

King's College Council

Meeting date 31 March 2025

Paper reference KCC-25-03-31-04.1

Status Unconfirmed

Access Members and Committee Staff Resource



Minutes

The Council is asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Date 20 January 2025, 17.00

Location Council Room, Strand

Present Lord Stevens of Birmingham (Chair); Nhuoc Lan Tu (Vice-Chair); Professor Shitij Kapur; Vivek Ahuja; Dr Natasha Awais-Dean; Tom Berry; Paul Cartwright; Sir Jon Coles; Dr Joanna Davies; Vinay Jha; Sir Ron Kerr; Steve Large; Professor Rachel Mills; Sheeba Naaz; Professor Kim Piper; Clare Sumner; Steve Weiner; Jon Zehner

Apologies Donna Catley

In attendance Malcolm Ace, CFO/Vice President (Finance)
The Rev'd Dr Ellen Clark-King, Dean of King's College London (*for the Community Story*)
Edward A. David, Director of the Associateship of King's College (*for the Community Story*)
Ujjwala Singh, LLB Student (*for the Community Story*)
Naadir Qazi, BA Student (*for the Community Story*)
Robin McIver, Deputy Vice Principal (Operations) (*for item 8*)

Secretariat Dr Sinéad Critchley, University Secretary & Director of Assurance
Christine Cartwright, Governance Manager

Community Story – The Associateship of King's College (AKC)

The Chair welcomed The Rev'd Dr Ellen Clark-King, Dean of King's College London and Edward A. David, Director of the Associateship of King's College, along with two students who were currently enrolled on the course. They presented an overview of the AKC, its content, participation rates and future plans for the course.

The Council heard from the students about their experience with the course and how it contributed to their employability prospects. The Council discussed how beneficial the course could also be for staff members and alumni, and those members present who had started or completed the course, found it an engaging and worthwhile endeavour.

1 Welcome, Apologies and Notices

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Donna Catley.

2 Declarations of Interest

The Governance team had received updates relating to the ending of two interests from two members.

Further updates were received from the Chair and the Senior Vice President (Academic).

ACTION: Secretariat to update the register of interests.

3 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

4 Unanimous Consent Agenda (including Minutes of the Previous Meeting) [KCC-25-01-20-04]

The items on the Unanimous Consent Agenda were taken as read and noted or approved as set out in the papers.

The Chair noted that the Calendar of Business was a skeleton document, to be populated with additional items following further discussion.

The Chair asked that Council be updated on the matter of mid and end of module surveys which had been discussed at Academic Board in December. The Senior Vice President (Academic) confirmed discussion was ongoing as to the use of these surveys in academic promotion.

5 Matters Arising

None were raised.

6 Report of the Chair

The Chair added his congratulations to those members of King's who had been recognised in the New Year's Honours list, including Professor Sir Bashir Al-Hashimi.

He noted that during his induction to King's he would be visiting the faculties and departments, and that members of Council would be welcome to join. Having officiated at the recent graduation ceremonies, he commended to members of Council members that they participate where possible at the summer graduation ceremonies.

He invited members of Council to contribute to the call for nominations for Fellowships and Honorary Degrees.

The Chair drew Council's attention to the upcoming changes to the The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 announced by the Secretary of State for Education.

7 Report of the Vice-Chancellor & President [KCC-25-01-20-07]

The Vice-Chancellor drew members' attention to the publication of the King's Policy Institute, '*Are universities worth it?*' by former universities minister and visiting professor, David Willetts. The Vice-Chancellor reflected on the key headlines of the report and where universities needed to take action.

Council received the Vice-Chancellor & President's report, which highlighted current issues and events which included: Admissions; fundraising; New Year's Honours and HR updates. Points raised, and updates since report circulation included:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

8.1 Committee Chairs reflections [KCC-25-01-20-08.1]

The Council discussed the following points:

-
- How Council uses its time collectively, to contribute to development of the next phase of the strategy, and to receive greater assurances on delivery, within a revised governance framework.
-

8.2 Update on Strategy 2030 [KCC-25-01-20-08.2]

The Vice-Chancellor and President introduced the Deputy Vice Principal (Operations) who would lead on the development of the new strategy.

The Deputy Vice Principal advised that at this stage, the intention was to optimise the existing King's model. A focus would remain on attracting high-quality students consistent with the existing business model.

There was also an intention to focus on growth and the ability for King's to invest, which would be measured by the operating surplus. Solely achieving growth by increasing the volume of students would place stresses on the infrastructure, and growth could also be supported through a focus on productivity measures such as space utilisation.

The Vice-Chancellor noted there was a desire to have consistent growth to enable planning and investment back into the University to keep King's as an attractive option for students and top-quality academic staff. The new Strategy would include a framework and targets against which success could and would be measured.

The Council discussed the opportunities for staff to contribute to the development of the strategy. The members noted a need for awareness of strengths and weaknesses across the University, and how these connected to whole academic missions and the portfolio choices.

The Chair noted it was important for Council members' expertise to be utilised fully in the development of the strategy and that the Vice-Chancellor and his team would do so in advance of the next meeting.

9 Report from the Governance and Nominations Committee [KCC-25-01-20-09]

The Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee presented the paper, noting that this heralded the conclusion of the implementation of the recommendations following the independent governance review.

It was noted that the Board Assurance Framework would come back to Council in March.

The Chair of the Committee noted that the contributions made by the members of the executive team as members of Council had been valuable, but it was recognised during the Governance review that King's had more senior management as a share of staff members of Council than some other London-based Russell Group universities.

The Chair of the Committee noted that the recruitment of new independent members, alongside a change in the staff members, required a renewed focus on the skills required by Council, and this should inform the recruitment and selection of all new Council members.

The Council recognised the importance of communicating its decision-making on this matter in a timely manner to the members of Academic Board and noted that this would be done before the next meeting of Academic Board.

Given the decisions to be taken potentially affected their roles, the Senior Vice President (Academic), Senior

Vice President (Operations) and Vice President (Finance) left the meeting.

The position regarding the Academic Board members of Council was clarified in discussion. There were currently three elected staff members - two academic, one professional. During the governance review the union along with management had suggested that room be made for a further two elected staff members. The Advance HE governance review had supported the appointment (rather than election) of a further two staff members to supplement the skills and needs of the Council. The Council was persuaded of the value of adding two regular (i.e. not senior management) staff members to replace two senior management members of the Council to bring additional relevant skills and expertise, and decided that the best way forward would be to select them through the already elected members of the Academic Board, with the Governance Committee specifying the particularly areas and skills that were needed from time-to-time, cognisant of the staff skills and perspectives already on the Council.

Decision:

Council approved the recommendations in the paper from the Governance and Nominations Committee (based in part on the independent governance review), including:

- **That Council would expand its membership from three to five members drawn from the elected membership of Academic Board and delegate authority to GNC to conduct the selection process and bring forward to Council recommended candidates for consideration for appointment.**
- **That Council would not pursue a change to the Statutes to amend the length of independent members' terms of office at this time and so would commence external recruitment for the requisite number of new independent members.**

Paul Cartwright would however be appointed for an exceptional third term of one year, to support the COO transition and by extension would serve one further year on the board of King's College London Mathematics School. It was noted that Donna Catley had resigned as a member of Council. To mitigate the impact of the loss of multiple independent members at one time, Council agreed that Sir Jon Coles should also be appointed for an exceptional third term of one year.

- **That Council would revise its standing committees to the following from 1 April 2025, with terms of reference presented to Council at its next meeting:**
 - **Finance Committee**
 - **Estates Strategy Committee**
 - **People Committee**
 - **Governance, Nominations, and Performance**
 - **Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee**
 - **Academic Board**
 - **Fellowships and Honorary Degrees Committee (pending review)**

The Vice-Chancellor expressed his thanks to the Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee for her work throughout the external governance review, noting that she would hand the role over to the Chair of Council during the period of transition to the new committee structure.

10 Any other business

None was raised.

11 Meeting reflections

12 Meeting Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 19:20.

**13 In-camera meeting of Chair, Independent Members, Vice-Chancellor, University Secretary
[DISCUSSION RESERVED AND RESTRICTED]**

Lord Stevens of Birmingham
January 2025