

Senate

20/24 A meeting of the Senate was held via teams, on Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Dr Emma Aston
Professor Cindy Becker
Professor Adrian Bell
Dr Katrina Bicknell
Professor Ingo Bojak
Professor David Carter
Professor Claire Collins
Professor Ben Cosh
Dr Giuseppe Di Fatta
Professor Mark Fellowes
Dr David Field
Professor Richard Frazier
Professor Clare Furneaux
Dr Francesca Greco
Professor Andrew Godley
Professor Louise Hague
Professor Rebecca Harris
Professor Chris Harty
Dr Lawrence Hill-Cawthorne
Dr Chloe Houston
Professor Carmel Houston-Price
Dr Katherine Hyde
Ms Rebecca Jerrome
Professor Gunter Kuhnle
Dr Daniela La Penna
Dr Allan Laville
Professor Gail Marshall
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Simon Mortimer
Professor Steve Musson
Dr Karen Poulter
Professor Jane Setter

Dr Mark Shanahan
Ms Stephanie Sharp
Professor Simon Sherratt
Professor David Stack
Professor Vesna Stojanovik
Professor Katja Strohfeltd
Dr Maria Vahdati
Professor Sue Walker
Dr Hong Wei
Professor Emily West
Dr Karin Whiteside
Professor Adrian Williams
Professor Paul Williams
Dr Hong Yang
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum

Students:

Molli Cleaver
Fifi Bangham
Gemma King
Daisy O'Connor

In attendance:

Ms Louise Sharman (Secretary)
Ms Sam Foley
Dr Richard Messer
Deepa Govindarajan Driver

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed members to the Senate and explained how the meeting would be run through teams. Questions had been collated in advance of the meeting and additional comments would be raised via the chat function.

20/25 Report from the University Executive Board on post-Covid-19 response and a proposed restructuring process

The Senate received a Report from the University Executive Board on the University's post-Covid-19 response and a proposed restructuring process.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the discussion by briefly setting out the context of an anticipated substantial shortfall in recruitment of both international and home students in 2020/21, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a consequent loss of £106m over the next three years.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that the University would undertake two major pieces of work to address the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the University. The Chief Financial Officer had outlined in Phase 1 a set of proposals to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic over the next three years, while the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resource and Planning) would consider the shape of the University, given the emerging new environment, in the longer term through Phase 2. The two pieces of work were co-ordinated to ensure that the process of restructuring and rationalisation was informed by the University's strategic objectives.

The comments of the Senate would be submitted to the Council who were meeting on Monday 15 June 2020. Council had received the same papers as the Senate.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Senator's that it was their role to scrutinise the proposals and to hold the Board to account on academic activity.

In responding to the questions raised by the Senate the Vice-Chancellor grouped similar questions together to avoid repetition in the discussion.

Questions – circulated in advance of the meeting

A large number of questions had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Vice-Chancellor outlined that these largely fell into four key themes:

- 1) How confident we were of the figure of £106M:
The income shortfall had been modelled on a 50% reduction in international students (which would amount to shortfalls of £31/17/17m over three years) and a 10% reduction in Home/EU students (which would amount to shortfalls of (£10/10/10m). In addition to the loss of fee income, a further reduction in Campus Commerce income (halls, catering, conferences, etc) was anticipated. The University might also lose research overheads and a further investment income linked to its share portfolio. The total projected shortfall therefore amounted to approximately £106m.

The % shortfall on recruitment had been based on UUK modelling. More recent surveys had not indicated significant differences in the assumptions used by UUK, although there were varying levels of optimism/pessimism in some surveys. Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Fellowes) reported that the latest QS survey had indicated that 53% of students from East Asia were not planning on studying in the UK.

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed to the Senate that the £106M was still the

- University's best estimate of the shortfall.
- 2) Questions around the 4-day working week/20% cut:

A number of questions and concerns had been raised in regard to the proposal re a 4-day working week/20% pay cut.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that the Phase 1 work had modelled a series of options that could save money and consequently reduce the pool of potential redundancies required in Phase 2.

These options would be considered as part of the Consultation Process. Different permutations of these options could be considered as part of the negotiation for e.g. variations between grades, lower amounts.

- 3) Questions around the consultation process:
The formal Consultation Process would commence once the agreement of Council had been given.

The Staff Forum and the University and College Union (UCU) would be willing to negotiate constructively on the range of proposals and work with the University to reduce the number of redundancies. Achieving the necessary savings on staff costs by varying contractual terms would depend on collective agreement by the Staff Forum and UCU acting on behalf of staff. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that UEB was concerned about the impact on lower-paid staff and would take mitigating action.

- 4) Work in Phase 1 versus Phase 2:
UEB wished to minimise the extent of redundancies. The work being undertaken as part of Phase 1 was aimed to get collective agreement on a range of measures to reduce the projected shortfall. The more that could be saved through Phase 1 would then in turn reduce the amount of savings required through redundancies in Phase 2.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) Is the figure of £106 million a conservative estimate of the savings the University is likely to need to make?

The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the figure was the best estimate.

- 2) Some colleagues have expressed concerns that the idea of a 20% pay cut/a 4 day working week would become a 'new normal' - so what assurances are there that, if agreed, these would be temporary measures?

The model was for 1 year only. That level/time length could be negotiated as part of the consultation.

- 3) What would be the impact on individuals' pensions, given that this is now calculated on a career average rather than final salary?

The Chief Financial Officer informed the Senate that protection for pensions had not been included in the modelling.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) A solidarity hardship fund should be set up to help staff whose lives are most

negatively affected by the loss of income. As an example, the cut to take-home income will be relatively painless for higher grade staff living in two-income households, but for a single parent on a lower pay grade it is no exaggeration to suggest that the cut could make them homeless. A sum of money should be put aside by the University – like the student financial hardship fund – to assist in these cases, which could be topped up by voluntary donations from the many highly paid staff in the University, alumni of the university, and other benefactors.

- 2) I'd also like to note that while a few staff in PCLS would like the option of reducing their FTE instead of taking a pay cut, very few of us thought that would be a practical solution that would allow the School to keep running effectively, and most of us preferred a pay cut to the FTE reduction. But that might be different in different Schools and Functions. Could Heads of School and Functions be given some flexibility on pay cut vs. FTE cut?

The Vice-Chancellor noted that such an option could be considered in the consultation process but ideally would need to be done at scale. He reminded the Senate that all colleagues had the right to request flexible/reduced working hours or to take unpaid leave.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) Staff are currently developing online teaching resources for next academic year and planning how to deliver (for example) key skills lab classes on the basis of multiple iterations of face-to-face teaching. This brings up some issues in relation to redundancies and/or reduction of pay for a “4-day week’ with respect to workload and ownership of IP. A) If staff develop online resources that we rely on to teach programmes but are subsequently made redundant, where do we legally stand on future use of those materials regarding IP? B) Any scenario will imply increased workloads for remaining staff across all job roles and pay grades. Our workload modelling tells us that staff are already working beyond 1.0FTE (extra evening and weekend working is the norm). Is the University being honest in its language around the scenarios with respect to 20% pay loss? Staff have commented that they would be more prepared to accept this option if it were presented to them with more honesty on the implications, i.e. that it is a 20% pay cut for the same work. They also were not satisfied with the answer to questions regarding UEB showing leadership on pay sacrifice.
- 2) Impacts of pay sacrifice or loss of pay progression are regressive measures, with more impact on staff on lower pay, part-time workers or being reliant on single incomes. Have more progressive approaches been considered?
- 3) What will be the basis for decisions on redundancies? It appears this is informed by the Phase 2 workstreams, so how was the membership decided given their influence on our futures?
- 4) The scope of the activities of the Phase 2 workstreams overlaps with the terms of reference of University committees [redacted, section 40] which had no consultation or input into this work that is related to the strategic direction of UoR. Why not?
- 5) The use of the NIRD Trust has been a source of some “difficulty” for Reading in the recent past. Is the justification of £10m per annum drawdown from the Trust robust enough to ensure that we do not suffer more reputational damage? (In the interests of transparency, who are the Trustees?)
- 6) There is a certain cynicism that the COVID situation is a smokescreen for a process that the University has wanted to drive anyway. Does the University view staff as an asset or simply a cost? The frequent quoting of staff cost contribution to the University cost base has driven the perception that it is the latter (and is damaging to

- morale in general).
- 7) Why was Senate not consulted alongside Leadership Group when scoping Institutional Level long term change to shape Phase 2?
 - 8) The timelines for the process we are now being drawn into are extremely short. There appears to be no provision for Senate to propose a rethink of the Restructure Proposal. There is unease about the consultation process and how that will facilitate input from staff.

In regard to question 5 the Vice-Chancellor clarified that the University was Trustee of NIRD acting through the Council. Over the past eighteen months revised governance arrangements had been put in place with a separate Trust Committee (comprised of internal and external members). The proposal to use NIRD fund would need to be agreed by the Council as Trustee.

It was acknowledged that there could potentially be missed opportunity costs, but the Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that NIRD would still have significant assets.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) I have a concern about retention of staff from clinical backgrounds. We have many staff that teach on our programmes that maintain their clinical practice through other part-time employment. Several have expressed their intention to go back to clinical practice if there are significant pay reductions associated with their University role.
- 2) Pharmacy numbers were pre-agreed by the accrediting bodies. Has the University considered the impact the options might have on such programmes if staffing resource was reduced?

The Vice-Chancellor stated that the University would not want to take measures that would worsen its financial position. However, the student number cap might mean that the University has to turn students away as the penalties proposed by the OfS for over recruitment were serious.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) Why is there an urgency to find, by January 2021, the savings assumed necessary over the next three years (£106m)?
- 2) Given that the necessity of all of the proposed cost saving measures in the CFO report are based on estimations of UG student enrolment for 2020/1, would it not reflect a more cautious and reasonable response to consider such measures only once UG enrolment figures for 2020/1 are known? This would seem appropriate for four reasons: i) The proposed salary cost saving measures would have a considerable impact on the University's ability to perform its teaching and research functions; ii) The proposed timeline suggests implementation as appropriate of the consultation outcomes at the end of July – one month later, the full extent of the pandemic on 2020/1 UG student recruitment would be known; iii) The very immediate need for implementation of cost savings is also reduced by the double pay of the first tranche of tuition fees in September; iv) The CFO report demonstrates that £16m as a minimum can be recuperated in the first year from investment assets, providing a considerable buffer. In addition, if it became necessary, a further £10m can be saved in 2020/1 from salary cost savings short of redundancy or pay cuts.
- 3) If 2020/1 recruitment is close to that originally expected, then presumably there is no financial problem necessitating major cuts to our cost base.
- 4) If recruitment is as expected, there can be no claim to a reduced workload. In Law, as elaborated below, there is no room in our WAM for fewer staff or a 4-day working week. Already there is a considerably larger workload expected for 2020/1 due to

blended face-to-face and online teaching. This recommendation would therefore be unworkable.

- 5) In addition to the incompatibility of this recommendation with workload and teaching quality, it would also have a huge impact on morale, which already is stretched to breaking point.
- 6) Is it proposed that redundancies and/or a 4-day working week be made evenly across all schools/departments/functions or differentially? In either case, on what principles would decisions regarding redundancies be made?
- 7) The VC in his briefings made clear that any pay cuts would be made across the board (including the UEB) for reasons of fairness. However, though a 20% pay cut for someone on £30k and a 20% pay cut for someone on £200k is equal in proportion, it certainly is not equal in outcome (it is clear that the loss of income to the former would likely create far more financial challenges than the loss of income to the latter). Many colleagues in Law have emphasised the unsustainable financial position in which this would place them.
- 8) What impact would the proposed 4-day working week have on those already on less than 1 FTE contracts? Colleagues in Law on part-time contracts have again emphasised that this would be financially unsustainable for them.
- 9) How is the likely disproportionate impact on BAME staff of pay cuts and/or redundancies being factored in, and would this be within the scope of the review of the University's support for BAME staff and students announced on 3 June?
- 10) When and how will an equality impact assessment be carried out on these proposals? How will that feed into the consultation process?
- 11) It must be borne in mind that Law staff already work considerably more hours than those accounted for in our WAM.
- 12) Law School staff have emphasised that the University's promise of blended face-to-face teaching (with social distancing) and online teaching for 2020/1 will necessarily involve a considerable increase in workload both in preparing new materials for teaching and in delivering that teaching (due to the need for an increased number of tutorials). This will be the case even if there is a lower than planned level of recruitment.
- 13) Moreover, there is no clear evidence that there will be substantially fewer students joining in 2020/1 for Law. For our UG programmes, home/EU and overseas acceptances are largely on par with this time last year. For our PG programmes, we have seen a considerable increase relative to this time last year in acceptances of offers from overseas students for FT October 2020 entry (figures for Law are considerably higher than the University average, thus partially controlling for any impact of the deposit waiver). Indeed, we have seen acceptances continue to come in at a good rate for both UG and PG 2020 entry during the pandemic. We cannot be sure, of course, and some reduction in numbers is expected, but this data for 2020/1 recruitment should play some role in making resourcing decisions for 2020/1.
- 14) The proposed 4-day working week would also undermine research in the Law School. The university-wide steer on suspending awarded research leave in 2020/1 (which, in Law, is generally quite resource-neutral as staff absorb the workload of those on leave) will already significantly compromise research in Law and across the University. It will also hinder personal development/promotion, quite likely in an unequal way. As it is, very few T&R colleagues are able to research during term time (and research time during the breaks is heavily limited by admin, marking, teaching prep for the next term, and the need to take some holiday). A shift to a 4-day week would undermine Law's (and other schools') research profile and reputation, our future REF submissions, and the finalising of our REF2021 submission.

- 15) This impact on research would have a knock-on effect on our recruitment at both UG and PG admissions – our research profile and the policy impact of staff’s research are major selling points both to UG and PG applicants [redacted, section 40].
- 16) There is a concern that the timeline for Phase 2 consultations is extremely tight (final report by early September). Why is this necessary, given the limited scope for consultation that this leaves?
- 17) Who made the decisions about membership of the workstreams and on what basis? Would a broader membership for greater transparency be considered?
- 18) The separation of teaching and research into different workstreams is concerning. In Law, for example, our teaching and research are inseparable – as noted, our research plays a key recruitment role and our teaching is heavily research-led. Any changes to teaching or research structures necessarily affect the other.
- 19) What scope will there be for consultation with staff within Schools/departments? Discussions with colleagues in Law show a great desire to contribute positively to discussions around teaching, research, and University structures.

In regard to recruitment, the Vice-Chancellor stated that over the next few months the picture on student recruitment should solidify. Overseas there was a massive backlog in English language testing. It was hard to see how that would quickly solve itself, but it was recognised that the picture varied between countries, including for e.g. Malaysia. It was noted that the student number cap would limit any measures to offset in between international and home students. [Redacted, section 40] followed up with a question in regard to fairness for Schools that had continued to recruit well. The Vice-Chancellor stated that he did not have an immediate answer to this question for each School.

In regard to the question on applying measures unevenly/allowing exemptions in certain areas the Vice-Chancellor stated that the University would need collective agreement and that as soon as exemptions were taken into account some departments could become unviable.

In regard to the question on FTE/pay reduction it was noted that this would form part of the Consultation Process. It had been noted from comments raised that a salary freeze appeared more palatable than a salary reduction.

In regard to the question around the urgency of timing, the Chief Financial Officer informed the Senate that the reason was cash flow. She outlined how bills continued to need to be paid and that measures such as an early payment from the SLC did not particularly help given the profile of payments needed. The work under Phase 1 could not wait until the outcome of student recruitment was fully known as the University would run out of cash. She confirmed to the Senate that the University’s cash flow position prior to COVID-19 was fine. The Vice-Chancellor added that if more international students returned then that would indeed be taken into account. However, given the amount of time involved in redundancy processes it was not possible to delay the Phase 1 and 2 work to await the outcome of the student recruitment round.

In regard to the Phase 2 work it was reported that the workstream leads had been agreed by UEB, they in turn had determined membership to cut across the breadth of the University including Heads of School, RUSU and non-Leadership Group members. It was acknowledged that the research and teaching workstreams would need work closely – the workstream leads for both would weave together the two streams of work.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) Pay-related cost savings, point (iii) all staff reducing to 80% of their contract for 12 months - I think that a 20% salary cut for someone on a lower grade contract could create significant difficulties for the individual affected, but, in turn, would not result in significant savings for the University. Personally, I would be in favour of a cap/minimum threshold being applied so that staff on lower salary (e.g. grades 1-5) are not affected.
- 2) Pay-related cost savings. Proposal of an additional point - The VC has indicated in his talk that at this stage all options were open for discussion, and that alternative options could be added for consideration. I would like to suggest for consideration an additional pay-related cost saving option: *Voluntary unpaid leave arrangements*. Current university regulations and guidelines already make provisions for an employee to request a period of unpaid leave. Furthermore, employees are also allowed to request fixed-term periods of part-time under the flexible work arrangements. In a similar spirit, employees with parental responsibilities are also entitled to up to 4 weeks unpaid leave per year. Here I am proposing to use already available unpaid leave arrangements (possibly with temporary relaxed rules on eligibility) as a means to combine individual needs of a member of staff for some leave time and the need of financial savings.
- 3) [Redacted, section 40], I was wondering if some clarifications could please be given with regards to the role of research/arrangements for research in a context of reduction of working hours.

In regard to the question on voluntary unpaid leave the Vice-Chancellor stated that all colleagues had the right to ask for unpaid leave or flexible working. He suggested that maybe both of these options needed better promotion and the options made clearer to colleagues

In regard to the question on research the Deputy Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that there would be an impact on the way in which research was undertaken if there was a reduction in working hours. She stated that the University wished to preserve key external research funding/key research partnerships and to maintain the pipeline of bids for strategically important research. The Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research and Innovation) would work closely with Heads of Schools, Research Deans, and Research Division Leads.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) How reliable are the projections? - The projections used rely heavily on a number of assumptions (e.g. recruitment) that are unreliable. In the past, we have been fairly unlucky with predictions – e.g. after PAS, expenditure for administrative services appeared to increase by ~£30m according to University accounts (and an increase in staff numbers), and the use of the NIRD fund had unexpected repercussions. The proposed actions will have a severe impact on the University, in particular staff morale, at a time when it is crucial that we all work together and deliver the best possible student experience and excellent research – and it might also affect the confidence students have in us. Can we be certain that these projections are correct, and the proposed measures are the *only* option we have?
- 2) Impact on future success - The proposal focuses on short term measures, but many of these are likely to have long term impact which could seriously harm the University. The proposed reduction in income etc is likely to result in a loss of staff that might be essential to the University, and an increased workload for the remaining staff at a time when workload is already high (e.g. due to changes to teaching etc). This will have an impact on student experience and ultimately our TEF results – which will affect future recruitment and financial stability. It will also affect the quality of research which might

affect our position in the REF, QR funding, future funding from other sources and our reputation. How has this been taken into consideration? Is there a detailed risk assessment that could be shared?

- 3) Savings vs income generation - The proposal focuses a lot on savings – why not on income generation? We have just recruited a new PVC for international recruitment – do we expect that this can mitigate the expected 50% drop in international applications and increase income in future? Are there other income streams we could use instead of imposing fairly severe measures on staff that will ultimately harm income generation (as it will affect research & teaching quality)?
- 4) Position of staff on rolling contracts - A considerable number of staff are on rolling contracts, including ECR, – often based on recurring grants. There is very often a long delay until these awards are processed, which creates uncertainty. How will these members of staff be affected by the proposed changes?

In regard to the question on the reliability of the figures the Vice-Chancellor stated that the figures were the best estimate at the current time. He noted that various surveys were being published on the recruitment position which gave ballpark figures and varied slightly – the £106M remained the best estimate. He reminded the Senate that any under recruitment in year 1 would be carried forward into a deficit in years 2 and 3. The governance for NIRD had been improved.

In regard to income generation the Chief Financial Officer acknowledged that there was a possibility that some commercial activities would provide additional income but that these were likely to take time and would not generate significant income in the coming academic year.

In regard to the question of rolling contracts Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Zaum) stated that there was not a hiring freeze for colleagues funded by external monies. In addition, it was noted that a 4-day working week for colleagues funded by external grants would save no money. He stated that there was a rumour that UKRI and other funders would offer costed extensions.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) I see that top slicing or removing SDAs is mentioned. I would argue strongly against this. In many cases, SDA funds have been gained through hard work e.g. winning very competitive grants or doing external consultancy. Cutting SDAs would be damaging for staff development, and the savings yielded would be tiny compared to other (less damaging) measures on the table.
- 2) Has the university sought assurance from UKRI that a compulsory four-day week will definitely be accepted as grounds for a no-cost extension on research grants? If not, then this assurance needs to be sought urgently, as without it our department (Meteorology) would lose roughly £2.7M, compared to a saving of £1.5M, i.e. a net loss from moving to a four-day week.
- 3) Following a pay freeze, would salaries return to the levels they would have been in the absence of the freeze? In other words, will staff continue to rise up the spinal points in the usual way, just without receiving the extra remuneration during the freeze, but with a step rise in remuneration at the end of the freeze to the spinal point they would have reached without the freeze? If not, there will be unfair disparities between continuing staff and newly appointed staff after the freeze, and Reading's salaries may not be competitive with the rest of the sector.

In regard to the comment on SDA's the Vice-Chancellor noted that it was important to continue to support research and that this option was unlikely to yield significant savings.

In regard to the question on salaries the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the modelling assumed no progression through the spinal points during the period of pay freeze.

[Redacted, section 40]:

- 1) We appreciate the urgent need to realise assets and it appears that the NIRD Trust could be reasonably accessed to support this as described in the paper. However, the Heads of the affected Schools and Research Dean had discussed and proposed ambitious plans to use NIRD funding to leverage matched external money to bring about step changes in our research relevant to the Trust. With this current draw down and the previous use of the fund, what money will remain in the NIRD Trust and when will we be able to access this to deliver our future plans.

The Vice-Chancellor advised that the NIRD would still remain a significant asset.

In regard to a follow up question as to why all of the University's reserves were not being used to mitigate the number of redundancies required, the Chief Financial Officer informed the Senate that reserves still needed to be retained in case of another spike in the pandemic or other incident.

Questions – raised in the meeting

[Redacted, section 40]:

Can the Consultation Group explore other options or only those in the paper?

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Consultation Group could explore other ways to find savings.

In terms of communications what would be the next step after Council?

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that Consultation Group meetings would commence with the UCU and Staff Forum. A series of all-staff communications were also planned.

[Redacted, section 40]:

A WONKHE article analysed spend on academic staff which showed that spend on academic salaries was 40%. To fix a structural problem at the University the redundancies should fall disproportionately, but not entirely, on non-academic salary costs.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that part of the reason for the change in that line of data was due to changes in accounting as a result of FRS102 and for UoRM. The Vice-Chancellor had undertaken a considerable amount of work in analysing cross flow data for the institution and it was suggested that the graph did not fully represent how the university operated.

[Redacted, section 40]:

Could the Vice-Chancellor outline what happens next and would the Senate's discussions influence the University's approach.

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Minutes and views of Senate would be passed to the Council for consideration on Monday 15 June. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that the views expressed would be taken forward and that there was no fixed blueprint for the

Phase 1 work.

[Redacted, section 40]:

At what point could the paper be circulated more widely to colleagues?

The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the paper was confidential and not for wider circulation. The paper was an honest/open/fulsome account, but it included confidential information. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to consider what could be made openly available on the web site.

[Redacted, section 40]:

How will the Senate representative to the Group be selected?

[post meeting note – at the time of writing a process was being undertaken to elect a Senate representative].

[Redacted, section 40]:

Could the VC clarify the sums spent on UPP?

The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the University had lost [redacted, section 43] in halls income. The University would have lost this income even if the halls were ours. She stated that she was continuing to work closely on this matter with other institutions in the same position.

Questions – circulated via the meeting chat during the meeting

- [Redacted, section 40] - The doc prepared by Brady and Julie Rowe reads (p.2. section 9): 'the options available to the University (as set out in the CFO's paper) include pay freeze for up to 3 years, and a temporary reduction in the hours of employment for all staff [...]. This has the potential to reduce the indicative number of redundancies to c. 150-200'. However, in the CFO document, Model 1 is presented as the only one that would not include redundancies (Agenda item 2.2, p. 14). Which is which?

The Chief Financial Officer clarified that Brady/Rowe paper referred to a hybrid of the models and that all of the papers were correct.

- From the President of UCU - May I please bring to the attention to Senate that in my role as UCU president I had requested to provide a paper for Council (which you kindly agreed) - and if colleagues (union members or otherwise) wish to share any thoughts with me I would welcome those at [contact Secretary for details]. May I also ask if you would please reiterate on behalf of UEB any thoughts that might have been shared what the position and role of Senate is regarding university governance - and also particularly any changes envisaged going forward, to help increase inclusiveness in steering the university particularly given UEB is asking for a voluntary reduction in FTE/reduction in hours etc in phase 1.

Other questions:

- Which Universities have started redundancy proceedings? – SOAS, Kent, Sussex
- We are getting a double pay of tuition fees in Autumn Does that not help cash flow in the very short term?

- What proportion of this projected shortfall in international students is in HBS?
- Could you clarify whether the cash-flow issues are Covid related (as the title of the paper suggests)

This was confirmed.

- Can you clarify the rationale for the final statement in the recommendations: "If the University finds itself in a more positive position in the Autumn Term e.g. International recruitment is stronger than expected and therefore the shortfall is lower, it is recommended that we call less upon the investments." Why this, rather than reducing redundancies or pay cuts?

It was confirmed that some reserves needed to be retained in case of a further spike

- I have seen analysis of data taken from WONKHE showing that only approximately 40% of the current UoR salary bill is spent on academic salaries, compared with a much higher average in our 'competitor group' of approximately 55% and as recently as 2016/7 a percentage at UoR itself of 52%. This seems to be a very important comparison, and suggests that we have a structural problem; we could use the crisis to fix that structural problem by loading redundancies disproportionately on the non-academic salary costs and using less of a component of cuts to pay?
- Can we incentivise an unpaid leave scheme in the short term, rather like a VR scheme (but much less cost, and the staff come back)?
- Reading appears to have a low fraction of academic salaries in the total staff costs (below 40% of salary costs are academic), as compared to competitor unis (average around 55%, some close to 70%). Will this play a role in planning where cuts should be made?
- where do we expect the international shortfall to be concentrated? Does the modelling have numbers?
- In terms of income ideas (and I am sure that this is really difficult in these self-same fragile circumstances), is it possible to raise money through patronage, such as naming of buildings or departments? For example, when I visit Toronto, every university building and lecture rooms are named after their sponsors. What about additional scholarships, like Stormzy's scholarship of black students at Cambridge? Finally, individual donations from alumni etc might be maximised and those donors recognised in some way.
- Who will make the ultimate decision? Senate, UEB or Council?

The Council.

- back in 2018, as RDL, when I checked number of staff with R in contract, UoR had roughly 1000 members of staff. Is this not correct? This was UoR data.
- Is the issue with UPP a direct result of the long -term poorly constructed contract + Could you clarify re: Force Majeure clauses being invoked re: remaining students?

- There has been a really useful discussion, but do we have a collective Senate view which will be put to Council?

Discussion continued on the teams chat following the close of the meeting.

In summary, it was noted that:

- a) A variety of views had been expressed by the Senate;
- b) The salary freeze option had received the most support;
- c) There was a concern to protect as much as possible those on the lowest salaries;
- d) There was most objection to the 4-day week proposal, but some Senators asked whether it could be an option because it would be preferred by some staff, because of their personal circumstances;
- e) There was encouragement to consider whether savings could be made differentially across Schools, depending upon their performance in student recruitment.

The Vice-Chancellor closed the meeting by stating that he hoped to minimise redundancies. It was important to gain collective agreement in Phase 1 to minimise any redundancies required as part of the Phase 2 work.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Senators for their input, comments, and questions during the meeting.

20/26 Date of next meeting

Thursday 25 June 2020 at 2.15 pm.