

## ***the Academic Council***

Minutes of the first meeting of the Academic Council in the 2022-2023 academic session,  
held on 11 October 2022 at 3pm in QA010 in person and via Microsoft Teams.

### **Present:**

Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Peter Garrod, University Secretary  
(Executive Secretary)

Abdul Ahad, elected student member

Ben Bennett, Interim Director, NRI

Leigh Doster, PVC (Business)

Peter Griffiths, Interim PVC (Engineering &  
Science)

Yasinur Rashid Javed, elected student member

Jennifer Marie, Head of Academic and  
Learning Enhancement

Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Associate Dean,  
Student Success, FLAS

Dr Sofia Stathi, Chair, UREB

Andrew Westby, Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(Research and Knowledge Exchange)

Anuj Baral, elected student member

Paul Butler, Director, ILS

Andy Frost, Interim Director of GRE

Petros Ieromonachou, Associate Dean,  
RKE, GBS

Krishmi Karki, elected student member

Derek Moore, PVC (Education, Health and  
Human Sciences)

Zoe Pettit, Deputy Dean, FLAS

Jane Roscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Peter Taylor, Chief Operating Officer

### **In attendance:**

Trudy Brighton, SEO: Governing Body (minutes)

Simon Lewis, Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence

Frank Toop, Halpin Partnership (for AC 22/P03 and P04)

### **Apologies:**

Heidi King, Director, Communications & Recruitment

Chris Shelley, Director, Student & Academic Services

### **AC 22/01 WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Abdul Ahad, Anuj Baral, Javed Javed and Krishmi Karki, GSU elected Officers, to their first meeting and Mr Frank Toop, from Halpin Partnership, who was attending for the items relevant to the review of academic and executive governance.

### **AC 22/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made.

### **AC 22/03 ITEM FROM THE CHAIR**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the OfS guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 had been published and the final submission date of 24

January 2023 had been confirmed. The OfS's revised Condition B3, relating to student outcomes, had come into effect on 3 October 2022. [REDACTED]

AC 22/04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS LIST (AC 22/P01)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 June 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

The actions list was received. The University Secretary reported that a role description and advert for replacing the vacant elected members on the Academic Council would be developed with the intention of appointing new members as soon as possible.

The University Secretary reported that the template provided for the Faculty reports would be developed further ahead of the next meeting.

AC 22/05 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

**5.1 Antisemitism**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had commenced a consultation in 2021/22 with staff and students on whether to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. As that had been inconclusive, she had chaired a University Working Group on Antisemitism to continue the conversation and consider the best ways to support staff and students in addressing antisemitism and to recognise and celebrate Jewish identity.

The Working Group was now recommending that the University adopt both the IHRA definition and the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA) definition. The Equality Act 2010 would be used as the overarching legal umbrella and the two definitions would help the University to understand each case and take the relevant contexts into account. Internal and external expertise on antisemitism would be used when further expertise was required.

The University would continue to work with the Working Group on the next steps including identifying suitable training and agreeing which Jewish events should be celebrated.

The Academic Council **approved** the proposed statement on Antisemitism for recommendation to the Governing Body.

**5.2 Committee Review and Academic Council Terms of Reference (AC 22/P03)**

Mr Frank Toop, Halpin Partnership, attended for this item.

The University Secretary recalled that, following the review of academic and executive committee governance by DKA Associates, a new rationalised committee structure for the Academic Council had been approved by the Council in June. Over the course of the summer, he had worked with Mr Toop, a consultant from Halpin Partnership, to develop standardised terms of reference for all the committees in the new governance structure, including new terms of reference for the Academic Council. Standing Orders for the academic and executive committees detailing common rules of operation had also been formulated. These were now available on a dedicated Teams site.

The Council was updated on two further strands of the review. The University's Articles of Association, which had been amended to improve its flexibility in a number of areas, were being submitted to the Governing Body's meeting on 18 October 2022 for approval in principle. Recruitment of two Governance Support Officers as part of a central secretariat team to support the senior committee was under way. The new team would be working to professionalise and standardise committee servicing across the University.

The Council **approved** proposed amendments to its Terms of reference recommendation to the Governing Body.

#### AC 22/06      DELEGATION FRAMEWORK (AC 22/P04)

Mr Toop also attended for this item.

The University Secretary reported that a University Delegation Framework had been developed following a periodic governance review of the Governing Body and its committees by Halpin Partnership in 2021/22. The Framework had been developed alongside and was intended to dovetail with the new terms of reference for committees. It summarised how powers were delegated within the University and comprised three separate frameworks:

- A Governing Body Framework covering decisions retained by the Governing Body and its committees;
- An Academic Council Framework covering powers delegated by the Council;
- An Executive Framework covering powers delegated by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Council received the following papers:

- An introduction to the University Delegation Framework;
- The draft Academic Council Delegation Framework;
- A Framework setting out where the approval of policies and statutory returns lay.

Mr Toop reported that the draft Frameworks reflected best practice across the sector. In establishing committee governance, it was important for committees to understand what their powers were and where the decisions were made. The Frameworks should be regarded as living documents and subject to review and amendment.

The University Secretary reported that the Governing Body Framework would be submitted to the Governing Body for approval following review by its committees. The Executive Framework would be provided to the VCG for comment and approval.

The following points were made in discussion of the draft Academic Council Delegation Framework:

- There was a query from the Interim PVC FLAS about which committee was responsible for the approval of amendments to modules and minor amendments to programmes. The University Secretary clarified that this would be the responsibility of Faculty Programme and Partnerships Management Committees (which could establish a sub-committee to assist in the work if necessary). He would discuss it with the Interim PVC outside the meeting;
- The Framework referenced that the Council would approve appointments of honorary visiting professors and professors emeritus,


which was different to the current processes for appointment to these roles. It was confirmed that the intention was that the Council should have visibility of these appointments in future. The University Secretary would discuss appropriate wording with the DVC (Research and Knowledge Exchange) outside the meeting.

Subject to these two points, the Council **approved** the Academic Council Delegation Framework.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Mr Toop and the University Secretary for their work in developing the Frameworks.

AC 22/07      REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR (AC 22/P05)

The Vice-Chancellor presented her report on recent developments and highlighted the following:

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- **Finance Update:** The financial statements for 2021/22 were being finalised and a moderate surplus was being forecast in line with expectations and the strategic KPI target of >3%. The strong financial performance would allow continued investment in the infrastructure and support for staff to manage the increased student numbers. It would also help the University to manage rising costs.
- **Strategy Programme Update:** Priority projects for the each of the sub and enabling strategies had now been identified for the next 6-12 months. 21 Strategy Programme Business Cases had been agreed to date.
- **League Tables:** In recently published League Tables, the University had improved by 5 places to 84<sup>th</sup> in the Good University Guide but had fallen by four places to 98<sup>th</sup> in the Guardian League Table. The League Tables used varying metrics; in the Guardian, the improvement in the NSS had been counteracted by the fall in Value Added and Graduate Outcomes. The momentum to improve Greenwich's metrics needed to be maintained.
- **Senior Staff Recruitment:** Recruitment for three senior roles (PVC and Executive Dean in FES and FLAS and the newly created post of PVC Education) was currently underway.
- **EDI:** The University had launched an inclusion calendar aimed at promoting, commemorating and celebrating dates associated with faiths, festivals, observances, culture and wellbeing.
- **University Achievements:** The joint GSU and University of Greenwich Retention Project had been shortlisted for a 2022 THE Award in the category of Outstanding Support for Students. The results would be announced on 17 November.
- **Office for Students:** Susan Lapworth had taken up post as Chief Executive of the Office for Students wef 1 September 2022. Future plans for access and participation included the creation of a new 'equality of opportunity risk register' to identify students requiring extra support to access higher education. New thresholds setting out minimum expectations for student performance had been introduced in early October 2022. Universities performing below these thresholds could face sanctions.

AC 22/08      GREENWICH STUDENTS' UNION (GSU) REPORT (AC 22/P06)

The GSU President reported that the new GSU Officer team had determined their priorities for the year. Each Officer was acting as lead for a Faculty and for a series of strategic priorities. The key areas of work, linked to the priorities of



Year 2 of the 'Become Your Best' Strategy, included supporting students through the cost of living crisis, working to co-create more spaces and campaigns, reviewing the sustainability offer and enhancement of the Medway Partnership for the benefit of students and stakeholders.

The Welcome programme had been well received and had attracted about 10,000 students. The Global Greenwich initiative, which helped build a sense of community, had been promoted. Following a vote by students as part of the Big Priority campaign, the GSU would be focussing on cost of living, employability and graduate prospects, international student support, closing the BAME Awarding Gap and tackling loneliness. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the GSU for their successful Welcome offer and looked forward to working with them more closely on their priorities, which the University shared.

## AC 22/09 FACULTY REPORTS (AC 22/P07)

The PVCs/Interim PVC presented highlights from their Faculty reports:

### 9.1 Faculty of Education, Health and Human Sciences

Professor Derek Moore, PVC, drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** The new Deputy Dean, Brian Boag, had taken up appointment in September. A number of new posts in health and human sciences were being advertised to support student growth. A new central practitioner pathway was being developed to work alongside the teaching pathway. A small restructure in the School of Education had been completed over the summer.
- **Student Success:** The Faculty had performed well in the NSS, with the Adult Nursing programme attaining the top score in the country. An NSS action plan was in place for relevant programmes and a review of continuation was under way. Three new programmes had been introduced into its portfolio. The Faculty had successfully tendered for three new teaching contracts with Health Education England.
- **Facilities:** The Critical Care Unit was now fully commissioned.
- **Partnerships:** Health Sciences had launched a new partnership board which was working with local NHS partners.
- **Events:** There had been a successful launch of the Greenwich Learning and Simulation Centre in July. Since that time, the Team had won two national awards.

### 9.2 Faculty of Engineering & Science

Professor Peter Griffiths, Interim PVC, drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** The Faculty was actively recruiting to build its teams in order to manage the larger student population. A senior management team away day was scheduled for 9 November to review the academic portfolio and resourcing needs.
- **Student Success:** The implications of the NSS results were being worked through. Potential developments to the portfolio were under discussion. As part of its employability initiative, students were being encouraged to secure work placements in order to build their soft skills.
- **International:** The Faculty was engaging with MSA (Egypt) to restructure the collaboration under a slightly different framework.
- **Partnerships:** The Faculty was exploring a new partnership with Plumpton

College in Sussex to validate a number of their programmes.

- **Accreditations:** The Biomedical Science programmes had been awarded re-accreditation for a further of five years.

### 9.3 Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Professor Zoe Pettit, Interim PVC, drew the Council's attention to the following:

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** The new School of Stage and Screen was to be inaugurated on 9 November 2022. Its partnerships with external production houses and theatre companies would ensure that programmes met contemporary industry needs.
- **Student Success:** The areas of Sociology and English Literature with Creature Writing had scored 100% overall satisfaction in the NSS. The NSS Task Force had produced improvements including an increase of 50 points to 84% for Film and Television Production. Work to maintain these gains was ongoing. Three new programmes had been introduced for 2022/23.
- **International:** The Faculty was extending its TNE provision with discussions involving partnerships in Pakistan, Cyprus, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.
- **Accreditations:** An accreditation visit by RIBA was scheduled in October 2022 and by the Architects Registration Board in November 2022. The Faculty was preparing for a change in the accreditation process for law degrees.

### 9.4 Greenwich Business School

Professor Leigh Doster, PVC, drew the Council's attention to the following:

- **Overview:** the Faculty had completed a significant restructure, recruited a new Faculty Leadership Team and was about to launch the Greenwich Business School properly.
- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** Following completion of the Faculty realignment, 12 new senior appointments had been made. Four Task and Finish Groups had been established to progress specific projects. The Executive Business Centre was being operationalised.
- **Student Success:** The Faculty had improved its overall NSS satisfaction score by 4% and its PTES results by 3%. The first phase of the portfolio review was under way and five new programmes and five revamped programmes were under development.
- **Research and Knowledge Exchange:** A new initiative (Collaborative Forum and Ideation Sessions) aimed at improving the research culture within GBS had been introduced.
- **International:** New TNE partnerships had been developed in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Shanghai and Cyprus. [REDACTED]

In response to a query from the GSU President about resourcing to support the larger student numbers, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed a commitment to increase staff resource commensurate to student numbers. The space issues were being addressed by the purchase of Bounty House in Deptford and the relocation of UGIC from the Greenwich campus.

The Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence presented an analysis of the results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 published in July 2022.

The University had improved by 4% to 76% in overall satisfaction, a good improvement. This compared positively with the sector increase and meant that Greenwich now equalled the sector average. There had also been some pleasing improvements relative to the sector in the individual areas of 'Teaching on my Course', 'Student Voice', 'Academic Support' and 'Organisation and Management'.

The Council was reminded that the NSS 'Overall Satisfaction' score was one of the strategic KPIs. The results were flowing into the latest set of League Tables and Greenwich had moved up 26 places from 80<sup>th</sup> to 54<sup>th</sup> in the Guardian's list of 119 institutions. More importantly, the 3% increase in 'Teaching on my Course' put Greenwich in the top ten biggest improvers for this metric.

In terms of strategic targets, the results meant that Greenwich had closed the gap with the highest performing English modern university in 2021 (UWE). Nevertheless, Greenwich had only improved its ranking by one place. Greenwich was now 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 University Alliance members.

The Vice-Chancellor agreed that some good progress had been made. The NSS Task Force approach to addressing areas of low performance was continuing. The sharing of good practice was key to improvement and in 2022 16 programmes had been invited to events to celebrate and share their ways of working. There had been some mixed results as well. In particular, 'Assessment and Feedback', which had remained the same as last year, required further work. The results had provided a clear direction on areas needing change and some quick wins had already been identified.

The Associate Dean (Student Success), FLAS stated that it was important to learn from the areas achieving 100% as well as areas with significant improvements. A report sharing good practice had been prepared and was being taken forward by the Student Success Project Officer.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised the need to sustain good practice to ensure that students received the best possible experience. Teams needed to own their responsibilities and be receptive to adapting and changing ways of working. The discussion about how to improve the NSS would need to continue in preparation for the next survey.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Business Intelligence presented an analysis of the recently released Graduate Outcomes results for 2019/20 leavers. The University's response rate had been 56% (sector average of 57%). The University's overall employment percentage had improved by two percentage points to 87% against a sector average of 90%. Modelling of the strategic KPI measuring the proportion of graduates in highly skilled employment or further study indicated that Greenwich's rate had fallen by 0.8% to 70.2%. This compared to a 2.2% increase in the sector average to 72.8%.

The Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence reported that, on the basis of the methodology used by the Complete University Guide Graduate to measure graduate prospects/outcomes, Greenwich's performance had fallen from 71% to 68.4%.

Analysis of the results suggested a number of drivers for Greenwich's lower rates including:

- An increase in the number of graduates going into part-time work (15%)
- An unemployment rate of 8% ie 2% higher than sector
- A lower proportion of graduates going into further study (15% against a sector average of 20%).

The Vice-Chancellor reported that a more focussed analysis of the results and the reasons why Greenwich was below the benchmark would be undertaken in order to understand the factors at play and the variance in results between subjects. The increase in students moving into part-time employment had been surprising and could reflect the London dynamic, the mature student population or life circumstances. The Employability and Apprenticeships Directorate would be developing initiatives to help students manage the working environment. It would be necessary to have appropriate resourcing and tailor interventions to meet the needs of students. Work placements were a helpful instrument in improving job prospects and staff needed to encourage the take-up of these opportunities. Consideration should be given to the phasing and prioritisation of interventions to make as significant and speedy an impact as possible. The Council would continue to monitor progress.

#### AC 22/12      DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2020/21 (AC 22/P10)

The Head of Academic & Learning Enhancement presented a revised draft Degree Outcomes Statement for 2020/21.

The University's Degrees Outcome Statement for 2020/21 had been approved by Council and the Governing Body in June 2022 and published on the website. However, following publication of Universities UK's (UUK) statement in July 2022 committing universities to returning to pre-pandemic levels of degree classifications and outcomes, institutions had been required to revisit their statements to take into account a number of commitments for actions relating to degree outcomes.

As a consequence, a number of proposed amendments had been made to Greenwich's Statement. These included references to how external examiner appointment and training processes met sector expectations, a commitment to reinstating periodic programme review, narrative on the discontinuation of pandemic 'no detriment' practices, and benchmarking data of pre-pandemic outcomes against 2021/22 outcomes to confirm that these had reverted to pre-pandemic levels.

The Vice-Chancellor stated that this was an important sector issue. UUK's stance was not problematic to Greenwich as the University's degree outcomes had already returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Subject to minor amendments identified in discussion, the Council **approved** the revised Degree Outcomes Statement for recommendation to the Governing Body prior to publication on the University's web pages.

#### AC 22/13      RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE (R&KE) INSTITUTES AND CENTRES (AC 22/P11)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange) updated the Council on the proposals to create interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange centres and institutes within Faculties. Their establishment was integral to the Research & Knowledge Exchange Sub-Strategy and to growing



R&KE revenues and providing an inclusive and supportive research environment for staff and postgraduate students.

Consultation within Faculties about the R&KE centres, led by Associate Deans (R&KE), had resulted in a number of proposals around the likely structure. Detailed proposals would be agreed through the R&KE Board in order to assess the viability and critical mass of the proposed centres. The development of the Institutes and Centres was still ongoing but current plans envisaged centres being clustered into four institutes. The DVC (R&KE) updated the Council on current thinking on the number of and possible names of the Centres.

The Council noted progress with interest and emphasised the importance of determining names for Centres and Institutes which explained the nature of their work but remained concise.

The DVC (R&KE) reported that the next steps included:

- the appointment of Centre leaders
- approval of the detailed Centre proposals by the R&KE Board
- approval of the proposals for the new Institutes (on the recommendation of the R&KE Board)
- approval of the finalised structure by VCG which would be brought to Academic Council for information.

#### AC 22/14      CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY (AC 22/P12)

The University Secretary presented the Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2021-22 which summarised key highlights of activities that enhanced research integrity during the past year. The summary referenced the new requirement for applicants to the University Research Ethics Board to demonstrate completion of two mandatory on-line ethics training courses and a favourable review of the University's research ethics procedures undertaken by the Internal Auditors, BDO LLP, in 2021.

Institutions were also required to outline any official investigations of research misconduct and the Annual Statement contained brief details of one staff and two student investigations undertaken during the year.

The Council **approved** the Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2021-22. A copy would be provided to the Governing Body for information at its November 2022 meeting.

#### AC 22/15      SUMMARY REPORTS FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES (AC 22/P13) ;

The Council received summary reports from the following Academic Council's committees:

- **2021/2022 Academic Year:**
  - Programme Approval Committee held on 22 September 2022
  - Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 18 May 2022
  - Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 13 July 2022
  - University Research Ethics Committee held on 28 June 2022
- **2022/2023 Academic Year:**
  - Student Success Committee held on 22 September 2022

AC 22/16 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES  
(AC 22/P14)

The Council **received** minutes from the following Academic Council's committee meetings:

- 2021/2022 Academic Year:
  - Programme Approval Committee: 22 June 2022 (unconfirmed)
  - Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee: 18 May 2022
  - Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee: 13 June 2022 (unconfirmed)
  - University Research Ethics Committee; 28 June 2022
- 2022/2023 Academic Year:
  - Student Success Committee: 22 September 2022 (unconfirmed).

AC 22/17 ACADEMIC COUNCIL CYCLE OF BUSINESS 2022/23 (AC 22/P15)

The Council **received** the updated cycle of business for 2022/23.

Meeting closed at 16:45.

T A Brighton / Peter Garrod  
30 December 2022