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

**Wednesday 20 July 2022**

**12:00 – 14:00 [via Zoom]**

**Present:** Mark Baker, Martin Banks, Laura Black, Martin Evans (Chair), Jonny Huck, Kay Hodgson, Laura Ingleby, Steve Jones, Lizzy Langton, Sarah Lindley Khalid Nadvi, Kelly Osgood, Lorna Pontefract Juup Stelma, Isabella Machin (minutes)

1. **Apologies: Kerry McCann**, Edita Pymm, Lizzy Langton & Kelly Osgood (both for second hour)
2. **Minutes of SPRC Meeting held on 08 June 2022**

The minutes were approved.

It was agreed that actions 23/240622-01 and 23/240622-04 from the SLT away day were complete, as well as action 270422-03.

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

Estates work continues to progress. Faculty have recruited consultants to discuss how shared spaces could be adapted for future needs. It was noted that the Rutherford Building may be refurbished and used by SEED. A meeting is scheduled week commencing 25th August to discuss long-term strategies.

The SLT and SPRC formats are currently being amended to clearly define the variance between the two meetings. SPRCs will happen less frequently and will take the place of every 5th SLT rather than the 3rd meeting that it is currently replacing. SPRC should be the formal policy Committee and therefore, it was requested that all other Committees share their minutes with its members. Reports were requested from all PS leads and periodic reporting will be scheduled from functional teams. Agendas will be more distinct.

This new format will commence from the 14th September SPRC.

Strategic planning has been on pause for the past 3 years in favour of operational priorities.

The Faculty has produced a draft strategic plan and the final version will be distributed at the start of the academic year. Sarah Lindley (SL) has updated the School Research strategy and was signed off at the SLT away day on 23rd and 24th June 2022.

Discussions will be needed on further renewing strategies other than research. This was discussed with Directors in recent PDRs and will be actioned in the next academic year.

1. **Head of School Operations Report (written report)**

The latest updates on Estates were:

* The work on the HBS Quad is underway; work will then begin in the foyer once all heavy lifting has been completed.
* Fidel Peacock (FP), KH and Steve Bateson are aware of the biodiversity concerns raised by academic colleagues. Estates have confirmed that the new plants have been very carefully chosen to optimise biodiversity. This is something that should be regularly reviewed.
* Work in EWB has restarted now that the asbestos issue has been resolved. There are plans to work over weekend to catch up on the work. The age of our buildings means this will always be a possibility but checks have been made.
* There is progress with the ALB common room.
* FP and KH met with Andy Howes, Rob Buck, John Moore (JM) and Rebecca Self to discuss the PGCE labs. Work has not progressed as the VR lab will need to be prioritised, now that the capital bid for the GIS suite has been approved. Once the VR lab is established PGCE lab practical for Biology and Physics can then be moved over from EWB. This will then enable the EWB space to be refurbed.
* KH and colleagues will continue to work on how SEED use our space more effectively across all three buildings.

**Action: Standard document to be sourced or produced within Estates as to how asbestos is dealt with within buildings and circulated by FP.**

Several weeks ago Neil Humphrey raised concerns around the level of support received on the Bee Well project which the school raised further with the Faculty. This opened a discussion on the broader aspects of research management (including contracts, research finance and POD as well as research services) and as a consequence, Patrick Hackett has set up an operations group, along with a rapid response team, to look into the major and fundamental issues across the institution. It was noted that there has been training for newly appointed research finance staff and recruitment continues within these teams. A number of improvements have been made in this key area, as well as research services and this will be closely monitored through Patrick’s group. A training programme for research services is will be launched at the research services conference in early September 2022.

**Finance**

Colleagues were reminded to raise any financial requests as quickly as possible to optimise spend in the current year. HoDs were advised to encourage colleagues to submit claims ASAP. Submissions must be made by 25 July 2022 in order for these to be charged to theaccounts by end of year (31 July) t. This avoids accruals and year-end adjustments.

There have been a few changes to 22/23 budgets and the final agreed details will be presented at the September SPRC.

**P&OD**

Improvements have been made around recruitment turnaround and this is now 2 days.

MB confirmed that there has been an integration between recruitment and onboarding. The team that were originally wholly focused on recruitment activity now do both. This makes for a more seamless process and an increased resource for service delivery.

MB requested feedback on the P&OD process as it stands, both positive and negative.

Clear metrics will be circulated fortnightly to monitor progress within these teams.

Kerry McCann (KM) is school point of contact for any other issues with recruitment.

**IT**

Patrick Hemmaway, the new IT Director has now taken up his role.

Work is in progress on the metrics regarding laptop orders. The laptop delivery aspect is monitored weekly and is running smoothly, aiding the recruitment process.

**PS**

The PS hybrid working framework will be relaunched in the next week and shared with PS leads to start to embed into SEED.

1. **EDI update (CA)**

Please refer to presentation circulated.

CA shared the Canterbury Christ Church University's decolonisation strategy/checklist for information: <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/asset-library/BH365-and-bridging-the-gap/Decolonising-the-curriculum-a-health-check.pdf>

Juup Stelma (JS) questioned how existing support systems are dealing with the decolonisation strategy, as the only formal review process is the Faculty’s Review and Refresh which aligns with Size and Shape. This information may need to be shared with David Spendlove in order to have this issue raised on the agenda.

The GDI MSE International development went through a review and refresh but this perspective was not thoroughly looked into. Currently in MIE, the MA International Education qualification is in the review and refresh process so it was noted there may be an opportunity to feed this strategy in. It was also suggested that this strategy should be integrated into PAG, in a more general way. CA and JS will further discuss this.

The EDI committee is not minuted but actions are identified; SR Committee is not minuted due to resource issues. This will be looked into in order to aid reporting to SPRC in the next academic year.

1. **Academic Advising and Student Wellbeing (SM)**

Academic advising forms part of the baseline of every academic member of staff therefore, there is a broad group of individuals who can contact SM at any point.

One of the hallmarks over the past couple of months has been putting the student reference request system in place. This will streamline all varieties of reference request and will continue to be rolled out across all communication channels.

It was noted that staff investment and support of the assessment commitments for 2021/22 made a significant difference and was incredibly valuable, as the mitigating circumstances procedure had to be redeveloped to allow for the 5 day turnaround time.

In autumn, to support welcome and induction, there will be an increase of both staff and student-facing resources. This will promote the benefits of advising to multiple audiences and streamline the information available at the University. Resources for students will include advice on what to expect from their advisor and what they should be asking, as well as short talking heads videos about students and how to make the most of the academic advising relationship. A single document will provided as one point of reference for all these resources. This will be ready for academic year 22/23.

Further to the benchmarking review, the academic advising training resource has been updated across the Faculty. Changes to content include further EDI resources including inclusive language and how to access the support service.

Looking ahead, the following projects will be investigated for integration:

* The outcome of the task and finish student voice which provided numerous recommendations. These include how the student voice is listened to and feedback on both services and environments, to be embedded into SEED practice going forward.
* Student hubs will be put in place during welcome week, supported by Paul Rowbotham.
* Evaluation of academic advising models across the University by the senior academic advisory network.
* ITL strategic fellows will be introduced and one will investigate staff visibility and Pure profiles.
* Return to study process.

There is an opportunity to make the academic advisor roles more visible. This AD role is broad role with a range of KPIs, including attending PAG. JS advised that visibility could be increased in the overview of T&L structures across departments. Some departments have a senior tutor if their academic advisor network breaks down however, this may not be established in all departments as yet.

Khalid Nadvi (KN) suggested that further information could be circulated via the DoTLs with a roadshow in GDI. The differing sizes of departments will mean that the whole school may not benefit from the same course of action. An ideal structure is to be mapped but with the understanding that not all departments will be the same.

1. **Admissions update**

* Slight increase on all UG programmes, looking to come in on target in most programmes by December.
* PGT programmes are all down on home, in line with national trends. Up slightly in International but not at level to make up for missing home students. The Admissions team are continuing to work on this by releasing additional offers.
* Down on ITE, at 30% across the board against the 50% that is nationally trending. SJ has looked into ways of recruiting additional international students and a clear plan will be put in place.
* The Power BI data is not currently an up to date source it was advised that this cannot be kept up to date over the Summer. This raises questions around the channels of communication and HoDs would like to be part of the strategic decisions.
* Summer 2022 will be uncertain terms of recruitment, particularly on a PGT level.

The latest date that International students can arrive this year is October 10th 2022. There will be a challenge on Chinese students arriving in the UK, despite there not being a lockdown which may cause some attrition.

**Action KH to speak with Emma Rose on back up for A&A in Tania’s absence.**

It was also agreed that bringing in Senior Tutors at late notice to cover the extra applications of students was not ideal therefore, this should be assessed in mid-August.

JS advised that of July 13th 2022, there is will be no dual or mitigating circumstances options available to students. This may only change if there is a large scale lockdown in China however, this seems unlikely at present.

Mark Baker (MB) informed the Committee that PEM are on target and extra offers have been given to international students. The issue remains that there are senior tutors in place until the end of October 2022 and these cannot be kept on if the student numbers stay the same however, if numbers increase then SEED won’t have enough tutors.

The first SRAC in the 2022/23 academic year will discuss strategy and JS questioned whether it may be appropriate to invite Tania Smith (TS) to advise on what it looks like going forward in terms of staffing and systems and processes in the year ahead. This may allow SEED to reaffirm successful processes for example, the relationship between admissions and HoDs. It was greed that TS and all HoDs should be invited to SRAC.

1. **Any other business**

James Evans (JE) and Isabella Machin (IM) were thanked for their hard work. Louise Gorton and the Research PS team were thanked for their work over the past year.

In ME’s absence in early August, JS and Sarah Lindley (SL) will be deputising. Queries should be directed through School Office in the first instance.

Steve Courtney will cover for SL in her absence.

No other business was noted.