

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 13:25 on 17 FEBRUARY 2017, at MedRus 1, Penbryn.

Present: Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Chancellor (Chair, except for minute 62.1); Mrs Elizabeth France, Pro-Chancellor (Chair, for minute 62.1); Ms Gwerfyl Pierce Jones, Pro-Chancellor; Dr Timothy Brain, Treasurer; Prof John Grattan, Acting Vice-Chancellor; Ms Rebecca Davies, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer); Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement) (from minute 60); Prof Chris Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research); Mr George Ashworth; Ms Anne Davies; Mr Keith Evans (except for minute 60); Mr Richard John; Mr Ian MacEachern; Dr Emyr Roberts; Dr Hazel Davey; Dr Jenny Mathers; Ms Jackie Sayce; Mr Rhun Dafydd, UMCA President; and Ms Lauren Marks, Aberystwyth University Students' Union President.

In attendance: Mr Daniel Benham, Director of Finance (from minute 57); Mrs Kim Broom, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mrs Lucy Hodson, Director of Planning (from minute 57); Mrs Esther Prytherch, Head of Communications; Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor designate; Dr David Blaney, HEFCW Chief Executive; and Bethan Owen, HEFCW Director of Institutional Engagement.

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Susan Chambers, Director of Human Resources; Mrs Janet Davies; Prof Neil Glasser; and Dr Glyn Rowlands, Pro-Chancellor.

50. PERSONAL MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

1. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the death of Rhiannon Hughes, formerly a member of staff in Information Services.

2. Welcome

A warm welcome was extended to Prof Elizabeth Treasure who was attending her first meeting of the governing body as Vice-Chancellor designate. The HEFCW Chief Executive and the Funding Council's Director of Institutional Engagement were also welcomed to the Council meeting. Despite each attending the meeting as observers, they were encouraged to contribute to any debate as appropriate.

51. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Keith Evans declared an interest in the report on the Welsh Language Standards due to his employment with the Welsh Language Commissioner, and elected to recuse himself from that discussion.
2. The reappointments of Pro-Chancellor Gwerfyl Pierce Jones and Treasurer Dr Timothy Brain would be considered during the meeting. Neither would be required to recuse themselves from those parts of the meeting on the understanding that they would not contribute to those particular discussions.

52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 (COU1617-059).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

53. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Council meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (COU1617-060).

NOTED

The update provided in the decisions log.

54. CORRESPONDENCE

NOTED

1. Interim Institutional Risk Review Letter

On 02 February 2017, the Acting Vice-Chancellor had received a letter from HEFCW following an interim Institutional Risk Review. This would be considered by Council during a separate agenda item.

2. 'One Day Without Us' / Brexit

1. The Chancellor had received an e-mail from an Italian, third-year mature student who was arranging an event in Aberystwyth as part of a national day of action on 20 February 2017 called 'One Day Without Us'. The intention of the nationwide event was to highlight the contribution of immigrants, migrants and refugees to communities and the wider society.
2. The student had also corresponded with the Acting Vice-Chancellor and had met with the Head of Communications, and the University was providing support for the event being held at on the Arts Centre piazza.
3. Members were informed that, in light of the referendum vote for the UK to leave the EU, HEFCW had undertaken an analysis of the various exposures within the sector to life outside the EU. However, the financial implications to the sector of withdrawal will only become known once negotiations formally commence between the UK and the EU.

55. HEALTH AND SAFETY MOMENT

NOTED

The Health, Safety and Environment Committee had met earlier that day. During that meeting, members had thanked Phil Maddison for his contribution to the University as he was preparing to leave his position as Director of Health, Safety and Environment at the end of February 2017. Andy Wainwright had been appointed as Interim Health, Safety and Environment Manager for a three-month period while the future location of the department within the institution is considered.

56. ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

NOTED

This would be Prof John Grattan's final meeting of the governing body as Acting Vice-Chancellor. Since 01 February 2016, he had sought to refocus the University's activities on the strategic priorities of Recruitment, Reputation and Sustainability. These priorities had contributed to the development of the Transformation Plan last autumn. While progress was being made with respect to Recruitment and Reputation initiatives, further work was required to achieve Sustainability.

57. DIRECTOR OF PLANNING'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Planning (COU1617-061).

NOTED

1. A clearer picture of applications for September 2017 entry was now available following the UCAS application deadline of 15 January 2017. While Aberystwyth University (AU) seems to have performed better than the sector average, the number of applications received are not as high as required to fulfil June 2016 forecasts.
2. The University's focus was now shifting to converting the applications received into acceptances. The activities being progressed included a visiting day to be held the next day, which had received more registrations to attend than any previous such event. A group had also been established to work on the conversion of EU applications to acceptances.
3. While the University would not be participating in Stage Two of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), a working group had been established to consider the institution's participation in Stage 3 of the TEF next year. A recommendation in this respect would be brought forward to Council in due course (**ACTION:** Director of Planning).

58. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Finance (COU1617-062).

NOTED

1. The Finance Department were in the process of finalising the results for the second quarter. The data presented in the report therefore drew on the results for the first quarter and the information gained through the monthly processes undertaken at the end of January 2017. The forecast outturn for the year was nevertheless considered to be robust.
2. Work to develop the 2017–18 budget frame was underway. In light of the application levels as at the UCAS deadline, the forthcoming budget would take a prudent view and be based on zero-growth, rather than the increase in student numbers previously forecast.

59. INTERACTIONS WITH HEFCW AND THE TRANSFORMATION PLAN

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary, incorporating a confidential letter from the HEFCW Chief Executive dated 02 February 2017 following an interim Institutional Risk Review, and background documents by the University Executive (COU1617-063).

NOTED

Members considered the report, debated the various issues involved and issued guidance to the University Executive, as set out in the confidential annexe.

60. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement), and the Centre for Welsh Language Services (COU1617-064).

NOTED

1. In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Act 2011, AU's existing Welsh Language Scheme will be replaced by Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language Standards Regulations which are applicable to Higher Education Institutions in Wales had been approved by the National Assembly on 31 January 2017.
2. The University was currently awaiting the draft Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner which will outline the Standards which the institution will be expected to meet. Upon receipt of the draft Compliance Notice, the University Executive would consider its implications for the institution, and if necessary the University will have an opportunity to argue against any disproportionate burdens before a final Compliance Notice is issued. Compliance with the Standards then set will be a statutory requirement.
3. A further report first will be presented to the Welsh Language Strategy Committee once the draft Compliance Notice is received (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement)). This will include an analysis of any resource implications for the University in order to meet the Welsh Language Standards.

61. SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

NOTED

1. At its meeting on 16 February 2017, the Charter Committee had once again considered opportunities to reduce the size of the governing body and, in doing so, review Council's composition to address the proportion of Independent Members versus Staff and Student Members.
2. As a result of these discussions, the Charter Committee was looking to bring forward a formal recommendation to reduce the size of Council from 24 to 16 members. The main implications of the proposed revisions would be that the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors would no longer serve on Council in an ex-officio capacity. A reduction in the Senate members on Council from three to one would also be recommended.
3. A report outlining the proposals in full would be presented to Senate on 23 March 2017, and subsequently brought forward to Council for final approval on 07 April 2017. However, any changes to membership would be introduced gradually as and when opportunities to do so arise.
4. Some members queried the appropriateness of progressing with this matter in advance of the new Vice-Chancellor starting in post.

RESOLVED

5. To invite the Charter Committee to reconsider the matter once the new Vice-Chancellor is in post and bring forward any resulting recommendations in due course (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

62. UNIVERSITY OFFICERS

1. Appointment of Chancellor and Chair of Council

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (COU1617-066).

NOTED

1. Sir Emyr Jones Parry's term of office as Chancellor and Chair of Council will conclude on 31 December 2017, when Sir Emyr will have served the maximum 10 years permitted in the role. AU's position, whereby the same individual fulfils the roles of both Chancellor and Chair of the governing body, was now anomalous within the sector. However, the revisions to the University's Supplemental Charter in 2014 now made it possible to split both roles.
2. Members considered the personal attributes required for undertaking the roles of Chancellor and Chair of Council. As an honorary position, the former role requires an individual who is distinguished and keen to contribute to the University in an ambassadorial capacity. The latter role requires an individual who can demonstrate leadership, and has the time and expertise to become involved in the effective governance of the institution.

RESOLVED

3. To fully separate the roles of Chancellor and Chair of Council from 01 January 2018, and to proceed with the recruitment processes on this basis (**ACTION:** University Secretary).
 4. To commence the process to appoint the University's next Chancellor as soon as possible in accordance with the requirements of Ordinance 2, with nominations being invited from staff, students and alumni (**ACTION:** University Secretary).
 5. To conduct the process to appoint a Chair of Council in line with the timetable set out in the report, in order to present a recommendation to the governing body on 23 June 2017. While the vacancy would be advertised externally, those already serving as Independent Members on Council could apply for the vacancy (**ACTION:** University Secretary).
2. Appointment of Pro-Chancellor(s) and Treasurer

NOTED

1. Pro-Chancellors Dr Glyn Rowlands and Gwerfyl Pierce Jones, and Treasurer Dr Timothy Brain were to reach the end of their initial five-year terms of office on 31 December 2016. However, in order to enable other Council members wishing to serve in these positions to express their interest in being appointed, Council on 29 November 2016 had resolved to extend the current terms of office of the University Officers in question until 28 February 2017.
2. These Pro-Chancellors and the Treasurer were all eligible for reappointment. While Pro-Chancellor Gwerfyl Pierce Jones and the Treasurer had signalled their desire to continue in the roles, Pro-Chancellor Dr Glyn Rowlands had indicated

that he wished to reduce his commitments and concentrate primarily on his contribution as one of Aberystwyth University's Directors on AIEC Ltd.

3. At its meeting earlier in the day, the Nominations Committee had considered the reappointment of the University Officers and had resolved to recommend to Council that Pro-Chancellor Gwerfyl Pierce Jones and the Treasurer be reappointed. The Nominations Committee had also recommended that Pro-Chancellor Dr Glyn Rowlands' appointment be extended until 31 December 2017, on the understanding that Dr Rowlands would no longer serve on the governing body in an ex-officio capacity.
4. Members expressed regret that, in light of the Nominations Committee's recommendation, this would have been Pro-Chancellor Dr Glyn Rowlands' last meeting of the governing body.

RESOLVED

5. To reappoint Gwerfyl Pierce Jones as Pro-Chancellor for a second, and final term ending 31 December 2019, in line with the remaining period permitted as Pro-Chancellor by the current Ordinances (**ACTION:** University Secretary).
6. To reappoint Dr Timothy Brain as Treasurer for a second, and final term ending 31 December 2021, in line with the remaining period permitted as Treasurer by the current Ordinances (**ACTION:** University Secretary).
7. To extend the appointment of Dr Glyn Rowlands as Pro-Chancellor until 31 December 2017, on the basis set out by the Nominations Committee (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

63. TUITION FEES POLICY

RECEIVED

Draft policy by Assistant Director of Finance Eiddig Morgan (COU1617-067).

NOTED

1. The proposed Tuition Fee Policy would guide the agreement of any future revisions to tuition fees, and the body which would be responsible for approving such revisions.
2. The draft Policy had been considered by FSC on 03 February 2017 where members had recommended that it be approved by Council.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the draft Tuition Fee Policy (**ACTION:** Assistant Director of Finance Eiddig Morgan).

64. INVESTMENT POLICY

RECEIVED

Draft policy from the Investments Committee (COU1617-068).

NOTED

1. AU's Investments Committee had reviewed the current Investment Policy as part of its annual schedule of business. A number of minor amendments were being proposed.

2. The proposed revisions had been considered by FSC on 03 February 2017 where members had recommended that they be approved by Council.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed revisions to the Investment Policy (**ACTION:** Management Accountant Nansi George).

65. HEALTH AND SAFETY: INCIDENT TRENDS

RECEIVED

Report by the Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator (COU1617-069).

NOTED

1. The report documented the emerging trends and developments arising from incidents reported and received by the Health, Safety and Environment Department during the period January 2016 to January 2017.
2. The report had been considered earlier that day during a meeting of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee.

RESOLVED

3. That future updates on incident trends summarise key considerations on the coversheet (**ACTION:** Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator).

66. ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Students' Union President (COU1617-070).

NOTED

The report provided an update on developments at the Students' Union since the last meeting of the University's Council, including forthcoming revisions to the titles and responsibilities of sabbatical officers.

67. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH BANGOR UNIVERSITY

RECEIVED

Report by the Deputy Head of the Strategic Alliance Office (COU1617-071).

NOTED

1. The annual report highlighted the achievements of both Aberystwyth and Bangor universities under their Strategic Alliance during the 2015–16 academic year.
2. The report had been considered by FSC on 03 February 2017 where members had invited the University Executive to review the structures of the Strategic Alliance in the context of how each university has developed since 2011, to ensure that they meet the requirements of both institutions.

68. SUMMARY CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

RECEIVED

Report by Director of Planning (COU1617-072).

NOTED

The report provided a summary of the significant risks from the Corporate Risk Register.

69. DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (COU1617-073).

NOTED

1. The report detailed the instances since the last Council meeting where members had approved matters by correspondence.
2. The matters approved by Council members via correspondence were:
 1. the appointment of Prof Elizabeth Treasure as Vice-Chancellor;
 2. the University's Prevent Duty Annual Report for 2015–16, for submission to HEFCW; and
 3. the University's Strategic Planning and Engagement Document (SPED), for submission to HEFCW.

70. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

RECEIVED

A composite report covering the following reports (COU1617-074):

1. Finance and Strategy Committee (03 February 2016);
2. Remuneration Committee (17 October 2016); and
3. University Executive Group – Strategic Meetings (22 November and 13 December 2016).

NOTED

4. The reports received from the committees.

71. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Marketing Strategy

NOTED

1. The University had appointed an interim Marketing Consultant to work with the institution over the next six to nine months to help lead the development of a new positioning strategy for the University and its institutes.
2. The services of an experienced marketing agency had also been engaged, who will carry out an extensive consultation exercise with staff, students, and other stakeholders. Council members would be invited to participate in this consultation exercise (**ACTION:** Director of Finance).

3. A presentation on the outcome of this consultation will be shared with Council at its meeting on 23 June 2017 (**ACTION:** Director of Finance).