**Minutes of the School Policy and Resources Committee (SPRC) meeting**

**Wednesday 27 April 2022**

**12:00 – 14:00 [Room 20.21, ALB]**

**Present:** Mark Baker, Laura Black, James Evans, Martin Evans (Chair), Jonny Huck, Laura Ingleby, Steve Jones, Khalid Nadvi, Tania Smith, Juup Stelma, Sarah Lindley, Stephen Walker, And Lyons (minutes)

1. **Apologies:** Kevin Woods, Kelly Osgood, Kay Hodgson, Kerry McCann, Andy Milne & Isabella Machin. Lizzy Langton & Fidel Peacock for second hour.
2. **Minutes of SPRC Meeting held on 16 March 2022**

The minutes were approved.

All actions are ongoing. Regarding 130422-04, Juup Stelma (JS) will contact HoDs in due course with relevant information. Regarding 130422-03, Jonny Huck (JH) is yet to receive feedback.

1. **Head of School Report (ME)**

* Current mandates for industrial action will end on 3rd May 2022. Latest ballots did not approve further action.
* Any further action likely to be linked to the 2022 pay negotiations.
* It was noted that around 10 staff members haven’t yet responded to checks as to whether they took action.
* Recent fieldwork has gone well. ME stressed his thanks for all colleagues who have been involved in this work.
* REF will be finalised on 9th May 2022, with competitors results confirmed 10th May 2022 and all results published on 12th May 2022.
* Louisa Dawes has been appointed as Associate Director for Assessment; Tom Donnai has been appointed as Associate Director for Widening Participation. The new HoD for Geography will be interviewed for on 28th April 2022. The HoD for Architecture and the Co-Chair for Ethics Committee will be interviewed in May 2022.
* External academic appointments will be very active at the end of May and all colleagues involved were thanked.
* The University has appointed a new travel agent called Diversity who will be available for use from 25th April 2022. The Committee were advised that based on minimal feedback, the new system is still difficult to use but has seen improvements compared to KeyTravel.

Information on the system can be found via the Finance advice page on Staffnet. ME advised that feedback should continue in order to monitor its success.

* The new University consultancy procedure has gone live. HoDs will start receiving requests for approval.

**Action: Lorna Pontefract (LP) to promote Diversity through School Comms and to share information on the consultancy procedure.**

* HoDs were advised to flag issues or comments on SLT Away Day. It was noted that the main agenda items were:
  + Research strategy – a review of its future and cross-school collaborations and appointments
  + Teaching – cross school collaboration
  + Departmental leadership

Time will be given for further discussions.

1. **Head of School Operations Report (KH)**

It was noted that there will be no risk of redundancies within the ongoing SEP restructure. Posts within the new structures will be permanent.

**Risk and Compliance / Health & Safety / Information Governance (FP)**

12 volunteers have advised on their availability for First Aid training. Fire Marshal volunteers are still needed.

**Finance (EL)**

Management Accounts for March show a year-to-date variance of £8.2m better than budget, against a full year forecast of £7.1m better than Budget. Other Operating Expenditure is still much lower than budget in many areas and the Q3 forecast will be adjusted to reflect this.   The Faculty had its Budget challenge meeting with Finance last week and was asked to identify £2m savings across the whole Faculty.

**Action: Louise Gorton (LG) to share information on Research Group fund requests with HoDs.**

1. **Admissions update (EP)**

* Course choices will be confirmed by 9th June 2022 and will present a better indication on numbers,
* All departments except Architecture are down on acceptances. This will see an increase after 9th June 2022.
* Home application numbers are down; overseas applications are on target.
* Some courses are still left open for diversity purposes. These will close on 12th May 2022 however, feedback was welcomed by HoDs on whether there was a more ideal date. The further promotion of the bursaries available to applicants will aim to improve diversity further. PGCE is down on numbers, mostly around Primary. The entry requirement will be dropped from 2.1 to 2:2.
* Many courses are now back up to 2019 (pre-covid) numbers.
* ME requested thanks to be fed back to the Admissions Team for their hard work, especially around diversity.

1. **Faculty Targets (ME/SL/JS)**

Please refer to the document circulated.

Consultancy has not been included in the income targets.

**Action: LG to advise on African Cities funds and their impact on University funds and its noted expenditure.**

**Action: Sarah Lindley (SL) to advise on funds to be included in expenditure and those to be omitted.**

An issue was raised that the POLAR 4 ratio target of 3.8% was too low.

The Committee were advised that the target of 35% of students from outside of the Chinese cohort is an aspirational target and may be difficult to achieve.

1. **Fieldwork (ME/KO/JS)**

* All recent fieldwork has been reorganised in the UK due to COVID considerations.
* Courses will need to plan for students to isolate in place if diagnosed with Covid and for staff to remain in place to support them.
* European fieldwork appears safe to begin planning.

**Action: Kelly Osgood (KO) to look into practicalities around insurance for fieldwork in African nations.**

* The current wording in course descriptions clearly states that there are currently no guarantees around international fieldwork to ensure students are aware that plans may be cancelled. Short haul fieldwork trips should be prioritised.

1. **Any other business**

Khalid Nadvi (KN) raised an important issue around the current Keep It On Campus regulations and a Ramadan event where students’ dietary requirements were not met. Laura Black (LB) has been in discussions around this and a further event has been offered as compensation for the error. A written apology has been sent to the students and LB will update SLT on all correspondence around this.

No further business was noted.