



UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

19 February 2019

Minute

- Present:** Peter Mathieson (Convener)
David Argyle, Eleri Connick, Chris Cox, Gavin Douglas, David Gray, Lee Hamill, Gary Jebb, Charlie Jeffery, Richard Kenway, Gavin McLachlan, Wendy Loretto, Theresa Merrick, Dorothy Miell, Dave Robertson, James Saville, Tracey Slaven, James Smith, Sarah Smith and Moira Whyte.
- In attendance:** Phil Copestake, MD Cubane UK Operations, Ariel Rainbow, Consultant, Oliver Parfitt, Business Analyst, Barry Neilson, Service Excellence Programme Director, Helen Taylor, UniForum Programme Manager (for item 1), Fiona Campbell (for Leigh Chalmers), Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.
- Apologies:** Leigh Chalmers, Hugh Edmiston, Andrew Morris, Jane Norman and Jonathan Seckl.

1 UniForum Briefing

Verbal

Prior to the formal meeting the University Executive received a presentation on the UniForum benchmarking exercise from Cubane. UniForum is a multi-university study of administration and professional services, which compares the way we deliver and resource our professional services with 18 Russell Group institutions in the UK currently participating in the programme. The presentation provided an overview of the initial benchmarking data gathered by UniForum with a further more detailed session to be provided to the Service Excellence Programme Board, to consider how to make most effective use of the data provided by this exercise.

2 Minute

Paper A1

The Minute of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 was approved as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A2

There were no matters arising and the action log was noted.

4 Principal's Communications

Verbal

The Principal reported on progress on developing the Strategic Plan, the programme of work being developed around student experience and the follow up work to the staff survey, reporting that these three interlinked streams of work were continuing to progress. He updated members on a number of changes to the University leadership structure, which clarified the respective roles of the Senior Leadership Team and the University Executive, with the Executive the forum for major policy decisions. He also reported the continuing uncertainty in a number of areas,

including Brexit, the Augar review of Post-18 Education and Funding, the UCU action on pay and the unresolved issue of changes to the USS pension, with the need to ensure effective communication to staff likely to be effected by these ongoing and challenging issues outwith the scope of the University's control.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5 Near Future Teaching

Paper B

The Executive received a report summarising the work, led by Professor Sian Bayne, on the Near Future Teaching project launched in 2017 in order to develop a values-based vision for the future of digital education at the University. Members commended the report and its underpinning values, vision and aims and approved the report and future actions for publication and further sharing internally and externally.

6 Provision of an Additional Large Teaching Space in the City Centre

Paper C

It was noted that estates projects were approved through Estate Committee, however before progressing with this project it was necessary to assess the Executive's view of the location in meeting the demand for a large lecture theatre in the central area.

The Executive considered access, timetabling including provision for students with disabilities and the impact on New College Library and Rainy Hall and subject to assurances these issues would be addressed were supportive of the principle of working in partnership with the Church of Scotland to adopt and adapt the General Assembly Hall as a large teaching space.

7 Human Resources

7.1 People Report

Paper D1

The Director of Human Resources spoke to the report and updated members that there would be a report on staff engagement to the next meeting, building on the three themes identified as a result of the staff survey: change management; wellbeing and bullying and harassment, alongside leadership.

Members were also updated on other HR developments including the final implementation of HR transformation, the potential impact of Brexit on staff and the Intimate Relationship Policy that was about to be launched.

7.2 Severe Weather Policy

Paper D2

The Executive was reminded that in previous consideration of revisions to human resources policies, it had been agreed that the 'median' sector position should be the benchmark used to inform the update of policies. In discussion it was agreed that the definition of 'essential staff' needed to be clarified as referring to 'essential staff attending on site'. It was noted that the policy of paying such staff their hourly rate increased by 50% did not preclude managers from authorising exceptional

discretionary payments and vouchers, on a case by case basis. Taking the above into account the Executive approved the Severe Weather Policy.

8 Finance

8.1 Director of Finance's Report

Paper E1

The Executive considered the University management accounts (excluding subsidiaries and the City Deal) up to the end of December 2018 (period five) and received a verbal update on period six. It was noted that the University remained ahead of the phased budget surplus showing that cautious forecasting in the early periods of the financial year continued to occur. Improving the accuracy of in-year forecasting could allow for earlier reinvestment decisions and reduce incentives for increased expenditure in the final quarter of the year. The Executive also reviewed the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast (TYF), noting the work on capital prioritisation which would be considered by March Estates Committee.

The Executive noted the scenario planning for external risks that individually or cumulatively could have a significant negative impact on both University revenues and expenditure, including Brexit, the Post 18 Education (Augar) Review and USS Pension reform, with full scenario analysis to be presented to Court in April 2019.

8.2 Annual TRAC and TRAC (T) Return

Paper E2

The Executive noted the University's Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return and approved the Principal signing off the TRAC for Teaching (TRAC(T)) Return for 2017-18 for submission to the Scottish Funding Council and UK Research and Innovation.

9 Business Continuity Framework and Policy

Paper F

The University Executive considered a proposed new Business Continuity Management (BCM) Policy and Framework developed to enhance the University's resilience by delivering a consistent and overarching structure to support Schools and Departments in the development and implementation of their own BCM arrangements, setting the scope, objectives and approach for the University's BCM and defining roles, responsibilities and authorities.

The importance of this work was recognised and there was discussion on the scale of work required, the necessary resource to support this and it was noted that the BCM design should be considered through the lens of the Service Excellence Programme principles, which focus on simplification to reduce administrative burden. It was recognised that a pragmatic approach was required, accepting that implementation will need to be phased and will take time. On that basis, the Executive approved the BCM Policy and Framework as set out in the paper as a pilot approach in the first instance to return for review following completion of a number of Business Impact Assessments.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

10 Responsible Research Metrics

Paper G

The Executive considered an update on responsible research metrics developments, noting the connection to the later agenda item on Plan S. The Executive agreed the University of should become a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DoRA) and approved the process for finalising a University statement and action plan on responsible research metrics, with Research Policy Group oversight.

11 Information Security Strategy

Paper H

The Executive approved the Information Security Strategy as set out in the paper.

12 Development and Alumni Annual Report

Paper I

The Executive noted the Annual Report and commended the increased activity in alumni engagement and philanthropy.

13 Student Experience Project Plan Update

Paper J

The Executive noted the progress update on developing the Student Experience Project Plan.

14 Plan S

Paper K

The Executive considered an update on a forthcoming initiative to accelerate the transition to full and immediate open access to research publications called Plan S, as previously discussed at the December meeting. Following discussion, the Executive endorsed the aspirations of Plan S while recognising the significant challenges, particularly for the smaller learned societies and on that basis endorsed the University response to cOAlition S on Plan S.

15 Outcome Agreement

Paper L

The Executive endorsed the broad approach for the University's draft single year Outcome Agreement for 2019-20 and agreed to delegate authority to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning to refine the detail of the document in advance of Policy and Resources Committee and Court on 29 April, where the final document will be presented for approval.

16 Review of the Structure of Senate Committees

Paper M

The Executive noted a review of the Senate Committees will take place in semester two led by the Senior Vice-Principal.

17 Creation of a New Chair

Paper N

The Executive approved the establishment of the Baillie Gifford Chair of Data and AI Ethics in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

18 University Executive Communications

Verbal

Communication on the revised senior leadership structure, the new Baillie Gifford Chair of Data and AI Ethics, Near Future Teaching, the Uniforum presentation, Plan S/Responsible Research Metrics and the Development and Alumni Report was agreed.

19 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 19 March 2019 at 10 am in Raeburn Room.

The following meeting dates for 2019/20 were approved:

Tuesday, 30 July 2019
Thursday, 29 August 2019
Tuesday, 17 September 2019
Tuesday, 22 October 2019
Tuesday, 19 November 2019
Tuesday, 17 December 2019
Tuesday, 21 January 2020
Tuesday, 25 February 2020
Tuesday, 24 March 2020
Thursday, 23 April 2020
Tuesday, 19 May 2020
Tuesday, 16 June 2020
Tuesday, 21 July 2020