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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

JOINT CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th October 2020

PRESENT: Dr S Marwood (Chair), Dr P Angell, Ms S Beecroft, Mr A Catterall, Mr B Grice, Ms L Mottram, Professor A Nagar, Revd Professor Newport, Dr N O'Sullivan, Ms L Thompson

SECRETARIAT: Mr M Jones

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received minutes of the 9th June 2020 meeting. Dr O'Sullivan advised members that she would contact the UCU representatives who had attended the meeting (Drs Anderson & Rye) re the accuracy of the minutes

Pending this confirmation the minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. UCU Items

(i) Covid 19

Dr O'Sullivan informed members that since the start of term UCU has been conducting a consultation with schools and departments in relation to the University's response to the pandemic. Dr O'Sullivan voiced the opinion that the University's Overarching Risk Assessment document does not acknowledge the range of modes of transmission of the coronavirus. Dr O'Sullivan drew members' attention to the risk assessment matrix published in the British Medical Journal, noting that indoor, unmasked contact is in some cases classed as 'high risk'. Mr Catterall responded that the University is following government guidance in all areas and added that members of academic staff with concerns about risk assessments should contact their Head of School.

Mr Catterall advised Dr O'Sullivan that specific concerns relating to health and safety would be better addressed by Health & Safety Consultative Committee rather than JCNC. Ms Beecroft informed members that the next meeting of Health & Safety Consultative Committee would take place on 16th October 2020 and asked members to send any concerns to her in advance of the meeting. Dr O'Sullivan asked whether it would be possible for Health & Safety Consultative Committee to meet more often during the

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pandemic. Ms Beecroft concurred with the suggestion and said she would look into this possibility. Dr O'Sullivan requested that she and Dr Angell be invited to the next meeting of Health & Safety Consultative Committee.

ACTION: Mr Jones to invite Drs Angell & O'Sullivan to meeting, as above.

Professor Newport asked UCU representatives to confirm that, while the union is seeking a greater level of participation in the University's processes to create a Covid-safe working environment, it is satisfied with the structures the University has put in place in this area. Dr O'Sullivan responded that UCU is 'provisionally' satisfied with the University's structures.

Dr O'Sullivan raised the issue of Covid 19-related cleaning, passing on a request for further clarity from colleagues at Creative Campus. Ms Beecroft undertook to look into this. Mr Catterall reiterated that members of academic staff can raise any concerns with their Head of School.

Dr O'Sullivan asked whether the December meeting of Equality & Diversity Steering Committee could be brought forward in order to address concerns relating to equality issues raised by the pandemic. The Chair asked Mr Jones to raise this possibility with Dr Walsh and Mr Dykins.

ACTION: Mr Jones to liaise with Dr Walsh and Mr Dykins, as above.

Dr O'Sullivan asked whether the University would consider putting in place a Serious and Imminent Danger Procedure, allowing members of staff to remove themselves from situations they judged to be unsafe due to Covid 19-related concerns. Mr Catterall stated he had already responded to UCU on this matter in writing. He advised that feedback from UCEA confirmed that, providing guidelines were followed, this would not be necessary. Mr Catterall added that such concerns are normally covered by the University's Major Incident Plan.

Dr O'Sullivan requested clarification on the purpose of the back to work form staff were required to sign before returning to campus. Mr Catterall explained that the purpose of the form was to give assurance to managers that their teams had read the University's guidance and added that the forms were not legally binding.

(ii) Workload Model

Dr O'Sullivan requested an update as to progress with the workload model. Professor Newport responded that the timescale for implementation of the new model had been affected by the pandemic, adding that while the new model has been agreed, consultation was under way as to the best way to implement it. Professor Newport added that any colleague experiencing workload issues should contact their Head of School in the first instance.

(iii) Term Time Changes

Dr O'Sullivan noted the restructuring of the University's terms, with teaching shifting into June, and asked whether this was a Covid-related measure specific to the 2020/21 academic year. Professor Nagar responded that the measure has received support from students adding that the number of teaching weeks remains 24. Dr Angell informed members that if the restructuring is to be permanent UCU will need to be involved in the decision making process. Dr O'Sullivan informed members that UCU members are not in favour of teaching shifting into June. Professor Newport reminded members that the paper detailing the change had not stated that it was due to the pandemic, and agreed that liaison with UCU would be necessary.

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4. Unison

Mr Grice noted the imminent expiry of the current furlough scheme and asked how many staff are currently on furlough. Mr Catterall replied that 20-25 members of staff are on furlough. With reference to the Job Retention Scheme. Professor Newport assured members that the University was committed to avoiding redundancies, but that a degree of flexibility, in the form of short-term redeployments, may be asked of staff in order to achieve this. Mr Catterall assured members that in such cases no member of staff would be redeployed to an area in which they had no previous experience or transferable skills.

5. Management Items

(i) Finance Update

Ms Beecroft informed members that the 2019/20 accounts are currently being audited, adding that the University is entering into the new academic year well-placed financially. Ms Beecroft added that early indications on recruitment and accommodation were very positive but that this could be subject to change. Dr Angell asked if there had been any developments in relation to Dr Anderson's enquiries re funding for equipment for people working from home. Ms Beecroft responded that USET had discussed the matter and that she was looking into ways to address this concern.

Professor Newport informed members that the University's Foundation Year provision generated £3.7m in income for the University in 2019/20 and reminded members of the importance of providing a high quality experience for, and retaining, foundation year students. Dr O'Sullivan agreed, adding that UCU recognised the value of Foundation Year provision.