

**UNAPPROVED COUNCIL MINUTES
MEETING HELD ON 29th JUNE 2023, 9.00am to 12pm
NORTHAMPTON A AND B**

| Members | | Meeting 1 06.10.22 | Meeting 2 25.11.22 | Meeting 3 23.02.23 | Meeting 4 31.03.23 | Meeting 5 18.05.23 | Meeting 6 29.06.23 |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Independent Members | Ms Julia Palca (Chair) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein (President) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Professor Bob Allison | N/M | N/M | N/M | N/M | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Kru Desai | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | A | A |
| | Ms Adrienne Fresko | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Mr Simon Harding-Roots | A | A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Mr Adrian Haxby | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | A |
| | Mr Thomas Lee-Warren | A | A | N/M | N/M | N/M | N/M |
| | Dr Andrew Mackintosh | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Catherine McGuinness | ✓ | ✓ | A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Ebele Okobi | ✓ | A | A | N/M | N/M | N/M |
| | Mr Anant Prakash | ✓ | A | ✓ | ✓ | A | ✓ |
| | Professor Sir Eric Thomas | N/M | N/M | N/M | N/M | A | ✓ |
| | Ms Jen Tippin | A | A | A | A | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Mr Ron Zeghibe | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Staff and Student | Professor Elisabeth Hill | N/M | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Mary Luckiram | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Professor Debra Salmon | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Professor Andre Spicer | N/M | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Gesmina Tsourrai | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ms Helen Watson | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

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

| In Attendance | Reason and Meeting Section |
|----------------------------|--|
| Mr Dominic Davis | Director of SPPU |
| Professor Juliet John | Vice-President, Education |
| Dr William Jordan | College Secretary |
| Ms Akanksha Kumar | SU President-elect |
| Ms Sarah Lawton | Governance Administrator |
| Ms Marion O'Hara | Chief Financial Officer |
| Professor Susannah Quinsee | Vice-President, Digital and Student Experience |
| Professor Sionade Robinson | Vice-President, Enterprise, Engagement and Employability |

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 18th May were approved.
- Matters Arising**
Council noted the actions arising from past meetings.

Matter Arising 1: Industrial Action

The HR Director reported that, to date, a relatively small number of staff had indicated that they were planning to take strike action. The marking and assessment boycott would be challenging to deal with. Once more accurate data on staff participation became available the extent of the challenge would be known.

The President had had to suspend Senate Regulations for 72 final year students to enable them to graduate. The extent to which it had been necessary to suspend Senate Regulations in relation students in Years 1 and 2 to enable progression, had yet to be determined. This would be reported to Council in due course. The Executive would consider, in the light of the outcome, whether or not this constituted an event that was a 'reportable event' for the OfS.

Council thanked those staff who had gone the "extra mile" to ensure such a good outcome.

Matter Arising 6: City/St George's Project

The Chair and Catherine McGuinness would discuss offline how best to provide regular updates to those Council members who were not members of the Working Groups. **[Action]**

4. Conflicts of Interest

In relation to items 10.1 and 10.2, City St George's Project, it was noted that:

- The interest of the independent members in terms of their future role post-merger should be recorded.
- The interests of staff members and staff attending Council in terms of their employment status post-merger should be recorded.
- Staff members and attendees at Council would, at future meetings, withdraw from discussion and voting on the terms of any staff restructuring that might directly affect them personally.

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair

Plenary Dinner

The Chair thanked the VP, Digital & Student Experience and the CIO for the previous night's IT presentation. There was still a long way to go with regard to City's digital transformation but work was underway to identify what needed to be done.

Appointment of Council member

Council noted that Jen Tippin's membership expires on 2nd July and agreed to extend it until the end of the month to enable her to Chair Remuneration Committee on 21st July.

Freedom of Speech Act

The COO provided a verbal update on the potential impact on City of the new legislation on Freedom of Speech. The Government's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill had become law on 11th May 2023. The Act would require universities, colleges and Students' Unions in England to take steps to promote lawful freedom of speech on campus. The impact of the new legislation would not become clear until the regulations were published and the OfS had consulted on how it would implement its new duties. The implementation of the Act, which would require providers to demonstrate that they promote and secure both academic freedom and freedom of speech, would be a complex exercise.

The COO would have responsibility for ensuring City's compliance with the new legislative requirements and for providing an annual report on freedom of speech.

Class Action

The COO reported that there had been a hearing in court at the end of May in relation to the 'class action' taken by students at a number of Universities in relation to the case against UCL. UCL had offered to re-open its internal complaints system for students who had signed up to the class action. A ruling before the summer recess was likely.

Farewell to Council Members

This was the final Council meeting for Jen Tippin and Dr Andrew Mackintosh and the Chair thanked them both for their respective chairing of RemCo and CGNC and for all their contributions to Council discussions. This was also the final meeting for Gesmina Tsourrai in her role as SU President and the Chair thanked her for all her hard work on Council and in working towards the rebuilding of the student community.

6. Calendar

Council noted the calendar of business.

7. President's Report

Council noted the update from the President on work and activities undertaken since the last meeting. Since the last meeting the President had:

- Attended the Technology Forum 2023, organised by The European House – Ambrosetti. This was one of the most prestigious and influential events focused on innovation, technology and research in Europe, bringing together academics, policy makers and executives from a wide range of industries and sectors to discuss the latest trends and developments in technology and their impact on business and society.
- Participated in a discussion on the “course officer of the future” which was likely to be influential in the work of “transforming City’s operational model”.
- Attended the dinner of the Worshipful Company of Apothecaries, which had provided a valuable opportunity to test the views of the medical establishment on the St George’s combination. The President had felt that there was overwhelming enthusiasm for the project.
- On 31 May, together with Professor Andre Spicer, Dean, Bayes Business School, met the Director of the Architectural Association School of Architecture to discuss potential future collaborations and partnerships.
- Given the opening address at the 10th Shipping Biennale on 12th June, organised by the Centre for Shipping, Trade and Finance at Bayes Business School. Held at the International Maritime Organisation and sponsored by the Maria Tsakos Foundation, the Biennial focused on the theme of ‘A Changing World – Adapt to Succeed’.
- Met with Heads of Departments to support work to strengthen City’s management capability and provide pointers on areas for improvement.

In discussion, the President noted that he was giving further thought to workforce issues, including the role of Visiting Lecturers and Graduate Teaching Assistants, and also the long-term shape of the future workforce to drive efficiencies at City. A “workforce” report, incorporating workload/academic planning and factors that play into issues such as staff/student ratio could be provided to Council by the end of this calendar year. **[Action]**

8. SU Report

Council received the update from the SU President and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The SU President had been preparing her handover to the Union President-Elect (Akanksha Kumar) to ensure that her successor was well prepared to start the role from 3rd of July.
- The Students’ Union Officers had delivered a presentation to the City SLT regarding their work to address the Cost of Living for students. The presentation included recommendations covering various issues such as food expenses, course costs, travel expenditures, housing, employability, and overall wellbeing.
- The transition of Sports Development to the Union was underway. Staff resource transitioned across in June with the budget following in August. The transition period to deliver Sport Development for the new academic year was on track.
- On Tuesday, May 23, 2023, the Board of Trustees had given its approval to the new SU strategy. The strategy had previously been presented to the City SLT on May 6th and received positive feedback. This new approach in the strategy moved away from focusing solely on vision, mission, and enablers, instead employing language that was more relatable to students. It establishes a clear purpose of “making the everyday better,” reinforced by the new SU values and behaviours.
- The SU President thanked all members of the Senior Team for making her feel so welcome since taking up the post and for their collaboration with the SU.

9.1 Financial Q3 Report

Council considered the report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- City was very close to finding the necessary savings, and much good work had taken place with regard to cost control, but it would not be known until the “final moment” whether or not the covenant had been breached. This was because the outturn on a number of issues would not be known until year-end adjustments had been made.

9.2 School Strategy Implementation Plans

Council considered the report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The report provided a summary of the School plans in the following areas:
 - The numbers linked to intake
 - Student population
 - Continuation
 - New provision
 - Staffing
 - Staff:student ratios
- The School Strategy Implementation Plans marked a pivotal point in the early implementation of the City Strategy. The amalgamation of the School plans shows an increase of 21% in the student population between 2022 and 2027, with student numbers rising from 17,794 to 21,606. This excluded any combination with St George's.
- The importance of progress was clear; and Schools had reviewed the relevant data and the Executive had been pleased to see the aspiration to improve. Progression was a sector-wide issue with emerging understanding of the underlying factors. Covid had exposed other weaknesses which needed to be addressed, for example management insight, support systems, and the structure of the student year. There would be a stepped approach to return to previous levels of achievement and the new Academic Registrar would help develop City's approach.
- The planned 21% increase in Undergraduate recruitment was a positive change, but for Postgraduate recruitment only a 1% increase was planned. This would increase City's reliance on regulated fee income.
- Moreover, increases in student recruitment were not matched by planned increases in the recruitment of academic staff. It would be helpful for City to spell out how student satisfaction levels could be maintained and increased through adopting new ways of teaching.

9.3 Draft Budget 2023/24 and Five Year Plan

Council considered the budget and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The draft budget was compared, in the paper, to the forecast prepared for the OfS Annual Financial Return (AFR) in November 2022.
- The draft budget now forecasted a surplus of £1.8M against the AFR forecast of £3M.
- Savings had been found across all School and Professional Services budgets to offset the shortfall in income and additional costs arising in 2022/23.
- The draft budget did not include any changes relating to the proposed combination with St George's as currently the two institutions were independent of each other. However, it was likely that there would be costs incurred in 2023/24 so these had been added to the sensitivity analysis.
- The Financial Plan would support Council's final decision on St George's, and in addition the Autumn Plan would have further specificity on merger assumptions.
- In November the Plan would be updated with final figures for 2022/23 and the Flash Forecast 2023/34 to inform the AFR 2023 for submission to the OfS.

- The assumptions underlying the plan, including the assumptions on student recruitment (still a 'red' post control risk on the risk register) would be externally validated to feed into the City/St George's joint paper for consideration in October.
- The likely lower level of USS contributions would be helpful in strengthening the forward budget, but City also needed to make savings elsewhere too. The Finance Team would be looking for a certain amount of pay reduction, mostly through vacancy savings rather than redundancies.

Decision

Council **approved** the Budget for 2023/24 and noted the refreshed assumptions feeding into the Financial Plan.

9.4 Student Gateway Project Business Case

Council considered a presentation and Business Case for the Student Gateway Project. In discussion the following points were made:

- SaFCo had considered the Business Case in detail at its meeting on 15th June and agreed to recommend it to Council for approval given that this was a strategic imperative for City. Prior to that meeting, members of SaFCo had been taken on a tour of the estate which highlighted the current fragmented support available to students.
- SaFCo had also recommended that the team look at achieving maximum flexibility for the space, including for example, by installing partitions that could be moved.
- The Students' Union was supportive of the project which would improve the student experience at City.

Decision

Council **approved** the Student Gateway Project Business Case and associated costs.

10.1 City/St George's Project: General Update

Council considered the general update.

This item is continued in the closed section.

10.2 City/St George's Project: Governance Update

Council considered the governance update.

This item is continued in the closed section.

11. EDI Report

Council considered the report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The report detailed City's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work undertaken during the period June 2022- May 2023. The paper outlined key achievements, key milestones, forthcoming activities, and University wide progress related to EDI.
- It had been a truly transformational year for the EDI team with the launch of the Office for Institutional Equity & Inclusion (OIEI) and welcoming six new team members.
- The Team had made great progress, demonstrated through: the achievement of securing City's Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award, evidencing City's commitment to improving the representation, progression and success of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in higher education; the continuation of its work on gender equity through the renewal of the institutional Athena Swan award and School-level awards, recognising City's commitment to the career advancement of women; the successful application to Disability Confident level 2; and securing a silver award from Stonewall for creating an inclusive workplace for LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

- The Team's work was not only demonstrated through its charter marks, but also through its ongoing relationships with student societies and staff affinity networks, ensuring their voices are centred and heard through training and events.
- The Team also recognised that there was still much to do, to ensure City became a university of inclusive excellence, fully representative of all of its diverse communities.
- There was a real opportunity for City to address community issues and Professor Bob Allison would be happy to liaise outside of the meeting with the EDI Team to put them in touch with the community groups he works closely with in Leicester. **[Action]**
- To increase non-white academic staff numbers, a cultural shift was required and the Team had been working very closely with the HR Director on this issue. Moving forward, it would be important to look closely at the language used to cater to the ambitions of future staff and their world view. It would also be important to focus on pipeline work and how non-white staff members might be retained at City.
- Next year's report could helpfully reference the current make-up of Council members.
- The Dean of the School of Health and Psychological Sciences assured Council that City was being much more proactive about improving the welcome environment. The "Our City" campaign would communicate what it means to be a member of the City Community and will be embedded in all communications across the institution. The messaging will focus also on what it means to be a Modern Professional – where account must be taken of all beliefs.
- The Team had developed an Anti-discrimination Action Group in response to an incident targeted at the LGBT community last year,
- Attention should also be given to the way City staff taught and assessed students. The more that is understood from data and by listening to staff and students the more it should be possible to break through any structural barriers impeding the achievement of equality, diversity and inclusion for City's students.
- The Counselling Service had since been transformed over the past year in terms of the diversity of its staff and the services on offer; and was now widely perceived to meet the needs of all those it served.
- Council noted the great work achieved whilst recognising the challenges faced by the EDI Team.

12. City Strategy: Performance Measures

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

13.1 Risk Register Review

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

13.2 Health and Safety Mid-year Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

14. Planning for student experience monitoring against the strategy for 23/24

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

15. Appraisal of the Chair of Council

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

16. OfS Reportable Event

Council noted the recent reportable event report (City being granted University Title through a Supplementary Charter); and that a reportable events policy was now being drafted in the light of the OfS response to the reportable event report.

17. Minutes for Note

Council received the unapproved minutes of the CGNC meeting held on 4th May 2023.

- 18. Strategic Estates Projects Update**
Council noted the update and specifically the development of the Student Gateway Project.
- 19. Policy Update**
Council noted the update.
- 20. Council meeting dates.**
Council noted the report.
- 21. FOI Review**
Council **agreed** that no changes were required.
- 22. Date of Next Meeting**
Thursday 5th October, Chair's dinner on Wednesday 4th October.

Julia Palca
Chair of Council
July 2023