

# CONFIRMED

## LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

### JOINT CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**PRESENT:** Ms S Weir (Chair), Ms S Beecroft, Professor S Davismoon, Mr B Grice, Ms K Jones, Dr S Mercer, Ms L Thompson, Dr K Wilson

**APOLOGIES:** Mr A Catterall, Professor A Nagar, Dr A Yeates

**SECRETARIAT:** Mr M Jones

#### 1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023. These were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

#### 2. Matters Arising

Re Brazel ruling, Mr Grice confirmed that he had contacted Ms Thompson and this had been completed retrospectively. 23/24 academic year to be reviewed.

Re facilities time for UCU reps, Dr Mercer informed members that this action had been completed.

Re research mentoring, Mr Jones informed members that Professor Nagar had emailed to say that a mentoring role has been formally embedded as part of the new Personal Development Plan (called PROSPER) which has just been approved as part of the new Research Strategy (which was approved by Senate last week). The PROSPER scheme, along with the Mentoring scheme, is being planned for roll-out shortly.

#### 3. UCU Items

##### (i) Workplace Bullying

Dr Mercer requested clarification in matters relating to workplace bullying, asking what the University's acceptable threshold of evidence was in relation to alleged incidents. Ms Thompson informed members that every allegation is examined individually on its merits. Ms Thompson added that the grievance process is investigated by **an independent party, if it was against a Senior manager it would be investigated by staff from a different faculty/department than in which they are raised.** Ms Thompson informed members that Dignity at Work training has recently been delivered in a number of departments, adding that Ms Anton is currently delivering bullying and harassment training to all managers. Dr

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Mercer asked for guidance re scenarios where the University is aware that bullying has taken place but no formal complaint has been made. Ms Thompson responded that in any incidents in which bullying was found to have taken place disciplinary action would be taken. **Ms Thompson added that the University has a Collective Grievance procedure which can be used if a number of staff have same grievance.** Ms Thompson informed members that departing staff are able to raise issues via exit interviews. Dr Mercer responded that colleagues had concerns that raising issues of this nature during exit interviews would adversely affect their references. Ms Thompson confirmed that this was not the case. Dr Wilson informed members that some colleagues are loath to raise issues in relation to bullying as the first step of the process is mediation, with the person accused of the bullying. Ms Thompson asked union representatives to contact her re any specific incidents of bullying they wished to raise.

### (ii) Faculty Restructure

Dr Mercer informed members that Dr Haughan had responded to UCU's initial queries about the restructure, and thanked her for her response. Dr Mercer asked whether the restructure is being undertaken for budgetary reasons. Ms Beecroft informed members that the process is being undertaken in order to reduce bureaucracy, and is planned as cost-neutral. Ms Beecroft added that the restructure is not a redundancy exercise. Dr Mercer asked whether the University has been considering redundancies. Ms Beecroft responded that while the University is looking at a range of options for the future and cannot rule anything out, redundancies have not been discussed.

### (iii) Academic Calendar

Dr Mercer noted that the 2023-24 academic year started earlier than previous years and asked for the rationale behind this decision. Ms Beecroft informed Dr Mercer that the decision would have been discussed by, and approved at a meeting of, Senate and undertook to provide minutes to this effect.

**ACTION: Ms Beecroft to provide Senate minutes, as above.**

### (iv) Promotion

Dr Mercer raised the issue of 'increased visibility of staff' being among the criteria for promotion and asked for clarification in relation to this. Ms Jones informed members that this comes under 'wider contribution' and is to do with colleagues making an impact outside of their subject/school. Ms Jones added that the criterion is to do with impact rather than visibility. Dr Mercer asked whether it would be possible to publish the make-up of promotions panels. Ms Jones responded that details of this are included in the guidance, adding that an element of randomness is used, along with efforts to ensure representation re protected characteristics.

### (v) Staff Development at Creative Campus

Dr Mercer voiced the opinion that the majority of staff development events take place at Hope Park, leaving the Creative Campus under-served in this regard. Professor Davismoon informed members that he has raised this issue with Personnel, adding that a number of events have taken place at Creative Campus since the beginning of the academic year. Professor Davismoon added that he had requested a link person between Hope Park and Creative Campus and that this was now in place.

### (vi) Maternity Leave Improvements

Dr Mercer informed members that Drs Yeates and Pritchard had supplied information in relation to this. Ms Thompson undertook to follow this up.

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### **ACTION: Ms Thompson to follow up information from Drs Yeates and Pritchard.**

Ms Thompson added that the University has recently undertaken benchmarking in relation to maternity policies and is in line with the rest of the sector. Ms Thompson added that the Vice Chancellor has requested a review of family friendly policies, which is currently being undertaken.

#### (vii) Professional Tutors Promotions and Progression

Ms Jones informed members that Professional Tutors are now able to apply for promotion, adding that all relevant colleagues have been informed of this. Ms Jones added that a review of the promotions process is currently underway.

## **4. Management Items**

#### (i) Financial Update

Ms Beecroft informed members that at its June 2023 meeting Finance & General Purposes Committee had recommended for approval a deficit budget of £2m, which was approved by University Council at the July 2023 meeting. Ms Beecroft informed members that, subsequent to this approval, student recruitment performed below expectation. Ms Beecroft informed members that based on registered student numbers on 23/10/23 compared to the same time last year, Home UG numbers are down 25% (313 students). Overall, UG numbers were 15.6% down (265 students) and there was an identical story for PGT/PGCE student numbers, down 15.5%. Ms Beecroft added that as well as the impact on tuition fee income, the other consequence of the disappointing recruitment is that occupancy of University accommodation is only at 80%. Current estimates are that this represents a loss of income of £500k. When the impact of these two items are included within the budget – the high level estimate is that the deficit increases from £2 million to between £3.3 million to £3.5 million. Ms Beecroft informed members that a number of initiatives are being put in place to address this situation.

#### (ii) Staff Development Annual Report

Members had received the Staff Development Annual Report. Ms Jones drew members' attention to the Dignity At Work training, Health & Safety Awareness training and pre-retirement sessions for relevant colleagues.

#### (iii) Staffing Profile Annual Report

Members had received the Staffing Profile Annual Report. Ms Jones drew members' attention to the turnover statistics, noting that turnover of all staff in 2022-23 was 11.1%, down from 13.4% in 2021-22. Re leavers, Ms Jones informed members that the highest amount of academic voluntary leavers are in grade 7. This is understandably the highest as just under 41% of all academic staff in 22/23 were grade 7 with grade 8 next at 37.5%. Dr Mercer asked whether staff members who resign are still being replaced. Ms Jones informed members that there is a weekly Authority To Recruit meeting, at which all proposals to fill vacant posts are considered. Ms Jones added that there is no recruitment freeze in place.

#### (iv) People Strategy Themes 2024-28

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Members had received the proposed People Strategy Themes 2024-28. Ms Thompson informed members that the thirteen areas mapped onto the five pillars of the main University Strategic Plan and asked members to let her know if they believed anything had been omitted.

### 5. UNISON Items

#### (i) Agile Working Feedback

Mr Grice passed on feedback from UNISON members that the Agile Working Policy is not being applied consistently across the University. Dr Wilson added that for some roles the unreliability of colleagues' home internet makes access to some services (eg SITS) a challenge. Ms Thompson requested that colleagues forward feedback on Agile Working to Mr Catterall. Ms Thompson added that while the aim of agile working is to provide short-term flexibility, requests for permanent arrangements can be made via the Flexible Working process.

### 6. AOB

There was no other business.