

COUNCIL MINUTES
MEETING HELD ON 14th MAY 2021, 9 – 10am

Members		Meeting 1 09.10.20	Meeting 2 27.11.20	Meeting 3 12.02.21	Meeting 4 26.03.21	Meeting 5 14.05.21	Meeting 6 02.07.21
Independent Members	Ms Julia Palca (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Professor Sir Paul Curran (President)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Ms Kru Desai	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Dr Paula Franklin	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
	Mr Simon Harding-Roots	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Mr Adrian Haxby	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Ms Philippa Hird	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/M	
	Professor Chris Jenks	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
	Mr Thomas Lee-Warren	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	
	Dr Andrew Mackintosh	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
	Ms Ebele Okobi	N/M	N/M	✓	✓	A	
	Mr Anant Prakash	N/M	N/M	✓	✓	✓	
	Ms Jen Tippin	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Mr Ron Zeghibe	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
Staff and Student Members	Ms Mary Luckiram	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	
	Mr Saqlain Riaz	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Ms Liz Rylatt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Professor Debra Salmon	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	

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) Item 6 onwards
Professor Andrew Jones	Interim Deputy President (IDP) Item 6 onwards
Dr William Jordan	College Secretary (CS)
Ms Sarah Lawton	Governance Administrator

MINUTES SECTION A – OPEN FOR PUBLICATION

Part One – Preliminary Items

- Highlighted Items**
Council **agreed** the highlighted items.
- Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2021 were approved.
- Matters Arising**
Council noted the table of actions arising from past meetings.

USS Update

The President gave a brief verbal update, noting that:

- The JNC had asked for their deliberations to be extended and this was likely to be considered as a reasonable request.
- The USS Trustee was set to miss the statutory deadline of 30th June and completion of the process during the spring was more likely. If this was the case, then the three month consultation with scheme members could straddle Christmas.
- The UUK consultation ended on 24th May and the proposal it contained was important, as it was currently the only proposal that offers a path through.
- Current questions being raised by the sector included: 'how will cost monitoring be enforced? How will *pari passu work*? Will banks be convinced?'

4. Conflicts of Interest

The President noted that he was a member of the USS Ltd. Board; and had therefore declared an interest in Item 3 (above).

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair

5.1 Mercer USS Presentation to SIPCo (29th April)

The Chair of SIPCo noted that the presentation had been extremely useful and had helped to focus minds and move the debate forward. He noted that this was the single biggest financial challenge that City faced. Frustratingly, individual universities only had a very indirect ability to do anything about it as it was a sector-wide issue. If the scheme continued in its current form, it was likely to cause bankruptcies eventually. If the scheme were reformed, however, industrial action was possible as the pension scheme was important to staff.

The CFO noted that during a recent meeting with S10 colleagues the expression used to describe the situation was “financial Armageddon” – with the Government waiting in the wings to see how universities responded.

5.2 Senior Team Recruitment

Professor Anthony Finkelstein thanked the members of the Interview Panels who had given up their time to interview candidates. It was confirmed that the following posts had been filled by internal candidates, although some interim arrangements might be required to allow current posts to continue for a period:

- Deputy President
- Vice President Education
- Vice President Research
- Vice President Enterprise, Employability and Engagement

Professor Finkelstein noted that it was buoying to see the impressive management talent of City staff throughout the interview process.

5.3 Remuneration Committee Decisions

Council noted two decisions Remuneration Committee had taken relating to the severance arrangements for two members of staff.

5.4 Meeting with Students

The Chair had had a good meeting with the SU earlier in the week. It was helpful that two of the Sabbatical Officers were remaining in post as this would provide consistency for the SU.

One key priority for the SU was Student Mental health (check-in report was for discussion at Item 7). Another was the student experience, with the SU noting that often students raised concerns which are subsequently addressed but this was often not relayed back to the students – changing this could be a “quick win” with regard to NSS. Another quick win with students noted by the SU might be to offer better advice on how to raise concerns with accommodation providers.

The SU were keen to receive early clarification on the plans for teaching delivery for 2021/22 and for support available for students to get back to campus.

The final key SU priority discussed was “decolonising the curriculum”. On this issue, appointing more staff with whom students could identify and with a range of cultural competencies, would be very helpful.

6. University's Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression at City

Council reconsidered the revised Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech at City (first considered in November) and in discussion the following points were noted:

- CGNC had reviewed the Code and recommended an exploration of the timeline within the Code to see whether approvals could be 'fast tracked' for 'straightforward' speaker requests. It was, however, not always possible to identify a 'straightforward' speaker, and the Code's timeline needed to be long enough to allow for instances where for example, extra searches were needed, external advice sought or an appeal brought. Therefore, to provide clarity to students, manage expectation and ensure procedural regularity (i.e. ensure City follows its own process) no change had been made to the proposed timelines. Operationally, it remained that a clear majority of speakers are processed within a week or less.
- Once approved, the Code would supersede the current Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech for Meetings or Other Activities on City Premises and provide the operational arrangements for the approval of External Speakers Requests for virtual and in-person meeting/events hosted in City's name or that of City's Students' Union. The approved version would also be made available to the OfS as required under City's Condition of Registration with the Regulator.
- The Chair of Council noted possible implications for Students' Unions arising from the proposed legislation outlined in the Queen's Speech. Should the legislation become law, Council would seek to provide support to the SU, for example, helping with legal advice and insurance cover.
- The SU President recognised the constraints put on universities, but noted that the SU remained of the view that the timeframe within which speakers were approved should be shortened; and suggested that a sharp eye be kept on this process.

Decision

Council **approved** the University's Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression at City. *[The SU President, Saqlain Riaz, abstained from voting].*

7. SU Check-in Survey Report and Response

Council noted the update and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The SU President hoped the report illustrated that this work was moving forward in a positive way. With each round the SU learnt more about the gathered data. The joint ownership of the SU and the University had been key to the success of this activity. A common theme emerging was the desire of students to return to campus.
- The SU President noted that it would be interesting for him to see (following his departure) how the SU continued to drive the check-in process forward and further develop it. It had been heartening to see that this work was picked up by the sector and used as an example of good practice.
- The DP&P noted that the "response" report summarised the overall high-level response to the SU Check in Calls report. This report was part of the wider evaluation of the delivery of the Term 2 education and student experience offer, and responses to all student feedback. This report would be presented to Senate and Council at a later date. **[Action]**
- The SU President noted that to develop a university experience that was truly hybrid was challenging. However, it would be important to enable all students, including those living locally, to learn online if that is their preference. Students should not be asked to justify why they choose not to take up face-to-face sessions. It should be recognised that the whole approach to learning and to working had shifted as a result of the pandemic.

- Data had shown that City's black students were feeling less supported and that could be attributed to systemic issues but generally speaking the SU President was of the view that it could be linked to the lack of community as a result of not being on campus which brought with it its own issues. The experience of black students at City was very similar to those in other HE institutions.
- If more students were in future recruited through Clearing, those students might require additional support throughout the duration of their degree.
- The attainment project was particularly important and it was encouraging that the new methods of assessment were having a positive impact on attainment.

8. **Strategic Estates Projects Update**

Council noted the update and **approved** the SIPCo endorsed recommendation for the sale of 20 Myddelton Square. It was noted that an independent view on growth rates had been obtained and would remain on file.

9. **AOB**

This was Saqlain's last meeting as SU President and the Chair thanked him for his hard work, balanced approach and enormous commitment to strive to improve the student experience. His efforts reinforced Council's commitment to the importance of improving the student experience.

This would have been the final meeting for Dr Paula Franklin and the Chair noted Paula's commitment as a link to the School of Health Sciences during her time as a Council Member.

Professor Zoe Radnor was leaving City to take up the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Law in July. The Chair thanked Zoe for her contributions to City, particularly in championing City's Civic Engagement work and in striving to move City's EDI agenda forward.

Council looked forward to saying farewell to Saqlain, Paula and Zoe on 1st July.

Finally, the Chair noted that this was the last meeting for Professor Sir Paul Curran who would be standing down after 11 years as President, in June. One of the fruits of Paul's legacy was the excellent staff he had recruited for the University. His efforts tripled the proportion of staff producing research of world-leading or internationally excellent quality. City's widening participation work was boosted under Paul's leadership, increasing the intake of undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Under Paul's leadership City's Estate had flourished, with many ambitious projects completed such as the Northampton Square entrance, underground lecture theatres, the City Law School building and the acquisition of today's venue, 33 Finsbury Square for the Business School.

Paul had transformed City's financial health with the help of Finance Team colleagues and his good management, this enabled the aforementioned projects, which in turn enabled growth for City.

Paul's commitment and effort saw City join the University of London; an ambition held by City since 1924! This was a lasting legacy indeed.

Council thanked Paul for everything he had done for City and looked forward to celebrating his time at City at the dinner to be held on 1st July.

9. **FOI Review**

Council **agreed** that no changes were required.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Council Dinner Thursday 1st July and Council Meeting Friday 2nd July