

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**COUNCIL****Minutes of the Meeting held Thursday 4th October 2018 at 2.30 pm in ST102/103****Present:**

Mr Jonathan Day	Chair of the Council
Mr Glen Alexander	
Mr Tom Ashford	President, Newman Students' Union (NSU)
Dr John Carlisle	
Professor Scott Davidson	Vice-Chancellor
Rev Canon David Evans	
Ms Deirdre Finucane	
Ms Karan Gilmore	
Dr Karen Graham	
Mr Colin Harris	
Mr Stephen Kenny	
Mr Phillip Lennon	
Ms Elizabeth McGrath QC	
Professor Femi Oyeboode	
Mr Richard Wallace	
Mr John Westwood	

In Attendance:

Ms Andrea Bolshaw	Registrar and University Secretary and Clerk to the Council
Mr Tony Sharma	Chief Financial Officer
Ms Jackie Flowers	Minute Secretary

The meeting of the Council opened with prayer.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor Peter Childs, Ms Gayle Ditchburn, Ms Julie Jones, and Archbishop Bernard Longley.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 6th September 2018

Consideration of the minutes of the Council Away Day was carried over to the next meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Council received the revised version of the University Council Standing Orders. The Clerk to the Council reminded members that Council had recently approved changes to the terms of reference and status of the Remunerations Committee and the terms and reference and title of the Nominations Committee.

She noted that the revised Standing Orders would be published on the University website. In discussion of the change to the terms of reference and status of the Remunerations Committee, the Chair advised that it had been made a stand-alone committee because the remuneration of senior post holders' pay was not just a financial matter but was a strategic decision affecting the University as a whole. Requirements for increased transparency on the pay of senior post holders were noted, as was the requirement that the University disclose the pay ratio between the median and highest paid employees.

The Council noted the revised version of the Standing Orders.

4. Governance and Council Matters

4.1 *Appointment and Re-appointment of Council Members*

The Clerk reminded the Council that succession planning had already been put in place for Ms Julie Jones, currently a co-opted member, to succeed Dr Mark Goodwin at the end of November 2018 when his term of office finished. The Nominations and Governance Committee at its meeting earlier today had recommended that Ms Jones now be given full membership with effect from this meeting. The Committee had noted that Dr Goodwin had been happy with the succession plan and it was not felt to be disrespectful to his memory to move full membership forward for Ms Jones.

Resolved UC 13/2018

That Ms Julie Jones become a full member of the Council with immediate effect.

Action: the Clerk to notify Ms Jones.

4.2 *Report from the Vice-Chancellor*

The Council received an oral summary from the Vice-Chancellor on matters arising since his report at the last meeting on 6th September 2018.

The OfS had not yet communicated a decision on the University's application for registration. One hundred and twenty-two providers had so far been registered and some had had conditions attached to their registration.

There was a threat of industrial action over pay. This was a national pay dispute but UCU had run separate institutional ballots rather than one aggregated national ballot. In some institutions the 50% turnout threshold might be passed, but not in others. Whilst there might not be a national dispute, there could be local disputes. The University had undertaken contingency planning in case there was a local dispute. The Council noted the high UCU membership at the University (60% of academic staff). The Vice-Chancellor outlined the lines of communication with UCU, including a formal joint negotiation council which met on a regular basis and meetings

with the branch Chair should any particular issues arise which a conversation could help to stop escalating to a formal level.

The Vice-Chancellor had attended a meeting between the Chief Executive and the leader of Birmingham City Council and the Vice-Chancellors of Aston, Birmingham, Birmingham City and University College Birmingham. The meeting had been called to discuss the city's current position, its plans and how the local universities could work with the City Council to solve problems, particularly in health and social care. Other items discussed were the Commonwealth Games, transport, and violent crime in the city centre. The group would continue to meet three times a year.

4.3 Office for Students

4.3.1 Registration Update

The Clerk advised that there had been an email on 14th September 2018 from the OfS to say that it was undertaking its last scrutiny before making a decision and that the decision would soon be communicated.

4.3.2 Transitional Arrangements (UC36/16)

The Clerk explained that there would be a transitional period between 1st April 2018 and 31st July 2019 before the OfS's regulatory framework came fully into force on 1st August 2019. During this period institutions would be funded and regulated through a combination of powers and duties carried forward from the previous legislation and the new HERA powers and duties. She had attached, for information, the requirements of the transitional arrangements.

It was not yet clear whether new templates for the OfS annual Assurance and Accountability sign-off would be issued or whether the HEFCE templates would remain in use. There was a possibility that if new templates were issued, there would be short notice before the November 2018 meeting of the Council. However, if this were to be the case, it was hoped that the template would be broadly similar to that completed last year. *Secretarial note: The template was received from OfS on the 16th October and is almost identical to the HEFCE equivalent template.*

The report was noted.

4.3.3 Prevent

The Clerk reported that the new templates for the Prevent Accountability and Data Return for 2018 had just been received from the OfS and she felt that the Council should see them in advance of sign-off by the Council meeting on 22nd November 2018. She also felt it important to remind members of the Prevent Annual Report that was submitted last year. The University was not required to do an

annual report this year but assurance had to be signed off in a slightly different way than previously. The main aspect of this was for Council members to provide a short statement (max 300 words) outlining the mechanisms to which they have been assured that they are able to sign the declarations satisfactorily. The Clerk did not have any concerns about the mechanisms that were already embedded within the University to enable Council members to be assured, but wanted Council members to be aware of the difference in expectations.

In discussion of the Prevent Risk Register, it was observed that one risk only had a red status – students being radicalised by factors external to the University. The Clerk explained that the risk had a high rating because the University did not have control over its students' experience outside the University.

She reported that the Prevent Risk Register would be reviewed this year by the University's Safeguarding Task Group (previously called the Prevent Working Group).

It was noted that the Clerk's office would be arranging Prevent training for new members of the Council.

Action: the Clerk

The report was noted.

4.3.4 Election of Vice Chair

The Clerk reminded the Council that the OfS required the University to conform to its own governance documents as a condition of registration. The University's documents and the CUC Code specified that there should be a Vice-Chair. Accordingly, the Nominations and Governance Committee had agreed that the appointment of the Vice-Chair should be brought forward. The Committee's proposed procedure was for any member who wished to serve as Vice-Chair to indicate an expression of interest in writing to the Clerk to the Council. Expressions of interest received would be considered by the next meeting of the Nominations and Governance Committee. It was noted that the Vice-Chair had to be an external member of the Council but did not have to be a Catholic as the Vice-Chair was not necessarily the successor to the Chair. The Council did not feel it necessary to appoint an interim Vice-Chair and ad-hoc arrangements would be made should an emergency arise.

Resolved UC 14/2018

to approve the process outlined for the election of the Vice-Chair

5. Financial Matters

5.1 2017/18 Year-end Financial Update

The Council received a paper giving an update on the 2017/18 finance year and statutory accounts. Presenting the paper, the Chief Financial Officer reported that the predicted surplus was at or around the level that had been forecast over recent months. Provisions had been made for the restructuring of the Centre for Knowledge, Science, Belief in Society (CKSBS) and the subject area of Business. The final draft accounts would be circulated to Council members by the end of October for comment. Any comments received would be considered by the next meeting of the Audit Committee on 12th November 2018 so that changes could be completed in time for sign-off by the November meeting of the Council.

The Council noted the report.

5.2 2018/19 Recruitment Update

The Chief Financial Officer introduced a paper giving an update on student recruitment. He reported that first year recruitment was just above the budget level and that it would continue to rise a little over the next few weeks as there was a significant number of returning students still to enrol. The increase in the recruitment to the Foundation Year had offset the reduction in full time degree numbers which had decreased by about one hundred. Although there had been fewer applications, there had been an improvement in enrolment to the three-year and one-year initial teacher training programmes due to the efforts of staff to maximise recruitment.

There followed a discussion about the Foundation Year, with it noted that the retention figures for the last year had been good and it could therefore be assumed that potentially ninety to one hundred students would join year one of undergraduate programmes. These students would otherwise have not been able to enter higher education and so the Foundation Year was in line with the University's mission. The University worked hard to ensure that Foundation Year students were integrated to the student community and it was felt that they had a strong sense of identity and were not isolated. It was not clear whether Foundation Year students had greater needs than traditional students, but as the numbers of Foundation Year students increased, the University would conduct research into the students recruited. It appeared that the demographics of the Foundation Year students were similar to Newman students, being working class, a mix of ages with older students who had some employment experience, and those first in their family to go to University.

The Council saw that the challenges for the next year were first to ensure that the number of students recruited to full time single and joint honours programmes returned to the five-hundred level and second, to improve student retention. It was considered that the University's good record on student employment (as reported in *The Economist* last year, for example) should be emphasised to potential students. The Chief Financial Officer observed that if all students were retained, the

University would receive an additional £3m income. It was felt that a session for the Council on retention and learning analytics should be arranged for a future meeting.

Action: Clerk to the Council

The Council commended the University's new website which was felt to be a great improvement on the previous website.

The report was noted.

5.3 2018/19 Financial Update

The Council was provided with a paper giving a financial update for the 2018/19 financial year. The Chief Financial Officer advised that although student enrolment was not yet complete, if the final figures were as now predicted, income would be as expected. He reported that there were no particular concerns over non-pay costs. Capital expenditure had largely been spent for the year on the finalisation of the Darwin refurbishment. The £2.5m cash balance requirement would be met.

The only area of some concern was the need to reduce pay. Pay costs assumed significant vacancy savings, including a saving of £250,000 which had yet to be identified. The recruitment pause would continue for all but essential posts.

In response to a question, the Vice-Chancellor explained how the University assessed the impact of vacancy savings. Outstanding vacancies were reviewed monthly, and the review took into account reports from line managers: priority was given to posts which had a direct impact on the student experience. The University was working towards a full sustainability plan for the Council before the end of the calendar year and it was intended to devolve resources to line managers so that they could make decisions within their own area of autonomy.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that resources released would be used to invest in areas where market research had shown that there were large numbers of applicants; new programme proposals included the development of an LLB, a Computer Science degree and an Arts and Humanities liberal arts degree with a strong employability strand.

The Council discussed approaches to cost analysis and what research was available to inform the development of the sustainability plan. The Vice-Chancellor commented that the recent restructure of University committee system was not only to ensure OfS compliance but also to enable the availability of data to indicate where improvement was needed and to feed into action plans.

The Council received the report.

6. Reports from the Council Sub Committees

6.1 Nominations and Governance Committee

The Committee received an oral update on meetings of the Committee held on 5th September 2018 and 4th October 2018. The Chair drew attention to the following items. In view of the forthcoming vacancy for a staff representative on the Council, the Committee had discussed the election procedure for staff governors and considered changes to the process and a paper would be submitted to the November meeting of the Council. The review of governance effectiveness had been initiated using self-assessment via a survey tool. Recommendations and actions from the recent audit of corporate governance by the University's internal auditors would also form part of the effectiveness review.

6.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd September 2018.

Arising from the minutes, it was noted that the business covered at the meeting was picked up in the reports from the Chief Financial Officer to this meeting of the Council. The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the Committee's commendation of the work by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Human Resources in the closure of the CSKBS.

6.3 Audit Committee

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st June 2018.

It was noted that matters arising from the Health and Safety Audit were picked up in the University's Health and Safety Annual Report.

7. Report from Senate

The Vice-Chancellor gave an oral update on the meeting of Senate held on 3rd October 2018. He said that the main item to report was the formal approval of the terms of reference and membership of the new committee and task group structure. The re-structuring had been made to ensure alignment with the new regulatory framework and environment and to ensure speedy diagnosis and response to any emerging problems. He commended the University Secretary and Registrar and her team for their work in developing the new structure.

8. Internal Reports

8.1 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Council received the Health and Safety Annual Report which provided a summary of health and safety performance during 2017/18.

The Clerk drew attention to the internal audit of the University's Health and Safety Management System undertaken in February 2018. She reported that there had been a positive outcome and the audit had given a substantial level of assurance to design and operational effectiveness. The University was working through the action and recommendations from the audit.

She noted the challenge of engaging staff with the requirements of health and safety and the University had highlighted to staff the importance, for example, of carrying out risk assessments at the appropriate time.

The Council commented on the percentage (52%) of reported student illness which related to mental health and personal illness. *Secretarial note: later clarified that 'personal illness' covered illnesses that did not involve mental health issues.*

The report was noted.

8.2 Estates Strategy Update

The Chief Financial Officer provided the Council with a written update on the implementation of the Estates Strategy. He reported that the Darwin refurbishment was successfully completed in August 2018, was within budget and to a high standard which had improved the learning environment.

It was agreed that a tour of Darwin for Council members would be arranged for the November meeting.

Action: Clerk to the Council

The Chief Financial Officer advised that there would be a pause on further major estates projects while the University's Strategic Plan was reviewed.

8.3 Environmental Committee Annual Report

The Annual Report of the University's Environmental Committee was received. In discussion, the Chief Financial Officer explained that the decision to withdraw from EcoCampus and instead to progress two new standards ISO14001 and ISO5001, was made because it was cheaper. He advised that EcoCampus was a national environmental management and award scheme for higher education and its platinum award conformed with the environment management system standard ISO 14001.

The Council noted the report.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1** The Council was advised that Dr Karen Graham would shortly be leaving the University and thanked her for her contribution to its work and wished her well for the future. Dr Graham's term as a member of Council will finish on Friday, 19th October 2018.

9.2 Rev Canon Evans led prayers in thanks for the life and work of Dr Mark Goodwin. The Council noted his generosity, kindness and calmness and the great contribution he had made to the Council.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 22nd November 2018.

The Council
Action Plan from the meeting held on 4th October 2018

Minute	Agenda Item	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible
4.1	Appointment and re-appointment of Council members	To notify Ms Jones of the Council's decision	Clerk to the Council
4.3.3	Prevent	To arrange for training for new Council members	Clerk to the Council
5.2	2018/19 Recruitment Update	Item on retention and learning analytics on a future agenda	Clerk to the Council
8.2	Estates Strategy Update	To arrange a tour of Darwin at the next meeting	Clerk to the Council