



## University Executive Board

### Minutes of the meeting of 4 April 2023

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- Present:** Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Neil Crout (PVC RKE), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC EDI and People, up to minute 23.42), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Provost UNM) via Teams, Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC) via Teams, Professor Jane Norman (DVC), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE, up to minute 23.42), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE) for minutes, Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Clive Roberts (Interim FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science).
- Attending:** Sarah Troy-Brown (minutes), Sally Blackamore (Financial Controller, for minute 23.42), Helen Lawrenson (Deputy Director of Finance, for minute 23.42), Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance, for minute 23.43), Professor Chris Gerada (Electrical Machines, Engineering, for minute 23.44), Professor Henner Wapenhans (Innovation, Engineering, for minute 23.44)
- Apologies:** Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam (FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences)
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#### 23.38 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Clive Roberts, Interim FPVC Medicine and Health Sciences, to his first meeting. The PVC EDI and People, and PVC Global Engagement would need to leave the meeting early.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of interest.

#### 23.39 Minutes of 7 March 2023 and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Action Tracker was NOTED.

#### 23.40 Chair's business

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated an update to UEB members prior to the meeting.
- .2 UEB DISCUSSED concerns with proposed duty of care legislation and related implications, particularly with regard to students who may not wish to be in contact with parents for various reasons.
- .3 UEB DISCUSSED the contingency regulations for classification and progression which would enable students to graduate and progress during periods of high risk. It was reported that a special meeting of Senate would be convened.
- .4 Members DISCUSSED voting methods and online voting was being explored. It was NOTED that it was important the teller be able to identify who had voted (but not what they had voted for) in order to ensure all votes cast were eligible.

#### 23.41 Remuneration Committee Review

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED a verbal update from the Director of Human Resources on the outcome of the review of Remuneration Committee.



- .2 A recommendation of the review was that the Committee establish a framework for the negotiation of senior staff pay for new appointments in order to ensure agility in decision making.
- .3 UEB discussed development of a pay strategy and it was NOTED that pay for the majority of staff levels was negotiated at a national level and therefore out of the University's control.

#### **23.42 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan – April UEB update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/56) from the Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Director of Finance, and Financial Controller which set out the first draft of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The paper included assumptions previously agreed by UEB and other committees, and set out consideration of how the MTFP performed against the covenant requirements set by lenders and the Universities Superannuation Scheme. It also provided a view of the long term sustainability of the current plan.
- .2 It was REPORTED that the MTFP would deliver a small deficit in the first year of the plan and a small surplus in the outer years. This surplus would be at a lower level than pre-Covid where surpluses of circa £25m-£30m per annum were delivered.
- .3 A reduction in the inflation assumption across all areas of the MTFP was NOTED. This assumption had been revised to reflect guidance that had followed the recent interventions from the government and the Bank of England to reduce and control inflation.
- .4 It was REPORTED that:
  - .1 The income targets related to student recruitment and research margin would need to be delivered as these had been missed for a number of years;
  - .2 The targets for improvement in the full economic cost of research that had previously been agreed and included in the MTFP had been removed as there was no clear plan to deliver this activity.
- .5 The changes to the MTFP had resulted in a reduction in operating cash over the first four years of the MTFP compared to the previous year. It was essential that there was an improvement in cash generation as well as cost reductions in order to bring the surplus up to pre-Covid levels to enable sustainably delivered investment.
- .6 UEB DISCUSSED the recommendation:
  - .1 Concern was NOTED with regard the potential impact on morale. However, it was suggested that one approach to achieving a cost reduction would be for the University not to absorb the inflation in the plan and for this to be absorbed by Faculties and departments;
  - .2 There were a number of areas for which money had been set aside in the current budget and which had not been utilised. This money could be re-phased;
  - .3 Concern was NOTED that the University was less well resourced in some areas when compared to peers through benchmarking data;
  - .4 Some decisions on the way the University operated had high impact in terms of the cost base. Examples NOTED included the limit of 10 postgraduate research students per supervisor, and how gaps in teaching resources were addressed;
  - .5 More efficient ways of working were required which would include standardising processes and procedures across Faculties and departments to remove duplication and variation;
  - .6 Clarity was required for the workforce to ensure staff at all levels were clear on expectations of their roles in order to make better use of resources;



.7 Improvements in budget management was needed which should include ensuring decisions that impacted the cost base were taken at the right level in Faculties and School.

.7 Whilst it was suggested that a group be established to develop options for absorbing inflation, it was not thought that such a group was required at the current time, and further thought may be given to establishing such a group in the future.

.8 UEB considered the options proposed in the paper, and supported further work on options to absorb pay and non-pay inflation (options 1 and 1a), as well as a review of strategic investment and target uncommitted expenditure to identify what activity could be re-profiled (option 2).

**23.43 Health and Safety Improvement Plan**

.1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/52) from the PVC Engineering and Director of Governance and Assurance which set out the Health and Safety strategy improvement plan for the University. .

.2 UEB NOTED the current position which included areas of good practice around the University for health and safety as well as significant gaps and inconsistencies in approach.

.3 UEB considered the improvement plan and NOTED with some concern the current compliance levels. It was confirmed that external resources would be employed to progress compliance in some areas.

.4 UEB NOTED the need for culture change across the University with regard to health and safety and a sustained move towards standardised processes and recording of information.

.5 UEB confirmed its SUPPORT for:

.1 The planned approach outlined in the paper;

.2 The deployment of the plan into Faculties and Departments and in particular:

.1 Ensure that appropriate resources be made available to implement the plan locally;

.2 Lead the cultural change as accountable individuals for health and safety;

.3 Mandate that a consistent approach was to be followed.

**23.44 Zero Carbon Cluster – Translational Centre Concept Paper**

.1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/50) from the FPVC Engineering which outlined the opportunity for the development of a new building which would require infrastructure and risk underwriting from the University.

.2 UEB NOTED the update and provided the following comments:

.1 The proposal would align with the investment zones being established in the East Midlands;

.2 It was suggested that there was further opportunity to collaborate with other Faculties on zero carbon and this would include biological zero carbon in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences for which the University was one of the four leading centres in the country.

.3 UEB NOTED the proposal and that a business case would be submitted through an appropriate approval route in due course.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.4	Opportunities for collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and Health sciences on biological zero carbon would be explored.	Clive Roberts (Interim FPVC MHS), Henner Wapenhans (Professor of Innovation), Chris Gerada (Professor of Electrical Machines)	June 2023



**23.45 Employee Engagement Survey Questions**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/55) from the Director of Human Resources which set out the questions for the Employee Engagement survey that had been agreed by the People and Culture Committee.
- .2 It was confirmed that there would be paper versions of the survey available for some staff groups so no colleagues were disadvantaged.
- .3 UEB provided the following comments:
  - .1 Wording such as senior leaders could be interpreted in different ways. It was confirmed that there would be explanations of which level of leadership was being referenced. Members NOTED that explanations should be co-located with the relevant question;
  - .2 Some level of granularity to the data would be required to enable segregation of teams in larger departments. It was confirmed that whilst there would be some level of granularity, detailed data would not be available for small teams where individuals could be identified;
  - .3 Concern was NOTED that some teams and roles were unable to undertake flexible working for a number of reasons, and the question on flexible working may imply it was available to all staff roles;
  - .4 Trends and the ability to link with previous surveys was DISCUSSED. It was confirmed that whilst some questions in the proposed survey had not been asked in previous Gallup surveys, they would enable benchmarking with other institutions.
- .4 UEB AGREED the questions subject to the inclusion of the comments above and confirmed once the questions had been reviewed, the final set of questions would be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.5	To review revise the questions in line with the suggestions and to submit the final set of questions to the Vice-Chancellor for approval	Jaspal Kaur (Director of HR)	April 2023

**23.46 Roundtable**

- .1 The Malaysian Qualifications Agency had confirmed the self-accreditation status of UNM until 2027.
- .2 Approval had been received from the Department for Education for the proposed Maths School, and next steps would include a further meeting with the Department on site.
- .3 The Universities and Colleges Union had balloted its members and received a mandate for a marking and assessment boycott later in the month.

**Date of next meeting:** 11 May 2023.