

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 12:45 on 04 OCTOBER 2017, at MedRus 3, Penbryn.

Present: Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Chancellor (Chair); Dr Timothy Brain, Treasurer; Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Chris Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research); Mr Keith Evans; Mrs Elizabeth France; Mr Richard John; Ms Gwerfyl Pierce Jones; Mr Ian MacEachern; Dr Emyr Roberts; Dr Hazel Davey; Ms Kath Williams; Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar; Mr Bruce Wight, AberSU Union Development Officer; and Mr Gwion Llwyd Williams, UMCA President.

In attendance: Ms Rebecca Davies, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer) (until minute 16); Mr Rob Eastwood, Interim Director of Finance; Ms Susan Chambers, Director of Human Resources (until minute 12); Prof John Grattan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and International); Mrs Lucy Hodson, Director of Planning; Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement); Mrs Esther Prytherch, Head of Communications (until minute 16); and Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary.

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr George Ashworth; Ms Anne Davies; Mrs Janet Davies; and The Right Hon Elfyn Llwyd.

1. PERSONAL MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

1. Welcome

Mr Rob Eastwood, Mr Bruce Wight, Mr Gwion Llwyd Williams, Ms Kath Williams, and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar were welcomed to their first meeting of the Council.

2. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the death of Emeritus Professor D J Bowen, former Chair in the Department of Welsh.

3. Composition of Council

1. This would be the first meeting of Council following the revisions to the size and composition of the governing body, which had come into effect on 01 August 2017.
2. Prof Chris Thomas had been appointed by the Vice-Chancellor as the Pro Vice-Chancellor who will be a member of Council for the 2017–18 academic year. However, all Pro Vice-Chancellors would be welcome to be in attendance at meetings and to contribute to the Council's discussions as they previously had.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, Dr Emyr Roberts noted that was a reference to that organisation in the minutes of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee meeting held on 09 June 2017. Since these minutes were presented for information, there was no need for Dr Roberts to recuse from that part of the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meetings held on 23 June 2017 (COU1718-003).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

4. 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 (COU1718-004).

NOTED

The update provided in the decisions log.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from the University and College Union

RECEIVED

Letter dated 15 September 2017 received by the Chair of Council from the University and College Union's Wales Official (COU1718-005).

NOTED

While an agreement was not reached during July 2017 between Aberystwyth University (AU) and the University and College Union (UCU) on the cost savings required at the University, the UCU were appreciative of the University's willingness to work in partnership with its staff. Council members welcomed the trust engendered by the negotiations.

2. HEFCW Institutional Risk Review Letter

RECEIVED

Letter dated 25 September 2017 received by the Vice-Chancellor from the Funding Council's Chief Executive (COU1718-006).

NOTED

HEFCW had not issued an Institutional Risk Review Letter to AU during the normal cycle. The Funding Council will instead monitor the University's implementation of the Sustainability Implementation Plan (SIP), and draw on the progress made to inform an Institutional Risk Review Letter to be issued in early 2018.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY MOMENT

NOTED

The University's Big Welcome Weekend and Orientation Week had commenced on 22 September 2017. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer) provided an overview of the logistical arrangements required to provide a safe 24-hour welcome to new and returning students.

7. COUNCIL'S AWAY DAY

NOTED

1. Council had held a successful away day on the afternoon of 03 October and the morning of 04 October 2017. The away day had served as an opportunity for Council members to have a series of focussed discussions on aspects of the emerging 2018–23 Strategic Plan in an informal setting.
2. The advice received during the away day would now inform the next iteration of the Strategic Plan, which will be shared with staff, students and the local community for their feedback. A further draft will then be presented to the Finance and Strategy Committee (FSC) and Senate during their November meetings for endorsement, prior to seeking Council's formal approval on 27 November 2017 (**ACTION:** Vice-Chancellor).
3. Copies of the presentations delivered by the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro Vice-Chancellors would be made available on SharePoint (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

8. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (COU1718-007).

NOTED

1. The report provided updates on recent developments, including: senior staff appointments; success in the Sunday Time Good University Guide league table; strategic development; political engagement; and the approval of a business case to offer Initial Teacher Education.
2. The Vice-Chancellor had been informed by Universities Wales that the Welsh Government (WG) had allocated £30m in capital funding to the higher education sector over the next three financial years.

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

RECEIVED

1. Report by the Director of Planning, incorporating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the minutes of the SIP Council Oversight Group held on 10 August 2017 (COU1718-008); and
2. Minutes of the SIP Council Oversight Group held on 25 September 2017 (COU1718-027).

NOTED

3. The report provided an update on the progress made to date. Members were reminded that the further information considered by the SIP Council Oversight Group could be accessed via that Group's folder on SharePoint.
4. Members welcomed the progress being made, and underlined the importance of communicating this progress to the wider University community.

10. ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY MAURITIUS

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and International); and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer) (COU1718-009).

NOTED

1. A notice had been issued as per Council's resolution of 23 June 2017. The report summarised the developments since, and the options being scoped for the period post 01 January 2018. A further report would be presented to Council on 27 November 2017 to seek approval for the practical decisions which would be required in advance of the new calendar year (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and International); and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer)).
2. The focus from 01 January 2018 onwards would be to provide the best possible education and experience to AU students currently enrolled at the branch campus until they have completed their studies. Funding for doing so had already been allowed for in the SIP.
3. Discussions with the academic departments which deliver programmes at the branch campus had indicated that there was no appetite for an intake of new students in March 2018.

RESOLVED

4. To establish a new, wholly-owned subsidiary of AU in Mauritius to facilitate the teaching of students currently enrolled at the branch campus in the new calendar year, in case such a company should become required (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer)).
5. That the University will not enrol further intakes of students at the branch campus (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and International); and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer)).

11. FINANCIAL UPDATE

RECEIVED

Report by the Interim Director of Finance (COU1718-010).

NOTED

1. Following the financial year end on 31 July 2017, operating financial result were in line with expectations presented to Council on 23 June 2017, before adjustments regarding pensions and other reserve movements. The External Auditors had commenced the year-end audit on 02 October 2017.
2. While operating cash flows were in line with expectations, the fall in cash flow due to working capital movements was being investigated to address any potential longer-term implications. Members discussed the way in which income from the Student Loans Company is received in three, unequal tranches, and the way in which it affects the University's monthly cashflow position.

12. DIRECTOR OF PLANNING'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Planning (COU1718-011).

NOTED

1. The report provided updates on recent developments, including: undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment; the results of the National Student Survey 2017; fee and maintenance changes for full-time Home / EU undergraduates; the results of the Times

and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018 league table; and the WG consultation on 'Reforming Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Wales'.

2. The Westminster Government had announced that it would freeze tuition fees for full-time Home / EU undergraduates in England. Once a steer is provided on such fees in Wales, a proposal will be brought forward to Council (**ACTION:** Director of Planning). In the meantime, the University has put a suitable sentence on its website in order to comply with the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority.
3. A draft of the University's response to the WG consultation on 'Reforming Post-Compulsory Education and Training in Wales' would be circulated to Council for consideration by correspondence during mid-October 2017. The response will underline the need to ensure that the interests of higher education are promoted, and that the expertise currently within HEFCW be retained.

13. RISK APPETITE STATEMENT AND MATRIX

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Planning (COU1718-012).

NOTED

1. In line with the University's Risk Management Policy, Council is invited to review the Risk Appetite Statement and Matrix at its first full meeting of each academic year.
2. As part of this process, the University Executive had reviewed these documents and was not recommending any revisions to the Risk Appetite Statement and the Risk Matrix.

RESOLVED

3. To retain the Risk Appetite Statement and the Risk Matrix as currently worded, subject to the date on the Risk Matrix being revised (**ACTION:** Director of Planning)

14. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Planning (COU1718-013).

NOTED

The report summarised performance against the KPIs agreed for monitoring the implementation of the 2012–17 Strategic Plan. While good progress had been made on the qualitative indicators, further work would be required with respect to the quantitative indicators.

15. ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION DEVELOPMENT OFFICER REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the AberSU Development Officer (COU1718-014).

NOTED

1. The report provided an update on developments at the Students' Union since the last meeting of the University's Council.

2. Members discussed the increasing number of students who choose to live at home and enrol at their local universities. The importance of demonstrating the value of studying at AU was underlined, and the University Executive was already working to develop pathways to the University from key schools and Further Education colleges.

16. COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (COU1718-015).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the circulars which had been published recently by the Funding Council and other bodies which set out the responsibilities of members of university governing bodies. It was for Council members to ensure familiarity with these responsibilities.
2. The University Secretary was reviewing compliance with the Financial Management Code in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and the University Executive. Any areas which require further consideration would be brought to the attention of Council through the appropriate route.

RESOLVED

3. That new Council members be required, upon appointment, to sign an agreement to confirm that they have received a copy of key documents which set out their responsibilities as governors and trustees, and accept these responsibilities (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

17. SUMMARY CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

RECEIVED

Report by Director of Planning (COU1718-016).

NOTED

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

18. DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (COU1718-017).

NOTED

1. The report detailed the instances since the last Council meeting where the Chair had used the Executive Powers provided for by Standing Order 6.11.
2. The matters approved by means of Executive Action by the Chair were:
 1. the understandings reached during Council on 23 June 2017 during the latter part of the meeting when there was an absence of a quorum;
 2. the University's response to the HEFCW consultation on procedures for handling complaints against institutions;

3. the University's response to the consultation on the Welsh Language Standards compliance notice; and
 4. a revised 2018/19 fee and access plan in response to HEFCW feedback.
3. The Chair also reported verbally that he had agreed a letter to WG in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor making the case for financial support towards refurbishing Pantycelyn. A copy of the letter would be made available via SharePoint (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

19. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

RECEIVED

A composite report covering the following reports (COU1718-018):

1. Senate (20 September 2017);
2. Health, Safety and Environment Committee (09 June 2017);
3. University Research Ethics Committee (14 and 26 July 2017); and
4. University Executive Group (20 June, 04 July, and 19 September 2017).

NOTED

5. Members debated whether and when Council members should be informed of internal processes which may have wider implications. It was recognised that it would be inappropriate to share details while formal processes are on-going. However, matters should be communicated separately to members in general terms and not by means of sub-committee minutes, particularly if they were sensitive.
6. The reports received from the committees.