COUNCIL MINUTES
MEETING HELD ON 5th OCTOBER 2018

Members

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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)
Mr Kevin Gibbons Director of Property and Facilities for Item 13
Professor Andrew Jones Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) (VP (R&E))
Dr William Jordan College Secretary
Ms Sarah Lawton Governance Administrator
Professor Stanton Newman Vice-President (International) (VP (I))
Professor Zoe Radnor Vice-President (Strategy & Planning) (VP (S&P))

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 6th July 2018 were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**
   Council noted the table of actions arising from past meetings.

   **Matter Arising 2: USS and Industrial Action**
   A 60 day consultation by the USS Trustee with USS scheme members had commenced and related to the proposals for implementing the default cost-sharing option which was triggered by the USS 2017 Valuation. (*Details can be found at item 20.1.*)
Subsequently, a consultation by UUK of all USS employers which related to the findings of the first report of the Joint Expert Panel published in September had also commenced. The CUC had written to all Chairs to suggest that they take the views of their governing bodies on the consultation questions and to this end, the Chair asked Governance to organise a teleconference to discuss a draft City response. **[Action]**

A second report by the Joint Expert Panel would consider long-term issues relating to the USS including issues of scheme design.

In discussion it was noted that: the attitude of the USS Trustee to the JEP proposals would be an important factor in the determination of the way forward; the nature of the ‘increased risk’ that employers were asked to bear under the JEP proposals would need further clarification in due course; City would need to be prepared for a range of possible outcomes to the consultation exercises; and that it would be helpful for City both to consider how its ‘pension offer’ (through the USS and other schemes) formed part of its total remuneration offer to staff, and also to understand fully its rights and obligations under the USS.

The College Secretary would give consideration to which Council Committee would be best placed to undertake any necessary further consideration of these issues. **[Action]**

**Matter Arising 3: Research Students Who Teach**

All CityGgraduate Teaching Assistants would be employed on consistent provisions (i.e. a City contract of employment) for the current academic year. The HR Director noted that in developing a more coherent contracting process it had been discovered that there were many differing approaches across City, so the next year would constitute a transitional period, during which consistency would be established across the institution.

4. **Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

5. **Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair**

The Chair welcomed Professor Zoe Radnor, newly appointed Vice-President, Strategy & Planning, to her first meeting as a regular Council attendee.

The Office for Students (OfS) had accepted City’s application to be included on the register of English higher education providers. *(Item 19.1)*

The OfS, in response to a request from the Chair of Council, had acknowledged the need to amend its Privacy Notice. The revised wording of the OfS Privacy Notice made clear that personal data would be shared with other organisations, “in circumstances that arise through our regulation of providers’ and “where we are required to do so in order to perform our functions or where otherwise permitted by law.” *(Item 19.2)*

The Chair welcomed the “Opportunities for Engagement for Independent Council Members” paper *(Item 22)*. The Governance Team would ensure that Cass events were included in the next iteration of the paper. **[Action]**

The Chair would attend the forthcoming CUC Autumn Plenary event and report back at the next meeting. **[Action]**

6. **Council Calendar**

Council noted the calendar. The current thinking was to explore internationalisation at the November Plenary Dinner but any suggestions for topics to be covered at dinner or at the February Away Day should be sent to the Chair. **[Action]**
7. President’s Report

The President highlighted several items from his report. In discussion the following points were noted:

- *Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide*: City was starting to move beyond last year’s very unwelcome drop in the satisfaction and employability of its undergraduate students with an increase of seven places in the tables published on 23rd September.

- *Times Higher Education World University Rankings*: City had moved up five places. The rise could be attributed to a significant improvement in City’s citation scores arising from increased use of the CRO repository for research outputs.

- Professor Zoe Radnor, previously Dean of the School of Business at the University of Leicester, had joined City as Vice-President (Strategy & Planning) on 24th September.

- Professor Andrew Stockley, previously Executive Dean of Law at the University of Auckland would join City on 19th November as Dean of the City Law School.

- City had been shortlisted for three Times Higher Education awards; for Dr Liza Schuster’s research on returned Afghan asylum seekers; City’s Widening Participation and Outreach Team’s City Tutoring programme; and the work of our City Starters team.

- City’s UKVI Tier 2 (staff) and Tier 4 (students) visa processes were audited in July and, although the report is yet to be received, indications were that it had proceeded satisfactorily. The most recent internal report on City’s UKVI compliance indicated that the Tier 4 visa refusal rate had reduced to 0.5% from over 3% two years ago.

- The President and colleagues from the Executive Team would be visiting School and Professional Service meetings throughout the year to discuss City’s V&S26 as City had entered the third year of its implementation, with the first visit in the School of Health Sciences on 11th October.

- The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report on international students had been published. International students would remain within the national net migration target but on a positive note, the MAC made an exceptionally strong case for the importance of international students to the UK and recommended actions that would present the UK in a more welcoming light to such students.

- Council congratulated City’s Organisational Development team who had won the Human Resources/Learning & Development Team of the Year 2018 at the CIPD People Management Awards.

8. Students’ Union Report

The Students’ Union (SU) President highlighted items from her report which provided an update on the implementation of the Student Union’s Vision 2020. The new SU President set out the priorities of the incoming team of student sabbatical officers. In discussion the following points were made:

- Welcome Week 2018 had been a great success and included nearly 100 activities and events over a two-week period.

- The most common concern raised by students during Welcome Week had been locating buildings and rooms and to this end the SU President would liaise with the Director of IT to discuss making revisions to the CityNav App. [Action]

- The Union was in the process of running its Autumn Elections for positions on the SU Executive Committee and Student Council, and for NUS Conference delegate positions.
• The SU’s annual survey had received 751 responses and a report with recommendations for improvement would be considered at the next Board of Trustees meeting.
• Student societies continued to be the main way that the Union engaged students across City with 84 societies at the start of this academic year. The ambition was to have 125 societies by the end of 2018/19.
• In response to the NSS question 26, “The SU effectively represents students’ academic interests”, City’s SU had seen a massive improvement over the past 12 months, achieving its KPI to be in the top quartile of Students’ Unions in London.

Part Three – Major Items for Discussion or Decision

9. Finance

9.1 Financial Performance Report Year End 31st July 2018
Council received a verbal update from the CFO on the Financial Performance Report and in discussion the following points were noted:
• The draft report indicated that City’s total income was on target, at £241M. The KPI to deliver a retained surplus of approx. 2 to 3% should be exceeded.
• For the coming year, City’s recruitment of home and international undergraduate students was on track.
• The final Financial Statements 2017/18 would be presented to Audit and Risk Committee in November prior to Council for approval. [Action]

9.2 Preparation of the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements
Council considered a proposal regarding the preparation of the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements and in discussion the following points were noted:
• This year it was proposed to extend the Strategic Report section of the Annual Report and Financial Statements to present a stronger and clearer narrative about City’s achievements. This would ensure that City met statutory reporting requirements and would also allow for the introduction of some elements of Integrated Reporting.
• The proposed approach had already received endorsement by ExCo and Audit and Risk Committee.
• Council were happy with the proposed approach to the preparation of the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

9.3 Finance and Student Number Verbal Update 2018/19
Council received a verbal update from the Deputy President and Provost on student numbers for 2018/19 noting that City had achieved its growth target for student enrolments again this year despite exceptionally strong competition.

9.4 Investment Policy Annual Review
Council considered the Investment Policy paper and in discussion Council noted the highlighted revisions which followed the annual review of the policy, which had been undertaken in partnership with City’s Investment Managers, UBS.
Decision
Council approved the revised Investment Policy.

10. NSS 2018 Results
Council received a report on the 2018 NSS results and in discussion the following points were noted:
• In the context of a national drop in overall student satisfaction of 1% across all UK universities City had maintained its overall student satisfaction score of 82%, which was unchanged from 2017. This compared with a drop in overall
satisfaction across all London universities of 1.7%. City’s participation rate was 78%, higher than the national average and higher than City’s rate in 2017.

- Welcome improvements included a rise of 6.4% in satisfaction for the Students’ Union which was the result of hard work by City’s Student Union.
- There had been disappointing results in some disciplines, particularly within SMCSE and SASS, which would be addressed in action planning for NSS 2019.
- The impact of industrial action had clearly been felt both in Sociology and Midwifery but did not seem to have impacted on results in other areas. On a positive note, the fact that there had not been a bigger impact from the strike action was testament to leadership and staff commitment in many areas and was to be commended.
- Work undertaken to improve marking and assessment had paid off, with an increase in satisfaction (relating to fairness) of 6%.

11. Estates Matters

11.1 Library Expansion Revised Business Case
Council considered the revised business case for the Library Expansion Project which was endorsed by SIPCo at its meeting in September.

*This item in continued in Section B of the Minutes, Closed Business.*

11.2 Strategic Estates Projects Progress Report
Council noted the progress report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- Designers appointed for the main Centenary replacement feasibility work had proposed a dramatic and compelling concept for the future development of the western main campus. The PAF Director anticipated being able to report further on what will be required to implement the scheme in early 2019.
- Sebastian Street works were now well above ground, with the structure advancing to upper floors. Major design work was substantially complete and the team were planning a “topping out” event with Marketing colleagues for the New Year. Commercial discussions were underway with BAM in relation to a draft Final Account and accurate final figures should be available in early 2019.
- The Test Cells Modernisation Project continued to prove challenging. Based on issuing tenders out at the end of September an operational handover of June/July 2019 could be supported, subject to contractor confirmation. An update should be available early next year.
- A project to consider essential priority works for Cass at Bunhill Row would commence this autumn, for potential implementation from summer 2019, subject to logistical constraints. There were many options for the longer term future of the Cass Estate under consideration but current thinking was based around a possible two-site approach. Options should be narrowed down by spring 2019.

12. Research & Enterprise

12.1 Research & Enterprise Annual Report
Council received the Research & Enterprise (R&E) report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The report, which was warmly welcomed by Council, gave an overview of progress in relation to City’s R&E supporting strategy and overall provided evidence that City had made significant progress in the first year of the new R&E Strategy in its ongoing journey to become a more research intensive and innovative institution in line with V&S2026.
- The key headline was that City continued to make progress towards the goal of achieving at least 60% of total academic staff producing 3 and 4 star research outputs by 2021 (KPI 4 in the V&S26). The ARQM for the 2017/18
The academic year indicated a continued increase in line with the planned milestone to 50% from 48% in the preceding year and even more encouraging was an increase in the proportion of total academic staff producing 4 star outputs by 5% to 25% - exceeding the milestone by 1%).

- Thorough the Implementation Plan much enabling work was taking place including work to improve citations of City's research outputs. Current indications from reports during the year showed increased usage of City Research Online (CRO) with a growing proportion of journal articles available in full text. This was a key factor and likely to drive up citation impact.

- During 2017/18, City had established or invested in the expansion of four interdisciplinary centres, in data science, healthcare innovation, food policy and gender and sexuality. A fifth centre on "violence and society" led by the current UNESCO Chair in Gender Studies, who had been appointed to a Chair at City, would be transplanted with the postholder from Lancaster University. This appointment was expected to have an important 'halo' effect in attracting undergraduate students to study sociology at City in future years.

- Whilst research grants and contract income had remained level, application activity had increased significantly and better support was in place.

- Although the final data were unavailable, indicators pointed towards good progress in relation to PhD completions, citations, some elements of enterprise (commercialisation) and impact.

- The report would be developed, next year, to include a more systematic mapping of City's engagement, as a business-facing institution, with big businesses. Further action planned for the year ahead included greater engagement with a range of Research Councils and further diversification of the sources of research funding.

- Looking to future scheduling of this report, the VP (R&E) suggested that owing to the lack of availability of some of the data at this time of year, this might be better scheduled for a Council meeting later in the academic year. [Action]

- Any independent member of Council interested in becoming a School Link for the Graduate School should contact the Chair. [Action]

12.2 Spin-out Company Request for Approval

Council considered an abridged case for the creation of a new Spin-out company, “Behavioural Fusion Ltd” following review of the full business case by City’s Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Board and the abridged case by ExCo. In discussion the following points were noted:

- This was the first proposed spin-out company to be developed at City for at least 6 years. Current governance arrangements would need to be followed for approving this proposed company. New proposals for spin-out companies under development, however, might be considered first by SIPCo on behalf of Council prior to approval by the Chair of Council; and the Ordinances revised to enable that process. [Action]

- Future proposals for spin-out companies should receive fuller consideration by the relevant Committees/Boards at City to develop a robust and full business case; and the engagement of staff at City with business acumen. It might be helpful to engage the expertise that existed in Cass around entrepreneurship in developing future proposals for spin-out companies.

- Establishing a new spin-out company carried reputational risk for City as well as in many cases a degree of financial risk; and so reputational issues too should standardly be considered through a number of stages of the process including SipCo.

- The present proposal would require further development before it could be considered for approval by the Chair of Council: the value that would be contributed by City to the proposed company, through the free use of rooms and the investment of staff time, should be calculated and the proposed return
to City for this investment should also be further considered. A 10% equity stake, as proposed in the paper, might be appropriate, but a gain-share arrangement was also worth consideration. [Action]

- One possible way forward might be for one or more of the five academics leading the proposed spin-out company to present their proposals to a meeting of SIPCo for further consideration. [Action]

13. Internationalisation Report
Council received the Internationalisation Report and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The presentation outlined the strategic aims of City’s Internationalisation Strategy including its governance structure, and work on the internationalisation of the curriculum. This was designed to give students an international experience whilst studying at City; create an inclusive environment of international students and to promote global perspectives and opportunities for learning in a global context for all students.

- The Internationalisation agenda included: increasing global brand visibility and reputation; improving City’s position in the global rankings; developing an international university community; preparing students better for a globalised world and increasing employability; and having a greater impact on global issues and policy formulation.

- Key activities in 2017/18 had included City’s first overseas delegation visit in South East Asia (Singapore and Malaysia) in May 2018. The delegation was led by the President and VP(I) and the key event at the centre of the visit was “Going Global”, the British Council’s annual conference for leaders in international HE held in Kuala Lumpur.

- A smaller delegation, led by the VP(I), along with representatives from SASS and SMCSE, had visited the University of Trento in Italy in response to an approach from the University of Trento and as part of the development of City’s emerging post-Brexit Europe Strategy. A Brexit Working Group had been established a year ago to address how City would respond to, and cater for, its students depending on the effects of Brexit.

- Partnerships with key partners had been enhanced by close collaboration with universities in the WC2 Network. The WC2 Symposium held in Toronto in August 2018 was attended by 200 staff and postgraduate students from 11 universities.

- The Chair thanked the VP(I) for his report and noted that Internationalisation would be the focus of the November Council Plenary Dinner.

Ms Claire Priestley joined the meeting.

14. IT Report
Council received a presentation from the Director of IT and in discussion the following points were noted:

- City’s IT department had successfully delivered several projects for the Modernising Administration for Students programme (MAfS), including the Personal Tutorial Records Tool project which had been shortlisted for a Times Higher Leadership & Management Award in summer 2018.

- The IT department had also prepared City for the implementation of GDPR.

- The launch of the PhishMe tool at City allowed users to report a potential cyber-attack with one click. 150-200 suspicious emails were reported each month.

- The Staff Survey had demonstrated a 15% improvement, among IT staff, in confidence in IT’s senior leadership.

- Council thanked the Director of IT for the informative update.

Ms Claire Priestley left the meeting.

Dr Christine Rajah joined the meeting.
15. **Staff Mental Health**

Council received a report on Staff Mental Health and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The paper followed two papers provided to Council earlier this year about staff and student wellbeing and student mental health. The paper focussed on staff mental health whilst recognising the importance of taking a whole institutional approach to mental wellbeing.
- The provision of a service to support staff wellbeing, including mental health, was considered to be good. Atypically for the sector, City provided a part-time, on-site Staff Counselling Service.
- In the HE sector, sickness data was notoriously difficult to collect, owing to the varied nature of working patterns. However the data from UCEA indicated that City had 3.8 sick days per person per annum, which was comparatively low, with 10% citing mental health as the reason for absence. Dr Rajah suggested that one reason for the low rate was the excellent facilities to address staff mental health issues at City.
- The Government had adopted the recommendations of an independent report, “Thriving at Work”, on mental health at work, which set out a framework for managing the impact of mental health on employment. The report identified the responsibility of employers in reducing the impact of mental health on employees. City had undertaken a gap analysis of its compliance with the standards for employers set out in the report. This confirmed that City was broadly compliant with both the core and enhanced standards.
- City was not complacent however, and had established a diverse and multidisciplinary Working Group chaired by the Deputy President & Provost to develop City’s provision further.
- The Working Group planned to run a sector-wide Thriving at Work event to showcase best practice both at City and elsewhere, to engage and inform key stakeholders as an indicator of City’s visible commitment to delivering excellent mental health services and support to both its staff and students. Priorities for further action identified by the Group were leadership, mental health first aid and on-line resources.
- The HR Director noted that Dr Rajah would be retiring at the end of the year and that in future the occupational health provision currently provided in-house would be contracted out. The Staff Counselling Service would remain in-house.
- The Chair, on behalf of Council, thanked Dr Rajah for over 30 years of service to City and wished her a happy retirement.

*Dr Christine Rajah left the meeting.*

16. **DPO report on GDPR Implementation**

Council noted the report which provided an update on progress with implementation of GDPR since the new regulations came into force on 25th May 2018.

**Part Four – Information**

17. **Minutes for Note**

17.1 Senate, 11th July 2018
17.2 SIPCo, 13th September 2018

18. **Modernising Administration for Students**

Council noted the annual report to SIPCo.

19. **Office for Students**

19.1 **OfS Registration Decision**

Council noted the decision.
19.2 OfS Privacy Notice
Council noted the exchange of correspondence with OfS relating to the OfS Privacy Notice.

19.3 OfS Assurance Review Outcome
Council noted the letter from OfS.

USS Consultation Exercises

20.1 USS Pension Reform
Council noted the USS consultation with scheme members on proposals for implementing the default cost-sharing option triggered by the USS 2017 Valuation.

20.2 Report of the Joint Expert Panel
Council noted the proposed UUK consultation with HEIs about the interim conclusions of the Joint Expert Panel report on the USS 2017 Valuation.

21. Student Appeals/Cases Annual Report
Council noted the report.

22. Opportunities for Further Engagement with City for Independent Members
Council noted the calendar of forthcoming meetings and events.

23. FOI Review
Council agreed that no changes were required.

24. Date of Next Meeting
Friday 23rd November 2018 (Plenary Dinner Thursday 22nd November)

Part Five – Meeting of Independent Members
There was a meeting of the Independent Members, which was not minuted.

Julia Palca
Chair of Council
October 2018
11.1B Library Expansion Revised Business Case

Council considered the revised business case for the Library Expansion Project which had been endorsed by SIPCo at its meeting in September and in discussion the following points were noted:

- The case for capital investment of £13.5M to expand City’s library by summer 2020 had been approved by Council in March 2018. During the design competition in spring 2018, however, it had become apparent that a more substantial reworking of Level 7 could yield a better way forward. The new proposal was for an elliptical reading room at Level 7.
- The revised scheme would deliver an increase of 97 extra study spaces over and above that approved in March 2018 (716 total compared to 619) at an additional cost of £3.18M. The opportunity was also being taken to incorporate £2.7M of budgeted environmental and other library improvements in the project, bringing the consolidated cost to £19.03M, for an unchanged delivery date of the start of the 2020 academic year.
- Council noted that the revised scheme was affordable given the developments reported in Item 13, “Strategic Estates Project Progress Report”. Council also noted the circa £3M expected adverse variance relating to Sebastian Street reported in that paper.
- Council stressed the importance of minimising disruption to students, noting many of those students would not enjoy the benefits of the outcome of the works being undertaken. At a future meeting, the Director of PAF and the Director of Library Services would present a paper to update Council on the actions being taken and the initiatives in place to limit disruption to students.

[Action]

Decision

Council approved the revised Library Expansion Business case, noting that the project would directly enhance the student experience and further support the aims of City’s staff.

Julia Palca
Chair of Council
October 2018