

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the *Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee* held in the Elder Room, Old College on Thursday 16 March 2017.

- Present:** Lesley McAra (in chair), Assistant Principal Community Relations
 Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
 Laura Cattell, Head of Widening Participation
 Moira Gibson, Head of External Affairs, Communications & Marketing
 Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
 Pete Higgins, Dean of Students, CAHSS
 Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
 Jenna Kelly, Students' Association Vice President Services
 Phil McNaull, Director of Finance
 Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee
 George Sked, Acting Director of Procurement
- In attendance:** Sarah Anderson, Project Officer (Beltane), for Heather Rea
 Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy, for item 6
 Jennifer McGregor, Senior Strategic Planner, for item 6
 Matthew Lawson, SRS Programme Manager, for items 9 & 10
- Apologies:** Charlie Jeffery (Convenor), Senior Vice Principal
 Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
 Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
 Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources
 Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture
 Heather Rea, Project Lead, Beltane Public Engagement Network
 James Smith, Vice Principal International
- 1** In the absence of the Senior Vice-Principal, the Vice Convenor chaired the meeting. **A**
 The minute of 17 October 2016 was approved as a correct record.
- 2 Matters Arising**
 There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda or in post-meeting notes.

STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

- 3 SRS: Curricular and Co-Curricular Pathways** **B**
 The AP Community Relations introduced a vision for further integration of SRS issues into the cross-University curriculum, building on the student social enterprise pathways paper discussed in June 2016. The model could be implemented within existing resources.
- Members recognised progress to date, emphasising that these opportunities should be made available to all students, regardless of core programme of study. Building the social enterprise pathway in collaboration with staff in the Business School had increased activity in the area, generating new research bids and connections, which should be replicable elsewhere. SRSC noted the SPHEIR (Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform) bid to build capacity in universities for more online teaching. A postgraduate certificate was proposed, bringing together all three Global Academies. There was also potential for the further development of MOOCs and the option to add credit-bearing elements.
- SRS Committee endorsed the initial structure and approved extension of the pathways model for onward transmission to the Learning and Teaching Policy Group and Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee.

4 Community Engagement Strategy Update

A business case had been developed and funding secured for two Community Engagement posts. Sarah Anderson had been appointed Project Manager, with a Communications Officer to follow in April. The posts would help achieve a strategic overview of CE activity, helping decide where to deploy learning and teaching. A community of practice had been established, research synergies were emerging, and funding was being generated, including an ESRC impact accelerator grant. A reactive service was envisioned, launching student projects around issues brought to the University. The Committee noted potential linkages to the work of the Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement.

Action – LM & MG to bring an annual report to the October meeting.

5 Widening Participation Update

C

The Head of Widening Participation updated members on progress, including a paper to PSG in November to ask for support for a strategy and a meeting with Professor Peter Scott, Commissioner for Fair Access. There was more work to be done to demonstrate the range of activities and shape the scope of the commission, due to report by 2018.

Efforts were ongoing across the sector to make for a more efficient learner journey. Better articulation in accordance with SQA levels of attainment would facilitate progression, allow learners to exit and return more easily, and access quality education to the maximum possible attainment. Provision between FE and full degree was needed, delivered by universities and colleges working in partnership. There were currently not enough students with the minimum attainment to meet WP targets. Only three universities had achieved 10%, with a 2% increase within the sector against a falling demographic in Scotland. If targets were not going to be met, discussions around them needed to change. The Commissioner for Fair Access had placed emphasis on getting WP students through the door, regardless of subsequent dropout rates. This had been challenged in UoE's response to the Scottish Government consultation.

SRSC recognised that WP work needed to align with the wider agenda of tackling social deprivation. Underlying problems were created at ages 0-5 and creative solutions were needed, including investing in supporting nursery education. There was an enormous amount of voluntary resource that UoE could commit. Identifying and mapping current involvement with schools would help guide decisions about how best to intervene. The social route needed to be cleared to facilitate study for learners with families, part-time jobs, and caring responsibilities, as current timetabling and programme structures impeded part-time provision. SRSC noted linkages to 2030 Sustainable Development goals 1 and 2 (no poverty and zero hunger) and the need to be mindful of goals and metrics, with reporting starting in 2019. These initiatives should be mentioned in all strategy documents to demonstrate how UoE was addressing the issues. WP strategy was now going into a period of consultation, to include a workshop with SRS Committee.

6 Measuring the Social Impact of the University

D

There was an opportunity to develop a new performance framework and baseline to assess UoE's benefit to society. Academic expertise would help identify priorities and develop tools and techniques. The focus initially would be on the city, before looking at global benefits. There were potential linkages to the WP and CE strategies, but this would be a long term process. These metrics would also be useful if UoE went ahead with the social finance options discussed under item 8.

SRSC recommended that the Sustainable Development Goals be kept as a lens to communicate impact, and that negative impacts also be considered. Members welcomed development of a rigorous process, would find the baseline particularly helpful, and looked forward to hearing further developments.

Action – PJ to follow up with Francis Greene in the Business School.

7 University Climate Change Strategy 2016-2026

E

The new plan put UoE in a stronger position, with absolute targets established via a solid process, on an evidence base, taking into account what other universities were doing. Positive feedback had been received from the staff and student community following launch in the autumn. The Sustainable Campus Fund was running well, funding savings, and would report back to Estates Committee in May. The utilities target was a 10% reduction from baseline, and progress was currently at 7%. The fund was uncovering general energy issues around data and design, and offered opportunities to work with Estates on a longer term vision. Sustainable travel work was progressing and further investment could be made in UoE's VC suites to make for a more immersive experience. There was a potential leadership opportunity for UoE to start a virtual conference programme. The Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Options Review Group was on track to deliver robust recommendations by autumn. More work was needed looking into adaptation and metrics. Targets were in place to 2025, but a pathway still needed to be developed, with input from the Committee. The launch would continue with SRS writing to Schools and Departments offering to present on the new Strategy.

Action – DG to bring back an update on work inventorying VC assets.

8 Investing for Good- The Case for Social Finance Investment

F

Options were being developed to go to CMG in April and Court by the summer. With the focus initially on divestment, efforts were made to balance this by looking at positive investment including renewables. The proposed approach offered a third way - not just investing in the stock market, but accepting a lower return for social benefit. Cash balances could be used that were currently seeing less than 1% return, securing a higher return while building up expertise in a growing area. With a blended return, having covered funds to pay back the loan and running costs, UoE could afford to include some riskier investments.

SRS Committee welcomed the proposals, found the basic concepts sound and the data well presented, though more work was needed to shape the narrative, including an elevator pitch and cutting overall length. Strong student interest should be flagged in the revised paper as the opportunity could be transformative for the student experience. It should include recognition of the social and environmental impact and links to related goals. Members noted opportunities for synergies, including a proposal from the City Council for a Scottish Social Stock Exchange.

Action – All to send their comments to DG.

9 SRS Strategy Review Update

G

The Programme Manager updated the Committee on progress since approval of the project plan in October. A revised strategy would be delivered by spring 2018. The first of five workstreams had been completed and a staff/student workshop held to discuss the issues. Scoping best practice across the sector highlighted examples including Manchester, UBC, and Glasgow Caledonian. SRS were working with students completing courses or dissertations in the area. A workshop would be set up to discuss the new strategy with Committee members and key stakeholders. The Sustainable Development Goals would provide a theoretical framework. It was proposed to explore options for a Chancellor's Fellow in SRS with a particular focus on action research.

Members agreed with the approach, emphasising that the Strategy should make clear how what it was saying was specific and material to the work of the University. Messages should be high level and consistent. Linkages to research, learning and teaching should be better articulated, and traction built up with learning and teaching committees. The new strategy should provide practical opportunities as well as leadership and vision.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

10 **ESSA Project Report**

The aim of this Erasmus+ funded project in partnership with the Students' Association was to further develop sustainability benchmarking, carrying out audits across participating universities and developing open educational resources. Using the SLICC model, students would receive academic credit. This was the first SLICC with an international component, and would influence the next set of USR benchmark standards. Outcomes from the project would feed in to the SRS Strategy Review and SRSC would be kept up to date on progress.

11 **SustainEd Festival 2017**

The Festival, which closed National Green Week, offered a way to centralise and celebrate SRS activity on campus over the last year. It had been a success with 33 events held, over 2,000 attendees at the three flagship events, and 27,000 people reached on social media. The Festival was run in partnership with the City Council, building a foundation to work together to promote these issues. Feedback was being pulled together and an impact report would be circulated. The hope was to develop the event into an annual festival. The VPS thanked the Principal's Office and SRS Department for their support.

Action – JK to circulate the impact video.

12 **Any Other Business**

A new VP Community role had been added following a referendum last spring, increasing the number of Students' Association sabbatical posts to five. The role should increase focus on SRS and community engagement. SRSC thanked outgoing VPS Jenna Kelly for her substantial contribution. The VP Community would be the principal point of contact in future.

The Procurement Strategy presented to SRSC in October went to Court in December and was published on the University website, as required by the Procurement Reform Act. Next steps involved formal reporting on how UoE was performing against the strategy. An update would come back to the Committee.

A Business Development Executive had been hired on a 12 month contract to work with SRS and ERI, focusing on raising income particularly in the Living Lab space, with the aim of demonstrating that this was worth doing in the longer term. A progress report would come back to the Committee.

The Dean of Students and Head of SRS Programmes had met with the VP People & Culture to discuss staff learning and development on SRS issues and would come back with a revised proposal. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee had approved the optional course embedding SRS in learning and teaching and the Convener would write to Heads of School to ask for their support.