

Council
21 September 2020 at 13.00
Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

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Members:	Chair – External member	Mr Michael Queen
	Joint Vice-Chair – External member	Mr Vib Baxi
	Joint Vice-Chair - External member	Ms Rachel Hubbard
	Treasurer - External member	Mr Robert Napier
	President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Max Lu
	Provost & Executive Vice-President	Prof Michael Kearney
	Vice-Provost, Education	Prof Osama Khan
	Vice-Provost, Research & Innovation	Prof David Sampson
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	Vice President, External Engagement	Mr Patrick Degg
	President, Students' Union	Ms Lizzie Rodulson
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Esat Alpay
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Amelia Hadfield
	External member	Mr Elliot Antrobus-Holder
	External member	Dr Tony Bragg
	External member	Ms Judith Eden
	External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	External member	Dr Mike Goodfellow
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Mr Nigel Jones
	External member	Mr Peter Maskell
	External member	Ms Pam Powell
	External member	Ms Jan Sawkins
	External member	Mr Nick Standen

In attendance: Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services
Ms Martine Carter, Director of Strategy and Executive Officer
Mr Phil Grainge, Chief Financial Officer
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

20/089 Preliminary items

.1 There were no apologies.

20/090 Declarations of conflicts of interest

.1 None

B ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Please refer to the slides presented in the meeting for more detailed information. These

minutes provide a summary of key discussion points and decisions taken.

20/091 Introduction

- .1 The Chair of Council and the VC introduced the meeting, noting that the focus was on preparing for the future.

20/092 Student numbers

- .1 MC presented the paper. The following additional points were noted:
 - .1.1 The student numbers appeared to be broadly as forecast in July. Whilst the net financial position was c.+£1.8m, the overall expected tuition fee income was c. £17m less than last year (c£143m against c£160m).
 - .1.2 Some overseas students had arrived already and were quarantining as required. Late arrival had been approved for c. 300 students.
 - .1.3 The mix of nationalities of overseas students was similar to that in previous years.
- .2 Council noted an update on the Community Engagement Plan, with the following additional points noted:
 - .2.1 The comprehensive plan was focused towards supporting the safe return of students to off-campus settings and the local community from September 2020.
 - .2.2 A series of stakeholder meetings were being held, supported by communications from the Vice-Chancellor.
 - .2.3 Residents' Association meetings were now being held virtually and the Street Marshalls and Street Angels initiatives would be continued this year.
 - .2.4 A series of press releases were planned, highlighting the University's contribution to its local community, supported by the delayed but timely publication of the Your University newspaper, sent to 36,000 household locally. Council members could view the newspaper via <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/community>. Feedback, particularly from students, would be welcomed.

20/093 Student Experience plan

- .1 OK gave a presentation. The following additional points were noted:
 - .1.1 There had been really good engagement with the plan from the University community.
 - .1.2 It was suggested that if the University focused on making staff happy, a good student experience would follow.
 - .1.3 Council viewed a demonstration of Unitu, the new student feedback platform, noting that other universities had seen an improvement in NSS and student satisfaction after starting to use this platform.
 - .1.4 It was noted that the emphasis would be on supporting and encouraging staff to deliver an excellent student experience. It was recognised that staff needed the environment, support and the time to improve, particularly when returning to work at this difficult time. However, if staff were unwilling or unable to improve, there would be a need for capability conversations.
 - .1.5 The targets had been set with a view to targeting the top quartile for each area of the NSS. Initially, only objectives for year one had been set, but objectives for years two and three were under consideration.
 - .1.6 If the NSS did not take place this academic year, the 85 Plan would still go ahead.
 - .1.7 A Council Student Experience Committee was being established.

20/094 Strategy update

- .1 ML and MC gave a presentation. The following additional points were noted:
 - .1.1 It was suggested that an additional c.200 academic staff would be required to reduce SSRs (Staff Student Ratios), a key factor in improving NSS scores and to increase the capacity for research. To fund this, there would need to be a combination of measures to reduce costs and increase income. Performance management of low performing staff would be required, and some areas may need to be reshaped.
 - .1.2 The per-fte performance of existing academic staff with respect to research was high compared to competitors.
 - .1.3 Noting the summary of the review of performance against Strategy, it was recognised that it would be unlikely that the University could deliver all of the aims of the 2017 strategy by 2022.
 - .1.4 The focus for 2020-21 would be on the return to campus after Covid and the 85 Plan.
 - .1.5 The University needed to ensure that the right level of support for academics was in place. However, the proportion of professional services staff at Surrey was higher than competitors, so it was not thought that additional professional services staff would be required. Instead there needed to be a combination of technical solutions and a focussing of staff on key areas.
 - .1.6 There should not need to be a conflict between success at teaching and research – some areas such as the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering scored highly in both, albeit it has a low SSR.
 - .1.7 A team led by OK would be driving innovation in Teaching and Learning and would review the potential markets for online courses.
- .2 It was suggested that it would be useful for some lay Council members to participate in the Strategy sub-groups.
Action: ML and MQ to discuss

20/095 Wrap up

- .1 All were thanked for a very positive and useful meeting.

C CLOSING ITEMS

20/096 Any Other Business

- .1 None

20/097 Dates of next meeting

2020

26 November (meeting plus strategy away day)

Mr Michael Queen
Chair