

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee  
held in the Raeburn Room, Old College on Thursday 12 October 2017.

- Present:** Charlie Jeffery (Convenor), Senior Vice Principal  
Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes  
Moirra Gibson, Head of External Affairs, Communications & Marketing  
Ollie Glick, Students' Association VP Community  
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability  
Pete Higgins, Director, Global Environment & Society Academy  
Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations  
Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee  
Heather Rea, Project Lead, Beltane Public Engagement Network  
George Sked, Acting Director of Procurement  
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
- In attendance:** Matthew Lawson, SRS Programme Manager, for item 3  
Laura Cattell, Head of Widening Participation, for item 4
- Apologies:** Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience  
Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources  
Phil McNaul, Director of Finance  
Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture  
James Smith, Vice Principal International

- 1 The minute of 31 August 2017 was approved as a correct record. A

2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda or in post-meeting notes.

### STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3 **SRS Strategy Review** B

The Programme Manager updated members on main findings of the review so far. SRS was becoming mainstreamed, with opportunities for further value creation across core business. There was need for a shared narrative and framework to link SRS issues, and greater clarity around roles and responsibilities in delivery. Consultees also highlighted a recent proliferation of strategies.

Attendees discussed a potential structure around five priority themes (Socially responsible students and graduates; Sustainable operations; Research with impact; Engaging our staff; Supporting local and global communities). Alternatively, the Sustainable Development Goals - the main guiding framework on these issues to 2030 - could be used.

Action – ML to include a commitment to the SDGs in the Strategy, and highlight the work of the Global Academies.

CMG endorsed the level of ambition expressed, but sought assurance that the scope of the strategy would keep within established boundaries. Two to four flagship projects should be

highlighted. These should be distinctive to the University, and areas where most value could be added. The key areas of focus could be sustainability and community.

SRS had been embedded in degree programmes and more students were interested in developing skills in this area for their future careers. Experiential learning would be key, and programmes including sustainability project work with the local community were already standard in institutions such as UBC. Greater focus on local health and wellbeing would be crucial, as well as the values UoE instilled in its graduates.

Members emphasised the need for clarity around ownership. The strategy could be presented as a roadmap, making clear where individual responsibilities lay. Part of its value was in bringing activities together and acting as a communications tool, but there were also opportunities to add value, particularly around Community Engagement. Just highlighting positive activities would not be enough to bring about change.

Action – ML to include how it articulates to other strategies, such as Learning & Teaching.

On staff volunteering, there was a communication challenge about framing the narrative to avoid the perception that the University was taking credit for what staff were doing.

Community Engagement work included a review of staff volunteering policy in comparison to other Russell Group institutions. Issues around staff volunteering needed to be addressed in a more structured way.

Committee members would have another opportunity to feed in to development of the Strategy at a dedicated workshop on 6 November.

#### **4 Widening Participation Strategy**

**C**

Development of the Strategy was moving toward a final version, though there were still opportunities for reworking and revision. Both the current and incoming Principals were in favour of thinking boldly in this area. This was an opportunity to showcase UoE as an institution with strong representation across all groups in society, where students feel they belong and have a positive experience, demonstrating to the sector that excellence and diversity can come together.

The student lifecycle model comprised four mutually-dependent strands: Aspiration and earlier engagement; Support to get in; Support to succeed; and Support to progress. Strand one contained discussion of who to engage with and where, which would be added to other stands in future. The WP strategy would align closely with the CE strategy.

Under 'support to get in' the emphasis was around communications and the final version would include a communications plan. The strategy was linking in to ongoing work around the Year 1 structure. While many students were still studying for qualifications in sixth year, it was possible that part of that year could be spent in university. Greater outreach was required at this stage to start systematically helping students become inducted into the processes of thinking required for university. This could be through summer courses, similar to those currently run for international students. The Committee noted the current policy debate about qualification structures and overlaps between the senior phase of school and first year at University. More students were mentoring within the city area, and this could be further developed, in partnership with the Students' Association. Now that agreement was in place for investment in social finance, proposals could be put forward for investment in student social enterprises to go into areas targeted for WP. Communications and Marketing were happy to offer support with workshops, case studies, filming, and use of the Edinburgh Local pages.

Under 'support to succeed', more data was needed to better understand current WP students, including postgraduates. Transition and induction processes would be reviewed and more value would be placed on Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education.

Under 'support to progress', additional advice and information would be provided to current WP cohorts to present PG study as a viable option, with more bursaries offered at PG level and more flexible options, including part-time and Online Distance Learning, though part-time options were restricted by current funding structures.

The draft had been to College and central committees and a revised version would go to CMG at the end of October. The strategy would be finalised by the end of the year, including more evidence, a communications plan, and more focus on implementation, and would be launched in the new year. It would be split into internal- and external-facing versions, tailored to the needs of each audience. There would be further consultations in October and November.

The Committee welcomed the paper as important for the University, and emphasised the need to reflect how WP and CE mutually reinforced each other.

Action – LC to make more mention of Further Education colleges, include reference to the City Deal, and address potential students' concerns about the cost of accommodation. The reach could be extended beyond Scotland to target North East England as an area of emphasis.

## **5 SDG Accord**

**D**

In 2015, world leaders committed to the Sustainable Development Goals to frame their agendas and policies over the next 15 years. The SDGs linked to the University's vision delivering impact for society. The Scottish Government was one of the first to commit. The EAUC had asked UoE to sign up to the Accord – a commitment for further and higher education. A mini gap analysis had indicated no major risk areas, though there may be issues for academics who do not feel the goals go far enough.

SRS Committee supported the proposal to sign up to the Accord, ideally in partnership with the Students' Association, and highlighted the need to be alert to the implied resource implications.

Action – OG to raise signing up to the Accord at the next Students' Association executive meeting.

Action – MB to take the proposal forward to next available CMG for an operational decision, and, if required, on to Court in December for strategic sign off.

## **6 Integrating SRS into the Mainstream - Next Steps**

**E**

SRS Committee welcomed this paper setting out current progress and future plans. More work was needed on training, induction, and setting future direction. This would be easier to develop with a clear and simple strategic vision and would have more traction if the number of activities were restricted. Members highlighted the need for greater alignment with the Students' Association.

## **7 Food Policy Implementation Plan**

**F**

The Committee endorsed the Good Food Policy in September 2016. This paper updated members on implementation and included a supporting infographic requested by the Director of Corporate Services.

Members raised concerns about the use of non-recyclable coffee cups in university catering outlets, and the need to engage with them to further promote KeepCups.

Action – MB, with the support of the Committee, to approach ACE to propose the introduction of discounts for all types of reusable cups.

Efforts should be made to investigate ways of increasing the number of facilities capable of recycling.

Action – MB & OG to follow up with the City Council on vegware.

UoE's performance on food waste was not yet where it needed to be, and more could be done to reduce waste associated with the Festival. While its environmental impact was minimal, this had important signal value.

Members welcomed the paper, supported the direction of travel, and urged Procurement, ACE, SRS and the Students' Association to broaden the scope of issues considered.

## **ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING**

### **8 Modern Slavery Statement**

**G**

The University prepared its first statement in 2016. This was compliance driven, and a good example of efforts to bring together activity across the institution, linking learning, teaching, research and operations. There was interest in establishing a funded scholarship in this area with Law and the Global Justice Academy. Any organisation would have risks in the area and it was becoming more of an issue for investors.

Action – MB to update wording in section 4 from 'While the risk of modern slavery on our campuses *is likely to be low*' to 'is low'.

Procurement and HR were currently pursuing Living Wage Accreditation, identifying all contracted suppliers that meet the criteria for accreditation to reconfirm that no staff on University premises are paid less than the living wage. UoE was unusual in the sector in not outsourcing servitorial and catering services, making for a more secure position.

Action – OG to verify and confirm to JP that all Students' Association staff are paid the living wage.

### **9 Conflict Minerals**

**H**

The Committee noted the work of Professor Jason Love in the School of Chemistry recovering gold from electronic devices. It was beneficial in terms of research funding that the University had clarified its own approach to the issue. Development of the policy had been prompted by legislative issues and student interest. Members noted the update and endorsed the broadening of focus to industries beyond ICT.