

Council

17/15 A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, Carrington Building, on Monday 20 March 2017 at 2.15 pm.

The President
 The Vice-President (Mr R.E.R Evans)
 The Vice-President (Ms S. M. Woodman)
 The Vice-Chancellor
 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G. Brooks)
 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor R. Van de Noort)
 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Mr V. Raimo)

Mr T. Beardmore-Gray
 Professor J. Board
 Professor L. Butler
 Mr B. Cooper
 Mr K. Corrigan
 Lord Crisp
 Mrs P. Egan
 Ms M. Hargreaves

Dr O.B. Kennedy
 Miss P. Oppenheimer
 Mrs K. Owen
 Mr H.W.A Palmer
 Professor J.R. Park
 Dr B. Rawal
 Mr S.P. Sherman
 Professor S. Walker

The University Secretary

In attendance: The Chief Financial Officer
 The Director of Quality Support and Development

Apologies were received from Mr T. Bartlam, Dr P. Erskine, Dame Moira Gibb, Mr S.C.C. Pryce and Mrs S.L. Webber.

17/16 The minutes (17/01-17/14) of the meeting held on 20 January 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the minutes:

Minute 17/08 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

(g) The Vice-Chancellor advised that the University Executive Board had been considering the range of views expressed during Council's informal strategic discussion in the Autumn Term, and that, following consultation with the Leadership Group, a paper outlining strategic options would be submitted to the Council at its July meeting. In the light of the discussion, a paper on the capital and financial strategy would be submitted to the Council

at its meeting in November.

Items for note

17/17 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017 (Item 4.1)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017 relating to items for report.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017 relating to items for note, now submitted, be received.”

17/18 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 4.2)

The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.

Resolved:

“That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported.”

Main items of business: strategic matters for discussion and decision

17/19 Henley Business School: a presentation by the Dean of the Henley Business School (Item 5)

The Dean of the Henley Business School (Professor Board) made a presentation to the Council on the Henley Business School (HBS) and its future development (copy added to Diligent).

Professor Board explained that HBS’s educational purpose focussed on the empowerment of individuals to become outstanding professionals and business leaders who think with clarity and act with confidence and conviction. The strong emphasis on values and integrity distinguished HBS from many other business schools which sought simply to equip their students with a set of technical skills. He outlined the need for HBS, as an international business school, to have an identity which was expressed differently from the University, while remaining an integral part of the University and contributing substantially to the University’s success. He believed that HBS and the University managed effectively and collegially the subtleties and complexities of the relationship between a business school and a parent university.

Professor Board explained HBS’s strategy for engaging business across the areas of research, teaching and learning, and executive education. He outlined HBS’s success in rankings and accreditations and indicated the need to improve and secure its position in a fiercely competitive environment. HBS had undergone rapid growth in the past five years, doubling the number of undergraduates and increasing fivefold the number of postgraduate research

students, while achieving more modest growth in taught postgraduate students. HBS accounted for 22% of the University's undergraduate population and 64% of its taught postgraduate population, and accounted for one-third of its undergraduate and postgraduate student income. It contributed £13.4m to central University funds. HBS had a significant research profile, having achieved a ranking of 16th for grade point average in the most recent REF Business and Management Unit of Assessment and a ranking of 10th for impact. It regularly won major awards from research councils, government and industry.

Professor Board referred to HBS's engagement with industry, including a major contract for professional development for Financial Conduct Authority staff, commissioned programmes for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and important collaborations with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. HBS also had global reach, with partners and branches across the world, including China, Canada, Europe and Africa. Henley South Africa was the only foreign business school in South Africa, contributed to the ambitious national agenda for empowerment and business development, and had ambitions to extend its provision across Africa. HBS had a very active international alumni network, with alumni associations in 15 countries, and maintained contact with 70% of its alumni.

Professor Board explained the challenges facing HBS in a rapidly changing environment, and the actions which were being taken to mitigate the risks and to pursue opportunities. There were three linked projects which would help to secure HBS's position among leading business schools globally: doing what business schools do, better and more profitably; adding to the range of HBS's activity, notably degree apprenticeships; and entering professional spaces which business schools rarely manage, by offering an integrated service of learning, development and insight and providing a bridge between the academic and non-academic worlds. He discussed briefly a number of challenges which would need to be addressed to achieve this ambition.

In response to questions, Professor Board elaborated on the scale and impact of degree apprenticeship provision, and the consequent opportunities to develop a broader, mutually beneficial relationship with clients, and he explained the challenges of maintaining HBS's high ranking in a competitive and expanding global field. He also explained the importance of the University to the reputation and sustainability of HBS, noting that the only stand-alone UK business school had recently been sold to a US university. The excellent relationship between HBS and the rest of the University was based on a high level of mutual trust and respect, and sensitivity to issues of brand and identity.

Finally, the Dean asked for the support of the Council for the strategic direction he had outlined and its recollection of the presentation, in broad terms, as and when it had to make strategic decisions in future. Capturing the mood of the meeting, the President assured the Dean that he did indeed have such support, and that the Council would be mindful of the Business School's many strengths in its decision making.

would be available in October, as originally envisaged. The Vice-Chancellor proposed, in variance of the circulated draft resolution, that the revised plan be submitted to the Strategy and Finance Committee in November 2017 and to the Council in January 2018.

In response to a question from the President, Professor Butler explained that Psychology was a relatively young discipline in Malaysia, but that some public universities now had significant cohorts of Psychology students and the market was growing rapidly. UoRM's Psychology programme was distinctive in the Malaysian context since its basis was neuroscience rather than social science. The programme had had a single intake to date. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) (Professor Brooks) indicated that Pharmacy's growth had been constrained by the delays in the accreditation of both programmes: the first programme had now admitted its first cohort and the accreditation of the second programme was expected imminently. Professor Park spoke of the strong links which the School of Agriculture Policy and Development had with Malaysia, and commented on the significant in-country opportunities for research and the possibly more limited opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate agriculture programmes. In response to questions, Professor Board affirmed HBS's commitment to UoRM, and provided a brief account of the success of HBS's programmes at UoRM and their contribution to the overall UoRM student numbers.

In response to a question from Dr Rawal, Mr Raimo explained that the population in the Johor Bahru area, in which UoRM was located, was growing rapidly and was ethnically diverse, which provided significant opportunities for UoRM. He also noted that Malaysian applicants to UK-based programmes had declined last year, which implied that international campuses would have growing importance in offering a UK education to Malaysian students.

In response to a question from Mr Corrigan, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the process was under way to appoint a Provost in succession to Professor Downes, who had indicated his wish to retire in 2018, and that, in due course, a Chief Operating Officer would be appointed in succession to Mr Savage, who had accepted the role for a fixed term. Professor Downes and Mr Savage would continue to work to their utmost capacity for the remainder of their terms to ensure UoRM's financial success and academic excellence, and they were collaborating closely with the range of relevant colleagues in the UK to achieve this purpose.

In response to questions from Ms Woodman and Mr Palmer, the Vice-Chancellor offered an account of the University's negotiating strategy with Malaysian authorities, which was necessarily carefully calibrated to the cultural context, and explained some of the political and social factors which were shaping the higher education environment in Malaysia. He indicated that the negotiating strategy would be reappraised if sufficient progress was not being achieved.

A number of lay members expressed concern that the level of the University's financial commitment to UoRM would constrain the University's ability to take advantage of opportunities for its UK campus at a time when the UK higher education environment was changing rapidly. They noted the need to reconcile the University's long-term ambition to create a full-service university

at UoRM with ensuring sufficient strategic investment in the UK campus to maintain and improve its competitive position in relation to teaching and research.

Resolved:

1. “That a revised plan for the University of Reading Malaysia be prepared for submission to the Strategy and Finance Committee in November 2017 and thence to the Council in January 2018;”
2. “That a paper on the University of Reading Malaysia, now submitted, be received.”

Items of Report

17/21 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 7)

The Vice-Chancellor:

- (a) reported that HEFCE, under its new Annual Provider Review process, had conducted a preliminary assessment of the University and had concluded that there were ‘no concerns’ in respect of the two areas under consideration, namely (i) quality and standards and (ii) financial sustainability, good management and governance. In consequence, HEFCE’s final risk categorisation of the University was ‘not at higher risk’, which was the most positive category in HEFCE’s grading scheme;
- (b) invited the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Van de Noort) to provide an update on recruitment to date. Professor Van de Noort reported that Home/EU undergraduate applications had [REDACTED] relative to last year (which compared with an average decrease of 5% across the sector), and Overseas undergraduate applications had [REDACTED]. The number of offers, however, had [REDACTED] and acceptances for Home undergraduates had [REDACTED]. Home/EU applications for postgraduate taught programmes were similar to last year, but Overseas applications [REDACTED]. Home/EU postgraduate research applications [REDACTED] and Overseas applications [REDACTED]. Professor Van de Noort was as confident as he could be at this stage that the recruitment targets for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes for 2017 would be achieved;
- (c) noted that the Council received an update report on major projects twice a year, and advised that he would report on the progress of the largest project such as Electronic Management of Assessment, Degree Apprenticeships, and the University of Reading Malaysia, in a more detailed way and at the appropriate time;
- (d) commented on the progress of the Higher Education and Research Bill through Parliament, noting that the House of Lords had agreed a series of amendments which would strengthen universities’ autonomy relative to the provisions of the Bill’s first draft and which would remove the link between the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and

eligibility to increase student fees. He noted that it appeared unlikely that the Government would allow the amendments to stand. He indicated that, provided that the University achieved a satisfactory outcome in the TEF and the necessary legislation was in place, the University Executive Board would submit to the Council at its July meeting a proposal to increase the student fee;

- (g) reported that the Government had announced its intention to increase the number of medical undergraduate training places by 1500, in part by the managed expansion of existing providers and in part by offering 'new high quality providers a direct entry route to the medical education and training market'. The entry route would involve a competitive bidding process to be shaped by responses to a consultation. It was understood that the Department of Health and Health Education England would expect an institution to use the consultation to signal its intention to apply to establish a medical school. The Council noted that initial contact had been made with the General Medical Council in order to access the initial application form, and that accreditation normally extended over a period of three years, which would be consistent with initial delivery of a programme in 2019/20.

The University proposed to develop plans for a medical school in close partnership with the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The establishment of a medical school offered major potential benefits for all partners. It was envisaged that a medical school would build on the strengths of the University and NHS partners, and would address policy challenges identified by the government. In consequence, the draft vision statement focussed on under-recruiting specialties, regional 'cold spots' (related to population increases, socio-economic and health deprivation, and shortages of health professionals), the need to attract applications from under-represented groups, and equipping medical graduates with a range of skills required to operate in the mid-21st century healthcare system, including health-informatics, preventative medicine, and business and leadership. Given that the closing date for the consultation was 2 June 2017, the Council was now invited, having noted the developments to date, to support, in principle, further work to develop a business case and application to the bidding process.

In regard to the possible establishment of a medical school, the President noted that the Council would receive at a future meeting a paper on possible transformational projects over the period of the next ten years, and, on the basis of that paper, would be better placed to develop an informed view on a proposed medical school in the context of the broader institutional and higher education landscape. He noted that a medical school would be consonant with the overarching themes of the University's strategy and would align with its strategic ambitions to increase its research activity.

Lord Crisp indicated that there were advantages and disadvantages for a university in having a medical school, and that careful consideration needed to be given to both. A medical school would inevitably be operationally complex, and would have significant implications for the operation and character of the

University as a whole. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He observed that Henley Business School would be an important adjunct to a medical school, given the growing need for business and leadership skills among medical professionals. In response to a question from Lord Crisp, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that general practitioners and local public health bodies had been included in preliminary conversations, and that they would be a key element in any proposal. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

The Council agreed that further work be undertaken to develop a business case and application for a medical school.

In response to a question from Mr Evans, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that the University would consider, in due course, its position in relation to two-year undergraduate degrees, which the government was seeking to promote. It was not clear, at this stage, whether there would be significant demand for two-year degrees.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”

17/22 Reports of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017
 (Item 8)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017 relating to items for report.

In regard to item 8.1, Quarter 2 Forecast, the Chief Financial Officer reported that there was an adverse variance of £3.6m in the forecast operating surplus for the Academic Group (reduced from a £5.8m surplus to a £2.2m surplus) with reductions in forecast income in respect of both fee and research income offset by some reduction in expenditure. She advised that actions were being taken to achieve the budget by the financial year end. In response to a question from Mr Palmer, the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the £12m savings derived from the Professional and Administrative Services Review had been fully incorporated into the budget and were being sustained.

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 February 2017 relating to items for report, now submitted, be received.”

17/23 Report of the Senate (Item 9)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 8 March 2017.

The Council noted the progress of the Senate Review and looked forward to receiving the final report in due course. Miss Oppenheimer noted that the University, having increased the Student Fee for 2017/18, was minded to take the opportunity for a further increase for 2018/19 (which would be limited to new starters and would not be applied retrospectively); she expressed her disquiet at a further increase and the consequent financial pressures on students, both during their studies and post-graduation.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 8 March 2017, now submitted, be approved.”

17/24 Report of the Student Experience Committee (Item 10)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 6 February 2017.

Ms Woodman, as Chair of the Committee, expressed her regret that RUSU had encouraged students to boycott the National Student Survey (NSS) in order to protest against the link between increases in the Student Fee and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The Vice-Chancellor reported that, to date, the University’s response rate for the NSS was slightly below 50%, which was greater than at the equivalent point last year but below the current sector average; it was, however, difficult to anticipate the final position. Miss Oppenheimer, while regretting any adverse impact on the University, explained that RUSU believed that the boycott offered one of the few means of effectively opposing the increase in the Student Fee.

Ms Woodman thanked Mr Cooper, Miss Oppenheimer and the other RUSU officers for their contribution to the Committee during a year which had presented a number of challenging issues.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 6 February 2017, now submitted, be approved.”

17/25 Report of the Remuneration Committee (Item 11)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 31 January 2017.

Mr Evans, as Chair of the Committee, drew attention to the excellent work being undertaken to address the gender pay gap, and indicated the Committee’s strong support for further action which would maintain progress in this area. He also noted the changes to the Lifetime Allowance and related aspects of pension arrangements, which might entail the University providing

compensation to a small number of staff who were 'high earners' if they elected to withdraw from the pension scheme or to cap contributions.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 31 January 2017, now submitted, be approved.”

17/26 Report of the Appointments and Governance Committee (Item 12)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Appointments and Governance Committee held on 31 January 2017.

The Council noted that, in the course of the Session 2016/17, it would fall to the Appointments and Governance Committee (acting as Nominations Committee) to propose for appointment by the Council two members of the Council in Class 2 (*vice* Mr T. Bartlam and Mr H.W.A. Palmer) to serve for the period from 1 August 2017. The Committee, having considered the size of the Council, had agreed to keep one of the posts vacant for the time being, which would still maintain a lay majority on the Council. The Council confirmed its support for this course of action.

The President informed the Council that Dame Moira Gibb had indicated to the Vice-Chancellor her wish to resign from the Council on the grounds that her other commitments prevented her from fulfilling the role as she would wish. The President paid tribute to Dame Moira's contribution to the Council and its work. The Appointments and Governance Committee would consider an appointment in due course.

Resolved:

1. “That, with reference to item 3, Ms Helen Gordon be appointed to membership of the Council in Class 2 (*vice* Mr T. Bartlam) for the period from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2020.”;
2. “That the Report of the meeting of the Appointments and Governance Committee held on 31 January 2017, now submitted, be approved.”

17/27 Report of the Audit Committee (Item 13)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 February 2017.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 February 2017, now submitted, be approved.”

17/28 Outgoing RUSU Officers

The President noted that Mr Cooper and Miss Oppenheimer were attending their last meeting of the Council. He thanked them for their valuable contributions to the Council and for their wider service to the Students' Union

and the University community more broadly. Mr Cooper thanked the Council for having engaged so constructively in discussion on a number of contentious issues in the course of the year, and for its support for improving the student experience.

17/29 Date of the final meeting of the Council in the Session 2016-17

The final meeting of the Council in this Session had been scheduled for Monday 10 July 2017 at 2.15 pm.