NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held Wednesday 20th June 2019 at 2.00 pm in ST102/103

Present:

Mr Jonathan Day	Chair of the Council
Dr John Carlisle	
Professor Peter Childs	Acting Vice-Chancellor
Ms Gayle Ditchburn	
Rev Canon David Evans	
Ms Deirdre Finucane	
Ms Karan Gilmore	
Mr Colin Harris	
Ms Julie Jones	
Mr Phillip Lennon	
Ms Leoarna Mathias	
Professor Femi Oyebode	
Mr Richard Wallace	

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

Observer

Mr Christian Black	President Elect, Newman Students' Union

For item 4.3

Professor John Peters	Director of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship

For item 6

Ms Alison John	Director of Corporate Marketing
Mr Daniel Shaffer	Interim Registry Consultant

The meeting opened with prayers led by Canon David Evans.

The Chair welcomed Mr Christian Black, President Elect of Newman Students' Union as an observer. Mr Tom Ashford, the current President, had been appointed to a post in the University's Quality Office and finished his term on Council early; as an employee he was not eligible to attend. The Council thanked Mr Ashford for his contribution to its work.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Glen Alexander, Archbishop Bernard Longley, Mr Stephen Kenny, and Ms Elizabeth McGrath QC.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

2.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th February 2019 (UC 1M/19)

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 27th February 2019 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting.

2.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd April 2019 (UC 2M/19)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2019 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meetings

There were no matters arising.

4. Council Matters

4.1 Report from the Acting Vice-Chancellor (UC 24/19)

The Council considered a report from the Acting Vice-Chancellor which gave information on the general Higher Education (HE) environment together with important sector and institutional developments. The paper included a report on a presentation by the Director of Competition and Registration at the OfS and a summary of the recommendations of the recently published Augar Report, which recommended sweeping changes in the financing of UK higher education.

Professor Childs said that given the current political uncertainty, it was likely to be some time before the Government responded to the recommendations of the Augar Report; aspects of the Report might be used in the Comprehensive Spending Review which was expected to take

place the end of 2019 or early 2020. Professor Childs described some recommendations in the Report as positive, such as proposals to reintroduce maintenance grants and increased support for FE. But he felt that other aspects were regressive, for example the increased repayment period, which would particularly affect middle and lower-earning graduates. The more negative implications of the Report from Newman's perspective were the recommendations for reduction of the tuition fee, the likelihood that the Government would only make up shortfall in STEM courses, and the cessation of funding for Foundation Year courses. ULT had briefed staff at the all-staff meeting before the Report was published, and followed up with an email highlighting the main points once the Report was published: staff were aware of the Report, but there did not appear to be undue concern. Of more immediate concern in the current climate were the capping of tuition fees and increased competition from other institutions.

During discussion, Council noted the cost implications of the loss of the Foundation Year. The Acting Vice-Chancellor reported that a recent research paper had found students were slightly more likely to complete a Foundation Year at a University than an Access Course with an FE institution.

In a separate discussion on the Office for Students, the Acting Vice-Chancellor said that the University seemed to have fared better than average in the sector for conditions and enhanced monitoring requirements from the OfS.

Council received the report.

4.2 Access and Participation Plan (UC 25/19)

The Director of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, Professor John Peters, introduced the latest draft of the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP). He explained that the University had been required to produce an access plan for some years but the OfS had now introduced a more strategic focus with a five year plan (although there would be annual monitoring of the plan), and a change of emphasis which went beyond the enrolment of under-represented groups to how these groups were supported by the University once they had enrolled in terms of continuation, degree outcome and employment.

The University's committees had been involved throughout the drafting process, mainly the Retention and Success Task Group, but also the University Operations Team (UOT) and the University Leadership Team (ULT)). ULT had felt it important to ensure that the APP was realistic, meaningful and achievable in terms of what the University would be measured against. The OfS had recently significantly raised the importance of the APP with two HEIs having received substantial fines for 'major' access breaches, for example.

Professor Peters observed that the University's student body was remarkable in the HE sector in terms of its "under-representedness" and had the second most diverse student body in the country. The main challenges were student retention and the Black awarding gap. Over 80% of the University's students were either mature, disabled or BAME. Commuter students were seen to be a disadvantaged group as they often lived at home for reasons of cost or family/caring responsibilities: over 90% of Newman's students commuted. Professor Peters noted the intersections of sources of disadvantage: about three quarters of the University's students had more than one category of disadvantage and about half were from the bottom quartile in terms of deprivation.

In respect of the Black awarding gap, Professor Peters said that the OfS had yet to produce figures on the explained and unexplained gap. Some of the gap was explained by socio-economic class and previous educational qualifications and the OfS's target was to remove this explainable gap in the next five years and in the longer to remove the unexplained gap. The University was looking at improved and targeted mentoring, based on the available literature and on work which had been effective at other universities. The methodology would be an action based iterative process.

With regard to Council's monitoring of progress with the implementation of the APP, it was agreed that Tables 2 a, b and c in the APP Appendix could be adapted for this use. The process of Council monitoring would also be included in the APP.

Action Director of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship/ Clerk to the Council

The Chair made some specific recommendations in respect of the Catholic identity of the University and to acknowledge the life and writing of John Henry Newman and the Catholic faith of Paulo Freire whose writing had inspired the University's pedagogy of partnership.

Action: Director of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship

It was noted that although the OfS had set a 'soft' deadline of 1st July the University would like to meet the deadline to avoid any possible delay of approval of the APP which would have implications for tuition fees. As such, editing of the APP could continue up to the deadline.

The Council **resolved UC 9/2019:**

> To delegate to the Acting Vice-Chancellor the submission of the APP as it stood, subject to non-material amendment. If material changes were necessary, the APP would have to be submitted to the next meeting of Council on 18th July 2019, and the 1st July deadline be missed.

5. Governance Matters

5.1 Vice-Chancellor Recruitment (UC 26/19)

The Clerk to the Council gave an update on the recruitment of the Vice-Chancellor. At the Council meeting of the 3rd April 2019, the Chair put forward the search process and Council agreed to the proposed process. The discussion included the establishment of a Search Committee. The Search Committee had been established and had its first meeting on the 15th May. The Committee had engaged Odgers Berndtson to support and advise on the search, not through a tendering process because Odgers Berndtson, who had undertaken the process in 2016, had agreed to complete the search for the same fee. The Committee and ULT considered that this, together with the relationships and organisational knowledge that had previously been established by the team at Odgers Berndtson, was sufficient value for money for a tendering process not to be necessary. The value for money paperwork had been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

The first of the scheduled Town Hall consultation meetings with staff and students had taken place on the 17th of June with a second meeting to follow on 21st June 2019.

Council received the update.

5.2 Membership (UC 27/19)

The Clerk to the Council reported that at its meeting on the 23rd May 2019, the Nominations and Governance Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that Mr Phillip Lennon be re-appointed for a second three-year term of office.

The Council **resolved UC 10/2019**

To re-appoint Mr Phillip Lennon to a further three-year term of office as a Council member and as Chair of the Audit Committee.

6. Recruitment Plan (UC 28/19)

The Director of Corporate Marketing and Registry Consultant attended the meeting for this item.

[REDACTED]

7. Financial Update for 2018/19 (UC 29/19)

The Council was provided with a financial update relating to 2018/9.

[REDACTED]

8. Financial Matters for 2019/20

8.1 Applications and Enrolments for 2019/20 (UC 30/19)

[REDACTED]

The report was noted.

8.2 Budget 2019/20 (UC 31/19)

The CFO presented, for adoption, the 2019/20 annual budget. He said that the budget paper had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC) at its meeting on 23 May 2019 and, subject to the provision of additional cost management information (included at Annex G), the Committee had agreed to support the adoption of this budget.

[REDACTED]

The OfS had revised timescales and now required financial forecasts to be submitted by the end of November each year (previously this had been by the end of September and before then by the end of July). Due to the current OfS deadline, it was management's intention to prepare updated financial forecasts for consideration at the November meetings of FGPC and Council. These will then be submitted to the OfS in late November.

The Council **resolved UC 11/2019**

To adopt the budget

9. Financial Regulations (UC 32/19)

The CFO advised Council members that the University was undertaking a cyclic review of the financial regulations. The regulations were based on a model set of regulations produced by CIPFA for FE/HE institutions and issued in 2013. As the model had not been updated since the last review of the Financial Regulations in 2015 no significant changes were being proposed to the updated regulations. Minor changes had been made in order to reflect changes to structures and titles and the move to the Office of Students as the regulatory body.

The regulations had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting in May 2019 and the Committee had resolved to recommend approval. The Audit Committee had considered the regulations at its meeting on the morning of 20th June 2019 and had recommended approval subject to spelling corrections and the following amendments: the deletion of paragraphs 12-16 on p 51 of the document; at para 41, page 54, the addition of "It would be expected that at least 2 or 3 tenders will be returned ..."

The Council **resolved UC12/2019**

To approve the updated Financial Regulations

10. Treasury Management Policy (UC 33/19)

A review of the Treasury Management Policy was undertaken every three years by the Finance and General Purposes Committee before being taken to Council for approval. The CFO reported that at its meeting in May 2019 the Committee had reviewed the Policy and recommended to Council that it be approved. There had been no significant changes since the Policy was last reviewed in 2016.

The Council **resolved UC 13/2019**

To approve the updated Treasury Management Policy

11. Reports from the Council Committees

11.1 Nominations and Governance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2019 were noted and received.

11.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 29th January 2019, 18th February 2019 and 7th March 2019 were noted and received.

12. Reports from Senate

The minutes of the meetings held on 27th March 2019 and 15th May 2019 were noted and received.

13. Internal Reports

13.1 Office for Students update

The Council received an update on the new announcements and correspondence received from the OfS.

The Clerk to the Council reported that the OfS had published today a paper on governance, and that this would be considered by the Nominations and Governance Committee.

14. Any Other Business

Council members discussed matters arising from the recently published *Guardian* league tables (2020). The University had received good ratings for Criminology and History, but less in social work and education, which was surprising. Similarly, in view of previous results in *The Economist* about the high value added by the University, members were surprised to see the lower score for this in the *Guardian* tables. The Acting Vice-Chancellor explained that the education category, for example, covered a wide range of courses and not

just Initial Teacher Education and that there had been some issues on some of the other University courses in the education category. History and Criminology had good scores in the National Student Survey. The University would investigate the reasons for the lower score in the value-added column.

Action Chief Financial Officer

15. Date of the Next Meeting

18th July 2019 at 11 am.

The meeting closed with prayers led by Canon David Evans.

The Council
Action Plan from the meeting held on 20th June 2019

Minute	Agenda Item	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible
4.2	Access and Participation Plan	1. To incorporate recommendations made in respect of Catholic identity. 2. To adapt tables 2 a, b and c for use by Council in monitoring the implementation of the APP	Director of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship
6	Recruitment Plan	Videos produced by the Marketing Department would be placed on the Council Moodle site.	Clerk to the Council
14.	Any Other Business	To investigate the reasons for the lower than expected score in the value added column of the Guardian League Table.	Chief Financial Officer