



University Executive Board

Minutes

3 December 2024

Present: Professor Jane Norman (Interim Vice-Chancellor and Chair), Professor Sube Banerjee (FPVC MHS), Sally Blackmore (Finance Director), Professor Mark Bradley (Interim PVC ESE), Helen Dunn (Interim Director of Human Resources), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts and Interim FPVC Social Sciences), David Hill (CDO), Professor Sam Kingman (Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC People and Culture), Professor Tom Rodden (PVC RKE), Professor Chris Tuck (Interim FPVC Engineering), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science)

In Attendance: Rowena Hall (Secretary), Rav Kalsi (Principal Executive Officer), Louella Houldcroft (Director of Communications and Advocacy), Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance), Niall O'Loughlin (Director of Research and Innovation Strategy) for minutes 171, 176, 177, Alice Reeve (CEO UNIP) for part of minute 171, Mark Barber (Programme Director) for minute 172, Carolyn Stanhope (Digital Core Senior Business User for HR) for minute 172, Kerry Williamson (Director of Procurement and Financial Operations) for minute 172, Rob Phillips (Programme Manager) for minute 172, Jenny Vempati (Director of Internal Audit) for minutes 173, 174 and 175)

Apologies: Professor David FitzPatrick (Provost UNM), Professor Jon Garibaldi (Provost UNNC)

24.165 Welcome, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
- .2 There was one declaration of conflict of interest made by the Finance Director who confirmed that, as a director of University of Nottingham Innovation Park (UNIP), she had an interest in the UNIP item on the agenda. It was AGREED that the Finance Director would abstain from any decision making in connection with the item.
- .3 The Director of Governance and Assurance was welcomed to his first meeting of UEB.

24.166 Minutes of Meetings on 8 October, 24 October and 5 November and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meetings as set out in paper UEB/24/199 were CONFIRMED as a true and accurate record.
- .2 The Action Log was NOTED.

24.167 Chair's Business

- .1 UEB meetings would be scheduled to take place in different locations across the University during 2024/25. The Principal Executive Officer would develop a schedule for engagement activity to take place around the meetings. Suggestions for how that activity might be delivered were made and included informal engagement activity rather than formal items. Members were asked to direct any further suggestions to the Principal Executive Officer.
- .2 The Interim Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the outcome of the recent Times Higher Education Awards. It was NOTED that the Director of Communications and Advocacy was working with the Registrar and the PVC RKE to implement a more strategic approach to award nominations.



- .3 It was Dr Paul Greatrix' last meeting as Registrar of the University and member of UEB. The interim Vice-Chancellor thanked Paul on behalf of the UEB and the University for his many contributions, successes and loyal support to the University over the last 18 years.

ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.4 To direct further suggestions for engagement activity around UEB meetings to the Principle Executive Officer	UEB members	31 January
.5 To discuss a possible submission for a Queens Anniversary Prize for Education at the next meeting of UEB.	Vice-Chancellor	18 December

24.168 Roundtable

- .1 All UEB members provided operational updates and updates on other specific areas were provided where appropriate.
- .2 A case had been submitted to the Department of Education for the East Midlands Maths School review. A recommendation was expected in the new year.
- .3 It was reported that parts of the Bio-Support Unit on F-Floor in the Medical School Building were due to reopened in the new year. The PVC RKE would meet with research groups imminently.
- .4 UEB was reminded that a Human Tissue Act audit was due to take in the place in the new year. A remediation plan to ensure compliance was already underway.

Students from Ghana

- .5 The Registrar reported that the Ghanaian currency had collapsed which had led to the non-payment of tuition and other fees by both state-funded and privately funded Ghanaian students.
- .6 52 postgraduate students were due to graduate in December. Liabilities in respect of those students stood at £1.2m in tuition fees and £300k in accommodation costs.
- .7 It had been agreed that those students who wished to cross the stage would be given the opportunity to do so, but degree certificates would not be provided.
- .8 Work continued with the Ghanaian government to recover payment of the liabilities. Consideration would need to be given to whether state-funded students from Ghana should be offered places for 25/26 entry.
- .9 It was NOTED that there was the potential for visa issues for some of the students concerned. Support was being provided.

UniCore

- .10 UEB members reflected on the successful go-live of the UniCore system and considered the ongoing required activity and next steps.
- .11 It would be important to review and adjust operations and ways of workings to ensure that the benefits and efficiencies of the UniCore system were realised. There was a risk that the system was simply used around current ways of working without achieving those benefits.
- .12 It was NOTED that the Chief Digital Officer would be the business owner of the UniCore system.
- .13 The Director of Governance and Assurance reported that a rapid response team had been deployed to manage an incident relating to incorrect and excessive access to data in the system which had been granted to a number of individuals. The level of breach did not require a report to the Information Commissioner's Office.



Clinical Skills Training

- .14 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an update on a required decision related location of the delivery of future clinical skills training for a new Medicine curriculum to be introduced in 2026/27.
- .15 C Floor of the psychology building was currently vacant due to the ongoing work to repair the roof. It was considered a more beneficial location from a cost perspective than Kings Meadow Campus which had previously been identified. It would also support the release of Kings Meadow Campus for a potential sale.
- .16 A decision would be made at Estates and Infrastructure Committee in the next week. It was NOTED that colleagues in the Schools of Pharmacy and Psychology had expected to be able to reoccupy the space following the repair of the roof. If it was determined clinical skills training should be delivered from that location, alternative space would need to be identified for those colleagues.

Medical School Building

- .17 Following its meeting in November, Council held an expectation that it would receive a business case for the Medical School Building in March 2025. It was the view of a number of UEB members that this was an unrealistic timescale.
- .18 Work was underway to understand and determine the funding mechanisms available to the University for its major infrastructure projects.
- .19 Council twilight sessions would be used where appropriate to ensure that Council remained updated on the progress. It was anticipated that an interim paper would be submitted to Council in March.

Curriculum Nottingham

- .20 The programme was receiving some push back across parts of the University in connection with the standardisation of credit modules. 80% of programmes were in alignment. Whilst some exceptions were necessary and appropriate, the level of non-alignment caused complexity.
- .21 Professor Linehan acknowledged that there were parts of the University that were being asked to review their curriculum by the Curriculum Nottingham programme not long after having conducted their own reviews.

24.169 Executive Structure and Committee Structure

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/198 which set out a new executive and governance structure for the University. It was planned to share the draft structures with Senior Leaders later in the week.
- .2 Some minor changes to the executive structure were possible. The diagram would be updated to reflect that Professor Linehan had been appointed as PVC ESE with effect from 1 January 2025.
- .3 The new executive and governance structures would be effective from 1 January 2025 although it was acknowledged that it would take some time to transition into their operation. There were a number of vacancies on the professional services side of the executive structure for which recruitment would begin in the new year.
- .4 Whilst the highest level of the committee structure was almost complete, there would be significant work to map out subsequent levels. The reporting routes for committees would be clear.
- .5 Work was underway to develop standard reporting templates and forward plans. The Chairs of UEB committee would be contacted to initiate reviews of Terms of Reference and membership.
- .6 Members were asked to direct further comments on the executive structure to the interim Vice-Chancellor and on the governance structure to the Director of Governance and Assurance.



24.170 Future Nottingham Update Report

- .1 The Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided a verbal update.
- .2 A planning session was scheduled for later in the week to consider a detailed work plan for 2025. The plan and detailed RACI would be shared with UEB in the new year.
- .3 It was acknowledged that discussions on Academic Size and Shape had entered a challenging phase as details of potential changes were being discussed.

24.171 UniCore Update

- .1 The Programme Director provided a verbal update on the go-live of the UniCore system which had been a success. There remained work to do and UEB member support for that work would be required in the new year.
- .2 The following achievements were highlighted:
 - .1 Early life support mechanisms continued to manage the levels of contact.
 - .2 November payroll had been delivered.
 - .3 Staff were able to purchase supplies in the system.
 - .4 Finance integrations for a number of systems were live.
- .3 Challenges and remaining activity included:
 - .1 Some testing remained outstanding in connection with the RIS system before it could go live. There were some further integrations to complete, but no risks were foreseen.
 - .2 The log in information for some casual staff had been received late by the staff in question.
 - .3 Many of the support requests received concerned issues which related to the accuracy of data inputted to the system rather than the operation of the system itself.
 - .4 Some decisions were required in the new year related to data governance.
 - .5 Some mapping issues had been identified in the finance close period.
- .4 The first update to the UniCore system would be implemented towards the end of December.
- .5 The hard-work and commitment of the UniCore team and those who worked closely with it was recognised and appreciated by UEB.

24.172 Audit Recommendations Tracking

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/195 which set out a monthly report on overdue management actions arising from internal audit reports.
- .2 It was NOTED that there were 50 overdue actions with a further 12 more becoming due by the end of December. 13 Priority 1 actions were currently overdue.
- .3 The Director of Internal Audit was keen to engage with UEB members to understand the progress of actions and barriers to completion. If the priority of any actions required reassessment, this could be



arranged. There were protocols in place agreed with Audit and Risk Committee to adjust or remove actions if appropriate.

- .4 The importance of ensuring that target dates for completion of actions were realistic was highlighted as was allocation the action to the right owner. It was explained that target dates for completion could not be changed. The forecasted completion date for the action could be changed, but it would not alter the overdue nature of the action.
- .5 It was acknowledged that the new executive structure would support a more coherent oversight and management of the delivery of audit actions and risk mitigations.
- .6 The interim Vice-Chancellor requested the support of all UEB members to make progress on the delivery of audit actions.

24.173 Internal Audit Annual Opinion 2023/24

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the Internal Audit Annual Opinion for 2023/24 (UEB/24/177) which provided an overall conclusion of 'Reasonable Assurance' and identified some areas for attention.
- .2 The report highlighted some of the areas that were working well which included risk management and Council-level governance. A number of areas were outlined where there were challenges and included the several internal audit reports that had provided only limited assurance, making progress in identifying the scope of Future Nottingham, and the need to improve the culture of ownership and accountability. The number of roles on UEB filled on an interim basis had been noted.
- .3 Some areas of challenge had progressed since the report was written during the summer. At the time of its writing the Budget remained draft but had since been approved by Council and financial controls had been reinstated.
- .4 UEB NOTED that the opinion and the management response had been submitted to Council for NOTE in November 2024.

24.174 International Student Recruitment – Internal Audit Report

- .1 Assurance Committee considered an internal audit report on international student recruitment (UEB/24/185) at its meeting in September 2024 and directed that the report should be shared with UEB due to it having provided only 'limited assurance' of activity that related to a significant entry on the University's strategic risk register.
- .2 The report outlined a lack of clarity and alignment of strategy and planning at different levels in the University and a need to strengthen governance and accountability.
- .3 UEB NOTED the contents of the report and that the implementation of agreed management action plan would be tracked by Assurance Committee with reporting to Audit and Risk Committee.

24.175 Higher Education-Business and Community Interaction Survey 2023/24 (HEBCIS)

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/193 which set out the University's HEBCIS submission to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee recommended it to UEB for approval.
- .2 The Director of Research and Innovation Strategy confirmed that:
 - .1 A strategic decision had been taken to spend a portion of the University's Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) income on Research Excellence Framework (REF) activity. The



decision might result in less HEIF income in the next year, but it was necessary to support REF planning by Faculties.

- .2 It was now a priority to deliver a paper to UEB proposing the REF strategy including any budget request.
- .3 Advice had been sought about whether income from the Manufacturing Technology Centre should continue to be included in the HEBCIS submission.

.3 UEB APPROVED the HEBCIS submission as set out in the paper to HESA.

24.176 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: January 2025 Report

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the annual progress report on the implementation of the University Researcher Development Concordat 2024-27 action plan (UEB/24/196). The report would be submitted to Council by circulation for NOTE to fulfil reporting obligations as a signatory of the 2019 Researcher Development Concordat.
- .2 It was NOTED that much of the report had been drafted over the summer period therefore, additional progress had been made to that shown which would be captured in future progress reports.
- .3 UEB APPROVED paper UEB/24/196 for submission to Council.