

**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY****Council****Minutes of the Meeting held at Newman University on  
Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 3.00 pm in DW111/DW112****Present:**

Mr Jonathan Day	Chair of the Council
Professor Scott Davidson	Vice-Chancellor
Ms Gayle Ditchburn	
Rev Canon David Evans	
Dr Mark Goodwin	Vice-Chair of the Council
Mr Stephen Kenny	
Mr Phillip Lennon	
Ms Elizabeth McGrath QC	
Mr Richard Wallace	
Mr John Westwood	

**In Attendance:**

Ms Andrea Bolshaw	Registrar and University Secretary and Clerk to the Council
Professor Peter Childs	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship)
Professor Duncan Lawson	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Formative Education)
Mr Tony Sharma	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Ms Rosie Richter	President NSU
Mr Ryan Beasley	For items 3.10 and 3.11
Ms Margaret Holland	For item 3.1
Ms Jackie Flowers	Minute Secretary

The meeting of the Council opened with prayers led by Rev Canon David Evans.

**1. Work of the Council****1.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Glen Alexander, Dr John Carlisle, Ms Deirdre Finucane, Archbishop Bernard Longley, Professor Femi Oyeboade and Mrs Rosemary Thorp.

**1.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting.

**1.3 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

The minutes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting subject to the removal of 'by telephone' next to the name of Mr John Westwood in the list of those present.

## 1.4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Arising from the minute 3.3.3 (Tuition Fee Schedule) of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017, it was noted that the action concerning communication with students about the tuition fee increase had not yet been completed.

**Action:** Vice-Chancellor and Director of Finance and Corporate Services

## 1.5 Reports from the Committees and Senate

### 1.5.1 Nominations Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

The confirmed minutes of the meeting were received.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2017

The Council received an oral report of the meeting, with it noted that the main items of business concerned consideration of proposed revisions to the Council Member's Application Form, and membership of the Council and its Committees.

Items of business relating to membership of the Council were covered under item 1.6 below.

### 1.5.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting were received.

24<sup>th</sup> August 2017

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting were received.

### 1.5.3 Audit Committee

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting were received.

### 1.5.4 Senate

12<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The confirmed minutes of the meeting were received.

## 1.6 Ratification of Appointment of New Staff Council Members

The Clerk to the Council reported that more than one candidate had been nominated for each vacancy thus necessitating an election and she outlined the election process. Following the election, Mr Colin Harris had been elected

as the Support Staff member of Council and Dr Karen Graham as the Academic Staff member of Council.

It was noted that at the meeting of Nominations Committee on 27th September 2017 there had been discussion about confidentiality in the case of candidates having a family relationship with a member of University staff. After consideration and agreed action, the Committee had recommended to the Council that Dr Graham and Mr Harris be appointed as members of Council.

The Council agreed:

#### **Resolution UC16/2017**

- (i) to appoint Dr Karen Graham as Academic Staff Council Member.
- (ii) to appoint Mr Colin Harris as Support Staff Council Member.

### **1.7 Re-appointment of Council Members**

Mr Kenny withdrew from the meeting for this item.

The Council was advised that the terms of office of Ms Deirdre Finucane and Mr Stephen Kenny would expire in December 2017 and October 2017 respectively. Nominations Committee had recommended that they both be appointed for a second term of office, with their contributions and level of commitment highly praised.

The Council agreed:

#### **Resolution UC17/2017**

- (i) to re-appoint Ms Finucane for a second term of office
- (ii) to re-appoint Mr Kenny for a second term of office.

### **1.8 Recruitment of a New Chancellor**

The Council noted with great sadness the death of the University's Chancellor, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor who had given generous support to the University while he was Chancellor.

The Chair advised that it would now be necessary for the University to appoint a new Chancellor. He outlined the role of Chancellor noting that Chancellors were typically drawn typically from held in high public regard. He advised that although the first Chancellor had been a member of the clergy, the new Chancellor could be from the laity.

The Chair described the proposed process of finding a new Chancellor, which would be by means of working group that would be dissolved at the end of the process. The group's terms of reference would be to advise the Council and to draw up a list of priorities, to devise mechanisms to ensure consultation, and to oversee due diligence. Membership of the Group would comprise Mr Jonathan Day, Professor Scott Davidson, Ms Andrea Bolshaw, Ms Deirdre Finucane, Rev Canon David Evans, Dr Karen Graham, Mr Colin Harris, Ms Rosie Richter, Ms Margaret Holland and Ms Alison John. Archbishop

Longley would be consulted. A paper would be drafted for sign-off at the next meeting of the Council. It was intended that the process would be completed by April 2018.

**Action:** Clerk to the Council

## **2. Future Issues**

### **2.1 Outline of Future Issues**

The Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor on internal developments and the external higher education environment. The report covered: The Chancellor; the higher education environment; the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); the Research Excellence Framework (REF); the National Student Survey (NSS); academic restructuring and the Resource Allocation Model (RAM); student recruitment; the re-organisation of the University's marketing function, the pay settlement; events and meetings attended.

In addition to the points in his written paper, the Vice-Chancellor updated the Council as follows. The Office for Students was currently being formed but its mode of operation was not yet clear. He emphasised the importance of preparation for the EU General Data Protection Regulation which becomes effective in May 2018 as penalties for non-compliance were severe. There was continuing speculation about the capping or reduction of student tuition fees. The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) had recently removed the cap on recruitment to postgraduate initial teacher education (with the exception of Physical Education) for the autumn 2018 intake. The University would have to respond quickly, but in a measured way in order to balance recruitment and quality. The Catholic Education Service was proposing to support Catholic schools with Catholic universities acting as regional hubs. The area covered by Newman would be Birmingham, West Midlands, Wales and South West England although the borders were not immutable and he noted that Newman did work with Catholic schools in other areas. There was to be a further meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October to see how the proposal would be advanced.

In conclusion, the Vice-Chancellor, noting the considerable uncertainty at present, emphasised the need to be clear and faithful to the University's vision, mission and strategy and to ensure that the institution was in alignment with this and also to ensure that as far as possible, the University was sustainable and resilient.

### **2.2 Refreshed Strategic Plan**

The Council received the refreshed Strategic Plan; Vision, Mission and Values Statement; and Risk Register. A copy of the Objects, Vision, Catholic Ethos and Mission section from the original Strategic Plan was tabled for reference.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University Executive, whilst valuing the original Strategic Plan, had undertaken a refresh of the Plan and related documentation in recognition of the significant changes which had taken place at the University and the sector within which it operates. The refresh had been informed by discussions at ULT and UOT. The values, mission and

institutional values had been reviewed and refocussed to give a more succinct and persuasive presentation. Those elements of the Strategic Plan that could be made more concrete had been extracted and smart, measurable objectives had been applied to them. Although there was still further recalibration to be done, the Risk Register had been reformatted to take into account the recommendations made by the Internal Auditors and was now mapped against the Strategic Plan to give a clear correlation between the strategic objectives and the risks associated. The revised Risk Register would be considered by the November meeting of the Audit Committee.

The Council reviewed the documents, with the following points arising. Members questioned whether the Catholic ethos was as strongly present in the revised Vision, Mission and Values statement: for example, the original Plan referred to Newman as a Roman Catholic University. In response, the Vice-Chancellor said that there was a concern that reference to the University being Catholic might leave potential students with the impression that it was necessary to be a Catholic to attend. However, he acknowledged that the Strategic Plan was not the document from which applicants were likely to obtain their information about the University. He gave reassurance that Catholic values were central to the University and that primacy was given to Catholic tradition of social justice. Council members felt that the reference to Catholic values could be widened to include formation and the mission of service. In the current competitive environment, it was also felt that the retention of a distinct Catholic ethos was important for the sustainability of the University. It was suggested that the objectives from the Articles and from the original Strategic Plan could be incorporated to the revised Statement of Vision, Mission and Values. It was felt that the vision statement could be rephrased to place Catholic values earlier in the bullet point and to split the first Value as it was longer and of a more complex structure than the other Values.

Members asked whether there had been a re-basing of the original plans for the growth rate of the University. The Vice-Chancellor responded that, taking into account the demographic and the increasing competition, a growth of 3% per year was more prudent. He noted that the majority of Newman's students came from within a 20 mile radius of the campus and that the University was looking at ways to recruit students from the broader Midlands region.

It was suggested that there could be greater reference to alumni, with it noted that it took time to build up alumni relationships. The appointment of the Alumni Officer was intended to develop this aspect of the University's work. The importance of the relationship with those who had trained to be teachers at Newman was noted.

It was agreed that the Vision, Mission and Values statement would be reviewed to take into account the discussion at the meeting.

**Action:** Clerk to the Council

### **3. The Current State of the University**

#### **3.1 Chaplaincy Annual Report**

The University Chaplain was in attendance for this item and summarised the main points of her annual report on the activities, events and life of Newman Chaplaincy. She gave an update on matters occurring since the writing of the report. Fr Dries van den Akker SJ had now joined the University as priest. Tabor House, a permanent night shelter in Digbeth, was soon due to open and following an email sent out by the Chaplain, a number of students had volunteered to help at the House. It was agreed to circulate to Council members the email sent to staff and students by the Chaplain concerning Tabor House and volunteering.

**Action:** Clerk to the Council

The Chaplain drew attention to dates of forthcoming events, including the Christmas Service, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Foundation Mass and the Blessing for the opening of the Halls of Residence.

The Council noted and commended the great amount of work undertaken by the Chaplaincy.

The Report was received.

#### **3.2 Vice-Chancellor's Report**

This was covered under 2.1 above.

#### **3.3 Student Numbers Update 2017/18**

A report on recruitment and enrolment for the academic year 2017/18 was given by the Clerk to Council. She was generally positive about student numbers but noted that a more complete picture would be presented at the November meeting of the Council when confirmed figures for returning students would also be available. She drew attention to the successful recruitment to the new Foundation Year Zero programme. She also described the work done by University staff in converting applicants to students.

The Council heard that applications had been higher than the previous year but that enrolments were expected to be broadly the same and so the conversion factor had decreased. This was a reflection of the national position. Applications from the EU had fallen across the sector and consequently there was more intense competition for students; mainly, programmes which were vocational were recruiting more students with applications to arts and humanities subjects falling. The University had reduced its standard offer by the equivalent of an A level grade to take account of the changes to A levels and BTEC programmes. The average entry points would, therefore, be lower this year.

The Clerk to the Council noted it would be possible to carry out greater analysis and benchmarking of applications and enrolments from November when the recruitment position had finalised and when statistical information from UCAS was available.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to add information about the number of applications and the average entry tariff to the updated paper for the November meeting of Council.

**Action:** Clerk to the Council

The Report was received.

### **3.4 2016/7 Financial Year End Update**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services spoke to paper 38/17 which provided the Council with an update on the 2016/17 financial year and statutory accounts. He noted that the University was likely to achieve an operating surplus of £1,528,000. Due to an increase in non-pay expenditure, the surplus was lower than recently. There were three matters outstanding: the audit and finalisation of the student numbers' return; the partner review of fieldwork; and the finalisation of the text associated with the financial statements. Following review by the Audit Committee, the draft set of accounts would be submitted to the November meeting of the Council for approval.

The Report was received.

### **3.5 Financial Expectations for 2017/18**

The Council received a report giving a financial update relating to the 2017/18 financial year which covered Income, Pay and Non-Pay, Capital Expenditure, Cash and Loan Finance. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reminded Council members that student enrolment was not yet completed and a more detailed report would be prepared for the November meeting of the Council when student numbers were more certain. He expected that recruitment would be close to the target.

The Council noted the importance of student enrolment to target for the achievement of the budgeted surplus and asked that a sensitivity analysis of the impact of under or over recruitment be included in the paper to go to Finance and General Purposes Committee on income and expenditure projections for 2017/18.

**Action:** Director of Finance and Corporate Services

The Report was received.

### **3.6 2015-20 Estates Strategy Update**

An update on the implementation of the Estates Strategy was received and considered. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported that the Estates Strategy was on budget, on time, of good quality and there were no matters of significant concern. About half of the contingency had been spent, mainly on reinstating items taken out during the value engineering process. The Darwin refurbishment would be progressed with an expected completion by August 2018. As no significant overall benefits had been identified, it had been decided not to accelerate the Elgar/Sturge project, but to revert to the original timescale of completion in 2020.

He noted that by 2020 all of the University's learning and teaching spaces would have been refreshed. Over the next few months, consideration would also be given to a refresh of the long term maintenance plan for the campus.

The importance of communication with students about the Strategy was emphasised and it was noted that a member of staff from the Estates Office would attend the forthcoming Student Forum to speak to students about the campus development.

**Action:** Director of Finance and Corporate Services

The naming of the Sturge extension (St Hilda) and the Halls of Residence (Cofton) was discussed. It was noted that there was a religious retreat nearby which was also named Cofton Hall. To avoid any possible confusion, it was agreed to raise the issue of signage with the Director of Communications and Marketing.

**Action:** Clerk to the Council

### **3.7 Report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship)**

A report apprising the Council of current developments in research and scholarship was presented by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship). He gave an update on recent developments in the REF, with the following noted. Greater emphasis would be placed on the impact of research (an increase from 20% to 25% of the total score). He noted the importance of receiving external funding as a measure of impact and commented that through the Templeton project, the University was in a better position than previously as it had received significant external funding for the project. Several case studies could be produced from the research to demonstrate impact.

There would be further consultation on the definition of research active staff and on the transition arrangements for the non-portability of publications. Non-portability would benefit the less research intensive Universities by enabling them to retain publications produced by staff whilst working at the University who subsequently moved to another institution.

With regard to staff submission, two options were available: either to submit all staff who met the core eligibility requirement; or, to produce a code of practice to be used to decide which staff were eligible for submission. The latter option would be preferable to the University as it would remove the need for change to staff contracts. The aim was for around one third of academic staff (roughly 50) to submit outputs to the next REF; this was double the number for REF 2014. This number was also important for the achievement of RDAP, submission for which would be around the same time as for the REF.

The major research findings from the Templeton project on Religion and Science: Exploring the Spectrum had been disseminated in September and had received good press coverage across the board.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor reported that he had been elected as Director of the Consortium for Research Excellence, Support and Training (CREST) which was the GuildHE network for the pooling of expertise, staff development and supporting of joint bids for research funding.



In response to questions, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University was on track for RDAP, with the necessary number of doctoral completions expected to be achieved by 2020. He also outlined the ways in which to demonstrate impact from the University's research in the humanities citing as an example Dr Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's recent commendation in the Forward Prize for Poetry and her appearance on BBC Radio 3. He added that between three and five impact case studies would arise from the multi-disciplinary Templeton project some of which could cover, for example, Theology. He also noted the importance of obtaining external funding from the start of a project.

The Report was received.

### **3.8 UKVI T4/T2 Licence Revocation Update**

The Clerk to Council introduced a paper informing the Council of the current position on the Licence Revocation. She described the actions taken by the University to assist the students concerned and felt that the students had been well supported in line with University values. The Council noted the support given and discussed possible future developments and potential costs to the University.

The report was received.

### **3.9 Prevent Update**

The Council received an oral update on Prevent from the Clerk to Council. She advised that the next annual report was due for submission on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The draft report would be considered by the Safeguarding Group and the Audit Committee prior to submission to the Council at its November meeting. The Clerk to Council had been in contact with the Regional Prevent Advisor, who had not been prescriptive about the format of the report but had said that it was important for the University's policies to come alive within the report, for instance by the use of examples.

It was noted that there were no Prevent related concerns that had been raised in the reporting period.

### **3.10 Students' Union Constitution and Bye-Laws**

The Students' Union Development Manager was in attendance for the item and presented a draft NSU Constitution and Bye-Laws for approval. He tabled a paper which documented his oral commentary during the meeting that explained the main changes proposed.

The Council gave initial consideration to the draft Constitution and discussion included the following points. It was noted that under the proposed revised Constitution it would no longer be compulsory for a member of ULT to be on the Board of Trustees; this had been done to respect the autonomy of the Students' Union. The Council noted that the linkage between NSU and the University was not only financial (via the block grant) but was also reputational. It was suggested that the Constitution should retain the option of appointing a member of the ULT to the Board of Trustees. It was also felt that a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and NSU would be helpful to set out the various rights and responsibilities.

It was agreed that the document should be reviewed to take into account the discussion at the meeting and that it would receive further consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

**Action:** Development Manager, NSU/Clerk to Council

### **3.11 Students' Union Strategic Plan 2018-2023**

Consideration of the NSU Strategic Plan was deferred to the next meeting.

### **3.12 New Internal Reports**

#### **3.12.1 Equality and Diversity Committee Annual Report**

The Vice-Chancellor presented the Annual Report from the Equality and Diversity Committee which gave an overview of the main items and reports received during the academic year 2016/17. He advised that the purpose of the Committee was to ensure compliance and to disseminate best practice. It provided a platform for discussion and review and from time to time undertook research projects. The effectiveness of the Committee would be reviewed during the 2017/18 academic year with a view to driving its agenda more proactively. Student mental health had been a particular concern for the Committee during the year. He noted the actions taken to make the campus more accessible

The Report was received.

#### **3.12.2 Annual Summary of Staff Equality Data and Activity 2016 Report**

The Council noted and received the Report.

#### **3.12.3 Annual Health and Safety Report**

The Health and Safety Report for 2015/16 was considered. During discussion of the report, the Council noted the increase in student mental health issues. It was felt that the growth was not just as a result of greater awareness of mental health but due to a change in scale and that this was across the sector. The Clerk to the Council reported that the University had reviewed and updated relevant student policies and procedures, for example, the Fitness to Study Policy.

The Report was received.

## **4. Any Other Business**

The Chair thanked the new members for their valuable contributions to the meeting and looked forward to a long and productive relationship.

## **5. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting to take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017.

The meeting of the Council closed with a prayer from Rev Canon David Evans.

### The Council

#### Action Plan from the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Minute	Agenda Item	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible
1.3	Minutes of the special meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Removal of 'by telephone' next to the name of Mr John Westwood in the list of those present.	Clerk to Council
1.5	Reports from the Committees	For future agendas to clarify that Senate is not a Committee of the Council.	Clerk to the Council
1.4	Matters Arising	Communication to students of the reasons for the increase in tuition fees and an explanation of how money was spent.	Vice-Chancellor/Director of Finance and Corporate Services
1.8	Recruitment of a New Chancellor	Paper to come to next meeting of the Council.	Chair/Clerk to the Council
2.2	Refreshed Strategic Plan	To review the document taking into account the discussion at the meeting.	Clerk to the Council
3.1	Chaplaincy Annual Report	To circulate to Council members the email sent to staff and students by the Chaplain concerning Tabor Hostel and volunteering.	Clerk to the Council
3.3	Student Numbers Update 2017/18	To add information about the number of applications and the average entry tariff to the updated paper for the November meeting of Council.	Clerk to the Council

3.5	Financial Expectations for 2017/18	To include a 'sensitivity analysis' for the paper to go to F&GP on income and expenditure projections for 2017/18.	Director of Finance and Corporate Services.
3.6	Estates Strategy Update	A member of staff from Estates to attend the forthcoming Student Forum to speak to students about the campus development.	Director of Finance and Corporate Services.
3.6	Estates Strategy Update	To discuss signage of Cofton Hall with the Director of Communications and Marketing.	Clerk to the Council
3.10	Students' Union Constitution and Bye-Laws	To take into account the discussion at the meeting and for the Constitution, with any amendments, to be considered again at the next meeting of Council.	President NSU/ Development Manager NSU
3.11	Students' Union Strategic Plan	Deferred to the next agenda.	Clerk to Council