

## COUNCIL 3

**Minutes of the meeting held via Skype for Business on 20 May 2020**

<b>Members:</b>	Baroness Ann Taylor (Chair)	Shahnaz Ali	Dr Pam Bagley
	Karl Bates	Jo Beaumont	Michael Bell
	Dermot Bolton	Carl Chambers	Professor Shirley Congdon
	Terry Hartwell	Amir Hussain	Karen McMahan
	Ayman Malik	Sally Neocosmos	Professor Rami Qahwaji
	Mohammed Pandor	Samera Shabir	Sarah Smith
	Maurice Watkins	Stuart Watson	Professor Vishanth Weerakkody
	Michael Ziff		

**In attendance:** Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head, Governance (Secretary)  
Professor John Bridgeman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Knowledge Transfer  
Professor Zahir Irani, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality  
Joanne Marshall, Director of People and Campus Services  
Stuart McKinnon-Evans, Chief Finance Officer  
Riley Power, University Secretary

**Apologies:** Kersten England

**62.19-20 Chair's Opening Remarks**

62.1 The Chair of Council formally welcomed Dermot Bolton, Professor Rami Qahwaji and Professor Vishanth Weerakkody, new Senate appointed members, to their first meeting of Council.

**63.19-20 Register of Interests (Document C56/19-20)**

63.1 Council received and noted the register of Council members interests. No further declarations of interest were received in relation to the business of the meeting.

**64.19-20 Minutes of the Meeting on 26 February 2020 (Document C57/19-20)**

64.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 February 2020 were **approved** by circulation prior to the Council meeting.

**65.19-20 Matters Arising and Action Tracker (Document C58/19-20)**

65.1 Council noted a report on matters arising from the Council meeting on 26 February 2020 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

66.19-20 **Report from the Chair**

- 66.1 The Chair recorded her appreciation for the work of the Executive Team, and the wider University community, in their joint efforts in the current unprecedented times. The speed in moving to remote working and online learning and teaching, and operating as a virtual campus was noted, as was the high level of cooperation received from both academic and Professional Services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 66.2 Council was pleased to note that through this work, the University had prioritised the health and wellbeing of staff and students, maintained academic standards and ensured students were not academically disadvantaged by COVID-19.

67.19-20 **Vice-Chancellor's Report (Document C59/19-20)**

- 67.1 Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the activities that had been undertaken in relation to learning, teaching and assessment, student support services, and support for University staff. This work was being guided by the University's values of excellence, inclusion, innovation, and trust.
- 67.2 Extensive internal and external engagement activities that had been undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor during this period were also highlighted; this included staff, students, Trade Unions, and local / City, regional and national engagement.
- 67.3 Council also noted that the University was engaged in the business recovery of the city and was represented by the Vice-Chancellor on the District Gold Command Group and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Economic Recovery Board. The University was also working closely with UUK and other sector bodies.
- 67.4 Attention was drawn to the following:
- that formal, on-campus, invigilated examinations would not take place in May 2020. Alternative assessment schedules had been developed and communicated to students in mid-April.
  - that the University had developed an Academic Performance Safety Net Policy to provide reassurance to students that they would not be disadvantaged academically by the impact of COVID-19 outbreak; this work had been strongly guided by regulatory notices from the Office for Students and guidance published by the QAA. The safety net would ensure that no student would finish their studies with a lower level of assessment than they had achieved by the start of the COVID-19 closure.
  - that a blended approach to learning, teaching and assessment would be undertaken in 2020/21, delivered through a combination of education technologies and face to face teaching on campus. This approach aligned with the emerging Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy.
  - that a recovery plan to support a phased and gradual return to campus-based teaching, research and innovation was being developed, in line with governance guidance, public

health advice, and health and safety legislation. A brief overview of the workstreams that would guide the return to campus was provided.

67.5 In response to a question about how academic quality and standards were being maintained during the pandemic, the Vice-Chancellor informed Council that this was of the utmost importance to the University and that Emergency Academic Regulations had been approved by Senate. These formed a coherent regulatory package that would support student achievement, safeguard academic integrity, and protect the value of the University's awards for students, staff and stakeholders; this was strongly welcomed by the Council.

#### 68.19-20 **University Secretary's Report (Document C60/19-20)**

68.1 Council received an update from the University Secretary which summarised ongoing work relating to areas of governance pertinent to the work of Council and the University. This included an update on ongoing compliance with the Office for Students conditions of registration, Council member observers at Senate; the Board Assurance Framework and Performance Dashboard; the Committee Year Planner for 2020/21; and the OfS consultation on the integrity and stability of the English HE sector. The University's response to the OfS consultation would be circulated to Council, for information.

68.2 Council noted that an incident of non-compliance had been reported by the University to the Office for Students. This was a technical non-compliance caused by another regulator providing delayed advice to the University. There was no concern that this was a systemic issue on the University's part, and it was not expected to be repeated.

68.3 In addition, Council **approved** the Statement of Primary Responsibilities which detailed the principal responsibilities of the University Council. Council noted that the SPR would be published on the University website <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/governance/committees/Council-Statement-of-Primary-Responsibilities.pdf> and included in the end of year accounts.

68.4 **ACTION: circulate response to OfS consultation (University Secretary).**

#### 69.19-20 **UBU Update (Document C61/19-20)**

69.1 Council received a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on the Union's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Council was pleased to note that the Union was working in partnership with the Executive to support students during the crisis. Council also received an update on the Union's new initiative 'Kick Start', launched at the start of the academic year, and on the annual UBU elections held in March 2020.

69.2 Council congratulated Samera Shabir and Ayman Malik who had been re-elected as Sabbatical Officers for Student Affairs and Education and as such would continue on Council until June 2021. Zain Ul Abdin had also been re-elected as the Sports and

Wellbeing Officer and Inshaal Ahmed had been elected as the Community and Activities Officer.

69.3 Points noted in discussion included:

- student engagement with online learning opportunities was being monitored via Programme Leaders and Personal Academic Tutors.
- under-represented and vulnerable groups had been provided with additional support, for example, through remote pastoral and mental health support, access to laptops, and an emergency food delivery service. The University placed equality and diversity, and inclusion, and a commitment to social mobility at the centre of values and support for under-represented and vulnerable students would continue to be addressed via the University's Access and Participation Plan.
- that the University would continue to support students who were experiencing issues with private accommodation, including funding emergency accommodation where required. The University and UBU had written to local private landlords and local MPs to try to ensure students were protected and fairly treated.

69.4 Council noted that the UUK was working hard to support students and had requested that private providers offered a no-penalty early release from tenancy agreements or rent obligations for the current and next academic year. The Office for Students had also issued a briefing note on student accommodation during the pandemic.

69.5 Council was pleased to note that the UBU and the University would continue to work in partnership to support student wellbeing across a range of issues from accommodation through to mental health.

#### 70.19-20 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C62/19-20)**

70.1 Council considered a report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality on the current student recruitment position for 2020/21 entry, noting that student behaviours had changed in light of COVID-19.

70.2 Contingency planning was being undertaken to ensure recruitment continued across all markets segments and to minimise the business risks associated with the pandemic. The PVC, AIQ updated Council on the specific outreach, marketing and recruitment activities that were being undertaken to deliver target student numbers, including the Clearing campaign.

70.3 Council noted that there were numerous uncertainties within a rapidly changing landscape, including the new approach to calculating A-Level and GCSE qualifications, the introduction of temporary stabilisation measures by the UK Government, the moratorium on unconditional offers, potential travel or visa restrictions, English language testing, and student propensity to travel.

70.4 Council welcomed the comprehensive update and noted that a further briefing would be presented to the Council in July 2020.

71.19-20 **Update on Financial Position and Outlook (Document C63/19-20)**

- 71.1 Council considered a report on COVID-19 financial scenario planning. The Chief Finance Officer presented the key highlights from the report, noting that the University's financial performance in 2019/20 was broadly in line with plan, however there would be challenges for the 2020/21 academic year on income, expenditure and cashflow.
- 71.2 Various financial scenarios were being modelled. The primary purpose of the scenario planning was to model cashflow over the medium term, up to July 2023. Finance Committee had received a general update on scenario planning at its last meeting and had agreed that the University should consider a range of scenarios, including a worst-case scenario, based on a significant disruption in the international market and Clearing.
- 71.3 Council noted that the shift to blended learning would enable the University to become more resilient going forward, although it was acknowledged that this would require a significant focus on staff development, technology infrastructure and investment in order to deliver a high quality blended experience. This formed part of the recovery plan and would be overseen by the PVC, AIQ and Senate.
- 71.4 Council **endorsed**:
- the preparation of an application to the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS), one of the measures confirmed by government to support higher education providers. In line with University governance, the CLBILS application would be presented to the Finance Committee in June 2020, for formal consideration.
  - the approach to planning and budget setting, in preparation for a draft budget to be presented to the Finance Committee and Council.
- 71.5 Finance Committee, supported by Council, would continue to closely monitor and review progress on the detailed scenario planning in order to maintain a financially sustainable position going forward.

72.19-20 **Strategy Development Update (Document C64/19-20)**

- 72.1 Council received an update on the strategy development process, noting that the original timetable for the development of the sub-strategies and enabling strategies and KPIs had been reviewed in light of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Outstanding sub-strategies (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience and Business and Community Engagement) and enabling strategies (People; Brand, Communications and Marketing; Estates and Infrastructure; and Finance and Performance) would be presented to the Council in July 2020, along with KPIs.
- 72.2 Council would also be presented with details of the Board Assurance Framework and Performance Dashboard which would be used to report on progress against KPIs and management of key corporate and strategic risks over the life of the strategy; this would

ensure there was a clear and unambiguous mechanism for tracking performance and delivery.

72.3 **ACTION: present outstanding sub and enabling strategies and the Board Assurance Framework to Council in July (Strategic Portfolio Holders / University Secretary).**

73.19-20 **Draft Research and Innovation Strategy (Document C65/19-20)**

73.1 Council considered and **approved** the draft Research and Innovation Strategy, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University Strategy, which presented a clear approach to research and innovation with a focus on people, performance and place, enabled the delivery of research that would continue to deliver a positive impact on local and global societies and economies, and a vision to empower and encourage excellent research, delivered through a framework of continuous improvement.

73.2 Further work was ongoing to finalise specific targets for identified KPIs which would be reported via the new Board Assurance Framework.

74.19-20 **Draft Equality Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (Document C66/19-20)**

74.1 Council considered and **approved** the draft Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University Strategy, which presented a clear approach to equality, diversity and inclusion with a focus on people, place and performance, reinforced the University's commitment to supporting EDI for students and staff, and highlighted good practice in EDI. Council noted that it had been developed in consultation with students, staff, Executive Board, Senate and lay members. The detailed feedback received from Ms Ali would be addressed further via the development of KPIs.

74.2 The importance of the continual development of the EDI Strategy was noted, as was the need for EDI to be integrated in all University activity and embedded across all aspects of the University's strategic and operational work. KPIs to support the strategy would be reported via the Board Assurance Framework.

74.3 The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that all sub and enabling strategies would have individual implementation plans, and the resources required to prioritise actions from each strategy would be assessed.

75.19-20 **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (Document C67/19-20)**

75.1 Council considered and **approved** the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, noting that they had been revised in line with best practice, and national and regional legislation and guidance. Areas of the University with additional specific safeguarding requirements (Nursery and Eye Clinic) had their own designated procedures which aligned to the University's procedures.

75.2 Council congratulated the Academic Registrar on the development of a comprehensive policy and procedure. Council also noted that that Academic Registrar had been commended by OFSTED at a recent safeguarding visit to the University.

75.3 In response to a query, the University Secretary confirmed that COVID-19 related risks would be captured within the risk management framework and would be monitored by the Risk Oversight Group and Executive Board.

76.19-20 **Report from Senate, April 2020 (Document C68/19-20)**

76.1 Council received and noted the report.

77.19-20 **Report from Audit Committee, April 2020 (Document C69/19-20)**

77.1 Council received and noted the report.

78.19-20 **Report from Finance Committee, March 200 (Document C70/19-20)**

78.1 Council received and noted the report.

79.19-20 **Report from Governance and Nominations Committee, April 2020 (Document C71/19-20)**

79.1 Council received and noted the report.

80.19-20 **Report from Remuneration Committee, April 2020 (Document C72/19-20)**

80.1 Council received and noted the report.

81.19-20 **Research Excellence Framework 2021 Update (Document C73/19-20)**

81.1 Council received and noted the report.

82.19-20 **Workforce and HSS Dashboard, Quarter 3 (Document C74/19-20)**

82.1 Council received and noted the report.

83.19-20 **Prevent Duty Update (Document C75/19-20)**

83.1 Council received and noted the report.

84.19-20 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2019/20 (Document C76/19-20)**

84.1 Council received and noted the report.

85.19-20 **Draft Council 4 Agenda (Document C77/19-20)**

85.1 Council received and noted the report.

86.19-20 **Council Schedule of Business (Document C78/19-20)**

86.1 Council received and noted the report.

Secretary: Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)

Date: June 2020