The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

The Senate, 24 June 2020

President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides summary information on current and forthcoming developments, both internal and external, for the information of Senate members. The President & Vice-Chancellor will introduce the Report at the meeting and members will have the opportunity to raise questions. This report is structured around each of the themes in the University Strategic Plan, after a section about the external environment. Where information relates to more than one strategic theme it is included under the most relevant theme.

1.   EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1   COVID-19

▪   Student Number Controls

The Department for Education has published details of temporary student number controls (SNCs) that will apply to full-time undergraduate students and foundation years starting in the 2020/21 academic year. The overall cap is designed to prevent damaging competitive behaviour between institutions for students in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The SNC is calculated from entrant numbers for 2018/20, base growth rate (based on provider forecast data) and an additional 5% growth rate. If an institution exceeds its individual allocation, the DfE plans to reduce funding available to it through the student finance system in the subsequent academic year. These revised fee limits will apply to all students on full-time courses in all years enrolled at that provider for the duration of 2021/22 for undergraduate, postgraduate Initial Teacher Training and postgraduate pre-registration healthcare and social work courses. The announcement also provides institutions with an option to bid for an additional 10,000 allocations (5,000 for certain specified courses and 5,000 for healthcare courses).

▪   **TUoS interest:** The University will be working to ensure that our recruitment numbers are below the cap and determine whether to bid for the additional proposed allocations. While the need for time-limited SNCs is understandable, the University will work with representative bodies and mission groups to advocate against SNCs becoming a long-term measure due to potential unintended consequences, including limiting student choice and damaging institutional growth.

▪   Reopening campuses

Most UK universities are planning to offer a blended approach of face-to-face and online teaching in the next academic year. This approach will allow students to receive the full student experience and prevent deferral, while at the same time allowing universities to implement social distancing on their campuses. Universities UK has released *Principles and Considerations: Emerging from Lockdown*, a framework within which institutions can operate according to their specific circumstances. DfE guidance on the reopening of HE buildings and

campuses notes the autonomy of providers but states that it expects institutions to be open for the 2020/21 academic year and highlights the importance of meeting consumer protection law obligations.

- **TUoS interest:** There are a great deal of complexities to be considered when making decisions about reopening campus. The University will be as flexible as possible and respond to changes in the national regulations. We are currently planning for a blended approach to course delivery for the start of the next academic year, where large lectures will take place virtually but students will still have face-to-face learning in the form of seminars and laboratory work. At the same time, we are reopening campus for the most urgent research activity so that that can recommence as soon as possible.

- Government support package

  On 4 May, the Government announced a set of measures to support higher education financial stability in the short-term. Alongside the SNCs introduced to stabilise the recruitment system, the government announced a proposed new temporary Office for Students' (OfS) condition requiring institutions to refrain from conduct which could have a material negative effect on the interests of students or the stability or integrity of the sector, including inappropriate use of unconditional offers. The OfS consulted on the proposed condition and the response and implementation is expected this month. Universities have been advised, first and foremost, to make use of the schemes that are available to other businesses and organisations, such as the Furlough scheme, to support its financial sustainability. The additional measures contained in the DfE support package do not represent any new money for the sector but are designed to ease short-term cashflow problems. The measures include bringing forward £2.6bn of tuition fee payments of £100m of QR-related research funding into the current academic year. The announcement also included creation of a joint [Ministerial University Research Sustainability Taskforce](#) to act as an advisory forum to recommend how to sustain the university research base. The Government has stated that it will consider support for any institution that encounters acute financial difficulty during this period, but that such support will come with regulatory conditions attached and may see those institutions required to alter their mission and structure considerably.

- **TUoS interest:** While the package may help immediately vulnerable institutions, it does not address the financial sustainability in the medium to long term for institutions. The University's response to the OfS consultation disagreed with the proposed new regulatory condition due to serious implications for institutional autonomy and its wide scope. We are instead encouraging the OfS to consider the strength of UUK's proposed fair admissions agreement, allowing universities to self-regulate. The University of Sheffield is working with regional stakeholders, including MPs and peers, representative and mission groups to encourage government to urgently put in place measures to secure the medium to long term financial sustainability of the sector, particularly in relation to research capacity and ensuring we have a welcoming environment for international students.

1.2 Pathways for Potential

- The Russell Group has published a report, *Pathways for Potential*, setting out proposals to improve opportunities for disadvantaged and under-represented students. Although it was compiled before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russell Group argues that the current crisis underlines the importance of creating new pathways for talented students regardless of background. Analysis in the report suggests that universities will not meet the OfS targets for eliminating access

gaps as to do so would require Russell Group institutions to admit all current POLAR Quintile 1 students with 3 A Levels regardless of grades achieved by 2026 and all Quintile 1 entrants to the HE system regardless of whether they had achieved an academic qualification by 2035.

- Instead, the Russell Group is proposing a three-pronged approach to tackle inequality throughout the education system. First, by universities fulfilling their obligations to diversify their campuses and supporting students to reach their full potential by embedding evidence of good practice across their access and participation efforts. Second, the right regulatory incentives should be in place to support further progress and ensure universities can pursue long-term and collaborative work to widen the pool of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Third, a wider drive to tackle inequality throughout the education system, starting with early years, with a new ten-year national strategy to join up the relevant Government Departments and other key stakeholders.

- **TUoS interest:** the University recognises the enormous role it plays in widening access to world-leading higher education for disadvantaged students, and that we still have work to do before we achieve fair access between the most advantaged students and the most disadvantaged. At the same time, it is right that work should take place at every stage of the educational life cycle to enhance the prospects of young people. The University works closely with local schools and colleges through its outreach work to improve opportunities for prospective students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and would support a national effort of the kind proposed by the Russell Group to enhance that work.

1.3 Immigration

- The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2019-21 has passed its second reading stage in the House of Commons. The purpose of this Bill is to end rights to freedom of movement under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration. Prior to the debate, UUk produced a briefing note for parliamentarians that called for an extension to free movement for EU students who commence their studies in 2020/21 but who may not be able to travel to the UK until after 1 January 2021. It also requested confirmation of the Graduate Immigration Route immigration rules, allowing those who have studied in the UK to remain and work here for two years after graduating.

- **TUoS interest:** The University will continue to lobby for changes that support the mobility of international students in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is incredibly important that students are not deterred from studying in the UK because of uncertainty about their rights and visa restrictions that may follow from being unable to travel at the start of the academic year. At the same time, we will continue to monitor the impact of the immigration changes on our students and staff, and provide appropriate advice and support to individuals.

1.4 Brexit

- The UK Government published draft legal texts in an effort to reboot the Brexit process after a third round of negotiations on the future partnership between the UK and the EU concluded on 15 May. The fourth round of negotiations ended on 5 June but it appears there remains significant differences on issues such as fishing and the level playing field. There has not been any update on whether the UK could participate in EU programmes that are important to higher education teaching and research. A high-level EU summit will meet in June to discuss overall progress of negotiations.

- **TUoS interest:** The University's Brexit Coordination Group maintains oversight of, and coordinates planning and activity regarding the UK's future relationship

with the EU, and manages the institutional risks of the UK and the EU not reaching an agreement on their future relationship. We will continue to lobby for the fullest participation possible in EU schemes like Horizon and Erasmus.

1.5 Graduate premium and graduate earnings

- The IFS has published a [report](#) on the impact of UG degrees on lifetime earnings for English domiciled students. Even after accounting for HE, students having higher prior attainment and coming from more advantaged backgrounds than those who did not attend HE, lifetime net earnings(taking into account the progressivity of the tax system) for men and women with HE experience are £130K and £100K higher respectively. The IFS concludes that although the government only recoups part of the funding it gives out in tuition fees and maintenance loans this loss is more than offset by higher income tax receipts. The study does not examine the personal and social benefits of a HE education.

- The latest Longitudinal Education Outcomes data was released on 19 March 2020, for the 2017/18 tax year. It suggests (i) that the graduate premium may be declining slightly over time, particularly when looking at earnings ten years after graduation, and (ii) the disparity in earnings power between STEM subjects and some Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences subjects continues.

- The IFS report and LEO data will feed into the work government is undertaking as part of its response to the Augar Review and the approach to addressing "low quality courses".

- **TUoS interest:** While the government continues to state that it recognises the wider benefits of degrees, in the absence of other data, salary is becoming the main metric in determining value to the individual and to society more widely. The University is considering how it can improve its relative standing in these metrics through learning and teaching improvements and an increased focus on employability, recognising that graduate outcomes influence our position in sector-wide quality measures, e.g. the TEF.

1.6 Mentally healthy universities

- UUK has published a refreshed version of its strategic framework, _Stepchange: mentally healthy universities_, to mark Mental Health Awareness Week. It calls on universities to prioritise the mental health of their students and staff by taking a whole university approach to mental health, particularly at this time when students and staff are adapting to a new way of living and working.

- **TUoS interest:** The University is prioritising the mental health needs of students and staff in these difficult times. Students are still able to access the full range of student support programmes, and additional support is being offered to those who are self-isolating or continuing to live in university accommodation. The University has actively promoted Mental Health Awareness Week and continues to look to improve its support to students and staff through the work of its Mental Health Strategy Group, chaired by Professor Wyn Morgan.

1.7 Governance performance and challenges

- An AdvanceHE [report](#), based on survey response from 296 individuals in 20 institutions, has found that the sector considers its governance to be largely effective. However, the report also highlights areas for improvement. Of particular note are the need for more effective performance reviews of governing body members, including Chairs, a renewed focus on improving diversity on governing bodies, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

- **TUoS interest:** the University has recently commenced its regular Council Effectiveness Review that will carefully consider the effectiveness of the

University's governance processes, as well as looking at issues including diversity on the governing body and the system by which members are performance reviewed.

1.8   Knowledge Exchange Concordat

- UUK and GuildHE have published the [Knowledge Exchange Concordat](), designed to complement the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) and help improve how universities and other research organisations collaborate with business. The Concordat, which is supported by Research England and the National Centre for Universities and Businesses, states that it should be a mechanism by which universities can consider their performance in Knowledge Exchange and make a commitment to improvement in those areas that are consistent with priorities and expertise. The Concordat outlines eight guiding principles for universities to follow, including establishing a clear knowledge exchange mission, putting in place policies to pursue it, and engaging with others.

- **TUoS interest:** the University participated in the KEF pilot and has developed a knowledge exchange strategy to underpin its work in this area. The University is pioneering world-leading collaboration between higher education and industry through the work of the AMRC and in other areas.

2.   EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1   Covid-19 impact on Admissions

- We continue to consider both our own internal picture and that gained from UK and global intelligence. Many surveys show a forecast reduction in the number of applicants expected to start their courses in the Autumn. Our own internal picture is more mixed, with a reduction in some later applications being submitted but good levels of engagement from our current Home and International offer-holders in the range of activities being provided to help them stay in touch with our plans and preparing to join us after the summer. Our understanding of the impact of Covid-19 developments will be clearer in July/August as we receive results from applicants as normal and the VISA and travel position is more definite.

2.2   Undergraduate Admissions

- Home applications remain roughly in line with last year, with a further health increase in our International applications. However, accepted offers are currently down by a long margin. It is difficult to make a comparison to previous years as the UCAS deadline for Home applicants to make their choices was moved from 5 May to 18 June. Looking at the number of applicants still to make their decisions both at Sheffield and across the sector, we expect to reach the 30 June end of main cycle date in a position roughly similar to last year. Despite an overall increase in applications, UG Home recruitment remains a risk and action is being taken to recover our overall position and allow a focus on enhancing entrant quality, in addition to work to secure the 2020 entry cohort in light of the covid-19 outbreak.

2.3   Postgraduate Taught Admissions

- Home applications have recovered from their reduced position earlier in the cycle to just a little above the same number as at this stage last year. This is recent growth so suggests applicants may be considering further study next year possibly as a result of a less buoyant employment market overall. International applications are still well ahead of last year as are offers and accepts, but there has been a reduction in the rate of new applications and accepts over the last few months as the Covid-19 situation has developed in the

UK and further afield. There is however a larger number of applicants having accepted an offer for pre-sessional English courses this year which gives a level of confidence that many applicants are still hoping to travel to Sheffield and start their degree in the Autumn.

2.4   Postgraduate Research Admissions

▪   The postgraduate research application position is not particularly positive, with both Home and International applications below last year's levels, and continuing the downward trend seen over the last few years. Applicants are still accepting their offers however, and acceptance rates are more positive than the application position initially suggests. Funding concerns continue to dampen the market and are exacerbated by the current Covid-19 position facing many governments across the globe.

2.5   Annual Planning Cycle

▪   The Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor has led a series of meetings to discuss proposed Faculty and Professional Services plans for 2020/21. However, only two Faculties were discussed at UEB in March before the decision was taken to halt further discussions. On 19 May UEB discussed and approved a paper outlining University and Faculty priorities coming from the 2019/20 planning round, accounting for reprioritisation of activities in light of Covid-19. UEB leads are to review their plans in line with these priorities. These priorities will inform budget setting and will be considered by Council in due course. Accompanying the development of the Strategic Plan, a new style of planning round is being considered for roll-out in 2020/21. This will use a performance framework as the basis for discussion and in the first year, Faculties, Departments and Professional Services will be asked to revise their own strategies to re-align to the new University level Strategic Plan.

2.6   Student Number Forecasts

▪   Faculties have developed departmental student recruitment targets for the financial forecast period, including intake targets for 2020. The resulting targets were independently reviewed by the UEB Strategic Advisory Group, Student Numbers and Fees prior to consideration and approval by UEB. These forecasts form the basis for scenario modelling to consider the possible impact of Covid-19 on recruitment.

▪   Due to Covid-19 the Department for Education is implementing a Student Number Cap on Home fee status Undergraduate students for 2020/21. This cap is expected to allow for an additional Home/EU student recruitment above that forecast during the 2019/20 planning round, due to the cap being set on forecasts provided to the OfS in the previous cycle. Principles are currently being discussed on how to maximise the benefits of using the capacity this cap provides.

2.7   Grant Letter

▪   The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, wrote to the OfS on 1 January 2020 to confirm the teaching grant allocation to the sector for 2020/21. The grant of £1,479 million is 0.5% lower in cash terms than 2019/20.The letter asked the OfS to focus on prioritising allocations for high cost subjects, world leading small and specialist institutions, and the student premium as well as ensuring value for money while focussing on priority areas. The OfS was also asked to consider how to best fund the additional costs of institutions operating in London. The OfS has consulted on how it should implement the necessary savings in recurrent funding having regard to the priorities set out by the

Secretary of State. This consultation was ahead of a full review of the funding method from the 2021-22 financial year, which was planned from April 2020.

▪ The University received a letter from the OfS the week of 11 May detailing the teaching grant allocation for 2020/21. Headline changes from the 2019/20 grants amounts are detailed below:

- The teaching grant for 2020/21 is £23.4m, a reduction of £1.1m (4.7%) compared with the 2019/20 grant.
- High-cost subject based funding has been cut by £0.8m or 4.4%. This stems from a reduction to the overall sector funding for high cost subjects, as well as an increase in student numbers in the sector that this funding has to support (and therefore a lower funding rate per student),
- The University has seen some reductions to most of the targeted allocations including intensive postgraduate provisions and Erasmus reflecting a reduction in number of relevant students in these classifications at Sheffield.
- Premiums to support successful student outcomes (previously referred to as widening participation) and disabled students remain largely unchanged.

2.8 National University Performance Metrics / Tables

▪ **HESA Performance Indicators**
The HESA PIs reflect the diversity of UG students across the sector and include a benchmark. The latest figures, for the 2018/19 academic year, show that:
o Sheffield remains consistently above the benchmark for entrants from state schools and colleges and young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.
o The PIs suggest a fall in the proportion of mature full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.
o Sheffield continues to perform well against the benchmark for non-continuation of young full-time first degree entrants.

▪ **QS World University Subject Rankings**
The rankings were published on 4 March 2020. They are based on the results of academic and employer reputation surveys, and research impact (measured by citations per paper and an indicator of author productivity and influence based on citations).Overall performance across the 5 broad subject bands ranges from 75th for Arts and Humanities to $=165^{th}$ for Natural Sciences. There are six subject areas in the top 50, with 2020 (and 2019) rank:
1. Library and Information Studies – 2nd (2nd)
2. Architecture / Built Environment – 23rd (21st)
3. Archaeology – 29th (40th)
4. Development Studies – $= 37^{th}$ (39th)
5. Engineering (Civil and Structural) – $=47^{th}$ (44th)
6. Geography – 46th (43rd)
This featured in regional news.

2.9 National Student Survey (NSS)

▪ The NSS went live on 10th February and initially weekly response rates were broadly within 2% of 2019's survey The disruption caused by Covid-19 has slowed the rate of increase. However, the University has reached the NSS 50% threshold response rate required for publication of results.
▪ Headlines include:
- Overall response rate was 60%.
- 37 out of 40 departments met the reporting threshold (93%).

- 82 out of 123 programmes met the threshold (67%).
- Only 4 programmes out of the 27 with 50 or more eligible students did not meet the threshold (15%).

- The results of the survey will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 1 July, although with the proviso that 'this date is subject to change in response to the current coronavirus pandemic'.

- The OfS have also stated that 'The UK funders and regulators will look at the data when received to assess any impact the coronavirus outbreak has had on the results and make professional judgements about its statistical reliability,'

2.10 Programme Level Approach

- The Enabling PLA project board met for the first time with a revised, more balanced membership including representation from across the faculties. The team is undertaking further work to explore the opportunities around systems and processes in enabling PLA. Two new stakeholder forums have been established; a Subject Matter Expert forum (experts in inclusivity, employability, and sustainability); and the Student PLA Forum, to give a clearer voice to student perspectives.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on colleagues and students in many significant ways and in recognition of this and, in particular, the heavy pressures that colleagues are under at the moment redesigning teaching and assessment for online delivery, the decision has been taken to make changes to the timeline for PLA to the following:
  - Summer 2020: Departments reflect on Covid-19 response from a PLA perspective.
  - 2020-21: Departments review and embed Employability, Inclusivity and Sustainability within their programmes and further embed any positive changes made to programmes in response to Covid-19.
  - 2021-22: Departments consolidate their PLA plans, focusing on areas of greatest need.
  - 2022-23: PLA values embedding in Learning & Teaching design, development and delivery.

2.11 Programme and Module Evaluations

- Work continues to introduce digital feedback from students on their programme and module experience. The anticipated go-live will be in Semester 1 of 2020/21 although the scale of the launch may be reduced due to the potential impact of Covid-19. The system and process of evaluation will be known as 'Tell Us' within the University. The name reflects the move from viewing this as an 'evaluation' process towards it being one part of the overall student voice dialogue, and as a reflective feedback tool for practitioners.

- The task and finish group, led by Professor Mary Vincent, has defined the principles of implementation and ongoing operation. A panel of internal experts is defining a set of core questions and institutional guidelines for deploying surveys, effecting the technical implementation, developing business processes and training resources and departmental and other key stakeholder engagement.

- In light of the impact of Covid-19, departments have been advised to run Semester 2 2019/20 evaluations using existing processes where it is possible to do so, with the appreciation that some departments may find it difficult to undertake evaluations this semester.

- The FLTC will be responsible, through tabled discussion and review, for ensuring that each department continues to have an individual action plan in place for any

programmes for modules where Semester 2 evaluations have highlighted areas which need to be addressed, and that the plans are appropriate and being progressed.

2.12 Student Support Services

- The Disability & Dyslexia Support Service and Careers Service have collaborated on a successful bid to Santander for a project to improve opportunities and outcomes for students on the autism spectrum. The University is one of 20 across the UK partnering with Santander on this initiative. An award of £25k (matched internally) will support paid internships with SMEs for students with autism to provide work experience and improve graduate employment prospects. It will also enable more SMEs to benefit from the diverse skills and strengths of students with autism.

- Student Support Services will continue to be available online throughout the coronavirus (Covid-19) situation: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/coronavirus/support. Student support continues via telephone, email and virtual meets.

3.   RESEARCH AND ITS IMPACT

3.1   Research Awards

- See Finance, section 7.3, below.

3.2   Research Development

- There are a number of quick turnaround research-funding opportunities available through UKRI and others relating to Covid-19, which researchers are being encouraged to apply for. The University has received a number of awards which must be started quickly.

- PGR student projects are impacted in a number of ways by the current pause in on-campus activity. UKRI- and University-funded students are eligible to apply for a costed extension to their period of research if they are in their final year.

3.3   Research Excellence Framework

- The Research Excellence Framework is on hold temporarily with the original submission deadline of 27 November 2020 no longer applying. Research England has undertaken a short survey to seek views as to how to restart the process, taking into consideration the likely effect of the pause on impact case studies. Any new deadline will be announced with a minimum of eight months' notice. . It will be important for them to find a balance between the concerns of the sector and not introducing a delay which becomes so lengthy that it distracts HE from proactively recovering from the effects of campus closures on research projects, grant applications and PGR support and recruitment. The deadline of 31 July 2020 for the staff census will remain.

4.   STRATEGIC PARTNERS

4.4   Alumni Volunteering

- **Student recruitment**

  Work has taken place to facilitate alumni involvement in the upcoming virtual open days. Alumni profiles will be added to the TAP platform, and alumni will be available for Q&A with prospective students during the open days. The University has reached out to Sheffield's international alumni groups in China, Malaysia, India, Honk Kong, USA and Mexico, to ask if they can share their experiences to inspire prospective students. The University is asking them to pre-record content for online offer holder sessions - to then add to

departments' subject specific webinars. Alumni are being contacted to host virtual Q&As to increase the interaction between alumni and offer holders.

This is a pilot and it is hoped to significantly increase the scope of alumni to offer holder interaction in the next years.

- **Student Employability**

In spite of the lockdown, 196 alumni mentors completed the spring ementoring programme (which ran from February- May), providing one to one advice and support to the same number of students from across the Faculties. Alumni mentors provided insight into a broad range of careers, as well as helping students build their confidence and networking skills. The University is facilitating alumni volunteer support for the Discover programmes in STEM, Law, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, connecting Y12/13 students from disadvantaged backgrounds with young alumni in related professions for virtual networking, advice and Q&A. Work is taking place on a new project to run a series of online leadership masterclasses over the Summer to this year's graduating students. These will be delivered by highly successful UK and international alumni who are leaders in their fields. There is work to increase alumni volunteer support for student and graduate employability and strengthening our collaboration.

- **Volunteers Week**

During Volunteers Week (1-7 June) there will be a social media campaign to thank and celebrate over 1000 alumni volunteers who've given their time to support our students. The University will also be sharing stories of how our alumni across the world are volunteering to help in their communities during the pandemic, and has collaborated with the Students' Union to produce a video celebrating stories from students, staff and alumni.

- **Updated targets**

	2019/20 to date*	2019/20 Target (Pre-Covid)	2018/19	2017/18
Alumni volunteers	726	1000	999	979
Volunteer hours	8,504	11,500 (*8,000)	10,752	10,277
Volunteer instances	949	1,200	1,194	1,195
Philanthropic prospects engaged in volunteering	91 (13%)	10%	144 (14%)	141
Student beneficiaries	5,323	5,000	5,307	4,667

*As of 29.05.2020 *revised post-covid volunteer hours target set in April, due to cancelled events March-July.*

5. OUR PLACE: LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

5.1 COVID19 impact on students abroad

- The University is tracking Sheffield students abroad, in collaboration with academic departments and other professional services. We have also been lobbying for increased government repatriation efforts via Universities UK

International. The majority of students on managed study abroad and exchange programmes have now returned home. Those remaining abroad are being supported by the University and advised to register with the local embassy and follow FCO travel advice

5.2 Outbound Visits:

- **India Mission April 2020**

  The P&VC's visit to India has been postponed to 2020/21. The main aims are to raise the University's profile, engage with key policy makers and discuss potential collaborative activity with prestigious Indian institutions. Video conferences are being planned, in the interim, with leaders of IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, Jamia Hamdard University, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, and Indian Institute of Science.

- **Priority University Partners**

  With travel commitments postponed or cancelled, activities with priority university partners continue to take place where possible through virtual platforms.

- **Worldwide Universities Network:**

  The University of Lausanne (UNIL) has now formally joined the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN). The University of Sydney will be concluding its membership at the end of the WUN year (31 July 2020).

5.3 Communications

- President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield Professor Koen Lamberts and Executive Director of the University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) Steve Foxley, were interviewed for Forbes magazine to discuss how the AMRC has created a blueprint for manufacturing innovation across the north of England.
- The Desert Garden Appeal received widespread national BBC coverage, and regional broadcasts, Mail Online and the Independent. This led to an increase in donations to the appeal.
- Researchers from the University of Sheffield found that young men are most likely to break lockdown rules; this story received national coverage on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, across local, regional and international BBC channels as well as national newspapers.
- The University featured in regional coverage highlighting how staff and students have helped in the fight against coronavirus, stories included donating 160,000 items of PPE to local hospitals, sequencing over 1,000 COVID-19 genomes and hosting vaccine trials.
- Drawing on research from across the university, the University's first weekly podcast series (Coronavirus Examined) covers an array of topics including working from home, the value of greenspaces/ nature for our wellbeing and comparisons between this and other historical crises.
  You can listen to the podcast here: Spotify download / Podbean download.

6.   PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

6.1 Regional Engagement

- As a regional anchor institution, the University is represented on the newly-formed South Yorkshire COVID-19 Response Group, led by Dan Jarvis, Mayor of the SCR. The Group comprises South Yorkshire's private sector, business bodies, universities, trade unions, local authorities and community groups. It is

focused on long-term regional recovery after the crisis, as well as showcasing the contribution the region's businesses are making to help the national effort and communicating, and lobbying with one voice.

- The University's Head of Regional Engagement is also part of the Economic Intelligence Group, which is feeding evidence to the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum and the Mayoral-led economic recovery plan.

6.2 Cultural response

- The University has submitted a 'COVID-19 Response Fund' proposal with cultural partners across the city. Using academic expertise and creative industry insight, the proposal looks to measure the impact of the pandemic on creativity in the city and how cultural industries can be supported to diversify. The Director of City & Culture has also worked with cultural partners in the city to develop a digital platform to enable the delivery of and easy access to online events. The University is also planning for the delivery - both physically and virtually - of two major events in the autumn: Festival of the Mind in September and Off the Shelf in October.

6.3 Success and Achievement

- A £1.2m award to the Institute for Sustainable Food to lead a research network to build sustainable and resilient food systems.
- University scientists successfully sequenced two whole genomes of COVID-19. These were then published in a global database to help track the virus. Sheffield scientists have joined a national consortium, backed by the UK government, to help fight COVID-19.
- University Neuroscientists were presented with the Queen's Anniversary Prize at a reception at Buckingham Palace.
- Engineers are collaborating to manufacture face shields for doctors and healthcare workers using 3D printers. The story received strong engagement on social media and quickly met the initial £10k fundraising goal. This target has now been extended to £15k.
- The Minister for Business and Industry Nadhim Zahawi MP visited the University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) Cymru to launch the Aerospace Sector Deal – One Year On report.
- The Engineering Heartspace was shortlisted for two prestigious architectural awards.
- Academics from Medicine, Dentistry and Health were invited to take part in a prestigious innovation programme that recognises them as leaders in their field.
- Dr Claire Corkhill (Materials Science and Engineering) won the Pam Liversidge OBE Award for Engineering at the 2020 Inspirational Women of Sheffield Awards.
- Professor Joan Cordiner (Chemical and Biological Engineering) has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- PhD researcher Kirsty Smitten (Chemistry) was featured in Forbes 30 under 30 Europe list for Science and Healthcare.

6.4 COVID-19 Communications

Corporate Communications worked as part of the COVID-19 Incident Management Team to provide a broad range of internal and external communications to keep our staff, students and local community up to date with the evolving situation. This has included daily emails to staff and students, regular updates via social media and sometimes hourly updates to FAQs on our website.

6.4 Events Held

- The Krebs Lecture, entitled 'harnessing evolution to create new medicines' took place on 26 February, delivered by Sir Greg Winter, CBE FRS FMedSci, 2018 Nobel Prize Winner for Chemistry. 400 people attended.
- The 11th annual alumni reception at the House of Lords took place on 4 March, hosted by the P&VC and the Rt Hon the Lord Blunkett. 200 alumni attended.
- The Institute for Sustainable Food official launch event, at the Royal Society, London on 16 March, was postponed to March 2021 due to the coronavirus outbreak.

7. CHALLENGE OF RESOURCE

7.1 Financial Results to 31 January 2020

- The financial results for the quarter ending 30 April 2020 are included as item 21 on the Senate agenda.

7.2 Research

- New awards for the last 12 months to the end of February 2020 stand at £168.8m (£145.7m excluding AMRC). This is a decrease of £4.7m (2.7%) on February 2019The main reason for this fall is that there are £8.7m less Catapult funds in the February 2020 figures compared to February 2019.
- There have been 3 new awards over £1m since the last report, £1.9m and £1.3m from the EPSRC to the Faculties of Engineering and Science respectively and £1.3m from the European Commission to the Faculty of Social Science
- The value of new awards for the 12 months to February 2020 has seen small rises in the UK Government and RCUK sponsor categories of £1.4m and £0.8m respectively, w with falls in the Industry (£1m) and Overseas (£6.7m) sponsor categories.
- There has been a rise in the overall number of new awards opened for the 12 months to February 2020 (891), compared to February 2019 (835). There are 92 more UK Government Catapult awards in the February 2020 awards compared to February 2019. Overall the number of new awards has risen in the UK Government (+99) and in the RCUK sponsor categories (+14), but has fallen in all other sponsor categories, with the biggest being 22 fewer Charity awards.
- As at February 2020, research grants work in progress (research order book), which excludes capital projects, stands at £296.2m (£278.8m excluding AMRC). This is an increase of £22.8m compared to February 2019.

8. POWER OF PEOPLE

8.1 Covid-19 Update

In adapting to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Covid-19 Incident Management Group has worked with HR to implement the following actions:

- Established an evolving set of staff facing FAQs.
- Established support and guidance for Heads of Departments (HoDs) comprising a live managers' guidance document and regular weekly briefings for HoDs.
- Arranged frequent regular meetings with the joint trade unions to ensure they are kept up to date with activity and can raise queries or concerns directly with the University.
- Supported the transition of the vast majority of staff to working from home, with dedicated information and a clear approach to health and safety.
- Ensured that payroll activity can operate remotely for employees and casual workers.
- Implemented a review of all recruitment activity at all stages to ensure any further spend on staffing is limited to those posts determined to be essential or

- financially beneficial. A new approvals process is now in place for all new recruitment, including requests for extensions to fixed term contracts.
- Deployed the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme as appropriate across the University to recover a proportion of the salary costs of those unable to undertake their jobs remotely.
- Following the Government's announcement of an extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, further discussions are taking place around whether this can be utilised beyond the current staff currently furloughed by the University.
- Connected with partner bodies across the city to ensure information is shared and joined up, with discussions over potential redeployment and sharing of staff. This is linked to work around staff volunteering to ensure that appropriate liabilities and legal mechanisms are in place.
- A review of timescales and mechanisms for normal people management processes including Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS - appraisals), promotions and reward cycles and academic probations have been completed.
- Instigated a pause in the promotions/annual reward processes until at least Autumn 2020.
- Led work to develop a framework to support the reopening of parts of the University campus, notably our research facilities in line with UEB agreed prioritisation, in a way which reduces risks of infection and complies with Government guidance. This framework is now being adapted to include library facilities and then teaching spaces.
- Proceeding with disciplinary, capability and grievance processes and some structural change processes only where it is in the wider interests to do so (e.g. if not going ahead were to cause additional stress or uncertainty for those involved) and are in discussions with trade unions over each of these cases.
- The HR Department is continuing to review and respond to the changing situation and guidance provided by Government to support our workforce through this crisis. We are also exploring the longer term implications and actions needed if the current restrictions continue for longer than initially expected, including what will need to happen at the point the restrictions are lifted.

8.2 Industrial Action

- The UCU disputes over USS and the national pay negotiations and related matters remain live.
- A further 14 days of strike action was taken by UCU members in February and March 2020. Around 840 UCU members took part in some or all of this action. There are c1,700 UCU members at the University out of c8,000 staff. Disruption to students was felt to different extents across the University and that disruption has been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Proactive and frequent communications and updates were provided to students and staff and regular discussions were maintained with members of the local UCU branch executive and the Students' Union Officers. On the whole, local relationships remained calm and constructive.
- Since the strike action ended UCU members undertook a continuous period of action short of a strike (ASOS) until the end of April when the mandate for industrial action expired. This did not cause significant issues and in light of the current situation relating to the Covid-19 pandemic most UCU members appear to have ceased undertaking ASOS, though the local UCU branch executive rejected calls to cease asking their members to take action during the lockdown period.
- There have been calls for refunds of student fees due to the disruption. Our approach remains to seek to mitigate impacts and deliver students' learning opportunities (Covid-19 notwithstanding).

- National USS negotiations continue, though the national pay negotiations for 2020-21 which were due to commence on 31 March 2020 have been postponed until further notice.
- The USS 2020 Valuation is progressing in what will undoubtedly be a very challenging economic environment. We are continuing to work with UCU colleagues and academics to develop our recommended University response to the various related consultations. Where possible any University responses are agreed with UEB and Council.
- The latest response to the USS discussion document which was intended to inform the development of the USS 2020 Valuation Technical Provisions consultation has been considered by UEB and the University Officers. The response can be located here.

8.3 New Key Appointments

- Heidi Fraser-Krauss has been appointed as Executive Director of Corporate Services, joining from the University of York where she is currently the Deputy Registrar and Director of Corporate and Information Services.
- Dr Anthony Glass (previously Senior Lecturer at Loughborough University) has been appointed as a Chair in Managerial Economics within the Management School.
- Jon Savage has been appointed as Business Development Director at the Nuclear AMRC, joining from TWI Limited.
- Professor Damian Hodgson (previously Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester) has been appointed as a Chair in Organisational Studies within the Management School.
- Craig Best (previously a Student Success and Engagement Manager at the University of Salford) has been appointed as Deputy Director of Student Support Services within Student Support Services.

9. LEGAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS

9.1 Reportable Events

- In its role as principal regulator of HEIs, the OfS requires that serious incidents have been appropriately notified under registration condition F3(i). . The OfS defines a reportable event as 'any event or circumstance that, in the judgement of the OfS, materially affects or could materially affect the provider's legal form or business model, and/or its willingness or ability to comply with its conditions of registration'..

- In the period since the previous report to Senate, the University has notified the OfS of the following reportable events:

  o The University of Sheffield suspended face-to-face teaching from Monday 16 March 2020 and all teaching was moved online.

  o Between the 9 March and 17 March, the University was required to provide to the OfS on a daily basis the number of individual staff and students with either suspected or confirmed symptoms of COVID-19. The University notified the OfS of one case of a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 before the OfS withdrew this requirement.

9.2. Guidance on the running of charities during the coronavirus outbreak

The Charity Commission issued Guidance to help with the running of charities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This included the cancellation, postponement or conduct of meetings using digital solutions. Where Council decide to hold meetings over the phone or using digital solutions, they should record this decision to demonstrate good governance of the charity.