

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 February 2020**

## PRESENT

Ms Sarah Buck (Chair)

University Representatives

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Steve Smith

Provost, Professor Janice Kay

Chief College Operations Officer, Ms Linda Peka

Director of HR, Mrs Imelda Rogers

Trade Union Representatives

Dr Sharon Strawbridge (UCU)

Mr Chris Forrest (Unite)

Mr Tim Hortopp (Unison)

Mr Jim Milnes (Unison)

Also in attendance

Assistant Director of People Services, Mr Andrew Johnson

HR Policy Adviser, Mrs E Hilton

Apologies

Registrar and Secretary, Mr M Shore-Nye

Ms Rhian Keyse (UCU)

Ms Philippa Davey (Regional Officer, UCU)

20.01 Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October (JCCN/20/01).

Matters Arising

- (a) Minute 19.13 (a): The UCU representative advised the meeting that the concern was not specifically related to health and safety but in relation to questions about the management structure at FXPlus and how trade unions can have a voice in the management of the campus. The Director of HR agreed to arrange a meeting between Trade Union representatives and one of the Exeter representatives on the FXPlus Board.
- (b) Minute 19.13 (b): The Director of HR stated that she had not yet received any examples of HEIs that are sharing new starter information with Trade Unions. The UCU representative informed the Committee that she would request examples of these from their Regional Office.

20.02 Vice Chancellor's Update

The Vice-Chancellor briefed the Committee on the following issues:

- (a) University Funding: Following the outcome of the General Election in December 2019, significant changes to the University sector are likely over the next few months. EU students at UK HEIs are expected to decrease significantly following Brexit. The new Government's focus is likely to be on lower quality degree provision, which is likely to be transferred to Further Education institutions. This may mean that some Universities see lower student numbers because of this. The Government has announced significant increases in funding for research and it is expected this will be concentrated

in a small number of the best performing institutions. This will create further divergence in the sector.

- (b) Pay and Pensions Dispute: The University has accepted the outcomes of the JEP1 and JEP2 reports. The Vice-Chancellor was surprised that further strike action had been called whilst the JEP2 discussions are still ongoing. He noted his regret that the compromise offer regarding member contributions was not put to consultation with all UCU members. He advised the Committee that most of the letters he had received were about “casualisation” and not Pensions. The Vice-Chancellor advised the Committee of his concern of the damaging effect of 14 days strike action when the primary demand is on casualisation - which the University has agreed to address in partnership with trade unions.

With regard to the 2019 pay dispute, the Vice-Chancellor advised the Committee that, in response to UCEA’s November consultation with employers, the University of Exeter was one of only three institutions (out of 147) who supported increasing the pay offer. UCEA had made a new offer on the non-pay issues but UCU had chosen not put this to members for consultation.

### 20:03 Professional Services Strategy

Linda Peka, Chief College Operations Officer, briefed the Committee (in the absence of the Registrar and Secretary) on the following issues:

- (a) Reinvestment in Professional Services posts to support the academic experience: 20 administrative posts (Grade C-E) have been appointed through internal moves, promotion and recruitment. The majority commenced work on 6 January 2020 and have now all been through a thorough orientation. There are 4 new Grade D technical posts and appointments have been made to two of these. The Education Hubs have recruited 6 GBP posts of which all are now in post.
- (b) Project 35: this aim of this project is to achieve 35% international students, primarily through increasing postgraduate student numbers. The management of the University is working with the Students’ Guild about their feedback on the plans and with the City Council and community groups regarding the impact on the city. India applications are current up 50% for UG and 318% for PGT – PGT applications from India have exceeded 1000 this week (+800 on last year).
- (c) Environment and Climate Emergency Board: Following the working group report published in November, an Environment and Climate Emergency Board has been established, co-chaired by the Provost and Registrar.
- (d) Creation of Professional Services Partnership and Effectiveness Board: This board is an amalgamation of the PS Strategy and Cubane Steering Groups and will be meeting termly. (The first meeting took place in November and the next are in March and June.)
- (e) Student Experience Action Plans: Each Professional Services directorate has been asked to produce a Student Experience Action Plan to identify actions and initiatives that would have a positive impact on the student experience and be in support of an institution-wide approach to ensuring the highest quality of learning, teaching, student support and student outcomes.
- (f) Professional Services Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plans: PSLT will be dedicating one meeting each term exclusively to EDI issues. In response to a question from a trade union representative regarding increasing the number of BMI home students, the Chief College Operations Officer explained to the Committee that this was being addressed by University action plans on Widening Participation and social mobility.

20:04 Occupation of Peter Chalk by students

The Provost raised concerns about the role of UCU and its social media platforms during the recent student occupation of the Peter Chalk Building. She advised the Committee of the University's concerns regarding the wellbeing of students who participated in the occupation. The Vice-Chancellor informed the Committee that the University had worked closely with the Guild of Students to bring the occupation to an end. The Provost reminded the Committee that the Registrar had offered to meet the UCU branch and this invitation remained open. The UCU Branch President advised the Committee that the Registrar's would be discussed by the branch committee.

20:04 Fair Employment for All Working Group

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of HR (JCCN/20/02) which summarised the establishment of the Fair Employment for All Working Group and the arrangements for the Working Group to undertake its review and make recommendations before the end of the current academic year. Representatives of the three campus trade unions had been invited to join the Working Group, which would meet for the first time 28 February. There will be an additional meeting of the Committee in June 2020 to consider the report of the Working Group.

20:05 Trade Union Engagement Report

The Committee noted the report of the Assistant Director, HR (JCCN/20/03), summarising engagement since the last meeting of the Committee in October 2019.

20:06 Trade Union Items

(a) Joint Trade Union Claim for Additional Facility Time

The Committee noted that trade unions had received a formal offer from the University in response to the (a) Joint Trade Union Claim for Additional Facility Time. Trade union representatives welcomed the University's response and commented that they would like some time to consider the offer and the opportunity to discuss further. The Director of HR agreed to organise a separate meeting with Trade Union representatives to discuss this in more detail.

20:07 Date of next meeting

The date of the Summer Term meeting of the 2019/20 University year is Monday 11 May 2020 (14:00 – 15:30).