

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Away Day held on Monday 25 September 2020

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Warden of New College, Principal of Somerville, Ms Becker, Professor Sir Rory Collins, Professor Coulson, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra' John Eidinow, Professor Essler, Professor Hamerow, Mr Harman, Professor Hobbs, Professor Johnson, Mr Kroll, Professor Lahiri, Professor Nobre, Mr Ovenden, Professor Trefethen, Head of the Humanities Division (Professor O'Brien), Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Screaton), Head of the MPLS Division (Professor Howison), Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore), Senior Proctor (Professor Horobin), Assessor (Dr Swift).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Nikita Ma (President of Oxford SU), Tucker Drew (Oxford SU VP Access and Academic Affairs) and Lauren Bolz (Oxford SU VP Graduates); Dr Gwilym Rowlands (Chair, Oxford Research Staff Society).

Apologies: Ms Boyt, Junior Proctor (Professor Johnston), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Officers in attendance: the Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation), the Director of Finance, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel, the Director of Public Affairs, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance), the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

In attendance: Principal of Brasenose (for items 1-5); Professor Malcolm McCulloch, Oxford Martin School; Professor EJ Milner-Gulland, Department of Zoology; Professor Myles Allen, Environmental Change Institute; Harriet Waters, Head of Environmental Sustainability; Tom Yearley, Deputy Head of Sustainability; and Joanne Murraybrown, Travel Officer (for item 5).

Order of business: item 3 was taken after item 5.

Declarations of interest: Council members were reminded to declare any interest that could give rise to a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda.

Introductory matters: The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the Principal of Brasenose to the Away Day, attending as an observer before joining Council.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Principal of Somerville as this was her last meeting, in particular for her work as one of the joint chairs of the Michaelmas Coordination Group.

I. STRATEGIC BUSINESS

Unreserved

CONFIDENTIAL 1. **Welcome and update from the Vice-Chancellor ****

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed all members and those in attendance to Council's Away Day and outlined the content and structure of the day, which was necessarily being held on line.

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following matters.

- The recent very successful online conference run by Richard Ovenden to mark the 700th anniversary of the decision to build the first proper library for the University.
- The University of Oxford being 'University of the Year' in the Sunday Times' annual ranking of the universities for its work on the Covid-19 vaccine and for its recent progress in access. She reminded Council that the University had already been ranked first by THE for its global impact and by the Guardian for its student experience.
- The continuing negotiations for associate research status with the EU following Brexit,.
- On the return to onsite working, 160 buildings were fully open, 71 were being reopened, and 8 were not yet open.

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**A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.

- Final undergraduate numbers were 323 above the three-year average and an additional 160 had deferred entry, making 2020 the largest ever entry. It was too early to provide final postgraduate numbers. The Conference of Colleges was working hard to deal with the implications of at the additional numbers at a collegiate level.

CONFIDENTIAL 2. **Covid-19****

(i) *Updates on governance, the crisis management framework, the financial position, the MCG and the 'what ifs' risk register.*

The Vice-Chancellor provided an introduction and Council received reports on and discussed the above items.

3. **Inclusivity****

Council discussed this item and a number of approaches to take it forward.

CONFIDENTIAL 4. **An update in relation to the 2020 valuation of USS****

Council received an update on the USS consultation and discussed the approach..

CONFIDENTIAL 5. **Environmental Sustainability Strategy****

Council received a presentation on and discussed the emerging Environmental Sustainability Strategy (C(20)119).

Council was overwhelmingly supportive of the impressive progress that had been made to date and congratulated the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the academics and the team in Estates on the work they had undertaken and on the comprehensive, informative presentation. The Vice-Chancellor expressed her appreciation and admiration for the work done so far. It was important that the consultation was being led by PRAC, rather than Council itself, so as to ensure a thoroughly inclusive and consultative process, resulting in a draft Strategy for Council's consideration.

NPB/SC

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