



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 8 May 2024

Present: Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Professor Sube Banerjee (FPVC MHS), Helen Dunn (Interim Director of HR), Professor Jon Garibaldi (Provost UNNC) via Teams, Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts and interim FPVC Social Sciences), David Hill (CDO), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering and interim Provost UNM), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Jane Norman (DVC), Professor Tom Rodden (PVC RKE), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science).

Apologies: Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC People and Culture)

Attending: Alison Dubas (Governance Manager), Louella Houldcroft (Director of Communications and Advocacy), Helen McNamara (Director of Organisational and People Development), Dr Daniel Booth (VC Mentee, Observing), Professor Donal McNally (VC Mentee, Observing), Rachel Atkin (Director of Student Recruitment) for minutes 24.48, 24.49 and 24.50, Rachel Gillam (Deputy Director, External Relations) for minute 24.50, Helen Pennack (Chief Marketing and Communications Officer) for minute 24.50, Professor Caitlin Milazzo (Head of School, Politics) for minute 24.51, Emma Szembek (Deputy Director of Student Recruitment) for minute 24.52, Musa Yusuff (Strategic Delivery Lead) for minute 24.52

24.46 Welcome, Quoracy and Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

- .1 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of conflict of interest.
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor's mentees Dr Daniel Booth (Principal Research Fellow) and Professor Donal McNally (Professor of Bioengineering) were welcomed to the meeting as observers.

24.47 Minutes of 16 April 2024 Meeting and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2024 (UEB/24/71) were confirmed as a true record. The action log was NOTED.

24.48 Student Number Planning and Target Setting

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/67, which set out student number planning and target setting for 2024, variances in previous targets set and the rationale for changes.
- .2 Ahead of submission to Finance Committee, UEB DISCUSSED the following:
 - .1 A previous iteration of the paper had reported an agreed increase of 200 postgraduate taught international students, whereas paper UEB/24/67 noted an increase of 220. This must be clarified and confirmed ahead of discussion at Finance Committee;
 - .2 The extent to which student number targets could be flexible and where there were opportunities to accept additional students within some disciplines. During the confirmation and clearing period, there would be regular meetings with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors to discuss student numbers and opportunities for increases. A robust plan was being developed for the confirmation and clearing period to enable the University to respond and mitigate any potential number issues as they arose.



| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .3 | Feedback from UEB would inform a further iteration of the paper ahead of its submission to Finance Committee | CMCO/Registrar | September 2024 |

24.49 Issues Relating to Student Admissions, Retention, Progression and Completion

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/75, which outlined the key factors underlying the current challenging and uncertain student recruitment environment.
- .2 The Registrar advised that further work was required to develop the paper before it could be fully considered by UEB and Finance Committee. UEB NOTED paper UEB/24/75, which would continue to be developed and submitted back to UEB for discussion and consideration.

| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .3 | The paper would continue to be developed and refined and following the outputs of an internal audit. Detail on risks and mitigations would also be included. UEB would reconsider a further iteration of the paper once available. | Registrar | November 2024 |

24.50 International Contextual Offers

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/73, which outlined the current University approach to contextual offer making for international students, and future options.
- .2 The following points were made during the discussion:
 - .1 That there must be clarity on the entry requirements for all programmes at the University;
 - .2 Contextual offers for international students should be permitted on a case-by-case basis, as for home students, but this should not result in different entry requirements and those requirements should not be published to the University website;
 - .3 Different entry criteria for international students could be considered using a similar approach to widening participation for home students. This would support flexibility during the confirmation and clearing period;
 - .4 An alternative option was to consider international students' qualifications that were equivalent to A-levels. Although such qualifications did not directly align to tariff, reasonable judgement could be made in determining their equivalence;
 - .5 Data indicated that international students did not always achieve the same progression levels as home students, due to the additional barriers faced in entering the UK education system. Understanding the differences in achievement between home and international students would help to inform the entry requirements at admission stage.
- .3 UEB DISCUSSED the Reputation and Recruitment Committee's indicated preference to further develop the approach to contextual offer-making by reducing the entry requirement by two grades for international students on some undergraduate courses. UEB considered the potential associated risks.
- .4 UEB determined that there should be an equivalence between home and international students, with a mechanism to consider contextual offers which also supported individual, case-by-case decisions to be made during confirmation and clearing. The approach would need to be publicised in the same way that widening participation offers were published.



| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .5 | Feedback provided by UEB would be incorporated into an International Contextual Offers approach for 2025 entry and be submitted to Reputation and Recruitment Committee for consideration, following which the policy would then be circulated to UEB for final consideration. | CMCO | July 2024 |

24.51 Fees, Pricing and Financial Awards – Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Scholarships Update

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/74 which provided an update and recommendations on PGR scholarship activity.
- .2 Recommendations from the task and finish group had previously been reported to UEB in October 2023 and members were reminded that, at the time, UEB was unable to approve a recommendation that all scholarships were provided with a consumables budget via Faculties. UEB felt that further work was needed to understand the full cost implications.
- .3 The work of the task and finish group included understanding the level of spend on PGR scholarships. The group determined that the University’s fee structure was not aligned to that of other institutions and that greater transparency of student costs was needed. The group had also considered the following:
 - .1 A way of continuing with PGR scholarships and enabling best practice to be implemented, without significant increased overall costs;
 - .2 In order to sufficiently and effectively fund PGR scholarships, consideration might need to be given to funding a smaller number of students;
 - .3 The University’s appetite to remain in the top ten Russell Group institutions for PGR per FTE ratio.
- .4 There was often no correlation between the cost of the fee for the course and the cost to the University in terms of delivery. In a number of instances, this often meant high-cost courses, which left little funding available in the Faculty budget to support those students further. Subsequently, the task and finish group had recommended an in-depth review of PGR fees and the PGR Faculty funding model to ensure that PGR research activity would be supported.
- .5 UEB DISCUSSED the following:
 - .1 There should be an ambition to recruit the best possible quality of PGR students, which would support the achievement of the University’s Research Excellence Framework ambitions;
 - .2 Recruiting fewer PGR students would, in turn, enable a better support package to be offered to successful students. This should be explored and would also improve the experience of PGR students;
 - .3 A full review of PGR fees and the PGR Faculty funding model should also consider the role of the postgraduate teaching assistants and how they were integrated into the package of support provided for PGRs;
 - .4 In alignment with comparator institutions, consideration should be given to implementing a fee ‘banding’ model.



- .6 UEB AGREED the following:
 - .1 In respect of PGR recruitment numbers, the appetite should be to be within the Russell Group average, as opposed to remaining in the top ten;
 - .2 To instigate a move towards best practice as set out in the paper, with phased implementation from 2025/26. The current PGR budget should be maintained;
 - .3 That a full review of PGR fees and the PGR Faculty funding model be undertaken and conducted by the task and finish group;
 - .4 Actions related to the implementation of PGR scholarships would be assigned to the PGR Committee.

| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .7 | The PGR Committee would review and implement the decisions made by UEB. | FPVC Science | August 2024 |

24.52 Access and Participation Plan

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/63, which presented the new access and participation plan (APP) for the 2025/26-2028/29 academic years. Council had approved the new APP at its meeting the previous day.
- .2 UEB NOTED the new objectives and targets that had been included in the University's APP.
- .3 UEB NOTED Council's approval of the APP and ENDORSED its support.

24.53 Reshaping Our Estate: Space Management Responsibilities

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/62, which proposed a change to the way University space was managed.
- .2 Lack of a formal space policy presented challenges to the Estates and Facilities team in the allocation, management and utilisation of space. Decisions on a significant portion of University space resided with School, Faculties and Departments, rather than Estates and Facilities. This led to inconsistency of decision-making and in the utilisation of space.
- .4 The remit of the Estates and Infrastructure Committee must include the oversight, management and utilisation of space and supporting the Estates and Facilities team in relation to implementing space management.
- .5 UEB CONFIRMED that Estates and Facilities was authorised to collect data on space usage and utilisation, which might include the use of occupancy sensors and other data collection methods. Furthermore, UEB AGREED the following:
 - .1 Where necessary, changes to governance arrangements would be implemented to enable effective oversight of and accountability for space allocation. The terms of reference of Estates and Infrastructure Committee would be reviewed and amended accordingly to ensure accountability of space allocation and that the Committee would provide the Estates team support in the implementation of the space policy;
 - .2 A University space policy and space standards should be developed, based on agile working principles, which would be applied to all future development, remodelling and space reallocation projects;



- .3 Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors would be responsible for ensuring that Faculties, Schools and Departments engaged with Estates and Facilities to identify opportunities to improve space utilisation and to release surplus estate footprint, which may be reallocated, repurposed, mothballed or disposed.
- .6 UEB emphasised that, following the decision, communication with staff on the changes in the management of space would be crucial, as would clearly defining expectations around the use of space.

| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .7 | Communications on the decision by UEB in respect of space allocation and usage would be developed and would clearly articulate the benefits of the approach agreed. | Director of Estates and Facilities/ Director of Communications and Advocacy | September 2024 |
| .8 | Changes to governance arrangements would be implemented where necessary. This would include a review of the Estates and Infrastructure Committee terms of reference. | Registrar/ Associate Director Governance and Executive Services | July 2024 |

24.54 International Governance Reports: UNNC and UNM

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/60, which was the output of a review of international governance and template report from each of the international campuses, which provided UEB with visibility and oversight of key operations and decisions.
- .2 UEB NOTED that an error had occurred at UNNC in the processing of marks for the Tri Unity Scheme Test entrance exam. Members were assured that action had been taken to mitigate and manage the error and that all affected students had been contacted and dealt with appropriately.
- .3 UEB NOTED the request to remove caps for all 2+2 and 2+1 undergraduate programmes at UNM. UEB would CONSIDER the removal of caps for all 2+2 and 2+1 undergraduate programmes at a future meeting.

| | ACTION | OWNER | DUE |
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| .4 | The request for remove caps for 2+2 and 2+1 undergraduate programmes would be submitted to UEB for consideration at a future meeting. | Provost UNM | July 2024 |

24.55 Roundtable

- .1 Professor Mark Bradley had been reappointed as the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Curriculum Leadership for a second four-year term. Professor Bradley would also assume the role of interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and student Experience from 1 August 2024.
- .2 The Migration Advisory Committee was expected to publish its graduate route report the following week. Briefings would be provided for senior leaders and members of UEB.
- .3 The Head of School of Computer Science, Professor Tony Pridmore, had been appointed and the Head of School of Physics, Professor Mark Fromhold, had been reappointed for a further term.



- .4 Following the departure of the Deputy Registrar, the Director of Governance and Assurance would assume the role of Deputy Registrar from 1 June 2024, alongside his current role. Chris Hulse had been appointed as Academic Registrar on an interim basis and would take on most of the former Deputy Registrar's duties.
- .5 USS would hold its Board meeting at the University of Nottingham on 22 May 2024.
- .6 A vote of thanks was NOTED to Professor Robert Mokaya for his considerable contributions during his tenure as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement. Professor Mokaya would leave the University on 14 June 2024.

24.56 Meeting Feedback

- .1 Feedback on the meeting was provided by the Registrar who observed that:
 - .1 UEB had considered a significant level of business at its meeting, and it had done so with healthy discussion and robust dialogue;
 - .2 A model of open, objective and rational decision making had been employed and the meeting had been productive and well organised.