



Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 27 February 2024

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair),
Professor A Blom (AB), Professor J Derrick (JD),
Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor S Hartley (SH) (Items 1-3),
Professor G Jewell (GJ), J Jones (JJ), R Sykes (RS),
Professor M Vincent (MV), Professor C Watkins (CW), I Wright (IW)

In attendance: J Strachan (JS), T Wray (TW), H Morgan (HM) (Item 1), V Jackson (VEJ)
(Items 3-4), S Duke (SD) (Item 5)

Apologies: Professor C O' Bradaigh (CB)

Secretary: Dr E Smith

1. **Staff Survey 2024**

(HM in attendance for this item)

1.1 UEB considered proposals relating to the administration of a Staff Survey in 2024. It was highlighted that the previous Staff Survey took place in 2022 and, prior to that, there had been a hiatus due to the impacts of COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, the custom had been to conduct Staff Surveys on a biennial basis. The related paper set out the rationale for undertaking the survey in 2024. The retention of the Hive platform to host the survey was recommended, given its timely provision of data and facilitation of granular data analysis. Subject to UEB approval, the paper outlined an indicative timeline for the preparation and launch of the Staff Survey and evaluation of its findings.

1.2 Following discussion, UEB:

1.2.1 Agreed to conduct a Staff Survey in 2024.

1.2.2 Agreed to the proposed approach to the Staff Survey.

1.2.3 Agreed the proposed timeline for the Staff Survey, working on the principle that the survey would be launched in the autumn.

2. **Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap**

(HM in attendance for this item)

2.1 UEB received and noted the annual report on the University's Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and GPG data for 2023, which assessed institutional progress against the University's five-year reduction targets at a University and Faculty level. The paper

likewise presented the University's Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG) data and the EPG Bonus Gap data for the same reporting period, recognising that this was at present a voluntary return that the University had committed to making. Both sets of legislative data would be published for external audiences ahead of the deadline of 31 March 2024.

- 2.2 During discussion, UEB raised and/or noted the following points:
 - 2.2.1 The separate classification of clinical academic staff relative to other colleagues in the Faculty of Health was welcome, given that this group of staff was on NHS rather than University contracts.
 - 2.2.2 Particular areas of future focus.
 - 2.2.3 The University had undertaken an Equal Pay Audit in 2024 and would repeat this exercise in 2025.
- 2.3 UEB:
 - 2.3.1 Noted the University-level GPG data for 2023, and agreed the proposed narrative to accompany the publishing of the University's legislative data for external audiences no later than the legislative deadline of 31 March 2024.
 - 2.3.2 Noted the progress made on areas for action agreed in 2023, and agreed to the key areas of activity for the next 12 months.
 - 2.3.3 Noted the University-level EPG data for 2023, and agreed the proposed narrative to accompany the publishing of the University's legislative data for external audiences no later than the legislative deadline of 31 March 2024.

3. Quarterly Financial Results to 31 January 2024

(VEJ in attendance for this item)

- 3.1 UEB received and noted the financial results for the University for the three months ended 31 January 2024 and the related detailed presentation, which compared the results with the budget approved in July 2023. Members observed the following headlines:
 - 3.1.1 An underlying operating surplus for the reporting period against the full-year budget forecast.
 - 3.1.2 Cash generated from operating activities over the year to date against the budget for the full year.
 - 3.1.3 Capital expenditure levels.
 - 3.1.4 Cash balances.
 - 3.1.5 The University was in full compliance with its bank covenants and the USS Debt Monitoring Metrics for the three-month period and was forecast to remain in this position for the remainder of the financial year.
- 3.2 During discussion UEB was assured the University remained in a reasonable financial position and Members highlighted the importance of maintaining strong cash balances to alleviate the impact of anticipated future challenges.

4. Budget 2024/25 Update

(VEJ in attendance for this item)

- 4.1 UEB received and noted an update on the work to prepare the University's budget for 2024/25. During a related presentation, attention was drawn to the following points:
 - 4.1.1 The priority actions before the initial presentation of the budget to Finance Committee on 25 March 2024.
 - 4.1.2 The core features of the University's Financial Strategy Framework that provided the parameters for budget-setting decisions.
 - 4.1.3 The most recent 2024/25 budget submissions across the University Group, together with the respective contribution rates for the faculties, Professional Services, and shared costs.
 - 4.1.4 The major variances between the prospective budget and the November 2023 forecast submitted to the Office for Students (OfS).
 - 4.1.5 Progress to date following budget meetings with each of the faculties and central Professional Services areas.
 - 4.1.6 Next steps planned.
- 4.2 During discussion, UEB raised and/or noted a number of additional points.

5. National Pay Negotiations

(SD in attendance for this item)

- 5.1 UEB considered proposals regarding the National Pay Negotiations for 2024/25. The related paper set out the economic and broader context informing the negotiating the negotiating round and the draft institutional responses to UCEA's Employer Consultation .
- 5.2 During discussion, UEB raised and/or noted the following points:
 - 5.2.1 The variable financial positions of providers in the sector would make a consensus difficult to reach.
- 5.3 UEB:
 - 5.3.1 Confirmed participation in the National Pay Negotiations for 2024/25.
 - 5.3.2 Agreed to apply the final nationally agreed award outcome to Professorial and Professorial Equivalent pay points, excluding UEB posts.
 - 5.3.3 Noted that a further paper would be brought to UEB on 5 March regarding the national review of the pay spine and local grade boundary negotiations.

6. Strategic Meeting Topics – 5 March 2024 UEB Agenda

- 6.1 UEB considered and agreed the topics for its next strategic meeting on 5 March, noting that further changes would be discussed and agreed via correspondence.

7. Away Day Agenda for 19 March 2024

7.1 UEB considered and agreed its Agenda for the Away Day on 19 March

8. **Report of the UEB International Steering Group**

(Meeting Held on 31 January 2024)

8.1 UEB considered and approved the report and related recommendations.

8.2 Members also noted other updates provided in the paper.

9. **Report of the UEB Information Management & Security Group**

(Meeting Held on 6 February 2024)

9.1 UEB considered and approved the report, noting the updates provided.

10. **Round Table**

10.1 Freedom of Speech: JS confirmed that Council approved the institutional Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom at its meeting on 22 February. The Code was designed to ensure the University maintained compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.