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 14th July 2017 were approved.
3. **Matters Arising**  
Council noted the table of actions arising from past meetings.

4. **Conflicts of Interest**  
There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5. **Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair**  
The Chair welcomed Julia Palca to her first meeting of Council as Deputy Chair. Julia is Chair of Macmillan Cancer Support and the Royal Free Charity and her background was as a media and employment lawyer. Julia had lived all her life in Islington and Hampstead and had friends who had either worked or studied at City, an institution which she was passionate about.

The termly meeting with students had taken place and it had been clear that the Students’ Union were delighted to be a company limited by guarantee. A key area of discussion had been about building a sense of community. Lay Council Members were reminded that they had an open invitation to termly meetings with students and staff.

A further meeting to consider fundraising would take place on 25th October and an update would be provided at the November Council meeting.

All Council members had received an email from the CFO in August, which provided an update on the successful conclusion of negotiations with INTO. The first board meeting under the new arrangements would take place on 13th October. The Chair thanked the CFO and the VP (International) for their work on this.

The Sebastian Street contract had been signed with BAM, but archaeologists continued to have a watching brief and would be undertaking some further digging in an attempt to unearth Civil War fortifications. Therefore, progress on the project could be slowed for up to 8 weeks.

The Minister for Higher Education Jo Johnson had requested the Committee of University Chairs to draw up guidance on Vice-Chancellor’s pay, covering transparency, publication of pay differentials and membership of Remuneration Committees. The Chair noted that he was attending the CUC meeting at the end of October and should receive an update at that time.

6. **Council Calendar**  
Council noted the rolling Council Calendar of Business. In discussion the following points were noted:

- At the Plenary Dinner on 16th November Council members would receive Prevent training. The session would be led by the VP (Research & Enterprise) and City’s Prevent Officer.
- The Chair had intentionally left the calendar for 2017/18 relatively clear to enable the incoming Chair to tailor it as she wished over the next few months.
- Members were warned that the agenda for the November meeting would be particularly heavy. Most of the HEFCE returns would have been considered at Council sub-committees, e.g., Council’s assurance about Academic Quality would be considered by CGNC next week. With that in mind it was proposed that a substantial amount of time should be spent in November on student progression.
7. President’s Report
The President highlighted several items from his report. In discussion the following points were noted:

- Government proposals to freeze fees for undergraduates at £9,250pa would potentially lead to a cumulative shortfall in City’s budget, over a 5 year period, of £14M. The government had announced a wider review of HE funding, but arrangements for this review had yet to be clarified.
- City had dropped by 25 places to 75th in The Good University Guide 2018, the largest decrease of any university. This reflected declines in City’s NSS results, the annual survey of employability and the ratio of students to staff.
- There had been some administrative issues in relation to the conduct of the annual employability survey, which was likely to have had a significant impact on the outcome for City this year. Council was assured that these administrative issues would not arise next year.
- ExCo would be concentrating on City’s identified “Big Six” issues as City implemented School and Professional Service Strategic Plans. Four priorities for 2017/18 were: research intensity (with a focus on staffing plans and REF preparation), undergraduate progression, satisfaction and employability (with a focus on enhancing the educational experience of City’s students, including personal tutoring and continuous improvement of teaching).
- Initial guidance for the REF 2021 had been published by HEFCE and while discussion continued on issues such as staff to be submitted and the portability of outputs, some issues were now settled, including one of importance for City: - the weighting on “impact” which would increase from 20% to 25%.
- The second appointment round for the post of Vice-President (Strategy & Planning; Equality & Diversity) had begun over the summer.
- Professor Chris Greer had been appointed as Interim Dean of the School of Arts & Social Sciences and lay members would have the opportunity to meet him at the November Plenary Dinner.
- Property & Facilities and their contractors had worked hard over the summer on the Drysdale Ground Floor Project to deliver student space, an IT facility and an undergraduate front-door for Cass. Council members were invited to take some time before or after the November Council meeting to view the impressive results.
- In the Times Higher global rankings, Social Sciences were placed in the top 150 and Business and Economics were placed 75th in the world.
- The City of London Academy Islington had achieved another outstanding set of examination results: A level and BTEC results were the strongest ever with a 100% pass rate.

8. President of the Students’ Union Report
The Students’ Union (SU) President highlighted items from her report. In discussion the following points were noted:

- Programme Representative Training had been completely rewritten to ensure it meets the needs of Programme Representatives across the Union. This should ensure that they are well equipped to have academic impact.
- Welcome Week had been the biggest, and best, to date with an increase in the number of both day and evening activities. The Fresher’s Fair had been held at the Business Design Centre and was a great success.
- The student-led Societies Board had approved 8 new societies and awarded £3.5k in funding for equipment, competition fees and promotion.
• The Union had trained a large cohort of students as part of the City Buddies “look after your mate” scheme designed to support students with mental health difficulties.
• The event to launch the new Union space had been very successful and was well attended by colleagues from across City.
• The Union had begun operating as a company limited by guarantee and was now managing its own finances.
• The SU President and her team had identified concerns about the lack of a sense of community at City. There were good communities but there was little sense of cohesion. The SU planned to collaborate with staff and set up a working group to tackle this issue. The Director of HR would ask the Organisational Development Team, who were already undertaking work in this area, to collaborate with the SU. [Action]

**Part Three – Major Items for Discussion or Decision**

9. Finance

9.1 Financial Performance Report Year End 31\textsuperscript{st} July 2017

Council received the Financial Performance Report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- These were draft figures for 2016/17 and subject to further changes when agreed with the external auditors. The Report would normally have accompanied Financial Statements when these were approved by Council in November, but had been circulated to Council earlier this year for its consideration.
- There had been some variances from previous forecasts, with the biggest relating to INTO. In general, the Schools had delivered in line with forecasts.
- The interest cover covenant looked unusually large and this was because interest used in this year’s calculation was for 3 months’ only, i.e., after the receipt of funds in May 2017.
- The Cash Flow Forecast illustrated the following key movements for 2016/17: City had generated £26.1M of cash from its operations, received £60M from borrowing and had invested £21.5M in estates and IT related fixed assets and £25.5M in deposits and non-current investments (as per the classification rules for FRS102 and the HE SORP).
- The Finance Directorate’s Revenue Team had performed well in relation to credit control and had a particularly strong record of collecting income due, with a very high proportion of payments received.
- Setting aside the effect of significant spend on equipment in 2014/15 which had led to an unusual increase in income in that year, research income had grown steadily over the past 5 years, though this year it was static compared with 2015/16.
- The CFO and her team would undertake a line-by-line financial review with each School and Professional Service, to ascertain the resilience of income streams and areas requiring the most focus.
- The Financial Statements would be considered for approval at Audit and Risk Committee in October.
- Council welcomed the report which provided a far more transparent reporting than in previous years.
9.2 Finance and Student Number Verbal Update 2017/18
It was noted that Clearing this year had been City’s busiest and most successful ever. City was currently on target for UK/EU and international student numbers and postgraduate numbers were also broadly on target.

10. NSS 2017 Results
Council noted the overview report of City’s NSS 2017 results which along with an institutional and programme level commentary, included detailed action planning in response to results, as well as plans for the Your Voice Our Action campaign. In discussion the following points were noted:

- The overall satisfaction rating for City was 82%, a 3% decrease on last year’s result. The national average for overall satisfaction was 84%. City’s participation rate, of 76.3%, was higher than the national average.
- It had been an unusual year, as the question set had changed, there were new questions areas and some institutions had not been included in the overall data set owing to the NUS boycott.
- City’s performance on the new questions had been weak, but having the commentary on those questions gave the Executive more detail to follow up on and to assist it when asking questions of Schools, e.g., about responsiveness of staff to student emails and requests on some programmes.
- The Cass programme results had been unexpected and, due to large cohort sizes, had impacted significantly on the overall institutional results. In other Schools, concerns had been raised in-year or by the cohorts’ second year Your Voice results, as for example in Journalism and Economics.
- The Education & Student Strategy, which Council had approved in July, included institutional plans and actions to improve student satisfaction. In addition School Strategic Plans included high-level actions to achieve the new student satisfaction KPI measured by NSS.
- The President and Deputy President & Provost were now emphasising to Schools, among other things, the importance of peer reviews of teaching in improving student satisfaction and pressing for universal engagement of academic staff in educational Continuing Professional Development.
- In Cass, the results reflected the fragility of Cass undergraduate programmes which had increased with the significant expansion in student numbers. This expansion had occurred without a corresponding rebalancing of resources (e.g., professional services staff) to support those larger undergraduate intakes. The Dean was encouraging academic staff to learn from the example of leading Business Schools which ran large undergraduate programmes, such as Berkeley and NYU. She had appointed new leadership for the undergraduate programmes in Cass and had restructured the ‘Undergraduate Office’.
- In SHS, critical factors influencing a stronger outcome in the NSS had been effective staff student liaison committees, the use of School awards for programmes achieving the best NSS results, and the widespread adoption of peer review of teaching. A remarkably high NSS response rate had been achieved on some programmes.
- Students’ desire for more personal support was growing and provided the biggest long-term challenge for student satisfaction. Meeting student expectations required a consistent approach to the provision of undergraduate student contact from academic staff and programme administrators across the institution.
- The Executive and Deans were jointly taking vigorous action across City to address issues that had been identified by this year’s NSS results.
11. **Research & Enterprise Annual Report**

Council received the annual report which provided an overview of research & enterprise activities at City for the 2016/17 academic year. In discussion the following points were noted:

- The new format of the report was warmly welcomed by Council: this effectively drew together several reports previously provided to Council (e.g., Intellectual Property and Commercialisation) and provided a more coherent overview of the year’s activity and of how different aspects of research & enterprise linked together and overlapped. An example of this was the increasing significance of enterprise to the Research Excellence Framework’s (REF) assessment of impact. It would be helpful if future annual reports included an Executive Summary. **[Action]**

- Overall, the year had been very busy with the development and finalisation of the *Research & Enterprise Supporting Strategy* that supported the *Vision & Strategy 2026 (V&S26)* and the finalisation of a restructured Research & Enterprise Office. **[Action]**

- 2017/18 would see finalisation of a detailed Research & Enterprise Implementation Plan which would focus on priorities within the supporting strategy: academic staff planning, research grant income, impact and enterprise. The Implementation Plan would be presented to Council in due course. **[Action]**

- Each of the five Schools had been working on detailed academic staffing plans to support the KPI target. Overall the new School plans outlined a trajectory for achieving an institutional target of at least 60% in 2021. **[Action]**

- A range of support measures and actions were being developed in the Implementation Plan to increase research grant income which had been identified as a priority in the Strategy. Key actions were to increase the numbers of academic staff applying for grants, develop City’s capacity to make large grant applications as part of consortia and diversify the funding sources applied to. **[Action]**

- City’s research standing would be critical to its success in future years. It would therefore be important that City’s internal ARQM measures were more robust in future than they had proved to be prior to the externally validated REF 2014. Planning for the next REF should be included as a major item for the Council’s Feb 2018 Away Day. **[Action]**

12. **Doctoral Student Issues at City**

Council received the first report on doctoral student issues at City, prepared by the Dean of the Graduate School. In discussion the following points were noted:

- Issues affecting doctoral students at City had been raised at one of the termly meetings between the Chair of Council and students. It had been agreed then that it would be helpful for Council to receive a paper that gave an overview of issues affecting doctoral students at City. **[Action]**

- The paper provided a view of City’s position five years after the creation of the City Graduate School and as the VP (R&E) was leading a review of support for doctoral students at City, which was expected to conclude in early 2018. **[Action]**

- City aimed to increase its current number of doctoral students, but also to ensure that quality was maintained. This would have an impact on City’s REF outcome and its applications to join Doctoral Training Partnerships. **[Action]**

- Although there was study space on campus for doctoral students, there was no single area that was a focus for all doctoral students. Moreover, communications about such facilities needed to improve as not all doctoral
students arrived at the same time. There needed to be key trigger points for communications to all new students.

- Serious consideration should be given to mental health issues and how students were supported. Council would welcome a presentation in due course on the support given to students on mental health issues. [Action]
- Contractual issues regarding “research students who teach” were being discussed with the UCU and with the Students Union. City had an absolute need not to jeopardise City’s UKBA “highly trusted status” in relation to Tier 4 students. This meant that the university needed to monitor and cap the working hours of Tier 4 students. City believed this could only be done through issuing Unitems contracts to such students when they undertook teaching. For other ‘research students who teach’ it would be possible to issue contracts as Graduate Teaching Assistants that were closely modelled on existing contracts for Visiting Lecturers at City.
- Discussions on these issues with UCU and the Students Union were ongoing. Discussion also embraced a third issue, namely whether there was a case for City to depart from standard sector practice in relation to the award of research studentships which carried with them an obligation to teach in return for a set level of stipend. City was awaiting further information on alternative arrangements that UCU and the Students Union believed had been adopted elsewhere.

Decision
Council agreed that there should be an annual report to Council a Doctoral Students at City.

Council considered a report on UoL benefits realisation for City, following its first full year of membership and in discussion the following points were noted:
- Website traffic reports from September 2016 to September 2017 showed that www.london.ac.uk was the top referrer (excluding search engines) for site clicks to City’s website and was ranked much higher than paid websites. During the first year of membership, traffic from the UoL website to City’s resulted in 251 visitors clicking the “apply” button on postgraduate course pages.
- Joining UoL had enriched the student experience. City students benefitted from the use of many of the social facilities provided by UoL, such as Student Central and the sports facilities and clubs (e.g. the prestigious Boat Club). Another major benefit was City’s students’ access to UoL accommodation.
- UoL membership also provided an opportunity to create a sense of pride and community internally amongst academic staff, professional service staff and students.
- It was clear that benefits of joining UoL had far outweighed the very modest cost.

14. Remuneration Committee Verbal Annual Report
Council received a verbal report from the Chair of Remuneration Committee (RemCo) which summarised activities of the committee since the last Annual Report was provided in October 2016. In discussion the following points were noted:
- RemCo had met three times in 2016/17 to consider the remuneration and policies relating to the remuneration of senior staff. RemCo also considered progress on equality and diversity issues, including City’s successful application for an Athena SWAN bronze award.
RemCo had considered a first draft Annual Diversity Report; a draft Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, and progress reports on actions to follow up on the Equal Pay Audit including an ongoing review of Responsibility Allowances. RemCo would receive at its next meeting a briefing on disability issues at City.

RemCo had agreed a basket of indicators for the Performance Related Remuneration Scheme, in so far as it applied to Senior Staff, but had not agreed a forward value of one indicator; and had discussed a Guidance Note on remuneration that might serve as a protocol for RemCo to follow when members of staff withdrew from the USS.

RemCo had discussed the Terms of Reference for a Professorial Pay Review in Cass (not yet agreed); and had also received briefing on sectoral practice in relation to the transparency of the remuneration of the Heads of Institution in HEIs and of senior staff.

The sector was in transition, with a growing public interest and desire for more transparency in relation to senior pay and reward and this had affected the way RemCo carried out its business. It was relatively unusual and sector-leading that City’s RemCo had an independent chair and that the Head of Institution was not a member of the Committee. Moving forward RemCo was preparing to more clearly justify its decisions in relation to pay and reward of senior staff.

**Part Four – Information**

15. **Minutes for Note**
15.1 Remuneration Committee, 8th June 2017
15.2 SIPCo, 13th September 2017
15.3 Audit and Risk Committee, 18th September 2017

16. **FOI Review**
Council agreed that no changes were required.

17. **Date of Next Meeting**
Friday 17th November 2017.

*On the evening of the 16th November 2017 (6-9pm) there will be a Plenary Dinner at “The Kitchen” Cass Business School, which all Council Members were expected to attend to receive Prevent training.*

**Part Five – Short Meeting of Independent Members**

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

Rob Woodward
Chair of Council
October 2017