

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Wednesday 17 February 2021

Present Andrew Palmer Chairman
Sam Hoe Richardson
Deborah Lamb
Reena Pastakia
Stephanie Wright
Caroline de Guitaut
Elizabeth Braakenburg Dyce (for items 1-4)
Victoria Farrow
Patsy Cullen
Nicola Clarke
Morgan Fowles
In attendance Susan Kay-Williams
Hannah Warwick

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. RSNE Accounts

[REDACTED]

3. RSN Accounts

[REDACTED]

The meeting was then adjourned for the AGM.

4. Minutes of last meeting

With one small amendment, the minutes were approved and signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. Chief Executive's report

The Chief Executive presented her report. Staff were continuing to work at home, but were itching to get students back to the classroom across degree, FT and C&D as soon as possible. Standard of work coming in from the students was acceptable through to very good, although there was some evidence of missing the physical access to resources, especially for third year degree students where buying online cannot give a real indication of quality, feel or even colour of fabric. Bursary reports are due in next week and will be circulated to trustees. These give an individual indication of circumstances, and how students are faring.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. Minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee Jan 2021

The Chairman asked HW to speak to the paper. HW summarised the actions that had been completed. She raised the issue of publication of the Council minutes highlighted by the auditors for consideration by Council. After discussion, it was agreed that the RSN would now publish on its website the appropriate section of the minutes relevant to higher education, including a precis of the Course Leader's paper but not other matters which were not connected to higher education and which were business sensitive.

7A. Management Accounts

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

7B.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

8. Cash flow

HW had attached a commentary to navigate the paper and changes. Bottom line was £499K in the bank at the end of January of which £50K was the ring fenced bounce back loan. Since last meeting there had been confirmation from UCA that they would pay half of the remaining fees in February, so this should amount to about £90K by the end of the month, with a further £90K in May. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

9. Post Audit letter

HW summarised that it had been a clean audit with no recommendations. She pointed out that the auditors had highlighted their emphasis on going concern this year. It was noted that the OfS had specifically asked auditors to review evidence of going concern. It was agreed that underpinning the RSN was the investment portfolio.

[Redacted]

10. International Summer School

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

11. Anniversary Plans

[Redacted]

12. IT Update

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

14. Update on the Governance Code

SKW had circulated the updated parts of the Code. It was agreed we needed to present what we were doing in these areas, as well as looking at how we might enhance them. ED to work with RP and EBD on developing these areas. It was noted that in the light of recent demands, this area had not been front of mind, but we did have good examples.

[REDACTED]

15. RSN response to Covid 19

The meeting received a paper on the RSN's response to Covid from September 20 to January 21. It was noted that the RSN had managed to deliver safely Degree, Future Tutor and Certificate and Diploma courses face to face between September and December but had moved all of them online since January in compliance of the lockdown.

PC asked about how/when students were informed of course changes. SKW explained there was a robust level of communication between the Degree team and the students. All teaching was remaining to timetable, all tutorials were being given. Any minor changes were notified through the weekly calendar sent to all students on a Friday afternoon. As required by UCA the Degree team had reviewed the Learning Outcomes of the course for each year group and these had not had to change. The biggest challenge for students was in finding some materials but the technicians had a stock at home to send out as required and the staff team were able to recommend companies that were still operating online,

15A. The meeting received and noted the recent communications from the Department for Education and the OfS response on course funding and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). UCA recently achieved gold standard of TEF. The RSN, however, is not in receipt of any course funding.

15B. The meeting received and noted the OfS's latest communication on regulation during the pandemic.

15C. The Chief Executive introduced a letter from the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, which had been received overnight, promoting the government's updated policy on free speech and academic freedom. In advance of the meeting, this had been circulated to the Chairman and the academic trustee for their consideration. The letter was noted.

16. Degree update

The paper from the Course Leader was noted. In particular that teaching and resources access had been continued throughout lockdown virtually to the original timetable.

17. Business Updates

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

18. AOB

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

19. There being no further business the meeting was closed.

