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Council

23/01 A meeting of the Council was held in the Meadow Suite, Park House on Tuesday 24 January 2023 at 10.00am.

The President
The Vice-Presidents (Mr K. Corrigan and Mrs K. Owen)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor E.M. McCrum)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor M. Fellowes)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor D. Zaum)

Mr S. Alexander
Mr S. Ali
Mr S. Allen
Professor E. Beleska-Spasova (*vice* Professor J. Board)
Mrs S. Butler
Mrs P. Egan
Professor R. Frazier
Professor J. Gibbins

23/02 President's introductory remarks

The President welcomed Professor Beleska-Spasov to their first meeting of the Council. She noted that Professor Kambhampati was completing her term of appointment and thanked her warmly for her invaluable contributions to the work of the Council.

The President reported that consideration was being given to the future order of the agenda and the possibility of deferring matters of governance not requiring discussion to a point later in the business.

The President expressed appreciation of the presentation, prior to the meeting, on the proposed Shinfield and Arborfield

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Excellence

Enhancing teaching and research excellence, through improvements to the design and delivery of our teaching portfolio as well as through improved mechanisms to set effective expectations and manage workloads for academic staff.

Community

Ensuring that academic workloads

remained scope for improvement. There was continuing demand from external partners for space on the University estate.

In response to a question on the capacity of academic staff to engage with SFP work, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) (Professor McCrum) confirmed that staff were working hard to redesign their programmes under Portfolio Review to meet a deadline towards the end of March and it was expected that pressure would reduce after that point. She expressed appreciation of colleagues and their commitment, given the demands of teaching and research and the challenges of supporting students in the aftermath of the pandemic.

In response to a question on joint Honours programmes, Professor McCrum explained that the Portfolio Review was addressing the historic problem that joint programmes tended not to integrate the two subjects, which compromised the coherence of the programme and the student experience. Schools were being asked to ensure coherence across

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The Council noted that RUSU officers had a major impact on student experience notwithstanding their limited period in post. Mr Allen confirmed that the RUSU officer team was closely involved in the induction of its successors and shared their experience and advice on how to achieve objectives within the time constraints of the role.

Resolved:

“That the RUSU Impact Report 2021/22, now submitted, be received.”

23/10 Reflection from Professor Kambhampati on opportunities and challenges for Schools (Item 8.2)

Professor Kambhampati offered her reflections on some of the challenges currently faced by Schools.

Professor Kambhampati noted that key elements of the University’s planned solution to its operational deficit had major implications for the workload of academic staff: increasing student numbers, without a corresponding increase in staff, involved more classes, more support, and more marking, and increasing numbers of international students, in particular, placed more demands on staff as international students required greater support as they re-orientated to a different academic culture and different social environment.

women at various stages of the postgraduate research lifecycle and in their access and progression in academic careers.

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Scrutiny and Finance Committee held on 9 January 2023.

Mr Corrigan, as Chair of the Committee, explained that the Group Q1 forecast deficit stood at -£19.4m, and that improvements of £5.7m were needed in order to achieve the agreed budget deficit of -£13.7m. The Committee would review the position in the light of the forthcoming Q2 forecast and would agree at that point measures to be taken to address the shortfall on the budget. In response to questions, the Director of Finance explained that the University was extremely careful to ensure that its covenants were not breached, and that, in the current circumstances, banks were content, as a matter of general practice, to agree

23/14 Update on the University's strategic partnership with the Royal Berkshire Hospital (Item 11)

The Council received a report on the activities of the Strategic Partnership between the University of Reading and the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust (RBFT) during the first year of its operation.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that a paper on strategic decisions in relation to a medical

