

Academic and Governance Services

Council

21/12 A meeting of the Council was held online on Monday 15 March 2021 at 2.15 pm.

The President	
The Vice-Presidents	(Mr T. Beardmore-Gray, Mrs H. Gordon, and Mrs K. Owen)
The Vice-Chancellor	
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor	
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor	(Professor M. Fellowes)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor	(Mr P. Inman)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor	(Professor E.M. McCrum)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor	(Professor D. Zaum)

Professor J. Board	Ms S. Maple
Mrs S. Butler	Mr P. Milhofer
Mr K. Corrigan	Ms L. Moses
Mrs P. Egan	Miss R. Osborne
Professor R. Frazier	Mrs S. Plank
Professor J. Gibbins	Mr S.C.C. Pryce
Professor Uma Kambhampati	Mr N. Richards
Miss B. Karki	Dr C. Shaw
Mr J. Magee	Mr J. Taylor

In attendance:

- Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary
- Chief Financial Officer
- Director of Quality Support and Development

The President noted that this was the final meeting to be attended by Miss Osborne, RUSU

- x Council members were well-qualified and experienced, but the University did not always make the most effective use of their expertise and capacity
- x Induction worked well for lay members and should be extended to internal members (both staff and students). Some induction material could be more efficiently delivered as an online resource.
- x Council members should be expected to undertake continuing professional development for the role
- x Individual appraisal would be helpful, especially if linked to a structured development process
- x Council members might usefully be linked to external stakeholders in order to strengthen the bonds between the University and its partners
- x The respective formal responsibilities of Council and Senate were clear, but there would be merit in building a better mutual understanding between the two bodies
- x Council's relationship with the wider University community should be strengthened through a dedicated webpage, pairings between lay members and Schools/Councils, and provision of wider opportunities to share experience.
- x The role of Independent Governor did not seem useful—the functions attributed to the role would more effectively fulfilled if built into the responsibilities of existing members rather than assigned to a distinct role.

The President thanked Mrs Gordon and Mrs Owen, together with the review group, for their work and for leading a valuable discussion. He asked that members contact Mrs Gordon and Mrs Owen if they had further thoughts on the matters raised in the discussion.

21/17 Report of the Student Experience Committee (Item 6)

The Council received the report of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 1 February 2021.

Mrs Owen, as Chair of the Committee, reported that the Committee had carefully considered the Annual Learning and Teaching Report to Council (Spring Term 2021), and noted that it would be discussed

The RUSU President reported on the strong desire among students to enjoy as much of a normal student experience as possible following the lifting of the lockdown. RUSU had been working with the University to offer a rich programme of on-campus events towards the end

The Council noted that a review of Senate's effectiveness was due in the next academic year, and that some reflection on developing fuller engagement and a better understanding between Council and Senate might be helpful.

1. "That the University Annual Learning and Teaching Report for Council (Spring Term 2021), now submitted, be approved;"
2. "That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 3 March 2021, now submitted, be approved."

21/19 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 8)

The Council received the Report of the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, together with six other Vice-Chancellors, he had been signatory to a letter calling on the government to address the disadvantage which students had suffered during the pandemic. The letter proposed that: the interest on student loans, which was currently 5.6%, be deferred or not charged for a period of 15 months; further support be provided for students suffering from digital poverty; and universities be permitted to spend their apprenticeship levy to provide further careers and employability support for their students and graduates, given the large surplus in the levy fund and the limited apprenticeship opportunities currently available.

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the current position in relation to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), to which approximately half of the University staff belonged. The 2019 valuation of the USS indicated a deficit of £5.4bn, and the 2020 valuation was currently being finalised. Since the relevant valuation point was March, which was a low point on the financial markets, the deficit had grown and the scenarios proposed by the USS Trustees indicated increases in the combined employer/employee contributions to as much as 56.2%, which was unsustainable for both employers and employees. He noted that some 20% of

In response to further questions, the Vice-Chancellor explained that the USS covenant meant that all

Mr Richards, as Chair of the Committee, reported that the Committee had reviewed its Membership and Terms of Reference in the light of the CUC HE Audit Code of Practice. The Committee had concluded 1.5 (t)7.7 (C)-2.5 45.2 (l -167t4-3.8 (h)-0.6 M(o)-4 (e)-0.7 b(h)-0.6 (r)-1.7s(C)-3.5h(o

which mode might be most appropriate. The guidance would be an important factor in determining how Council would meet over the coming months.