



University Council

Paper no: 2021-04-14-03

Paper title: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 November 2020 at 16.00-18.30 by video conference

Present:

Ferguson, Iain (Chair)	Hynes, Alice
Atkinson, Helen	Lu, Lucy
Carter, Caroline	Mayhew, Maxine
Day, Colin	Rowlands, Simon
Fairweather, Paul	Saggu, Jaz
Gregson, Sir Peter	Sparks, Emma
Hart, Ian	Thompson, Christine
Hill, James	

Apologies: Chen Davison, Lesley

Attending: Aspinall, Philip, Chief Operating Officer
Douglas, Gregor, University Secretary
Oglethorpe, David, PVC SoM (for item 6.3)
Richardson, Mark (for item 6)
Sibbald, Ian, Director of Finance (for items 6 and 7.1)

1. Introduction

The Chair welcomed members and attendees.

2. Disclosure of interest

There were no declarations recorded.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-03 setting out the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020.

Resolved: The minutes were approved.

4. Health & Safety update

Received: Oral update on Health & Safety.

Noted: (a) The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had been focused on setting up a dedicated Covid19 lateral flow testing (LFT) centre, in partnership with the NHS, on the Cranfield campus. LFT testing was a huge issue for higher education institutions but Cranfield was on track to launch its centre in advance of the government's 'travel window' for students. Communications will be sent to all students and staff in due course.

- (b) University Executive will present lead indicators to the meeting in April 2021.

5. Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-05 setting out a report from the CE&VC.

- Noted:
- (a) Covid19 continued to be the focus of University operations, but it was encouraging to report that there had at no time been more than two reported cases at one time; with a cumulative total of twelve.
 - (b) The UUK report on Managing Risks in Internationalisation had been published. The University Security Controller had prepared a detailed briefing, including RAG analysis, for University Executive; this would be cascaded to members of the Senior Management Team.
 - (c) Cranfield had seen a small dip in student registrations compared to that being reported by other HEIs. The Council congratulated colleagues on their achievements and continuing contributions.
 - (d) It was noted that the University's programmes would unlikely be affected by the outcome of the Secretary of State's review of the Apprenticeship Levy Level 7 Senior Leaders standard.
 - (e) Council congratulated Professor Lynette Ryals on her appointment as a Non-Executive Director of East West Railway Company; and Jane Hubble on being shortlisted as a finalist for Outstanding Technician of the Year Award.

6. Briefings

6.1 Cranfield post Covid19 - Towards a new normal

Professor Mark Richardson and Mr Ian Sibbald joined for this item.

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-06a setting out the University's priorities beyond the current year and a separate paper setting out the responses to questions raised in advance of the meeting.

- Noted:
- (a) Council members reported that they had found the opportunity of raising questions and receiving responses in advance of the meeting very helpful.
 - (b) The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor led discussion on the future direction for Cranfield. The following points were discussed:
 - *Student engagement*: the pandemic had provided a number of additional avenues through which Cranfield could engage with its students. The University's response to the pandemic had been positively reported on and continuous engagement with the student body throughout had enabled the University to respond and adapt to changes in real time.

- *Face-to-Face versus Online teaching:* the University had transitioned well to online teaching with many benefits and positivity being reported by the student body. However, as the pandemic and associated restrictions continued, Cranfield, along with the rest of the sector, was experiencing a shift in student and stakeholder opinion with a strong message coming through to return to face-to-face teaching wherever possible. The University will continue to review and monitor its online teaching and strike the right balance for stakeholders and ensuring that the student experience was maintained.
- *Staff experience:* the pandemic had placed demands on staff across the University with many having to work remotely or be furloughed for long periods of time. Staff wellbeing had been, and would continue to be, monitored carefully. As the University planned for the future it would be as enabling as possible to meet the needs of its staff and business. Council members offered insight into staff experiences from other business sectors.
- *IT Strategy:* notwithstanding the recent successful transition to online teaching and operations, there remained significant enhancements required to future proof the University's IT infrastructure both in terms of digital investment and processes. Council will receive a briefing at its meeting in April 2021.
- *Assumptions:* recognising that September 2021 was the UK's anticipated return to 'normal' Council considered that the central assumptions used were fair.

Resolved: The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor thanked Council for their contributions to discussion.

6.2 CDS repositioning post Covid19

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-06b setting out a post-Covid19 repositioning paper for Cranfield Defence and Security

- Noted:
- (a) The PVC-CDS presented the CDS repositioning paper summarising the School's transition from its historical dependency on the MOD Academic Provider (AP) contract to a broader customer base both in the UK and internationally.
 - (b) CDS was focusing its attention on pursuing significant security sector growth; defence sector growth and delivery of high quality, research led, performance to the

Defence Academy and other strategic defence partners. In discussion the PVC-CDS expanded on the School's accessible market research channels over and above current stakeholders and the sphere of influence it had within government and the security and defence sector.

- (c) Looking at historical business performance the Chief Operating Officer reported that CDS had been by far the most successful school, no least due to its relationship with the MOD. Government cuts to MOD funding had impacted heavily on CDS resulting in the renegotiated AP contract. CDS now had a very credible case which was being monitored closely and had tangible growth opportunities. Turning the business around would require cultural change across the School.
- (d) University Executive reinforced the view that Cranfield would be profoundly diminished without CDS and its reach across the defence and security sectors.

Resolved: Council thanked the PVC-CDS for his briefing.

Professor David Oglethorpe joined for this item.

6.3 Executive Education

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-06c setting out confirmed income positions in Executive Education, Cranfield Executive Development and Transport Systems for 2020/2021

- Noted:
- (a) The PVC-SoM summarised the role of Executive Education (non-award bearing open and customised programmes) and the changes in demand during the pandemic.
 - (b) Customised programmes were one of Cranfield's most agile areas given the University's focus on strategic partnerships. These programmes were the most agile and had enabled Cranfield to maintain a healthy financial position.

Resolved: Council thanked the PVC-SoM for his briefing.

Professors Richardson and Oglethorpe withdrew from the meeting.

7. Reports from Sub-Committees

Redactions made

7.2 Audit Committee

7.2.1 Academic Assurance Report

Received: 2020-11-26-08a being the Annual Academic Assurance Report from Senate.

- Noted:
- (a) Audit Committee had considered the report at its meeting in October and commended it to Council. The report was comprehensive and provided information on the broad scope of activities and responsibilities of the academic community and the overall student journey.
 - (b) Discussion focused on: the University's response to coronavirus and the arrangements put in place to support students; the roll out of a new virtual learning environment, initiatives around enhancing research culture, customer service and complaints handling, mechanisms to review the currency of educational offerings on an annual and periodic basis.

Resolved: Council thanked Senate for its report.

7.2.2 Audit Committee Annual Report to Council

Resolved: 2020-11-26-08b being the annual report from Audit Committee to Council.

- Noted:
- (a) The format of the Audit Committee report had remained unchanged to that presented in previous years and provided an overview of the Audit Committee and its activities over the previous year.

Redactions made

Resolved: Council thanked Audit Committee for their report and approved it for submission in the University's annual return to the OfS. Council noted that, within the areas of their respective remits, Audit and Finance Committees would continue to monitor CAeSL and report to Council as appropriate.

7.3 Remuneration Committee

Remuneration Committee Annual Statement

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-07d being the Annual Statement from Remuneration Committee 2019/2020.

- Noted:
- (a) The Remuneration Committee had met three times during the year and this report reflected the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.
 - (b) Remuneration Committee had reviewed progress against the corporate and individual objectives for the University Executive; pay arrangements for the Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor; sector benchmarking; Gender Pay Report; the approach to remuneration; reward strategy; policies; severance payments; and diversity and inclusion.

Resolved: Council thanked Remuneration Committee for their report and endorsed its inclusion in the Financial Statements.

8. Report from University Executive

Received: Paper 2020-11-26-08 setting out the Report from University Executive.

Noted: The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor took the paper as read.

Resolved: Council:

- approved the Diversity and Inclusion Report for publication subject to minor amendments regarding BAME and update to wording agreed with the Diversity and Inclusion Manager;
- authorised the signing of the assurance statement to the Office for Students on the basis of the Prevent Duty Annual Report;
- Noted the quarterly environment report and approved the annual environment statement for publication;
- approved amendments to Ordinance 12 on Honorary Degree criteria and noted the arrangements with regard to Graduation and honorary degree nominations for 2021.

9. Any other business

The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Peter Gregson, announced his retirement with effect from 31 July 2021. Search consultants would be appointed to lead the search for a successor. Council expressed its appreciation to Sir Peter for his outstanding leadership of the University.

Julie Morris, Governance Officer, December 2020