**MINUTES of the Governing Body Strategy Session held on
Friday, 25 March 2022 via Microsoft Teams, commencing at 10.00**

Present:	Ms B Hill CBE (in the Chair)	Mr C McWilliam
	Ms A Ayoub	Mr M Orr
	Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor)	Mr S Saluja
	Mrs T King	Mr A Sharma
	Mrs D Khanna	Mrs E Sideris
	Miss D Larnder	Professor A Westby
	Professor A Maragiannis	

In attendance:
Mrs T Brighton (SEO Governing Body) (minutes)
Ms G Brindley (Director of Human Resources)
Mr M Farmer (Strategy Programme Manager)
Mr C Forster (Director of Estates & Facilities)(item 6)
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)
Professor P Griffiths (Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Faculty of FES)(item 4)
Mr R Hartley (Head of Estate Strategy and Carbon Reduction)(item 6)
Ms H King (Director of Communications & Recruitment)(item 5.1)
Dr S Lewis (Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence)(item 4)
Professor J Roscoe (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr P Taylor (Chief Operating Officer)
Ms L Watson (Chief Financial Officer)
Dr J Wetherall (Head of Digital Strategy, Security & Compliance)(item 2.2)

Apologies for Absence:
Mr R Hicks, Mrs A Mehta, Ms S Ragab
Professor J Bonet (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise))

THIS IS OUR TIME – SUB-STRATEGIES

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1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Governors and attendees to the Strategy Day which, because of Covid-19 and other factors, had been moved at short notice from the Medway campus to Teams. An opportunity for Governors to visit Medway on a future date would be arranged.

2. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY SESSION: Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor (GB 21/P76)

The Vice-Chancellor stated that the purpose of the strategy session was to update Governors on progress with the development of the sub-strategies and enabling strategies. She hoped that the presentations would provide confidence in the general direction of travel and would show that the strategic plan was moving from a strategy to a strategy programme. Work to date had concentrated on looking at the interdependencies across the strategies. The next stage of work would focus on identifying and focussing priorities.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Governors for their input. Staff and students had also been consulted and had helped to shape the current strategies. The sub-strategy leads had presented the draft strategies to the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG) to ensure a joined up and integrated programme. After the strategy day, the language and branding would be reviewed to ensure a consistent look and feel. The sub-strategies and enabling strategies would be launched at three blended events on all campuses before starting the strategy implementation phase. She encouraged Governors to provide further feedback and challenge prior to signing off the general direction of travel.

3. SUB-STRATEGY SESSIONS

2.1 STUDENT SUCCESS SUB-STRATEGY: Professor Jane Roscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (GB 21/P77)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the draft Student Success Sub-Strategy. The strategy set out the strategic priorities for ensuring that students experienced an integrated and personal education that was aligned to their needs from the start to the finish of the student journey. Three strategic priorities - personalised teaching and learning, graduate outcomes and employability and enhanced student experience - had been identified to drive the work toward achieving the 2030 ambitions and targets for student success.

The sub-strategy had been developed through a series of forums with a range of internal and external stakeholders as well as link Governors. Governors had raised insightful points for consideration, including the importance of addressing priorities. There had been a good discussion about the staff journey and the importance of staff having the right skills and mindset to deliver the student journey, as a result of which, this sub-strategy was strongly aligned with the People enabling strategy. The importance of understanding these interdependencies and making sure that infrastructure and digital fluency were connected was highlighted.

A huge amount of work was under way in this area. Systems such as the Student Lifecycle Management System and priority projects such as the Personal Tutor Framework and Students as

Partners to Peers would be crucial to success. Alongside this work, business as usual activities to support the ambitions in the strategic plan continued. A number of task forces (eg NSS, awarding gap, TEF) were in place, and a review of School-level structures was about to be launched. A review of the working relationship between professional services and faculties to centralise activities was planned.

The following points were made in discussion:

- In response to a request for clarification on the reference to the "staff journey", it was explained that it was important to have the right staff in place as well as the right mix of staff. The University would need to upskill its staff and develop their professional expertise. This was referenced both in this sub-strategy and in the People enabling strategy.
- The importance of the quality of provision to deliver the academic offer to students was emphasised and the need to incentivise staff.
- On implementation, Governors asked how the University would prioritise key actions. It was explained that a set of guiding principles (creating opportunities for individuals and society, building partnerships and delivering impact) would steer the work and empower management to say 'no' to particular actions. The student lifecycle management system would help align and clarify priorities, as would consideration of the 'student lens'.

The Governing Body agreed that the sub-strategy provided a positive framework for student success and was pleased to note that interdependencies had been captured.

2.2   DIGITAL ENABLING-STRATEGY: Dr Jodie Wetherall, Head of Digital Strategy, Security & Compliance (GB 21/P78)

The Head of Digital Strategy, Security & Compliance presented the draft Digital enabling strategy. This is integral to the successful delivery of the overall strategic plan. It is bold and ambitious, and represents the continuation of a journey since 2013. The new strategy now incorporates a Digital Engagement Plan designed to ensure that people are supported and the pace of change will be manageable. The other main themes are the Learning Environment, Student Lifecycle Management, Research & Knowledge Exchange, and Data, Process & Decision Support. Around 400 stakeholders including link Governors, staff networks and third-party contacts had been consulted with a view to encouraging shared ownership for digital and its driving principles.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Bearing in mind the size and complexity of this strategy, Governors asked about support and engagement of staff, particularly in faculties for this level of change. It was reported that the faculties had been fully involved but were concerned about the resourcing

required for delivery. These concerns and learning from Project Ascent, about the impact of new digital initiatives on Faculties/Directorates, would be reflected in the additional resources planned for delivery. Training and development of staff will be crucial to success and a training academy was being considered.

- In response to a question about prioritisation, the Governing Body was informed that responsibility for aligning priorities rests with the Programme Board.
- There should be a focus on risks to delivery and the appropriate mitigation necessary to manage them and the Governing Body was advised that the Programme Board risk register would capture risks relevant to sub- and enabling strategies below the level of the strategic risk register.

The Governing Body agreed that the strategy was impressive and forward looking. Governors recognised the challenge in delivering this and managing expectations in a fast-changing higher education environment, and that the strategy would need to be agile.

2.3   PEOPLE ENABLING-STRATEGY: Gail Brindley, Director of Human Resources (GB 21/P79)

The Director of Human Resources presented the draft People enabling strategy. The strategy set out how the University would attract, develop and retain high performing people and teams. It had been developed in consultation with a range of key stakeholders including staff, trade unions and link Governors. The strategy articulated the employee journey needed to enable staff to deliver the University's transformation. There wre four key priorities: excellence in leadership and management, building high performing and inclusive teams, an enhanced modern infrastructure to support people, and sector leading EDI and wellbeing.

Work was underway for many projects relevant to delivery. Priorities for 2022-23 would focus on projects such as the HE Policy Review and enhancements to existing processes relating to the employee lifecycle, appraisal and performance management, and reward and benefits. The key goals and success measures would be formally reviewed in 2026 and revisited, if necessary, to ensure delivery by 2030.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Governors and others had stressed the importance of a more student-centric approach across all strategies: this needed to be clearer in the People Strategy. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that excellence in management and the need to attract and retain people with a student centric approach were clear priorities. It was agreed that the introduction would be revisited to ensure a more explicit reference and that the student-centric focus was articulated across all the sub- and enabling strategies.
- Governors asked for assurance that statements around "sector leading" and "excellence in standards" had real substance. The Vice-Chancellor reported that, where relevant, the

strategies referenced a sense of agility and flexibility and the importance of embracing change, and advocated consistency but not standardisation in approach. The strategy would be nuanced to bring out these points.

- Governors acknowledged that there were considerable expectations placed on staff and that the tension between business as usual and delivery of strategic ambition needed to be recognised. The Vice-Chancellor assured Governors that support was in place to guide staff and to bring out the best in staff to deliver their best to students.
- The importance of ensuring that hourly paid lecturers felt part of the University community was also flagged.

The Governing Body was pleased to see that people are at the heart of the University's work. It was agreed that some useful points had been identified in the discussion.

2.4   STRATEGIC RISKS: Peter Garrod, University Secretary (GB 21/P80)

The University Secretary presented the draft Strategic Risk Register (SRR). The new Strategic Risk Register reflects the 'This is Our Time' strategic plan, identifying nine strategic risks and four compliance-related risks. It had been compiled using a bottom-up approach, i.e. discussions between the Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary and risk sponsors and operational leads. It had been reviewed by the Vice-Chancellor's Group (which had led to the addition of SRR13 on UKVI Compliance).

The proposed risk management approach had been endorsed by the Audit & Risk Committee and would ensure that the SRR was a dynamic document. Risk sponsors and operational leads would be required to review their risks on a quarterly basis and Faculty and Directorate Risk Registers would be updated on a similar timescale. There would be deep dives by the Vice-Chancellor's Group and the Audit & Risk Committee to ensure the SRR remained current. A Programme Risk Register was being developed relating to the sub-strategies and would be subject to periodic review by the Programme Board.

In discussion, the Governing Body agreed in principle with the proposed approach for actively managing the SRR. There was strong support for the ownership of risks by senior managers and the emphasis on dialogue in the review process. A shorter risk register describing key risks would drive strategy and would promote regular discussion of strategic risks. Whilst it was important for the University to understand the drivers to success, the risk register needed to be more forward looking. The level of detail contained in the SRR's current form was felt to be appropriate for the ARC remit. However, the Governing Body needed a more streamlined version, possibly in the form of a dashboard. This would enable focus on forward looking risks and an understanding of the interdependencies between risks and a focus on mitigation.

The importance of reviewing the University's risk appetite and its risk tolerance, given the high level of ambition in the Strategic Plan for 2030 was discussed. A review of the Risk Management Policy and Guidance and the Statement of Risk Appetite was planned. A facilitated session for Governors with external risk management expertise would be arranged, as the Halpin governance review had suggested.
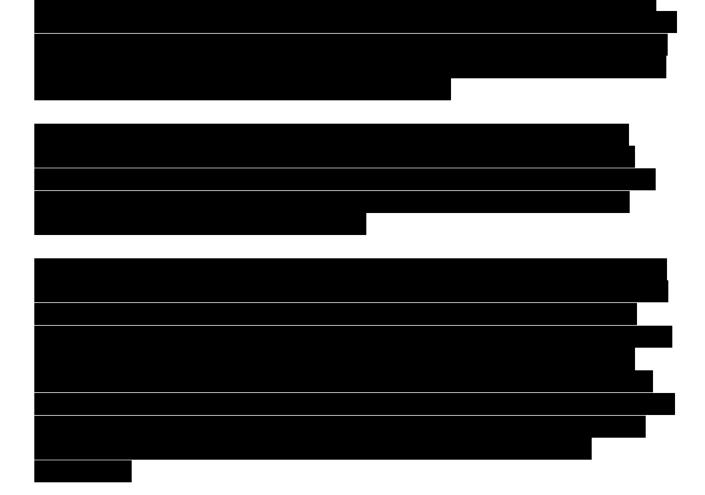
3.	GROUP DISCUSSION

The Governing Body confirmed that it was satisfied with the general direction of travel outlined for the Student Success Sub-Strategy, the Digital and People Enabling Strategies and the new approach to strategic risks. Governors were pleased to note that these strategies had benefited from the perspective of staff, students and other stakeholders. The need for some refinements had been identified. The discussions had highlighted that the People Enabling Strategy was central to the University's strategic ambitions. More explicit reference was needed to the importance of people and culture in delivering the ambitions in the Strategic programme. The conversations about the Student Success Sub-Strategy had highlighted the importance of the staff journey and acknowledging that people were affected differently by change. It would be important to ensure that resources enabled staff to play their part in delivery of the programme and in achieving their personal goals. It would be important to build on the relationship between Faculties and Professional Services and encourage collaborative working across the University.

The Governing Body was informed that the Programme Board would be responsible for tracking progress, with VCG interaction as necessary, to ensure a forward-looking focus. The Governing Body's role in monitoring performance would be developed by management for a future discussion.

4.	BRIEFING ON FACULTY OF ENGINEERING & SCIENCE AND NRI FUTURE PLANS: Professor Peter Griffiths, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Engineering & Science and Professor Andrew Westby, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research

The Governing Body received a briefing on the work of the Faculty of Engineering & Science (FES) and the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) and their future plans. Following a restructure, the Faculty now contained five Schools (Computing and Maths, Engineering, Science, NRI and the Medway School of Pharmacy). The Faculty had a diverse mix of students across a very broad academic programme. ██
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The Governing Body thanked Professor Griffiths and Professor Westby for the interesting and informative overview of the Faculty. Governors recognised the huge amount of change in the Faculty and the importance of understanding its core aspirations. The Student Governor drew attention to the small number of student and academic societies in the Faculty and highlighted the importance of these forums in creating a sense of belonging. She urged the Faculty to encourage its students to start up more societies and its academics to contribute to their activities in order to provide added value to students.

5. SUB-STRATEGY SESSIONS

5.1 PARTNERSHIPS SUB-STRATEGY: Heidi King: Director of Communications & Recruitment (GB 21/P82)

The Director of Communications & Recruitment presented the draft Partnerships Sub-Strategy. It focussed on how partnerships would help the University develop, grow, manage and measure partnerships' impact. In order to provide the best return on investment, there are three priority areas: UK partnerships, Workforce and Skills, and International Study. In these areas, the University would work to raise aspirations in schools and colleges, seek employers' input into the

design of the curriculum, develop a community influence plan and review the appropriateness of TNE and overseas partnerships and operations. The sub-strategy had been developed through engagement with over 200 staff and link Governors.

The creation of a central partnerships hub was pivotal to the strategy. It would provide a single front door for external organisations and partnerships and retain oversight of the University's relationships in order to leverage the greatest impact. The development of the relationship management framework and a customer relationships management (CRM) system to drive integration would also be critical to this work.

In discussion, Governors recognised that partnerships work are a key enabler to the other strategies. The sub-strategy reflected the priorities needed for the future and aligned with the work of the external facing side of Greenwich Research and Enterprise (GRE) and knowledge exchange development. The development of the Partnerships Hub was acknowledged to be key to brokering future relationships. A suggestion was made that greater texture should be provided to the proposed approach for businesses, which would be imperative to building the University's employability and skills work. The Governing Body welcomed this more structured and focussed approach and gave its full support to the sub-strategy.

5.2   RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SUB-STRATEGY: Professor Andrew Westby, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research

The Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research, presented the draft Research & Knowledge Exchange (R&KE) Sub-Strategy. This outlined the planned approach to achieving the University's ambitions for R&KE income to represent 20% of the University's total revenues and to be top of the University's peer group in the Research Excellence Framework and the Knowledge Exchange Framework. The results for REF 2021 were expected in May and the University expected to see an improvement on REF 2014. Professor Javier Bonet had successfully led the work in recent years to improve the quality of research. A growth in REF research income was needed to bring about a further step change.

Three key priorities had been identified within the sub-strategy: world-leading and impactful research, sector leading knowledge exchange, and teaching and learning informed by research, practice and knowledge exchange. A number of enablers had been identified as imperative, including the Partnerships sub-strategy and People enabling strategy, adoption of a more business minded approach to R&KE and effective systems to support an increased volume of R&KE activities. A project management office would be formed and a proposed Doctoral / Graduate School was being scoped to improve student outcomes through the expansion of pedagogical research.

The Governing Body agreed that the sub-strategy set out some impressive plans for the future. It recognised that the proposals would require more collaborative working to bring about improvement. The Governors asked about staff appetite for change. Professor Westby reported that staff reacted differently to the challenge of cultural change. Some academics were keen to pursue research careers alongside teaching and learning whilst others were more research focussed, but all would need to work together in a supportive environment. Governors understood the importance of investment in the R&KE estate and digital systems. The Vice-Chancellor stated that the challenge of improving R&KE performance should not be under-estimated.

5.3   ESTATES ENABLING STRATEGY: Chris Forster, Director of Estates & Facilities and Rob Hartley, Head of Estate Strategy & Carbon Reduction (GB 21/P84)

The Director of Estates & Facilities presented the draft Estates Enabling Strategy. This sets out how the University aimed to develop its estate and infrastructure to ensure that its campuses were fit for the future and for its ambition to be the top modern university. The strategy comprised four documents, Volumes 1-4, with the estate plans outlined differently for specific audiences. The strategy has six priority investment themes: quality of space, flexible and multi-purpose space, the size and shape of the institution, digital and physical provision, carbon neutral ambitions and inclusivity and accessibility of the estate. Its key goals are that the outline investment programme would be delivered on time and to budget, that the maintenance backlog would be reduced by 50% or more, that the net zero carbon target would be achieved, that Greenwich would become a top ten Green League university and that space utilisation would improve per student by 6%.

The estate strategy envisaged a programme of investment of £227m aimed at enabling student and research growth to 2030. ███████████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████████████. A total of 20 projects were proposed, including three new buildings and 17 refurbishments/reconfigurations of space. A separate masterplan had been developed for each campus aimed at strengthening the University's presence and identity in each location:

- Avery Hill Campus: would become greener and the entrance to the site would be enhanced (8 projects comprising 1 new build and 7 refurbishments)
- Greenwich Campus: would be given an improved sense of arrival. Opportunities to develop Devonport House and the Cooper Building linked to student growth had been identified (7 projects comprising 1 new build and 6 refurbishments)
- Medway Campus: would be given an improved sense of arrival and better connectivity between the two levels of the campus. The engineering and research and enterprise facilities would be improved (5 projects comprising 1 new build and 4 refurbishments).

The following points were made in discussion:

- There was agreement that the draft strategy included exciting and interesting new build and refurbishment projects. In response to questioning about the timescale for prioritising the projects, the Vice-Chancellor clarified that the projects would be prioritised in stages, with the need to address space requirements at Greenwich and the engineering and science teaching laboratories provision at Medway identified as first priorities.
- It was recognised that actual growth in student numbers and the need to modernise facilities are key drivers of prioritisation amongst projects. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that, in in terms of estate condition, UoG was behind the curve; much of the work would involve improving facilities but not all would necessarily be state of the art.
- The usefulness of having optionality in the investment programme was emphasised. The Director of Estates & Facilities agreed this was important and explained that flexibility was built into projects through start / stop points. The pace of project work could be moderated as resources permitted.
- Governors asked whether the strategy signified an intention to increase the quality or quantity of student accommodation. The Director of Estates & Facilities advised that there were no plans to build more student accommodation. Future investment aims to improve quality and the current student accommodation would be reconfigured to absorb student growth.
- Governors cautioned about the commitment in KPIs to improving the backlog of estate maintenance by 50% or more and suggested that the target should be reviewed.
- It was noted that the drivers of investment needed to be clear. The University's cash reserves were good and would be used to finance the estate ambitions in the early part of the programme but it was expected that external financing would be required in later phases.
- The Vice-Chancellor stated that clear business cases setting out the key deliverables and anticipated impact for each individual project would be presented to Governors for approval. The financial and project management models for this process were being worked through by the Chief Financial Officer and would be presented to the next meeting of the Finance Committee for consideration.

The Chair of the Governing Body confirmed that the Governors were satisfied with the broad direction of travel.

5.4 **STRATEGIC KPIs: Dr Simon Lewis, Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence (GB 21/P85)**

The Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence recalled that the Governing Body had approved nine corporate KPIs in autumn 2021, subject to slight modification of the Staff

Engagement KPI. Each KPI was linked to one of the four strategic priorities and had a long-term target and trajectory set for 2030. He presented the template of the new corporate KPI scorecard which would be submitted, for the first time, to the May meeting of the Governing Body. The scorecard would be colour coded to allow easy understanding of the year-on-year difference in performance.

Targets and trajectories to 2030 had been set for eight of the nine KPIs. ████████████████ ██ ██

As part of the current planning round, Faculties were setting out their own trajectories to 2030 to ensure that they collectively helped to deliver the strategic plan. A broader piece of work was underway to map the contributions from initiatives to the various KPIs. The sub-strategies also contained strategic indicators and their outcomes would be used to drive continuous improvement at local and corporate levels.

The Governing Body agreed that a smaller, more manageable set of KPIs was beneficial. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the corporate KPIs would be owned by VCG and a process for monitoring and reviewing would be put in place.

> **6.   GROUP DISCUSSION, SUMMARY AND CLOSE: Bronwyn Hill, Chair of the Governing Body and Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor**

The Chair of the Governing Body thanked everyone for the presentations and their contribution to the discussion. The Governing Body was impressed by the level of development in the sub- and enabling strategies and noted that the process of collective engagement across teams had helped to build confidence and understanding of the interdependencies. The Governing Body endorsed the direction of travel of the sub- and enabling strategies, strategic risks and strategic KPIs. Given the high level of ambition in the programme, progress would need to be monitored and reviewed regularly. Governors looked forward to the launch of the strategies in April.

The meeting ended at 15:05.

T A Brighton / Peter Garrod
15 April 2022