

**Minutes of the Cardiff University Council Meeting held on 4 July 2023 at 13.00 in the Board Room and Function Space of the sbarc I spark Building, Maindy Road, Cardiff.**

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Vice-Chancellor, Angie Flores Acuña, Professor Rudolf Allemann, Professor Rachel Ashworth, Paul Baston, Professor Marc Buehner, Judith Fabian, Professor Dame Janet Finch, Christopher Jones, Jan Juillerat, Jeremy Lewis, Deio Owen, Dr Joanna Newman, Suzanne Rankin [Minutes 2143-2157], David Selway, Dr Pretty Sagoo, Professor Damian Walford Davies, Jennifer Wood.

Attendees: Katy Dale [Minute taker], Millicent Ele, Rashi Jain, Professor Urfan Khaliq [from minute 2143], Professor Wendy Lerner, Jon Lockley [Minute 2154], Sian Marshall, Susan Midha, Claire Morgan, Claire Sanders, Darren Xiberras, Professor Ian Weeks, and Professor Roger Whitaker.

**2137 Welcome and preliminaries**

All were welcomed to the meeting, especially the Students' Union President in their new role, the Vice-President Welsh Language, Community and Culture who was attending their first meeting, and the Vice-Chancellor Designate who was attending as an observer.

**2138 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Michael Hampson, John Shakeshaft and Agnes Xavier-Phillips. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

**2139 Declarations of interest**

The Chair reminded the Committee members of their duty to disclose any potential conflicts of interest. No declarations of interest were noted.

**2140 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 April 2023 (22/775) were confirmed as a true and accurate record and were approved to be signed by the Chair.

**2141 Matters Arising**

Received and noted paper 22/794C, 'Matters Arising'. The Chair spoke to this item.

**2142 Items from the Chair**

Received paper 22/777C, 'Report of Chair's Action Since Last Meeting'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

2142.1 that the Chair had approved a number of appointments to Committees, including the appointment of Dr Catrin Wood and Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo to Council;

2142.2 that the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee had resigned as Chair and as a lay member of Council with immediate effect; [Redacted].

### **2143 Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council**

Received and considered paper 22/791C, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2143.1 that the report contained positive news on student numbers and student outcomes;

2143.2 that the term for the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience was detailed incorrectly in the paper; their current term would end in October 2023 and their next term run from November 2023 to October 2026;

#### Marking and Assessment Boycott

2143.3 that an update was provided, and a discussion held, in regards to the Marking and Assessment Boycott;

2143.4 that although the boycott had been known of in advance, it remained unclear who would participate in the boycott and therefore the scale of the impact until marking had commenced, as members were not obliged to indicate their participation in advance; this impacted the ability to put mitigations in place;

2143.5 the University had followed UCEA guidance on this matter in regards to withholding pay for those involved in the boycott due to not working to contract; although entitled to withhold the full 100% of pay, the University had withheld pay and then made an ex-gratia payment of 50%; the local UCU branch had deemed this as punitive and were undertaking further strike action (which was seen at other institutions though not across the sector); the University had requested if the impact of the MAB could be reduced and understandably UCU had been unable to meet this request; the University therefore continued to withhold pay; the University continued to have courteous conversations with UCU and both were in a constrained situation;

2143.6 [Redacted]

2143.7 [Redacted]

2143.8 [Redacted]

2143.9 [Redacted]

2143.10 that a range of measures had been put in place to help students including:

- .1 establishment of a helpdesk; this was manned by staff across the institution and included those with experience of schools from previous roles; individuals taking calls would work with schools to understand each student's position;
- .2 creation of FAQs;
- .3 a letter to be included with students' transcripts to help them understand their results and any impacts;

.4 mental health support for students and the University had reached out to vulnerable students;

.5 communications on social media to help students understand the situation;

2143.11 [Redacted]

2143.12 [Redacted]

2143.13 [Redacted]

2143.14 [Redacted]

2143.15 [Redacted]

2143.16 that the Students' Union appreciated this was a difficult situation and a national dispute and noted that a solution needed to be sought for all to limit the impact and distress for students.

#### **2144 Risk Register**

Received and considered paper 22/715HC, 'Risk Register.' The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2144.1 [Redacted]

2144.2 [Redacted]

2144.3 [Redacted]

Resolved

2144.4 to approve the risk register.

#### **2145 Institutional Risk Review letter**

Received and considered paper 22/797C, 'Response to HEFCW Final Institutional Risk Review letter.' The University Secretary spoke to this item.

Noted

2145.1 [Redacted]

2145.2 [Redacted]

2145.3 [Redacted]

2145.4 [Redacted]

Resolved

2145.5 to approve the response, subject to comments raised in 2145.3 and 2145.4;

2145.6 to provide detail of the number of institutions identified in each of the risk categories.

**2146 KPI Update Report 22-23**

Received and considered paper 22/738C, 'KPI Update Report 22-23.' The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2146.1 that the number of green arrows was pleasing; it was noted that some red arrows were deceiving (e.g. KPI 6C which had missed the target by 0.01%);
- 2146.2 that there was currently no system to provide the figures for the KPI in regards to students on work placements (these had to be manually calculated), hence why no figures had been provided;
- 2146.3 that high level results for the staff survey would be available in the coming weeks; the results would be shared with Council.

**2147 Finance Report**

Received and considered paper 22/743C, 'Finance Report.' The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

- 2147.1 [Redacted]
  - 2147.2 [Redacted]
  - 2147.3 [Redacted]
  - 2147.4 [Redacted]
  - 2147.5 that the Q3 forecast did not include any risk from industrial action and this may need to be considered; current estimated figures around removal of pay due to strike action was [Figure Redacted] and would be included as a balance sheet item;
  - 2147.6 that a significant positive pension adjustment in the year-end accounts was expected; this was for CUPF as the accounting arrangements for the USS scheme were different;
  - 2147.7 that congratulations were extended to all who had worked hard to achieve the current financial position.
- Resolved
- 2147.8 for future iterations to include reference to the KPI target on EBITDA.

**2148 Proposed Budget for 2023-24, Financial Projections for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27**

Received and considered paper 22/818C, 'Proposed Budget for 2023-24, Financial Projections for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27' and paper 22/742HC 'Integrated Planning Process Outcomes'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

Proposed Budget for 2023-24

- 2148.1 [Redacted]
- 2148.2 these figures were dependent on final student numbers;
- 2148.3 [Redacted]
- 2148.4 that a discussion was held on the condition of the estate and maintenance backlog; a condition survey of the estate was being undertaken (reporting in 2023/24 academic year) and it was expected this would result in a maintenance backlog cost that was higher than currently predicted; work would then be undertaken to determine an estates strategy and ensure alignment with carbon net zero work, alongside integrating this work into the IPP; it was noted that teams had been established within the Estates function to focus on space and carbon net zero; the need for a digital maintenance programme was also highlighted; it was noted that generating capital would allow for such work to be undertaken, but would also remove surpluses generated; the need for an integrated finance plan, which ensured sustainability and agreed the level of reserves and how these could be used, was highlighted;
- 2148.5 the current government policy around restriction of international student numbers; it was noted that this was more of an English government policy and the University was not as exposed as other institutions (though there was exposure to this risk);
- 2148.6 [Redacted]
- 2148.7 that it had been agreed not to increase FTE of students but to amend the proportions and quality of student intake;
- IPP
- 2148.8 that this would provide a centralised and holistic tool for academic and financial planning, including the estate, and help to safeguard delivery of financial plans;
- 2148.9 that it required buy in from Heads of School and budget holders; a session had been held with Heads of School to discuss the proposals and there was appetite from them for this work;
- 2148.10 a launch day event was planned for the 2023/24 academic year;
- 2148.11 that going forward, UEB would take responsibility for the IPP (as opposed to the IPP management group) to ensure greater alignment;
- 2148.12 that confirmation and clearing would target schools which could bear a higher intake and had plans for growth, as well as subjects where the market could bear an increase in student numbers;
- 2148.13 that it was important to consider the staffing requirements for change projects.
- Resolved
- 2148.14 to approve the proposed 2023/24 budget.
- 2149 Report from the Students' Union President**
- Received and considered paper 22/789 'Report from the President of the Students' Union'. The Students' Union President spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2149.1 that the recent Varsity events had gone well;
- 2149.2 that sabbatical officers had been mandated to not attend graduation and it was felt by some to be crossing a picket line; sabbatical officers would likely still attend;
- 2149.3 that the attendance of police at recent Open Day events did not seem to have caused upset;
- 2149.4 that students had requested sabbatical officers work to end the MAB and a letter would be issued to the University shortly.

## **2150 Student View**

Received and considered paper 22/677, 'The Student View 2023'. The Students' Union President spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2150.1 that the Student View consisted of three main topics: Housing, Estates and Facilities, and Assessment and Feedback;
- 2150.2 that development of a Residences Strategy would follow the results of the condition survey; the annual refurbishment budget for residences would not be cut where possible and would continue whilst a strategy was developed; the agreement with Unite had also been extended to ensure accommodation for students; there had been no rent strikes as yet as it was believed levels were reasonable; it was noted that the majority of out of hours calls for Security were due to residences issue and calls due to lock-outs had greatly increased now there was no charge for this.

## **2151 Student Experience Update**

Received and considered paper 22/841R, 'Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience Student Feedback Update'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2151.1 that there were two postgraduate student surveys, CUPTS for taught students (an internal survey) and PRES for research students (run nationally by AdvanceHE); there were low response rates for both surveys; results were above benchmark and were being reviewed by PG Deans;
- 2151.2 that it had been confirmed NSS results would be issued on 10 August 2023; there had been changes to the questions and how responses were constructed and it was unclear how the data would be presented; it was expected there may not be positive movement in regards to the Schools of Law and Politics and Social Sciences in this survey; it was also expected the 2024 survey results would reflect the impact of the MAB;
- 2151.3 that outcomes of the NSS consultation work had indicated that student experience was not working as effectively in larger schools; differentials between experiences had become more visible, heightening the need for consistency;

2151.4 that good progress had been made on the associate fellowship scheme and this had been well received by PG students;

2151.5 that a Task and Finish Group had been established to review the issues around marking and had engaged consultants; work was progressing at pace in this area but there were competing areas of importance and so this required monitoring.

## **2152 Review of the bicameral relationship between Council and Senate**

Received and considered paper 22/795, 'Review of the bicameral relationship between Council and Senate'. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2152.1 that this review was a Council commissioned review following the recommendations of the 2021 Governance Effectiveness Review;

2152.2 that the Task and Finish Group would be scoping the review but not undertaking the review itself; external reviewers were proposed and informal meetings had been held; formal meetings would be held on 25 July and the final reviewer chosen;

2152.3 that the current timeline indicated the final report would be presented in May 2024;

2152.4 that proposals had been shared with Senate who had requested addition of a minor inflection to point 5 of the scope;

2152.5 that the Director of English Language programmes had been indicated as a consultee as they were an ex-officio member of Senate and all categories of membership of Senate were included as consultees; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was content that Welsh-speaking staff were represented.

Resolved

2152.6 to approve the timeline, reviewers and consultees proposed in the paper.

## **2153 Annual Estates Performance Report**

Received and considered paper 22/746C, 'Annual Estates Performance Report.' The Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2153.1 that it was a recommendation of the HEFCW Financial Management Code and IAR report that the governing body receive an annual report outlining estates performance;

2153.2 that Finance and Resources Committee had also seen the report;

2153.3 that the report provided a snapshot of the estate position and provided detail of future priorities (e.g. reducing carbon footprint, improved utilisation and divestment from legacy estate where necessary);

2153.4 that the report noted poor utilisation rates of space; a holistic review of the estate and student and staff experience within it would be undertaken; there may be a need for cultural change around use of space and the need to emphasise space costs to schools;

- 2153.5 that a Net Zero Programme Manager had been appointed and the University was making use of a number of loans in this area; a strategy in regards to offsetting of carbon would be key;
- 2153.6 that issues around testing of fire alarms and fire doors being held open would be taken back to the Estates team;
- 2153.7 that production of green energy was considered as part of any new project; the possibility of a heat source in the Cathays area and use of energy from the sea were being considered;
- 2153.8 that the changes within the estates team seemed to have stabilised;
- 2153.9 that it was predicted there would be significant change in the areas of the estate identified as condition A and B following the results of the condition survey;
- 2153.10 that there may be opportunities to work with other institutions on a joint public estate approach.

Resolved

- 2153.11 to approve the Annual Estates Performance Report.

**2154 High Performance Computing and Redwood Data Centre Refurbishment Programme**

Received and considered paper 22/740HCR, 'HPC and Redwood Business Case.' The Chief Operating Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2154.1 [Redacted]
- 2154.2 [Redacted]
- 2154.3 [Redacted]
- 2154.4 [Redacted]
- 2154.5 [Redacted]
- 2154.6 [Redacted]

Resolved

- 2154.7 to approve the High Performance Computing and Redwood Data Centre Refurbishment Programme, namely:
- .1 to create a High Performance Computing and Redwood Data Centre Refurbishment Programme;
  - .2 to approve the HPC and Data Centre capital investment of £4.941m (spanning 2023/24 and 2024/25);
  - .3 to approve the additional Estates Works, with a capital investment of £576K inclusive of VAT and 25% contingency during 2023/2024.

Jon Lockley (ARCCA Director) left the meeting.

**2155 Carbon Reduction Phase 1 Business Case**

Received and considered paper 22/696, 'Carbon Reduction Phase 1 Business Case'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

2155.1 that the paper requested approval of up to £14.1m of funding; this would come from a £10.5m interest free loan from Welsh Government and up to £3.6m of University reserves (which included £1.8m of risk); a further loan of £1.4m was being investigated;

2155.2 that works for this would run from August 2023 to August 2026 and would equate to financial savings of £1.26m and carbon savings of 1487 Co2 (both per annum);

2155.3 that solar panels would of the requisite standard dictated within the criteria for the loan.

Resolved

2155.4 to approve Carbon Reduction Phase 1 Business Case, namely:

- .1 the approve submission of the Welsh Funding Programme loan application with a value currently estimated at £11.9m;
- .2 to approve the University commit funding up to £3.6m to deliver this project;
- .3 to approve delegation to the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer to sign off the works contract for Breathe to proceed with the works, subject to the loan application being successful and the University commitment not exceeding £3.6m.

**2156 Report from Redundancy Committee**

Received and considered paper 22/788RC, 'Report from Redundancy Committee July 2023'. The Director of Human Resources spoke to this item.

Noted

2156.1 that the paper requested approval of delegations from Council as was usual at this meeting.

Resolved

2156.2 [Redacted]

2156.3 [Redacted]

2156.4 to set up Redundancy Committees to consider such terminations;

2156.5 to delegate to the Chair or Deputy Chair of Council the authority under paragraph 11(2) of Part I of Statute XV, to either approve any selection recommendation made by the Redundancy Committee under sub-section (1), or to remit it to the Redundancy Committee for further consideration in accordance with their further directions; a report on such decisions to be made to the next ordinary meeting of Council (2.1);

2156.6 to delegate authority under paragraph 12(1) of Part I of Statute XV to the Director of Human Resources to issue dismissal notices following a decision taken on behalf of Council by the Chair or Deputy Chair of Council (2.2).

**2157 Pro Vice-Chancellor College of Physical Sciences and Engineering Presentation**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor College of Physical Sciences and Engineering presented this item.

Noted

2157.1 that the 7 schools within the College were not only important for education but were also areas for the future social and sustainable needs of the community, both locally and globally;

2157.2 that it was the smallest college with 660 academic staff, 325 PS staff and 6448 student FTE; 25% of students and 37% of staff were international; 95% of students were in employment or further study;

2157.3 that the College had generated £39m of research awards in 2021/22; its annual contribution had grown from £22.8m in 2015/16 to £44.2m in 2021/22;

2157.4 that a number of key projects had been undertaken to assist with growing schools and the College (e.g. works to Bute Building, building of Abacws);

2157.5 that the College had performed well in REF 2021, with all submissions rated >95% 4\* or 3\* and all schools had increased their GPA;

2157.6 that the College had refreshed its Strategy and aimed to grow annual contribution rates 34.8% between 2023/24 and 2025/26;

2157.7 that key external risks included HE Funding model, dependence on China, industrial action and changes in government and policy (e.g. Horizon); key internal risks were student satisfaction, increased costs, staff recruitment and retention, and use of space;

2157.8 that student recruitment presented both a risk and opportunity; there were particularly opportunities within the School of Engineering and School of Computer Science and Informatics; thought was also being given to growth for the Schools of Chemistry and Mathematics; it was noted that there may be opportunities for cross-over with the Business School and a need to ensure digital expertise;

2157.9 that civic mission remained a core element of the work of the College.

**2158 Any Other Business**

Noted

2158.1 that thanks were extended to the following who were attending their last meeting:

- Vice-Chancellor
- Professor Rudolf Allemann
- Professor Rachel Ashworth
- Professor Marc Buehner

- Dr Joanna Newman
- Paul Baston

**2159 Items Received for Approval**

Resolved

- 2159.1 to approve the following papers:  
22/616 Changes to Ordinances  
22/793C Council Lay Membership  
22/617C Trustee Benefits Policy  
22/606R Council Development and Induction Programme 2023-24  
22/615 Updates to Scheme of Delegation May 2023  
22/745C SU Financial Agreement Annual Review 2022-23

**2160 Items Received for Information**

NOTED the following papers:

- 22/796C Senate Report to Council June 2023  
22/685 Emeritus and Emerita Titles Awarded Since 1 April 2023  
22/819C Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee  
22/820C Finance and Resources Committee Chair's Report to Council  
22/744C Update on University Pension Schemes  
22/739C Investment Plan updates – Capital Investment Plan 2018-23 and Short-Term Investment Plan 2021-23  
22/748C HR Dashboard  
22/786C Annual Report on Joint Ventures  
22/792C Report from Chair of Governance Committee  
22/788C Report from Redundancy Committee  
22/776C Report from Chair of Remuneration Committee  
22/684C Report from Honorary Fellows and Degrees Committee  
22/779 Schedule of business for the year 2023-24  
22/790 UEB Operational Plan 2022-23  
22/778 Sealing Transactions  
22/731HC Major and Serious Incidents Update (*on Director's Desk*)