

Minutes marked Commercial in confidence or confidential to Council have been redacted from the web version

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Venue: Darwin Boardroom

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2022

Present: The Chair of the Council (Dame Ursula Brennan); the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Karen Cox); the Deputy Chair of the Council (Andrew Newell); Xian Chan; Michael Crick; Aisha Dosanjh; Thomas Freeston; Mayuri Lakhani; Kim Lowe; Dr Owen Lyne; Gabriel MacGregor; Tobi-Temple Obaremo; Mark Preston; Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura; Professor Richard Reece; Professor Shane Weller.

In attendance: Chief Financial Officer (Jane Higham); Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to Council) (Dr Sinead Critchley); Assistant Director Governance (Sarah Megson), Head of Secretariat (Jo Dalton).

Apologies: Chris Barron; Colin Carmichael; Dan Cook; Neil Davies; Mark Malcomson; Professor Gill Nicholls; Timi Okuwa; Peter Pentecost; Alex Perkins; Professor Iain Wilkinson.

5494 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including colleagues from the Division of Arts & Humanities.

5495 DIVISION OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Professor Juliette Pattinson, (Director of Division of Arts & Humanities), joined by the Divisional Senior Leadership Team and student representatives, presented to Council.

Through discussion Council noted the following:

- a) That to translate the recent REF success into improving recruitment will require effective communication to prospective students that they will be taught by world leading academics. With negative rhetoric from government on arts and humanities it was important for the Division to position itself to grow its market share and promote the key skills that graduates will bring to the workplace.
- b) That students felt the benefits of hybrid delivery, with in-person workshops valued alongside online lectures. The Joint Honours offering at Kent was attractive with the opportunity to develop practical skills as well as theory, and key employability skills such as critical thinking, time management and self-motivation.
- c) That students very much felt part of the Divisional community and interactions between staff and students were conducted with the approach of meeting on an equal footing and learning from each other. The inclusivity of the curriculum was also valued covering subject matter such as black playwrights, transgender, disability and queerness in the arts.

- d) That the Division is developing its People and Culture Strategy as part of the wider University strategy. The need to streamline processes and reduce the administrative burden whilst prioritising the core business of education and research was acknowledged.

On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked Professor Juliette Pattinson, colleagues and students for their informative presentation and engaging dialogue.

5496 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2022, Paper **C2021/073** were approved.

5497 MATTERS ARISING

The Action Log: **C2021/074** was noted.

5498 VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Vice Chancellor gave a verbal update on the following topics:

- Ukraine Crisis
- Queen's Speech
- Lambeth Conference
- REF2021
- Universities at Medway Steering Group
- Kent Giving Week
- In-person Graduation ceremonies had taken place at both Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals this month for students who had graduated in 2021. The Vice Chancellor thanked volunteer staff for their assistance.

The Council congratulated the Vice Chancellor on being elected to the UUK Board for a period of three years beginning August 2022.

The Council congratulated Colin Carmichael on being awarded Freedom of the City of Canterbury.

5499 STRATEGIC PLAN DASHBOARD REPORT

The Vice-Chancellor presented paper **C2021/075**, an update on progress against the Strategic Plan.

5500 CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The Vice Chancellor and the DVC for Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance presented paper **C2021/076**, Performance Dashboard report.

The DVC for Research and Innovation presented Paper **C2021/077A KPI Research and Innovation – Impact of REF Outcomes**.

The following points were noted:

- a) That the REF was the UK system for assessing excellence in research, with the results determining the allocation of £2bn public funding by Research England on behalf of four research councils. The results will have a bearing on league table position for the next seven years. The REF2021 saw 157 HE Institutions make submissions, with Kent submitting to 26 Units of Assessment (UoA).
- b) That REF2014 resulted in £15m for Kent (£16.9m with Knowledge Exchange), and it was hoped that REF2021 outcome will drive increased income.
- c) That while it was possible for an Institution to improve their Grade Point Average (GPA) in subjects but as an Institution fall in the rankings, Kent had increased both GPA and position ranking. The Times Higher has ranked Kent as 38th (from 49th), whereas internally Kent is ranked at 44th (Times Higher excludes Institutions that submit to only 1-2 UoA's but Kent includes them). Kent had also retained a first quintile position for research power.
- d) That the results for Kent were the best in the region, supporting the University's strategic aim; eg CCCU submitted to 10 UoA's and was ranked 101st.
- e) In individual UoA's, Kent had achieved 1st for History, 2nd for Law and 3rd for Social Policy and Social Work, with the Times Higher identifying Kent as a 'real mover' along with the Surrey, Loughborough, Leicester and City universities. The Arts & Humanities submission had done better than many of the Russell Group institutions, and while Law and Social Policy and Social Work had done extremely well, there were strong results in large parts of the social sciences, and good results in the Sciences, including Biosciences ranking ahead of a number of Russell Group institutions, that can be built upon going forward.
- f) That the results for Quality Related (QR) funding would be known in July and there was confidence that this would grow for Kent following the good REF2021 outcome. Divisional Research & Innovation leads were enthusiastic to build on the results, with a focus on leadership, research culture, and the strategic use of resource. In addition, interdisciplinarity, collaboration and working with business/industry would be key, and while Arts & Humanities had done very well, there were challenges to student recruitment. The aim was to build closer research ties with the social sciences and STEM subjects, to drive UG and PG recruitment.
- g) Council thanked all those involved in the REF2021 submission and extended congratulations on a successful outcome.

The Director of Information Services presented Paper **C2021/078 KPI Finance, Sustainability and Efficiency – Status Update on Digital Transformation project**.

The following points were noted:

- The Covid-19 pandemic had helped accelerate the rate of transformation and the expectations of users, both individually and on a corporate level. Students now expected to engage with organisations via an end-to-end digital experience.

- That the Digital Transformation Strategy would be an enabler, supporting the delivery of the University's strategic objectives and support the required efficiencies in the operating model and processes.
- That the user journey was be critical to any digital transformation project and strategy and should be the starting point for the work.

5501 EDI ANNUAL REPORT

The DVC for Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance presented paper **C2021/079**, the EDI Annual Report 2020/21.

5502 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Council wished the Kent Union President and the elected Student Representative their best wishes as their terms of office come to an end before the June meeting, and thanked them for their contribution to the work of Council.

5503 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The forthcoming meeting for the 2022/23 year:
Wednesday 29 June 2022 10:00-16:00

Meetings in the academic session 2022/23:

- Tuesday 4 October 2022, 2-5pm
- Friday 25 November 2022, 10am-4pm
- Thursday 26 January 2023, 10am-4pm
- Wednesday 22 February 2023, 2-5pm
- Friday 24 March 2023, 10am-4pm
- Thursday 18 May 2023, 2-5pm
- Wednesday 28 June 2023, 10am-4pm

ITEMS BELOW THE LINE

Council **approved and/or noted** as appropriate the following papers:

C2021/080 Report of the Chief Financial Officer

C2021/081 Minutes of 23 March 2022 Lay Nominations Committee

C2021/082 Council Forward Programme

Notes

1. Papers

Copies are available on the Council eboard portal (Diligent Boards) or on request from the Secretary. Approved Minutes and many of the papers are published on the University SharePoint site at <https://livekentac.sharepoint.com/sites/council>.

2. Queries

Any queries should be addressed to Dr Sinead Critchley, Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to Council), (email: S.Critchley-2002@kent.ac.uk).