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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL (REFLECTIVE): Thursday 3rd October 2019

PRESENT: Revd Canon Peter Winn (in the Chair), Mrs Jane Beever, Dr John Bennett, Mr Haris Rashid, Revd Canon Chris Fallon, Dr Penny Haughan, Dr Joan McClelland, Fr Chris McCoy, Dr Arthur Naylor, Fr Michael O'Dowd, Revd Canon Professor Kenneth Newport, Professor Gerald Pillay, Mr Ultan Russell, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Dr Caroline Wakefield (15 members)

By invitation: Ms L Gittins (Clerk to Council), Mr Derrick Dykins (minute secretary) Dr Penny Haughan for item 2

1. The Chair **received apologies of absence** from Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Sr Dr Mary Charles-Murray SND, Dr Simon Hulme, Very Revd Dr Sue Jones, Sr Maureen McKnight SND, Mr Charles Mills (Vice-Chair), Mr John Norbury, and HH Judge Graham Wood QC. The Chair welcomed all new members to the meeting and each member introduced themselves briefly.

2. **The Student Experience at Liverpool Hope University**

The Chair introduced Dr Haughan for the substantive item on the agenda, which was an overview of the student experience, from application to graduation and beyond. Dr Haughan drew members' attention to the Access and Participation Plan and the Approval Letter from the Office for Students.

Dr Haughan gave a detailed presentation and had invited a mixture of students and staff (approximately 20 in total) to help illustrate the level of support that students throughout their time at the University, and into the world of work. Staff, who were attending without managers, represented a wide range of support and academic services the University provides, with representatives from Finance, Student Development and Wellbeing. Tutorial, Residential Life (including Senior Resident Tutors) and Pastoral, in addition to the Students' Union and Chaplaincy. First, Second, Third and Postgraduate Students were also represented. Each invitee gave a short overview of their experience/role at the University.

Dr Haughan reminded Council of the four primary regulatory objectives for HE stipulated by the Office for Students, which are that "all students from all background and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education: are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education; receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected; are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time; and that they receive value for money."

She reminded members of the University's approach to HE

<https://www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/staffgateway/personnel/documents/Our%20Approach%20to%20Higher%20Education%C3%A2.pdf>

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She emphasized that no two student experiences are the same, and noted distinctive features of the University which help to cater to the wide range of students at the University. These include: bi-weekly tutorials; a curriculum which is integrated and allows the education of the student “in the round”; and an awareness of individual’s student’s needs and mechanisms to ensure that those needs are met. She gave a summary of the very wide range of extramural activities available from Freshers’ week and beyond, and the different ways in which the Student Development and Wellbeing Team work both directly and through outside agencies to support any student who is struggling, both academically and personally.

Members thanked Dr Haughan for an informative and thorough presentation.

3. Freedom of Expression

Canon Winn explained that, following the University’s successful Prevent Review, he had asked Ms Gittins to give some background to current issues around Freedom of Expression (FoE), and the balance that needs to be struck in terms of allowing students and visitors to express their views whilst at the same time paying due regard to the University’s duty under Prevent Duty. Ms Gittins defined FoE and explained how this applied to universities. FoE can only be limited if it breaks criminal, equality or charity laws or duty of care. She outlined a recent Court of Appeal case which found in favour of the complainant against the University of Sheffield. The case highlighted the challenges universities might face when dealing with students whose views may appear extreme and incompatible with their studies. She noted that the University had had no major issues with FoE and had mechanisms in place to ensure that the Vice Chancellor was aware and could check whether an event or speaker was not breaking the law. There were also measures he could take to ensure that any controversial messages were balanced by the opposing point of view.