



## University Council

**Paper no:** 2024-11-28-03

**Paper title:** Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the Council meeting held at 09.00 on 22 October 2024 in Lecture Room 17, Cranfield Management Development Centre

Present:	Ferguson, Iain (Chair)	Osagie, Solomon
	Atkinson, Helen	Price, Jo
	Chen Davison, Lesley	Rowlands, Simon
	Day, Colin	Saggu, Jaz
	Greatrex, John	Sen, Muhammet
	Greening, Connie	Stokes, Claire
	Hart, Ian (by Teams for items 1 to 5)	Upadhy, Rachna (by Teams)
	Hill, James	Watkins, Peter
	Holford, Karen	Zeidler, Phil
	Hubble, Jane	

Apologies: Aspinall, Philip, Chief Operating Officer

Attending: Douglas, Gregor, University Secretary  
Morris, Julie, Governance Officer  
Perkins, Helen, Director of People & Culture  
Sibbald, Ian, Director of Finance (*for items 5 to 7c*)  
Terry, Leon, Chair of CUH&S Committee and Pro-Vice-Chancellor R&I (*for item 4*)

### 1. Introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the Council meeting, in particular, John Greatrex, Solomon Osagie and Rachna Upadhy who were attending their first meeting.

### 2. Disclosure of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 3. Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising

Received: Paper 2024-10-22-03 being the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024.

Resolved: Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 July 2024 subject to amendment to section 4(c) to read "Council asked whether the third-party Employee Assistance Programme was reviewed periodically for value for money **and quality of experience for staff**, and how statistics, for example ...".

### 4. Health and Safety update

*Leon Terry joined for this item*

Received: Papers 2024-10-22-04a to 04d being the H&S Quarterly Report; the H&S Annual Report; H&S Strategy and governance framework; and the Nominated Safety Manager's summary report.

- Noted:
- (a) The Council Health and Safety Lead reported that he was supportive of the work being undertaken by the Chair of the Cranfield Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee (CUHSWC), the Health and Safety Director and the Health and Safety team, who had progressed many of the key issues raised by Council in July 2024.
  - (b) The Chair of CUHSWC introduced the suite of health, safety and wellbeing papers. The following points were noted:
    - a new strategy had been created to replace the 'Beyond Compliance' strategy. The strategy would be launched on 11 December 2024 and aimed at resetting the H&S culture;
    - the governance framework had been reviewed to ensure that reporting lines were clear and that Specialist Safety Groups (SSGs) reported directly into the CUHSWC;
    - additional SSGs had been established for Hydrogen and Test Rigs; all SSGs were operational;
    - all actions arising from HSE enforcements in the last 18 months had been addressed;
    - one-to-one meetings between the Chair of CUHSWC and each Nominated Safety Manager had taken place (75 in total) to understand good practice and/or concern.
  - (c) In discussion, the Chair of CUHSWC commented as follows:
    - *on areas of inefficiency*: the health and safety software system would be replaced at the end of contract;
    - *on connectivity between professional services*: better communication between Health and Safety and Facilities in terms of closing out some of the health and safety issues could be enhanced (for example re-examining shower detector heads in student accommodation to reduce the number of false fire alarms cause by steam from showers);
    - *Bedfordshire Fire Inspector audit*: following any fire-related incident the Bedfordshire Fire Inspector conducts an audit as part of a standard procedure. In 2023/2024 this procedure occurred twelve times and each building was graded satisfactory;
    - *Internal Audit Report*: an Internal Audit on Health and Safety Governance had taken place and the Chair of CUHSWC and the Health & Safety Director had agreed with the draft recommendations, to be reviewed by Audit & Risk Committee;
    - *SSG membership*: these would include a member of technical staff;
    - *Near miss reports*: staff would be encouraged to continue reporting near misses;
    - *Lifts, Lifting Equipment, LEV's and Pressure Systems Compliance terms of reference*: the ToRs would be updated to review operational issues associated with the delivery of a safe and accessible Estate for use by staff, students, residents and visitors.

Resolved: Council thanked the Chair of CUHSWC for his assurance that health and safety matters were being addressed.

*Leon Terry withdrew from the meeting*

## 5. Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's Report (CEVC)

*Ian Sibbald and Helen Perkins joined the meeting*

Received: Paper 2024-10-22-05 being the CEVC report covering the period August to October 2024.

Noted: The CEVC highlighted:

- *Bhattacharya Award*: the Cranfield/Airbus partnership had been shortlisted for the Bhattacharya Award. This was Cranfield's first time to be in the top five nominees for this prestigious award;
- *Earthshot Prize*: For the second year running, a Cranfield nominee has been selected as a finalist for the Earthshot Prize. Build up Nepal was a project founded in response to an earthquake that hit the country in 2015;
- *Financial Times and Bloomberg rankings*: recognising the quality of our business and management courses.
- *Technician's Commitment*: The Technician's Commitment event had showcased the value of our technicians.
- *Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change*. Cranfield had been working with Universities UK on the report which had been well received by a number of government departments. DSIT has visited Cranfield with a view to positioning Cranfield as a sovereign capability.

## 6. Report from the University Executive

Received: Paper 2024-10-22-06 being the quarterly report from University Executive.

Noted: The paper was taken as read.

## 7. Transformational Change Programme

Received: Paper 2024-10-22-07 setting out summary information relating to staff cost savings and student recruitment.

Noted: 7.1 Headlines on progress to date

- (a) The CEVC observed that Finance Committee had not met. The figures presented in the paper were as at 1 October 2024, and would be discussed in detail at Finance Committee. However, it was reported that there was a shortfall on student income of £2.5m, and a shortfall on staff cost savings of £1.5m.
- (b) The Director of Finance reported that the accounts for the year to 31 July 2024, which would show an operating deficit of £4m. This was £2m worse than the figure presented to Council earlier in the year.
- (c) It was noted that the recruitment freeze and attrition rate had not yet reached the anticipated cost savings. The Director of Finance commented that the paper set out evidence of savings to the end of September 2024 – the figures showed actual savings achieved to that date. It was anticipated that the target £7.5M savings would increase to £12.5M.

7.2 Engagement of SUMS Consulting Ltd for PSU Review

- (a) The CEVC reported that SUMS Consulting had been commissioned to undertake a review of professional services and to assist with a new target operating model to enable the University to deliver against its strategic objectives and to be financially sustainable.
- (b) SUMS would seek to form conclusions around structure, resourcing, efficiencies and improvements. Cranfield had specified three priority areas for the review: student recruitment and admissions; strategic planning functions; and finance processes. Their work would be informed by the additional cost savings required.
- (c) The report would be delivered in December 2024. Council encouraged University Executive to prepare for implementation now, not to wait for the SUMS report in December. The Director of People and Culture reported that a forward-looking plan was in hand, and that SUMS would be providing an implementation toolkit.

## **8. Update from Council Committees**

### **8.1 Cranfield Advisory Group on Defence and Security (CADS)**

The Chair of CADS provided background information on the Advisory Group's role in supporting the University in its preparations for renewal of the MOD Academic Provider contract in 2028. The Advisory Group had provided guidance and support to the Director of Defence and Director of Security in the development of the separate but linked Defence and Security Strategies. There has also been progress in building new stakeholder relationships.

### **8.2 Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)**

The Chair of ARC reported that she had received assurances that University Executive was resolving overdue Internal Audit Recommendations; where there had been a change in ownership of actions these were being addressed. ARC would next review the Audit Recommendation Tracker in December 2024. ARC had approved the Internal Audit Plan 2024/2025 for Q1 and Q2. The Committee had asked that student recruitment be listed as a risk on the major risk register in its own right. The Committee was due to meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellors for a briefing on risk and opportunities they faced through the change programme. The External Auditors had not raised any red flags in connection with the Audit but had given early notice that the HEI sector could expect focus on matters of going concern.

### **8.3 Finance Committee**

There was nothing to report from Finance Committee.

### **8.4 Remuneration Committee**

The Chair of Remuneration Committee reported that the main focus of discussion at the meeting in August 2024 had been reviewing the objectives for University Executive and the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee had incorporated three financial targets in the score cards. At the meeting taking place on 22 October, there would be a focus on pay and rewards for staff.

## **9. Any other business**

There were no further items of business raised.

Governance Officer  
October 2024