

THE COUNCIL

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the Council held on Tuesday 11 March 2014 at 10.00am in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

The Council **approved** these Minutes as a correct record at its meeting on 13 May 2014.

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THE COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 11 March 2014 at 10.00am in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

- Present: Lord Haskins (Chair), the Vice-Chancellor, Mr E Briffa, Mr H Brown, Mrs M Cantieri, Professor J Draper, Mrs S Dutton, Dr I Falconer, Mr A Freeling, Mr B Heil, Prof K Hetherington, Mr R Humphreys, Mr B Larkman, Dr C Lloyd, Mrs S Macpherson, Mrs R McCool, Mr W Monk, Dr T O'Neil, Mr C Shaw, Mr R Spedding, Mrs R Spellman, Prof W Stevely, Dr G Walker
- In Attendance: University Secretary; Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching); Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality), Director Students; Finance Director; Commercial Director, Head of Governance; Senior Manager (Governance)
- Observing: Mr L Hudson, (Director Communications)
- Apologies: None

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Professor Jan Draper, a new Senate member of the Council, to her first meeting; and also the acting University Secretary, Mr Alan Burrell.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

C-2013-04-M

The Council **approved** as a correct record the minutes of the business meeting held on 26 November 2013.

4 MATTERS ARISING

C-2014-01-01

The Council **noted** the responses to the matters arising from the last meeting, which were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

5 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 5.1 The Chair informed the Council that Michael Steen had resigned as Treasurer on 13 February 2014. Mr Steen's letter had made clear that his resignation was for personal reasons and had confirmed that there were no regulatory matters that he needed to draw to the Council's attention. Mr Steen had expressed the view that the University's finances were in as good shape as could be expected in the complex circumstances facing the University, and were a credit to all concerned – both leadership and staff. Mr Steen had

stated that it had been a privilege and a matter of pride to serve this great institution and to assist in promoting its mission.

- 5.2 The Membership Committee (C-2014-01-12B a)) recommended that Mr Steen should be succeeded by Howard Brown, who had been a member of the Finance Committee for five years. The Council were asked to consider this recommendation at the start of the meeting in order to allow the appointee to talk to the finance papers on the agenda.
- 5.3 The Council **approved** the recommendation on the appointment of a Treasurer.

6 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REGULAR REPORT

- 6.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean, thanked Alan Burrell for serving as Acting University Secretary, whilst Fraser Woodburn was recovering from surgery. On behalf of the Council, the Vice-Chancellor wished Mr Woodburn a speedy recovery.

Student Numbers

- 6.2 The Vice-Chancellor reported that following the February intake the 2013/14 planning assumptions for undergraduate students had been exceeded in both England and Northern Ireland, and were within a few percent of them in Scotland and Wales. It was currently predicted that the postgraduate numbers would reach 90% of the planning assumption, although this might improve as many postgraduates did not register until April or May. It should be noted that the University had set an aggressive target to grow these numbers when the overall market was experiencing a year on year decline of 27% across the UK. Significant efforts were being made by the University to revitalise its postgraduate offering.

Student Opportunity Allocation

- 6.3 In January 2014, the government had announced that the Student Opportunity Allocation (SOA), formerly known as the Widening Participation Allocation, would be abolished as part of the ongoing austerity measures. The fund had been worth a total of £327 million in 2013/14, with just over £30 million going to the OU to support access work. The University had participated in a campaign that had resulted in significant support from MPs, peers and third party stakeholders, who had contacted the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and spoken out in the media to defend the SOA. Such widespread resistance had persuaded the government to rethink their position, and in February 2014 BIS had written to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to say that the fund should be protected in 2014/15, with widening participation given the same status as science, maths and engineering. Although the fund was now secure, HEFCE would not announce their final allocations for each University until 27 March 2014.

Regional Office

- 6.4 The Director, Students, Keith Zimmerman, reported that the lease on the East Grinstead regional office expired in December 2014 and the landlord, who intended to convert the building to residential accommodation, would not be renewing the lease. A legal challenge to these plans was unlikely to be successful; and the lease costs of alternative premises locally would be approximately 50% higher plus fit-out costs. The East Grinstead office would therefore close at the end of 2014.
- 6.5 It was not anticipated that compulsory redundancies would be necessary as a result of the closure. However, it was likely that staff would need to relocate and redeploy, or take early retirement or voluntary severance. Plans would now be made for the transfer of operations to alternative University locations, and to consult and support East Grinstead

staff on the implications of the closure for them as individuals. The unions had been informed about the overall strategy and would be involved in discussions about supporting staff. The President, OU Students Association (OUSA) and the Chair of the Associate Lecturer Executive (ALE) had also been informed. The decision would be announced to East Grinstead staff by the Director, Students on 13 March 2014, and then communicated to all OU staff, ALs and students. Until then, Council members were asked to keep the matter strictly confidential, as the University was working to a detailed HR and Communications plan to balance the needs of a broad range of stakeholders, internal and external.

- 6.6 The decision had resulted in a strategic discussion about the optimal configuration of the locations needed by the University to deliver excellent support to all its students. As the University operated in all four political jurisdictions of the UK, a presence would continue to be required in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, alongside the OU headquarters in Milton Keynes. An analysis would be undertaken to determine the optimal configuration of the OU's presence across the rest of the UK and recommendations would be taken to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) by January 2015. A formal report on the project will come to the Council meeting on 13 May 2014.

Action: Dir, S

- 6.7 An AL member asked what would be done to alleviate the inevitable nervousness of staff in other regional offices as a result of the East Grinstead Office closure. Mr Zimmerman replied that he would be asking for the support of the Assistant Directors in addressing the difficulties and challenges of the next 9 months. Decisions would be taken as expeditiously as possible, but the first priority was to deal with the East Grinstead situation effectively and fairly. He would be visiting the regions regularly to speak to staff in person. The report would be produced within the specified timescale.

Student Support Teams

- 6.8 A member asked for an update on the implementation of Student Support Teams (SSTs). Dr Christina Lloyd, the Director, Teaching and Learner Support, reported that SSTs had gone live on 3 February 2014. Some early problems with systems had been resolved. Staff were getting used to the new ways of working and were looking at how the new structures could be used to extend support for students.

7 PROPOSED MEASURES WITHIN THE 2014 INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

C-2014-01-02

- 7.1 The Director of Strategy, Guy Mallison, presented the paper, which set out the proposed measures to be reported against within the 2014 Institutional Performance Report (IPR) and provided the Council with the opportunity to comment on these measures before the annual report was produced. The measures were primarily as originally articulated in the Strategic Plan, with the addition of some interim measures relating to employability and one supplementary measure on human resources that had been proposed by the Staff Strategy Committee (C-2014-01-08). These were the headline measures that should be of most concern to the Council; more detailed measures were tracked by VCE and were primarily managed through the Institutional Dashboard.
- 7.2 An AL member commented that the additional measure on the percentage of staff responding favourable to the question in the Staff Survey 'I feel motivated at work' should be further developed next year. The Staff Strategy minutes suggested that it was based on the survey of internal staff and did not include ALs, who were surveyed less often. However, as ALs had an impact on the student experience, their level of motivation should also be measured. The Chair of the Staff Strategy Committee, Ros McCool, acknowledged that it been the regular staff survey the Committee had considered, but she

did not see an issue in extending the measure to include ALs. The Committee had considered two questions: the measure around motivation was stronger as there was existing data from past surveys; but the committee had also considered the inclusion of staff alignment with the OU vision. However, there was no benchmark data, so an appropriate question would be included in next year's staff survey with a view to using the measure as a potential key performance indicator (KPI) in the future.

- 7.3 Another AL member asked whether the interim measure on employability sufficiently captured the range of students studying with the OU, where some wished to enhance their career prospects and others wanted to change careers altogether. Mr Mallison replied that the University had considered different options, but employability was not easy to measure. The Director, Students, Keith Zimmerman, added that this was the one question in the National Student Survey (NSS) that allowed the University to compare itself with others. The Careers and Employability Project (CEP) was considering how students might be differentiated more effectively. A student member observed that the OU student demographic was very different to that in other universities, with many students coming into education for the first time. The outcomes from this measure might appear somewhat diminished in comparison to other universities, unless another measure was included to demonstrate the difference between the students.
- 7.4 A member said that an underlying challenge for this type of reporting is that of finding a single measure that reflected all the relevant aspects of performance in a particular area. It might therefore be helpful to explore over the next year whether composite measures in some areas would be more appropriate. Mr Mallison agreed this was a good idea and that he would report back on potential further enhancements.

Action: Dir, Strat

- 7.5 The Council **approved** the proposed measures to be reported against within the 2014 Institutional Performance Report

8 THE OPEN UNIVERSITY SUBMISSION TO THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF)

C-2014-01-03

- 8.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality), Professor Tim Blackman, presented the paper, outlining the OU's approach to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission and the importance of achieving a good result, as well as the issues being addressed in the current review of the research strategy. (A copy of the slide presentation is available to Council members as a confidential paper on the Governance website.)
- 8.2 Members thanked Professor Blackman for a helpful presentation and raised the following issues:
- a) that there was a need to have contingency plans in place for an outcome that produced a low, or a particularly high, ranking. Professor Blackman confirmed that the University would be preparing communications for various scenarios. The main risk was that the OU was vulnerable to losing key individuals in key research areas to competitor universities. It was important to build critical mass and offer researchers the same terms and conditions as other universities in their field to help retain them;
 - b) that some excellent work had been done constructing our submission, but some strategic issues were still to be addressed and should not be subject to a long review. Professor Blackman explained that the University had already embarked on a strategic review, the Research Roadmap 2020, before the results of the REF, informed by data from the mock REF exercise and metrics, and was scheduled to

go to the Senate for approval in October 2014, so that we lost no time in preparing for the next REF. The intention was to build the Roadmap bottom up, via a process of wide consultation, so that there was a high level of ownership;

- c) that the publication of the REF results on the 18 December 2014 would be followed by league tables and rankings. The results were important because the profiles would influence which universities would want to partner with the OU in research and doctoral training consortia. Professor Blackman replied that the strategy would be to profile the OU as an institution that others would want to work with;
- d) whether the University's submission of 44% of eligible academic staff was an issue that required strategic consideration. Professor Blackman responded that the OU's research intensity would always be lower than that of some other HEIs, as the University had a major commitment to types of scholarship that were not entered into the REF, but were necessary to deliver distance learning effectively, including staff tutors and regional/nation managers. Work was being done with the faculties to improve the percentage of eligible staff submitted, but, with the degree of strategic change necessary to secure student numbers at present, there had been other priorities;
- e) with reference to developing partnerships, whether there would be value added by focussing on the four nation impact. Professor Blackman agreed that this was an area that should be considered, for example there should be more academics working in comparative public policy. The two Associate Deans leading the Roadmap exercise were aware of the four nation agenda and would be making connections with academic strengths in the faculties. The University of the Air had profiled the OU as a four nation institution in terms of our research impact and public engagement;
- f) how the OU could capitalise on the high reputation of its teaching and learning and translate this into its research. Professor Blackman said that the OU could be better at this, but it had to be serious and selective about building capacity in a very competitive environment. This would form part of the University's research strategy;
- g) whether dividing the units of assessment (UoA) into 6 high performing and institutionally strategic subjects and 12 other subjects would create a two tier system, and what this would mean for managing these areas. Professor Blackman said that the way in which the University might be more selective in supporting excellent research, by discipline or by theme across disciplines, would be part of the Roadmap, and required further discussion. The range of performance was a reality in terms of the research base, but it enables the OU to say that it is a broad based teaching and research university;
- h) whether the real purpose of the REF was about staff recruitment, appeal to students or government funding. Professor Blackman said that the exercise was primarily about concentrating funding, but that the OU's strategy was to maintain a good quality profile, that contributed to our academic reputation among students and other stakeholders. The REF outcomes were significant, not only in terms of the block grant, but also with regard to the opportunities that came with a good place in the rankings. 70% of funding went to the top 12 universities, with 30% left for the squeezed middle (those universities at the bottom of the tables tended to be clear that their purpose was about teaching and learning). Any further concentration of funding would have a negative impact on the University. The OU's Charter stated that it was a teaching and research University, and it was an important part of the UK research base.

8.3 The Council **noted**:

- a) the profile of the Open University REF 2014 submission to HEFCE; and
- b) plans to develop an OU Research 2020 Roadmap that would sign-post the future direction for OU Research from 2015.

9 FORECAST OUTTURN

C-2014-01-04

- 9.1 The Finance Director, Miles Hedges, introduced the paper, which forecast an outturn deficit of £11.8m in 2013/14, based on the first quarter's results. He outlined the two most significant contributions to the net £2.2 adverse variance: the first was a higher than budgeted take up of discounts by transitional students; and the second was the inclusion of an allowance for non-payment of new regime fees, currently estimated at the 2012/13 year end figure of £5.7m, which was an entirely new cost of operating in the new fee regime in England. The University was working with the Student Loans Company (SLC) to improve the payment profile and to optimise payment opportunities.
- 9.2 The Treasurer commented that after 2012/13, when the variances had been almost entirely in the University's favour, it was not surprising to have a year in which the forecast net movement was currently unfavourable. However, it was encouraging that if the new allowance for non-payment of new regime fees had been excluded the net movement would still have been favourable. The allowance had not been included in the budget for 2013/14, as the budget had been prepared well before the first modules had been completed. The budget for 2014/15 would include such an allowance, which would be based on the University's experience to date. The Vice-Chancellor and Finance Director had confirmed that VCE were addressing costs with a view to bringing the year end deficit below the budget of £9.6 million.
- 9.3 In response to a query from a member, the Finance Director explained that the discounts offered to transitional students were aimed at encouraging them to remain in study; the take up had been higher than expected.
- 9.4 Members commented that whilst the paper provided a factual report on the financial situation, it would be helpful to include further commentary on the analysis and how it was affecting strategy.

Action: Fin Dir

9.5 The Council **noted** the 2013/14 forecast consolidated outturn of £11.8 million deficit.

10 FINANCE COMMITTEE

C-2014-01-05

- 10.1 The Treasurer introduced the paper and highlighted three key issues that had been discussed by the Finance Committee.
- 10.2 The issues affecting the future financial position in 2013/14 and beyond were summarised in Minute 5. The overall scenario was one of greater pressure on government funding and on costs, at a time when some of the uncertainty over fee income in the new regime had started to diminish. Although HEFCE would not issue the grant letter until the end of March, it now appeared that widening participation funding might only reduce by 15-20%, equivalent to approximately £6 million per annum. This was unwelcome, but better than had been anticipated.
- 10.3 The Finance Committee had agreed the policy for accepting permanent endowments (Minute 6). The Chair of the Development Committee, Anthony Freeling, commented that there had been some discussion between himself and the Finance Director as to what this meant. Mr Freeling supported the unit trust approach (6.3 a), as it would help to ensure

that the real value of the endowment was maintained in perpetuity. However, whilst the decision not to accept permanent endowments where doing so would add to the cost base of the University appeared to be logical, donors did not necessarily work this way and might want to negotiate matched funding. It was important to find a way to be flexible. Another member said that overall funding had to meet the University's costs, but these could be met by more than one donor. The Treasurer said that he would come back to the Council on this matter.

Action: Treasurer

- 10.4 The third key issue was the discussion of the Financial Strategy (Minute 8), which considered comments made at previous Council meetings. There was a trade-off between increasing the University's financial strength and the ability to maintain and develop current activities. The University had built up strong reserves and was facing diminishing risks in respect of its teaching income, so it was appropriate to recommend to the Council that the target surplus be reduced from 5% to 2% of total income.
- 10.5 Referring to Minute 14.3, the President, OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, said that she did not recall being informed of any changes that meant that future contributions to OUSA from the University would be limited. The OU-OUSA Relationship Agreement stated that resources should be sufficient to enable OUSA to meet its formal obligations and any exceptional requirements that are agreed between the OU and OUSA. The Finance Director responded that the intention was that OUSA would draw on its own resources in order to ensure that the University's contributions were limited to those that would ensure that OUSA could function effectively.
- 10.6 The Council:
- a) **agreed** that the University's financial strategy should remain unchanged in respect of the target net current assets and borrowings, but should be amended to reduce the annual target surplus from 5% to 2% of total income;
 - b) **noted** the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 21 January 2014 (F-2014-01-M).

11 AUDIT COMMITTEE

C-2014-01-06

- 11.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee, Bob Spedding introduced the paper, noting that concerns previously raised by the Council regarding the areas of project management and the reliance on spreadsheets, and IT Access Controls had been well covered by the meeting. IT issues continued to feature prominently and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) would make a presentation to the Audit Committee at its next meeting.
- 11.2 An internal audit investigation into the payment of travel and subsistence expenses to Council members had resulted in several recommendations, some of which had already been implemented. Council members could help to make the process more efficient by submitting their expense claims promptly.
- 11.3 The respective roles of the Audit and Finance Committees (C-2014-01-06B) would be discussed further before the next meeting of the Council, but members had felt that such clarification would be valuable.
- 11.4 The Council **noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 11 February 2014 (AUC-2014-01-M).

12 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEEC-2014-01-07A
C-2014-01-07B

The Council:

- a) **approved** the 2014-17 Outcome Agreement between the Scottish Funding Council and The Open University in Scotland (SPRC-2014-01-04).
- b) **noted**
 - i) the unconfirmed Minutes and Confidential Minutes from the meeting (SPRC-2014-01-M and SPRC-2014-01-CM);
 - ii) the updated paper presented to SPRC on the UK Political Landscape and Funding Environment (SPRC-2014-01-07 updated);
 - iii) that the recommendation from SPRC on the proposed measures within the 2014 Institutional Performance (C-2014-01-02) had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

13 STAFF STRATEGY COMMITTEE

C-2014-01-08

- 13.1 The Chair of Staff Strategy Committee, Ros McCool, introduced the report, noting that the Council had already approved the proposal for a new key performance indicator (KPI) measuring 'motivation' (Minute 7.5). The Committee had begun to discuss the issue of succession planning, as mentioned in Minute 5.9 of the Audit Committee report (C-2014-01-06A), and the Chair would be meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and Director of Human Resources to inform further work. The Chair of Audit Committee, Bob Spedding, welcomed this and suggested further discussion with Ms McCool on this matter.
- 13.2 Ms McCool said that the Committee's annual workshop in October would consider performance management; Council members would be welcome to attend to provide additional insights. She thanked Alan Burrell for taking on the role of Acting University Secretary at the last meeting, as well as that of a Committee member.
- 13.3 Referring to Minute 8, a staff member expressed concern at the implication that long serving staff had lost their motivation. Experience indicated that it was those staff who were mid-career, but with no prospect of moving on, who were the most difficult to manage. Another member of the Committee, Ruth Spellman, said that the University had to consider the needs of staff of all ages and at various stages of their career. The coaching and mentoring roles discussed by the Committee might provide development opportunities for mid-career as well as long-serving staff. The Chair commented that most organisations had a large number of people who were not looking to gain promotion, but who could still improve their performance. A member said that there should be recognition of the huge value that mid-career staff in middle tier positions could bring to an organisation.
- 13.4 Another staff member observed that People and Culture was an important part of the Strategic Plan and it was encouraging to see that the organisation had such a commitment to its staff. It was important to communicate this commitment to colleagues across the University.
- 13.5 The President, OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, said that she was delighted that the OU had agreed to adopt the living wage, rather than the minimum wage, for University staff and contractors. Minute 9.2 stated that the strikes appeared to be having a minimal effect; however, concern was expressed that any further action, such as non-marking of assessments, would have a big impact. The Director, Students, Keith Zimmerman, said

that he would be keeping OUSA up to date on the arrangements being put in place to mitigate the effects of any further strikes.

Action: Dir, S

13.6 The Council:

- a) **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes from the meeting held on 11 February 2014 (CSSC-2014-01-M);
- b) **approved** the proposal for a new KPI measure on 'motivation': the percentage of staff responding favourably to the question in the Staff Survey 'I feel motivated at work' (dealt with under item 7 above).

14 DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

C-2014-01-14

14.1 The Chair of Development Committee, Anthony Freeling, introduced the paper, commenting that it had been a very good year for fundraising. A workshop was planned, not to consider how to raise funds, but rather what the University would look like in the future and consequently what funds would be required.

14.2 The Council **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes from the meeting held on 26 November 2014 (DC-2013-02-M).

15 THE SENATE

C-2014-01-15

15.1 A member commented that the report provided a useful overview of the Senate's discussion on Group Tuition, but that it would be less meaningful for members who had not seen the Senate paper. The Vice-Chancellor said that the paper could be provided. A member noted that the Senate papers could be accessed on the Governance website and encouraged other members to use this facility.

Action: GT

15.2 The President, OUSA, Marianne Cantieri, informed members that Group Tuition had formed the first item for the new student consultation process. The system had functioned extremely well and many contributions had been made.

15.3 The Council **noted** the report on the following items that were discussed at the meeting of the Senate held on 5 February 2014:

- a) Principles of Group Tuition
- b) Research Intellectual Property Policy
- c) The Council

16 PRO-CHANCELLOR APPOINTMENT

C-2014-01-11

Minute items 16.1 to 16.3 are detailed in C-2014-01-CM (Confidential Minutes).

17 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

C-2014-01-12

17.1 The Vice-Chair of the Council, Professor Bill Stevely, introduced the paper.

17.2 Referring to the recommendation in paragraph 6.7 a) vi), which stated '*Those responsible for preparing papers for the Council should ensure that members can readily get to grips with the essential reading. Background material should be made available, but should be clearly identified*', a member observed that background reading could be provided through

electronic links, which would avoid the need for lengthy additional papers to be circulated, such as the 2014-17 Outcome Agreement attached to the SPRC report (C-2014-01-07A). The Vice-Chancellor said that he and the Vice-Chair were discussing ways in which the papers presented to the Council might be improved, and this point would be noted.

17.3 The Council:

- a) **approved** the recommendation on the appointment of a Treasurer (dealt with under item 5 above)
- b) **approved** the recommendations arising from the consolidated report on Council Member Reviews and the consequential changes to the Council Standing Orders:
 - i) all appointed and external members should complete annually a short self-assessment questionnaire on their activity on and perceptions of the Council;
 - ii) normally, all members will have discussions with the Vice-Chair on joining the Council and at the end of their term of office. Other reviews will take place if and when requested by the member or by the Vice-Chair;
 - iii) an annual report on the questionnaire returns and the review meetings will be prepared for the Membership Committee, with any concerns and recommendations being reported to the Council. (This will be in addition to the Committee's Annual Effectiveness Review);
 - iv) the formal requirement for members to be linked with units within the University should be discontinued, although members should be offered the option to link with a unit if it would be of particular interest;
 - v) the Induction Day should be an annual event for new members and new co-opted members of sub-committees;
 - vi) those responsible for preparing papers for the Council should ensure that members can readily get to grips with the essential reading. Background material should be made available, but should be clearly identified;
 - vii) the agenda for each Council meeting should include at least one item explicitly identified for extended discussion.
- c) **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes from the meetings held on 12 February 2014 (MC-2014-01-M) and 26 February 2014 (MC-2014-02-M).

18 CHAIR'S ACTION

C-2014-01-19

The Council **noted** the amendments to the OU-OUSA Relationship Agreement that was approved by the Council on 26 November 2013.

19 DECLASSIFICATION OF COUNCIL PAPERS

The Council **agreed** that the following papers should remain confidential:

C-2014-01-03 The OU Submission to the REF 2014

C-2014-01-06B Audit Committee Confidential Minutes

C-2014-01-07B Strategic Planning and Resources Committee Confidential Minutes

C-2014-01-11 Pro-Chancellor Appointment

20 NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary business meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at 9.45am for 10.00am in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. This meeting will be followed, after lunch, by the Council Strategy Workshop.

21 REVIEW OF MEETING

- 21.1 Members commented that although the Council was responsible for strategy, it did not always have the opportunity to discuss some items in the way that SPRC did. For example, there appeared to have been a wide-ranging discussion on student retention and progression (C-2014-01-07B), which had provided members of the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee with information on the Enquirer Experience Programme (EEP) and Study Experience Programme (SEP). This would be a valuable agenda item for a future meeting of the Council. The Vice-Chancellor requested that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Professor Belinda Tynan, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Musa Mihsein, considered the best time for such an item to come to the Council.

Action: PVC (L&T)/PVC (A)

- 21.2 Other members said that the presentation on the REF submission from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Scholarship and Quality) had been very helpful. It was important to have at least one item on each Council agenda for significant debate. More signposting would be useful, so that members could do some reading in advance. The Chair invited members to let him know if there were items that they wished to be discussed by the Council.

Alan Burrell
Acting Secretary to the Committee

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