

Summary Report of Council 3: 20 May 2020

The University Council held a meeting via Skype for Business on 20 May 2020, and welcomed Mr Dermot Bolton, Professor Rami Qahwaji and Professor Vishanth Weerakkody, new Senate appointed members who were attending their first meeting of Council.

The meeting focussed on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the impact of the crisis on the University's financial position, current and planned mitigations to minimise the business risk of COVID-19 on student recruitment for the 2020/21 cycle and strategy development.

This paper provides a high-level summary of the business considered by Council, which will be published on the University website. This is not a formal record of the Council meeting but presents an update on matters discussed by the University's governing body.

Baroness Ann Taylor
Chair of Council

1 Report from the Chair of Council

The Chair recorded her appreciation for the work of the Executive Team, and the wider University community, in their joint efforts in the current unprecedented times. The speed in moving to remote working and online learning and teaching, and operating as a virtual campus was noted, as was the high level of cooperation received from both academic and Professional Services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council was pleased to note that through this work, the University had prioritised the health and wellbeing of staff and students, maintained academic standards and ensured students were not academically disadvantaged by COVID-19.

2 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the activities that had been undertaken in relation to learning, teaching and assessment, student support services, and support for University staff. Extensive internal and external engagement activities that had been undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor during this period were also highlighted; this included staff, students, Trade Unions, and local / City, regional and national engagement. It was noted that the University was represented by the Vice-Chancellor on the District Gold Command Group and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Economic Recovery Board and was working closely to ensure the University supported the wider effort in response to the pandemic. The University was also working closely with UUK and other sector bodies.

3 Student Recruitment

Council considered a report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality on the current student recruitment position for 2020/21 entry, noting that student behaviours had changed in light of COVID-19. Contingency planning was being undertaken to



ensure recruitment and marketing activities continued across all markets segments and to minimise the business risks associated with the pandemic. Council noted that there were numerous uncertainties within a rapidly changing landscape, including the new approach to calculating A-Level and GCSE qualifications, the introduction of temporary stabilisation measures by the UK Government, the moratorium on unconditional offers, potential travel or visa restrictions, English language testing, student propensity to travel, and the potential impact on Clearing. A further briefing would be presented to the Council in July 2020.

4 Update on Financial Position and Outlook

Council considered a report on COVID-19 financial scenario planning. The Chief Finance Officer presented the key highlights from the report, including the challenges for the 2020/21 academic year on income, expenditure and cashflow. Council **endorsed** the preparation of an application to the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS), one of the support measures confirmed by government to support higher education providers. In line with University governance, the CLBILS application would be presented to the Finance Committee in June 2020, for formal consideration. Finance Committee, supported by Council, would continue to closely monitor and review progress on the detailed scenario planning in order to maintain a financially sustainable position going forward.

5 Strategy Update

Council received an update on the strategy development process, noting that the original timetable for the development of the sub-strategies and enabling strategies and KPIs had been reviewed in light of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Outstanding sub-strategies (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience and Business and Community Engagement) and enabling strategies (People; Brand, Communications and Marketing; Estates and Infrastructure; and Finance and Performance) would be presented to the Council in July 2020, along with KPIs. Council would also be presented with details of the Board Assurance Framework and Performance Dashboard which would be used to report on progress against KPIs and management of key corporate and strategic risks over the life of the strategy.

6 Research and Innovation Strategy

Council considered and **approved** the draft Research and Innovation Strategy, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University Strategy, which presented a clear approach to research and innovation with a focus on people, performance and place, and a vision to empower and encourage excellent research, delivered through a framework of continuous improvement. Further work was ongoing to finalise specific targets for identified KPIs.

7 Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Council considered and **approved** the draft Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University, which presented a clear approach to equality, diversity and inclusion with a focus on people, place and performance and highlighted good practice in EDI.

8 Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Council considered and **approved** the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, noting that they had been revised in line with best practices, and national and regional legislation and guidance. Areas of the University with additional specific safeguarding requirements (Nursery and Eye Clinic) had their own designated procedures which aligned to the University's procedures.

Standing Items

9 Report from the University Secretary

Council received an update from the University Secretary which summarised ongoing work relating to areas of governance pertinent to the work of Council and the University. This included an update on ongoing compliance with the Office for Students conditions of registration, the OfS consultation on the integrity and stability of the English HE sector; Council member observers at Senate; the Board Assurance Framework and Performance Dashboard; and the Committee Year Planner for 2020/21. In addition, Council **approved** the Statement of Primary Responsibilities which detailed the principal responsibilities of the University Council. Council noted that the SPR would be published on the University website <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/governance/committees/Council-Statement-of-Primary-Responsibilities.pdf> and would be included in the end of year accounts.

10 Report from the UBU

Council received a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on the Union's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Council was pleased to note that the Union was working in partnership with the Executive to support students during the crisis. Council also received an update on the Union's new initiative 'Kick Start', launched at the start of the academic year, and on the annual UBU elections held in March 2020. Council noted that Samera Shabir and Ayman Malik had been re-elected as Sabbatical Officers for Student Affairs and Education and as such would continue on Council until June 2021. Council further noted that Zain Ul Abdin had been re-elected as the Sports and Wellbeing Officer and Inshaal Ahmed had been elected as the Community and Activities Officer.

11 Business from Committees of Council, and Senate

Council noted summary reports from Audit Committee, Finance Committee, Governance and Nominations Committee, Remuneration Committee, and Senate on issues discussed since the last meeting of the Council.

12 Council received the following reports, for information:

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 26 February 2020;
- Research Excellence Framework 2021 update;
- Workforce and HSS dashboard, quarter 3;
- Prevent Duty update;
- Draft Council 4 agenda;
- Council terms of reference and membership 2019/20;
- Council schedule of business for 2019/20.

13 Date of next Council meeting:

Wednesday 8 July 2020

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)
21 May 2020