COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON 22nd NOVEMBER 2013
UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members

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Key: ✓ In Attendance   A Apologies   P Part Attendance   NM Not a Member   S Sabbatical

In Attendance | Reason and Meeting Section
---|---
Professor John Fothergill | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) (Items 1 to 9.4 inclusive)
Miss Sarah Lawton | Governance Administrator
Ms Mary Luckiram | Director of Human Resources
Mr Richard Middleton | Interim Registrar
Mr Frank Toop | University Secretary
Professor Richard Verrall | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy & Planning)

MINUTES SECTION A – OPEN FOR PUBLICATION

Part One – Preliminary Items

1. **Highlighted Items**

   The Chair drew item 24, “Massive Open Online Courses” to members’ attention. It was noted that after discussion at UET and ExCo it had been agreed that the University would not seek to become a leading provider of MOOCs. However, there
was existing activity in the School of Health Sciences that could potentially be converted into a MOOC.

It was noted that Items 15 to 21.2 would be approved without discussion unless a member wished to highlight any item.

2. Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2013 were approved.

3. Matters Arising
Council noted the table of actions.

Matter Arising 13, Item 7, 24.05.13, Vice-Chancellor’s Report, The University would be tendering for cleaning services in 2014 and consideration would be given as to whether the London Living Wage should be applied to this contract. Council would receive reports on progress. It was noted that the City of London Corporation had recently decided to apply the London Living Wage to existing contracts.

Decisions
It was agreed that the following items would be deleted as they were now incorporated into ongoing items of business:

Matter Arising 2, Minute 8.3, 12.10.12, Performance Monitoring,
Matter Arising 3, Minute 11, 12.10.12, HR Strategy,
Matter Arising 4, Minute 20, 23.11.12, HEFCE not at Risk Letter,
Matter Arising 11, Minute 5, 24.05.13, Items brought forward by the Pro Chancellor,
Matter Arising 12, Minute 6, 24.05.13, Council Calendar
Matter Arising 15, Minute, 9, 24.05.13, Professional Services Review Progress

Council agreed to amend the timeline for Matter Arising 8, Minute 10, 22.03.13, Restructuring Committee, to summer 2014.

4. Conflicts of Interest
Council agreed that Members would indicate any conflicts of interest at the time of the item to which those conflicts pertained.

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair
- The Chair expressed his thanks on behalf of Council to Professor Andrew Jones and the team from the School of Arts and Social Sciences for their presentation at the previous evening’s plenary session.
- It was Richard Middleton’s last meeting and the Chair expressed his thanks and that of Council for his contribution.
- The Chair noted that much had changed since agreeing the Strategic Plan. Also, most of the Deans, now in post, had not had the opportunity to contribute to the Strategic Plan. The Chair proposed that the bulk of time at the Away Day should be allocated to “recalibrating” the Strategic Plan: – considering where the University was positioned against the Strategic Plan and whether any KPI or PI targets or any milestones needed to be revised. It was also proposed to have two School presentations – Cass and Law. It was likely there would need to be a short formal Council meeting during the Away Day.

6. Council Calendar
The Chair indicated that there was flexibility to use the plenary dinner in March to cover any significant topic(s) that arose at the Away Day.
7. **Vice-Chancellor’s Report**

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted several items from his report and the following points were noted:

- The Academic Staff recruitment campaign which had been a core part of the Strategic Plan was complete. This did not mean that recruitment would cease but it would be on a smaller scale.
- An update on student experience and NSS would be provided at the March meeting.
- The REF was the key area of focus currently and the PVC (Research & Enterprise) updated Council on the process. It was noted that there were 12 units of assessment being submitted by the University (6 from the School of Arts & Social Science). Each unit would submit the following:
  (i) List of staff
  (ii) Publications – up to four per staff member
  (iii) Impact Case studies – 49 in total for the University
  (iv) PhD student numbers and Research Grants and Contract income
  (v) Environment Statement – 106 pages of documentation for the University

It was critical to select the most suitable staff. There had only been two appeals from staff who felt their work should have been submitted. 52% of academic staff (439 staff i.e., 379 FTE) would be submitted which exceeded the 45% target. 1592 publications (average length 10 pages) would be submitted - each one had been read and assessed internally and approximately 500 had been read and assessed by external reviewers to ensure that the University’s internal review process had rated papers appropriately. The deadline for all submissions was 29th November. It was noted that in 2016 HEFCE would be evaluating the REF process and there would be an opportunity to question the complex and intensive nature of the process.

This item is continued in the closed section of the Minutes.

8. **President of the Students’ Union Report**

The President gave a verbal report covering the following points:

- There was now a full Trustee Board following the recruitment of two student trustees bringing the membership of the Board to 10.
- The Union had worked intensively with the University to develop a plan for the Students’ Union facilities in Tait building.
- The Union were also working on formalising the relationship between the University and the Students’ Union as a charity and thanked the Interim Registrar, Richard Middleton for his contribution to that work.
- The first Islamic Faith Discussion Group meeting had taken place and discussions had begun on how to resolve Islamic faith issues. Professor John Fothergill would take on the University responsibility for faith matters following Richard Middleton’s departure.
- Local MP and Shadow Attorney General Emily Thornberry had attended the launch of the Green Dragons’ sustainability project. There were approximately 20 student-led projects in development which was above the target of 15 for the year.
- The Union aimed to build bridges with the local residents and on 12th December would host a small Christmas Market in Northampton Square to this end.
- The Union had welcomed the invitation to work on the role of course officers as part of the PSR Phase 2.
It was suggested that the Student Union be invited to input into the Away Day. The student experience was a key issue for the University.

Kevin Gibbons joined the meeting at this point.

9. Progress in Implementing the Strategic Plan

9.1 Strategic Estates Investments Projects
Council received the Strategic Estates Investments progress report and the following points were noted:

- The Director of Property & Facilities (PAF) noted that there had been positive developments since the paper was produced.
- The SEMS projects were proceeding in the basement and level 2 of Drysdale.
- Council noted that the Cass works at Bunhill Row, Aldersgate and Northampton Square were complete.
- The SU President assured Council that although there had been times when the works had been disruptive to students, the general view amongst students was that the works would improve the facilities for students and therefore enhance the student experience.
- The Director of PAF confirmed that planning permission had been obtained for three major projects including Sebastian Street. The Urban Presence projects had contributed to the resolution of the S106 agreement.
- The Director of PAF confirmed that the University had exchanged on the Abacus building and it was noted that there would be no issue regarding naming rights. The University could use the name “Abacus” but was not obliged to do so.

9.2 Flash Forecast
Council considered the Flash Forecast for 2013/14. The scale of the shortfall in postgraduate taught student numbers (pgt) had not become apparent until October 2013 and represented a significant concern for both the out-turn and the reliability of forecasting and control of pgt student numbers. The forecast showed a £20.7M deficit which was £6.6M worse than budget and £10.7M worse than the target set by Council for the Executive to ensure an out-turn no worse than a £10M deficit. Pgt income was expected to be nearly £5M below budget. This was partly offset by strong performance by Cass Exec but expenditure deferred from 2012/13 had adversely impacted the forecast. The following points were made:

- The CFO noted that there had been some criticism at the introduction of Financial Plan targets as they could potentially cause confusion. However, the aim had been to set a base budget which the Executive had a high degree of confidence could at least be achieved. It was disappointing that the current forecast was below this. Even with the lower student number assumptions, he felt there was a realistic possibility in 2014/15 of bringing the University back into surplus. 2014/15 would be a transformational year as the payback from the University’s investment in research-excellent staff would be determined in the REF financial outcome. It was important that the University held its nerve. However, in the intervening period finances would need to be managed appropriately and expenditure would have to be reduced. He noted the need to communicate the financial position more intensively within the University.
- One Council member advised caution on placing too much emphasis on one critical event and another noted that the REF might not bring in the
desired funding and that it would be wise to have a Plan B in case this happened.

- The CFO noted that capital rationing would have to be undertaken to address the cash consequences of the revenue shortfall. This would require particularly careful planning in view of the impact of the estate on the virtuous circle of improvement upon which the Strategic Plan was based. The Strategic Plan needed to be revisited and an Estates Plan setting out a more modest spend would be presented to the next meetings of SIPCo and Council.

- Cash flow forecasts showed that if the approved capital programme continued unchanged, cash would be exhausted by the end of 2014/15. Consideration should be given to obtaining a borrowing facility to provide some flexibility and potentially allow investments to continue from January 2014 onwards albeit at a lower level than planned.

- The Chair of SIPCo noted that the cash graph was alarming. Financial sustainability was important. Competition was growing and it was likely that one or more of the Schools would suffer in that environment. University planning needed to build in a margin so that though a School might be impacted, the University position was covered.

- Council asked whether the drop or lack of growth in pgt numbers was a “blip” or a trend. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the position would be reviewed to ascertain the causes and more would be known in January 2014 for the Away Day.

- The Vice-Chancellor indicated that one known issue faced by pgt students was the financing of the courses. Students would be able to pay back fees but would not necessarily have access to funds at the time they wanted to commence studying. As the SIPCo minutes indicated there were good reasons for the Government to introduce a loan scheme for pgt courses. He had written an article recently for the Daily Telegraph on this topic and he would arrange for this to be circulated. There was an increasing trend in international recruitment but home numbers had declined by 12% over the last 3 years.

- The Director of Property and Facilities noted that the most serious issue for PAF was that the difficulty of arranging satisfactory tender lists as many contractors had downscaled and currently had no capacity for the scale of work being undertaken by the University. There was a upturn in construction activity nationally and contractors were seeking better margins. The University’s projects were perceived as complex. The position would become worse if projects were deferred.

**Decisions**

(i) Council approved the £2.2M interim capital spend on Estates.

(ii) Council agreed that the CFO should investigate obtaining an overdraft facility.

(iii) The Council Away Day would consider the Strategic Plan and the Estates Plan.

*This item is continued in the closed section of the Minutes.*

**9.3 Annual Research Quality Monitoring**

Council received a report on the Annual Research Quality Monitoring (ARQM) exercise for 2013. The exercise had been introduced in 2010/11 to monitor the quality of research outputs over time, specifically between the HEFCE reviews to inform PI 2.1 of the Strategic Plan. It was noted that this report covered publications up to December 2012. The report showed that 43% of staff (by FTE)
had outputs with a 'Grade Point Average' of 3 or above. This exceeds the PI milestone of 36%. The following points were noted:

- There was a need to be careful when making comparisons between the ARQM and the REF as they were different in some fundamental ways. The REF used a 6-year window (January 2008 to December 2013) whereas the ARQM results were based on a 4-year window (January 2009 to December 2012). The same paper would not be submitted twice to the REF, however if two staff had jointly authored a paper it could be used by both of them for the ARQM e.g., Engineering tended to have more internally multi-authored papers and therefore would show more favourably in the ARQM than in the REF. The REF also considers the impact of the research and the "environment" (including research grants and contracts and the numbers of PhD students graduated.
- The PVC (Research & Enterprise) would provide a more detailed analysis of ARQM and REF at the March Council meeting.
- The ARQM was due a review following its third year of operation.
- It was noted that the total academic FTE used in the ARQM included Visiting Lecturers and so the percentage derived could be misleading if it were used to compare between Schools rather than within a School over time. It was noted that this choice had been made so that the total resource was considered with Schools choosing their own balance between visiting lecturers and salaried academics.

9.4 THE World Rankings 2013
Council received the latest THE World Rankings. City remained outside the top 400 with a score of 26.0 compared with the lowest score in the top 400 of 29.5. The following points were noted:

- Recent information was that the University was 468th (previously 466th). There were a number of new Universities joining the rankings and 27 of these had ranked more highly than City.
- There was limited response on 'reputation' from the survey of international peers and this could impact ranking considerably.
- There was significant bunching in the scores of Institutions outside of the top 400, so a minor change in score could impact positioning considerably.
- Speedy and significant improvements would be required to get to the Strategic Plan destination.
- A direct action was being taken to increase the number of citations through the use of the institutional repository introduced in 2011 and consistent use of the correct University name. However, it was noted that the citation score included publications from the period 2007-11 and there was therefore a considerable time lag to overcome.
- It was noted that industry/business income was very low at City.

**Decision**
It was agreed that this KPI would be revisited at the Away Day as part of the "recalibration" of the Strategic Plan to determine what was a realistic ambition.

*Professor Fothergill left the meeting at this point.*

9.5 Internationalisation Strategy to 2016
Council received the draft Internationalisation Strategy to 2016. The DVC (International and Development) had revised the Strategy in the light of comments
made by Council and the Executive and had reviewed the draft with Andy Friend. The following points were noted:

- The Strategy addressed (a) in its sections 5.1 and 5.2 - the short term objectives to bring Schools to a competitive level of internationalisation taking account of the current different levels each School had attained to date and (b) in its section 5.3 the longer term strategic direction including setting up offices and foundation courses abroad. This latter section needed the full engagement of Schools and an Executive Away Day was planned to discuss this section.

- It was noted that no additional funding was being requested at this point.

- It was noted that 5.3 focused more on educational matters rather than research. The DVC (International & Development) argued that this focus was aimed at ensuring that educational initiatives could be moved along as they needed a considerable amount of time to become established. It was suggested that one aim should be to assist academics to work on a global stage, the University should support this and the paper should illustrate the synergy between education and research.

**Decisions**

(i) Council approved the sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Internationalisation Strategy.

(ii) The DVC (International & Development) would provide further information especially on the educational collaboration outputs from partnerships such as WC2 at a future meeting.

9.6 Professional Services Review

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal report on the Professional Services Review and the following points were noted:

- Phase 1 implementation was almost complete and there had been no compulsory redundancies.

- The main service pressure had fallen on Information Services with 30 front line support staff needing to be recruited. The biggest impact had been on services for staff as student service had been prioritised. The success of Cass Exec had put additional pressure on the team and this had not been anticipated. The CIO was confident that the new structure was appropriate and that the current situation would improve, however, there were lessons to be learnt from the process especially in improving communications.

- A report was due to be made to Restructuring Committee in January 2014 on the benefits from Phase 1.

- There would be a full review of Phase 1 in the middle of 2014 following almost a full academic year of implementation.

- There were two services left to complete in Phase 1. The Library proposals had been approved (external advice had been sought) and the 30 day consultation was due to commence with a target saving of £0.2M. The Research Office review had not been completed and it was noted that the PVC (Research & Enterprise) had presented a proposal for a phased approach over the next 4 months which had been welcomed by the PSR steering group. Service improvements rather than cost savings were anticipated.

- The course support design for Phase 2 was going well and an organisational change plan should be ready in the new year. Ninety posts had been taken out of Phase 2 as they were School specific and it was not feasible to devise a “One City” approach e.g., technical support, Optometry clinics.
Council noted that the Senate minutes indicated concern about PSR and especially IS. There was an issue to be resolved as to what was a legitimate concern of Senate in its role of safeguarding quality and standards. A paper on Senate’s role had been discussed at Academic Governance Committee which would go to Senate and Senate would receive a paper on PSR at its next meeting.

10. Financial Statements

10.1 ARC Annual Report
The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee presented the committee’s annual report giving Council assurance that the University’s arrangements for risk management, control, governance, value for money and management & quality assurance of data submitted to HESA and HEFCE were Adequate and Effective. Where there were issues, they were not material to this judgment and they were in the process of being addressed. She highlighted that the committee was now, following the Deloitte review of effectiveness, adding more value in its review of risk and wanted to do something similar with value for money. The following points were raised:

- New members of ARC confirmed that the committee was operating well.
- One member of Council questioned whether the internal audit days were too high and whether the University was being over-audited. The Chair of ARC confirmed that the committee continually reviewed this. The committee was happy with the work undertaken by Internal Audit but would continue to keep its role under review.
- The CFO noted his concern that the in-house internal audit team did not have the breadth of skills that could be obtained from a professional firm.
- One member noted his concern that the risk register currently operated more as an issues register. It was important that the risk register addressed the key risks the institution faced.
- It was noted that the Council would be reviewing spin out companies and the commercialisation of the University’s intellectual property at its March 2014 meeting.
- The Pro-Chancellor thanked the previous Chair of ARC, Dame Lynne Brindley, for her contribution to the work of the committee.

Council received the CFO’s report on the Financial Statements 2012/13. The CFO noted that the statements showed that the University had made a surplus of £6.5M. This comprised an operating deficit of £16.2M and an exceptional surplus on the sale of the Finsbury, Heyworth and Pear Tree Court halls of residence of £22.7M. There had been a significant increase in the contribution from Schools and the year end operating position had improved by £6.3M when compared with the May 2013 revised forecast.

The cash position stood at £84.6M at the year-end, an improvement of £27.3M compared to the May 2013 revised forecast. This primarily related to the timing of capital works.

It was noted that the Auditors had recommended continued close scrutiny of the INTO partnership. The statutory audit work was complete and no major issues had been identified. An unqualified audit report was expected to be issued.

10.3 Financial Statements 2012/13
Council received the Financial Statements for 2012/13. The Chair noted that there was a small amendment to Note 6 on the Vice-Chancellor’s remuneration.

**Decision**
Council approved the Financial Statements including the Corporate Governance Statement and the Statement of University Council responsibilities.

### 10.4 Institutional Sustainability
Council considered the Institutional Sustainability Assurance report which would be submitted to HEFCE in December 2013. The Chair expected the reporting to evolve over time. Currently the prescribed style meant that the report lacked colour. It was noted that SIPCo had recommended the proposed amendment of the PI RAG rating for student recruitment from green to amber.

**Decision**
Council approved the Annual Institutional Sustainability Assurance report which would be signed off by the Chair and the CFO.

### 11. Senate Annual Assurance Report to Council
Council considered the Senate Annual Assurance Report which detailed matters considered by Senate during 2012/13 and was compiled from the Senate minutes. Senate at its October meeting had reviewed the report and agreed to give Council assurance that the University’s arrangements for the enhancement of academic quality and assurance of academic standards were Adequate and Effective. Where there were issues, they were not material to this judgment and they were in the process of being addressed. During the year the QAA Institutional Review took place and confirmed that the University had achieved all of the 4 confidence judgments assessed in the Review. Senate asked that the work required by the QAA to improve partnership working should be drawn to Council’s attention as an area of continuing concern. The following points were noted:

- Council welcomed the report which gave Council assurance on matters which were delegated by Council to Senate. The report aimed to make Senate more transparent for Council members and to improve the governance of Senate.
- The Chair thanked the Secretary for this initiative and asked that the new approach on City University’s Senate assurance to Council be flagged to HEFCE.

**Decisions**
Council agreed that it should continue to receive the Senate Annual Assurance Report.

### 12. Ethics Code
Council considered the proposed Ethics Code recommended by Senate and CGNC for approval. The following points were noted:

- The Chair of CGNC noted that the proposed Ethics Code used the learnings from the LSE and had been subject to extensive consultation over the last 9 months.
- Council members welcomed the Code and suggested that it would sit well alongside the Whistleblowing Policy which ARC had just finalised.
- The University Secretary would liaise with Academic & Student Services to ensure that the Code interlinked with student guides and regulations.
• It was noted that a Donations Acceptance Risk Assessment Policy governed the acceptance of donations with increasing scrutiny and approvals required as the risk increased.

**Decision**
(i) Council approved the Ethics Code subject to one amendment – referring to the “Council” rather than “the members” in the first sentence of Para 6(i) in the Guidelines.
(ii) CGNC would consider how the document could become a “living” document.

13. **Members’ Terms of Office**

**Decisions**
(i) Council approved the renewal of Professor David Bolton’s term of office for a further three years until 31.07.2017.
(ii) Council approved the renewal of Professor Dinos Arcoumanis’ term of office until 31.07.2014.

14. **Pro-Chancellor**

*The Pro-Chancellor absented himself for this item and the Deputy Pro-Chancellor took the Chair.*

Council considered a proposal to renew the term of office of the Pro-Chancellor for a further term.

**Decision**
Council unanimously endorsed the proposal and approved the renewal of the Pro-Chancellor’s term of office until 31.01.18.

**Part Three – Other Matters for Discussion or Decision**

The following items were not starred for discussion and were approved without discussion.

15. **Extension of Sponsorship of City of London Academy, Islington**

*This item is continued in the closed section of the minutes.*

16. **Letter of Representation**

Council approved the Letter of Representation which was signed by the Pro-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer.

17. **External Auditors Re-appointment**

Council approved the re-appointment of KPMG as External Auditors for the University for 2013/14.

18. **Annual Accountability Returns to HEFCE**

18.1 **Annual Monitoring Statement**

Council approved the Annual Monitoring Statement which would be signed by a member of the University Executive Team and submitted to HEFCE by 2nd December 2013.

18.2 **Designated Officer’s Annual Assurance Return**

Council approved the Annual Assurance Return which would be signed by the Vice-Chancellor and submitted to HEFCE.
19. **Honorary Awards**
Council **approved** six nominees to be offered an honorary award from the University.

*This item is continued in the closed section of the Minutes.*

20. **Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech**
Council **approved** Ordinance B4, Freedom of Speech, for meetings or other activities on University premises. This delegated responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of the Code of Practice to the Vice-Chancellor.

21. **Structure and Name Changes approved by Senate**

21.1 **Merger of the School of Engineering & Mathematical Sciences and the School of Informatics and the Boards of Studies**
Council **approved** the proposal to merge the School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences with the School of Informatics and also the two Boards of Studies. It was noted that the new School would consider its name and present a proposal for endorsement by Senate at its next meeting ahead of Council approval.

21.2 **Name Change of Learning Development Centre**
Council **approved** the proposal to change the name of the Learning Development Centre to the Department of Learning Enhancement and Development.

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**Part Four – Items for Information and not to be discussed unless Starred**

The following items were not starred for discussion and therefore not discussed and taken as read with the exception of item 26.

22. **Minutes for Note**
The following minutes had been approved by the Chair, but not yet by the full committee:

22.1 Corporate Governance and Nominations Committee, 14.10.13

22.2 Remuneration Committee, 21.10.13

22.3 Audit and Risk Committee, 07.10.13 and 06.11.13

22.4 Senate, 23.10.13

22.5 Strategy, Implementation and Performance Committee, 07.11.13

23. **Health and Safety Report**

24. **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

25. **University Events**

26. **FOI Review**
Council **agreed** the open/closed/restricted classification of items for the meeting.

27. **Date of Next Meeting**
Away Day Friday 24th January 2013 from 9am to 5pm, 200 Aldersgate.
Part Four – Short Meeting of Independent Members

28. Short Meeting of Independent Members
There was a short meeting of the Independent Members, which was not minuted.

Rob Woodward
Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council
November 2013