 10 Risk Profile appended on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/24/23).

- i) that redacted the;
- ii) that there had been erosion in the cash value of the £9,250k pa tuition fee over the time period which had put real financial pressure on the sector;
- iii) that redacted -;
- iv) that the Office for Students (OfS) referred to a range of strategies available to institutions to mitigate financial risks, and *redacted* that;
- v) that analysis of the University's abilities to withstand financial pressure, alongside time and impact scenarios, had been included in the Report;

vi) that the development of the Corporate Strategy would include retaining strong financial resilience.

Noted:

- i) that development of the approach to risk and 'risk appetite' was to be discussed further by ULT, before being considered by Audit and Risk Committee;
- ii) the view that the pressure on teaching delivery costs could be seen as an affront to social mobility;
- iii) the view that the University should continue to focus on good cost control and mitigate risks to its core business whilst considering diversification;
- iv) the view that the Report evidenced credit to the University for its financial management, but was also a sobering read regarding the sector, its asset position, and ultimately the skills of the UK's internal population;
- v) the view that the University might want to consider its long-term position regarding international student admissions, and opportunities to mitigate against reliance on international income as an institutional advantage;
- vi) the view that the role of universities in a changing world was important and that it would be worrying to run only financially viable courses in the future.

COU.24.31 SENATE REPORT

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

Reported:

- that Senate members had received the presentation of the USSU placement survey findings and had reacted similarly as members;
- ii) that regarding the proposed academic workload model, this had not been approved and was deferred for further actions before re-consideration at a future meeting.

COU.24.32 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meetings from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (COU/24/25).

- i) that the Committee had considered and recommended the re-appointments of PwC as the University's internal audit service provider and KPMG as the University's external audit service provider;
- ii) that a rigorous internal audit service tender process had been undertaken by a sub-panel of the Committee and that of the five companies taken to interview, PwC had clearly been the best choice;
- iii) that the Committee was confident from PwC's presentation that they would be innovative in approach for the duration of the contract;
- iv) that KPMG had appointed a new University audit partner, and the Committee had also been assured given the prevailing market conditions that the opportunity to re-appoint KPMG was the right decision;

- v) that the Committee had received the detailed risk registers for the food and beverage on campus business case, and would continue to monitor delivery of the two phases of the project at the next meeting;
- vi) that the internal audit reports presented [IT Governance Framework and Asset Management, and Data Quality] had both been assessed as redacted -, and that the Committee noted the reports had been discussed by ULT.

COU.24.33 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Considered: on the recommendation of Audit and Risk Committee, the Risk Management Policy (COU/24/26).

RESOLVED: that the Risk Management Policy be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

(Secretary's note: following the meeting, the Equality Impact Assessment for the Policy has been approved under reference number EIA2024-17)

COU.24.34 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee (COU/24/27).

Reported: that the Committee continued to take a close interest in the Campus Masterplan and its refreshed development as a connectivity plan.

Noted:

- for the benefit of the Chair of Committee who had not been present at the preceding session, that an overview of the Campus Connectivity Plan including potential governance structure had been provided;
- ii) that redacted an;
- iii) that redacted ;
- iv) the redacted ;
- v) that redacted also;
- vi) the view that the University's student expertise could be engaged in this area, for example through placements or consultation.

COU.24.35 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT CLOSED MINUTE

Received: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Quarter Two 2023/24 Finance Report (COU/24/28).

- i) that redacted -;
- ii) that redacted -:
- iii) that redacted the;
- iv) that redacted a;
- v) that issues arising from the currency devaluation situation in Nigeria coupled with the changes to student visas was of particular concern;

- vi) that registered Nigerian students affected by the currency devaluation were being provided additional support such as longer fee payment plans;
- vii) that the public report of the Migration Advisory Committee was expected shortly;
- viii) that Audit and Risk Committee would consider the scenario planning further;
- ix) that redacted -;
- x) that redacted however;
- xi) that the next budget would be presented in due course.

Noted:

- i) the redacted -;
- ii) that redacted the;
- iii) that staff communication was made as to the University's finances and financial position regularly, and that the recognised Trade Unions (TUs) were also kept informed.

RESOLVED: that the Report be noted, and a response circulated to members regarding void costs for student residences.

ACTION: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

COU.24.36 LAND ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL CLOSED MINUTE

(Secretary's note: Cllr Teresa Pepper and Cllr Phil Cusack left the Chamber and were not present for the item).

Considered: on the recommendation of Finance and Resources Committee, proposed land acquisition and disposals on Peel Park Campus (COU/24/29).

Reported:

- i) that redacted -:
- ii) that redacted -;
- iii) that redacted -;
- iv) that redacted -;
- v) that redacted -;
- vi) that redacted -;
- vii) that redacted -;
- viii)that redacted -;
- ix) that redacted -.

Noted:

- i) that Finance and Resources Committee had considered the matter closely in putting forward a recommendation to approve the land disposals;
- ii) that redacted -;
- iii) that redacted the;
- iv) that redacted -:
- v) the view that members not involved closely in estates master planning appreciated the wider perspective and updates that had been received at the earlier development session and through this discussion.

RESOLVED: - redacted -

COU.24.37 UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD ENTERPRISES LTD

Considered: on the joint recommendation of Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Resources Committee, a proposal that the University of Salford Enterprises Ltd accounts be exempt from external audit through parent guarantee for a further year (financial year-ending 31 July 2024) (COU/24/30).

RESOLVED: that the exemption of audit for USE Ltd for 2023/24 be approved and that when the University of Salford accounts be approved in December 2024 to provide a parent company guarantee for liabilities of USE as at 31 July 2024.

COU.24.38 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/24/31).

Reported:

- that recruitment for new independent members and co-opted members had opened and members were encouraged to promote the opportunities through their networks;
- ii) that the members' diversity survey had been re-opened and those members who had not made a return were encouraged to do so, even if this was to confirm that they preferred not to participate.

COU.24.39 COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT GROUP

Considered: establishment of a Council Engagement Group regarding support for initiatives involving the University community (COU/24/32).

Reported:

- i) that the Council Engagement Group (CEG) would be to widen engagement in the same fashion as the CEG for the Campus Masterplan had done;
- ii) that Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee would receive further details regarding name and membership once these had been finalised.

RESOLVED: that the establishment of a CEG for initiatives with the University community, relating to both colleagues and students, be approved.

COU.24.40 LEAD MEMBERS

(Secretary's note: Mr Philip Green and Dr Elza Zekeng left the Chamber and were not present for the item).

Considered: appointments to the Lead Member for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) and the Lead Member for Information Technology (IT) (COU/24/33).

RESOLVED:

- that Mr Green be appointed Lead Member for Digital IT with immediate effect; and
- ii) that Dr Zekeng be appointed Lead Member for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion with immediate effect.

(Secretary's note: the Chair informed Mr Green and Dr Zekeng of the resolution on their return to the Chamber and thanked both for agreeing to take up the roles).

COU.24.41 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Received: a report regarding the recent Committee meeting from the Chair of the Remuneration Committee (COU/24/34).

Reported:

- i) that the Vice-Chancellor had apprised the Committee of the development of titles for ULT;
- ii) that salary benchmark data had been refined and that this also placed the Committee in a better position when considering future appointments;
- iii) that the Committee had received its standing item on pension schemes.

Noted:

- i) that pausing the Committee's consideration of flexible benefits for senior officers was to allow the Oracle platform to be implemented;
- ii) that the software implementation was expected to be straightforward but required resource and focus from the HR team;
- iii) that the payroll phase of the platform would be delivered by April 2025, with the remainder implemented by 2026;
- iv) that there was an existing benefits package available to all staff, and that the Committee would have the opportunity to consider flexible benefits in a timely fashion;
- v) the redacted -;
- vi) that the University was immediately taking forward recruitment enhancements such as advertising part-time and job share options;
- vii) that the process for salary benchmarking had been improved such that the University remained competitive in the marketplace.

RESOLVED: that the Report be noted and to circulate details of the current staff benefits package to all members for information.

ACTION: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

COU.24.42 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

Received: on the recommendation of Remuneration Committee, the Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 (COU/24/35).

- that the Committee had received assurances from ULT that the action undertaken over the past 18 to 24 months would impact on gender pay gap;
- ii) that a review of appointment and promotion criteria was underway;

iii) that the profile of ULT was being monitored.

Noted:

- the view that the Report should be commended for its accessibility and those involved in its production;
- ii) that the Report had been produced following the guidelines provided, and that it would be difficult to include the mean gender pay gap by quartile due to mapping against the University's grade structure;
- iii) that however, the Committee discussed data analysis used to prepare the Report and monitored if this gave any further insight regarding equity.

COU.24.43 EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY (EDI) STATEMENT OF AMBITION

Received: a report and presentation on the University's preparations for submission to the Race Equality Charter (REC) as a key tool for change under the EDI Statement of Ambition (COU/24/36).

Reported:

- i) that the submission preparation had been underway for several months and include extensive engagement by the Equity Ambassadors of the USSU;
- ii) that it had been the intent to produce a wholly co-created submission;
- iii) that six key priorities had been captured for the University;
- iv) that a detailed action plan would underpin the priorities, addressed through a partnership approach between the University and the USSU;
- v) that actions included for example, redacted;
- vi) that ULT had endorsed the approach and action plan;
- vii) that the initial submission would receive comments from the REC panel before a final submission was confirmed for formal assessment;
- viii) that the final submission deadline was November 2024;
 - ix) that the goal was not to achieve an award, but rather to change University practice and impact on staff and students.

Noted:

- i) that the Chair thanked the submission team and all those involved in the important activity;
- ii) that EDI awards were welcomed as a way to recognise and value achievements and improvements;
- iii) that postgraduate research (PGR) students, including international PGR, should also be explicitly included in the remit;
- iv) that support for those pursuing the specified actions was being put in place, for example, time allocated to make applications, how to support if a promotion application was not successful;
- v) the view that the Report clearly evidenced where selection processes for staff did not operate equally;
- vi) that the student award gap was significant;
- vii) the view that solutions could only be found through a whole-institution approach, and to lift all demographic groups was the responsibility of all staff and executive;
- viii) the view that this was a major priority for the University;

- ix) that the Student Ambassadors had been engaged to fully understand the student perspective;
- x) that the timeline to implement recruitment advertising on part-time and job share options was too long, and could be adopted quickly;
- xi) the view that an ambitious mindset could be fostered in the grades affected through practical experiences such as co-option to project work or acting-up responsibilities;
- xii) that the range of professional service areas were being engaged with to consider the priorities ahead of the submission, but that the presentation today had focused on challenges arising in the Estates and Facilities Directorate:
- xiii) the view that further exploration could be made into the potential relationship on placement and the award gap;
- xiv) that the engagement rate with the REC activities averaging 4% appeared low but was a common range for REC survey returns;
- xv) that USSU ran a range of student pulse surveys that had also informed the preparation of the priorities and actions;
- xvi) that reasonable confidence had been achieved through common themes presenting in surveys and activities;
- xvii) that also questions had been embedded in the colleague survey and the longitudinal colleague review;
- viii) that the Race Ethnicity Group met monthly and would be involved in the actions going forward, and assessment of accurate measures over a longer period of time;
- xix) that the Chair thanked the presenting team and members for an informative discussion.

COU.24.44 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

COU.24.45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted: that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 05 July 2024.