

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

JOINT COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 November 2018**

PRESENT

Ms Sarah Buck (Chair)

University Representatives

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Steve Smith

Provost, Professor Janice Kay

Registrar and Secretary, Mr M Shore-Nye

Chief Financial Officer, Mr A Connolly

Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs, Ms J Chafer

Director of Campus Infrastructure and Operational Support Services, Mr C Nowell

Trade Union Representatives

Dr Alex Prichard (UCU)

Dr Joao Florencio (UCU)

Mr Chris Forest (Unite)

Mr Andy Holcombe (Unison)

Mr Tim Hortopp (Unison)

Also in attendance

Assistant Director of People Services, Mr A Johnson

Ms Philippa Davey (Regional Officer, UCU)

Director of Strategic Development Unit, Mr J Hutchinson

HR Policy Adviser, Mrs E Hilton

Apologies

Deputy Registrar and Director of People Services and Global Partnerships, Ms J Marshall

Ms Nicola Northcote (UCU)

Ms Rhian Keyse (UCU)

18.14 Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 July 2018 (JCCN/18/08).

18.15 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 July 2018 (JCCN/18/08).

18.16 Trade Union Engagement Report

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, People Services (JCCN/18/09), summarising engagement since the last meeting of the Committee in July 2018.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the minutes of the meeting with Trade Unions re consultation on USS changes (Appendix B). The Chief Financial Officer had explained the USS proposals to staff at a series of staff briefings across the University's campuses. More than 120 staff had responded to the consultation.

The Committee formally noted the report as a true and accurate record of trade union engagement during the period July to November 2018.

#### 18.17 Vice-Chancellor's Update

- (a) The Vice-Chancellor outlined the challenging context within which universities are currently working, including the financial challenges some institutions are experiencing as a result of falling student numbers and the possible outcomes of the Augar Review of post-18 education and funding.
- (b) The Vice-Chancellor also drew the Committee's attention to the report, expected in December 2018, from the Office of National Statistics on how student loans should be reported in the government's finances.
- (c) The Vice-Chancellor advised the Committee that the management of the University has shared its proposed response to the UUK consultation on the report of the Joint Expert Panel on USS with the University community. The 12 responses (from 57 individual employees) were shared with Council before the University's response was finalised. The majority of responses expressed the importance of staff being provided with a sustainable pension scheme. It was not clear if the increases in contributions proposed by USS would go ahead. These would have significant implications for both the University and its staff. The Vice-Chancellor stated that further conversations with Trade Union representatives would take place after the outcome was known.

#### 18.18 Professional Services Strategy

The Registrar and Secretary advised the Committee that a new Professional Services Strategy had been agreed, following consultation with key stakeholders, which would be supported by a programme of change running over the next two years. This would be launched in November 2018. The Director of Strategic Development summarised the key areas which would be focussed upon to ensure the correct shape and size of Professional Services for the future. He explained that there will be ongoing communications and consultation taking place in accordance with the Change Blueprint. There would also be systems investment to improve processes.

The Registrar and Secretary advised the Committee that Directors have been set a savings target over three years. To support this, TERS would be made available. Staff would be briefed in December 2018 and the scheme would be open for applications in January/February 2019. Staff whose applications for TERS were accepted would be expected to leave in June 2019. This will be communicated to staff at the Registrar's talks later this month.

In response to a question from Trade Unions about auditing of the effectiveness of previous transformations, the Director of Strategic Development explained that information had been shared with the Audit Committee and PWC will also complete an audit shortly. He agreed to share a summary of these reviews with Trade Unions. Trade Unions also asked if impact assessments had been completed to take account of staff wellbeing, stress and Health and Safety. The Director of Strategic Development confirmed that this was part of the Change Blueprint and would be taken into account.

The Registrar made a commitment to update Trades Unions on progress at JCCN meetings throughout the process.

#### 18.19 Employee Communications and Consultation

The Assistant Director of People Services drew the attention of the Committee to the outcome of the VCEG annual planning event to "Improve the way we work together" through an ongoing conversation with colleagues on how our University is managed and governed. This would involve engaging on three key issues: how to strengthen departmental involvement in major decisions; how to solve frustrations over the way some management mechanisms and internal processes operate; and reviewing our decision-making processes to ensure that the widest possible cross-section of staff are involved in formulating the future direction of our University.

The management of the University had already begun to implement this through the current review of SWARM, consultation on its response to the JEP report and the Green Paper

process. Communication would also continue through the Weekly Bulletin, Team Brief and the Vice-Chancellor's and Registrar's talks to staff.

He advised trade unions that while the management of the University will engage directly with the University community as a whole, it will also continue to engage with trade unions on the issues through regular monthly meetings with the Trade Unions as well as the termly JCCN meeting. He expressed the importance of managers being able to meet with trade union representatives on an ad hoc basis at short notice as needed in addition to the diarised meetings.

The Assistant Director of People Services also reminded the Committee that the University's normal standards and expectations regarding Dignity and Respect still apply to any messages shared via social media.

#### 18.20 Any other business

The Chair advised the Committee that she had asked for the Committee's Terms of Reference to be reviewed before the next meeting, noting that the last review had taken place in 2012.

The Chair ensured there were no other items to raise under Any Other Business before closing the meeting.