



Minutes of an electronic meeting of the Council held at 1630hrs on 26 November 2020.

Present	Sameena Aziz (15/20 on)	Mathew Bradbury	Dr Alison Davies
	David Dixon (15/20 on)	Sir Les Ebdon	Dr Mary Kiernan
	Peter Walker	Shakira Martin	Richard Greensmith
	Rachell Nicholls (Principal)(PC)		
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Secretary)	Charlotte Hobday (FD)(PC)	Liz Knight (UCP Academic Director)
	James Larner (UCP Deputy Director)	Louise Perry (CFO)	Dan Lee (HE Head)(SC)
Apologies	Claire Bowes		

14/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. The apology was accepted.
- b. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there were no unregistered interests declared; the register was available for scrutiny.
- c. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained an item of Urgent Business to be taken immediately, the Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) meeting had met immediately before this meeting and had recommended David Dixon and Sameena Aziz for appointment as Independent Council Members. The proceedings and recommendations were explained, the recommendation was unanimously approved. **(Action 1)**The new Members joined the meeting and all introduced themselves.

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)**

15/20 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 September 2020 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 2)**
- b. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the last meeting had been implemented.

See referenced minute for full detail.		Status
Action 1	02/20a. Last minutes (24.06.20) were confirmed for signature.	Complete
Action 2	02/20c. SM & PW appointed independent members. AD to chair AC.	
Action 3	03/20. "Well done" recorded to all for performance since lockdown.	
Action 4	04/20. Comments of CUC Code to LK office; then to next meeting.	21.01.21
Action 5	05/20. Academic Board ToRs approved.	Complete
Action 6	06/20. Care required over security of sensitive information.	
Action 7	07/20. Final student number to be circulated to members.	
Action 8	07/20. Graduate results commended/to pass on to concerned.	
Action 9	08/20a. Budget recommended to the IEG Corporation.	
Action 10	09/20. Fees Policy recommended to the IEG Corporation	
Action 11	10/20. RR mitigations effect to be considered.	
Action 12	10/20. Residual Risk scores to be evaluated for promotion	

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)**

16/20 ACADEMIC DIRECTOR'S (AD) REPORT

The AD Report and Annexes considered areas of interest which were not covered elsewhere on the Agenda and the detail was discussed; appendices (Letters from the Minister of State for Universities 02.11.20 (x2) & 09.11.20 and NHS detail on Covid Testing) were noted. Reports were taken as read with items of note raised specifically:

- a. Covid, adjustments to Covid associated guidance, advice and processes including the end-of-term plans had been fully detailed, electronic links to detailed information and websites were included. There had been 5 positive cases, 4 of which prompted self-isolation;
- b. Academic Board, a summary of proceeding and activity at the meeting held on 23 October was discussed. This had been the inaugural meeting and a full agenda had, as expected, resulted in a valuable and busy meeting. Peterborough College (PC) and Stamford College (SC) processes continued to be aligned, and students had welcomed blended learning. A "Stage 2" complaint originating from 2018 had not been upheld by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA);
- c. Board Member Training, individual members were required to complete annual specific training and documentation updates, full detail, including points of contact, was included in the report and was noted. It was planned to hold a full governance/strategic planning awayday during 2021, probably after the Easter break. **(Action 3)** A scheme to match members' experience and strengths to appropriate curriculum areas would be developed and details of the "Link" scheme would be circulated in due course **(Action 4)**;
- d. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), UCP was a member of the QAA and, resulting from increased use nationally of "essay mills" and cases of plagiarism had now signed up to Academic Integrity Charter with an associated commitment to reduce such behaviour;
- e. Prevent, approval of the Prevent risk assessment and updated action plan had been delayed for Covid related reasons at the Office for Students (OfS);
- f. University College Admissions Service (UCAS) proposed changes to the university admissions service would include clear guidance on use of unconditional offers and significantly, would change the "offer and acceptance" timeline, which would prompt changed processes. The changes were likely to be effected in the 2022.23 academic year; and
- g. Brexit, implications for students arising from Brexit had been detailed including useful electronic links to detailed information and websites use and the information was considered and welcomed.

The Student Office reported that, together with a colleague he had completed a learning walk around the campus, partly to determine students' views on "whether they felt safe on campus?"; the response had been overwhelmingly positive. That result was welcomed as a testament to the issued guidance and the professionalism of staff. Associated considerations widened to include mental health and wellbeing effects and assurances were received that there had been no noticeable increase but some pre-existing conditions may have been exacerbated. Thanks were recorded to all involved for their response to the continuing Covid related challenges. Well done. **(Action 5)**

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)**

17/20 INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA)

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) had written regarding acceptance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of Antisemitism.

That matter prompted detailed considerations. The issue had been originally raised with Universities during 2019 and the relevant letter, also from the Secretary of State, had drawn some levels of criticism for the tone, which could have been interpreted as questioning autonomy and academic freedoms inherent in HE nationwide. Some Universities had confirmed that they had not adopted the definition since they did not define other religious discriminations and it was felt inappropriate to “single out” a particular faith; there was some agreement with that as valid. The issue was closely discussed and, as an inclusive, EDI conscious and anti-racist establishment it was unanimously agreed to adopt the definition. **(Action 6)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)

18/20 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

KPI detail had been drawn together into a comprehensive report comprising a narrative supplemented by a data dashboard and graphical detail. The migration process from SC was now almost complete and future information should be IEG based. The total student population, including those registered with sub-contractors stood at a healthy 849. Applications for 2021.22 were similar to the same time last year and that was welcomed. During general considerations it emerged that these were no common threads in reasons for withdrawn students and the number had not risen dramatically and it was suggested that closer liaison between agencies would help to ensure compatibility between individual data sets and reduce minor anomalies, for example numbers/finance/data/records and that would be pursued. **(Action 7)** Discussions on the Performance Dashboard prompted the view that all was proceeding well despite the challenges and that was welcomed.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)

19/20 HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STRATEGY

As the IEG HE element it was necessary that a clear and focussed strategy detailing the way forward was established; the draft of such was attached and was considered. The merger had been completed, the independent UCP was operating and in that context the strategy was considered. Clearly the plan should be interlinked with the parent document and an electronic link to that document was included in the narrative. The Strategy had retained the former mission statement, which had been produced by the student body but had included the vision and values of the IEG. Sector appropriate strategic objectives had been determined and would be amended to reflect changed working practices and, again some related directly to IEG as the employer of UCP staff and provider of shared facilities. One central aim had been to retain the strong student focus, give appropriate and strong regard to civic duties and commit to the local communities. The strategy was welcomed as good work as giving clear direction, accurately reflecting hefty decisions taken over the merger period and since. The strategic objectives may become useful performance targets in their own right and it was also considered whether appropriate to consider “staff costs” as a firm target. The document would be circulated for consultation and feedback and would form the basis for a large part of the Strategic Planning day discussed at 16/20c. The Strategic Plan 2020-23 was unanimously approved. **(Action 8)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)

20/20 FINANCE REPORT

- a. Management Accounts. Over recent months for IEG finance team had been progressively assuming financial administration from ARU but there remained a small number of residual transactions from the Student Loans Company (SLC). As enrolment was now virtually complete an accurate year-end income position, which was 22% greater than that budgeted, due to over recruitment of SC subcontracting, however associated additional expenditure cancelled any benefit to the bottom line. However, the current strong position was achievable and a full reforecast would shortly be available, notably cash days at 100+days compared favourably with the forecast 35+. The current overall estimated position was a deficit of c(£59k) with the target of 6% T/O looking to be missed at c4%. Feed back on the report format would be welcomed directly to the FD at PC.

- b. Annual Financial Statements. It was necessary to consider the findings of the Auditor, to scrutinize the accounts, and to recommend the document(s) and the Letter of Representation for signature if appropriate. The accounts reflected that for the greater part of the year the UCP had been under control of the ARU. Complete sets of documents had been circulated to inform the necessary considerations. The previously considered legal action regarding accommodation charges had been instituted but the sums involved were unquantifiable. The opinion on the accounts was noted as was the narrative and numbers and the documents were approved for signature of the Council Chair and the PRC Principal. **(Action 9)**

The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (See Register at 25/20 below)

21/20 CONFIDENTIAL

22/20 RISK REGISTER (RR)

The RR had now been completely transferred to the “4Risk” template and system, the register items were clearly listed in the accompanying papers and each was individually considered. The register had been updated to include the latest Covid information and was discussed, relevance of some points for example:

- a. financial health, now a distinct risk had a new owner;
- b. sub-contractual provision had a new owner;
- c. Christmas travel plans had been reviewed and updated in line with governmental advice;
- d. student residential halls had also been revised to meet that guidance; and
- e. risk 26 would be revised post the OU 23.22.20 event;

The issue discussed at the last meeting re the relationship between “before controls” and “after controls ” risk scores and the effect of the mitigating (control) actions had now been resolved.

23/20 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

24/20 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 1630 on 21 January 2021

25/20 ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	14/20c. DD & SA appointed a Council Members.	Clerk	wie
Action 2	15/20a. Last minutes confirmed for signature.		
Action 3	16/20c. Strategic Planning day tbh after Easter 2021.	AD	asap
Action 4	16/20c. Members’ “Link” scheme to be initiated.		
Action 5	16/20. Appreciation recorded for staffs continued commitment.		
Action 6	17/20. IHRA definition adopted.	DD	wie
Action 7	18/20. Liaison between staff elements to be improved.		
Action 8	19/20. HE Strategy approved.		
Action 9	20/20b. AFS approved for signature.	CFO	

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Final Audit Report

2021-01-25

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