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Minute 21/27: Annual Leave Purchase Scheme

were provided with a breakdown of applications by Grade and by

The Committee w

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- a) Staff Relationships Policy, setting out the circumstances in which staff must report personal relationships they have with colleagues; and
- b) A Staff/Student Relationships Policy, which sets out that staff must report all personal relationships (as defined in the policy) with students, and in some cases prohibits such relationships.

She stated that whilst it is understood that some colleagues may consider these policies to place unnecessary restrictions on them, the primary purposes of the policies are to:

- protect students from improper conduct by members of staff (it is a welfare and, in its broadest sense, a safeguarding issue);
- protect staff from accusations of improper conduct by providing a mechanism for reporting, so that appropriate safeguards (for staff and students) can be put in place; and
- protect the University from complaints, claims and disruption.

She confirmed that UCU had reviewed both policies and sought the views of the

Committee of the University Students

of policies.

She also confirmed that the University had sought the views of the

of the University.

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22/05 Academic Staffing in a Research Intensive University – Proposals for Changes to Academic Recruitment and Planning Processes

Professor Zaum, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) asked the Committee to note the analysis and ideas presented to UEB in respect of examining trends in academic staffing in the university compared to trends in comparator institutions, and comment on the specific proposals relating to recruitment processes and panels.

The analysis showed that:

- Significant growth in student numbers has not been accompanied by

- A staffing strategy would help Functions to better align themselves with the mid to long term needs of Schools;
- Broad support for the long term strategy to strengthen research excellence across the University;
- A recognition that the University has a well-established Personal Titles process that rewards both research excellence and teaching & learning excellence;

The Committee discussed the challenge for Heads of School if TR is the default for new appointments and for T&R replacement posts. Does this mean Heads of School will not be able to appoint a new academic post as teaching-intensive (TI)?

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) stated that Heads of School should continue to have the autonomy to lead and take decisions locally and if a School had sound strategic reasons for making a new TI appointment then this would be supported. He stated that the proposal is in part to send out a clear message to colleagues that Reading is a research intensive University.

Members of the Committee debated the potential implications on teaching capacity if more appointments are TR and fewer appointments are TI. On the one hand it implies the University is doing less teaching when the evidence suggests we are doing more teaching. It was recognised that there are resource / capacity considerations.

In respect of the proposal for a Research Dean or PVC (R&I) to review relevant aspects of role descriptions and adverts for T&R and RI (Grade 8 and above) staff, and be represented on the appointment panels, a question was asked about the need to include a Teaching and Learning Dean on appointment panels. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) agreed to discuss this matter with the Pro-Vice Chancellors (Education and Student Experience).

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) thanked the Committee and confirmed that the proposals would be fully developed and would take on board the views of the Committee before being taken to UEB for approval.

22/06 Reward Committee arrangements

The Committee considered a paper setting out the views of the Science & Life Sciences Reward Committee in relation to the Reward Committee process. Members of the Science & Life Sciences Reward Committee have debated whether the current arrangements should be reviewed and Professor Harty, on behalf of the Committee, sought the advice of the Director of Human Resources. It was agreed that as a starting point the views of

The main issues discussed by the Science & Life Sciences Reward Committee related to:

- Having one Reward Committee a year instead of biannually, in line with the Personal Titles process.
- Considering merit-based promotion cases (research Grades 6 to Grade 7) under the Personal Titles route.
- In respect of merit-based promotion cases, to consider whether School's should provide a contextual statement. It was felt that a contextual statement would provide more objectivity and boundaries when judging cases.
- The Committee felt that it would be helpful to be provided with more information about the decisions taken by the other Reward Committees. This would enable the Committee to gain a better understanding of the overall University reward processes and ensure a more consistent approach.
- An acknowledgement that Schools have different approaches for promoting cases for staff reward and recognition, and for bringing forward cases to this Committee. The Committee wondered if further guidance might be available to ensure a more systematic process.
- Consideration of a word limit to the Rewarding excellence-contribution pay scheme form, along with additional boxes for staff to detail clear evidence and how they have gone above and beyond.

The Committee discussed the relative merits and limitations of the current arrangements and agreed that a review of the process was a sensible way forward.

There was an acknowledgement that some issues were worthy of discussion e.g. reviewing the arrangements for merit based promotion of G6 researchers to G7 – and others less so e.g. having one Reward Committee a year.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Advisory Services) reported that the HR Advisory team was currently considering progression routes and could incorporate a review of the Reward Committee process into this piece of work.

The Committee agreed that the process needed to be consistently applied across all Schools and Functions and supported a review of the process.

22/07 Pay and pensions update

The Director of Human Resources provided the Committee with an update on matters relating to pay, and summarised the current position in respect of the USS scheme. Highlights included:

- The UCU has notified the University of industrial action consisting of strike action from Monday 14 February to Tuesday 22 February 2022. These dates coincide with reading week and the first part of school half-terms, and as such seem an odd tactical choice. With that in mind we anticipate little real disruption, but the Contingency Operations Group has re-

report. The data cleansing and analysis process is underway for the report due by 31 March 2022, but no preliminary figures are yet available.

- In respect of pensions matters, the most pressing matter is the forthcoming changes to the USS pension scheme, to be effective from 1 April 2022. These have been commented on comprehensively at previous meetings.
- A statutory consultation with scheme members closed on 17 January. The consultation was facilitated