

Senate

20/24 A meeting of the Senate was held via teams Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 2.15

20/25 Report from the University Executive Board on post Covid19 response and a proposed restructuring process

The Senate received a Report from the University Executive Board on the University's post Covid19 response and a proposed restructuring process.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the discussion by briefly setting out the context of an anticipated substantial shortfall in recruitment of both international and home students in 2020/21, due to the Covid19 pandemic, and a consequent loss of £106m over the next three years.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that the University would undertake two major pieces of work to address the consequences of the Covid19 pandemic and to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the University. The Chief Financial Officer had outlined in Phase 1 a set of proposals to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic over the next three years, while the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resource and Planning) would consider the shape of the University, given the emerging new environment, in the longer term through Phase 2. The two pieces of work were coordinated to ensure that the process of restructuring and rationalisation was informed by the University's strategic objectives.

The comments of the Senate would be submitted to the Council who were meeting on Monday 15 June 2020. Council had received the same papers as the Senate.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Senate that it was their role to scrutinise the proposals and to hold the Board to account.

negatively affected by the loss of income. As an example, the cut to takehome income will be relatively painless for higher grade staff living in two households, but for a single parent on a lower pay grade it is no exaggeration to suggest that the cut could make them homeless. A sum of money should be put aside by the University like the student financial hardship fund to assist in these cases, which could be topped up by voluntary donations from the many highly paid staff in the University, alumni of the university, and other benefactors.

- 2) I'd also like to note that while a few staff in PCLS would like the option of reducing their FTE but s

- morale in general).
- 7) Why was Senate not consulted alongside Leadership Group when scoping Institutional Level I

blended face-to-face and online teaching. This recommendation would therefore be unworkable.

- 5) In addition to the incompatibility of this recommendation with workload and teaching quality, it would also have a huge impact on morale, which is stretched to breaking point.

6)

- 15) This impact on research would have a knock effect on our recruitment at both UG and PG admissions. Our research profile and the policy impact of staff's research are major selling points both to UG and PG applicants [redacted, section 40].
- 16) There is a concern that the timeline for Phase 2 consultations is extremely tight (final report by early September). Why is this necessary, given the limited scope for consultation that this leaves?
- 17) Who made the decisions about membership of the workstreams and on what basis? Would a broader membership for greater transparency be considered?
- 18) The separation of teaching and research into different workstreams is concerning. In Law, for example, our teaching and research are inseparable. As noted, our research plays a key recruitment role and our teaching is heavily research-led. Any changes to teaching or research structures necessarily affect the other.
- 19) What scope will there be for consultation with staff within Schools/departments? Discussions with colleagues in Law show a great desire to contribute to discussions around teaching, research, and University structures.

In regard to recruitment, the Vice-Chancellor has indicated that the University will continue to recruit to all schools and departments. The University will continue to recruit to all schools and departments.

[Redacted section 40]

- 1) Payrelated cost savings, point (iii) all staff reducing to 80% of their contract for 12 months- I think that a 20% salary cut for someone on a lower grade contract could

Phase 1 work.

[Redacted, section 40]

- x What proportion of this projected shortfall in international students is in HBS?
- x Could you clarify whether the cashflow issues are Covid related (as the title of the paper suggests)

This was confirmed.

- x Can you clarify the rationale for the final statement in the recommendations: "If the University finds itself in a more positive position in the Autumn Term international recruitment is stronger than expected and therefore the shortfall is lower, it is recommended that we call less upon the investment. Why this, rather than reducing redundancies or pay cuts?

It was confirmed that some reserves needed to be retained in case of a further spike

- x I have seen analysis of data taken from WONKHE showing that only approximately 40% of the current UoR salary bill is spent on academic salaries, compared with a much higher average in our 'competitor group' of approximately 55% and as recently as 2016/7 a percentage at UoR itself of 52%. This seems to be a very important comparison, and suggests that we have a structural problem; we could use the crisis to fix that structural problem by loading redundancies disproportionately on the non academic salary costs and using less of a component of cuts to pay?
- x Can we incentivise an unpaid leave scheme in the short term, rather like a VR scheme (but much less cost, and the staff come back)?
- x Reading appears to have a low fraction of academic salaries the total staff costs (below 40% of salary costs are academic), as compared to competitor units (average around 55%, some close to 70%). Will this play a role in planning where cuts should be made?
- x where do we expect the international shortfall to be concentrated? Does the modelling have numbers?
- x In terms of income ideas (and I am sure that this is really difficult in these very fragile circumstances), is it possible to raise money through patronage, such as naming of buildings or departments? For example, when I visit Toronto, every university building and lecture rooms are named after their sponsors. What about additional scholarships, like Stormzy's scholarship of black students at Cambridge? Finally, individual donations from alumni etc might be maximised and those donors recognised in some way.
- x Who will make the ultimate decision? Senate, UEB or Council?

The Council.

- x back in 2018, as RDL, when I checked number of staff with R in contract, UoR had roughly 1000 members of staff. Is this not correct? This was UoR data.
- x Is the issue with UoR direct result of the long-term poorly constructed contract + Could you clarify re: Force Majeure clauses being invoked re: remaining students?

- x There has been a really useful discussion, but do we have a collective Senate view which will be put to Council?