

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL WEBINAR

Held on 17th September 2020 (held virtually)

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	WHO
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Absences</u> For a record of attendance, apologies and absences, see attached list.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Professor Lisa Dikomitis, Senate member from the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Professor of Anthropology & Sociology of Health, Director of Research for the School of Medicine and Academic Lead for Institute for Global Health to her first meeting.</p>		
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u> None.</p>		
3.	<p><u>Vice-Chancellor's Update</u> Members received an update on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The hotel on campus was close to completion. ▪ The new Vet School building was coming out of the ground. ▪ Following Keele's nomination as Times Higher University of the Year, the Vice-Chancellor and a couple of colleagues would be interviewed by the judging panel. The ceremony would be online on 26th November 2020 and members would be given the opportunity to register to attend. ▪ Full analysis of the NSS results would be presented to Council in the near future. ▪ The full funding package was in place for IC7, the focus of which would be companies and research in the area of digital and artificial intelligence. Building would commence in 2021. ▪ There had been a number of recent cyber attacks in the sector but Keele had not experienced any of note. 	To present full analysis of the NSS	Vice-Chancellor

	<p><u>Admissions</u> Item commercial in confidence</p> <p><u>Staff Survey</u> Item commercial in confidence</p> <p><u>Return to Campus</u> Council received an update on the University’s plans for staff and students to return to campus, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of international students had arrived early in order to self-isolate prior to the start of semester ▪ The University was working closely with the local Public Health team and following the DfE’s guidance to put in place risk assessments, including how to respond to staff and students displaying symptoms ▪ The University’s 5-stage framework was proving to be extremely useful and it was noted that it could be that different parts of the University were at different stages in the future ▪ Students would be living in halls in a bubble of up to 8, which had been achieved by taking several hundred rooms out of circulation (these rooms were instead being used as additional shared social/study spaces) ▪ A public health style campaign was being adopted to ‘Work together and stay apart’ rather than to issue instructions. However, a new disciplinary process had been developed ▪ A Covid-19 test centre would be opening on campus on 1st October 2020 ▪ A copy of a letter sent to the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research & Innovation setting out the status of Keele's current planning for managing a Covid-19 outbreak on campus had been circulated ▪ Further information on the University’s approach and preparations was available on the website (www.keele.ac.uk/coronoavirus) 		
4.	<p><u>Finance Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Item commercial in confidence <p><u>Pensions Update</u> Council received a paper in which it was reported that the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) was again out to consultation regarding the outcome of the March 2020 valuation. The paper had also been considered at the Council Webinar.</p>		

	<p>A further widening of the deficit had occurred, which could result in a significant escalation of employer and employee contributions, which needed to be mitigated.</p> <p>It was noted that every 1% increase in employer contributions cost the University £0.5m per year so minimising the impact of further increases was critical. A further fundamental issue was that an increase in employee contributions could render the scheme unaffordable for staff.</p> <p>In its consultation document, USS recognised that the current level of contributions (30.7%) was at the limit of affordability for both employers and employees but that this would rise to 34.7% in October 2021 should agreement not be reached over the 2020 valuation.</p> <p>Council noted the update and the imperative to reach an affordable outcome.</p> <p>It was proposed that students be briefed on the position.</p>		
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Date of Next Session</u></p> <p>The date of the next session would be a Council Webinar on 16th October 2020, 10.30 am – 12.45 pm.</p>		

COUNCIL WEBINAR

ATTENDANCE LIST – 17th September 2020 – VIRTUAL MEETING

	Dame Jo Williams	Pro-Chancellor
	Richard Barnes	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
	Sally Bucknell	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
	Richard Callaway	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
A	David Hall	Honorary Treasurer
	Professor Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor
	Professor Mark Ormerod	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY STAFF

	Professor Lisa Dikomitis	Senate Member
	Dr Rebecca Leach	Senate Member
	Professor Peter Andras	Senate Member
	Emma Colley	Appointed by the Professional Services Staff

LAY MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL

Ruth Bagley
David Brown
Peter Harris
Sajid Hashmi
Manali Lukha
Sherree Schaefer
Dr Lesley Thompson

STUDENT MEMBERS

	Jack Karimi	Union Development & Democracy Officer, SU
A	Katie Charlton	President, Keele Postgraduate Association

SECRETARY TO COUNCIL

	Dr Helen Galbraith	Secretary to Council
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IN ATTENDANCE

	Dr Mark Bacon	Chief Operating Officer
	Rachel Adams	Director of Human Resources
	Paul Buttery	Director of Finance

SECRETARIAT

	Fiona Dumbelton	Governance Manager
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Key A = Absent