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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2024

PRESENT: Mrs M Swinson (in the Chair), Dr P Haughan, Professor C Ozanne

Secretariat: Mr M Jones

Apologies: Revd G Felton

By Invitation: Mr A Catterall

1. Conflicts of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the need to report any potential Conflicts of Interest which might arise during the meeting. None was reported.

2. Terms of Reference

Members had received the Terms of Reference. Professor Ozanne informed members that the current governance review would update and standardise all committees' Terms of Reference.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2024 and those were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Re Faculties, Dr Haughan informed members that the new faculty structure went live on 1st September 2024. Dr Haughan informed members that a small number of minor issues have resulted from this, adding that these were being dealt with. Dr Haughan informed members that the re-structure had been cost-neutral and added that information relating to this would be made available to staff. Mr Catterall informed members that the trades unions had requested details as to which roles had been discontinued under the re-structure, adding that this information would be provided at the next meeting of JCNC.

5. People Brief

Members had received the People Brief.

- (i) Senior Recruitment: Mr Catterall informed members that the recruitment process for Chief Operating Officer (a reconfiguration of the Executive Director of Finance, Services and Resources role) was underway, with interviews scheduled for November. Mr Catterall added that the role would see IT services sit under the Chief Operating Officer.

CONFIRMED

- (ii) National Pay Bargaining: Mr Catterall informed members that during the summer continued meetings had taken place with UCEA and the representative trades unions including two dispute resolution gatherings regarding the pay award for 24/5 inclusive of non-pay elements. Mr Catterall informed members that UCU's Higher Education Committee (HEC) had met following a Branch Delegate Meeting (BDM) and had voted to reject the pay offer, but to accept the Terms of Reference (ToRs) on non-pay issues. In addition, while there was significant support for an industrial action ballot, there had been a very slim majority against actually taking industrial action.

Mr Catterall informed members that UCEA had confirmed that while UCU was not pursuing an industrial action ballot, they would be able to progress joint work under the ToRs for the review of the pay spine and non-pay matters. Mr Catterall added that the UCEA Board meeting on 9th October 2024 had considered the responses of the unions. The Board had agreed that as there was at that point no ballot for industrial action, UCEA would note that a number of unions had not accepted the pay uplift element of the offer and would work with the Joint HE Trade Unions to progress work on the pay spine and non-pay elements of the offer.

Mr Catterall added that the Board had noted that there was still the possibility of IA ballots being called by some of the unions and that UNISON was in the process of calling a meeting of its sector group executive to reconsider its planned IA ballot. Therefore, should there be a ballot for industrial action, UCEA would revisit its decision to engage in joint work with the unions on these issues.

Mr Catterall informed members that the University would be making the pay award as instructed by UCEA in the October pay run and it would be backdated to August 2024. Mr Catterall added that although the spine point had been updated this would result in no change of pay for those on Grade 1 as the University's paying of the Voluntary Living Wage (VLW) exceeded the amount offered by UCEA.

- (iii) Pensions: Mr Catterall informed members that following the General Election UCEA had written to the new Labour government to request that they took a review of HE participation in the TPS. In a response from the Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith it was confirmed that she and the Secretary of State for Education would shortly be receiving advice on this issue which would lead to further discussions with HM Treasury. Mr Catterall added that UCEA had also been progressing work on the development of a sector-wide defined contribution scheme. Mr Catterall informed members that during summer 2024 UCEA had undertaken an exercise to select a consultant with whom to work. Mr Catterall added that UCEA were currently finalising this appointment and the appointment of the procurement consortia who would oversee the project working alongside their Working Group of representatives from HEIs and a sub-group of the UCEA Board. Mr Catterall informed members that UCEA would shortly be writing to those HEIs that have expressed interest in this project to request some further information on when and which staff they intend to enrol into the DC scheme. Mr Catterall informed members that with effect from 1st August 2024 UCEA had taken over as the USS Employer Representative, replacing UUK.
- (iv) Wellbeing: Mr Catterall informed members that targets in line with the corporate wellbeing performance indicator had been placed in the business plans for each

CONFIRMED

of the new faculties. Mr Catterall added that Mr Fahy had been working on a stress risk assessment template for use at faculty level.

- (v) Equality: Mr Catterall informed members that The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 would come into effect on 26th October 2024. Mr Catterall informed members that the act would place a new duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. The Chair asked Dr Haughan for an update on the University's work in the area of sexual harassment affecting students. Dr Haughan informed members that this area was audited in 2023, resulting in one low-priority management action. Dr Haughan informed members that the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Working Group continues to meet regularly.

Re Menopause Policy, Mr Catterall informed members that a guidance document had been in place and available to staff, detailing the support that could be provided to colleagues experiencing the menopause. Mr Catterall added that following a request from UCU this guidance document had been converted to a policy document. Mr Catterall informed members that this followed the norm in the sector.

Members **RECOMMENDED** the policy for approval by University Council.

6. Staff Development Update

Members had received the Staff Development Update. Mr Catterall informed members that the Staff Development Advisor was working on a Leadership and Training Plan which will focus on different levels of leadership, including training for Executive Leaders, SMT, Middle Managers and Aspiring Managers across the University. Mr Catterall added that the Staff Development Advisor would work in collaboration with the University Leadership Behaviours group.

7. Staff Absence Statistics

Members had received the staff absence statistics. Mr Catterall informed members that the new format report moved away from the Balance Scorecard approach that had previously been used. Mr Catterall assured members that the new format still referenced key elements of the Balanced Scorecard, including the previous agreed targets. Members noted that the average percentage non-attendance figure for the year had dropped to 2.84% from 3.46% in the previous year. The average days lost per employee was 7.32, with professional services staff averaging 8.73 and academic staff 5.74.

8. Annual Staff Profile including starter and leaver data

Members had received the Annual Staff Profile. Mr Catterall drew members' attention to a small increase in the number of academic staff leaving the University and attributed this in part to the previous year's Voluntary Severance scheme.

CONFIRMED

9. Legislative and Case Law

Members had received the Legislative and Case Law update. Members noted the information relating to the new Employment Rights Bill, including day-one right to unfair dismissal protection and day-one right to paternity, parental and bereavement leave. Mr Catterall drew members' attention to the section relating to new restrictions on "exploitative" zero-hours contracts, pointing out that any legislation relating to zero-hours contracts could potentially affect the University's hourly paid music tutors and Hope Works staff.

The Chair asked to what extent the University would be affected by 'Martynss Law' (relating to preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks). Professor Ozanne informed members that the Cathedrals Group, of which the University is a member, was looking into this. Mr Catterall added that following the attacks in Southport in summer 2024, swipe-access has been enabled on the majority of building entrances on the University's campuses.

10. Equality & Diversity Steering Committee

Members had received minutes of the meeting of Equality & Diversity Steering Committee which took place on 30th May 2024.

11. Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee

Members had received minutes of the meeting of Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee which took place on 13th May 2024.

12. Reports on Staff Discipline, Grievance and Mediation cases

Mr Catterall updated members on the current position in this area.