



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office UEB/2020/1304/02
Of
The President &
Vice-Chancellor.

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 09 June 2020

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair)

Professor J Derrick (JD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor S Hartley (SH), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Ms J Jones (JJ), Professor W Morgan (WM), Professor C Newman (CN), Professor D Petley (DNP), Mr R Sykes (RS), Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor C Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS), Mr I Wright (IW), Mr A Carlile (AC), Ms A Morgan (AM) and Ms L Devlin (LD) (item 2); Mrs V Jackson (VJ)(item 3)

Apologies: None Received.

Secretary: Ms K Sullivan (KS) / Mr D Swinn (DS)

1. Minutes of UEB held on 5 May

1.1 The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2. Closed Minute and Paper

3. Closed Minute and Paper

4. Pairings of Council members with UEB members

4.1 UEB received and noted an update from the Council Nominations Committee (CNC) regarding a review of the pairings of senior external Council Officers with UEB members. It was highlighted that the pairings had been reviewed to take account of new appointments and that HFK and RS were now included. UEB endorsed proposals to rotate the pairings and considered how the effectiveness of the pairings might be improved, including ways to help sustain the relationships.

4.2 Actions:

- (a) Further thought would be given to a more structured approach to include planned/diarised 1:1s. Consideration would also be given to pairings when planning seating arrangements for Council Dinners and other events.

5. Coronavirus Update

5.1 Return to Campus

UEB was updated on the roll out of the implementation plan for the phased return to campus for research staff and was pleased to note positive progress, including around

staff engagement with the process. UEB endorsed the approach to overseeing the process, including dedicated management tools.

5.2 Government

UEB was updated following a meeting between KL and Sheffield MPs. UEB also noted planned follow-up correspondence to the Government, highlighting the importance of South Yorkshire universities to post-COVID-19 economic recovery and requesting direct support.

5.3 OfS

UEB was updated on KL's recent meeting with the OfS to discuss Covid-19.

5.4 **Actions:**

- (a) Circulate return to work google document to FVPs/FDOs for consideration/discussion.
- (b) FDOs would be responsible for updating the shared Google Doc.

6. Report of UEB Estates and Capital Sub-Group

(Meeting held on 6 May)

6.1 UEB received and approved the report; this included a number of proposals set out in the related paper and accompanying business cases, subject to Finance Committee and/or Council approval where relevant in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation:

- (a) Capital Programme Pause Review by the Capital Prioritisation Group: UEB considered a report which set out the pre-Covid 19 status of all capital projects alongside proposals to either progress, pause or continue to review each project. UEB approved the Project Pause List subject to the following:
 - The re-categorisation of the SAF Project to 'under review'
 - The list being monitored and subject to change as the financial impact of Covid-19 on the University became better understood.
- (b) Capital Backlog Maintenance: UEB approved the Capital Backlog Maintenance List subject to the following:
 - The re-categorisation of the maintenance on the Octagon Centre to 'non urgent'.
 - The list being monitored and subject to changes in social distancing guidance and the financial impact of Covid-19 on the University being better understood.
- (c) TERC Cat B – Ineligible Costs: UEB approved the following subject to continued efforts to reduce costs further:
 - To award the contract to proceed with Category B works including the release of £330k from the Beighton flood unencumbered insurance settlement (PACT facilities) towards the Category B works.
 - The release a further £84k of unencumbered insurance settlement towards the non-recoverable ineligible project costs.
 - UEB also noted that the total overall budget shortfall was £414k.
 - UEB also noted that, in order to remain on programme, the Cat B contract must be awarded by 22 June 2020. Therefore, Council approval would be sought by email or Chair's action, after the Finance Committee meeting on 17 June 2020.

6.2 **Actions:**

- (a) Subject to Finance Committee approval, the business case approved at paragraph (c) would be presented to Council for approval.

7. **Report of UEB Strategic Advisory Group – Student Numbers & Fees** (Meeting held on 21 May)

- 7.1 UEB received and approved the report, including recommendations arising from the annual review of fees for fee-paying students on the Study Abroad Programme, whereby the 2020/21 fee levels would be retained for 2021/22, as set out in the report.
- 7.2 During discussion, it was highlighted that SAG SNF had agreed revised terms of reference to reflect its decision on 1 April 2020 to maintain oversight of the Education and Skills Funding Agency contract and its management.

8. **Report of UEB Health and Safety Committee** (Meeting held on 28 May)

- 8.1 UEB received and approved the report, noting the positive progress to address the challenges of Covid-19, and the range of actions that had been taken in response to the changing context and UK Government guidelines.
- 8.2 During discussion, particular attention was drawn to consider the remote application of the Stress Risk Assessment and Action Plan and UEB also noted the following:
 - A significant reduction in the number of accidents reported for the period 1 January 2020 to 30 April 2020, when compared to the same period in the previous year (91 in 2020 compared to 134 in 2019), which was likely to have been affected significantly by the impact of lockdown.
 - H&S risk assessments were a key focus for Trade Unions, locally and nationally, were likely to be the subject of increased scrutiny when the time came to return to campus.
 - UEB expressed appreciation for the work of the H&S Management team and staff in terms of critical incident management and broader challenges.

8.3 **Action:**

- (a) The Director of Health & Safety would be asked to review the reporting of accidents and near misses to minimise any risks of underreporting.

9. **Briefing on the Council Effectiveness Review**

- 9.1 UEB received and noted a briefing on the Council Effectiveness Review. The review, required under the CUC HE Code of Governance to take place at least every four years, was facilitated by Shakespeare Martineau LLP, and led by a Council Task and Finish Group chaired by a Pro-Chancellor. It was highlighted that a desk based review was currently underway and UEB members would be contacted in due course for an interview with Shakespeare Martineau LLP; due to the continued Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, these interviews would be conducted by the telephone or video call. UEB noted that the option existed to suggest potential areas for a deep dive into a particular area of compliance.

9.2 **Actions:**

- (a) Themes from the desk based review would be circulated to members ahead of the interviews.

10. Round Table

- (a) Leverhulme Trust ECR Awards: KL reported that Research Services were working to accept the ECR Awards, which was positive in demonstrating the University commitment to prioritising excellence and investing in young people. KL would prepare a letter of thanks to the Trust.
- (b) UEB Away Day, 7 July: UEB agreed to hold the Away Day at Halifax Hall, which could accommodate the event in line with government guidelines on safe working.
- (c) Students' Union Financial Position: RS provided an update on discussions with the SU in the context of the University's own current financial forecasts. UEB noted the challenges that the SU was experiencing as a result of the impact of the pandemic and the collaborative approach that would be adopted to consider any requests for additional support.
- (d) SU Nursery: It was noted that the SU Nursery currently remained open for key workers only. A recent survey of all nursery users showed a strong desire for the nursery to open more widely but the costs to the SU of doing so were prohibitive. After careful consideration, UEB agreed to fund the additional £4.7k costs of re-opening in line with Covid-19 guidelines, subject to any further Government and Public Health guidance, until the end of the financial year, at which point the arrangement would be reviewed.
- (e) ED&I: SF reported that the Race Equality Steering Group, Faculty Directors of EDI and the BAME Staff Network had worked well together to put out a statement and bring together helpful information and advice for staff and students on BLM.
- (f) Student Support: SF was working with WM, MV and Student Services to ensure a joined up approach between academic and professional colleagues to support those students who were returning to campus. It was particularly important to ensure that appropriate support was made available to those groups disproportionately affected by Covid-19.
- (g) Term Start Dates/Online Learning: WM provided an update on plans for the 2020 autumn term. Current plans were for students to be on campus but with a socially distanced experience, using blended approach of face to face and digital teaching but the University continued to plan to be able to deliver 100% of teaching online if national or local restrictions required this. This approach was consistent with many of the University's peers. Work to consider and agree start dates and enrolment dates for the new academic year was ongoing, including work with departments to understand the needs of particular disciplines and/or cohorts.