

**Notes of meeting no 23 of the combined JNC held on Thursday 20 August 2020**

**Present (virtually)**: Stephen Shute, Pro Vice Chancellor, (Planning and Resources) (SS) (chair); Siobhan O’Reilly, Director of HR (SOR); Keith Hart, Deputy Director of Human Resources (KH); Sarah Cox, HR Business Partner (SC); Claire Tucknott, HR Associate (CT). UCU: Andrew Chitty (AC); Jo Pawlik (JP), Joanne Paul (JP). UNITE: Paula Burr (PB); Daniel Hyndman (DH); Steve Pearce (SP). UNISON: Elaine Stephen (ES); Caroline Fife (CF); Holly Foster (HF).

Sharon Neal, Deputy Director of HR (SN) for Wellbeing and Mental Health item only.

**Apologies**: Tim Westlake (TW); Claire Colburn (ClCol); Mike Moran (MM); Bridget Edminson (BS);

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|  |  | Actions |
| 1/23 | **Introduction & Notes of Previous Meetings**  SS said that Bridget Edminson had stepped down as a member of the SCJNC, and would be replaced.  CT was introduced as a member of HR who would be working with SC to support the SCJNC meetings.  Notes of the meeting (no 22) 5 August 2020 were agreed. |  |
| 2/23 | **Student Recruitment**  SS noted that things had not gone smoothly with the release of A level results and the government U-turn. 1700 clearing offers had been made, and the University needed to get quite a lot of students through clearing if they were to meet the home/EU undergraduate admission targets. There was a possibility that a number of those who had accepted Clearing offers may have their A levels upgraded and revert back to their first or insurance choice universities, and those who had accepted an insurance place at Sussex may go back to their first choice. Conversely, the University had rejected fewer than 50 students outright who could potentially return if their A level grades had improved. The University had also started to receive applications for COVID-19 deferrals. The situation had created more uncertainty around student numbers, but the University would have more clarity after student registration had taken place (3 weeks into term) and **further information on student numbers could be provided at the SCJNC following the student registration deadline in October.** | **SS** |
| 3/23 | **Flexible Blended Working Policy**  The draft policy had already been shared with those present and SOR thanked those who had already provided comments. SOR asked for final written comments by the end of the day on Friday (21st August). SOR would send the final draft to UEG the following week and would have to submit it by 4pm on the Thursday (27th August). **SOR said that she had offered a meeting to discuss the policy for those who would prefer to comment in that way, it was agreed that this should be arranged.**  CF made the following comments:   * it would be helpful to define the separate terms and the differences between them i.e. ‘remote’, ‘flexible’, ‘blended’, ‘home-working’ etc. * staff needed to understand the difference between flexible working arrangements in place in the longer-term versus arrangements to work remotely because of current situation * Staff needed to know how the policy sat with the legal provisions around requesting flexible working, and it was likely that these would change anyway in response to recent events. * who was going to decide the % of the time someone spends in the office, and how was that going to be discussed? * It would be helpful to provide a template was for staff to set out what they were asking for and how it would work. CF noted that she had sent SOR a copy of the CIPD guidance setting out key points to consider * staff would ask about what services would be provided on campus in the autumn as this would dictate which/how many staff would need to be on campus at any given time * what would be the review period for the flexible arrangements?   SOR thanked CF for her comments and said that they would be taken on board. A flow chart was being developed to guide the decision-making around which category people should be in. A 3-month review period had been built in and this would be essential as circumstances were changing quickly and changing a lot at present. | **SOR** |
| 4/23 | **Car Parking Charges update**  SS said that the University would be applying 20% discounts for parking scratch cards to allow a more flexible approach to carparking charges for the Autumn semester. A book of scratch cards was previously £25 and would now be £20. This would allow staff to buy and pay for parking only on days they came to campus. A communication would be going out to all staff shortly. The scratch cards would be available to the same categories of staff on the same terms as they had been previously. |  |
| 5/23 | **CJNC Actions log and meetings management**  **SOR said that a SCJNC action log had been compiled and would be placed on the Box file which SCJNC members all had access to.** It would improve communication and visibility of follow-up from the actions that came out of SCJNC meetings. All agreed that this would be helpful.  HF said that she would be acting as union-side secretary to the SCJNC from now on.  It was agreed that the agenda and papers would be published at least 48 hours before the meeting from now on. In order to achieve this agenda items would be provided at least 3 days before the meeting. | **SC** |
| 6/23 | **Wellbeing and Mental Health** (SN)  SN said that she was joining the meeting to update the SCJNC on work that was taking place on wellbeing, including mental health and dignity & respect, and including both work that had already started and plans for the future. She gave an overview and a response to questions as follows:   * The Dignity & Respect service would be launched in September, including introducing 8 D&R champions. * The D&R champions had received comprehensive training based on the scenarios they were likely to come across. Staff would be able to go to them to talk on an informal basis if they felt that they had been the subject of unwanted behaviour or if it was something they had witnessed. * A group was being put together comprising colleagues who had lived experience of mental health issues and other colleagues who were allies on mental health issues and wanted to do what they could to support the agenda. This group would look at how to tackle issues around mental health that made sense to them, were meaningful and based on experience. * This will include self-directed resources for individuals and materials for managers to give them confidence in supporting their staff. * A range of self-directed resources on wellbeing will being put in place for everyone. The University already provided a lot of support in this area but it was not always easy to find, so the first step was to showcase what was already available and make it accessible for everyone. * SN would be working with Health & Safety and Occupational Health to ensure that these functions provide information and self help materials on stress management for individuals and guidance for managers on managing stress. It was acknowledged that this could be a particular issue given the current COVID crisis. * SN acknowledged that it was important to consider institutional and structural triggers as well as individual thresholds and  would also be looking at this. |  |
| 7/23 | **Return to Campus** (Unison)  CF said that she had already commented on the COVID self-assessment tool, but there were strategic concerns about return to campus and how this was communicated. Unison had found that information was being published on the website about their department and how and when they should be coming back and that was the first they had heard about it. AC agreed and said that it was important that there should be good communication from line management and that return for face-to-face teaching should be voluntary.  SOR said that she wrote to AC and other members of SCJNC clarifying that whist the union position on ‘voluntary return’ was understood, that was not the position of the University nor the one articulated in the documents.  PB asked whether SOR was in regular contact with managers about return to campus. SOR said that she was in regular email contact with the Heads of School and had fortnightly meetings with the Heads of Professional Services. |  |
| 8/23 | **UCU’s forthcoming blog post on the Free Black University** (UCU)  JPk had sent an email to SS the previous day pm behalf of the campus staff unions and the students’ union to ask the University to provide support to the Free Black University. It was a really important project and they would **appreciate a University response at a future JNC.** | **SS** |
| 9/23 | **Spending priorities in the Autumn** (UCU)  JPk asked if the Finance scenario B2 was improved upon, when and how would the University’s spending priorities be decided upon? What sort of conversations or consultation would take place? SS said that Council would consider this when they met in the Autumn. They would need to agree that money could be released into the budget, and would consider this in light of the Road Map of University projects that had been put on hold as a result of COVID. |  |
| 10/23 | **Post 6pm teaching (UCU)**  JP said that the timetable for the autumn had been issued and most staff had very little time to comment before the deadline. A significant number had been allocated post 6pm teaching. This had previously been rolled out without consultation and UCU were assured at that time that everything possible would be done to avoid it, that it was voluntary, staff would not have to teach at 6pm one day and the 9am the following day, and existing flexible working agreements would be honoured. None of these things seemed to have been considered when issuing the current timetable.  SOR said that a meeting had taken place with UCU and Kelly Coate (PVC Education) about this and Kelly agreed to take this away as an action. JP said that the meeting with Kelly was a small informal meeting and UCU wished to bring it to the SCJNC so that it could be minuted. It affected Unison and Unite too because their members could potentially be impacted by evening teaching (e.g. lab support staff, School office staff).  SS said that 6-8pm teaching had been a feature of the timetable in some Schools for a while. **SS agreed that the action for this item would be added to the SCJNC action log and followed up.** | **KC** |
| 11/23 | **DTs and return to campus**  AC raised concern that some areas were planning to use Doctoral Tutors and School Tutors to facilitate face-to-face contact with students where a member of faculty was not able to come to campus. AC said that UCU welcomed the employment of Tutors but did not want it to be conditional on them delivering the work face-to-face. SS said that as far as he was aware there was no proposal to change the contractual status of Tutors and the way they were offered employment, and SOR agreed. |  |
| 12/23 | **Date of Next Meeting**  7 September 2020, 11.30am via Microsoft Teams |  |

**Human Resources**

**24/08/20**