

Minutes of the meeting of Cardiff University Council held on 1 May 2024 at 09:00 in the Executive Education Suite of the Postgraduate Teaching Centre, Cardiff Business School

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Vice-Chancellor, Beth Button, Angie Flores Acuña, Professor Damian Walford Davies, Judith Fabian, Christopher Jones, Jan Juillerat, Professor Urfan Khaliq [from Minute 2213], Stephen Mann, Deio Owen, Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo, Suzanne Rankin, Sian Rees, David Selway, Dr Robert Weaver, Dr Catrin Wood [until Minute 2222], and Jennifer Wood.

Attendees: Professor Rudolf Allemann, Hayley Beckett [Minute 2223], Laura Davies, Ruth Davies, Katy Dale [Minute taker], Tom Hay [from Minute 2213], Julie-Anne Johnston, Sian Marshall, Claire Morgan, Claire Sanders and Darren Xiberras.

2207 Welcome and preliminaries

All were welcomed to the meeting.

2208 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor Dame Janet Finch, Jeremy Lewis, John Shakeshaft and Agnes Xavier-Phillips.

2209 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded the Committee members of their duty to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Noted

2209.1 Suzanne Rankin declared an interest in relation to the Dental School risk contained on the Risk Register [Minute 2214] and the Report from Redundancy Committee [Minute 2225], given her employment in the NHS;

2209.2 Angie Flores Acuña and Deio Owen declared an interest in relation to the Students' Union Block Grant [Minute 2227].

2210 Minutes of previous meeting

Received and considered paper 23/549C, 'Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 06 February 2024'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

2210.1 a request had been received to amend minute 2201.1 from "and required c.12m to meet this target", to "and would require a c.£50m improvement in financial performance to meet the EBIDA target".

Resolved

2210.2 to approve the minutes of the 06 February 2024, subject to the above amendment.

2211 Matters Arising

Received and noted paper 23/551C, 'Matters Arising'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Resolved

- 2211.1 to review the matters arising that were outstanding since 2022, and to provide an update for those that remained live and remove those now concluded or no longer applicable.

2212 Items from the Chair

Received paper 23/550C, 'Chair's Action Since Last Meeting'. The Chair spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2212.1 that the Chair had approved a number of appointments, both of Council members and of the Head of Internal Audit as listed in the paper; that Sian Rees had been appointed as the Welsh Language Champion on Council;
- 2212.2 that Cardiff had won this year's Varsity and Council members were encouraged to attend this event in future years;
- 2212.3 that thanks were extended to all involved with preparing for the recent talk from Jacob Rees-Mogg;
- 2212.4 that the Chair had visited Y Lle (the new Welsh Language drop-in centre) and encouraged members to do the same;
- 2212.5 that Council members would be contacted to provide feedback for the Chair's appraisal and were encouraged to give candid feedback;
- 2212.6 that information on Graduation 2024 would be shared shortly.

2213 Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

Received and considered paper 23/576C, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2213.1 that there remained ongoing uncertainty around international students and this was worsened by Westminster policy aimed at addressing immigration that was impacting on international students' ability and desire to come to the UK; the Graduate Route was also likely to be impacted by the Migration Committee's upcoming review; there was a "flight to quality" with international students attracted to universities in the QS Top 100 (which Cardiff University was not, although a number of subjects were); the University had undertaken a number of actions in this area (reviewed scholarships and agent use, better marketing and more visits) to remove barriers to quick offers and address historic issues and this would be looked at further once the Pro Vice-Chancellor International commenced in post;
- 2213.2 that the discount to alumni for postgraduate study was proving popular, with Home PGT offers up 6% and unconditional offers up 10%; this was also being

advertised via the alumni team and discussions were being held on offering this to PGR students;

- 2213.3 that it was felt most staff understood the necessity for change and the cost of this, alongside the internal and external factors that necessitated the change;
- 2213.4 that the University was undertaking work to ensure students were supported to progress and achieve degree outcomes;
- 2213.5 that the University continued to deepen its partnership with the Cardiff Capital Region, including work around the new Investment Zone;
- 2213.6 the University was working with Cardiff and Vale Health Board and other regional partners around the development of a Joint Academic Health Sciences Strategy;
- 2213.7 that work would be undertaken to review why subjects had fallen out of the QS Top 100 quickly; there were a number of quick changes that could be implemented to significantly improve the University's QS ranking;
- 2213.8 that removal of buildings from the estate would be aligned with the University's Residence Strategy and there were further financial benefits from utilities and maintenance savings;
- 2213.9 that the Students' Union had a campaign running to inform students on the process for registering to vote; the use of a possible polling station on campus was also noted.

2214 Strategic Risk Register

Received and considered paper 23/483HC, 'Strategic Risk Register'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2214.1 [Redacted];
- 2214.2 [Redacted];
- 2214.3 [Redacted];
- 2214.4 [Redacted];
- 2214.5 [Redacted];
- 2214.6 [Redacted].

Resolved

- 2214.7 to approve the Strategic Risk Summary and Register and the lessons learnt;
- 2214.8 that a target level of risk maturity be set.

2215 Finance Report and Q2 Forecast

Received and considered paper 23/537C, 'Finance Report and Q2 Forecast'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2215.1 that the forecast indicted a deterioration from Q1 and it was highlighted that a large amount of challenge had been built into the Q1 forecast;
- 2215.2 [Redacted];
- 2215.3 [Redacted];
- 2215.4 [Redacted];
- 2215.5 that the 2024/25 budget was being developed and would need to be realistic in relation to income predications and scenarios, and review the University's cost-base in light of its income; [Part Redacted]; a Task and Finish Group had been established, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, to review data and frameworks for cost savings and budget setting recommendations to UEB;
- 2215.6 [Redacted];
- 2215.7 that it was suggested the separation of STIP be removed from future budgets;
- 2215.8 that publishing a clear savings target could prove beneficial in regards to ownership of the challenge;
- 2215.9 that even with student recruitment targets met, there was a c.10% deficit, reflecting the impact of costs increases.

2216 Bicameral Report - Review of Recommendations

Received and considered paper 23/437CR, 'Bicameral Report – Review of Recommendations'. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2216.1 that this review had originated in the 2021 Governance Effectiveness Review and been commissioned by Council;
- 2216.2 a Task and Finish Group had been established to determine the scope of the review and Halpin had been appointed to undertake the review itself;
- 2216.3 Halpin's report had included 18 recommendations and 12 suggestions; of the recommendations, the T&F group had recommended all but 1 be taken forward; the T&F Group did not feel Senate was mature enough as yet to establish an agenda setting committee (recommendation 12) and that this would covered via the suggestion of more broader discussion items (suggestion 1); of the suggestions, the T&F Group had endorsed all but three, as the benefit of a joint Away Day (suggestion 3) was not clear and external stakeholder engagement (suggestions 11 and 12) was felt to be outside of the brief;
- 2216.4 that clarifying Senate's remit (recommendations 7 and 8) was key; good examples of this in the sector was requested and it was noted this would be for the University to determine; Halpin had noted the constitutional relationship between Senate and Council was clear at a high level, but became more unclear at a lower level;
- 2216.5 that the paper had been reviewed by Governance Committee who had emphasised the review of Statues and Ordinances in relation to the role of

Senate and Council; disappointment at the lack of comment on the role of the executive was also noted;

- 2216.6 Senate had also reviewed the report and had noted there was no recommendation around the perception that Senate was seen as “rubber-stamping”; support for a joint away day was noted by some members;
- 2216.7 that Halpin has determined the University as “improving” on their Academic Assurance Maturity Framework and whether it was desired this move to “good”;
- 2216.8 that the need to continue external stakeholder engagement had been noted following the abolition of Court; a large amount of stakeholder engagement had been undertaken as part of the Big Conversation and this would need to be sustained once the new strategy was approved; highlighting the impact on stakeholders from Council decisions would also be of benefit;
- 2216.9 that induction for Senate members was noted as key;
- 2216.10 that joint away days could focus on strategic issues (e.g. NSS or a better understanding of young people and the role higher education played in their lives).

Resolved

- 2216.11 to approve the proposed recommendations to be progressed from the Bicameral Review report and the associated next steps and timescales;
- 2216.12 to approve the Task and Finish Group oversee implementation of the recommendations, with an aim to move the University from an improving rating to a good rating.

2217 Governance Effectiveness Review 2024 Report

Received and considered paper 23/439CR, ‘Governance Effectiveness Review 2024 Report’. The Head of Corporate Governance spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2217.1 that AdvanceHE had been commissioned to undertake a survey and benchmark the data; the topics of induction, working relationships and EDI data had been below benchmark and therefore of focus;
- 2217.2 that discussions had been held with Council members on induction activities and proposals would be brought to Governance Committee in June; these would link with recommendations around induction from the Bicameral Review;
- 2217.3 in relation to working relationships, a facilitated session on the governance management boundary had been scheduled to follow this meeting;
- 2217.4 that the survey had not included EDI data and had focussed on members perceptions of diversity; the Corporate Governance Team had compared Council diversity data with University staff diversity data and this had indicated a higher proportion of Council members at an age of 55+ (although this was in line with the sector); a review of the last three years indicated a decrease in Council members declaring a religion or declaring a non-Christian religion; future recruitment activities would look to focus on these elements;

- 2217.5 that it was important to balance expertise and experience, alongside the diversity desired, and there may be opportunities to target advertising to maximise the potential for diverse applicants;
- 2217.6 that it was important to ensure effective use of time, to encourage working individuals to apply and to consider feedback from new members; that thought could be given to the use of, and connotations of, the term “lay members” and to consider whether remuneration would increase diversity.

Resolved

- 2217.7 to approve the three recommendations from the Governance Effectiveness Review 2024 Report.

2218 Report from the Students’ Union President

Received and considered paper 23/578, ‘Students’ Union President’s Report’. The Students’ Union President spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2218.1 that the University had won Varsity and for the second year running won second place for the best Students’ Union in the UK;
- 2218.2 that Speak Week had focussed on the experiences of international students and those on clinical placements; it had been highlighted that students were often not familiar with the support available;
- 2218.3 that Spring Elections had been completed and three current sabbatical officers would continue for a second year;
- 2218.4 the report included comparison tables for the number of students paid via JobShop, as a helpful indicator of the impact of the cost of living on students; it was noted that the number of jobs being offered may be reduced due to the cost of living crisis and therefore impact direct comparisons;
- 2218.5 HEFCW funding had been used for a mental health campaign targeted at men;
- 2218.6 activities had been undertaken for St David’s Day, including flying the flag of St. David over Main Building;
- 2218.7 that the Welsh Language Commissioner had given the Students’ Union Cynnig Cymraeg accreditation; the Students’ Union were the first to receive this and would be used as a case study;
- 2218.8 [Part Redacted]; the University and Students’ Union had been clear that all impacted by the events would be supported and that it was a place of freedom of speech.

2219 Update on Education and Student Experience Enhancement

Received and considered paper 23/577, ‘Update on Education and Student Experience Enhancement’. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2219.1 that current return rates for NSS 2024 were over 60% and results were expected in July;
- 2219.2 that a large amount of work had been undertaken to address results from NSS 2023, especially at an institutional level (e.g. Student Voice, Closing the Feedback Loop); subject plans were managed by College Deans and progress against plans would be reviewed in the coming weeks; progress in regards to Healthcare subjects and Economics was noted; there were concerns around Law and Politics as these subjects had been heavily impacted by covid and MAB;
- 2219.3 that there had been some press coverage on violence against women before Christmas and a large amount of work had been undertaken to look at this area, with an operational group and advisory group (including Welsh Government) established;
- 2219.4 that in relation to the marks processing project, a risk assessment had been undertaken for each school and first lines of defence introduced ahead of summer exams; it was intended to have standard operating procedures in place for September.

2220 Annual Quality Report Update: Academic Standards

Received and considered paper 23/422R, 'Annual Quality Report Update: Academic Standards'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2220.1 that the paper contained the items missing from the Annual Quality Report received in November; these had been delayed due to MAB which had prevented data being available in time;
- 2220.2 that there was assurance from the external examiners on the academic standards of awards;
- 2220.3 that all results had been confirmed by the deadline set and there had not been a significant uplift in awards;
- 2220.4 that there had been a huge number of complaints and the vast majority had now been processed, although there had been significant delays; the University had worked with the OIA on this; [Part Redacted];
- 2220.5 that pre-pandemic, the University had been below the Russell Group but above the sector for degree outcomes; during the pandemic, there had been an uplift, as seen across the sector; post-pandemic, the University had fallen to below pre-pandemic levels faster than anticipated and there was a need to understand why this has happened; this was not about the calibre or achievements of students, but what the University could do to support students to achieve their outcomes;
- 2220.6 that disaggregated data suggested black students were awarded fewer good degrees than their white counterparts and the University was working to address this;
- 2220.7 that an increase was being seen in the number of students required to repeat a year, being withdrawn by exam boards or choosing to withdraw; race and equality were also impacting here, with those students reporting a disability and not in receipt of DSA less likely to progress; there were differences between the

colleges but all were reflecting this pattern; the University was focussing on year one orientation and transition to address this;

2220.8 the University was looking holistically at student experience, personalised student support and a future strategy in this area; there was a wider conversation to be held in regards to workload in this area and a need to separate the academic and student support elements.

Resolved

2220.9 to approve the updated the section on academic standards (section 4) in the 2022/23 Annual Quality Report.

2221 Annual Enhancement Report

Received and considered paper 23/552, 'Annual Enhancement Report'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience spoke to this item.

Noted

2221.1 that this report was a partner to the Annual Quality Report and evidenced the University was making meaningful impact on student experience, maturing and assessing itself in this area;

2221.2 that the report included more metrics and case studies, to improve measurements of success;

2221.3 that there were a number of key achievements against the portfolio including:

- .1 a new Blackboard system;
- .2 improved Student Voice arrangements, with support in schools to speak directly to students;
- .3 key policies implemented to address assessment;
- .4 good graduate outcomes;

2221.4 that it was anticipated CPD would be a focus for CTER once established and the University had made good progress in this area;

2221.5 that some elements of the Campus Life project had been delayed to future years;

2221.6 that the current portfolio would end in July 2024 with a focus on maturity models and moving activity into business as usual; focus would shift to student experience.

2222 External Review of Internal Audit

Received and considered paper 23/489HC, 'Cardiff Internal Audit Review Report'. The Chief Operating Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

2222.1 that the review had been undertaken by SUMS Consulting;

- 2222.2 that a number of recommendations had been made and a number were already in place (e.g. recommendation to stabilise the department had been addressed by appointing a permanent Head of Internal Audit);
- 2222.3 that there was a need to resource the team to risk, rather than to budget constraints; there were plans to develop the existing team;
- 2222.4 that it was not proposed to amend the current reporting lines;
- 2222.5 that completion of the recommendations would be tracked via the Audit and Risk Committee;
- 2222.6 that thanks were extended to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Chief Operating Officer for their work in developing this area.

Resolved

- 2222.7 to approve the recommendations of the External Review of Internal Audit.

2223 Changes to Deputy Vice-Chancellor Title

Received and considered paper 23/440, 'Changes to Ordinances – Deputy Vice-Chancellor Title'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2223.1 that the amended title should be "Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor", in line with phrasing used across the sector.

Resolved

- 2223.2 to approve the amended title, subject to the above amendment.

2224 Taith Update

Received and considered paper 23/545, 'Taith Update'.

Noted

- 2224.1 that funding from Welsh Government for the project had been halved and this was disappointing; however, given the adverse environment the Government had committed some funding which was positive; it was hoped this would continue given the scheme fit well with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

2225 Report from Redundancy Committee to Council

Received and considered paper 23/553C, 'Report from Redundancy Committee to Council'. The Interim Director of HR spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2225.1 the Interim Director of HR joined the meeting to present this item;

- 2225.2 [Redacted];

- 2225.3 [Redacted].

Resolved

2225.4 [Redacted].

2226 Any Other Business

Noted there was no other business.

2227 Internal Audit Charter

Received and considered paper 23/494HC, 'Internal Audit Charter'.

Resolved

2227.1 to approve the updated Charter.

2228 Updates to Scheme of Delegation

Received and considered paper 23/430R, 'Updates to Scheme of Delegation'.

Resolved

2228.1 to approve the proposed updates to the Scheme of Delegation.

2229 Changes to Ordinance 3

Received and considered paper 23/436, 'Changes to Ordinance 3'.

Resolved

2229.1 to approve the proposed changes to Ordinance 3 – Standing Orders.

2230 Changes to Ordinance 8

Received and considered paper 23/440, 'Changes to Ordinance 8'.

Resolved

2230.1 to approve the proposed changes to Ordinance 8 - Appointment of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors.

2231 SU Block Grant 2024-25

Received and considered paper 23/536C, 'SU Block Grant 2024-25'.

Resolved

2231.1 to approve the Students' Union receives a cash flat Block Grant allocation of £3,326,975 for 2024/25;

2231.2 and to approve either inclusion within phase 1 of the University's solar programme, or £165K to fund the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Students' Union building.

2232 Items Received for Information

- 23/554C Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

- 23/575C Report from Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
- 23/555C Report from Chair of Governance Committee
- 23/556 Report from Senate
- 23/557 Sealing Transactions
- 23/538C HR Dashboard
- 23/490HC Major and Serious Incidents Update