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UNIVERSITY OF KENT

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Venue: Darwin Boardroom

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2022

Present: The Chair of the Council, Dame Ursula Brennan; The Deputy Chair of Council, Andrew Newell; Mark Preston; Xian Chan, Dan Cook; Michael Crick; Mayuri Lakhani; Kim Lowe; Gabriel MacGregor; Dr Will Norman; Mark Preston; Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance; Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience; and Professor Iain Wilkinson.

Present via MS Teams: Neil Davies

In attendance: Chief Financial Officer (Jane Higham); Financial Sustainability Director (Peter Pentecost); Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to the Council) (Dr Sinead Critchley); Director of Human Resources and Organisational Design (Martin Atkinson) for item 8; Senior Lecturer (Dr Kelli Rudolph) for item 8; Assistant Director Governance (Sarah Megson), Governance Support Officer (Clare Cockerell)

Apologies: The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Karen Cox; Timi Okuwa; Professor Shane Weller, Alex Perkins, Ben Bradley, Zaid Mahmood, Chris Barron, Colin Carmichael, Mima Osmani.

5527 Chair's Introduction

5528 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022, Paper **C2022/011** were **approved**.

5529 Matters Arising

The Action Log: **C2022/012** was noted. As events had overtaken some actions, the Secretary to the Council would update the action log accordingly.

5530 Strategic Plan Dashboard Report

The DVC ASP&P introduced the paper **C2022/013 Strategic Plan Dashboard** report, an update on actions following the 2022 strategy day.

Council noted the report.

5531 Current Performance

The DVC ASP&P presented paper **C2022/014(a) Performance Dashboard** report.

Council noted the report.

5532 Student Numbers (Recruitment and Retention) Update

The DVC ASP&P introduced **paper C2022/014(a) and (b)**

Council noted the report.

5533 Annual Report of the Senate 2021/22

Paper **C2022/015 Annual Report of Senate 2021/22** provided key assurance to Council on academic quality. In the absence of the VC, the DVC ASPP drew attention to four key areas:

- Degrees Outcome Statement
- Research Excellence Framework
- Student Wellbeing
- International Partnerships

The University was required to report on the explanation for the rise in the number of First and Upper Second degrees which had occurred during the pandemic. The paper noted that this rise was the result of Covid mitigation measures (including a move to continuous assessment and online exams) but that it had also led to a narrowing of the attainment gap for BAME students. Kim Lowe queried whether it made sense to return to pre-Covid arrangements for exams and suggested that this should be discussed at the strategy day. The DVC ES&E confirmed that there was a need to review how to combine online exams with consistent degree standards.

Action: Council to discuss post-Covid arrangements at the Strategy Day.

The Annual Report from Senate was noted.

5534 Proposed Ordinance on Academic Freedom

C2022/016 Ordinance on Academic Freedom as recommended by the Senate

Dr Kelli Rudolph and Martin Atkinson joined Council to introduce the paper. Dr Rudolph reported that the Academic Freedom sub-group of Senate had been working on a proposed Ordinance on Academic Freedom since November 2019. Following external legal advice in March 2022, further work had been undertaken with the Directorate of Governance & Assurance and the Director of HR and OD, to refine the wording of the proposed Ordinance.

Following approval of the proposed Ordinance, Senate would establish a Standing Committee on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression to develop a Code of Practice (as required by the HE (Freedom of Speech) Bill, currently making its way through Parliament) and to operationalise the Ordinance. The Code of Practice would set out how the rights and responsibilities of the Ordinance would be exercised.

The proposed Ordinance set out basic principles but further work would be needed on other governing instruments and policies, which would come forward to Senate and Council in due course, including:

- a range of staff processes and other policies such as on whistleblowing and grievances
- Student processes such as Fitness to Practice, Complaints, Appeals and Discipline

Council thanked the team for the effort which had gone into this work over a number of years.

Council **approved** the Proposed Ordinance on Academic Freedom as recommended by the Senate, with an expected effective date of September 2023.

**5535 Recommendation from Finance and Resources Committee
C2022/017 Kent Vision Funding request
Commercial in confidence**

Council **approved** the Kent Vision funding request.

**5536 Report of the Chief Financial Officer
Commercial in confidence**

The Chief Financial Officer presented the CFO Report **C2022/018**;
Council noted the report.

5537 Council agreed to **approve in principle the Annual Review and Financial Statements, subject to approval of the final drafts by a sub-group of Council comprising the Chair of Council, Chair of Finance and Resources Committee, and Chair of Audit Committee, acting under delegated authority, at a meeting on 8 December 2022.**

**5538 C2022/021 Amendment and Restatement of the Override agreement
Commercial in confidence**

Council **approved** the Amendment and Restatement of the Override agreement.

5539 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No further items of business were raised.

5540 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS were noted.

Meetings in academic session 2022/23:

- 26 January 2023, 10am-4pm (Strategy session)
- 22 February 2023, 2-5pm
- 24 March 2023, 2-5pm
- 18 May 2023, 2-5pm
- 28 June 2023, 2-5pm

ITEMS BELOW THE LINE

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

- **C2022/022** Schedule of Delegation
- **C2022/023** Report of Senate Meeting 2 November 2022 - Incl. UoK response to UUK Guidance on Suicide-Safer Universities
- **C2022/024** Minutes of Finance & Resources Committee 15 November 2022
- **C2022/025** Minutes of Audit Committee 11 October 2022
- **C2022/026** Minutes of Audit Committee 14 November 2022
- **C2022/027** Minutes of Ethics Committee 21 October 2022
- **C2022/028** Minutes of Lay Nominations Committee 25 October 2022
- **C2022/029** Researcher Development Concordat Annual Report
- **C2022/030** Modern Slavery Statement
- **C2022/031** Prevent Duty (submission to OfS)

- **C2022/032** Council Forward Programme 2022/23

The Chair thanked the Council for their contributions and discussion and closed the meeting.

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).

NN 15.02.23