

**MINUTES OF THE CARDIFF UNIVERSITY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 19  
APRIL 2021 VIA ZOOM AT 2.00PM**

Present: Professor Stuart Palmer (Chair), Professor Colin Riordan, Professor Rudolf Allemann, Professor Rachel Ashworth, Paul Baston, Ricardo Calil, Hannah Doe, Tomos Evans, Judith Fabian, Professor Dame Janet Finch, Professor Kim Graham, Professor Ken Hamilton, Michael Hampson, Karen Harvey-Cooke, Professor Karen Holford, Chris Jones, Jan Juillerat, Dr Steven Luke, Dr Pretty Sagoo, John Shakeshaft, David Simmons, Judge Ray Singh, Dr Janet Wademan, and Agnes Xavier-Phillips.

Attendees: Rashi Jain, Vari Jenkins [Minutes], Sue Midha [Minutes 1930], Claire Morgan, Dr Jonathan Nicholls [External Consultant for the Governance Effectiveness Review], Daniel Palmer [Chief Executive of the Students' Union, Minute 1929], James Plumb (Minutes), Melanie Rimmer, Ruth Robertson, Claire Sanders, Professor Damian Walford Davies, Professor Ian Weeks and Robert Williams.

**1910 WELCOME AND PRELIMINARIES**

All were welcomed to the meeting.

NOTED

1910.1 that Dr Jonathan Nicholls, an External Consultant for the Governance Effectiveness Review, was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

**1911 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Dr Joanna Newman and Len Richards.

**1912 MATTERS ARISING**

Received and considered paper 20/527, 'Matters Arising'. The Chair spoke to this item.

NOTED

1912.1 that the Dean for Environmental Sustainability would attend a Council away day during 2021/22 to provide a briefing to Council;

1912.2 that all remaining items are either completed or are reported under the agenda.

RESOLVED

1912.3 that under Minute 1908 Amendments to Ordinances (paper 20/404 Changes to Ordinance), Ordinance 4 should be amended to read "composition" not "competition".

**1913 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

NOTED

- 1913.1 that Dr Janet Wademan declared a new interest as a Trustee of the National Library of Wales. There were no conflicts arising with respect to the meeting agenda;
- 1913.2 that Tomos Evans and Hannah Doe declared an interest in item 18 Students' Union Block Grant;
- 1913.3 that John Shakeshaft declared an interest in item 13 Adoption of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism and the APPG of British Muslims' Definition of Islamophobia, as a member of Trustee for British Research in Levant, and advisor to the British Academy.

#### **1914 CHAIR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Received and considered paper 20/528, 'Chair's Report to Council'. The Chair spoke to this item.

NOTED

- 1914.1 congratulations to all detailed in section 1 of the paper;
- 1914.2 that in addition to those listed in the paper, the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh was reported and a book of condolences had been opened;
- 1914.3 that a moment's silence was held for the deaths reported;
- 1914.4 that a number of Chair's actions had been undertaken and were listed in the paper;
- 1914.5 that the Review of Court, led by the Reverend Canon Gareth Powell, was ongoing;
- 1914.6 that the report included a list of communications to be received by Council members to update them on activities across University.

RESOLVED

- 1914.7 to circulate the electronic link for the book of condolences for His Royal Highness Duke of Edinburgh, to Council members.

#### **1915 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Received and considered paper 20/529, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1915.1 the announcement of the Internal Learning Exchange Programme launched by Welsh Government, which is to be designed and delivered by Cardiff University as host organisation;
- 1915.2 that the UK higher education sector is very dependent on the recruitment of international students from China and this remains an ongoing challenge across the UK. The appetite and demand of Chinese international students to study at Cardiff remains unchanged but the way in which the institution delivers programmes may need to be adapted;

- 1915.3 that the University continues to maintain its international relationships and support Chinese students, and address issues of discrimination as a result of COVID;
- 1915.4 that UK Postgraduate Research recruitment numbers are 14% lower compared to this time last year, however this is not of concern at this point in the recruitment cycle;
- 1915.5 that congratulations were recorded to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise and her team on the Research Excellence Framework submission;
- 1915.6 that results from the Digital Education survey will be used by the Digital Education Steering Group to inform its work, and the themes identified will be used to gather further insights from students. A monthly Cardiff pulse survey will provide regular feedback. There have been rises in student confidence and how students engage online and further work is being undertaken to support student assessment.

RESOLVED

- 1915.7 Council to hold an away day session on the need for diversification in international markets, informed by a comprehensive analysis of the impact on a number of activities, not just international student recruitment.

**1916 COVID-19 UPDATE**

Received and noted paper 20/530HC, 'COVID-19 Update Report for Council'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1916.1 that there had been approximately 1000 COVID tests conducted in the past seven days with no positive results. Numbers of positive cases continue to be low;
- 1916.2 that students in Wales are now able to return to University and planning is underway for students returning to campus for the next academic year;
- 1916.3 that a teaching review will determine if programme learning outcomes remain achievable. It was noted that there are higher risks of impact to specific subjects within Schools such as Dentistry and School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, which have practical elements within their programmes which cannot be delivered online. Any shortfalls are being addressed;
- 1916.4 that low student self-confidence has been observed this academic year. Work continues to raise confidence and develop the skills required to go into employment;
- 1916.5 that there is a network project to replace existing IT equipment and increase resilience;
- 1916.6 that it would be useful to understand the helpfulness of communications to staff and students by reviewing qualitative data;
- 1917.7 that there has been an increase in the number of students taking an interruption of study. Students are advised to speak with their personal

tutor and programme director beforehand as there are different routes depending on individual circumstances;

- 1917.8 that there are validated online degrees for 2021/22 which are different to the majority of provision which is blended. Students have been able to opt for blended if they are shielding;
- 1917.9 that the number of fixed penalty notices reported only reflected the number of cases responded to by South Wales Police. The total number of cases was approximately double. Security staff had been disappointed with the level of wilful destruction to property by students in Residences, and measures had been put in place to prevent the entry of non-residents to Talybont Halls of Residence;
- 1917.10 appreciation and thanks to members of the Security team for their work during this difficult time;
- 1917.11 that the University had strived to strike an appropriate balance and, post-Christmas, had moved to greater use of disciplinary action to emphasise that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

## **1918 REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER**

Received and considered paper 20/531C, 'Risk Register'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1918.1 that the Audit and Risk Committee had observed improvements in the management of risk;
- 1918.2 that the increasing risks caused by dependence on the Chinese market had already been discussed under the VC's Report item (Minute 1915 above);
- 1918.3 that a Cyber Security internal audit report has been provided by TIAA. The University has also achieved the Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and will explore other accreditations as appropriate to the HE sector;
- 1918.4 that benefits realisation for capital projects is monitored as they are completed and buildings are occupied. Financial performance is considered by the Estates and Infrastructure Sub-Committee.

## **1919 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION**

Received and considered paper 20/532, 'Students' Union President's Report'. The President of the Students' Union was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1919.1 that Hannah Doe was congratulated on her appointment as President of the Students' Union for the next academic year. The Chair thanked Tomos Evans for his valued engagement during his current presidency;
- 1919.2 that this year received the largest number of votes in the Officer Elections, This was also the largest number of votes compared to other Students' Unions in the UK this year;

- 1919.3 that there had been a decrease in the number of Speak Week responses from students due to the digital format. The Students' Union have been using other data sources to draw on students' feedback;
- 1919.4 that there are concerns that some students are unfamiliar with the work of the Students' Union and the support available. The Students' Union is keen to build a community spirit and is working closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience.

**1920 INTERNATIONAL LEARNING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR WALES**

Received and considered paper 20/560C, 'International Learning Exchange Programme for Wales'. The Chief Financial Officer was invited to speak to this item.

**NOTED**

- 1920.1 that the Welsh Government had announced the programme at end of March 2021 and Cardiff University had been invited to develop the programme on behalf of the education sector;
- 1920.2 that a subsidiary company will provide transparency to stakeholders across Wales to demonstrate how the funding is managed over the life of the project;
- 1920.3 that a risk register will be developed, to include financial and reputational risk. The financial risk to the University, associated with the receipt of an upfront grant to establish the programme, is mitigated once the subsidiary company is established, but the reputational risk to the University remains throughout the scheme;
- 1920.4 that funding for the programme has been allocated to the next financial year's budget;
- 1920.5 there are three key appointments: an internal appointment from Cardiff University to design the scheme up to the point of delivery; a permanent Programme Director to deliver the scheme and a Chair of the Advisory Board;
- 1920.6 that the appointment of the Chair of the Advisory Board will be made jointly by the University and the Welsh Government;
- 1920.7 that the subsidiary company will provide an annual report to the Finance and Resources Committee;
- 1920.8 that the subsidiary company will have insurance cover independent to the University. The financial risk will be managed via ring-fenced grant allocations.

**RESOLVED**

- 1920.9 that it would be helpful to consistently identify risks within papers of this nature which require Council approval;
- 1920.10 that due to the reputational risk, the Council should be provided with an update on progress at every meeting via the Vice-Chancellor's report, unless there are any exceptional issues requiring a substantive report;

- 1920.11 the establishment of a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the University to administer the Programme;
- 1920.12 the appointment of the subsidiary company directors. These are the Pro Vice-Chancellor International and Student Recruitment, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment and a lay member of Council;
- 1920.13 to delegate all necessary powers to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer to put in place the legal and financial arrangements to establish the company.

## **1921 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO**

Received and considered paper 20/533, 'Strategic Partnership with University of Waikato'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, International and Student Recruitment was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1921.1 that the strategic partnership builds on the positive relationship already established with the University of Waikato and existing staff and student engagement across the University;
- 1921.2 that the development of the partnership had been carbon neutral in respect of travel;
- 1921.3 that the intended initial duration was for a five year partnership.

RESOLVED

- 1921.4 to approve the Strategic Partnership with the University of Waikato.

## **1922 ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE STAFF SURVEY RESULTS**

Received and considered paper 20/534, 'Actions Taken as a Result of the Staff Survey Results'. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1922.1 that the actions had focused on culture, internal communications, the visibility of the University Executive Board and leadership, all of which had received positive feedback through pulse surveys;
- 1922.2 that pulse surveys are important and consideration should be given to increased frequency which would increase feedback from staff;
- 1922.3 that it may be beneficial also to employ a professional survey firm with a cross section of higher education engagement to provide benchmarking on a biennial basis;
- 1922.4 that the survey could be used to draw out emerging enhancement areas, to include role expectations, staff performance and contribution;
- 1922.5 that there is improved engagement with staff which will help to address challenges in future.

RESOLVED

- 1922.6 that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council will form a small working group with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to progress actions.

**1923 ADOPTION OF THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM AND THE APPG OF BRITISH MUSLIMS' DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Received and considered paper 20/535C, 'Adoption of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism and the APPG of British Muslims' Definition of Islamophobia'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1923.1 that the University had received a letter from the National Hindu Students Forum asking if the University is considered to be a safe space for Hindus;
- 1923.2 that adopting selected religion or race specific definitions may appear to exclude any other faith groups or races not covered and that the Council did not wish to be divisive as a result of adopting a definition;
- 1923.3 that the University has existing policies in place to safeguard groups within its community and is fully committed to supporting its various religion and race communities.

RESOLVED

- 1923.4 that following detailed consideration of the proposals, and taking into consideration the view of Senate as well as Council members, the Council agreed not to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the APPG of British Muslims' definition of islamophobia definition at this point in time as this may be divisive to the University community;
- 1924.5 that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee will support a review of University policies to safeguard groups within its community and ensure that all communities feel protected.

**1925 REPORT FROM CHAIR OF FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Received and considered paper 20/536C 'Report from Chair of Finance & Resources Committee'. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1925.1 that USS pensions remains an area of considerable uncertainty.

**1926 FINANCE REPORT**

Received and considered paper 20/537C 'Finance Report'. The Chief Financial Officer was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1926.1 [REDACTED]

**1927      2021/22 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS UPDATE**

NOTED

- 1927.1      that an exceptional item will be brought forward in the July 2021 budget for specific and targeted estate maintenance to meet health and safety requirements that have not been resolved over the past 18 months due to the pandemic;
- 1927.2      that new buildings opening in 2021/22 will carry cost implications which will be a challenge to the break-even position;
- 1927.3      an update provided by the Chief Financial Officer on the challenges facing the University with respect to the USS Pension fund and that USS has provided employers and employees with three scenarios for an increase in contribution levels required but with no change in benefits.

RESOLVED

- 1927.4      Council will receive a USS Pensions Briefing paper at the July 2021 meeting.

**1928      CIC FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Received and considered paper 20/539C, 'Cardiff Innovation Campus Update'. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1928.1      that there were no substantive changes from the report received by the Finance and Resources Committee and that a risk review is underway.

RESOLVED

- 1928.2      the newly appointed project director will present a report on key risks and milestones at the July 2021 Council meeting.

**1929      SU BLOCK GRANT 2021/22**

Received and considered paper 20/540C, 'SU Block Grant 2021/22'. The Chief Operating Officer was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

- 1929.1      that the Students' Union is requesting no change to its existing block grant level of £2,900K.

RESOLVED

- 1929.2      to approve the Students' Union Block Grant for 2021/22.

**1930      HR DASHBOARD SUMMARY**

Received and considered paper 20/547C, 'HR Dashboard Summary'. The Director of Human Resources was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED



- 1930.1 that there has been a reduction in the staff complement;
- 1930.2 that there has been a significant decrease in recruitment and advertising during the period. Current recruitment controls require four budget holders to scrutinise recruitment requests.

**1931 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Received and considered paper 20/541C, 'Report from Chair of Governance Committee'. The Chair of the Governance Committee was invited to speak to this item

NOTED

- 1931.1 that the Committee had recommended paper 20/550C External Funding Code of Practice, paper 20/551 Changes to Ordinances and paper 20/542C Lay Membership Appointments to Council for approval.

**1932 SKILLS MATRIX, MEMBERSHIP AND PROPOSED TIMEFRAME FOR REDUCTION IN LAY MEMBERS**

Received and considered paper 20/542C 'Skills matrix, membership and proposed timeframe for reduction in lay members'. The General Counsel and University Secretary was invited to speak to this item

NOTED

Agnes Xavier-Phillips, Michael Hampson and Judith Fabian left the meeting for lay member appointment discussion of this item.

- 1932.1 the importance of ensuring that Council lay membership provided the necessary range of skills to cover the requisite business.

RESOLVED

- 1932.2 to amend paragraph 3.7(vi) of Ordinance 10C Governance Committee from 'have regard to the diversity of the governing body and consider taking steps to address any issues' to 'have regard to the diversity of the governing body and take steps to address any issues', to reflect a stronger commitment to addressing diversity;
- 1932.3 to re-appoint Michael Hampson, Judith Fabian, Agnes Xavier-Phillips and Len Richards as a Lay Member of Council for a second term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;
- 1932.4 to re-appoint Michael Hampson as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for a second term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;
- 1932.5 to re-appoint Judith Fabian as Chair of the Governance Committee for a second term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;
- 1932.6 to re-appoint Agnes Xavier-Phillips as a lay member of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Honorary Fellowships & Degrees Committee for a second term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;
- 1932.7 to re-appoint Len Richards as a lay member of the Governance Committee for a second term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;

1932.8 to reduce the number of lay Council members from 15 to 13 over the next 2 academic years.

### **1933 REPORT FROM CHAIR OF AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

Received and considered paper 20/544C, 'Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee'. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

1933.1 that progress is being made against the CIC recommendations reviewed in the follow-up ARUP report;

1933.2 that the number of Limited and No Assurance reports are reducing, along with the number of outstanding highly rated recommendations, which demonstrates strengthening of internal controls;

1933.3 that rapid progress had been made against the UUK Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing recommendations for fire safety and that the University is meeting its Health and Safety requirements but wishes to exceed these by undertaking maintenance works over the summer.

### **1934 SENATE REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Received and considered paper 20/545C, 'Senate Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor was invited to speak to this item.

NOTED

1934.1 that Senate provides Council with an Annual Quality Report to provide assurance on academic quality standards. This report is generated following the examination results at the end of the year and is presented to Council in the Autumn, following endorsement at ASQC and Senate;

1934.2 that Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss the report in due course and to gain further insight into the discussions taking place in Senate on the impact of the pandemic on learning outcomes and the steps being taken to ensure the maintenance of academic standards;

1934.3 that the Audit and Risk Committee had briefly considered whether scrutiny of academic assurance should fall within their remit.

RESOLVED

1934.4 that the Senate Report to Council would provide more information on the discussion of items and the work of Senate;

1934.5 to circulate the minutes of Senate to Council members;

1934.6 to explore academic governance and quality assurance as part of a Council Away Day.

### **1935 POLICY STATEMENT ON RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT**

Received and considered paper 20/546, 'Policy Statement on Responsible Research Assessment'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise was invited to speak to this item.

RESOLVED

1935.1 to approve the Policy Statement on Responsible Research Assessment.

**1936 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 8 FEBRUARY 2021**

Received and considered paper 20/548, 'Minutes of the previous meeting'.

RESOLVED

1936.1 that the date in the heading should be amended to read '8 February 2021';

1936.2 to approve the minutes of the Council meeting of 8 February 2021, subject to the above amendments.

**1937 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Received and considered paper 20/452, 'Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference'.

RESOLVED

1937.1 to approve the Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference.

**1938 EXTERNAL FUNDING CODE OF PRACTICE**

Received and considered paper 20/550C, 'External Funding Code of Practice'.

RESOLVED

1938.1 to approve the External Funding Code of Practice.

**1939 CHANGES TO ORDINANCES**

Received and considered paper 20/551, 'Changes to Ordinances'.

RESOLVED

1939.1 to approve the Changes to Ordinance 8 - Appointment of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors.

**1940 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

NOTED

TRAC RETURN

Received and considered paper 20/556C TRAC return.

NOTED

1940.1 that a full TRAC report with benchmarking information will be reviewed by the TRAC Group and considered by the Finance and Resources Committee.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise gave an oral update on the REF submission.

NOTED:

1940.2 that the University had made a powerful submission to the Research Excellence Framework, and recorded congratulations to all involved, including the Libraries team who had checked over 3,500 outputs;

1940.3 that the research environment submissions provided information on the investments the University has made in research, which may be of interest to Council members;

1940.4 that the predicted overall GPA is around 3.5, compared to 3.27 in the previous submission.

STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT

NOTED

1940.5 thanks were recorded to the outgoing President of the Students' Union for their work during their term as President.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

1940.6 that the July meeting of Council is likely to be held remotely rather than in person.

**1941 ITEMS RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION**

- Council NOTED the following papers:
- Paper 20/552 Students' Union Accounts 2019/20
- Paper 20/438 Research Grants and Contracts
- Paper 20/554 Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2020/2021 Summary
- Paper 20/555C Redundancy Committee Report to Council
- Paper 20/557 CUPF Employer Nominated Trustee
- Paper 20/558 Sealing Transactions
- Paper 20/559C Agenda for next meeting

Chair.....

DATE