

CONFIRMED

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL: TUESDAY 28th November 2017

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PRESENT: Revd Canon Peter Winn (in the Chair), Mr Charles Mills (Vice-Chair), Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Mrs Jane Beever, Dr John Bennett, Sr Dr Mary Charles-Murray SND, Cllr Jane Corbett, Revd Canon Chris Fallon, Mr Mike Gilbertson, Dr Simon Hulme, Mr Jack Johnson, Dr Joan McClelland, Sr Maureen McKnight SND, Mr Charles Mills, Dr Arthur Naylor, Mr John Norbury, Professor Gerald Pillay, Professor Nick Rees, Mrs Diane Shaw, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Dr Sonja Tiernan, Professor Ian Vandewalle, HH Judge Graham Wood QC (23 members)

By invitation:

Mr Derrick Dykins (minute secretary)

No Conflicts of Interest were reported.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Liverpool), Fr Chris McCoy, and Mr Ultan Russell.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2017 and the reflective meeting on 3rd October 2017 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

3. **Matter Arising from those minutes**

4. **Vice Chancellor's Notes to Council**

The Vice Chancellor drew members' attention to the implementation of the new tutorial model which had been rolled out this term. The appendices to the notes described in detail the approach for promoting, valuing and monitoring student engagement, which, in addition to measures to engage students from the pre-arrival stage through to induction, is built around compulsory attendance at weekly tutorials. These tutorials are designed to encourage dialogue, relationship building and self-development via small group sessions (10 students per group). The approach includes attendance monitoring at tutorials and a compulsory early assessment at the end of the third week. The approach is particularly aimed at transitioning first year students from Secondary Education to Higher Education and to start focussing on their career following graduation. Poor attendance (without any mitigation) and a failure to submit the assessment, automatically leads to a withdrawal from the course, though the student does have an opportunity to appeal the decision with relevant evidence. This term has

CONFIRMED

seen 48 students withdrawn from studies under the new guidelines.

Mr Johnson noted that there had been some issues with the signing-off process which was now required for release of student loans. The Vice Chancellor advised that the review being conducted by Dr Haughan had already highlighted the issue and measures would be put in place to avoid any delay next year.

The Vice Chancellor outlined the restructure for marketing, branding and outreach work taking place alongside the Admissions Team following a review by Dr Haughan. This should enable recruiters and admissions staff to work seamlessly in generating applications and progressing these through to registration. It will also give access to a flexible pool of available staff and reduce pressure at key points in the annual cycle.

A significant development will be the replacement of HEFCE in April with the Office for Students (OfS). The change is not merely titular, as the OfS will have greater powers to intervene as a regulator in line with seeing students as “consumers” and will be governed by a new regulatory framework. The Vice Chancellor noted that this should dispense with overly burdensome quality assurance procedures, requiring a less bureaucratic approach driven by metrics.

The Vice Chancellor then gave an overview of the University’s KPIs. The University’s performance in attracting students from low participation neighbourhoods continued to be significantly above the UK average and the University’s benchmark. He noted that the University’s performance in the NSS was the best in the region, adding that the retention rates should also improve this year with the focus on student engagement at Level C. Graduate employment continued to be above the national average.

In terms of the percentage of good degrees awarded, the University continued to be below the sector average. The Vice Chancellor advised that the University maintained its academic standards and did not employ grade inflation tactics; it remained unclear how many HEIs in the sector were achieving year-on-year increases in this area. However, the metrics in this area adversely affect the University in league tables.

Metrics for the University’s academic staff profile continues to increase, with the University reaching the top ten in the country for the number of staff with PhDs. The last REF exercise also saw the University perform very strongly, and current efforts continue to consolidate planning for REF2021.

5. **Clerk's Business**

a. Register of Interests

Members had completed their forms and submitted them to the Minute Secretary at the meeting.

b. Committee Terms of Reference and Composition

Members had received the Terms of Reference and membership.

c. Equality and Diversity Data Collection

Members had been asked to provide details pertaining to certain protected

CONFIRMED

characteristics. These were submitted to the Minute Secretary at the meeting; an anonymised summary report would be submitted to HEFCE.

d. Prevent Duty

Members had received the Prevent Duty Annual Compliance Report and the November 2017 risk assessment and associated action plan.

Council **APPROVED** the Prevent Annual Report for signature by the Chair.

e. Modern Slavery Statement

Members had received the Modern Slavery Statement. The statement will be reviewed annually and aims to demonstrate good practice, mainly in procurement, with regard to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any University supply chain. Cllr Corbett said it was important that the University reviewed its processes to ensure that vulnerable people were not exploited. Revd Fallon queried whether the University had allocated resources to ensure that this area was monitored; the Vice Chancellor said that the University now had a full-time procurement officer who would be using the statement as a policy. Judge Wood asked whether this applied to international supply chains; the Vice Chancellor confirmed that it would, adding that if the University were not compliant, this would be picked up by the Fair City Framework.

Dr Bennett noted that, uniquely, the University did not outsource any of its services, and that this might be included in future KPIs as a particular strength.

Council **APPROVED** the Modern Slavery statement for signature by the Chair.

6. **Senate**

a. Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2017, which were presented by Professor Pillay in his capacity as Chair.

b. Members had received the Annual Report on Student Complaints, Appeals and Discipline.

c. Members had received the Policy on the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

The APL policy was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

d. Members had received the Handbook for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The CPD Handbook was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

e. Members had received the Quality Assessment Annual Report.

The QA Assessment Annual Report was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

7. **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

a. Minutes of 7th November 2017

CONFIRMED

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2017, which were presented by Mr Norbury as Chair. He noted that, despite the current adversarial environment for HE, the meeting was positive. He noted that ERDF fine had been considerably reduced from £337k to £67k.

Referring to the purchase of Kay's Medical property, Cllr Corbett said it was important that procurement principles be adhered to, particularly in how the property is used and whether this use is an appropriate fit for the Everton community. Mrs Swinson said that language used in discussion of the site should acknowledge its profile-raising ambitions in the community of Everton. She suggested that Service Awards have the opportunity to reflect engagement with the community; Dr Bennett suggested that courses could be developed to feed back into the community. It is not envisaged that the site would be developed for student accommodation.

Mr Norbury noted the budget for 2017/18 which highlighted a decreasing trend in surplus due to the static income stream. He advised that the picture should be clearer once the March reforecast had been completed but cautioned that the surplus for the current year would be less, as costs would increase.

Mr Norbury drew members' attention to the amendments to the Fee Schedule to incorporate new international provision in Appendix 1.

The purchase of Kays Medical, 3 Islington Square and 105 Taggart Avenue were unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

The amendments to the Fee Schedule were unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

b. Financial Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31st July 2017

Members had received the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st July 2017. Mr Norbury said the surplus was very good considering that income had been static and expenditure had increased. The Vice Chancellor said that demographics suggested a decline in student recruitment over the next three years, but that after 2020 numbers should start to improve.

The Report and Accounts were **FORMALLY ADOPTED** by Council.

c. Financial Regulations

Members had received the latest draft of Financial Regulations, updated to include changes in the internal and external environment; there were no substantive changes.

Council **APPROVED** the Financial Regulations.

8. **Audit and Risk Management**

a. Minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee 9th November 2017

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2017, which were presented by the Chair, Mr Charles Mills. Mr Mills thanked Judge Wood for chairing

CONFIRMED

this particular meeting in his absence.

b. External Auditors' Management Letter on the Accounts

Members had received the Management Letter from the University's external auditors, which reported that KPMG had described the audit as "good and clean" for both the financial statements and the use of funds audits.

The External Auditors' Management Letter on the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2017 was **APPROVED**.

c. Formal Appointment of External Auditors

Members were advised that a rigorous tender process had been overseen by the University's Procurement Manager, and KPMG had been re-appointed as University External Auditors for a period of three years.

d. Representation Letter

The Letter to the External Auditors confirmed that Council has fulfilled its responsibilities.

It was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

e. Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service 2016/17

Mr Mills noted the Head of Internal Audit Opinion was as follows: "The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance, internal control and economy, efficiency and effectiveness." RSM's report was positive and provided the highest opinion available to the internal auditors on the basis of work undertaken during the financial year.

The Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

f. Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2016/17

Members had received the Annual Report of the Audit Committee which summarised the work over the academic year 2016/17.

The Annual Report was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

g. Annual Assurance Return

Members had received the Annual Assurance Return.

The Annual Assurance Return was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

h. Items related to risk discussed at Management Meetings since October 2016

Members had received extracts from meetings of Rectorate Team, Senior Management Team and Heads of Department over the past twelve months. The Chair of Audit Committee stated that the Committee found these useful in demonstrating to Audit

CONFIRMED

Committee that senior managers were considering the major risks at their weekly meetings.

9. Staffing Committee

a. Minutes of the meeting of Staffing Committee held on 31st October 2017

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2017 which were presented by the Chair, Mrs Swinson. She noted that under the Apprenticeship Levy, the University had engaged its first apprentice and that the University was submitting a proposal to be included on the registered providers' list. However, it was clear that the Levy model was not an appropriate fit for the University as staff were already well qualified in their roles. She reassured members that a policy and training for staff to deal with sexual harassment was currently being developed.

b. Athena Swan Submission

Members had received the University's submission for the Bronze Award under the Athena Swan scheme. Mrs Swinson noted that this was likely to be required as an indicator of commitment to equality and diversity for both Research Council Funding and the REF. Mr Johnson suggested that the University consider gender-neutral toilets when the new properties at Creative Campus are being configured. The Vice Chancellor said that the University was always sensitive to the needs of all its students and would continue to support any member of its community. He noted that gender equality requirements for the REF submission had also been mooted.

The Athena Swan submission was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

10. Council Standing Committee on Health and Safety

a. Minutes of the meeting of Council Standing Committee on Health and Safety 2nd November 2017

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2017, which were present by the Chair, Sr Charles-Murray. There were a number of documents which had been recommended for approval to Council and Sr Charles-Murray explained that these were essentially ensuring that the University considered health and safety risks in all aspects of its operation and that new policies and updates were necessary in order to capture changes in the working environment. She noted that issues concerning mental health were emerging, and that the University was preparing itself well to support those affected.

b. Fieldwork Code of Practice and Risk Assessment Template

Members had received the Fieldwork Code of Practice and Risk Assessment Template.

The Fieldwork Code of Practice and Risk Assessment Template which was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

c. Health Surveillance Guidance Notes

CONFIRMED

Members had received the Health Surveillance Guidance Notes. It was noted these were a legal requirement.

The Health Surveillance Guidance Notes were unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

d. Infectious Disease Policy

Members had received the Infectious Disease Policy, which extended and updated the previous policy. It included a requirement for training for domestic staff; Mrs Swinson said that training in this area was vital.

The Infectious Disease Policy was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

e. Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy

Members had received the Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy, which pulled together two policies previously in use.

The Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

f. Smoking Policy

Members had received the Smoking Policy, which was an update of the previous iteration.

The Smoking Policy was unanimously **APPROVED** by Council.

11. Students' Union (SU)

a. President's Report

Members had received the President's Report. Mr Johnson noted that the SU were currently going through a transition period, with the departure of the previous General Manager, and the recruitment of a new one, though it was hoped that Mrs Bates' replacement would be recruited very soon. He highlighted the recent audit of the SU against the NUS' Quality SU award which judged that the SU was overall in the "good" category and commended its progress over the past five years. Revd Canon Winn noted that the SU had achieved an "excellent" rating in the area of governance.

The President outlined the Student Engagement Project that the SU is embarking on, in an attempt to justify an increase in block grant funding. He said that a number of methods had already been employed in an attempt to demonstrate greater engagement with the student body, including a fortnightly email bulletin which was read by 3,600 to 4,000 Hope students. Mr Johnson also thanked the University for listening to concerns raised through its various Student Voice forums. The SU continued to offer support and advice to students in a range of areas, but noted the high numbers seen by the advice service which was currently functioning over its capacity.

b. Financial Statements for Year Ended 31st July 2017

Members had received the Financial Statements which showed that the Students' Union were solvent and had achieved a surplus slightly higher than budgeted.

CONFIRMED

12. Senior Remuneration Committee Report

Members of the Rectorate Team (Professor Pillay, Professor Rees and Dr Vandewalle) left the meeting for this item.

Revd Winn reported that the Committee had met on 11th July 2017 to consider remuneration for the Rectorate Team as they were outside the University pay spine. He noted that all other staff were included in collective bargaining with remuneration agreed separately. The Vice Chancellor had confirmed that Rectorate Team annual performance reviews were all positive. The Committee reaffirmed its policy of the retention of Rectorate Team via remuneration in line with median salary levels for comparable posts within the sectors, balanced against competitiveness and affordability. Therefore, a 4% increase was agreed

Revd Winn said that the Committee reaffirmed its established policy of placing, dependent on satisfactory performance, the Vice Chancellor's salary within the top decile of heads of institutions that were granted University status in 2005. He said that the previous Pro Chancellor had undertaken regular performance reviews of the Vice Chancellor as well as having frequent meetings. The Committee agreed that Professor Pillay's leadership continued to maintain and improve in areas such as widening participation, student retention, student achievement, the NSS, Initial Teacher Training, the academic profile of staff and the financial management of the University. Consequently, a 4% increase for the Vice Chancellor was agreed.

All increases would be backdated to September 2017. Revd Winn noted that the Senior Remuneration Committee's remit and membership would be reviewed in the New Year once the new Code from CUC had been finalised.

Dr Naylor noted given recent media scrutiny in the area of senior salaries, it was important that increases are clearly justified to avoid any potential political backlash; he said that the recent award of Gold in the TEF demonstrated that the University had good leadership. Revd Fallon noted that there was an ever-widening differential appearing between staff and senior management, and queried how this might look in terms of the values of the University. Dr Bennett noted that senior salaries last year received the same increase as the rest of the University. Mrs Swinson noted that the University does not outsource its services, so the differential between the mean salary and senior salaries would be distorted compared with the majority of other universities.

Dates of future meetings

All meetings begin at 4pm:

- Thursday 19th April 2018
- Tuesday 10th July 2018
- Thursday 11th October 2018
- Tuesday 27th November 2018