

**Minutes of the Meeting of the College Council held on 27 September 2017, 17.00
Room 5.15, James Clerk Maxwell Building, Waterloo Campus**

Present:

Sir Christopher Geidt (Chairman); Baroness Morgan of Huyton (Vice-Chair); Professor Edward Byrne (President and Principal); Mr Michael D'Souza; Dr Angela Dean; The Hon Sir David Foskett; Mr Paul Goswell; Professor Sir Robert Lechler; Mr Chris Mottershead; Mr Momin Saqib; Mr Andrew Summers; Dr Ian Tebbett; Ms Nhuoc Lan Tu; Professor Evelyn Welch; and Professor the Baroness Alison Wolf.

Apologies: Professor Brian Holden Reid; Ms Ros King; The Right Reverend Dame Sarah Mullally; and Sir Nigel Sheinwald.

In attendance:

Presentations by the Senior Team on strategic priorities (Item 7b)

Professor Jonathan Grant, Vice President & Vice-Principal (Service)

Professor Ian McFadzean, Interim Vice President & Vice-Principal (Education)

Dr 'Funmi Olonisakin, Vice President & Vice-Principal (International)

Professor Reza Razavi, Vice President & Vice-Principal (Research)

Ms Deborah Bull, Assistant Principal (London)

Ms Tessa Harrison, Director, Students & Education

Mr Steve Large, Vice President (Finance) *(for item 7b & 8)*

Ms Sarah Guerra, Director of Diversity & Inclusion

Mr John Lauwerys *(for item 6a)*

KCLSU sabbatical officers (for item 3)

Ms Rahma Hussein, VP for Activities & Development

Ms Tayyaba Rafiq, VP for Education (Arts & Sciences)

Mr Yusef El-T, VP for Education (Health)

Mr Mahamed Abdullahi, Vice-President, Postgraduate

Secretariat:

Ms Irene Birrell, College Secretary

Ms Joanna Brown, Governance Manager

1 Opening Apologies and Notices

The Chairman welcomed Momin Saqib to his first Council meeting as President of the KCLSU.

2 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

3 KCLSU Current Issues [KCC_17_09_27_3]

The Council received a report from the President of King's College London Student Union (KCLSU), followed by a presentation from each of the KCLSU sabbatical officers. In his update to his written report, Mr Saqib noted that Denmark Hill students historically communicated disappointment at not studying at a central London site and that developing dedicated student union space at that campus was a positive and important project.

During the presentation, each sabbatical officer set out their reason for choosing to study at

King's, their experience to date and their three priorities. There were recurring themes of mental health, financial support, diversity and inclusion, academic experience, cultural awareness, and the refugee sanctuary programme. The sabbatical officers stated positive aims of being ambassadors that King's could be proud of, and that this be a year of delivery on the planning that had taken place in previous years. They were keen that students be more involved in issues of finance and academic experience.

The Chairman thanked the KCLSU sabbatical officers for their interesting presentations and for their advocacy of these important issues. Council wanted to see progress on all of these areas. In terms of the issue of financial support for those students of low economic background, it was established that sabbatical officers were concerned about all such students who did not wish to deal with interest-based loans; having to work substantial hours to pay for studies had an impact on student experience. It was suggested that the next Council meeting agenda include an item on student mental health.

Decision

The Council **approved** a suggestion that the next Council agenda include an item on student mental health.

4 Unanimous Consent Agenda [KCC_17__09_27_4]

Decisions

- (a) The reports on the Unanimous Consent Agenda were taken as read and **noted**.
- (b) The Council **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 June 2017.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes [KCC_17__09_27_5]

The Council noted the actions agreed in previous meetings and that all had been completed or would be completed within the agreed timeframe.

It was requested that Council minutes be circulated as soon as possible after each meeting as a matter of practice, rather than with the agenda of the next meeting.

6 Report of the Chairman

(a) Governance Review – Member Survey Results [KCC_17_09_27_6a]

John Lauwerys, governance consultant and former Secretary & Registrar of the University of Southampton, presented key findings from the survey of members. Mr Lauwerys acknowledged that being a member of a university governing body was a challenging job, and commended members for their helpful, in-depth and considered responses to the survey. He noted that the issues raised were not atypical of the higher education sector and highlighted the following recurring themes:

- Understanding to whom and for what Council is accountable. University accountabilities are multi-varied and sometimes conflicting.
- Understanding the distinction between governance and management. The primary job of the Council is to hold the executive to account and make sure it delivered on the strategic vision.
- Lack of understanding about academic governance. Traditionally, university governing bodies have delegated academic governance to the senate or equivalent senior academic body. However, governors are now being made accountable for academic effectiveness by regulatory bodies.
- The need for more time for in-depth, strategic discussion was a common one across

university governing bodies.

- Being able to provide constructive challenge to the executive. A confident executive would always welcome constructive challenge and would recognise that this was fundamental to good governance.
- The role of the Chairman's Committee. In terms of university governance, King's Chairman's Committee was unusual, and there was concern that it could be viewed as usurping Council's role.
- Senior Executive Remuneration. Every governing body should be comfortable that the decisions being made by their Remuneration Committees were entirely justifiable, and therefore best practice was that it report directly to the governing body.
- Comments about diversity issues and the Nominations Committee processes not being transparent should be addressed. There were existing examples of best practice in the sector that could be explored.
- A good induction process for new governing body members was very important.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- The role of the Chairman's Committee should be diminished. If the full Council is well-briefed, the committee should not be needed in its current form.
- The composition of the staff members of Council was extraordinarily senior in comparison to some other university governing bodies and while this meant Council had the benefit of their knowledge about the breadth of university activities, it perhaps lacked a grass roots point of view.
- The survey responses had not highlighted a clear distinction between staff and lay member views.
- King's governing body was on the smaller size – any smaller and it would be difficult to achieve a good breadth of skills and experience. A governing body membership of 20 was considered good, and the maximum recommended by the Code of Good Governance was 25. King's membership was currently at 19 (with vacancies).
- Mr Lauwerys considered that King's College Council had a good balance of lay versus staff members. A smaller number of lay members could potentially lead to quorum issues.
- Mr Lauwerys clarified that no member of a governing body, including student members, should be there as a representative with a mandated view; this would be contrary to good governance.
- King's practice of its Nominations Committee putting new member names to Council had advantages over an Academic Board election system as it was better able to ensure diversity and balance.
- About half of the respondents had indicated they were uncertain or only partially in agreement with questions which flagged that work was needed to improve understanding. An example was given of the KCL risk register, which was fully operational but clearly needed to be made more visible to Council Members.
- Some of the issues that had been highlighted were already being tackled, for example providing more succinct papers with executive summaries. Some issues were particularly challenging given the limited amount of time. Issues would need to be prioritised keeping in mind time commitments of governing body members.
- Sub-Committee transparency to Council was important in order to ensure Council confidence in holding the executive to account.
- The practice of having independent members on committees who were not Council members was good practice in terms of succession planning, but again, there was an issue of appropriate balance with Council member representation on committees.

With the permission of the Chairman, Mr Lauwerys remained to observe the rest of the meeting.

(b) Application for University Title [KCC_17_09_27_6b]

The Council noted a paper setting out the steps to be taken in the application for King's to be granted university title. As previously agreed by Council, the application is the change in title only, not in name.

(c) Remuneration Committee [KCC_17_09_27_6c]

The Chairman reported on the role and procedures of the Remuneration Committee. He confirmed that King's Remuneration Committee had not met since 2016, and was scheduled to meet on 3 October 2017, at which meeting it would review the HEFCE circular issued in June 2017 along with other available guidance. The Remuneration Committee would also be receiving input from a consultant with expertise in executive remuneration matters. The Chairman confirmed that the Principal was not a member of King's Remuneration Committee. He did attend meetings to present information about remuneration and performance of senior staff and to present his own annual self-assessment report, but was not in attendance when his own remuneration was being discussed.

The Chairman further confirmed that, along with other Council sub-committees, as part of the governance review, the Remuneration Committee would be reviewing its own terms of reference and procedures in light of advice received. One area needing improvement already identified by the Chairman and the College Secretary was the Committee's reporting procedure. A Remuneration Committee report would be brought to the next meeting of the College Council.

(d) Ordinance Amendments [KCC_17_09_27_6d]

The Council received a report setting out minor amendments to the College's Ordinances, proper notice of which had been given at the Council meeting of 29 June 2017, in accordance with Ordinance B1.

Decision

The Council **approved** the minor amendments to the College's Ordinances as set out in the report.

7 Report of the President & Principal

(a) Summary Report on Key Issues [KCC_17_09_27_7a]

The Council considered the Principal's report on key issues. The Principal proposed that going forwards, any matters which a member of the senior team considered the Council ought to be aware of be attached to his report as an appendix, with questions on them raised either at the meeting or outside the meeting, as appropriate. The Principal took his report as read and updated the Council that:

- The PLuS Alliance partnership was an exciting opportunity for King's to be in partnership with two other global leading research universities, each very different and providing many learning opportunities for King's.
- King's was exploring opportunities to collaborate in higher education in China and Council would be invited to discuss and approve plans in the months ahead as partnerships emerged.

- Moves to Bush House had gone well to date, though Bush House was not yet fully open. The South East building would be completed later than originally planned in order to address issues around fire integrity which would also likely incur additional costs. Completion was anticipated in spring 2018.

The following matters were highlighted by Members in discussion:


- Appendix B – King’s Math’s School: Council Members would be put on the King’s Maths School newsletter distribution list.
- Appendix K – King’s Health Partners: Professor Sir Robert Lechler informed the Council that conversations were continuing with the Royal Brompton Hospital Board about King’s bid to collectively manage congenital heart disease in London. It was planned to issue a joint public statement of intent in November 2017, which was expected to attract attention and would be carefully managed.

(b) Updates on Strategic Priorities [KCC_17__09_27_7b]

The Principal gave a high-level overview of issues and progress on strategic priorities, followed by presentations from the senior team on Vision 2029 strategies.

During the presentations the additional key points were made:

High-level overview – Principal Ed Byrne

- The external image of the King’s brand was strong but a great deal of work was still needed around student satisfaction and the fragmentation of the institution.
- Financially, King’s was in a much stronger position than three to four years ago and that was partly down to bringing in a contribution model with executive deans, but more work was needed to grow the entrepreneurial spirit.
- There had been limited strategic IT investment in recent times and this had contributed to poor professional support. Investment was in process but more was needed.
- The Bush House acquisition had improved the Strand campus and King’s profile in London. The focus had been on teaching and student social space over office space. Further estates investment would be required for King’s to retain its place in the top 25 universities in the world, for example more space for health research was needed.
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- Diversity and inclusion was another area that needed attention and work in improving this area had begun.
- A lot of effort was going into understanding the teaching excellence framework and the student experience with the ambition of King’s pedagogy being state of the art. Currently the undergraduate education model was not completely fit for purpose and there was a need for structural, in-depth change. There was felt to be a lack of internal cohesion and too much choice of modules.

Education – Professor Ian McFadzean and Tessa Harrison

- Underperformance had been reflected in league tables and in the TEF. The award of silver TEF had been welcomed and was seen as fair.
- There were challenges ahead in turning things around and living up to Vision 2029, with a need to look hard at how King’s delivered on its education responsibilities.
- Everyone involved in teaching would need to take a critical look at what they do, and

how and why.

- The Programme Administration Change Transformation (PACT) was a critical, robust procedure in place to support students and staff, including career progression of professional services staff.
- Prime responsibility for improvement was being put at the local departmental level, using not just the NSS, but a wide array of data sources. Steps had been taken for individual departments to provide assessments of what TEF outcome they were likely to achieve at local level.
- The Education Strategy had a medium to long-term outlook. This year was about focussing on enabling foundations, for example creating space in the curriculum for creatively adding value by reducing modules and programmes, and reducing over-assessment.
- Focus was also being given to priorities for first year students. A key priority was mental health and student services would work on this with the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IOPPN).
- Issues for immediate attention were: (1) Personal tutors meeting their first-year students by the end of October; (2) Lecturers turning up for timetabled lectures with Deans being informed where that was not happening; (3) Supporting the student union and student leaders across the faculties; (4) Deans reminding academics of using the first point of assessment as a place to add value to the education experience.

Research – Professor Reza Razavi

- King's was on a positive trajectory regarding grant income but others were doing better. For example, Edinburgh University's grant levels were twice that of King's. This was partly due to a reliance at King's on the health faculties to deliver research funding, while the number of academics in those areas had fallen. The biomedical sciences were doing better, but recruitment of academics and post-graduate researchers in science and engineering was tough, and was exacerbated by European Union issues.
- It was important to celebrate successes but also necessary to start having conversations with underperformers about improvement.
- Impact was going to be an increasingly important part of the REF process.
- There would be more focus on inter-disciplinary work and in supporting faculties to deliver high level research while ensuring that the student experience benefits from research.
- PhD student numbers were low compared to competitors.

Service – Professor Jonathan Grant

- In the past decade, the benefit of universities had mainly been articulated in economic terms. That King's puts service on a par with education and research sets King's apart.
- An audit across King's had demonstrated that there were over 200 examples of what King's already did regarding service activity, one example of which was PhD students visiting prisons and introducing inmates to philosophy.
- The challenge was to take the language in the Vision 2029 document and the enthusiasm in the service agenda across the whole of King's. King's community needed to be informed about and celebrate service that was already happening, and this would further engender big initiatives and ideas.

International – Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin

- External drivers related to Brexit and the changing international environment could

provide a massive opportunity. Vision 2029 was an opportunity to think about internationalization in a very different way.

- Internally, the issue of the student experience has recurred again and again in discussions about internationalisation.
- Internationalisation of the curriculum would mean different things in different departments in terms of giving students an experience that truly broadens their minds.
- We need to learn more about the institution, for example knowing about lecturers already doing innovative things. “Learning from below” should be a core value at King’s, and was integral to internationalisation.

London – Ms Deborah Bull

- The London framework was in its infancy. The idea was to use the geographical location of King’s to improve the student experience. London could be difficult for students and so a strategy was needed to mitigate that. It was not about connecting with London in and of itself, rather it was a way of delivering education, research and service (in a similar way to the international strategy).
- There was a ‘London’ champion in each faculty, and supporting faculty plans was a priority.
- King’s ‘London’ stories would be told, and indeed the first edition of a publication called [‘London Stories’](#) would be launched the following week and circulated to Council Members.
- Relationships were being built with other London universities and a main priority was King’s Local Partnerships.
- Other priority areas were supporting faculties, fostering a relationship with the Greater London Authority, drawing on global connections to deliver local benefits, and embedding champion roles.

From this point on the Vice-Chair was in the Chair.

Issues raised in the discussion that followed included:

- The ambition to grow the student base, [REDACTED], was not fixed, but King’s, as a great research university, needed a critical mass of students to help support its research, which in turn enriched the student experience.
- A member raised a concern about the use of Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey (NSS) metrics as KPIs, not only because of student concern around the NSS and its intended use in relation to fees, but because the NSS and TEF data were unreliable and simply not good data.
- Members were hearing consistently that King’s needed to up its game on education. It was acknowledged that there were pockets of excellence, but that much needed to be done to make this university-wide. If the undergraduate experience was not excellent there could be a long-term impact on funds. It was suggested that the immediate-term objectives for the education strategy implementation needed to be more ambitious.
- Regarding the TEF, and the question of going for gold, it was pointed out that TEF was highly politicized and that obtaining a silver did not truly relate to metrics of student experience. Some areas of King’s were still a bronze although the university had achieved a solid silver overall. Given that TEF used a rolling average and that King’s TEF results were the lowest in the Russell Group and fifth lowest in the country, gold would not be achievable in the next three years.
- It was proposed that metrics showed the post-graduate experience as more positive

because these students were already prepared for university life, and their programmes tended to be smaller and focussed on issues the students were passionate about.

Council Members were encouraged to seek individual briefings from members of the senior team on any of the strategy areas.

8 Tuition Fees for 2018-2019

The Council considered a report on tuition fees for 2018-2019. The Council was recommended to approve tuition fees for home/EU undergraduates for the 2018/19 academic year. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- While there had been speculation about tuition fees in the press, King's had a responsibility to prospective students to provide sufficient advanced notice of fees they may be required to pay. The current government policy for universities participating in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was to allow tuition fees to increase by the rate of inflation and that was what was proposed.
- The Council was requested to take into account the wider reputational factors of perceived quality following a decision to either increase or not increase fees.
- The Council was reminded that in November 2016 it had agreed to increase tuition fees to £9250 for students commencing their studies in 2017/18, but with a caveat to return to the issue of tuition fees for future cohorts.
- Subject to the Government confirming the tuition fee cap for 2018/2019, Council was recommended to approve the higher fee cap (expected to be £9500) for all home/EU undergraduates commencing their programme of study from 2018/2019 onwards, and for returning students who commenced their programme of study in 2017/2018. Fees for subsequent years would rise in line with inflation subject to meeting the relevant quality and eligibility thresholds, and any revised tuition fee cap. Students who commenced their programme of study prior to 2017/2018 would continue to pay tuition fees of £9000 for the duration of their period of study, as they entered the system on the understanding that fees would not be raised.
- The timing of any announcement on King's tuition fees would be considered carefully, and if the Government revised its position then King's would revise its announcement accordingly.

The KCLSU President referred back to the presentations made by KCLSU sabbatical officers at the beginning of the meeting and made a plea that the Council consider self-funded students from lower income backgrounds before making a decision to increase tuition fees. He quoted King's Strategic Vision 2029 promising equal access and support. In November 2016, the Council had agreed that a review would take place before the end of the following year before applying any further increase and he queried to what extent there had been a consultation with students as part of this fee setting process. Finally, Mr Saqib proposed that if Council went forward with the report's recommendation, an exemption be included for self-funded students.

It was noted that establishing different fee rates for different sets of students would cause difficulties. The issues affecting self-funded students could be looked at, however, and the Vice President (Finance) offered to discuss Mr Saqib's concerns further with him. He pointed out that not all unfunded students had financial need. More targeted bursary and scholarship programmes might be a better solution. The Vice-Chair proposed that the motion be agreed with the condition that the issue of self-funded students from low income

backgrounds be re-visited.

Decision

With the proviso of management looking into the issue of unfunded students, and subject to Government confirming the tuition fee cap for 2018/19, the Council **approved** the higher fee cap (expected to be £9500) to all home/EU undergraduates commencing their programme of study from 2018/2019 onwards, and for returning students who commenced their programme of study in 2017/2018. Fees for subsequent years would increase in line with inflation subject to meeting the relevant quality and eligibility thresholds, and any revised tuition fee cap. Students who commenced their programme of study prior to 2017/2018 would continue to pay £9000 fees for the duration of their period of study.

9 Reports of Committees [KCC_17_08_27_9]

(a) Report of the Nominations Committee [KCC_17_09_27_9a]

Decisions

- (a) Council **approved** the membership and terms of reference of the Governance Committee.
- (b) Council **approved** the appointment of Sir Nigel Sheinwald for a second, three-year term, effective 1 August 2017.

(b) Report of the Estates Strategy Committee [KCC_17_09_27_9b]

Under the unanimous consent agenda, the Council received for information and **noted** the report of matters for the attention of Council considered by the Committee on 13 September 2017:

- Strand Quad Development 2017-2020 and 21st Century Engineering
- Strategy Development Process
- Health & Safety: College Wide Fire Safety Report
- Special Projects Update
- Committee Terms of Reference and Governance Review update
- Student Accommodation Satisfaction Survey
- Major Projects Programme Level Report – King's Managed & King's Funded
- Operations and Performance Update
- Sustainability Report
- Ongoing Estates Matters

10 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Irene Birrell
College Secretary
September 2017