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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING: 6th July 2021

PRESENT: Revd Canon Peter Winn (in the Chair), Mr Charles Mills (Vice-Chair), Mrs Jane Beever, Ms Jean Ellis, Revd Canon Chris Fallon, Dr P Haughan, Very Revd Dr Sue Jones, Fr Chris McCoy, Dr Arthur Naylor, Revd Canon Professor Kenneth Newport, Mr John Norbury, Mr Harry Pearce, Professor Gerald Pillay, Ms Paula Raper, Mr Ultan Russell, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Dr C Wakefield, HH Judge Graham Wood QC

By invitation: Ms Laura Gittins (Clerk to Council), Mr Derrick Dykins (Company Secretary), Mr Tim Alderman (Council Member Designate), Ms Ann Marie Costello (Council Member Designate), Ms C Priestley (Students' Union President Designate)

No Conflicts of Interest were reported.

1. **Apologies for absence and** were received from Bishop Paul Bayes, Cllr Jane Corbett, Ms Lesley Martin-Wright, Fr Michael O'Dowd and Dr Edwin Djabatay. As this was Mr Mills' final meeting of Council, the Chair and members expressed their thanks for the many years of service he had given to the University.

The Chair also welcomed new Council members who will be joining Council formally after the summer: Mr Tim Alderman; Ms Ann Marie Costello; and Ms C Priestley.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2021 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not included elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Vice-Chancellor's Notes to Council

Members had received the Vice Chancellor's Notes to Council, presented by Professor Pillay. He noted that the pandemic meant that when students return in October, the University will not have been a real community for over a year and half. Re-building the collegium may present challenges and will involve all members of the Hope community.

On a positive note, the Vice Chancellor said that indicators suggested that student recruitment is likely to be better than planned for 2021-22. He also drew members' attention to the initiative to set up an investment portfolio for the University which was progressing via the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The aim of the portfolio is to ensure that the University is making best use of its cash reserves. He noted that graduation ceremonies in July have sadly had to be postponed though these will now take place in September.

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Dr Haughan advised that the University had published the first tranche of degree results on Friday. The results were encouraging and a great many students have done very well. The University had included mitigation for students to allow for issues caused by Covid e.g. allowing students to defer until August. This meant that a larger than normal number of students will have their results later than usual.

The Vice Chancellor highlighted the recent Ofsted outcome which he acknowledged was disappointing. This was contrary to what had been expected given that the team charged with preparing for the visit were extremely diligent. However, the new framework appears to have unexpectedly shifted focus which has meant that the University has not performed as expected. Added to this, Inspectors appear to have not taken into account the severe constraints of the pandemic and there is a suspicion that the change in focus may be politically motivated.

Professor Newport said that the scale of changes with the new framework are significant and this was acknowledged by the inspectors. The outcome requires some radical shifts relating to the curriculum, including the mentors and their role with the trainees and supporting the curriculum. He said that training across so many partner schools during Covid would be very challenging. There is to be a follow-up inspection in a year, though the University is currently reviewing the draft report and is considering whether it will appeal the outcome. Professor Newport also noted a fundamental shift by the government in the training of teachers by moving the training away from universities via the establishment of an Institute of Teaching which will be in operation from 2022. The Institute will have the authority to validate other providers of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) provision and all current providers will need to be re-accredited by the Institute.

Professor Newport also outlined some of the issues that had been brought by UCU (the academic union) including a formal failure to agree, motioned by UCU. This is a symptom of a more deeply rooted issue that has arisen over the last year with UCU, who have gone back on the previously agreed workload model. He noted that he believed the new model was a great improvement on the previous model and that it was difficult to understand the stance that UCU were taking.

5. Clerk's Business: Calendar of Meetings and Other Events

Members had received the Calendar of Meetings and Other Events for 2021-22 for information. Mr Dykins asked members to check dates in the first term as these may be different from dates that had previously been released.

6. Senate

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2021, which were presented by Professor Pillay in his capacity as Chair of Senate. There were no comments from the minutes.

7. Audit and Risk Management

- (i) Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2021 which were presented by the Chair, Dr Naylor. He noted that the internal audit report on Mental Health and Wellbeing was very positive, and covered a well-publicised concern in the

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sector. There were no fundamental issues, with only low priority actions and best practice identified. On the risk register, he noted that government intervention had a higher profile due to the impact of political issues around the Institute of Teaching highlighted in item 4.

- (ii) Members had received The Students' Union Code of Practice. Dr Naylor noted the tremendous progress that had been made by the current Sabbatical Officers in bringing the SU back on track.

Members **APPROVED** the SU Code of Practice.

- (iii) Members had received the Student's Union Constitution. The Chair of Council advised that he had taken Chair's Action due to the need to expedite the process. Ms Gittins explained that the University had had a request from the General Manager as the SU needed to put the new constitution through its own governance processes and there was only a very tight timeframe to do so.
- (iv) Members had received the four Probity Policies: the Declaration of Interests Policy; the Whistleblowing Policy; the Anti-Fraud Policy; and the Anti-Bribery Policy. These have been in place for sometime in slightly different formats but have now been brought together as a set of probity policies. Ms Gittins said that the policies were now aligned with advice given by both ACAS and the OIA and have more guidance on how to use with appropriate ownership. She said these would be reported upon regularly when used.

Members **APPROVED** the four probity policies.

- (v) On Cybersecurity, Dr Naylor drew members attention to the confidential minutes which had been a reserved item due to the need to ensure as limited an audience as possible. He noted discussions that the Committee had had with Professor Nagar and Mr Mike Beecroft and these had resulted in the new firewall being installed four months earlier than planned. Further discussions will be documented for Audit for their meeting in September.

8. Finance and General Purposes Committee

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2021 which were presented by Mr Norbury as Chair. He noted discussions concerning the University's finances looking both backwards and forwards. He explained the surplus and contingency and the conservative estimates that had been arrived at. In this context, the current year started with a 3% surplus which rose to 5%; the underlying contingency means the surplus is likely to be higher and will give a very satisfactory outcome.

He also discussed next year's budget where turnover is likely be similar to the current year with a similar surplus and contingency, starting at 3% with a £1m-plus contingency. Fr McCoy noted benchmarking against many universities who are struggling to maintain any kind of surplus.

Members **APPROVED** the budget for 2021-22

Mr Norbury drew members' attention to the proposed Endowment Investment Portfolio. He explained that the cash figure varies due to receipt of student fees in tranches of fees but that any interest on cash held is likely to be eroded by inflation. A longer-term investment fund was needed to make surpluses work more efficiently. Currently there would be up to £5m for this

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fund. Mr Norbury requested Council's approved to proceed to the next stage, which would be for the Finance Committee to come back to Council with a detailed recommendation which would include objectives and terms of reference. There would be an investment sub-committee set up with third party management options and a detailed cash analysis from the Finance Department. Ethical considerations about where the fund is invested would also be part of the paper.

Members **APPROVED** the proposal to receive a detailed recommendation from the Finance Committee.

9. Staffing Committee

Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2021 which were presented by the Chair of the Committee, Ms Swinson, who also provided a summary report. She noted that Staffing Committee is keeping a watching brief on developments in keys areas, namely the Unions, and pensions and pay matters.

10. Council Standing Committee on Health and Safety

Members had received the minutes for information of the meeting held on 3rd June 2021 which were presented by the Chair, Fr Chris Fallon. He noted the work of the Health & Safety Consultative Committee and the Covid Sub Group which received daily Covid updates.

11. Equality & Diversity Annual Report

Members had received the Equality & Diversity Annual Report for information.

12. Office for Students (OfS)

- (i) Members had received the following documents from the OfS for information: Statement of expectations on harassment and sexual misconduct; Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Update; and the OfS publications programme June to December 2021.
- (ii) Members had received the OfS Spring Audit Requirement on Consumer Protection and Student Information. Dr Haughan explained that this was to check courses have been delivered as promoted to students prior to their start at university. She and Ms Gittins had done a thorough audit to ensure that the University was compliant, and she reassured Council that the vast majority of provision had passed the audit, with only a few areas of concern which had been acted upon and remedied.

13. Students' Union

Members had received the President's Report which was present by Mr Pearce. He noted that Ms Priestley had been successful during a second election for his role and that he has been working closely with all the new officers, particularly around training and focussing on the relationship with the University. Much of his work this year had been achieving incorporation for the SU and he was pleased that this had been achieved within their relatively short timeframe. On the Budget the Development Manager now had this under control and this included a staffing restructure which had been undertaken in parallel with incorporation.

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In terms of student-facing events and services, there had been a great deal going on throughout the year, despite the limitations caused by the pandemic. Care had been taken to ensure inclusive practice and he noted the launch of the new “buddy” system. He thanked the University for its support during the year, in particular the guidance, advice and encouragement from Professor Pillay, Dr Haughan and Ms Gittins. The Chair and Ms Beever thanked him for his service to the Students’ Union, and the student community at the University.

14. Any Other Business

- (i) The Chair noted that a recommendation that had been made by the Council Effectiveness Review Group (CERG) was for the University to offer some short presentations to Council members covering key aspects of how the University operates to enable Council to scrutinise relevant papers it receives. These talks would last 15-20 minutes with some time afterwards for any questions, so do not take longer than 30 minutes in total. The aim is to offer one session per term.

In June, members were invited to the first of these, which was organised by the Health and Safety Officer (Ms Rachel McManniman) and gave an overview on how Health and Safety is managed at the University. Those present said that the sessions had been very useful and gave a good overview of Health and Safety at the University.

- (ii) Members congratulated the Vice Chancellor on the recent announcement that he has been made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Higher Education. They also noted that Mr Colin Wong, Senior Professional Tutor in Education at Hope as well as the University’s Disability Support Contact and Designated Safeguarding Officer was made a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for services to Education. It was agreed that the Chair would write a letter of congratulations to Mr Wong on behalf of Council.