

**Notes of meeting no 24 of the combined JNC held on Monday 7 September 2020**

**Present (virtually)**: Stephen Shute, Pro Vice Chancellor, (Planning and Resources) (SS) (chair); Tim Westlake, Chief Operating Officer (TW); 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: Caroline Fife (CF); Claire Colburn (CC); Holly Foster (HF).

**Apologies**: None

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Actions |
| 1/24 | **Notes of Previous Meetings**  Notes of the meeting (no 23) 20 August 2020 were agreed. |  |
| 2/24 | **Return to campus**  SOR said that further meetings had been held with Heads of School to re-clarify the Return to Campus process and how the University was dealing with concerns. There would be a follow-up communication to all staff and Heads of School later in the week. More Return to Campus webinars were scheduled. The previous week had seen the successful return of 350 PGCE students and the academic staff teaching them to ESW.  TW said that academics and PS staff had worked very hard and worked in partnership to achieve this return and it had gone very well. They had also engaged the students in this process. It was very helpful preparation for welcoming more students in the coming weeks.  HF said that a concern had been raised by ESW admin staff about how DBS and health check documentation would be verified as they had concerns about receiving large amounts of visitors and handling documents. **TW said that he would look into this and respond.**  AC said that the three staff campus unions and the students’ union were in the process of agreeing a joint statement about the reopening for teaching in the Autumn term. Their position was that all teaching should be done online unless it was lab based or practice based. There were 10 points to this statement and they would be requesting a special meeting outside the SCJNC to discuss them. They did not believe that the University’s current plans were adequate to address the concerns. | **TW** |
| 3/24 | **Remote working policy**  SOR said that the draft policy had gone to the University’s Executive Group. The principles of the policy were well received but SOR was asked to revise some details of the policy and it would go back to UEG for approval when this had been done. |  |
| 4/24 | **Review of staff on FTCs with more than 4 years’ service**  KH said that good progress was being made on the review, there were only 4 outstanding Professional Services and 3 Academic cases remaining. There was some more work to do on Tutors and Research staff. The Tutor agreement in SCLS was being finalised. The Research staff were a little more complicated because it was necessary to engage with individual PIs. The majority were in Life Sciences and the Head of School had been away. There were 54 outstanding the focus was now on these. |  |
| 5/24 | **Equality monitoring portal**  SC said that the EDI Unit were working with colleagues in the HR Payroll team to create an online dashboard on the MyView self-service portal that would allow staff to record and update their equality monitoring data. This would allow the University to collect more accurate and comprehensive data relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010). There would be an additional question about whether a staff member had caring responsibilities and all self-service fields would have a “Prefer not to say” option.  The EDI Unit had consulted with the University’s staff networks when developing the questions and had also sought advice from Advance HE. The portal was an important step in enabling the University to better understand the demographics of the workforce and help assess whether policies, support and guidance were equitable and fair, and reflected the needs of staff. The EDI Unit were looking for the unions’ help in engaging staff with using the portal and helping them understand benefits for them in doing so.  SC said that the EDI Unit would like to arrange a meeting for representatives of each union towards the end of September so that the portal could be discussed in more detail and **asked the unions to nominate representatives to attend this meeting.**  AC asked whether those who belonged to one of the groups who is more vulnerable to and/or at higher risk of serious illness when catching COVID, they would be classed as disabled? **SOR said that she would take this away for consideration.** | **TUs**  **SOR** |
| 6/24 | **HR & Equality Committees**  SOR said that a paper went to UEG last week proposing that the HR Committee was renamed ‘People, Culture and Inclusion Committee’, and that it would meet four times a year report into UEG. The EDI Committee would be reinstated and renamed ‘Inclusive Sussex Programme Board’ and would also meet four times per year. The Board would be focussed on action rather than strategy. The proposals were agreed at UEG. |  |
| 7/24 | **Action Log**  The open items on the Action Log were reviewed.  SS confirmed that the University did not agree to the request to donate £50k to the Free Black University but would be open to working together with them on projects via the University’s Race Equality Charter Scheme, chaired by the Provost.  It was agreed that actions coming out of other less formal meetings (such as the Teaching meetings with Kelly Coate) could be logged on the SCJNC Action Log at the unions’ request and it was not necessary to put them on the SCJNC agenda for the sole purpose of being formally recorded. |  |
| 8/24 | **Voluntary severance – final figures and ongoing monitoring**  SS said that 112 VS applications had been accepted: 45 academic staff and 67 professional services staff. 75 settlement agreements had already been signed and 37 were still outstanding. The last date for someone leaving under VS was 18 September. **SS said that a staff communication would be going out about this and asked the unions to keep this information strictly confidential until then.**  PB asked how the University would be monitoring workloads to make sure that the work of those leaving was not redistributed in a way that caused problems for remaining staff?  SS noted that when line managers made recommendations to the VS panel about whether they supported the application they had to consider the workload left behind. 18 applications were declined by the panel. Staff who had concerns about their workload should discuss with their manager in the first instance.  CC said that separate from VS, a major cause of workload issues was that RTFs for vacant posts from as far back as December had not been signed off. TW said that he was unaware of any RTFs that were awaiting response. **CC agreed to send the details to SC, copied to TW.**  CC said that workload issues could be addressed by more use of graduate interns and this would also help with the University’s graduate outcomes. TW said that he was currently leading on a piece of work to take this forward.  JP said that workload allocation was fixed in Spring and current allocations did not include the increase in work from converting to online or blended teaching or absorbing work for those leaving under VS and asked how APWs would be updated to reflect this? **SS suggested a meeting outside of the SCJNC to address these issues.** | **CC**  **SS** |
| 9/24 | **COVID-19 related absences**  AC asked whether staff who were unwell with COVID or quarantining would be expected to take the time from their sick leave? The unions did not think they should, particularly as staff may be in that situation as a result of being asked to return to work.  **SOR said that she would take this away for consideration.** | **SOR** |
| 10/24 | **Application of the ‘manager’s toolkit’ for return to campus**  HF said that the unions were still getting reports from their members about disparity in how managers were applying the manager’s toolkit. The term ‘manager’ was broad at University and there was a wide range of seniority and size of team, HF asked what level of manager the toolkit was aimed at and who in HR should staff contact if they had concerns or questions?  SOR said that the toolkit was aimed for all levels of manager and had been made available to all staff to provide clear and open guidance. Queries should be directed to the HRBP for the area in the first instance and they would escalate it to KH or SOR if necessary. |  |
| 11/24 | **Seminar recording policy**  AC said that UCU wished to request a formal statement or policy from Kelly Coate that there was no obligation to record seminars and make them available to students in the same way that other materials should be made available to students.  **SS said that this matter would be referred to KC for a response** | **SC** |
| 12/24 | **Closed caption policy**  AC said that UCU wished to request a formal statement or published policy that confirmed that staff were not expected to correct close captions after they had finished lectures.  **SS said that this matter would be referred to KC for a response** | **SC** |
| 13/24 | **Post 6pm teaching policy**  JP asked whether there had been an update from Kelly about post 6pm teaching in the new timetable, as discussed at the Teaching meeting with UCU and the previous SCJNC.  SS noted that there was an open action on the Action Log for KC to provide a response to this. |  |
| 14/24 | **AOB**  The unions requested that the length of the SCJNC meetings was extended to an hour and a half and that items on the agenda were marked as ‘for information’, ‘for discussion’ and ‘for negotiation’ as appropriate. SS requested that, when the unions asked for matters to be put onto the Agenda, the email also contained a brief note explaining what the item was about. |  |
| 15/24 | **Date of Next Meeting**  16 September 2020, 12.30pm via Microsoft Teams |  |

**Human Resources**

**09/09/20**