
College Council Minutes - Approved

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| Date | 30 March 2023, 17.00 |
| Location | Via Teams Meeting |
| Present | Lord Geidt (Chair); President & Principal, Professor Shitij Kapur; Nhuoc Lan Tu (Vice-Chair); Dr Natasha Awais-Dean; Dr Hillary Briffa; Paul Cartwright; Donna Catley; Sir Jon Coles; Paul Goswell; Vinay Jha; Yasir Khan; Steve Large; Professor Rachel Mills; Professor Kim Piper; Clare Sumner; Professor Richard Trembath; Tom Berry |
| Apologies | Vivek Ahuja; Sir Ron Kerr |
| In attendance | Shagun Bhandari, KCLSU VP (Postgraduate), standing attendee Annie Kent, CFO/Vice President (Finance), standing attendee Nick O'Donnell, Director of Estates & Facilities (for item 8.3) Secretariat: Irene Birrell, College Secretary Paul Mould, Deputy College Secretary & Chief Compliance Officer Xan Kite, Director of Governance Sheronlyn Balfour, Interim Governance Manager |
| 1 | Welcome, apologies and Notices The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, in particular Stephan Weiner and Tom Berry at their first meeting. No notice of conflicts of interest had been received. Members confirmed that the currently published register of interests was accurate and that there were no conflicts of interests in relation to any of the agenda items. |
| 2 | Approval of agenda The agenda was approved as circulated. |
| 3 | Unanimous Consent Agenda (including Minutes of the Previous Meeting) [KCC-23-03-30-03] The reports on the Unanimous Consent Agenda were taken as read and noted or approved as set out in the papers. |
| 4 | Matters Arising from the Minutes 4.1 Actions Log Noted. |
| 5 | Report of the Chair No items to report. |
| 6 | Report of the President & Principal The President & Principal presented his report to Council. The written report was taken as read and the following additional items were noted: |

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, visited the university along with the Australian Foreign Minister for an event held with the Australian High Commission.

Investment/Funding

- The Pears Maudsley Centre for Children and Young People: King's had made significant investment (£10m) in the Centre on the Denmark Hill site. Another £270,000 in philanthropic funding had been raised and £10m had been received from the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRIPF).
- Transnational Education in Africa had received £10m in philanthropic funding to build links at Master levels using distance education. This is the single biggest donation received by King's from the African continent.

Freedom of Expression Conference

The Principal reported that he had attended a freedom of expression conference, hosted jointly by the Universities of Chicago, Melbourne and King's. This was an annual event, last hosted in London in 2018.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- A member noted the award of the TS Eliot prize for poetry to Anthony Joseph, a Lecturer in Creative Writing at King's.
- With respect to admissions and the impact of any socio-economic conditions, the Principal noted that King's was in a very good place. However, the situation continued to be monitored very closely with postcodes and schools known to have large cohorts of students from lower economic backgrounds used as means of identifying those who would be eligible for contextual admissions considerations. Last year, 40% of undergraduate (UG) students came from the lowest 40% of the socio-economic profile. Data for this year's admission cohort would be provided in the Principal's report when available in the Autumn.
- In terms of the level of postgraduate (PG) applications and 11% of PG applications coming from the UK, King's was in line with peer institutions. The Principal noted that postgraduate students were not subsidised by the Government which was an issue of concern for Vice-Chancellors across the sector. There was work being done to encourage the inclusion of master's programmes within the life-long learning entitlement being framed by the Government. In terms of private, corporate support for postgraduate programmes, it was noted that the trend is for private funding to be focused on smaller, more career-specific programmes rather than full master's programmes.
- There continued to be concern about the percentage of Black British postgraduate students in the sector and the pipeline from undergraduate to postgraduate (taught) (PGT) and, especially, postgraduate (research) (PGR) levels. At King's the numbers are not where we would like them to be and this one of our priorities for our fundraising campaign.
- In answer to a question about the processes around accepting donations, the Principal noted that there is an extensive vetting process in place, including templates of terms and principles, and review by an advisory board (on which a member of Council sits) of any propositions that might be deemed controversial or that might have some elements that did not fit the template.

The SVP (Operations) provided an update on industrial action and pay negotiations.

Pensions

In terms of pension issues, progress had been made. A significant increase in interest rates meant that the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) has moved from a position of deficit to surplus. This would provide scope for potential adjustments to benefits and contributions.

Research Strategy

The Principal provided a summary of the discussion of the Research Strategy at the most recent meeting of the Academic Board. It was very well received with no disagreements with its content. However, four related points had been raised.

- A perceived lack of support for pedagogic research in general and for research conducted by staff in the teaching pathway.
- Support for changes to travel arrangements that removed the requirement to use a specified travel agency. This was seen as particularly important for researchers.
- The impact of academic workload affects the ability to conduct research.
- Workload issues more generally for both Academic and Professional staff: there is a sense that working at the university has become more laborious which is somewhat difficult to quantify but was being looked at carefully.

7 Report of the KCLSU [KCC-23-03-30-07]

The KCLSU President presented his report which was taken as read. The following items were highlighted:

Cost of Living for students.

KCLSU has conducted analysis of the 404 King's responses to the Russell Group Students' Unions (RGSU) survey which showed that, across the board, a higher percentage of King's students than other Russell Group students reported the cost-of-living crisis to be having a negative impact on their academic performance, health, and social wellbeing. It was noted that King's had allocated £4m above budget in various tranches to support students affected by the cost of living increases. It was suggested that this might need better communication to students and staff to improve uptake.

More specifically:

- Over 40% of King's students work alongside their studies to make money, with a mean average of 17 hours typically worked per week by these students.
- 67% of King's students have stopped taking part in extracurricular activities due to the cost, while 83% have overall reduced the amount of socialising they do.

Rent Setting

KCLSU had proposed that the number of instalments by which students can pay residence fees be increased. Discussions were underway with the CFO. The KCLSU President has been working with the CFO, who updated that £3m had been allocated to the hardship fund. Another £1m has been allocated to additional facilities for students, mainly to increase the cost of living bursary.

Freedom of speech

KCLSU continued to receive complaints and concerns about issues related to freedom of speech and student association activities, with associations with different views clashing.

NUS Disaffiliation Proposal

A process was underway to consider a proposal by some student groups within KCLSU to disaffiliate from the National Union of Students (NUS). In order for that to be considered further, 1% of the student body would need to vote with a majority to carry the motion. If that level of support was reached, the proposal would then go to the KCLSU Board for final consideration.

The KCLSU President commended the recently held Iftar event - a highly successful evening organised by KCLSU - and thanked the Estates Team and King's Venues for their support.

8 Reports of Committees

8.1 Governance & Nominations Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.1]

(i) Governance Review Terms of Reference (TORs)

Presented by Clare Sumner (Chair of GNC)

The TORs for the upcoming governance review were presented for approval by the Chair of the Governance & Nominations Committee. She noted that the terms were comprehensive and that an external consultant would be appointed as soon as possible. The conduct of the review would be overseen by GNC.

Decision:

Council approved the terms of reference as submitted.

(ii) Member resources and engagement

The Chair of GNC noted that the Committee had been considering ways in which members of Council might engage more frequently, and on an individual basis with the university community. A list of resources and opportunities for engagement would be developed by the College Secretary and the Director of Corporate Communications.

The SVP (Health & Life Sciences) requested that invitations be sent to Council members for inaugural lectures. This would be arranged.

A member noted that staff were arranging for him to spend a day at the Guy's Campus to get a sense of academic activities and campus life there. He would report back on his experience.

The Principal suggested that consideration be given to having an introductory session at the beginning of each meeting that would bring the university to the Council, similar to the notion of "The Patient Story" commonly used by NHS boards. This would provide an opportunity for Council to hear from a staff member or student about their experience of the life at the university.

8.2 Academic Board [KCC-23-03-30-08.2]

All items approved or noted on the Unanimous Consent Agenda.

8.3 Estates Strategy Committee (ESC) [KCC-23-03-30-08.3]

(i) Newcomen Street / Block 9

The Chair of ESC presented the proposal to develop the Newcomen St and Block 9 Extension buildings, on the Guy's and St Thomas' campuses respectively, as commercially led and managed incubator facilities. This was an operational led strategy and a small step in the university's wider life science strategy to create collaborative life science ecosystems combining research and commerce to drive better outcomes for both and make King's campuses leading national life science clusters.

The proposal was not without risk:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Decision:

That contracts be exchanged with We Are Pioneer Group (WAPG) as the university's preferred partner for the redevelopment of the Newcomen St and Block 9 Extension buildings as commercially led and managed incubator facilities.

(ii) Champion Hill Equity Release

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(iii) Britannia House Lease Extension

ESC had approved the extension of the lease on Britannia House, Trinity Street (Guy's Campus) ahead of lease end in December 2027 to protect the College's interests. The plan is to have a 10-year lease with the option to break the lease at 5 years.

8.4 Finance Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.4]

The Chair of the Finance Committee prefaced the presentation of his report with comments about his first meeting in the chair, the quality of the members and strong support received from management. He noted that he planned to provide regular communications to the members of the committee who were not members of Council. In discussion with the Vice-President (Finance), it had been agreed that a standard set of numbers would be provided to the Committee and hence to Council focussed on key year-to-date and forward movements in both the P&L and the Balance Sheet.

(i) Newcomen Street / Block 9 (for approval)

Covered under item 8.3 (i) above.

(ii) Champion Hill Equity Release (to note)

Covered under item 8.3 (ii) above.

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- (iii) Britannia House Lease Extension

As noted in item 8.4(iii) above.

- (iv) King's Global

See item 8.8 Chairs' Committee report, below.

8.5 Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.5]

- (i) Annual Health & Safety Report (to approve)

ARCC had reviewed the Annual Health & Safety Report, which dealt with a number of concerns raised in last year's report, and recommended its approval.

Decision:

Council approved the annual report of Health & Safety Services.

- (ii) External Audit Tender (to note)

The Deputy College Secretary & Chief Compliance Officer provided an update on the tendering process for a new external auditor contract. The process was on schedule, and it was anticipated that a recommendation would be brought to Council at its July meeting.

- (iii) Audit Committee Effectiveness (to note)

Chair of ARCC reported that a reciprocal peer review had been held with the Audit & Risk Committee at the University of Nottingham. A report of the process recommendations would be provided to ARCC in June.

8.6 Staff & Culture Strategy Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.6]

- (i) Report on First Meeting of SCSC

The Chair of SCSC gave an update on the inaugural meeting of the Committee. Members were bringing a strong range of expertise and experience to the table and had demonstrated engagement and enthusiasm. The plan was to conclude each meeting with three objectives or findings that could be communicated back to staff colleagues to keep the work of the Committee as transparent as possible. As part of this first agenda, the Committee had received a report that provided data around the size and shape of the staff cohorts and a paper from the Interim Vice-President (People & Talent) on work underway to implement the strategy.

8.7 Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee (FHDC) [KCC-23-03-30-08.7] [RESERVED]

Council considered the nominations proposed for award of honorary degrees and Fellowships of King's College London.

In the course of discussing the list, Council considered that some of the names might engender controversy for which the College needed to be prepared, but that all were individuals who had achieved great things in their fields of endeavour.

The Principal noted the changes in the processes that had been implemented for the first time this year and which would continue to be improved over time. A key factor would be to have

greater involvement from the Executive Deans in engaging with their candidates and having the recipients more engaged with the Faculties in turn.

Decisions:

(i) That the following individuals be invited to accept the award of Honorary Degree:

- Edmund John Browne, Lord Browne of Madingley



(ii) That the following individuals be invited to accept the award of Fellowship of King's College:

- I. Stephanie Boyce
- Professor Eduardo Bruera
- Alastair Campbell
- Michael D'Souza
- Professor Irene Higginson
- Dr Asma Khan
- The Ven Dr Giles Legood
- Dr Alberto Recordati
- Professor Reza Rezavi

8.8 Chairs' Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.8] RESERVED

Revised Agreement with Pearson.

The Chair of Council noted that the Chairs' Committee had, on Council's behalf, approved amendments to the Pearson Contract. The SVP (Operations) reviewed the proposed changes which had been circulated to Council members with their meeting papers. The key outcome for King's was to regain control of its online programming. Final edits were in the course of being agreed; it was expected that the new agreement would soon be signed.

9 Any Other Business

Before moving to the Remuneration Committee report - for which a number of individuals would need to leave the meeting - the Chair asked whether there were any other matters of business to discuss. There were none.

8.9 Remuneration Committee [KCC-23-03-30-08.9] [RESERVED]

SVPs, VPs, and attendees left the meeting for this item.

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee provided a summary of the issues discussed at the Committee's most recent meeting:

- An update on the senior executive team's progress on agreed key objectives;
- An outline of the beginning of a succession planning process which included identification of individuals who would step in if a position was suddenly and unexpectedly vacant; and,
- A note that Council's Policy on Remuneration of Senior Post Holders was due for review. This would be undertaken at the next meeting of the Committee.

10 Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 19:40.

Lord Geidt, March 2023