

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**COUNCIL****Minutes of the Meeting held at Newman University on Wednesday 21
February 2018 at 2.30pm****Present:**

Mr Jonathan Day	Chair of the Council
Mr Glen Alexander	
Dr John Carlisle	
Professor Scott Davidson	Vice-Chancellor
Rev Canon David Evans	
Ms Deirdre Finucane	
Mr Nathan Ganley	
Dr Karen Graham	
Mr Colin Harris	
Mr Stephen Kenny	
Mr Phillip Lennon	
Ms Elizabeth McGrath QC	
Professor Femi Oyeboade	
Mr John Westwood	

In Attendance:

Ms Andrea Bolshaw	Registrar and University Secretary and Clerk to the Council
Professor Duncan Lawson	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Formative Education)
Mr Tony Sharma	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Ms Rosie Richter	President NSU
Ms Jackie Flowers	Minute Secretary
	<i>For item 1</i>
Ms Smita Jamdar	Senior Partner for Education (Shakespeare Martineau)

The meeting of the Council opened with prayers led by Rev Canon David Evans.

The Chair welcomed Mr Nathan Ganley, elected member from the Students' Union, and Ms Jamdar, the guest speaker.

1. Guest speaker

Ms Smita Jamdar, Senior Partner for Education from the law firm Shakespeare Martineau, gave a presentation on the role of the Office for Students and its implications for University governing bodies; this was followed by a discussion of matters arising from the presentation.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Gayle Ditchburn, Dr Mark Goodwin, Archbishop Bernard Longley, and Mr Richard Wallace.

3. Minutes of the Meetings of the Council and the AGM of the University Company held on 23rd November 2017

3.1 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23rd November 2017 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting.

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4. Matters arising from the Minutes

4.1 Chancellor Selection

The Chair gave an update on the selection of a new Chancellor. He reported that there had been a Town Hall meeting that morning to hear the views of the University community on the desired characteristics for the Chancellor and that a good discussion had ensued. The necessary time would be taken to thoroughly research the background of potential candidates. A process was being developed to set out a simple but effective process for ending a candidacy should information come to light that made this necessary. Candidates would be made aware of the process from the outset.

4.2 UKVI, Tier 4 Update

Council members were advised of the latest developments regarding the revocation of the UKVI Tier 4 Licence. All of the students concerned had now signed an agreement; settlement costs and legal fees were below the budget allocated.

[REDACTED]

It was the ULT's view that a good outcome had been achieved, that good relationships had been retained with the students and the University's reputation remained intact.

The Council thanked the Clerk to the Council for her leadership on this matter, and also the other University staff who had worked hard to achieve this result.

It was reported that the University, in its registration with the OfS, would keep open the option to reapply for a new Tier 4 licence. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) was preparing an addendum to the Partnerships Strategy in respect of the University's international policy.

The Council noted the importance of clarity in the University's international strategy.

4.3 *Prevent*

The Committee heard from the Clerk that the annual Prevent report had been submitted to HEFCE on 1st December 2017. A formal letter had yet to be received in response but HEFCE had raised no queries prior to the Christmas holiday and this seemed a good indication that the report was satisfactory.

4.4 *The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*

The Clerk to the Council gave an update on measures being taken in readiness for the GDPR's becoming effective in May 2018. There was a cross-University Working Group; the University now had two staff trained and certificated; two Data Protection Officers had been identified; and the University was in process of appointing a fixed-term project officer. The Clerk noted the importance of ensuring that staff integrated GDPR compliance in their day-to-day thinking and working. The BDO internal preparedness audit had been moved back to March 2018 pending the receipt of the gap analysis report prepared by an external company. There were very serious penalties for a breach of the GDPR, but the University would take a prudent approach to complying with it.

5. Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor presented a written report on the general higher education environment and on significant sector and institutional developments, covering ministerial changes, HEFCE/OfS fees, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) applications, ITE recruitment, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), Data Futures, GDPR, staffing, and marketing. He gave an update on matters which had arisen since the report was written: the review of funding for tertiary education and the removal of the limitation on the number of occasions on which trainee teachers could take professional skills tests.

He noted the challenges posed by the combination of flat fees, rising costs and the decline in applications. There had been a 4% decrease in applications at the University, other smaller HEIs had experienced larger decreases. The University's acceptances had improved, however: for example, the admissions process for ITE had been reviewed and offers had been made earlier, which had resulted in more acceptances being received.

He commended the Marketing Department on the rebranding of the University and managing the introduction of the new website which had been brought to fruition in a fairly compressed timeframe. He also noted their work on the Cathedrals' Group Choir Festival and the 50th Anniversary events.

Arising from the report, the following points were discussed. The Vice Chancellor explained that a three month pause on recruitment had been introduced as a prudent measure in an uncertain time and to allow full discussions to take place with budget holders. By the end of May there would be a much clearer picture of forecasted student numbers. It was important to protect the current surplus but

also to make sure that no staffing commitments this year would become unsustainable next year.

It was noted that the current situation would not affect the Estates programme in the short term; and as the end of the five year period of the programme was nearing, there would, in any case, be a need to review the programme.

6. Report from the PVC (Formative Education)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Formative Education) outlined the main aspects of his report which covered the TEF, the National Student Survey (NSS), quality and standards matters, teaching excellence, and a record of his major activities and engagements since the previous report. He particularly highlighted developments with the TEF and the NSS.

The TEF would be continuing and was now a condition of registration with the OfS. TEF Year Three was underway with some changes from Year Two, including the introduction of two supplementary metrics based on LEO (Loingitudinal Education Outcomes) data and one on grade inflation. It was not clear how the supplementary ratings would inform the overall rating process. The piloting of the subject level TEF had started, with two models being trialled. There was a compressed timescale for the subject-level TEF. Institutions would receive both an institutional TEF rating and a rating in the subjects taught.

The Council noted the reputational concerns should there be a low TEF rating, which would be visible on the University's website and on the UCAS website, for example; both the TEF rating and the underlying metrics were publicly available. Whilst metrics drove the TEF, they did not in themselves determine the institutional rating. Each provider's institutional submission was taken into account and OfS could override the rating from the metrics. The Council was advised of the possible outcomes for the University for the subject-level TEF.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor reported that the results for NSS 2017 were disappointing with overall satisfaction dropping from 85% to 81%. The Estates development programme was felt to be a possible cause and he noted that this could carry over to the 2018 survey. The University was above average in the new scales on Learning Opportunities, Learning Community, and Student Voice. ITE had seen a significant improvement on several scales.

On the scales that contributed to the TEF metric, the University's score had dropped, with the largest decrease being in Assessment and Feedback. He outlined the work done during the year in response to the results and measures introduced to understand and address some of the concerns expressed. There had been close liaison with NSU and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor commended NSU on the production of a very thorough and valuable report (The Student Voice Report).

During discussion, it was noted that hearing both the student and the staff voice was helpful. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor observed that the staff voice was in place through University committee structures. The importance of the wider communication of the outcome of Committee discussions was emphasised. From the academic staff viewpoint, it was noted that assessment criteria were not always easy to encapsulate and that at times there was a heavy burden of

marking as modules had similar coursework submission dates. From the student point of view it was important that the assessment criteria were clear, that their work was marked only on the criteria given, and that there was communication should there be a delay in providing assessment feedback.

The Council heard that work on matters arising from the NSS was continuing and that there would be updates to the Council as work progressed.

7. Student numbers and recruitment

The Clerk to the Council introduced a report on the latest enrolment and recruitment figures. In comparison to the previous year, new enrolments on full-time first degree programmes had increased by 7% and on the full time foundation degree new enrolments had risen by 15%; PGCE (provider-led) enrolments were higher by 10% but new enrolments on undergraduate ITE programmes had decreased by 36%. The latter decline reflected the national position. She commented on the success of the pilot foundation year zero and drew attention to the benefits of the programme for future student retention.

When compared to the last year, applications to full time single and joint honours were 4% lower, with a 30% reduction in ITE. For PGCE provider-led applications there were fewer applications, but the offers made and the acceptances received were slightly higher than at the same time in the previous year. She noted the work done by the Dean and Associate Dean of the Faculty to review processes and to ensure that offers were made earlier than previously.

The following matters were discussed during consideration of the report. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Formative Education) explained the role of Ofsted in inspecting the QTS (qualified teacher status) element of ITE programmes. The sensitivity of application numbers to a fall in an overall NSS satisfaction rating was considered, with it noted that whilst it had some importance, course content and location were the main determining factors in students' choice. The increasing use of unconditional offers in the sector was raised, but it was noted that this practice did not necessarily improve retention rates.

The report was noted.

8. Financial Position – Update for 2017/18

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided a financial update for 2017/18. He explained that income was lower than budgeted due to fewer enrolments than anticipated, with tuition fee income expected to be about 2% lower than budget. The combination of flat fees for two years and the reduction in applications and enrolments meant that costs had to be more actively managed than in recent years to meet the budgeted surplus for 2017/8. A temporary three month pause in staffing appointments had been introduced to reduce costs during 2017/8 by about £200,000.

There followed a discussion about the University's sources of income. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that tuition fee income from full time students was the University's primary source of income. Research income was a small percentage (about 3%); research grants in themselves did not necessarily add to income but more active research would bring a return in

greater funding from the REF. With regard to donations, the Council was advised that contact was being re-established with the alumni data base for future development, although it was noted that this took time and needed a gentle level of engagement at the start.

Attention was drawn to some typographical errors and to some inconsistencies on the Capital Budget sheet. It was agreed that the errors would be corrected and that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services would investigate and provide clarification.

Action: Director of Finance and Corporate Services

The Report was received.

9. Reports from the Council Sub-Committees

The Chair clarified that draft minutes, rather than the approved version, of Council Sub-Committees were provided to save a delay in providing information to members about matters considered at recent meetings.

9.1 Nominations Committee

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 26th January 2018.

The Nominations Committee had recommended the appointment of Ms Julie Jones to Council from November 2018 and her co-option from February 2018 to facilitate a transition period. The Council was advised that Ms Jones had been interviewed by the Committee in May 2017 and had been felt suitable for appointment as a member of the Council. She had been added to the pool of suitable members as at the time the other non-Catholic vacancy had been filled. She was a management accountant, lived locally, and had links with Newman as 10 years earlier she had been an internal auditor to the University.

Resolved: UC1 /2018

- i) To appoint Ms Julie Jones as a member of Council from November 2018.
- ii) To co-opt Ms Jones as a member of Council from February 2018 to November 2018 to facilitate a transition period.

Action: Clerk to the Council

9.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 26th January 2018. The Chair of the Committee reported that the Committee had considered the University's insurance arrangements, particularly in respect of

terrorism and data breach; had held a wide ranging discussion on compliance; and Key Performance Indicators and the relationship to the strategic plan and the lower level supporting/operating strategies.

9.3 Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee gave an oral report of the meeting held on the morning of 21st February 2018. The meeting had covered the following: internal audit reports on payroll and data quality hearing that the Internal Auditors had given substantial reassurance over the design and operational effectiveness in both audits with some recommendations in both cases and the management responses were noted; the University's updated risk register; and value for money – the Committee had been impressed with the substantial savings made on the work to the roof of the Darwin building. The Committee had received updates on Prevent, GDPR and the OfS.

10. Reports from the Senate/Council Connection of 23rd November 2017

The notes from the Senate/Council Connection meeting were received. The Chair noted that there had been an informative discussion on the services the University provided to support students who were experiencing very difficult circumstances.

11. Report from Senate

This was deferred to the next meeting.

12. Reports from other Committees

12.1 Environmental Committee Annual Report

The Council received the Annual Report of the Environmental Committee. The report informed the Council of the work undertaken during 2016/17 and the work planned for 2017/18.

The Report was noted.

13. External Papers

13.1 Remuneration Code – Consultation on Proposed Guidelines

The Clerk to the Council advised that The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had produced draft guidance, for consultation, on remuneration for senior post holders. It was noted the University was broadly compliant with the guidance.

The Guidelines were received for information.

14. Any Other Business

Schedule of Council Meetings for 2018/2019

The schedule of Council Meetings for 2018/19 was received.

14.1 Change of date for 2018 Away Day

It was agreed that the 2018 Away Days would be Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th September, at the same venue as in 2017.

14.2 Proposed date for the next Join Senate/Council meeting

The proposed date was given as Thursday 4th October 2018. Council members were asked to confirm this date with the Clerk to the Council as soon as possible.

Action: all Council members.

The meeting of the Council closed with a prayer from Rev Canon Evans.

**The Council
Action Plan from the meeting held on 21st February 2018**

Minute	Agenda Item	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible
8.	Financial Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Correction of typos ii. Clarification of inconsistencies in Capital Expenditure table. 	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
9.1	Nominations Committee	To notify Ms Jones of the Council's decision.	Clerk to the Council
14.2	Date for next Senate/Council meeting	To confirm date of 4 th October 2018.	All Council Members/Clerk to the Council