

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Thursday, 6 July 2023

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Author:	Ms Alison Jones, University Secretary, 19 July 2023
Present:	Mr Jonathan Thornton (Chair), Mr Ajaz Ahmed, Mr Bernard Ainsworth, Miss Millie Avery, Ms Sally Baines, Mr Robert Cox, Professor Bob Cryan, Mr Mark Fisher, Professor Jessica Malay, Mrs Clare Morrow, Mr Krish Pilicudale, Baroness Kathryn Pinnock, Professor Isobel Pollock-Hulf, Professor Tim Thornton
In attendance:	Dr Laura Chambers, Ms Lydia Devenny, Professor Paul Harrison (for item 3), Mr Tim Hosker (for items 13 and 14), Ms Alison Jones, Mr Taha Khan, Professor Jane Owen-Lynch
Apologies:	Professor Hazel Bryan, Mr Rhys Davies, Mrs Virginia Lloyd

PRELIMINARY ITEMS

PAPER REFERENCE

The Chair welcomed Mr Taha Khan, the new Huddersfield Students' Union (HSU) President, and Professor Paul Harrison, Dean of Computing and Engineering, to the meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 The Chair declared an interest in item 8 (appraisal of the Chair within the University Secretary's report).

2. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MEMBER OF UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

UC_2023_07_06_P2

2.1 The University Secretary reminded members that there had been a need to appoint a member to University Council with specific expertise in Human Resources, following the departure of Ms Tonya Magennis in October 2022. Following an open call for interested individuals, one candidate with a high level of expertise had been invited to meet with the Chair of Council, Vice-Chancellor, and University Secretary. This appointment had been considered and recommended for approval by Governance and Membership Committee.

2.2 Members resolved to **approve** the following appointment with immediate effect for an initial three-year term of office:

- the appointment of **Ms Sally Baines** to University Council, including as an external member of Audit Committee, Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee and Senior Advisory Committee.

Ms Sally Baines joined the meeting.

3. MAJOR ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

School of Computing and Engineering – Plans for Growth

Presentation

3.1 The Chair introduced the item, highlighting that members had been provided with a summary of key data sets outlining the School's performance against the various elements of the University Strategy Map.

The summary was designed to provide Council members with contextual information about the School, and would be produced for the other Schools. Members agreed that the summary had been helpful (particularly the SWOT analysis), and the Chair asked for any further detailed feedback to be sent to the University Secretary.

3.2 The Dean of Computing and Engineering presented on plans for development and growth in order to achieve the key performance indicators as detailed on the University Strategy Map. These included:

- People First: reviewing the existing staff culture within the School to build confidence and grow ambition.
- Inspiring: [REDACTED]
- Innovative: increasing research income and expenditure, developing additional knowledge transfer partnerships (which also created new placement opportunities for students), reviewing research centres within the School, and growing the business development team.
- International [REDACTED].
- Financial Sustainability/Growth and Efficiency: increasing and diversifying income streams, particularly via international and distance learning recruitment.
- These plans were supported by a SWOT analysis detailing the current strengths and weaknesses of the School, as well as opportunities for growth and potential threats.
- A range of cross-School initiatives to support these plans were also outlined, such as rationalising the existing curriculum portfolio.

3.3 Council members thanked the Dean for the comprehensive overview, and queried what steps had been taken to address the gender balance within the School as part of its drive towards cultural change. The Dean reported that the School had created (and appointed) a new Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, whose role was to advise on policies around staff and student recruitment and staff progression. The proportion of female staff within the School had increased following recent recruitment rounds, and further initiatives were in place to add with career progression opportunities. It was noted that there was a UK-wide challenge in promoting STEM subjects to women and girls, and much work had been done (for example, via the Royal Society) to market and promote these subjects to these groups.

3.4 The Dean briefly summarised plans for growth within several target subjects.* [REDACTED]

It was noted that the School did not currently offer apprenticeships due to the resources required, but retained a watching brief on this area for potential growth.

3.5 [REDACTED]



The Vice-Chancellor and Chair of University Council thanked the Dean of Computing and Engineering for his insightful presentation. The Dean the meeting at this point.

4. MINUTES

UC_2023_07_06_P4

4.1 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023, and associated confidential supplement, be accepted as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising.

6. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

6.1 The Chair had no items of business to raise.

7. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

Presentation

7.1 The Vice-Chancellor updated members on a wide range of news from across the University, including:

- The 2023 edition of QS World University Ranking by Subject showed several improvements across many subjects, including Performing Arts which was ranked 27th globally and 9th in the United Kingdom.
- The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings had recognised the University's world-leading achievements in reducing inequality, promoting a peaceful and inclusive society, addressing sustainability issues, providing inclusive and quality education for all, and providing decent work and economic growth.
- Meghna Asthna, an alumna of Mechanical Engineering BEng (Hons), has been recognised as an India UK Achiever for her role in using science to create a positive social impact. The awards recognised and celebrated the work of 75 Indian students and alumni who had pursued a British programme of study, and marked the 75th anniversary of India's independence.
- The Huddersfield Business School has achieved accreditation from AACSB International.
- The latest HESA results showed that the University maintained its outstanding reputation for investing in the quality and qualifications of its staff.
- Dr Andrew Bland has won University Educator of the Year from the Student Nursing Times Awards 2023 for his innovative use of simulation as a learning strategy in undergraduate nursing.
- The 3M Buckley Innovation Centre (3M BIC) reached its 10-year milestone, having supported over 500 businesses worldwide.
- A project led by researchers at the University of Huddersfield, which used ancient DNA to rewrite the history of the Orkney islands, was awarded Research Project of the Year 2023 by *Current Archaeology* magazine.
- Professor Brigid Featherstone and Professor Nigel Parton had been named in the Top Contributors to Social Work Journal Scholarship in the world.

- The Smart Rolling Stock Maintenance Research Facility (SRSMRF) was on show to industry professionals at a seminar to celebrate the opening of the new facility. Located inside the Institute of Railway Research (IRR), the SRSMRF is part of a £1.8 million project to investigate how technology and data analysis can improve the efficiency and reliability of how the UK's railway rolling stock is maintained.
- 25 new PhD scholarships were now available from the University to support research opportunities in science, engineering, and the digital economy.
- The University was awarded £1.25 million from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) over five years in an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) to support partners from all sectors to apply social sciences knowledge to societal challenges.
- Scientists at the University had been studying the atmospheric conditions on Mars as part of an international research project, helping to pave the way for the first manned mission to Mars.
- The University's Global Disaster Resilience Centre (GDRC) was invited to take part in the 'High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030', at the United Nations General Assembly, which took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
- The President of the Institution for Mechanical Engineers visited the University and met the president of the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), the University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Bob Cryan. Every year the president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers visits regions across the UK to witness the achievements of firms and universities in the engineering field, and this year West Yorkshire was chosen as the host location.
- The construction of the Daphne Steele Building is under way following a ground-breaking ceremony attended by Health Education England's Chief Nurse Mark Radford, Cllr Graham Turner of Kirklees Council, and the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin.
- The Jo Cox More In Common Centre officially opened in March, attended by Jo's sister Kim Leadbeater MP, her parents Jean and Gordon Leadbeater, David Lammy MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs), and the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin.
- University Valli Opticians had raised awareness of children's eye health in the region with a new research study that included offering free vision screening for over 1,000 primary school children in Kirklees.
- HRH Princess Anne had recently visited the University to give the opening address at the 92nd Textile Institute World Conference.

7.2 The Vice-Chancellor went on to brief members on recent staffing matters. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that recent industrial action by the University and College Union had not impacted on student graduations at the University of Huddersfield, and reported that the national pay dispute remained on-going.*

8. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

UC_2023_07_06_P8

8.1 The University Secretary briefed members on a range of governance matters which had been considered by the Governance and Membership Committee (GMC) at its meetings on 22 and 27 June 2023, including:

- An update on progress made on completing the actions identified in the governance action plan.
- Proposed changes to Council and Committee membership. If approved, the University Secretary would work with the Chair of Council to appoint new committee members as required, reporting back on these outcomes at the next Council meeting.
- A draft procedure for considering allegations of misconduct by members of University Council.
- The proposed schedule of governor engagement activities for 2023/24.
- Proposals for the annual appraisal of the Chair of Council.
- The outcome of the recent Huddersfield Students' Union (HSU) elections.

8.2 Council members considered the proposed membership changes, and resolved to **approve** the committee membership options as presented. Members noted that the proposals for the annual appraisal of the Chair (introduced in response to the recent external governance effectiveness report) were designed to be light-touch, with a focus on governance enhancement, and Council **approved** the procedure as outlined.

8.3 In response to member feedback, the University Secretary agreed to incorporate the following amendments into the proposed misconduct procedure:

- To widen the membership of the sub-committee to include non-GMC members.
- To include reference to interviewing other members and University staff as required.
- To provide an indicative timescale within which the investigation would be conducted and completed.
- To note that additional complications may arise where artificial intelligence is involved.

Subject to these amendments, University Council resolved to **approve** the procedure.

8.4 Further matters of business raised by the University Secretary included minor amendments to the Student Protection Plan (SPP), the outcome of a recent review of the Donations Policy (to which no changes were proposed), and the application of the University Seal since the last meeting. Members were informed that the Office for Students (OfS) required any changes to the SPP to be verified by the OfS. The SPP and Donations Policy were **approved** by University Council.

INSPIRING:

9. STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

UC_2023_07_06_P9

9.1 The HSU President updated members on a range of SU activities, including:

- The wide range of student engagement activity, including Varsity and other sports club activities.
- The outcomes of the annual Students' Union Awards.
- The high number of employability transcripts issued to students by the SU to recognise their volunteering contributions.

- Continued work on improving the student experience, including cost-of-living support and support for international students, and working closely with the University to articulate the 'Huddersfield' experience for students.

9.2 The outgoing HSU President thanked University Council for its support throughout the year. The Chair congratulated the HSU for its continued focus on enhancing the student experience and for its excellent Varsity result.

10. HUDDERSFIELD STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS 2023

UC_2023_07_06_P10
Presentation

10.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, informed Council that the latest set of National Student Survey results would be published on 10 August 2023, and highlighted that changes to the survey's methodology and question banks would make comparison with previous year's data challenging.

10.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, presented the latest set of results from the Huddersfield Student Survey, which surveyed first- and second-year students. These results had been used to inform teaching and learning action plans for the next academic year. Whilst overall satisfaction levels among second year students were lower than in 2021/22, it was noted that student satisfaction was down across the sector as a whole following the post-COVID-19 return to teaching on campus.

10.3 Members queried the impact of COVID-19 on the current student body, whose schooling had been affected by the pandemic. A range of additional activities and interventions had been introduced to aid the transition into university study for many of these students, and it was expected that these activities would remain in place for several years. Cost-of-living pressures remained the biggest issue for the majority of new students at the University.

10.4 Council members noted that the lower levels of overall satisfaction for students in the School of Human and Health Sciences were primarily the result of NHS placement issues which had been affected by the pandemic and NHS staff strike action. The University continued to work closely with community and health providers to mitigate the impact of this on students.

10.5 Members highlighted the overall response rate to the survey, and queried what steps could be taken to improve this. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, reported that new initiatives would be introduced next year to assist with engagement. The HSU President noted that there had been a similar decline in engagement with SU activities and surveys as students sought to address cost of living challenges and balance study with part-time work but confirmed that the SU would also be reflecting on strategies for improving student engagement, including by international students.

The Director of Estates and Facilities joined the meeting at this point.

GROWTH AND EFFICIENCY:

11. HOME AND INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS, ENROLMENTS AND RETENTION

UC_2023_07_06_P11
Presentation

11.1 University Council received an update on the latest applications, enrolments and retention figures for Home and International students from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The University would continue to monitor the impact of recent Government policy changes to visa entitlements for students and their dependents.

11.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor briefed members on Home undergraduate applications as of 3 July 2023

12. RISK MANAGEMENT AND STATEMENT OF RISK APPETITE

UC_2023_07_06_P12

12.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the statement of risk appetite that had been developed in response to the recent external review of governance effectiveness. The proposed statement provided a framework for describing the risk appetite for the University and was intended to aid business decision-making, particularly for those areas where the risk register and statement of risk appetite were not in alignment. The statement had been derived from the UK Government's own template, with the addition of a high-risk category to indicate high raw and residual risks.

12.2 The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the statement had been discussed extensively at the last meeting of the Committee, and confirmed that the minor recommendations made by members had been embedded into the version presented for Council.

12.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor informed members that the statement would be refreshed annually in parallel with the Corporate Risk Register following the institutional planning process. The regular risk management reports considered at each meeting of Audit Committee would also include consideration of how the statement was being used by the Senior Executive.

12.4 Council members commended the Executive for the comprehensive statement and resolved to **approve** the statement of risk appetite.

13. NATIONAL HEALTH INNOVATION CAMPUS (NHIC) UPDATE

UC_2023_07_06_P13
Presentation

13.1 The Director of Estates and Facilities presented an update on construction progress for the Daphne Steele building, which was on target for completion in September 2024. Planning permission had been received by the owners of Crown Point (next to the site) to convert the existing building into student accommodation.

13.2

[REDACTED]

13.3

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the recently published NHS Workforce Plan outlined the Government's plans for the expansion in medical and health training, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13.4

The Chair of Estates and Finance Committee confirmed that the proposals had been discussed at its last meeting, which had considered in depth the outlined costings, funding sources, potential partners, and plans for space utilisation. The Committee had recommended that the Executive review the final budget in order to include a contingency envelope to accommodate any potential for rising costs, and had requested that the revised proposals presented to University Council outlined how the space vacated on the Queensgate campus would be utilised.*

13.5

[REDACTED]

13.6

[REDACTED]

14. REVISED CAPITAL PLAN

UC_2023_07_06_P14

14.1

The Director of Estates and Facilities identified changes to the existing Capital Plan and highlighted a number of items that required approval.*

14.2

The Director of Estates and Facilities included a brief outline of the plans for the refurbishment of the Ramsden Building, which would provide additional space for the International Study Group and facilitate the relocation of the International Office to the same area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was clarified that existing support services for international students would continue to be situated within Student Central.

14.3

The Chair of Estates and Finance Committee confirmed that these matters had been considered at the recent meeting of the Committee, which had recommended approval.

14.4

University Council resolved to **approve** the budget requested within the revised Capital Plan.

The Director of Estates and Facilities left the meeting.

15. RE-APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

UC_2023_07_06_P15

- 15.1 The Director of Finance briefed members on the positive outcome of a recent external quality assessment of the University's internal auditors, Uniac, and the feedback received following an internal survey. In response to a member query, the Director of Finance outlined the steps taken by the University to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest as a named director of the company.
- 15.2 University Council resolved to **approve** the re-appointment of Uniac as the University's internal audit service, as recommended by Audit Committee.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

16. ANNUAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

UC_2023_07_06_P16

- 16.1 The Director of Finance presented the proposed budget for 2023/24, noting that a revised budget would be considered in November prior to submission to the OfS in December.*
- 16.2 Council members also received the indicative forecast for 2027-28. The Chair of Estates and Finance Committee reported that this report and associated matters such as the impact of depreciation had been discussed in detail at the last meeting of the Committee, which had recommended approval.
- 16.3 University Council resolved to **approve** the annual revenue and capital budget.

17. UNIVERSITY SUBSIDIARIES AND AUDIT EXEMPTION

UC_2023_03_23_P17

- 17.1 The Director of Finance outlined the rationale for the audit exemption for the University's two subsidiaries and confirmed that the accounts of these two companies (HEIC Ltd and UHEL) would still be presented annually to Audit Committee and Estates and Finance Committee. The Chair of Audit Committee reported that this matter had been discussed in detail, and the Committee had recommended approval.
- 17.2 University Council resolved to **approve** the audit exemption for 3M BIC and UHEL.

PEOPLE FIRST:

18. FINANCIAL POSITION AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

UC_2023_07_06_P18

- 18.1 Council members received an update on staffing implications following the recent round of Schools and Services budget meetings from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. [REDACTED]

19. AMENDMENT TO PEOPLE FIRST ELEMENT OF THE STRATEGY MAP UC_2023_07_06_P19

19.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor outlined the rationale for the proposed amendments to two of the People First KPIs on the Strategy Map, explaining that the previous provider of the staff satisfaction measure no longer existed, thereby requiring an alternative. University Council resolved to **approve** the proposed amendments.

20. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT UC_2023_07_06_P20

20.1 Members noted the annual Health and Safety Report that had also been considered at the June meeting of Audit Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS:

21. REVISED SCHEME OF DELEGATION UC_2023_07_06_P21

21.1 The University Secretary introduced the revised Scheme of Delegation, noting that the revision of the existing Scheme had arisen as an action in the last external review of governance effectiveness. The proposed Scheme and associated appendices had been considered by the Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Audit Committee, Estates and Finance Committee, and Governance and Membership Committee, and further amendments had been made following discussions at those meetings.

21.2 Members highlighted that section 5.8 of the Scheme (appointment of University insurers) required review. The Chair of Audit Committee confirmed that this had been discussed at the Committee, and the University Secretary agreed to incorporate this amendment into the final Scheme.

21.3 University Council resolved to **approve** the Scheme and its appendices, subject to this amendment. The University Secretary informed members that revisions to Council Committee terms of reference would be required following this approval, and these would be completed over the summer before being brought back for approval by the respective committees.

22. COMMITTEE MINUTES UC_2023_07_06_P22

22.1 The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

- Audit, 8 June 2023 – it was noted that the final Education and Skills and Funding Agency letter had not yet been received. The Committee had also discussed potential risks around artificial intelligence within higher education, and in response, the Vice-Chancellor proposed incorporating a session on this into the agenda at the next University Council Strategy Day.
- Estates and Finance Committee, 13 June 2023;
- Governance and Membership Committee, 22 and 27 June 2023;
- A summary of the Senate meeting held on 14 June 2023.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23.1 Members noted that it was the last University Council meeting for Miss Millie Avery, out-going SU President, and wished her success in her future endeavours.

- 23.2** The Chair also expressed his thanks to Mrs Virginia Lloyd *in absentia* for her long service and contribution to the work of University Council over several years.
- 23.3** The Chair asked members to provide feedback on the presentation from the Dean of Computing and Engineering and the associated data sheets to the University Secretary's Office. Members agreed that the summaries had provided useful context that had been supplemented by the presentation, and concurred that it was important for Council to understand the ambitions and opportunities for growth for all Schools. The Vice-Chancellor suggested that these matters were considered in greater depth as part of a future University Council Strategy Day.

24. AVAILABILITY OF AGENDA, PAPERS AND MINUTES

- 24.1 Resolved:** to exclude the following papers from the open version under Standing order 11.8:

Agenda item 3	Major Item for Discussion	UC_2023_07_06_P3
Agenda item 7	Vice-Chancellor's Business	UC_2023_07_06_P7
Agenda item 11	Home and International Applications, Enrolments and Retention	UC_2023_07_06_P11
Agenda item 13	National Health Innovation Campus Update	UC_2023_07_06_P13
Agenda item 14	Revised Capital Plan	UC_2023_07_06_P14
Agenda item 16	Annual Revenue and Capital Budget	UC_2023_07_06_P16
Agenda item 17	University Subsidiaries and Audit Exemption	UC_2023_07_06_P17
Agenda item 18	Financial Position and Staffing Implications	UC_2023_07_06_P18
Agenda item 20	Annual Health and Safety Report	UC_2023_07_06_P20

25. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 10:00 in the McClelland Suite, Schwann Building (**Strategy Day**)
- Thursday 30 November 2023 at 13:00 in the McClelland Suite, Schwann Building

(* = Further details in the Confidential Supplement to these minutes, excluded under Standing Order 11.8)