

APPROVED minutes
DRAFT – prepared by the committee secretary
UNAPPROVED – signed off by the Senior Officer/Chair of the committee
APPROVED – formally approved by the committee



PEOPLE COMMITTEE

7 FEBRUARY 2024

Present: Ann Barnes (Chair), Gary Buxton, Jatin Patel and Robin Philips.

In attendance for all items: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice-Chancellor), Banji Adewumi (Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), Adèle Mackinlay (Director of People and Organisational Development), Sara Sawicki

In attendance for item 12 – Professor Rachel Cowan

Apologies: Professor Daniela Caselli, Patrick Hackett, Professor Danielle George

2 Declaration of Interests

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the meeting on 1 November 2023.

4 Matters arising and action log

Noted: the action log

5 *Forward plan

Noted: the forward plan

6 A report from the Director of People & OD

Received: a verbal update from the Director of People & OD covering matters not on the agenda.

Noted:

- i. UCU held a national survey before Christmas which seemed to show little appetite for further industrial action, but a desire for local progress on the 'four fights'. Three task and finish groups have been established to work in partnership on academic workload, casualisation and pensions (communication and engagement). National pay negotiations will shortly commence, and updates will be provided in due course.
- ii. An update on the P&OD and EDI Strategies is being prepared for the Board of Governors in March, which will reflect the progress that has been made to date.

Members also viewed a document detailing the achievements of the two Directorates, which was well received.

- iii. Staff survey – a wellbeing pulse survey will be circulated to staff in March, and planning has commenced for the next staff survey to be held in March 2025.
- iv. Training and Compliance – current ways to track essential training at the University are sub-optimal, and the Learning Management System project was paused due to Cyber. Members mentioned that compliance had been raised as an issue more generally (not just regarding training) in a recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting, and the possibility of a change in culture being included the P&OD Strategy was discussed. Colleagues have, through existing technologies, found a method to enable tracking of essential training to take place and it is hoped that this will be in place by the end of this academic year. In addition, University induction programmes have been reviewed, and there is a suite of support and information which will set out clear expectations for new staff. Progress will be monitored.
- v. The metrics by which the P&OD Strategy will be measured against have been developed and are close to finalisation. They will be presented for endorsement at the next Committee meeting.
- vi. New supporting information and guidance is being developed for colleagues for the P&DR process and further updates will be provided in due course. Members discussed the interplay between P&DR and performance management.
- vii. The wellbeing element of the strategic capabilities programme of work has identified key areas of focus for workplace wellbeing at the University, through a series of consultations. This has been translated into an employee wellbeing commitment, with three key priority areas – creating a thriving place, creating headspace and creating a psychologically safe place. The commitment outlines how we will approach these three areas across the University, using a prevent, promote and respond model. Work is being carried out on a detailed communications plan before this is launched at the University.

Agreed:

- i. The metrics by which the P&OD Strategy will be measured will be circulated via email for comment prior to the next meeting, and then presented for endorsement at the May meeting **Action: Director of P&OD**
- ii. Further updates on the P&DR process will be provided at the next meeting **Action: Director of P&OD**
- iii. Wellbeing pulse survey update to be provided at the next meeting **Action: Director of P&OD**
- iv. Staff Wellbeing commitment document to be shared with members **Action: Director of P&OD**
- v. Progress on staff training compliance will be monitored

7 SEP evaluation update

Received: a report on updating them on the evaluation process for the Student Experience Project.

Noted:

- i. The evaluation will be carried out by an independent team led by academic and PS co-chairs. The Senior Leadership Team and Senate have agreed the co-chairs whose responsibility it will be to form the project team – in consultation with the Faculties and Senate - and lead the evaluation. The membership is currently being finalised. The aim is to conclude the evaluation by the end of the academic year.

- ii. The evaluation will seek to understand what has worked well, what has not, and why. Outputs will be used to identify good practice, areas of success, and ascertain factors that will facilitate further improvement.

Agreed: Regular updates will be provided to People Committee

8 Panel approval process

Received: a report from the Employee Relations team regarding the procedure for panel approval as determined by Statutes and Ordinances.

Noted:

- i. The current procedures require approval, on a case-by-case basis, from the President and VC (in the case of a 'hearing' panel) and the Chair of the Board (in the case of an 'appeal' hearing).
- ii. The procedures also require the Registrar and Secretary's Administration Management Team to nominate panel members for panels concerning an academic-related member of staff and for the RSCOO to deal with any objections to panel members participation.
- iii. The Employee Relations team are proposing changes to the operational practices of the current arrangements.
- iv. P&ODSC had also received the paper and recommended that People Committee approve the changes.

Agreed:

The proposed changes to the operational practices were approved.

9 People & Organisational Development Priorities

Received: a report detailing the People and Organisational Development priorities and corresponding measures of success for the year 2024

Noted:

- i. The identified priorities aligned with key P&OD Strategy themes, namely Leadership, Culture, Performance, Wellbeing and Service.
- ii. It was noted that all Chartermark action plans are linked through the P&OD Strategy action plan. Members discussed how success against the priorities would be measured and were informed that a paper outlining the metrics to be used would be shared in due course.
- iii. Communication plans were being developed for each priority area.

10 EDI Strategy Update

Received: a report updating on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity from across the University covering activity by both Professional Services and academic colleagues.

Noted:

- i. Members also received to note and comment on, the EDI Strategy Implementation Plan; a Staff Network Group update; Academic Promotions EDI Data; a Future Leaders EDI presentation; the Draft Annual Equality Report; and the Draft Gender, Ethnicity, Disability, Sexual Orientation Pay Gap Report. Copies of the final reports,

which will include narrative descriptions to support the data, will be circulated to the Committee later in the year.

- ii. As an update, based on discussions at the last meeting, a working group has been established, sponsored by the Director of EDI and the Director of IT, which will focus on digital equity and accessibility for staff and students. Further developments on this programme of activity, including expected timeline(s) for completion/achieving compliance, will be brought back to the Committee.
- iii. Discussions were held around staff network Chairs, and how best to encourage people to take up these roles. It was acknowledged that this could be difficult, in the main because staff were taking on the role in addition to their substantive posts, but that each network differs. Support is provided by the central EDI team, and more work was being carried out to encourage both PS and academic staff to consider the roles.
- iv. One member noted that they had been approached by a PG student at a recent event to discuss disabled facilities on campus and how access to these could be improved.
- v. Members discussed how the University was responding to the impact of Israel & Gaza Conflict on staff and students. This included messages of support to both staff & students; and providing safe spaces for listening – here, the VP - Social Responsibility, Director Student Experience, Students Union Director of Student Engagement and Director of EDI have held listening sessions/meetings with Palestinian, Islamic and Jewish Student group/Society leads, separately, to discuss the impact on campus life. Members commented on the success of the improved communications.

Agreed:

- i. Contact Estates and Facilities regarding prioritising repairs to disabled facilities, and raise awareness of the work of DASS who provide financial support for access.
- ii. Change/progress against the metrics to be included in the narrative that accompanies the data in the Equality Information Report
- iii. Further developments on digital equity, including expected timeline(s) for completion/achieving compliance, will be brought back to the Committee.

Action for all: Director of EDI

11 Communication of change programmes

Received: a report detailing the current communications and engagement position, and future improvement plans for communications to staff during major change projects.

Noted:

- i. All communications and engagement activity across internal and change communications is monitored and evaluated monthly, and recommendations are made based on the results of the evaluation, to ensure continuous improvement and better colleague engagement.
- ii. The aim is to improve the quality of communications rather than the quantity, so colleagues feel better engaged with the University, and each other.

Agreed: An update to be provided to People Committee in 12 month's time, on progress with further staff engagement. **Action: Interim Head of Change Communications and Interim Head of Internal Communications.**

12 Athena Swan Charter Mark Submission

Received: an update on the recent submission for the Charter Mark.

Noted:

- i. The People Committee received an update on the recent submission for the Athena Swan (AS) Gender Equality Charter Silver award.
- ii. AS supports the University to address gender inequalities and fosters greater inclusivity for students and staff of all gender identities, in all areas, at all levels and in all aspects of work and study practice and culture.
- iii. The University has held an AS bronze award since 2008. All 9 Schools in the University also hold AS awards (5 Silver, 4 Bronze).
- iv. The AS Silver application was prepared through extensive consultation with our staff and student community, provides evidence of gender equality progress with impact, identifies remaining challenges and sets out a clear action plan with ambitious stretch targets.
- v. Work is being carried out with partners in India and Brazil, to help to embed similar Chartermarks. One of the next steps in the programme is to link to the University's Internationalisation strategy and links to the Global Development Institute were suggested.
- vi. Discussions were held regarding the Bicentenary celebrations, and links to promoting this success and fundraising for future projects. Members also discussed links with Board members who could assist with the ambitious action plan.
- vii. All members were enthusiastic in their support of the ambitious action plan and congratulated all those involved in the successful application for the silver award.

Agreed:

- i. Board members contact details to be shared with Professor Rachel Cowan
Action: Governance Manager
- ii. Board of Governors to be updated on the Chartermark achievements at the P&OD/EDI briefing in the March meeting of the Board. **Action: Director of P&OD**

14 AOB

- i. Members asked for a recording of the lecture that Nancy Rothwell was giving to students on the Educational Leadership in Practice (ELiP) programme to be shared with them. **Action: Governance Manager**
- ii. One member raised an issue that had been raised with them at a women's health event regarding paid time off for medical appointments and a query as to what staff University were entitled to. Contact to be made with this individual to advise them of their rights. **Action: Director of EDI**

15 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 1 May 2024