



University Council

Paper no: 2024-10-22-03

Paper title: Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Council meeting held at 09.00 on 18 July 2024 in Lecture Room 17, Cranfield Management Development Centre

Present:	Ferguson, Iain (Chair)	Holford, Karen (by teams)
	Atkinson, Helen	Hubble, Jane
	Carter, Caroline	Hynes, Alice
	Chen Davison, Lesley (by teams)	Price, Jo
	Day, Colin (by teams)	Saggu, Jaz
	Greening, Connie	Sen, Muhammet
	Hart, Ian	Stokes, Claire
	Hill, James	Watkins, Peter
Apologies:	Rowlands, Simon; Zeidler, Phil	
Attending:	Aspinall, Philip, Chief Operating Officer	
	Douglas, Gregor, University Secretary	
	Sibbald, Ian, Director of Finance <i>(for items 5 to 7c)</i>	
	Terry, Leon, Chair of CUH&S Committee and Pro-Vice-Chancellor R&I <i>(for item 4)</i>	

1. Introduction

The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, in particular to CSA President Muhammet Sen who was attending for the first time. Council and Senate members had met together for the first time the previous evening for a networking event. Council members found this to be helpful and looked forward to further opportunities to engage with Senate in future.

2. Disclosure of interest

Professor Helen Atkinson would withdraw from Item 7a. There were no further disclosures recorded.

3. Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-03 being the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024.

Resolved: Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 April 2024 subject to amendment to paragraph 4(c) as follows:

“... two situations, **one member of staff and one student**, involving loss of consciousness were caused **by individuals not having eaten; students fasting for religious purposes**; the rules...”

4. Health and Safety update

Leon Terry joined for this item

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-04 being the quarterly report from Cranfield University Health and Safety Committee

Noted: 

- (b) Council discussed the report noting in detail the circumstances and positive outcome relating to the first aid incident; receipt of a HSE Compliance Notice following completion of actions in response to an HSE Improvement Notice; engagement with enforcing authorities; the forthcoming review of the health and safety strategy; ISO45001 audit; arrangements for Specialist Safety Groups and other health and safety governance; an update on progress against health and safety targets 2023/2024; indicators; and statistics relating to accidents, near miss reports, fire alarm activations, occupational health and wellbeing; health and safety team resourcing and succession planning; and matters relating to Cranfield Airport.
- (c) Council asked whether the third-party Employee Assistance Programme was reviewed periodically for value for money, and how statistics, for example on anxiety, compared to the sector? Professor Terry observed that benchmarked against Cranfield's own historical data he would expect there had been an increase, likely as a result of external factors as well as workload.

Resolved: Council supported the new Chair of Health and Safety Committee's commitment to prioritise: a review of the Specialist Safety Groups, including their Terms of Reference, to be completed by the end of the summer; development of a new health and safety strategy; a re-set of cultural behaviours; and action with the CEVC in line with Council's concerns.

Leon Terry withdrew from the meeting

5. Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's Report

Ian Sibbald joined the meeting

5.1 Received: Paper 2024-07-18-05 being the Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's report covering the period May to July 2024.

Noted: The CEVC highlighted:

- Cranfield's success in the 2024 Times Higher Education Impact rankings. Our work towards the Sustainability Development Goals was being publicly recognised which was testament to the work that Cranfield was doing;
- Midlands Innovation had launched a campaign to attract inward investment into Research & Development.
- new government plans for growth in energy and transport, both areas for strength for Cranfield.

5.2 Received: Paper 2024-07-18-06 being the quarterly report from University Executive.

Noted:

- (a) The CEVC highlighted:
 - the ongoing education portfolio review to ensure that Cranfield's courses were the right ones for now and the future; a number of courses had already been withdrawn as an provisional outcome of the first part of this project;
 - student recruitment was vital for Cranfield as it was for other institutions. Following the MAC review, the HEI sector had hoped to see an immediate increase in the number of international student applications / conversions, but unfortunately this did not happen. Since the election, Cranfield's student numbers had seen a marginal increase only, from down 26% to down 25% on average;
 - with regard to tuition fees a differential rise had been agreed for 2025/2026 academic year, with courses in SoM and premium courses elsewhere increasing by the 2%; other courses in the technical Schools would hold fees. A lower band of fee category would be introduced and trialled for one year for some courses in SWEE. Recruitment performance in autumn 2024 would inform further action on portfolio review. In discussion it was noted that work would be undertaken to review student bursaries and the actual fees charged;
 - on the target for 4* research papers, it was noted that the programme of excellence in scholarship was focused on meeting the high bar of world-leading as widely as possible.
- (b) The Chair of the Energy and Environment Committee highlighted
 - following external audit University-wide, the University had maintained its ISO14001 accreditation (Environmental Management System);
 - the University's sewage treatment works was weather reliant and occasionally there were reported issues. Cranfield had proposed the installation of a new cloth filter system and was waiting for the Environment Agency to respond;
 - Cranfield anticipated further savings energy cost savings to be reflected in future reports.

6. Reports from Council Committees:

6.1 Joint Finance and Audit Committee (JFAC)

Received: Oral update on Transformational change; and paper number 2024-07-18-07a being proposed amendments to the Ordinances.

Noted:

- (a) The CEVC introduced Dr Randolph Cooper, Cranfield's Transformational Change Consultant. Randolph had joined Cranfield on 17 June 2024 and was reporting direct to the CEVC to lead significant transformational change, to enhance the University's academic and operational excellence. Randolph would champion a culture of change and innovation, including new ways of working and process improvement within the University,

fostering engagement and ownership among stakeholders.

(b) Dr Cooper noted that it was unusual in his experience for a change programme to commence before his appointment. He noted that deep, lasting cultural and behavioural change would take 3+ years to embed.

(c) It was reported that to date:

- Professor Dame Helen Atkinson had completed the management reports for the new Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences.
- Work on the new Faculty of Business and Management was at an earlier stage of discussion around an OD approach.
- The COO was seeking to achieve target cost savings in professional services through a recruitment freeze until the end of October and uptake of the flexible retirement scheme;
- Professor Lynette Ryals was leading a review on undergraduate provision. It was noted that business planning around building / facilities for MK:U was likely to be determinative.

(d) Council was advised that all-staff communications would be sent out from the CEVC at the appropriate time following the next VC live at which progress with the transformational change programme would be shared.

(e) Council noted feedback from Senate members that they welcomed the opportunities of better ways of working afforded by organisational change, and a relief the organisation was facing up to the challenge.

(f) The Chair confirmed Council's view that transformational change beyond immediate cost savings remained the brief. Council requested further updates on progress, including access to internal communications as appropriate. A Teams update may be convened, to be confirmed.

Helen Atkinson withdrew from the meeting

(g) Amendments to Ordinances
The University Secretary presented the paper which gave effect to the decision approved by Council in April 2024 to change the academic constituent units of the University. It further defined the title of Deputy Vice-Chancellor as a designation granted by the Vice-Chancellor to existing University Officer(s) at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion.
Resolved: Council approved amendments to Ordinances 1, 2, 10 and 11 accordingly.

Helen Atkinson rejoined the meeting

6.2 **Finance Committee**

(a) Management Accounts to 30 April 2024

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-07b being the management accounts to 30 April 2024

Noted: The Chair of Finance Committee introduced this item confirming that Finance Committee had discussed the management accounts and budget for 2024/2025 when it met on 4 July 2024. The Director of Finance presented the management accounts as follows:

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(b) University Budget 2024/2025

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-07c being the proposed budget for 2024/2025

Noted: The Director of Finance presented the budget as follows:

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(c) Airport update

Received: Oral update on matters relating to the Airport.

Noted: The University Secretary had emailed Council members on 24 June drawing attention to the news that the Interim Chair and CEO of Marshall had announced plans to make c300 staff redundant. The Interim Chair of Marshall had shared this news with the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor. They had indicated that Marshall remained positive about moving to Cranfield. The CEVC and Director of Finance would do all they could to help Marshall in implementing the option agreement for a move in 2026.

Ian Sibbald withdrew from the meeting.

6.3 Audit & Risk Committee

Received: Oral report from the Chair of Audit & Risk Committee.

Noted: The Chair of Audit & Risk Committee reported on the work of the Committee. The following points were noted:

(a) the External Auditors had presented their audit strategy memorandum to the July Audit & Risk Committee meeting. Areas of risk around fraud and going concern were discussed. The External Auditors would take an opinion on going concern in September 2024. Audit & Risk Committee agreed to increase materiality from 1% to 2% which was in line with other institutions across the sector.

(b) the University's major risk profile had been discussed by University Executive and Audit & Risk Committee in July. There were key risks around student recruitment, funding and the impact of a new government. A revised risk register was being sent to Audit & Risk Committee for monitoring.

- (c) Internal audit reports on HESA Data Futures, OfS Conditions of Compliance, Staff Morale and IT Portable Asset Management had been received. There had been some common concerns about depth of expertise in key areas and the need for succession planning.
- (d) There were ongoing concerns around actions agreed to in internal audit recommendations in finance and operations, partnership due diligence and fraud risk management.

This was Alice Hyne's last report to the Audit & Risk Committee as she completed her tenure on 31 July 2024. Alice recorded her thanks to University colleagues and to Council members, noting her satisfaction in the appointment of the Director of Internal Audit during her tenure and the value her work had added to the Committee.

6.4 **Nominations Committee**

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-07d setting out proposals relating to Council Committee memberships.

Jo Price, Claire Stokes and Peter Watkins withdrew from the meeting.

Noted: The Chair of Nominations Committee presented the Committee's recommendations for membership of Council Committees.

Resolved: Council approved the following appointments:

- Solomon Osagie to Audit Committee
- Rachna Upadhyia to Finance Committee
- Jo Price confirmed as Chair of Remuneration Committee
- John Greatrex to Remuneration Committee
- Peter Watkins to Nominations Committee
- Claire Stokes to Nominations Committee

8. **Appointment of Chancellor**

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-08 setting out a proposal for the appointment of Chancellor.

Noted: The Chair of Council presented the recommendation that Baroness Brown of Cambridge "Dame Julia King" be appointed as Chancellor, in succession to Dame Deirdre Hutton, from 1 August 2024.

Resolved: Council approved the appointment of Baroness Brown of Cambridge as Chancellor with effect from 1 August 2024.

9. **Emeritus Professorships – Simon Pollard, Iain Gray and Bryan Watters**

Received: Paper 2024-07-18-08 being a proposal to approve the title of Emeritus Professor on three staff members who had or would be retiring from the University.

Resolved: Council approved the title of Emeritus Professor on Simon Pollard, Iain Gray and Bryan Watters.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 There were four papers included for information: Secretary's Report; Approved minutes of Council committees; List of members; and Schedule of future meetings. There were no comments raised on these papers, nor any further items of business raised.
- 10.4 This was the last meeting of Council for Caroline Carter and Alice Hynes. Council members thanked both for their contributions and commitment to Council and to the University as a whole and wished them well for the future.

Julie Morris
Governance Officer
July 2024