

Council

7 May 2020



M20/124 – M20/181

Minutes

Present:	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair)	Professor Paul Layzell
	Ms Ann Ewing (Vice Chair)	Mr Jeremy McIlroy
	Professor Sarah Ansari	Mr Gerry O'Hagan
	Mr John Gregory	Mr Jack O'Neil
	Mrs Christine Goodyear	Professor Elizabeth Schafer
	Mrs Margaret Jack	Mrs Chris Shoukry
	Mrs Hazel Jessop	Mr Nick Perryman
	Ms Denise Keable	Mr David Williams
	Ms Sarah King	Ms Colette Wilson
Apologies:	Professor Bob Fitzgerald	Mrs Tina Harris
	Mr Hammad Chaudhry	
Secretary:	Dr David Ashton, Deputy Principal (Operations) and Secretary to Council	
In attendance:	Professor Ken Badcock, Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources)	
	Ms Helen Ellis-Jones, Director of Human Resources	
	Professor James Knowles, Senior Vice Principal (Education)	
	Professor Katie Normington, Deputy Principal (Academic)	
	Ms Mary White, Chief Financial Officer	
	Mrs Pauline Martin, Executive Officer for Council, Minutes	
	Mr Rob Cutting, Secretariat Assistant, Secondary Minutes	
Observer	Professor Mandy Merck (UCU)	

- 1. Apologies**
Received from Professor Bob Fitzgerald, Mrs Tina Harris and Mr Hammad Chaudhry. M20/124
- 2. Declaration of interests**
None. M20/125
- 3. Minutes of the Previous meeting**

	AGREED the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 (M20/13-M20/84) subject to an amendment to M20/52 regarding the Climate Emergency.	M20/126
4.	Matters arising None.	M20/127
5.	Un-starring of items None.	M20/128

Major Business

6.	Covid-19 Update RECEIVED a presentation addressing the objective of ensuring a successful and viable institution that would survive the Covid-19 crisis and be in a position to benefit from the recovery phase by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completing the current academic year • Addressing the medium-term challenges of the new academic year • Ensuring College remained viable and able to build up in the recovery phase • Using the new ways of working as a springboard to further innovation. 	M20/129
	Current Academic Year NOTED the current operations and mitigations in place for the current academic year, next academic year and to support colleagues.	M20/130
	DISCUSSED the range of support being put in place by the Careers service for student finalists during the economic downturn. This included a proposal to offer discounts on master's courses defined as "enabling up skilling".	M20/131
	AGREED that the definition of courses that met the criteria should be reviewed and should include a caveat regarding the minimum number of enrolled students. In view of the need to announce the details of the discounted master's vocational programme as possible, the details would be reviewed by circulation to the Chair of Council, Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee and Chair of Finance.	M20/132
	The National Context NOTED the National context including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UUK submission to Government for a package of measures to support the sector • London Higher Board addressing the London specific issues • OfS consultation launched seeking views on protecting students from providers engaging in activities not in the interests of students or the sector • Changes to OfS reporting requirements of financial forecasts and liquidity, noting that RHUL aimed at achieving 50 days liquidity over the long term and never 30 days, currently at 99 days and forecast 113 by year end • Surveys conducted by the British Council and QS on student likely intentions for the next year. 	M20/133
	NOTED that the financial forecast for this year was considered prudent with all income for the year recognised and costs being minimised due to continual detailed scrutiny.	M20/134
	NOTED the funding stream for Civic or local contribution was currently not being addressed and that local and regional engagement by HE providers needed to be redeveloped. This had been recognised by UUK.	M20/135
	The Flexible offer to students from Autumn 2020 NOTED the paper addressing the flexible offer for students 2020/21 (CL/20/20)	M20/136

NOTED the development of a flexible learning offer for every course, including a September and January start option for key overseas recruiting programmes, to reduce uncertainty around the 2020/21 operating environment and improve student intake.	M20/137
NOTED the implications for May communications with applicants, and for returners, to provide reassurance of our offer with further contingency planning for potential disruption through the year	M20/138
DISCUSSED the volume of work to address the changes required to term 3 exams and assessments and for the next academic year, restructuring of 1654 active course modules. Also, the resilience of IT systems, staff capability and support and support for students' access to technology, including by working across the sector.	M20/139
DISCUSSED that College was not planning a delay to the start of the academic year to January 2021 and was focussed on flexible delivery rather than moving to entirely online delivery.	M20/140
AGREED the approach to the development of a flexible offering for students to maximise student admissions for 2020/21 and deliver successful outcomes.	M20/141
Staff Wellbeing	
NOTED the "Working Well Remotely Hub" set up on the intranet to help staff adapt to working away from campus. Take up was being monitored and the site would continue to be developed.	M20/142
NOTED that 332 staff were currently furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme following Department of Education advice. Roles had been assessed and sources of funds checked for compliance with the Scheme. Furloughed staff retained work emails for social contact, which was encouraged, and for future return to work.	M20/143
CONSIDERED other reasonable measures, including whether it was possible, acknowledging any security issues, for some staff on fixed term contracts to retain access to College emails for a period of time in order to continue to use the College library for research work.	M20/144
Operations Clusters	
NOTED the operations cluster around ensuring appropriate communications, continuing to support staff, providing robust and supportive leadership and maintaining compliance with external regulators.	M20/145
NOTED a number of operations around returning to campus including a safe campus for working, managing movement around campus, policing and achieving an appropriate tone, establishing a safe campus for living and for generating income on campus over the summer from provision of campus services.	M20/146
NOTED four further operations cluster; working at home, supporting education -IT, successful student recruitment and financial sustainability.	M20/147
NOTED a further potential cluster around developing sharing across institutions, initially in relation to possible reciprocal access for students living at home to access the facilities of their local HEI.	M20/148
Student Admissions 2020	
RECEIVED a briefing on the current position of undergraduate and post graduate student recruitment for 2020/21 noting that the deadline for undergraduate choices of their first and reserve institution had been deferred to 18 June 2020. Consequently, there were 2,000 fewer choices made than at the same point last year.	M20/149
NOTED that Undergraduate, conditional and unconditional, firm acceptances, at 21% of offers made, remained at a similar level to previous years. The closure of the scheme whereby a conditional offer became unconditional if the student made the College their first choice seemed to have made no difference to overall acceptance levels at this time.	M20/150

	NOTED postgraduate taught applications currently exceeding previous years.	M20/151
	DISCUSSED the introduction of a 5% above forecast student number control for 2020/21 admissions raised the importance of conversion to firm acceptances and to recruitment through clearing.	M20/152
	DISCUSSED the balance between achieving student numbers and maintaining, or improving tariff, the implications of further reductions in tariff on league table position, for teaching and ensuring progression.	M20/153
	CONSIDERED whether tariff could be varied to support widening participation and if so what adjustments or additional resources may be required to support progression and at what cost.	M20/154
	DISCUSSED that there was an economic imperative to achieving student numbers this year in order to mitigate against a likely shortfall in international students but that more information was required on the impact of pursuing this strategy.	M20/155
	AGREED to present information at the next meeting at the lowest level, department or subject level, of the balance between achieving student numbers and the impact on tariff and to consider how widening participation may be supported in the process.	M20/156
	NOTED the student recruitment process for 2021-22 and CONSIDERED what more could be done to increase applications for 2021/22 entry.	M20/157
	DISCUSSED that we could be more innovative in creating an offer to those returning to education after redundancy and, working through London Higher, developing the University of London Worldwide to raise our profile.	M20/158
	Finance Update	
	RECEIVED a recap of the forecast end of year cash position where the cash balance was improved by £16m to circa £45m as a result of mitigating actions taken for the current year.	M20/159
	NOTED the mitigations to achieve the financial priorities for 2020/21 and the critical milestones which would activate a review of plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCAS June deadline • Confirmation and clearing • September arrivals • November student count • January arrivals 	M20/160
	NOTED the process and timing for 2020/21 budgeting during the period of uncertainty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current scenario planning with a range of impacts and mitigation actions planning • Three scenarios in development • Interim budget presented to Council July 2020 • Monitoring and assessing student registration • Final budget November 2020 	M20/161
	NOTED the workstreams in the development of the recovery plan.	M20/162
7.	Governance Reform	
	RECEIVED a presentation addressing the implementation of recommendations from the Effectiveness Review Report, which included a draft purpose statement for Council, and proposals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the overall size of Council • Harmonizing the appointment process for members of Council • The creation of four new strategic Council Committees • Chair of Council's objectives • Actions to support Council effectiveness. 	M20/163
7.1		

	NOTED that implementation of the changes required:	M20/164
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Statutes, noting the process and estimated timeline • Further analysis, development of content and communication • Project management resource to implement the actions within the timeline and achieve the desired outcomes. 	
	DISCUSSED a facilitated discussion session for Council with the Executive. Further input was requested from members by the end of May regarding the process for appointing Committee Chairs.	M20/165
	NOTED that the final proposals would be brought to Council for final consideration at the meeting on 2 July 2020.	M20/166
7.2	RECEIVED a paper proposing a model for a revised Council Committee Structure (CL/20/23) following consultation with members.	M20/167
	NOTED Members were invited to consider the model and forward observations to the Chair of Council, Ann Ewing and Colette Wilson. A final proposal would be submitted to Council for approval at the meeting on 2 July 2020 in order to allow implementation by September 2020.	M20/168
	<i>NOTED that two members left the meeting at 19.06, Professor Sarah Ansari and Chris Shoukry.</i>	M20/169
8.	Appointment at Council	
	NOTED a paper from General Counsel providing advice to Council when considering the appointment of a second Vice Chair of Council (CL/20/21). The paper reviewed previous consideration of the matter by Council, at its meeting on 5 October 2016, the legal advice provided at that time and gave an interpretation of a current view. Three options were offered to Council for a way forward.	M20/170
	NOTED the Chair of Council proposed that the appointment of a second Vice Chair of Council had already been made in 2016 and advised that it was within Council's power to make the appointment.	M20/171
	APPROVED by all members present, the appointment of Mr Nick Perryman as a second Vice Chair of Council. The role would focus on external relations.	M20/172
		M20/173
	Starred items for Report and Formal Approval	
9.	Reportable Events	
	None	M20/174
10.	Report of Decisions Taken by the Chair of the Governing body	
	None	M20/175
11.	Report of Decisions Taken by Circulation	
	NOTED the outcome of the consultation by circulation which agreed to appoint Dr David Ashton, Deputy Principal (Operations), as Secretary to Council.	M120/76
12.	RECEIVED the following Minutes	M20/177
	Finance Committee 8 January 2020	
	Council Executive 30 January 2020	
	Audit & Compliance Committee 3 February 2020	
	Finance Committee 13 February 2020	
	Council Academic Quality Assurance Committee 13 February 2020	

- Equality & Diversity Committee 25 March 2020 (Minutes not yet available)
- Council Executive 31 March 2020
- Finance Committee 22 April 2020 (Minutes not yet available)
- Remuneration Committee 5 May 2020 (Minutes not yet available)
13. **NOTED the following Committees have not met since the last Meeting of Council** M20/178
- Health, Safety and Well Being Assurance Committee (next meeting 9 June 2020)
- Council Academic Quality Assurance Committee (next meeting 11 June 2020)
- Audit & Compliance Committee (next meeting 15 June 2020)
- Principal's Pay Committee
14. **Sealing of Documents**
- None M20/179
- Other Matters**
15. **Other Business**
- None M20/180
16. **Date of next Council meeting**
- Thursday 02 July 2020 5.00pm MS Teams M20/181



Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP
Chair of Council

Date 4 June 2020