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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

JOINT CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th February 2021

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

APOLOGIES: Dr P Bamber

SECRETARIAT: Mr M Jones

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received minutes of the meetings of 9th June 2020 and 6th October 2020. Re the June 2020 minutes the Chair asked for clarification as to whether the 300 hours cited therein covered UG, PGY and EdD (phase one). Professor Newport responded that the figure covered formal contact teaching hours.

Pending this correction the 9th June 2020 minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

The minutes of the 6th October 2020 meeting were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

Mr Jones confirmed that both action points had been completed.

3. UCU Items

(i) Outstanding H&S Issues

Dr Lux informed members that UCU would welcome more consultation and information sharing from management in the run-up to the return to campus. Dr Lux cited the 1977 UK Health & Safety Regulations, informing members that they state that employers must consult with the union-appointed Health & Safety representative on matters affecting the employees they represent. Dr Lux requested that the Working From Home Risk Assessment be brought into line with the other risk assessments used by the University. Ms Beecroft assured members that Ms McManniman is currently updating this risk assessment and undertook to seek an update on this.

ACTION: Ms Beecroft to contact Ms McManniman, as above.

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Ms Beecroft informed members that a Covid Subgroup of Health & Safety Consultative Committee has been established in order for the University to consult with unions and other staff and thanked members of this group for their contributions. In relation to decision making, Ms Beecroft informed members that decisions in relation to return to campus will be made by USET following consultation with academic leaders and unions. Dr Lux agreed with this statement. Mr Catterall suggested that, in advance of management meetings at which the return to campus will be discussed, Ms Beecroft notify Dr Lux of the issues under consideration and solicit her input. Dr O'Sullivan reminded members that in advance of the return to campus colleagues may need to order additional equipment and asked that time for this be factored into the University's planning.

Ms Beecroft informed members that the University could theoretically have permitted in-person teaching on a number of courses during the early part of the calendar year but had opted against this.

Dr Lux requested that meetings of the HSCC Covid Subgroup be increased in frequency to fortnightly. Ms Beecroft concurred with this suggestion.

Mr Catterall thanked Dr Lux for her involvement in the health and safety consultation along with her input into the creation and HSCC's Overarching Risk Assessment and in relation to her comments on ventilation and assured members that when further information about resuming in-person teaching has been received from the government, unions will continue to be consulted. In relation to union queries about furlough, Mr Catterall informed members that (with the exception of a small number of specific cases in the sector but not at Hope) academic staff cannot be furloughed.

(ii) Equality Impact Assessments

Dr O'Sullivan suggested that colleagues with disabilities be invited to take a tour of the campus in advance of any return in order to flag up any potential issues with accessibility. Mr Catterall confirmed that this would be taking place, with input from members of staff (subject to their agreement) and students with disabilities.

(iii) Staff Student Ratios

Dr O'Sullivan requested clarification on staff student ratios. Professor Newport informed members that the University policy is that the ratio should be no greater than 1:20, adding that due to variation between schools this is significantly lower in some areas and slightly higher in a small number of others. Professor Newport assured members that in the event of a ratio going above 1:20 an alert is triggered and resources are reallocated as soon as possible in order to resolve the issue. Dr O'Sullivan cited a passage from the University's Corporate Plan stating that the University aims to reduce SSRs to below 17:1. Professor Newport confirmed that this was still the University's intention. Dr O'Sullivan requested that management share SSRs at course and school level with UCU. Professor Newport responded that if this were to happen accompanying narrative would need to be supplied to provide context. Professor Newport undertook to discuss this with Dr O'Sullivan.

ACTION: Professor Newport and Dr O'Sullivan to discuss, as above.

(iv) Workload Model

Dr O'Sullivan asked Professor Newport if he was willing to continue discussions in relation to the workload model at the Special Interest Group. Professor Newport confirmed that this was the case, while emphasising the significant amount of work yet to be done before

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a mutually acceptable model could be established. Dr O'Sullivan suggested that the Special Interest Group would benefit from formal Terms of Reference, a suggestion with which Professor Newport concurred. The Chair asked whether any new agreement would overturn the previous agreement. Dr O'Sullivan informed members that this was not the case, adding that the model under discussion is the one agreed in June 2020 and that current discussions relate solely to implementation of that model.

Dr O'Sullivan raised the issue of the 37 hour working week equating to a yearly total of 1,550 hours. Professor Newport commented that this figure had been agreed with the leadership of UCU at the time following consultation with UCU members. Dr O'Sullivan cited a discrepancy between the yearly total given in the SAM document (1,480) and the total given in the Workload Management document (1,550). Professor Newport undertook to discuss this at the next meeting of Special Interest Group.

ACTION: Discussions on the workload model would continue through Special Interest Group, which they did.

(v) Network of Hope

Dr O'Sullivan undertook to discuss issues relating to Network of Hope at the next meeting of Special Interest Group.

(vi) Promotion and CPD

Dr Yeates raised the issue of the promotion process to Senior Lecturer, noting that this had not taken place in the previous academic year. Mr Catterall responded that the process had been put into abeyance owing to financial and operational uncertainty relating to the pandemic. Professor Newport assured members that the process is taking place during the 2020/21 academic year and, in the event of appointments being delayed until any point in the 2021/22 academic year, successful candidates will be backdated to 1st September 2021. Dr Yeates asked whether consideration would be given to the challenges faced by applicants who have been homeschooling and/or undertaking other caring responsibilities during the pandemic. Mr Catterall confirmed that the Equality Impact Assessment would include this. Dr Yeates asked whether documentation was available for colleagues on Teaching and Scholarship contracts to apply for promotion to Senior Lecturer. Professor Newport informed members that a small number of colleagues are currently on Teaching and Scholarship contracts and added that the University does not intend to use such contracts going forward. Dr O'Sullivan undertook to send Professor Newport a proposal re progression for professional tutors.

(vii) CRT and Research Buyout

Dr O'Sullivan undertook to discuss the CBO formula with Professor Nagar following the meeting.

Dr Yeates raised the issue of CRT, informing members that there is no University-wide approach policy, with the result that there are disparities between schools and departments. Dr Yeates requested that the outdated CRT policy be removed from the University website. Mr Catterall asked Dr Yeates to contact Professor Nagar re disparities in CRT processes between departments.

ACTION: Dr Yeates to contact Professor Nagar, as above.

(viii) New Academic Calendar

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Dr O'Sullivan drew members' attention to the reflection week before the Christmas break and expressed the hope that student engagement would not decrease due to this. Dr O'Sullivan noted the two week closure for Easter and stated that this could potentially cause issues for EU colleagues who normally return to their country of origin at this time of year. Dr O'Sullivan informed members that UCU was broadly in favour of the new academic calendar and thanked management for the early notification of the changes.

4. Management Items

Mr Catterall acknowledged that UCU is holding a national indicative ballot and asked Dr O'Sullivan whether the University's branch was holding a local indicative ballot. Dr O'Sullivan confirmed that this was not the case.

(i) Promotions

The Chair confirmed that this had been dealt with under item 3 (vi).

(ii) Immigration Update

Mr Catterall informed members that due to changes following Brexit the University must now sponsor any EU colleagues coming to work at the University, with consequent increased costs. Mr Catterall added that the deadline for the EU settlement scheme is 30th June 2021 and assured members that reminders will be sent to EU staff.

(iii) Furlough

Mr Catterall informed members that the University's most recent furlough return showed 80 colleagues on furlough or flexible furlough. Mr Catterall added that throughout the pandemic the University has ensured that colleagues on furlough have received 100% of their normal salary. Mr Catterall informed members that the furlough scheme is scheduled to end in April, adding that it has been suggested that the scheme will be further extended.

(iv) Domestic Violence Policy

Members had received the updated Domestic Violence Policy. Mr Catterall informed members that the draft policy would be presented to Staffing Committee on 4th March 2021 and requested that any feedback be sent to him by then. Dr O'Sullivan praised the draft policy and undertook to send a number of minor suggestions to Mr Catterall.

(v) Finance & Student Numbers

Ms Beecroft informed members that Covid has resulted in the loss of circa £2.6 million of income to date in 2020/21, including over 90% of catering income, all conference income, all external bookings at Plas Caerdeon, all enterprise income such as car parking and circa £600k re accommodation refunds / contract terminations. Ms Beecroft added that a number of savings have partly offset this, eg utilities and food costs. Ms Beecroft informed members that student recruitment was good in September 2020, with the consequence that over 25 new academic posts have been advertised / appointed.

Ms Beecroft added that the new Institute for Teaching could present a potential threat to the University's recruitment; the first 1,000 places will be allocated for September 2022. It is not yet known whether the institute will be granted degree awarding powers,

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but if so this would have a potential impact on the University's PGCE and School Direct numbers.

(vi) **HR Update**

Ms Thompson assured members that the continual HR functions of absence management, recruitment and performance reviews have continued to take place during the pandemic.

(vii) **UCU Letter re HSCC**

Ms Beecroft confirmed that this had been covered under item 3 (i).

5. Special Interest Group update

Dr O'Sullivan voiced the opinion that the group provided a useful forum for discussion. Professor Newport confirmed that the next meeting of the group would take place on 2nd March 2020.

6. AOB

There was no other business.