

**COUNCIL MINUTES
MEETING HELD ON 20th MARCH 2020**

Members		Meeting 1 04.10.19	Meeting 2 22.11.19	Meeting 3 07.02.20	Meeting 4 20.03.20	Meeting 5 15.05.20	Meeting 6 03.07.20
	Ms Julia Palca (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Professor Sir Paul Curran (President)	A	✓	✓	✓		
	Dame Lynne Brindley	✓	✓	N/M	N/M		
	Ms Kru Desai	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Dr Paula Franklin	✓	✓	A	A		
	Mr Simon Harding-Roots	✓	A	A	✓		
	Mr Adrian Haxby	✓	A	✓	✓		
	Ms Philippa Hird	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Professor Chris Jenks	✓	A	✓	A		
	Ms Janet Legrand	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Sir John Low	✓	✓	N/M	N/M		
	Ms Hunada Nouss	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Ms Jacky Wright	A	A	N/M	N/M		
	Mr Ron Zeghibe	✓	A	✓	✓		
Staff and Student Members	Ms Tuna Kunt	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Ms Mary Luckiram	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Ms Liz Rylatt	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Professor Debra Salmon	A	✓	✓	P		

Key: ✓ In Attendance A Apologies P Part Attendance N/M Not a Member S Sabbatical

In Attendance	Reason and Meeting Section
Professor David Bolton	Deputy President & Provost (DP&P)
Professor Andrew Jones	Vice-President, Research and Enterprise
Dr William Jordan	College Secretary
Ms Sarah Lawton	Governance Administrator
Professor Zoe Radnor	Vice-President, Strategy and Planning
Professor Paolo Volpin	Interim Dean of Cass Business School

MINUTES SECTION A – OPEN FOR PUBLICATION

Part One – Preliminary Items

1. Highlighted Items

Council **agreed** the highlighted items.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2020 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Council noted the table of actions arising from past meetings.

3.1 UCU Industrial Action – Pay and Pensions

The Director of HR provided a verbal update on latest developments and the following points were noted:

- The recent period of strike action (14 days) ended on Friday 13th March. UCU remained in dispute and were continuing their period of Action Short of a Strike.
- Discussions continued with UCU, at national level, on pay and pensions.
- UCU's mandate for industrial action ran to 29th April. Employers had been notified that a further ballot of UCU members to renew the mandate for

industrial action has been deferred, probably until June in the light of the Coronavirus situation.

- In relation to USS, City had responded to the recommendations of the JEP 2 report. The DHR thanked Council members for their endorsement of the response.
- Employers were currently being consulted on the technical provisions for the March 2020 valuation.
- The impact of the Coronavirus on universities was likely to be felt in terms of future pay negotiations and the health of USS.

Senate

Council noted the two letters on the ongoing USS Dispute, one from 10 Elected Senators and one from the 5 Student Senators explaining their reasons for not attending on this occasion. Several other Senators had also been unable to attend the proposed meeting of Senate due to work of higher priority on Coronavirus issues. The proposed March meeting of Senate was deemed not to have taken place as not enough Senators had attended for the meeting to be quorate.

Additional Items tabled by the HR Director:

3.2 Written Statement of Employment Particulars

The recommendations of the Taylor Review into Modern Working Practices, which would come into force on 6th April 2020, placed new requirements for employers in issuing contracts of employment on or after that date.

The significant change which affects City is the stipulation that the written statement of employment particulars must state: *“the hours and days of the week the worker/employee is required to work, whether they may be varied and how”*.

The hours of work for City’s employees are set out in written statements of terms and conditions of employment. For Academic, Research and Senior Administrative (Professional Services) Staff the current wording does not stipulate hours of work.

Council **agreed** the proposal that the wording of the statements of terms and conditions of service be amended to reflect the legislation.

3.3 Parental Bereavement Leave

The HR Director noted that new provisions for parental bereavement leave for those staff who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 or suffer a stillbirth beyond the 24th week of pregnancy would also come into force from 6th April.

Council **approved, in principle**, the proposed amendments to the statements of terms and conditions of employment.

Following consultation with the Trade Unions, Council approval will be sought by circulation. **[Action]**

4. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair

Prevent Report for OfS

The report, which was overseen by Professor Chris Jenks and Professor Andrew Jones, as a response to OfS seeking assurance with regard to a past student and criminal activity (terrorism offences) would be circulated to Council in due course.

[Action]

Unions Request: to bring Catering and Cleaning staff “in house”

Council noted the request and agreed that further consideration would be given to this issue at a future meeting.

President Appointment Panel

The Chair recommended adding a further member to the appointment committee, Dr Jessica Jones-Nielsen as a BAME representative on the panel.

Council **agreed** that Dr Jessica Jones-Nielsen should be invited to become a member of the President Appointment Panel. **[Action]**

Coronavirus

The Chair began by extending huge thanks to everyone at City for their efforts to keep “the show on the road”; and invited the President and other members of the Executive to provide updates on the actions currently being taken at City to mitigate the risks to City posed by Coronavirus and the government response to Coronavirus.

The President noted that:

- In the space of a week all teaching had moved online.
- The vast majority of staff were now working from home.
- The work of closing down parts of the estate had begun and by this evening it would look a lot like full closure.
- A week ago, it was doubtful that we could have reached this stage let alone executed it so well and to such a high quality. Many thanks from the President to all staff.
- All staff, in particular IT, have been brilliant and had ably assisted staff to work from home.
- CitySport had been offered to NHS should they need it.
- Michelle Donelan, the new universities minister, would shortly be issuing a letter to all VCs about the Government’s response to the Coronavirus in relation to the HE sector.

The CFO noted, as Chair of the Business Continuity (BCM) Group, that:

- The BCM group were meeting every day and all Schools and departments were represented. Each area had its own challenges – which the group “triages” on a daily basis.
- Most City buildings were to be closed, but IT and PAF would remain open, as would parts of SHS. A Christmas closure style roster was being developed for PAF staff.
- The Trade Unions had written to the Chair of Council asking for full closure of all buildings but following discussion at the Joint Health and Safety Consultancy Group (whose membership included Union representatives) were content with the proposed arrangements.
- Director of Library Services was hoping that the library will be fully digital by later today and she was currently working with publishers to make this happen.
- *CityWire* would be circulated twice a week, on Tuesdays in addition to Fridays, to keep staff fully up-to-date and to provide support and advice.
- Space has been offered in SHS to Health Education England to help with training in support of Coronavirus care.

The Dean of Health Sciences, noted that:

- The environment in the NHS (and so for SHS) was a fast changing one and City continued to collaborate closely with partnering NHS Trusts.

- Many City third-year students would be asked to join the workforce as the NHS viewed third-year students as crucial to management of the current crisis.
- All students with underlying health issues had been asked to leave their placements to protect themselves.
- Many of the School's academics had been asked to return to NHS service.
- The School was also looking at its own facilities in a bid to offer space/help/support – and the NHS had been informed of what the School could offer.
- The Dean noted that all third-year students (in particular nurses and midwives) who were called to work, would be placed on a temporary register, and would receive credits (will be credited) before they complete their degrees.

The Deputy President & Provost noted that:

- Colleagues deserved huge thanks for their work in supporting the move to online teaching and online assessments.
- Cass had been the most prepared owing to the fact that it already runs two online courses and were more expert in this provision. However, all other Schools had moved very quickly to get up-to-speed.
- City was now moving towards a full virtual learning environment though issues remained to be resolved in relation to the practical elements of some courses (for example labs in Engineering – though recorded demonstrations were being made available online to students).
- It was not possible, as yet, to make an estimate of the level of student engagement with the new arrangements. While it was possible to measure engagement with the teaching via the online tools, teaching was now mainly asynchronous so students could choose when they engage – which meant that statistics would need to be assessed over longer periods.
- There was a risk that if engagement drifts substantially, the assessments would lose credibility.
- Online assessment presented a range of challenges, from adjusting the overall framework to reduce the burden on staff and students, to accommodating the reality that not all students would have the technology or the physical space to work effectively from home.
- For some courses, the way forward would have to be determined in the light of the requirements of regulatory bodies. Some were adopting a flexible approach (but not all, as yet).
- The key questions being considered were in all cases “what is the minimum amount of assessment we need students to undertake to enable us to be able to award degrees to 3rd year students?” – and “what is the minimum we need to give to 1st and 2nd year students to enable them to progress?”

The Dean of Cass noted, in relation to online teaching and assessment, that:

- He had been very proud of the way in which his staff had measured up to the considerable challenges posed by the move to online teaching and assessment.
- Term 2 teaching was all online now. In the case of the MBA, unusually it had been possible to organise some ‘synchronous’ sessions and for these sessions it was known that at least 50% of students had “attended”.
- The School was currently working on arrangements for assessment for 3rd year students, and on arrangements for Postgraduate Term 3 which starts teaching as early as mid-April.

The Director of HR noted, in relation to staff issues, that:

- Regular all staff communications, guidance to managers and local communications were all in place. There was now daily messaging to staff.
- Advice had been provided to managers across City on working from home, on how to manage working conditions for those few staff who are in work, and in relation to the continuation of salary payments for those whose children are at home, or are primary carers of people considered to be vulnerable.
- Messages to staff combined information on the practicalities of staying safe and well with reminders of the sources of support including OH and Staff Counselling (which was now providing telephone sessions). The level of demand for Staff Counselling was being kept under review and resources would be increased if there was increased demand for the service.
- Trade Union colleagues were working closely with Executive colleagues on staffing issues arising from Coronavirus.
- Council members had received an Open Letter from the Trade Unions seeking assurances over the payment arrangements for catering staff who are employed by Sodexo. The Head of Employee Relations was working with the Head of Facilities in PAF to respond to the issues that had been raised. The best way forward would depend, in part, on the outcome of discussion about whether the NHS or Public Health England made any significant use of City facilities in coming weeks, and if so whether or not catering for those staff would be required.

The CFO noted, in relation to financial issues, that:

- The current focus was on cashflow. The final tranche of fee payments should be issued by the Student Loans Company, but some students might request “suspension of studies” which would have an impact on the current year’s budget.
- By September, the cashflow position was far more uncertain as the uncertainties around the recruitment of new students would come to the fore. Moreover, the sale of Princeton Street, which would have provided cash in the next financial year, had fallen through. Therefore, this would also have to go “on hold”.
- All capital projects which could be delayed or deferred, (such as the Library and Pool Lecture Theatre) would be. Further consideration would also have to be given to Finsbury Square. SIPCo would have oversight of the discussions about all of these issues.
- Financial opportunities might also be presented as a result of actions now being taken. For example, the extended use of remote working, which has been forced upon City, might offer an opportunity for considering how we use our space and resources differently in the future. It was agreed that this could be an item for further discussion. **[Action]**
- The CFO was expecting the building work on the Law School to continue for the time being, but that might well change.
- On Finsbury Square, no agreements had, as yet, been signed. So, there would be an opportunity to reconsider the way forward if it was likely that the Cass student population was likely to change as a result of the current Coronavirus crisis.
- Islington Council’s requirements and the assurance it wanted from City (e.g., with regard to impact on community and entrepreneurship and what City will be “giving back to society”) would need to be factored into the timetable. However, work was progressing positively between City and the Economic Generation Officers at Islington.

In relation to Finsbury Square, the following points were made in discussion:

- It was difficult to see what the best way forward would be until there was a clearer picture of what sort of financial assistance the HE Sector might receive, and what the financial impacts of the Coronavirus would be.
- A timetable setting out when key decisions have to be made was also necessary. It would be important not to be forced unnecessarily onto the back foot or forced into making quick decisions. The CFO confirmed that this information would be provided to Council in good time. **[Action]**

Council expressed enormous thanks to all staff at City for the speed and goodwill with which they had worked to put in place new arrangements to maintain education and research at the University in these unprecedentedly difficult times.

6. Council Calendar

Council noted the calendar.

7. President's Report.

Council noted the President's report, which was on this occasion 'taken as read'.

8. Students' Union Report

Council noted the Students' Union Report, which was on this occasion 'taken as read'.

Part Two – Major Items for Discussion or Decision

9. President Recruitment Verbal Update

Council received a verbal update. It was noted that the longlisting meeting was scheduled to take place on 22nd April, and it was agreed that this would still go ahead, even though Coronavirus may have an impact on progress. It was noted that, if the quality of applications was not as hoped for at this meeting, the panel could review and take a further decision on the timetable and way forward.

10. Staff Mental Health Annual Report

Council received the Staff Mental Health Annual Report which provided an update on current measures in place to manage and mitigate mental health difficulties in the workplace.

11. Internal Audit

11.1 OfS Compliance Report

Council noted the OfS Compliance Report which had been considered at Audit and Risk Committee on 9th March. The report was 'taken as read'.

11.2 Corporate Governance Audit: E2 Compliance

Council noted the update which was considered by Audit and Risk Committee on 9th March.

Decision

Council **approved** the recommendation of the Director of Internal Audit to extend the Conflicts of Interests return to include all senior staff. This extension should ensure compliance with the Regulatory Framework.

12. Q2 Financial Performance Report

Council noted the report which outlined City's financial performance for the first half of 2019/20 and which had been considered by SIPCo on 5th March. The report was on this occasion 'taken as read'.

13. Annual Sustainability Report

Council received the annual Sustainability Report. The Report was on this occasion 'taken as read'.

Part Three – Items for Information

- 14. Minutes for Note**
 - 14.1** Audit and Risk Committee, 14th November 2019
 - 14.2** Senate, 11th December 2019
 - 14.3** SIPCo, 23rd January 2020
 - 14.4** CGNC, 6th February 2020
- 15. Strategic Estates Projects Update**

Council noted the update.
- 16. Establishment of a new Interdisciplinary Centre**

Council noted the establishment of the London Space Institute as approved by Senate by circulation.
- 17. Council Committee Dates 2020/21**

Council noted the 2020/21 committee dates.
- 18. Opportunities for further Engagement with City for Independent Members**

Council noted the table of events.
- 19. FOI Review**

Council **agreed** that no changes were required.
- 20. Date of Next Meeting**

Friday 15th May 2020, 9am. (*Chairs' Dinner Thursday 14th May*)

Part Five – Meeting of Independent Members

The meeting of the independent members did not take place on this occasion.

Julia Palca
Chair of Council, March 2020