



Minutes of an electronic meeting of the Council held at 1630hrs on 29 September 2020.

Present	Claire Bowes Peter Walker Richard Greensmith	Sir Les Ebdon Mark Woods Rachell Nicholls (Principal)(PC)	Dr Mary Kiernan Shakira Martin (03/20 on)
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Secretary) James Larner (UCP Deputy Director)	Charlotte Hobday (FD)(PC) Louise Perry (SFO)	Liz Knight (UCP Academic Director) Dan Lee (HE Head)(SC)
Apologies	Mathew Bradbury	Dr Alison Davies	

01/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. The apologies were accepted.
- b. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no undeclared interests; the register was available for scrutiny.
- c. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

02/20 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Minutes (Part 1&2) of the last meeting held on 24 June 2020 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 1)** There had been some organisational changes in the HE sector since the last meeting:
 - (i) the Office for Students (OfS) had resumed making Orders for degree awarding powers; and
 - (ii) the “student number “control directive had been rescinded.
- b. Outstanding Actions. Both actions from the last meeting had been implemented.
- c. Committee Minutes. re Agenda Item 4. The minutes of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) meeting held on 16 September 2020 **(Agenda Item 4)** were presented and explained by the Committee Chair the following recommendations were approved: **(Action 2)**
 - (i) Shakira Martin and Peter Walker were appointed as Independent Council Members; and
 - (ii) Dr Alison Davies as Chair of the Audit Committee (AC).

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

Shakira Martin joined the meeting

03/20 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; the Annex (OfS Access and Participation Plan approval) was noted and reports were taken as read with items of note raised specifically;

- a. Merger. Full transfer of provision from the Inspire Educational Group (IEG) to UCP had now been agreed by the OfS, the process was initiated on 30 July, necessary and

requested evidence was submitted on 7 August; the Student Protection Plan together with governance and management arrangements remained under review and the outcome was expected at the next planned joint meeting on 23 September. The meeting with the OfS went well and UCP's COVID plans and financial sustainability were also discussed. Dates were also agreed for the variation and submission of the UCP Access and Participation Plan (APP).

- b. Government Announcements and Returns. Full detail of all announcements was contained in the report and each was considered. Particular note was taken of the enhanced requirements for Care Leavers and support for disadvantaged groups and the reinforcement of links with the local authority (LA) and Pathways4Us (Cambridgeshire's local offer for Care Leavers). Student halls and general accommodation Covid standards were now required to be reviewed with the LA and this was underway as part of a wider college/campus plan, full information was available on the UCP website.
- c. Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)/University of Peterborough (UoP). The announcement that ARU was to be the academic partner for the UOP had been widely considered by local media, often inaccurately; detail of communication was included in the report and were fully discussed. Several electronic links to press articles were included.
- d. UCP/IEG. Work on the merging of UCP and Stamford College(SC) HE provision continued and a detailed report on the current progress was explained and discussed. Alignment of documentation as required by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator was proceeding well and rationalisation of governance regulatory process was almost complete.
- e. Accrediting Bodies and Partnerships. In parallel with merging provision considered above, SC associates were progressing processes for the now joint relationship, Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) have positively reviewed the plans with an institutional review in 2021. Pearson have agreed to the transfer of higher national provision to UCP. Meetings with ESPA and Addict are being arranged. Covid related issues had prompted suspension of recruitment from Peterborough United Foundation for the current year.
- f. Student Experience. There had been considerable modification and amendment to process to accommodate Covid with particular emphasis on staff and student wellbeing. All necessary information had been widely circulated and induction process had been tailored accordingly. Students had indicated strong satisfaction with the processes, with "excellent engagement and wider enrichment" the normal assessment. Staff morale remained high. There were some challenges with obtaining Graduation Certificates from ARU for last year's students and this was being robustly followed up.
- g. Quality. The HE Conference had focused on "blended learning", wellbeing and the CANVAS software and had informed the current review of teaching and learning process.
- h. OfS Challenge Fund. The project deadline had been extended by 3 months and progress with the submission was noted.
- i. HE Academic Board. The next Academic Board meeting would be on 23 October and would inform the Council meeting tbh on 26 November.

Thanks were recorded to all involved for their response to complexities that the joint challenges of the Covid related issued overlaid on the merger process had introduced. Well done. **(Action 3)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

04/20 COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS (CUC) CODE REVISION

The CUC Code of Governance was considered and discussed; the Code was not mandatory however it included a "comply or explain" requirement. It was agreed that in principle it was reasonable to adopt the code, however there would inevitably be areas which were

inapplicable or possibly conflicting with other policies. It was agreed that Members would consider the document outside of the meeting and forward comments to the Director's office; the responses would be considered at the next meeting. **(Action 4)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

05/20 ACADEMIC BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

As briefly considered earlier, the departure of ARU from the organisation and inclusion of the Stamford HE into UCP had prompted rationalisation of governance processes, which included regulatory documents. Accordingly, the HE Academic Board TORs had been reviewed and these were considered, discussed and approved with immediate effect (wie). **(Action 5)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

06/20 OPEN UNIVERSITY (OU) VALIDATION

The OU validation and an outline associated timescale had been detailed in the accompanying papers and was explained and discussed. The validation process required both institutional and discrete programme approvals; both elements would require peer/expert review, initially of the appropriate documentation, the outcomes of which would then inform subsequent validation processes. The process had been started prior to lockdown and had been suspended, the planned timescale for institutional approval was planned for completion by 23 November 2020, an ambitiously short but achievable window. Necessary action for individual programme validation had been comprehensively tabulated and it was noted that validation events should be completed by spring/summer to enable some programme starts in September 2021; these programmes had been listed. Further validations would enable the second tranche of programmes for September 2022; these programmes had also been listed in the paper. Joint validation managers had been identified as the UCP Academic Director (Liz Knight) and the SC Head of HE (Dan Lee). The paper included an Annex detailing the programme validation process. Some information that would be necessarily provided throughout the process would clearly be commercially sensitive or confidential and care would be taken to protect potential leakage. **(Action 6)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

07/20 STUDENT NUMBERS

The admissions process had been challenging: Covid related uncertainties, the Student Number Cap and the A Level and BTEC results debacle had combined to make it so. Notwithstanding, close focus had been given to maximising the enrolment experience for applicants both during on site clearing and virtual sessions. Key dates for the programme were detailed in the report, with the 9 October being the final date for semester I enrolment. Current student numbers were:

- a. UCP. New 189 (179 FTE), continuing 282 (179 FTE) excluding framework students, these are still tbc because of late awards board, a total of 471 (443 FTE); and
- b. UCP Stamford. New 199, continuing 120, a total of 319.

Some administrative issues such as the Management Information System (MIS) alignment and enrolments were ongoing the process was not yet complete it was agreed that when the final numbers had been determined details would be passed to all Members. **(Action 7)** The "Retention Day" deadline for determination of funding would be at the end of the coming week. The widening of HE capacity had also improved flexibility in student choice and some transfers of students between two centres had been achieved, for example Stamford Computing and Business students had transferred to Peterborough. It was also clear that some students had, as a side effect of the results outcome, "traded up" to their first choice provider. Full information on courses and student numbers for the last 2 years were compared against this year's target and were noted. Achievements for last year were tabulated by course and grading: from 99

undergraduate degrees, an impressive 35 had gained a first and 43 gained a 2:1; this was a superb result and was commended by the Council and that would be passed to all concerned. **(Action 8)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

08/20 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Report considered the:

- a. Budget for 2020/21. The transfer to IEG in June and the formation of the Council prompted an early recommendation of the Budget to the IEG Corporation. There were several caveats since OfS fees, recurrent grant and student numbers had not yet been finalised. Accordingly, the numbers would be a baseline, a comparator for in year performance. The detail was a combination of both centres' requirements and the two partnerships (sub-contracting) detail. Six points to note during the considerations had been listed together with details of services retained by the IEG which, together with academic pay costs would be funded from the £2.4m contribution to IEG. Assumptions in the detailing of the numbers were listed in the paper, together with post budget changes. Arrangements for the transfer of record from ARU were explained and the need for close performance monitoring was stressed. The complete budget tabulated in the paper was considered, discussed and recommended to the IEG Corporation for approval. **(Action 9)**
- b. Financial Results 2019.20 (Draft)
The joint venture (JV) with ARU had ceased on June 5 and accordingly 2/12 of the results were to PRC; the draft year-end position was a deficit of £66.8k which meant transfer of an £11k deficit to PRC end of year accounts. The full accounts were held by ARU and several troubling issues were highlighted in the report and clarification would be required from ARU; initially the detail appeared to conflict with the end result.
- c. Other issues. The last meeting had considered the 2020/21 accommodation guarantee and the potential impact on the 2019/20 guarantee. The situation focused on the failure to occupy the agreed number of rooms with the landlord. There was now a dispute between the landlord, the letting agent and IEG as the degree of enforcement of the guarantee; a full and final offer of £20k has been made. The landlord had commenced legal action against the agent, which in the event of an adverse outcome could prompt action against UCP.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

09/20 FEE POLICY

The Fee Policy, applicable to all HE students, was a key and comprehensive document, which required approval by the IEG Corporation, it included the agreed fees for the current year and the proposed fees for 2021/22. The Policy included full detail and clarifications on payment and non-payment sanctions, fee appeals and refunds. A request to increase all Foundation Degrees (FdA) had been made to BGU in relation to the Stamford provision. The full fee schedule was at Appendix A although it should be noted that the fee for BGU provision needs to remain at £6935.. The Policy was discussed and unanimously recommended to the IEG Corporation for implementation. **(Action 10)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

10/20 RISK REGISTER (RR)

The RR had now been completely transferred to the "4Risk" template and system, the register included six items 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, whether financial stability should have a higher profile were considered. The main issue covered in some depth, was the relationship between "before controls" and "after controls" risk scores and the effect of the mitigating

(control) actions for 231 and 253. There was some feeling that the mitigation should result in a lower “after control” score, otherwise the process was clearly ineffectual; there was a view that was not necessarily the case and some aspirational element should be allowed but it was agreed to review these items. **(Action 11)** It was also felt that some risks were a little pessimistic for example, 263 possibly could move to “green since today’s appointments to the Council. There was a management group meeting scheduled for the coming Friday and these points would be considered. **(Action 12)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register at 13/20 below)

11/20 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

12/20 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 26 November 2020

13/20 ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	02/20a. Last minutes (24.06.20) were confirmed for signature.	Sec	wie
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.	LK	26.11.20
Action 4	04/20. Comments of CUC Code to LK office; then to next meeting.		
Action 5	05/20. Academic Board ToRs approved.	Chair	wie
Action 6	06/20. Care required over security of sensitive information.		
Action 7	07/20. Final student number to be circulated to members.	DL/LK	asap
Action 8	07/20. Graduate results commended/to pass on to concerned.		
Action 9	08/20a. Budget recommended to the IEG Corporation.	Chair	20.10.20
Action 10	09/20. Fees Policy recommended to the IEG Corporation.		
Action 11	10/20. RR mitigations effect to be considered.	LK	asap
Action 12	10/20. Residual Risk scores to be evaluated for promotion.		

Rajni Devarana (Clerk) for Sir Les Ebdon (Chair)
Rajni Devarana Clerk for Sir Les Ebdon (Chair) 26.11.2020






29.9.20MinutesRDLKRN review

Final Audit Report

2020-11-30

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