Minutes for the sixth meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee for the 2019/20 Academic Session, held on Wednesday, 1st July 2020, 2.00pm via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

Prof J Bonet	**Chair, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&E)**
Prof A Westby	Vice-Chair
Prof P Griffiths	Director of Research & Enterprise (GRE)
Prof B Cronin	PVC (BUS) Nominee
Prof R Pacella	Director of Institute for Lifecourse Development
Prof C Monks	PVC (EHHS) Nominee
Prof D Wray	PVC (E&S) Nominee
Prof C Bailey	PVC (LAS) Nominee
Prof T Reynolds	PVC (LAS) Nominee
Ms R Nunn	Head of Commercialisation & Innovation
Prof A Mehra	Head of Research & Enterprise Training Institute
Mr N Cormack-Bissett	Head of Research Development Services
Mr S Mujunga	Student Union Representative
Ms R Hassan	President of Doctoral Society (invited)
Mr P Angelo	Secretary

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Dr C Papaix	PVC (BUS) Nominee
Mrs W Curran	Finance Manager
Ms P Gibson	ECR/PGR Nominee
Ms M Femi-Obalemo	Student Union Representative

R&EC-19-6-1 ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR

R&EC-19-6-1.1   Research & Enterprise Task & Finish Group update

The Chair reminded the Committee that following the COVID-19 outbreak several Task & Finish Groups had been established throughout the University that will look at different strands of activities and impacts across the institution. The Chair reported that significant progress had been made, and that several codes of

practice and associated risk assessments had been developed. The Research & Enterprise Task & Finish Group had convened on several occasions to consider the implications of agreed scenarios and principles relating to both Research and Enterprise activities.

The Chair informed panel members that two Faculties (FES/FLAS) had now allowed restricted access to certain research facilities which had been authorised by the Task & Finish Group, but that there was a pressing issue relating to PhD students in terms of potentially relaxing the permitted 6 hours of teaching per week on the current PGRTA contract. Both the academic and PGR community agreed that to help ease some of the financial difficulties that many PGR students were experiencing in the current climate, that this needed looking at but that the right balance needed to be found.

After considerable discussion, it was noted that some further work was required outside of the meeting to determine what the total hours should be, but that **the Committee concurred that the current PGRTA contract should be reviewed, and that Faculty Directors of Research & Enterprise take this forward with the Head of RETI and the Student Union Representatives so that a revised figure for permitted weekly teaching hours could be agreed and published in the new PGR Students Handbook.**

ACTION: FACULTY DIRECTORS OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE/HEAD OF RETI/STUDENT UNION REPRESENTATIVES

R&EC-19-6-1.2   COVID-19 planning for external networks (University Alliance)

The Chair presented the Committee with a document detailing the current COVID-19 related actions/plans from other institutions within the University Alliance. The Chair stressed that this was only for information as this was such a fast-moving environment, but that this was a useful document to make comparisons, and to ensure that the University was similarly aligned to other HEIs in the University Alliance. There was nothing of concern raised by panel members and the paper was duly noted.

R&EC-19-6-1.3   COVID-19 opportunities (London Higher)

The Chair briefed the Committee on another paper that highlighted some new opportunities for HEIs in London to contribute to the capital's post COVID-19 economy. London Higher had looked at past REF case studies and identified some possible ways in which institutions could help with this. The Chair reminded panel members that the University was part of this network and that the document set out some ideas in terms of research questions that will emerge from COVID-19, as well as providing some context in relation to the London economy. UKRI were looking at supporting projects that will

address the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, and that this was both for information and for wider distribution within Faculties.

R&EC-19-6-1.4   University Strategic Refresh 2020 - 2030

The Chair informed the Committee that the new Vice-Chancellor had written a fresh strategic vision for the University for the next 10 years and that the discussion document presented was for comment. The Chair reminded panel members that the current strategic plan ran until 2021 but that the Research & Knowledge Exchange sections would be informed by this Committee. The Chair added that an early draft version had been well received by the governing body and that this was for general discussion and input.

The Committee reviewed the draft and agreed that this was a good starting point but that several issues would need to be explored in more detail outside of this meeting. A couple of these included the identification and agreement of the targets that the new plan will set out, and to be clear in the language used when describing the linkages between Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Teaching. **The Chair explained that there would be further consultation on this document and that a number of workshops had been scheduled in the coming months, and for any comments and suggestions to be sent to him directly before the first of these to help inform the discussions.**

ACTION: CHAIR/FACULTY DIRECTORS OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE/HEAD OF COMMERCIALISATION & INNOVATION

R&EC-19-6-1.5   QR + HEIF funding 2020/21 update

The Chair updated the Committee with the latest developments on QR and HEIF funding for 2020/21 but that no official announcement had yet been made by Research England which was highly unusual at this stage of the year. There had been a recent announcement from the Government detailing a further £180m of additional funding to support Research that will be made available to HEIs for 2020/21, but the Chair explained that this will be distributed proportionally to UKRI funded projects that finish between April 2020 and March 2021 and will mostly benefit Russell Group institutions. As such, the University of Greenwich could only expect approximately £100k of this allocation.

In addition to this, a sum of money had been set aside that will be made available to HEIs, but that this will be in the form of a loan to help compensate up to 80% of the loss of income from overseas students. This figure will be capped, but the University can apply for this in the form of 75% as a loan and 25% as a grant, but that the whole amount would need to be requested in order to receive it. It

remained to be seen if Finance would agree to such an arrangement, but VCG will be tasked with taking this forward and the Committee will be kept informed of developments. The most current estimates predict a shortfall of £600k in QR funding for 2020/21 which is a concern.

Finance have started work on provisional budgets for 2020/21 and will employ various tactical cuts to minimise the impact on staff, but there were financial commitments already in place that were paid from QR money such as VC PhD Scholarships and the Research Fellows. The Chair reinforced that these will continue to be protected, but that other QR and HEIF funds that generate additional expenditure, such as conference attendance, consumables for research projects, or new computer equipment that would normally be permitted, would not be next year.

The Committee accepted that this was a difficult situation and that the next step would be to await the letter from Research England confirming the QR and HEIF totals for 2020/21 to assess how restrictive these conditions will be. The Chair reconfirmed that there will be an RCIF allocation for 2020/21 but that the amount that will be made available was yet to be determined.

R&EC-19-6-2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

R&EC-19-6-2.1 Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee for the 2019/20 academic session held on Wednesday, 20th May 2020

The minutes of the Research & Enterprise Committee held on Wednesday, 20th May 2020 were agreed by the Committee to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.

R&EC-19-6-3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

R&EC-19-6-3.1 Please refer to the action sheet attached.

R&EC-19-6-4 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 PREPARATIONS

R&EC-19-6-4.1 REF Team letter of revised REF 2021 submission deadline and assessment period for impact

The Chair informed the Committee that the University had received a letter from the REF Director outlining details of the revised REF 2021 submission deadline and the assessment period for impact. Institutions were notified that the submission deadline had now been confirmed as 31st March 2021 with results expected to be published

in April 2022. The impact assessment period had been universally extended, and that case studies could describe specific examples of impact achieved during the period of 1st August 2013 up until 31st December 2020, and that the staff census date of 31st July 2020 remained unchanged.

The Chair commented that this represented a positive outcome for the University as this was what the institution had requested in the consultation response, but that it was now imperative that the revised REF 2021 preparations timeline discussed in the following agenda item be strictly adhered to.

R&EC-19-6-4.2 Revised REF 2021 preparations timeline

The Head of Research Development Services provided the Committee with some of the key REF 2021 deadlines in the coming months, with the most pressing being the last round of Unit of Assessment (UoA) meetings in July to resolve all the outstanding staffing issues before the staff census date of 31st July 2020.

Following this, there will be a further round of UoA meetings in September to focus on outputs, another series in October to finalise impact case studies, and one other set in December for the environment statement narratives. This would mean the REF 2021 submission being virtually completed by the end of the year, with the first three months of the new year being used to polish and finalise it before 31st March 2021. The Committee agreed with this timeframe and the Chair stressed again the importance of everybody who is involved with the REF 2021 submission remaining engaged with this as the institution entered this crucial phase.

R&EC-19-6-4.3 REF 2021 web presence

The Director of Research & Enterprise provided an update on this item which had been discussed at another Committee meeting earlier in the year. GRE continues working with ILS to create a web presence that would be aligned to the REF 2021 submission. The purpose is to showcase research activity across the submitting UoAs, while listing an appropriate subset of the academic population.

Panel members were shown an example of a 'Disciplines' page that had been created, and the intention was for each UoA link to take the reader to the discipline specific presentation of research and researchers. New content needed to be generated, and when tagged appropriately, would appear in the various layers of the flow of information within the University.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the research tag should be that of SRR so that profiling would be identical with the REF 2021 population and offered the opportunity to elaborate the

REF 2021 profile beyond the submitted document. As such, **the Chair requested that all academic staff update their own individual profiles, and that Faculties create and tag content related to research activities using approved templates in collaboration with Faculty web editors.**

ACTION: DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE/FACULTY DIRECTORS OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE

R&EC-19-6-4.4   Summary of current staffing position

The Head of Research Development Services provided the Committee with a summary of the current staffing position with regards to the REF 2021 submission. There had been significant progress since the last REF Staffing Committee, with several outstanding issues having been resolved, but that another was planned for the middle of July to finalise all the staff profiles. Several individuals who still had a 'pending' status had been resolved via Chair's Action but there were still some that needed further discussion and agreement.

There were presently no outstanding appeals, and current estimates indicated that a total of upwards of 370 FTE would be submitted. This figure was likely to increase with a number of new starters needing to be processed. Panel members agreed that these numbers looked healthy and represented a significant rise from REF 2014.

The Chair added that outcome letters relevant to the decisions made had been sent to all members of staff, and that individuals had also been invited to submit an appeal or declare any personal circumstances if appropriate. Final figures were expected to be presented at the first Committee meeting of the next academic session for further review and comment.

R&EC-19-6-5 GREENWICH RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE

R&EC-19-6-5.1   New reporting structure – Optimising the 'value add' by GRE to Research and Knowledge Exchange

The Director of Research & Enterprise presented a paper to the Committee designed to start a conversation around how GRE could possibly work with the Faculties in a more strategic manner to optimise operational support. The discussion document highlighted four key areas as a starting point which were bid support, a potential new PGR management tool, population performance metrics, and the strategic use of Enterprise for Knowledge Exchange funding.

Panel members were informed of updates in relation to RADAR (bid support) and SkillsForge (PGR management tool) but the focus of

conversation was on the new proposed population performance metrics. Traditionally, finance and bidding data have been presented in the same manner as the following two agenda items, but GRE had now developed a dashboard of metrics which reflected the input and output from academic activity for both Research and Knowledge Exchange which consider Research/Enterprise Career Pathway FTE, unique PIs, and BAWs. The intention is for GRE to work more closely with Faculty Directors of Research & Enterprise and to support Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange strategies, and will encourage academic staff identified through these metrics to embrace wider research expectations around bidding.

The Committee agreed that these metrics were very useful and that these should be a regular feature of these meetings. As such, starting with the first meeting of academic session 2020/21, this dashboard of data will be presented, and the historical tables and graphs of finance/bidding summaries will just be noted under 'Items for Information'.

R&EC-19-6-5.2 Research & Enterprise Financial Summary Report 2019/20

The Committee noted the financial summary report by Faculty from 1st August 2019 to 31st May 2020.

The Director of Research & Enterprise briefly reported that revenues stood at £17.2m for the first ten months of the year and that this figure was down by approximately £400k at the same stage for 2018/19. This was predominantly showing in NRI, but some Faculties were demonstrating marginal gains. Contracting totals were presently at £21.4m which represented a drop of around £2.6m for the same period last year. There were no real concerns and the end of year figures will be noted for information at the first meeting of academic session 2020/21 scheduled in September.

R&EC-19-6-5.3 Research & Enterprise Bidding Activity Report 2019/20

The Committee noted the bidding activity report by Faculty from 1st August 2019 to 31st May 2020.

The Director of Research & Enterprise commented on the current bidding data for 2019/20 which showed promising activity across all the Faculties despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty profiles were generally healthy, but as mentioned in the previous item, these will be noted for information at subsequent meetings.

R&EC-19-6-5.4 Knowledge Exchange for Enterprise update

The Head of Commercialisation & Innovation presented a paper to the Committee that provided an update with regards to the four part strategy that was outlined to the Enterprise team last year, with a

view to developing Enterprise across the University and to effect a positive outcome on those Knowledge Exchange activities supported by GRE.

The document covered a need to build a thriving supportive engaged University Knowledge Exchange community, a requirement to optimise Enterprise processes and to have a meaningful KPI dashboard, a necessity to understand what the University core competencies were to enable effective Knowledge Exchange for Enterprise and beyond, and a digital virtual integration with the institution's physical built assets. It was clear that good progress had been made against each of these but that it was important for staff to remain engaged with this and that feedback from Faculties was always welcome.

R&EC-19-6-5.5   **Implementation of responsible and fair approaches for research assessment**

The Head of Research Development Services reminded panel members that the institution had implemented a 'Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics' that had been discussed and agreed by the Committee a couple of years ago, and that the institution had taken a decision not to sign up to DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment), but that funding bodies such as the Wellcome Trust were now asking for additional details on how the implementation plan for such a statement was being monitored for organisations that had not signed up to DORA.

The Committee was presented with several papers for discussion, but there was agreement that the University would need to address this in the near future, and that the original 'Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics' would need to include a section that detailed the monitoring of how this was being applied across the institution. **The Chair requested that the Head of Research Development Services investigate this further and to determine whether the original principles stated in the 'Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics' were still compatible with the new requirements of the Wellcome Trust, and to make any amendments if necessary.**

ACTION: HEAD OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

R&EC-19-6-5.6   **Reporting on Research Fellows**

The Director of Research & Enterprise informed the Committee that this was the first occasion in which progress reports from the appointed Research Fellows had been collated and that they were just for noting by the Committee. There was one report still outstanding but that this would be followed up after this meeting. They were all generally positive and panel members were happy with

their progress with no concerns being raised. For the purposes of the minutes these are all available from the Secretary, but in future the intention is to provide the Research Fellows with a standardised template to help structure these and have a more consistent approach.

R&EC-19-6-5.7 Revised statement on scholarly communications

The Head of Research Development Services reminded panel members of the commitment of the institution to expanding the total proportion of its research and scholarship outputs, and their underlying data, that are published in Open Access forms. A 'Statement on Scholarly Communication' for the University had previously been written but had recently undergone some revisions with regards to the publications policy and licensing options for review and comment by the Committee. Following some discussion, members concurred with these amendments and endorsed the policies that apply to all staff and PGR students actively engaged in research activity.

R&EC-19-6-6 RETI

R&EC-19-6-6.1 Recent RETI events

The Head of RETI provided panel members with a brief summary of recent and forthcoming RETI events that had either taken place or will be held remotely. This was just for information for the Committee but the 3MT final was held last week via Microsoft Teams and was extremely well attended and had received positive feedback.

The University Alliance DTA Applied Biosciences for Health Summer School was scheduled to take place later in the month and will feature group challenges where students will deliver presentations to an audience of PGR students and supervisors from a range of University Alliance institutions and receive awards in a number of categories.

R&EC-19-6-6.2 CEDARS survey

The Head of RETI reminded the Committee that the University had signed up to the revised 'Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' and that this was an agreement between research institutions, research managers, researchers, and funders, to improve the employment and support for researchers in Higher Education in the UK.

A 'Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey' (CEDARS) that aligned to the principles of the Concordat had been developed, and RETI together with some other

departments, had started work towards the implementation of the survey. The survey will run until the end of July and several academic staff and PGR students had already completed it. The Head of RETI added that this was important for establishing research culture and represented a good opportunity for the University to identify any gaps and improve outcomes. This was for noting by the Committee, but members were asked to encourage Faculty research staff to participate.

R&EC-19-6-6.3 PGR/ECR forum minutes

The Head of RETI presented the minutes from the last PGR/ECR forum that was held on Monday, 18th May to the Committee. The meeting had good representation from across the Faculties and was generally positive and constructive. There were no concerns from panel members and the minutes were noted.

R&EC-19-6-7 ITEMS FROM FACULTY RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE COMMITTEES

R&EC-19-6-7.1 FES High Performance Computing

The Vice-Chair briefed the Committee on the issue around High Performance Computing in FES which some individuals had become particularly concerned about. High Performance Computing continued to be an important research tool for both staff and PhD students in the Faculty and was being used for high-profile projects, but that it was apparent that some of it was currently unstable and may need to be switched off in the coming months. New investment was anticipated but this could now be delayed and there was also a need for technical support and the Vice-Chair sought clarity from the Committee.

After some general discussion it was clear that this needed to be addressed, and so **the Chair will ensure that this features on the agenda of the next meeting of the IT Strategy Board and will report any developments back to panel members at the next scheduled Committee meeting as this was an important matter.**

ACTION: CHAIR

R&EC-19-6-8 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH MATTERS

R&EC-19-6-8.1 PGR Completions – Recommendations for Committee

The Committee approved the list of postgraduate research degree awards recommended by examiners and considered at recent meetings of Faculty Research Degrees Committees.

R&EC-19-6-8.2 **Summary of PGR related business by FRDCs for 2019/20 to end of 30th June 2020**

The Head of RETI provided a summary of FRDC activity in terms of submissions of various RDA forms across all four Faculties to the end of 30th June 2020. This was for general noting by the Committee, but the total number of PGR students was presently just over 500 which was significantly lower than the target figure and remained a concern and will continue to be monitored closely.

R&EC-19-6-8.3 **PGR completions for REF 2021 update**

The Head of RETI presented some updated figures for the total number of PGR completions for the current REF period for consideration by the Committee. The existing totals indicated that there would be just over 420 completions (PhD/EdD) for the REF period (including 35 from the Medway School of Pharmacy) which was extremely positive and would represent an approximate doubling of the amount submitted to REF 2014. There were ongoing plans in place to maximise the number of completions before the census date at end of the month, and **the Chair requested that the final figures on PGR completions for the REF 2021 exercise be reported at the first Committee of the new academic session.**

ACTION: HEAD OF RETI

R&EC-19-6-8.4 **Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Awards 2020/21 – final version**

The Head of RETI supplied the Committee with the updated version of the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Awards 2020/21 following the amendments that were suggested by panel members at the last meeting. This was just for noting by the Committee as this had been presented and endorsed at Academic Council and the revised regulations were now to be published in time for the new academic year.

R&EC-19-6-8.5 **Academic Regulations for the Masters by Research (MRes)**

Following on from the previous item, the Head of RETI presented a draft paper to the Committee that proposed a stand-alone set of Academic Regulations for the Masters by Research (MRes). Some issues had arisen relating to the Masters by Research programme that highlighted the need to review the current regulations with a view to making them fit for purpose and that students could just refer to one set.

Following some detailed discussion, it was clear that further changes were needed to the draft, and the Chair requested that this be followed up outside of this meeting. Comments were to

be sent to the Head of RETI by the end of July, with the final version being presented at the first Committee meeting of the new academic session for endorsement by the panel.

ACTION: FACULTY DIRECTORS OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE/HEAD OF RETI/STUDENT UNION REPRESENTATIVES

R&EC-19-6-8.6   PGR records management

The Director of Research & Enterprise reminded the Committee that it had been previously agreed that PGR attendance would be monitored and escalated in the case of 'Tier 4' students. This was to manage concerns over workload and to also ensure that the University met its legal obligations in terms of compliance. This had proved successful, but that it was labour intensive, and was unsustainable from an equality and progression standpoint.

The intention was to therefore apply a set of moderated principles for academic year 2020/21 which panel members were asked to discuss and agree to. The Committee expressed no concerns with these, and the Director of Research & Enterprise will now report this back to Student Registry for them to be implemented.

R&EC-19-6-8.7   Support for PGR projects impacted by COVID-19

The Director of Research & Enterprise presented a paper that set out several principles that were to be adopted when considering the impact of COVID-19 on the PGR community, and which were similar across the HE sector. It was important to note that these had been discussed at a number of fora across the University, including the Research & Enterprise Task & Finish Group, but that they also needed consideration at this Committee.

The Director of Research & Enterprise stressed the importance of separating the academic elements from the financial ones, and that the PGR students would be supported on a case by case basis, but that the focus should remain on them being able to deliver a thesis. After substantive discussion, the Committee agreed with the set of propositions and that the regulations should aim to remove any financial burden from the students as best as possible. **The Chair proposed that this draft be reworked as a manual rather than a policy statement, and that the Director of Research & Enterprise continue dialogue with the Student Union Representatives outside of this meeting to develop this.**

ACTION: DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE/STUDENT UNION REPRESENTATIVES

R&EC-19-6-8.8   FRDC annual report 2018/19

The Head of RETI provided the Committee with the main headlines from the consolidated report from all the Faculty Research Degree Committees (FRDC) annual reports for 2018/19. The report was just for noting by members and was available from the Secretary upon request, but the issues raised have been discussed at length in previous Committee meetings and now have action plans in place.

R&EC-19-6-9 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There were no items for information presented to the Committee.

R&EC-19-6-10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretary mentioned that as this was the last Committee meeting of 2019/20 there were some planned changes to the panel membership for 2020/21. A new ECR/PGR Nominee, and a second PVC (BUS) Nominee will be invited to attend the meetings next year and that these appointments were to be confirmed over the summer break. Faculty Directors of Research & Enterprise were asked to nominate any individuals that would like to attend and inform the Secretary before the first scheduled meeting in September.

No other business was discussed and the meeting was duly closed.

R&EC-19-6-11 DATES & TIMES OF 2020/21 MEETINGS

Meeting
September 23rd 2020, Greenwich Campus, Room QA075, 2.00pm
December 9th 2020, Avery Hill Campus, Room G104, 2.00pm
February 3rd 2021, Medway Campus, Room P130, 2.00pm
April 14th 2021, Greenwich Campus, Room QA075, 2.00pm
May 19th 2021, Avery Hill Campus, Room G104, 2.00pm
June 30th 2021, Medway Campus, Room P130, 2.00pm