
College Council Minutes – Approved

Date	18 March 2019, 17.00
Location	The Council Room (Room K2.29), Strand Campus
Present	Lord Geidt (Chair); Baroness Morgan of Huyton (Vice-Chair); Professor Edward Byrne (President and Principal); Dr Angela Dean; Sir David Foskett; Mr Paul Goswell; Professor Brian Holden Reid; Ms Ros King; Mr Ahad Mahmood; The Right Reverend and Right Hon. Dame Sarah Mullally; Mr Andrew Summers; Dr Ian Tebbett, and Ms Nhuoc Lan Tu.
Apologies	Mr Michael D’Souza; Sir Nigel Sheinwald; Professor Evelyn Welch, Professor the Baroness Alison Wolf and Baroness Bull (standing attendee)
In attendance	<p>Standing attendees: Professor Sir Robert Lechler, Senior Vice President & Provost (Health) Mr Chris Mottershead, Senior Vice President (Quality, Strategy & Innovation) Professor Jonathan Grant, Vice President & Vice-Principal (Service) Professor Nicola Phillips, Vice President & Vice-Principal (Education) Mr Steve Large, Vice President (Finance)</p> <p>Secretariat: Ms Irene Birrell, College Secretary Ms Xan Kite, Director of Governance Mr Paul Mould, Director of Business Assurance</p> <p>In attendance for Item 6.4 (KBS External Funding Opportunity) Professor Stephen Bach, Executive Dean of King’s Business School Ms Jennie Younger, Executive Director of Fundraising & Support Development</p>

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- 1 Welcome, apologies and notices**
The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

 - 2 Approval of agenda**
Council approved the agenda.

 - 3 Unanimous Consent Agenda (including Minutes of the Previous Meeting)** [KCC-19-03-18-03.1]
Decision
That the reports on the Unanimous Consent Agenda, including the minutes of the 24 January 2019 meeting and the Actions Log, be taken as read and noted or approved.

 - 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes**
There were no matters arising.

 - 5 Report of the Chair**
None
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6 Report of the President & Principal

Items for Consideration

6.1 Summary Report on Key Issues [KCC-19-03-18-06.1]

The report of the Principal outlined key current issues, providing the following updates to his written report:

- Selection panels for academic staff were reporting very high quality candidates showing that interest in joining the College remained high in spite of Brexit. Preparations were being made for a range of different Brexit outcomes.
- The Dean, The Revd Canon Professor Richard Burridge, a distinguished biblical scholar, was retiring after 25 years' service. He would keep a connection to the university as a visiting professor.
- The Quad project had received sign off at all levels and was underway. There had also been a series of new appointments in the Engineering School. The rejuvenation of the Macadam building and the new space proposed for the Quad project would all be readily adaptable to a range of teaching types and programmes.. The Chair of the Estates Strategy Committee noted that one of the conditions of the approval for the project, the establishment of a borrowing facility, still needed to be completed. It was noted that a proposal would be put to Council under the Finance Committee's report.
- The Augar Review was expected to have a slow journey through Parliament. It was felt that its recommendations as currently understood should not impact the university beyond what had already been calculated.
- The Government had been supportive of the PLuS Engineering project, which was proceeding well.
- Trade Union Activity and Pay: The ballot for a strike over the national pay settlement had been unsuccessful. Work on improving relationships was ongoing with the unions and staff. It could be reported that the lowest paid staff had received a 5% increase in pay rather than 2%. The gender pay gap would be helped considerably by the implementation of the professorial pay band.
- There had been a long discussion at the Russell Group Board meeting about the USS Pensions matter and the Chair of USS Trustees had addressed the meeting. There was disappointment with the position taken by the Trustees but institutions were being pragmatic and were hoping to achieve the lower bookmark
- King's was now regarded as working well with the Jewish community despite difficulties in the past with Israeli events at the university. King's policy was to let people speak, to allow protests, but to build in appropriate protections to ensure that events were able to proceed and with due regard to the safety of all involved. The most recent event had been well managed and had receive positive responses from the Jewish community. A few students had over-stepped the mark by blocking others from entering the venue, and were facing potential university disciplinary action. This week was Israeli Apartheid Week. The university did not support the concept but in the interests of freedom of speech did permit students to hold events related to it. There was a particular higher education theme to Israeli Apartheid Week this year with protests focusing on links with Israeli universities. King's and Manchester University had being singled out, despite the fact that King's had relationships with many institutions across the Middle East. A member encouraged being proactive in dealing with protests, particularly given the current rise of the far right.
- Times Higher Education results: King's had improved dramatically in the physical sciences and King's Business School was already in the top 100.
- KCLSU election: The Council has oversight obligations with respect to KCLSU. The independent KCLSU Returning Officer had received complaints alleging electoral irregularities and this was being investigated through the appropriate channels. The Returning Officer believed the election to have been free and fair and that the results should stand, and results had been released on Friday 14 March by email. The KCLSU President provided a background summary of events and elaborated further during his report to Council towards the end of the meeting.
- The Principal had received lots of emails from students who felt distress following the devastating event that had taken place in New Zealand at the end of the previous week and stated strong support with them and with the Muslim community in general. He took on board suggestions to consider the provision of additional security and a robust review to ensure the university was not inadvertently doing anything that could be construed as feeding into Islamophobic narratives.

At this point in proceedings, the meeting was interrupted by a student anti-Israeli-apartheid demonstration and a letter was presented to the Principal. After ten minutes the demonstrators left and the meeting proceeded.

6.2 Curriculum 2029 [KCC-19-03-18-06.2]

The Vice-Principal (Education) introduced the report for Council discussion. The report provided a summary of the Curriculum 2029 project, which was a component of the Education Strategy for Vision 2029. The project addressed design and development of curriculum.

Interdisciplinarity in research had become standard in the higher education sector, but education had not followed suit. King's 100 group - a group of 100 students who provided advice to the administration on all sorts of matters - had met the previous week. About 80 percent of King's students wanted these kind of opportunities and Curriculum 2029 would allow King's to grow those ambitions and meet student demand. The project stopped short of making

interdisciplinary degrees compulsory; students who wanted to focus on one area of study would still be able to do so. However, there was scope to reconsider this in future.

A considerable transformation in systems and processes would be needed in order to manage the proposed interdisciplinary offering, including a new state of the art curriculum management system. Upgrades in academic advising would also be essential in order to help students navigate the programmes. There would be a marketing challenge in packaging King's offering. While King's would not be unique in creating a more interdisciplinary curriculum, the offer would be distinctive and we would need to ensure prospective students understood the advantages of it.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The Vice-Principal's team was embarking on market research to test the importance of a common King's style across the university and the challenges in that in terms of substance and in terms of getting in place the necessary harmonisation in the way that things were done across the university. For example there was currently variation in things like term dates as well as more major things like assessment and approaches to timetabling and allocating fee income across the university. It was anticipated that a lot of consultation would be needed to identify and mitigate barriers, while keeping in mind that the timeline of 2020 was quite short.
- In terms of substance and whether students who graduated with a minor in interdisciplinary studies would have sufficient heft in the market, the same challenges needed to be overcome as arose in research: specific language and prerequisites, for example. Faculties and departments would have to start thinking now about how they would open up their programmes.
- It was recognised that the introduction of interdisciplinary courses could increase the likelihood of students wanting to change programmes, and this was one of the challenges faced. There was already a process in place for students who wanted to switch courses after their first year, although this system did have room for improvement. It was hoped that using the first year as a transition year would make these kinds of changes easier.
- In terms of buy-in, the commentary on Curriculum 2029 had been very positive but there were high levels of anxiety about its operationalisation and the need for systems improvement.
- It was noted that it used to be very common for students to do a compulsory subsidiary programme, and that the best place to do that was the first year, should there be a future decision to make it compulsory that students have at least one module outside their regular programme.
- There was a query about offering a Service module, and Council were informed of a recent curriculum innovation contest which had surfaced some very diverse and imaginative proposals for a Service module. A dozen of these modules had funding to be developed over the next year, and it was hoped that in six to seven years' time many could be offered. It was noted that Service modules would be connected to academic studies and would be assessed.

6.3 Expanding Educational Provision [KCC-19-03-18-06.3]

The Vice-Principal (Education) introduced the report which provided a summary on the remit, scope and future direction of four cross-cutting educational areas at King's.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- There were increasing opportunities for students with the growth of on-line and summer school enrolments.
- This project was about expanding the range of King's educational offer and the diversity of groups of students to whom King's was able to offer core education. It was not about add-on or commercial venture, and it was acknowledged that a culture change was needed in order to embrace this understanding of different types of delivery of education. The challenge for the future was making sure that everything that King's did in education took this into account, as well as the traditional model.
- When King's Online started, it was 10th or 11th in the UK, as measured by a number of Masters programs. Within three years King's had more students enrolled in on-line masters than any other university in the UK. The Senior Vice President (Operations) chaired a group that worked to ensure high level of quality in online offerings.
- Feedback was provided that the focus of this paper, and its use of KPIs, was a good example of what Council members would like to see more of.

6.4



[REDACTED]

6.5 Freedom of Expression [KCC-19-03-18-06.5]

The Vice-Principal (Service) introduced the report which set out the various activities that had been put in place over the past 12-18 months to secure Freedom of Expression at King's. It was believed that King's was still the only institution in the UK with a statement, which positioned King's as thought leaders in this area. King's had been commended for its approach, but was also a target. He stated that the 'four freedoms' (free speech, the freedom to protest, academic freedom and freedom from hate) were very helpful, but there would inevitably be times they would be in tension with one another.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The VP (Service) was commended on working to solve a difficult problem and turning it to a benefit; in the inspiring example of working across functions at King's, and in the work that had been done in spreading the word via conferences and press articles.
- The Student Union was also commended in working with the university to tackle these difficult issues.
- The University of Chicago was still tougher than King's in its position on free speech; its only barrier was legality. King's was focusing on presenting students with robust and different points of view as part of the education proposition.
- The KCLSU President stated how it was necessary for King's to pioneer its own way in the UK because of its own particular landscape, and that one of the reasons this project was working well was that there remained a focus on diversity and inclusion as part of the discussion.
- A member encouraged going further, stating that one of the challenges in the present landscape was how to disagree in a civil society where polarised views coexisted. The VP (Service) stated that discussions were already underway with King's Online about developing a MOOC on disagreeing well. The member suggested aiming for a slightly more positive focus on "appreciative disagreement" rather than simply learning how to disagree.

7 Reports of the Committees

7.1 Academic Board [KCC-19-03-18-07.1]

Items for Consideration

(i) **Academic Board Review – Commentary on further recommendations**

The Principal introduced the report of the Academic Board and noted that there had been enthusiasm for the idea that some members of Council be elected from the Academic Board.

(ii) **Retirement Policy Review Update** (*Removed from the Consent Agenda*)

The Principal reported that there was the beginning of a discussion at the Academic Board on retirement age, and that it was a bottom up rather than a top down discussion. There was clearly a need for high performers to continue to work as long as they like but there was also a generational fairness issue. Academic Board would be leading this discussion in a facilitative way, and it was expected that this would lead to establishing a retirement age policy with appropriate caveats.

Items on Consent (all noted)

(iii) *Academic Board Standing Committees terms of reference*

(iv) *Academic Calendar for King's Online Managed Programme*

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- (v) *Principal's report and briefings on: Portfolio Simplification; and Curriculum 2029*
 - (vi) *Report of the College Education Committee*
 - (vii) *Report of the College Research Committee*
 - (viii) *Report of the College International Committee*
 - (ix) *Quinquennial Reviews (Department of Film Studies and Department of Physics)*
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The report of the Governance & Nominations Committee [KCC-19-03-18-07.2] was deferred until the end of the meeting as it required the Chair to leave the meeting because of a conflict of interest.

7.2 Report of the Estates Strategy Committee [KCC-19-03-18-07.3]

Items on Consent (all noted)

- (i) *Strategic Outline Case for the St Thomas' Education Centre (to note)*
 - (ii) *Report of the Director of Estates and Facilities*
 - (iii) *Philosophy for Delivering for Vision 2029*
 - (iv) *Vacation of the James Clerk Maxwell Building*
 - (v) *Centre for Translational Informatics*
 - (vi) *St Thomas' House swap*
 - (vii) *152-158 Strand*
 - (viii) *Student Residences Update*
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7.3 Report of the Finance Committee [KCC-19-03-18-07.4]

Items for Consideration

Dr Angela Dean, introduced the Finance Committee report.

(i) Revolving Credit Facility

The acquisition of the facility was a condition set by Council in January 2019 for its approval of the Strand Engineering Project. Dr Dean explained that a revolving credit facility (RCF) was a flexible debt tool that could be drawn down as needed. It was not to be drawn to support additional capital expenditure. It was very much a safety net to help manage any short-term liquidity issues in the context of a more challenging external funding environment, and it was hoped that it would not be needed. The Vice President (Finance) had originally recommended a five-year £50M RCF with Santander or NatWest banks, but after discussion, the Finance Committee had determined that a larger facility of £75M should be pursued, perhaps split between the two banks. Negotiations were ongoing but the CFO had made progress, and had gone through various credit checks, and the split between NatWest and Santander would likely be £35/£40M. If approved as requested it could be in place by mid-April.

Council was in support of the recommendation but did re-emphasise the need to continue to closely monitor the number of days' cash in the bank. The Vice President (Finance) concurred and confirmed close scrutiny and stated that the longer term investment plan was also being reviewed, including a review of 90-days cash stipulation which, in his view, was high given the overall budget of the institution.

Decision

That a short-term revolving credit facility (RCF) of £75M be approved and that the Vice President (Finance) be authorised to agree the RCF with Santander and NatWest Banks.

(ii) Pensions Update

This report was noted as presented.

(iii) Revisions to the Financial Regulations

This report was noted as presented.

Items on Consent (all noted)

- (iv) *President's Report*
 - (v) *Financial Forecasts*
 - (vi) *Capital Planning and Financing*
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7.4 Report of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee [KCC-19-03-18-07.5]

Items on Consent (all noted)

- (i) *Preparations for Brexit*
 - (ii) *Internal Audit Work*
 - (iii) *Publicising the Way Student Fees are Spent*
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- (iv) *Enterprise Risk Management*
 - (v) *Compliance Management*
 - (vi) *Risk Topic: The Service Strategy*
 - (vii) *Risk Topic: Education and Research mission in the Health Faculties*
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7.5 Report of the Chair's Committee – RESERVED ITEM [KCC-19-03-18-07.6]



8 Report of the KCLSU President

The KCLSU President presented an update on his report. He stated that the KCLSU focus had been on delivering its strategy. There had been a very good participation rate for the survey, and responses were currently being analysed. KCLSU was currently in the middle of accountability procedures and developing better ways of holding officers to account. Ways of improving transition were being explored so that the new sabbatical officers could become fully effectively more quickly, and different options were being looked at for better research on issues and students' concerns.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- With respect to the notion of ensuring a student had a maximum of three exams per week, it was asked whether this was normal in the sector, and if there was any quantitative data about exam numbers and student stress. It was noted that it would be the remit of the College Education Committee to take such a policy decision, and it involved more than Timetabling. Examination timings was a perennial issue with competing arguments that also needed to be balanced with student welfare and mental health. There might well be good reason to stagger examinations but it was also imperative to pay attention to the academic calendar. A very large number of students and a very large number of exams had to be managed within a short time frame. One thing being explored was more diverse means of assessment and not being so heavily reliant on exams.
- There were several ways, other than exams, of simulating working life pressure. The Service Strategy, for example, would encourage students to take on more responsibilities.
- On the KCLSU target of reducing waiting times for counselling it was noted that there was a monthly meeting between sabbaticals and counselling services. There were attempts to make sure that there were other options beyond counselling services on which students could rely. Faculties and departments had been putting measures in place that had had impact. The Mental Health Strategy had only recently been launched so its impact was yet to be determined but there was a sense that progress was being made. The VP (Education) clarified that there was a well-functioning triage system that dealt with the most acute cases quickly. The Principal stated that this was a further area in which King's had achieved a national leading position. The recently launched Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy not only dealt with service delivery and support but also contributed in-depth analysis and research to a growing problem for young people. There was more to do, but progress was being made. The Senior Vice President (Operations) reported that the fact that students were declaring issues more frequently and sooner meant that the number of cases had increased.
- The recent election issue was discussed in more depth. As mentioned during the Principal's report, the KCLSU elections for next year's sabbatical officers had taken place on Thursday, 7 March, following which there had been allegations of misconduct against several candidates including some who had been elected to sabbatical roles. It was particularly disturbing the complaints alleged harassment of women voters, a number of them women of colour, and disheartening because of the focused campaign this year to increase the number of women candidates for all roles. The allegations had been widely covered by the student press and within the National Union of Students (NUS) and had the potential to escalate to the mainstream media. Council learned that 50% of election candidates had been female but that only one third of elected candidates were women. The Returning Officer had declared the election to be free and fair based on the one complaint that had been submitted and dealt with within the one-hour window between the closing of the polls and the counting of the votes, as outlined in KCLSU Bye-Laws. However this was being challenged, as a number of additional complaints had come forward following the count. Under the KCLSU rules any complaints received subsequent to the start of the count were dealt with through the regular complaints process. Two reviews would take place: an independent review of the particular complaints and a review of the KCLSU election processes in general. The latter review would be assisted by the Director of Students & Education and the College Secretary. The Director of Students & Education had prepared a summary of the situation and this would be circulated to Council Members following the meeting. (Attached as **Annex 1**) Members were urged to refer any questions or concerns to the Vice President & Vice-Principal (Education).

9 Report of the Governance & Nominations Committee [KCC-19-03-18-07.2]

The Chair left the room for discussion of the first item.

(i) **Reappointment of Chair of Council**

The Chair of the Governance & Nominations Committee introduced the report.

Decisions:

- a) That the reappointment of the Chair of Council for a second three-year term to 31 July 2022, be approved.
 - b) That editorial updates to the College Ordinances regarding Academic Board Sub-Committees, be approved.
 - c) That the revised Terms of Reference for the Estates Strategy Committee be approved.
 - d) That the addition of a staff member to the Governance & Nominations Committee from 1 August 2019, be approved.
 - e) That the extension of membership of the student member of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee to 28 February 2020, be approved.
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Items on Consent

- (ii) Ordinances – Editorial Updates (approved)*
 - (iii) Estates Strategy Committee Terms of Reference revisions (approved)*
 - (iv) Addition of a staff member to GNC (approved)*
 - (v) ARCC – Extension of Appointment (approved)*
 - (vi) Publication of Minutes and Meeting Materials (noted)*
 - (vii) Academic Board Review Recommendations (noted)*
 - (viii) Draft Away Day Agenda Update (noted)*
 - (ix) University of London Act Update (noted)*
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10 Adjournment

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 19:30pm.

Irene Birrell

College Secretary

March 2019