

the Academic Council

Minutes of the second meeting of the Academic Council in the 2022-2023 academic session, held on 25 January 2023 at 12 pm in Room 108, Mary Seacole Building. Avery Hill campus and via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Peter Garrod, University Secretary
(Executive Secretary)

- Rachel Ashton, Interim Executive Director, Student and Academic Services
- Leigh Doster, PVC (Business)
- Peter Griffiths, PVC (Engineering & Science)
- Krishmi Karki, elected student member
- Jennifer Marie, PVC Education
- Derek Moore, PVC (FEHHS)
- Zoe Pettit, Deputy Dean, FLAS
- Jane Roscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
- Peter Taylor, Chief Operating Officer
- Anuj Baral, elected student member
- Paul Butler, Executive Director and Chief Information Officer, ILS
- Andy Frost, Interim Director, GRE
- Gianina Harvey-Brewin, Associate Director, Employability and Apprenticeships
- Heidi King, Executive Director, Marketing & External Relations
- Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Associate Dean (Student Success), FLAS
- Sofia Stathi, Chair, UREB
- Andrew Westby, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)

In attendance:

Trudy Brighton, SEO: Governing Body (minutes)

Karen Brough, Assistant Director (Registry), Student & Academic Services

Apologies:

Abdul Ahad, Elected Student Member

Ben Bennett, Interim Director, NRI

Yasinur Rashid Jabed, Elected Student Member

Petros Ieromonachou, Associate Dean (R&KE), GBS

Simon Lewis, Executive Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence

AC 22/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

AC 22/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS LIST (AC 22/P16)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

The actions list was received. The University Secretary reported that an Internal News article seeking applications for four vacant roles on the Council for

academic staff members (one from each faculty) would be published once the webpages were updated.

AC 22/20 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

20.1 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct (AC 22/P17)

The University Secretary reported progress on the actions in response to the OfS Statement of Expectations on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. The 'Report and Support' reporting portal had been launched before Christmas for students enabling them to report any concerns, anonymously if preferred. It would be rolled out to staff shortly. Additional resourcing to manage the casework was being put in place to manage the expected growth in casework as visibility of the new reporting mechanism increased.

A Moodle training course for students promoting healthy sex and relationships had been launched to coincide with the January 2023 Welcome Week. The impact of the training would be assessed via two surveys in Terms 2. He highlighted the important contribution of the GSU and Dr Becky Smith, FLAS, to this work.

The University had contributed to a review undertaken by SUMS Consulting on behalf of the OfS on the HE sector's response to the Statement of Expectations. The report's recommendations would be reviewed and used to identify further improvements to the University's approach. The Internal Auditors, KPMG, had separately assessed the University's work in this area as part of an internal audit review around OfS compliance. The review had led to a rating of substantial assurance with recommendations for minor improvements.

The Vice-Chancellor asked the PVC FEHHS to convey to Dr Smith the Council's appreciation of her valuable contribution to the project.

AC 22/21 REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR (AC 22/P18)

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

- [REDACTED]
- **TEF:** Greenwich had now submitted its TEF submission which was on the agenda. The final document was the culmination of a huge effort by many staff across the University led by the DVC and Provost, the PVC Education and the Associate Deans, Student Success. Provisional outcomes would be issued by the OfS in July 2023.
- [REDACTED]
- **Senior Staff Appointments:** There had been two new PVC & Executive Dean appointments, Professor Peter Griffiths for FES and Professor Vanessa Lemm for FLAS. The Council congratulated Professor Jenny Marie, appointed as PVC Education, and Ms Rachel Ashton who had been appointed as the Interim Executive Director of Student and Academic Services.
- [REDACTED]

- **University Achievements:** The University had been ranked as the 8th beset university in the UK in the 2022/23 People & Planet University League table.
- **Medway Food Innovation Centre:** The University's new Food Innovation Centre had been launched which would put Greenwich at the forefront of food innovation.
- **UUK Postvention Guidance on Student Suicide:** UUK had issued guidance for universities on responding to student suicides. The Assistant Director of SAS (Student Services) would provide an update and action plan to the next meeting.

AC 22/22 GREENWICH STUDENTS' UNION (GSU) REPORT (AC 22/P19)

Krishmi Karki, GSU Student Officer (standing in for the GSU President) updated the Council on progress with several core strategic projects. The GSU had conducted a survey in Term 1 on the impact of the increased cost of living on students. 1,722 students had responded and, in collaboration with the University, a number of initiatives had been introduced including the Open Pantry scheme and a trial of free breakfasts twice a week. Recommendations on reducing other cost pressures, such as commuting and travel costs, were being worked through. The Vice-Chancellor advised that food vouchers would be replacing the Open Pantry scheme.

A Welcome programme for the 2,000 January starters would be delivered across all three campuses. The Retention and Wellbeing Project was continuing and 2,438 check-ins with students had been completed in Term 1. 120 referrals for direct support had been registered. 95% of all students contacted were continuing into Term 2. As part of the Student Voice project, a new School Network Officer role had been introduced. These roles worked in tandem with the Sabbatical Officers in enabling students to provide feedback on programmes. Student societies had grown from 34 to 39 with 4333 members to date.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the GSU for its TEF Student Submission which had provided a powerful account of the University and GSU working in partnership for the betterment of the student experience.

AC 22/23 FACULTY REPORTS (AC 22/P20)

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

23.1 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 Head of Health Sciences, Dr Beverly Joshua, was due to start in March 2023. The senior leadership structures had been completed in the Schools of Education and Human Sciences. Team building events in a number of teams had been well received.
- **Student Success:** Work on the NSS action plans was on track. A Town Hall Q&A event for students involving the GSU had been successful and was a model of communication which would be repeated. Health portfolio

reviews had taken place in partnership with the Quality Team.

- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** [REDACTED] An ILD researcher development day held in November 2022 had been held for both staff and PGR students.
- **International:** A new international plan was being developed.
- **Accreditations:** Accreditation for new programmes in Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy was being sought.

23.2 Faculty of Engineering & Science

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

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** The Head of the School of Engineering had resigned and recruitment of a replacement would commence. Recruitment to a number of vacancies across Engineering and Science was in progress. An interim senior leadership team in the School of Pharmacy was working to align the School with the new General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) mandated programme. The professional services team had been refreshed to harmonise the provision across the Greenwich and Medway campuses.
- **Student Success:** Three Associate Heads, Student Success had been appointed to help improve the student experience. A portfolio review and rationalisation had started which incorporated input from Marketing and External Relations to enhance the offer of employment focussed programmes. Increasing numbers of students were on placements.
- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** Development of four research & knowledge exchange centres was being progressed with the intention of launching in summer 2023.
- **International:** A successful review event at MSA had set the narrative for a continuing relationship. Partnerships in Vietnam and Netherlands were being developed.
- [REDACTED]
- **Accreditations:** The new MPharm programme underwent its validation event the previous day and the GPhC visit was scheduled for 3 April 2023.

23.3 Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

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

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** Recruitment to the leadership team was nearly complete.
- **Student Success:** New programmes in Law and Criminology and Music and Sound Production had been approved. The focus on employability had resulted in exciting opportunities being created for students within the creative and film production industries.
- **Research & Knowledge Exchange:** Work was centred around the Faculty's new Institute for Inclusive Communities and Environments. A development day on 13 January had discussed plans to help deliver the R&KE targets.
- **Partnerships:** A new partnership with Tribe Urban Entertainment, led by an alumnus, was offering work experience opportunities in digital media/communications.
- **Accreditations:** The outcomes of the RIBA accreditation visit and the submission to ARB were awaited.
- **Event:** There had been a successful launch of the School of Stage and

23.4 Greenwich Business School

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

- [REDACTED]
- **Staff and Culture:** 28 new leadership appointments had been added to the Faculty providing the opportunity to move forward on strategic projects and impact on staff morale.
- **Student Success:** NSS and PTES action plans were being implemented. A comprehensive review of the Faculty's programme portfolio had begun.
- **Research and Knowledge Exchange:** A new research centre, The Tourism and Marketing Research Centre, had been created from two existing groups.
- **International:** The South East Asia Representative Office would be moving from Malaysia to Vietnam in February 2023. New partnerships were being developed with Nepalese institutions.
- **Accreditations:** There had been a successful accreditation of logistics and transport programmes.

AC 22/24 POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT EXPERIENCE SURVEY (AC 22/P21)

The Council considered the results of the 2022 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) conducted by Advance HE.

The University's response rate had increased to 38% (from 29%) with 2,567 students completing the survey. Overall, the University had performed strongly and had achieved an 86% overall satisfaction rate against a sector average of 82%. There had been some pleasing results in the sections relating to Resources, Skills Development, Covid and Dissertation. Assessment and marking, which had dropped by 3%, was the only area which had significantly fallen in performance. Apart from that there had been general improvement across the board at institutional level.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost reported that the Task Force approach used for improving NSS results would be applied to improving the PTES. Any programme scoring below 76% for overall satisfaction would require an action plan for addressing areas for enhancement. These would be reviewed by the Student Success Board. Common themes in plans included clearly outlining the content of programmes at recruitment stage, improving information to students at induction and increasing engagement with students. She impressed upon Council Members that the scale of results needed to be taken into account when considering the PTES results and an understanding of the bigger pattern was necessary to help a systematic approach to improvement.

AC 22/25 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2023 (AC 22/P22)

The Council received a report on planned changes to the National Student Survey (NSS) questionnaire.

The OfS had published the outcomes of its consultation on changes to the NSS core questionnaire in October 2022. The survey would change to direct questions with a four-point answer scale. For Greenwich as an English HE provider, other key changes included:

- new questions on provider mental wellbeing support and freedom of expression
- the removal of the sections on learning community and the standalone

question on 'Student Satisfaction'.

In addition, the University had chosen to ask its students to respond to:

- four of the 17 optional question banks that the OfS provided on Personal Development, Careers, Course Content and Structure and Learning Community;
- the overall satisfaction question removed from the NSS survey with a four-point response scale to provide some historical continuity in terms of performance monitoring;
- a free text response question: "Based on your experience, what is the best thing about the University?".

The changes to the format would be implemented with the 2023 NSS questionnaire. Thereafter the NSS would be reviewed at least every four years and from 2024-25 the survey window for students would be shortened to mid-February to April. The University had opted for Ipsos MORI to start contacting students from 6 February 2023 to allow more time to prepare for the internal NSS promotional campaign.

The Council noted that VCG members were responsible for cascading down the changes to the NSS to their staff.

AC 22/26 ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE IN LEAGUE TABLE RANKINGS (AC 22/P23)

The Council considered a report on the University's league table performance in the three main UK league tables in 2022. The University had improved in two but had declined in the Guardian which was the stated league table for Greenwich to achieve top 30 status by 2030.

The report had identified the importance of achieving long-term sustainable improvements. This would be challenging and would require the University to attain relative improvement against the sector and consistency across all metrics and subjects in order to see big gains across the piece. For example, the upward movement of metrics driven by the REF results had been offset by the downward direction of others.

The Council noted that change would be brought about by considering strategic drivers and interventions linked to metrics. It was agreed that focus on the NSS was an important driver in improving league table rankings but some programmes which had performed well in the NSS were negatively affected by spend on students. The Vice-Chancellor reported that a Task Force was being set up to consider the actions necessary to achieve the University's strategic ambitions. Spend per student was one of the factors that could make a big difference and consideration was being given as to how this should be allocated.

AC 22/27 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (TEF) (AC 22/P24)

The Council received the University's TEF submission submitted to the OfS on 23 January 2023. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost acknowledged that writing the submission had been a massive task and thanked everyone concerned for their contributions. The information gathered had provided plenty of examples of unique and interesting practice and identified incredible activities and work across the University. A debrief would be held to understand the lessons learnt from the experience. The material would be retained as a general resource and would provide a solid foundation upon which to build.

The PVC Education recognised the considerable work undertaken by the GSU in pulling together their submission.

AC 22/28 CONTINUING STUDENT RE-REGISTRATION (AC 22/P25)

The Director of Student & Academic Services reported that a report on the Continuing Student Re-Registration journey had been considered by VCG at its meeting on 14 November 2022. It had identified that, as of 8 September 2022, approximately 4000 student decisions remained outstanding and highlighted the various issues which had hindered students from re-registering. The delays impacted on the student experience. A 17 point implementation plan had been formulated to improve the student re-registration process and prevent a recurrence of this situation in summer 2023. The actions focussed on improved communications, training, standardisation of PABs and review and streamlining of systems. The Executive Director and CIO reported that a further piece of work to enhance the technology around the student record system was planned. The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the work to support improving the student re-registration experience.

AC 22/29 REPORT TO THE GOVERNING BODY ON ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS ASSURANCE (AC 22/P26)

The Assistant Director of Student & Academic Services (Registry) introduced the annual report on academic quality and standards assurance prepared for the Governing Body. The report provided an overview of the University's processes and systems to assure academic quality and the standards of the University's awards and to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes during the 2021/22 academic year.

The report was accompanied by a draft risk register relating to academic quality assurance. The risk register was provided for the Council's information and would not be presented to the Governing Body. It would be monitored by the Learning Quality and Regulations Committee and the risks would be used to update relevant risks around student experience and OfS compliance in the Strategic Risk Register.

The Council noted the series of enhancements to the systems and processes associated with quality and standards. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Continuous Improvement Tool would lead to a genuine reduction of academic workload and make the processes easier to facilitate.

The Council formally **approved** the report for submission to the Governing Body.

AC 22/30 APPRENTICESHIPS (AC 22/P27)

The Chief Operating Officer updated the Council on the University's current apprenticeship provision. [REDACTED]

Growth of the apprenticeship provision by 2030 was a strategic aim and the University was working to ensure that the provision was fit for purpose. Current work was focussed on three key areas:

- (i) Growing confidence in the assessment of the performance of the provision against Ofsted criteria.
- (ii) Arising from an internal audit of apprenticeships, a discrete piece of detailed work on gathering and collating the data and documentation that

- ESFA would expect to see in a future inspection.
- (iii) Ensuring that the resourcing and structure of the centralised and local apprenticeship teams were adequate in order to ensure that the growth of numbers was properly supported.

It was recognised that there were differences in delivering apprenticeships compared to taught programmes and these would need to be addressed. The apprenticeships provision was an important part of the University's offer and it was important to get on top of the work.

AC 22/31 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ANNUAL REVIEW 2021/22 (AC 22/P28)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) introduced the annual report on research and knowledge exchange activity in 2021/22 for presentation to the Governing Body. Research and knowledge exchange revenues and contracting as well as the activities of PGR students had continued to be impacted by the Covid pandemic during the last year. He highlighted the following aspects of activity:

- The excellent performance of the University in the REF 2021 was the culmination of seven years of planning and preparation. The University had improved its ranking in the sector by 25 places, which translated into an 80% increase in quality-related funding for the 2022/23 academic year. The submission covered research falling under 12 different Units of Assessment and the research environments of three had been rated at 100%. The quality of impact case studies had improved, with four receiving 100%. The report included a number of examples of impact case studies to give the Governors a flavour of the work across the Faculties.
- The new Research and Knowledge Exchange Sub-Strategy approved by the Governing Body in spring 2022 outlined the University's ambitions for growth with a target of increasing revenues to 20% of total income.
- [REDACTED]
- The number of research outputs and publications continued to grow with an upward trajectory of international collaboration at 69% for 2022.
- There had been no real growth in PGR student numbers and the extra investment in the VC Scholarships scheme should bring about an improvement.

Subject to the minor amendment outlined above, the Council **approved** the annual report on Research and Enterprise Knowledge activities for 2021/22 for submission to the Governing Body.

AC 22/32 ACADEMIC CALENDARS AND TERM DATES (AC 22/P29)

The Council noted that academic calendars for the period up to 2027/28 had been approved by the Student Success Committee in December 2022.

AC 22/33 INSTITUTE FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS
(AC 22/P30)

The Council received a report on the creation of the FLAS's new Institute for Inclusive Communities and Environments (ICE) as approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Group. The Institute would take forward the Faculty's research and knowledge exchange activities and would comprise six new research centres:

- Centre for Human Rights, Governance, Environment & Criminal Justice
- Centre for Communities, Activism and Social Injustice
- Centre for Research Enterprise in Language, Culture and History
- Centre for Creative Futures
- Centre for Sustainable and Inclusive Design
- Centre for Sound and Image.

AC 22/34 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK (AC 22/P31)

The Council received a report on the University's position in the latest Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF2). In recent KEF2 data published by Research England in the form of KEF dashboards, Greenwich was above average in its cluster group in four of seven perspectives. As the criteria and methodologies had changed since KEF1, direct comparison of results was difficult but Greenwich appeared to be on an improving trajectory. KEF 3 would take place later in 2023.

AC 22/35 SUMMARY REPORTS FROM ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES
(AC 22/P32)

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

- **2021/2022 Academic Year:**
 - FLAS Faculty Board, 18 May 2022
- **2022/2023 Academic Year:**
 - Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 28 September 2022
 - Student Success Board, 20 October 2022
 - Student Success Board, 6 December 2022

AC 22/36 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES
(AC 22/P33)

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

- **2021/2022 Academic Year:**
 - FLAS Faculty Board (now abolished), 18 May 2022
- **2022/2023 Academic Year:**
 - Research and Knowledge Exchange Board, 28 September 2022
 - Student Success Board, 20 October 2022
 - Student Success Board, 6 December 2022 (unconfirmed)
 - University Research Ethics Board, 11 October 2022.

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

Meeting closed at 13:35.

T.A.Brighton / Peter Garrod
11 April 2023