

**Notes of meeting no 25 of the combined JNC held on Monday 18 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). UCU: Jo Pawlik (JP), Joanne Paul (JP); Jackie Grant (JG). UNITE: Paula Burr (PB); Daniel Hyndman (DH); Steve Pearce (SP). UNISON: Caroline Fife (CF); Claire Colburn (CC); Jack Nugent (JN).

**Apologies**: Holly Foster (Unison); Andrew Chitty (UCU).

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| 1/25 | **Notes of Previous Meetings**  Notes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 (no 24) were agreed. |  |
| 2/25 | **Review of Action Log**  **47, 59 and 63** – still open – these related to requests for Council papers, Rowena Rowley in Governance is discussing this with the Chair of Council.  **74** – still open – SC will follow up with Kelly Coate and Jayne Aldridge.  **91 –** meetings have taken place – action closed.  **96** – still open - action to be taken in October.  **100 –** still open – to be covered in teaching meetings with Kelly Coate.  **104** – SOR clarified that for those suffering from longer-term symptoms of COVID 19 (or “long-covid”) this condition would need to last for 12 months or more to meet the definition of disability under the Equalities Act and so would not meet the definition of a disability at present – action now closed.  **105** – still open – CC has sent information to TW and he is looking into it. KH said that HR were developing an electronic tracker for PS vacancy approval and this would help speed up the process and would identify how long it was taking to fill vacancies.  **107** – still open – when people were unwell with COVID this would be classed as sick leave. With regard to people who were self-isolating but were not unwell, SOR has written a paper for COVID UEG on Monday to suggest how this should be dealt with, and would provide an update after that.  **108 –** still open – to be covered in teaching meetings with Kelly Coate. |  |
| 3/25 | **Return to campus**  TW said that useful discussions had taken place at the Health & Safety Committee, particularly around risk assessments and how they would be presented and made available to staff, and providing reassurance around campus ventilation systems.  CC said that some Professional Services staff were confused about why their role was considered essential to be carried out on site and asked if there could be a process for obtaining more detail about this and/or to appeal. SOR said that this should be discussed with their manager and if it could not be resolved between them the HR Business Partner could become involved. **SOR said that those specific cases could be picked up outside the SCJNC.**  JPk requested that language around Return to Campus was made more inclusive. A recent email sent out from Kelly Coate said that face-to-face teaching was better than remote teaching, which made people who had no choice but to work remotely feel underappreciated. This particularly affected BAME staff and those who had caring responsibilities. | **SOR/HRBPs** |
| 4/25 | **Professional Services workload**  CC said that Unison had seen an increase in the amount of casework they were doing around excessive workload. Staff were doing extra to cover those who had left under Voluntary Severance or who were not coming to campus due to clinical vulnerabilities, but were not giving up any of their substantive job. CC said that people did not always feel safe speaking up and raising these issues with their manager.  KH suggested that staff raised concerns with their line managers in the first instance and then if that did not resolve matters they should contact their HR Business Partner, and then refer to KH if no resolution. If there was a pattern in a particular area this should be raised with KH and he would take it up with the appropriate Director. |  |
| 5/25 | **Regulation of commitments made to students**  SS had sent an email to the unions prior to the meeting, providing the information they had requested. JPk said that OFS and CMA were cited as a reason why teaching could not be done solely online, but Kelly Coate had previously said that the point at which the ‘contract’ is made with the student is at registration which implied that the commitment to blended learning could still be changed.  SS said that there was evidence that students expected, wanted and needed face-to-face teaching. TW said that when the University confirmed to students that they had been accepted, the student was informed that the University would be providing blended learning, and had therefore made a commitment to do so. If there was a national lockdown or the government changed their current stance and said that face-to-face teaching could no longer be delivered at Universities it would not be a problem to change, but at the moment a blended learning offer had been made to students and that could not be changed without causing problems with the OFS and CMA.  SS said that the University had already received complaints from students who had received their timetable which looked like there was no face-to-face teaching and had threatened to withdraw if that was the case, because that was what they had been offered and they had decided to go to Sussex on the strength of that offer. JPk said they had received emails from students saying they were nervous about coming to campus. |  |
| 6/25 | **Any other business**  JP asked that future SCJNC meetings were scheduled to alternate with Health & Safety Committee so they did not both fall in the same week. SC said that this was the intention but it had been necessary to reschedule September SCJNC meetings due to availability and leave.  JG said that a number of staff had got in touch about Hong Kong national security law and trans-education partnerships, with concern about how it affected academic freedom and censorship. JG asked whether this matter had been to Senate. It was agreed that this issue would be discussed and that question addressed as a substantive item on the agenda at a future SCJNC. |  |
| 7/25 | **Date of Next Meeting**  Tuesday 29 September 2020, 3.00pm via Microsoft Teams |  |

**Human Resources**

**24/09/2020**