

Council

30 June 2022

9.30am – 1.30pm, H2.5/2.6, 2nd Floor,

Minutes

Present:	Christine Swabey Godfrey Allen Sandra Ashton Jonathan Curtiss Professor Sian Harding Professor Jenny Higham (Principal) Sarah Jones Josh Joshi Becky Kemp-Arnold Gillian Norton Dr Aileen O'Brien Damian Reid Sue Rimmer Professor Jane Saffell Dr Baba Sheba Sarah Wilton Ewart Wooldridge	Chair of Council Independent Member of Council Elected Professional Services Staff Member Independent Member of Council Independent Member of Council Ex officio Member Ex-Student Union President Independent Member of Council Student Union President Independent Member of Council [until 12pm] Ex officio Member Independent Member of Council Independent Member of Council [until 12pm] Ex officio Member Elected Academic Staff Member Independent Member of Council [until 1pm] Independent Member of Council
In attendance:	Soosan Atkins [minute 110] Dr Anna Dulic-Sills Muhammad Omar Hijazi [minute 108 to 110] Dr Julie Leeming Susan McPheat Caspian Priest [minute 108 to 110] Martin Priestley [minute 115] Paul Ratcliffe Graham Schofield Emma Whitaker Jenny Winters	Head of Operational Excellence Projects Deputy Chief Operating Officer / Director of Research Operations Chair of the SGUL Student's Union Director of Planning Director of Finance Trustee, Student's Union Representative from Mills and Reeve Chief Operating Officer Director of Estates and Facilities Senior Governance Officer and Interim Clerk to Council Director of HR and Organisational Development / Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Apologies:	Dr Sally Jackson Professor Jon Friedland	Independent Member of Council Ex officio Member

- 96. Welcome and apologies for absence**
Apologies were received as listed above.

It was noted that the quorum required, as currently set out in the Standing Orders of Council, had been met, namely that at least nine members of Council were in attendance, of which five were independent members *[Post meeting note: quorum was met throughout the whole meeting, even though some independent members had to leave the meeting early]*.

- 97. Declarations of Interest**
No declarations of interest were received.

98. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone, especially Dr Anna Dulic-Sills, who was in attendance in her capacity of Deputy Chief Operating Officer, for the period in which Paul Ratcliffe was seconded to the special strategic project.

The Chair noted that today would be the last meeting for Professor Sian Harding, Independent Member, who was stepping down at the end of her period of office. The Chair and members thanked Professor Harding for her contribution to Council during her tenure, and hoped that she would keep in touch with the university.

The Chair noted that Becky Kemp-Arnold would be stepping down from her role as Student Union (SU) President and attending Council as Ex-President in the new academic year, in place of Sarah Jones. The Chair thanked Sarah Jones for her contribution to Council during her tenure, and thanked Becky Kemp-Arnold for her input as President. The Chair added that Council would be looking forward to welcoming the new President of the SU.

The Chair congratulated the Chief Operating Officer (COO), who had been appointed to the role of Regional Convenor for the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) London. The Chair remarked that this was strong personal recognition for the COO personally and reflected well on the university as a whole.

Standing Items

99. Minutes

Considered and approved: The minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2022.

Paper Council/9/A

100. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Received and considered: A report on actions and matters arising.

Reported:

That action (minute) 81 – *“That the draft wellbeing and welfare report and action plan should be submitted to the liaison group between the university and the Students’ Union prior to its submission to Council to ensure the Students’ Union perspective was considered.”* – could be closed, as this had taken place and the perspective of the SU had been incorporated into the Welfare report, which was on today’s agenda for discussion.

Agreed:

That the report on actions and matters arising required updating and would benefit from colour coding to highlight what actions were overdue and/or required immediate attention.

Action: Clerk to Council

Paper Council/9/B

Strategic Matters

101. Report from the Principal

Received and considered: A report from the Principal.

Reported:

That the Principal warmly congratulated the COO for his appointment to the role of Regional Convenor for AHUA London.

That the Principal had just returned from the graduation ceremony at the University of Nicosia.

Paper Council/9/C

102. Draft Strategic Plan 2022-2030

Considered and approved: The draft Strategic Plan 2022-2030.

Reported:

That there had been positive engagement so far, with many stakeholder events held and opportunities for interaction at senior level and across the university, well facilitated by the ERCM team, led by the Associate Director of Development and Alumni Director of External Relations, Communications and Marketing.

That the draft plan brought together a key set of core objectives, taken from key themes raised at the events.

That the strategy was ambitious and would cover eight years instead of five. Also included was a helpful contextual document that gave the context for the ambitions.

That the next step would be for individual departments to draft realistic, costed implementation plans that would underpin the strategy; e.g. an estates and operational plan to help support the educational aims; and a financial plan that would support delivery. The timeframe to develop these plans would be brought back to Council.

That the Principal was the overall owner of the strategy.

Discussed:

That the members of Council were fully supportive of the strategy and thanked all involved for their hard work.

That the members of Council were pleased that the collaboration that had taken place across the organisation was evident in the draft document.

That members challenged the research and enterprise core deliverable R1; and asked how a 50% increase in volume and income would be achieved in eight years. It was noted that the financial strategy would be drafted to underpin this aim, and it would show how the costs and income for additional research would be achieved, in detail. The Deputy Principal (Research and Enterprise) had been keen to use the strategy as an opportunity to further establish the ambition of SGUL being a research university. It was noted that in order to achieve this ambitious aim there would be a need to thought given to the type of money the university would be prepared to accept for research. It was further noted that the department planned to focus in the future on large research grants and this would mean less emphasis on multiple small grants and a recognition of the importance of reviewing overheads. The Director of Research Operations added that the Deputy Principal had worked to develop and to put in place the underpinning structures needed to ensure future research could be sustained and built on, so that the department could deliver and grow.

That the President of the SU suggested an addition to the point around inclusive leadership, around how some students with protective characteristics may need more support.

That members would like to see the education quality element come through stronger in the student experience ambitions.

That members would like to see a continued focus on integration between education and research.

It was noted that the Long Term Plan did not yet reflect the strategy, but this would be brought forward at a later stage.

Agreed:

That the final draft of the Strategy be brought to the October Council for approval.

Action: Chief Operating Officer

Paper Council/9/D

103. Annual Budget 2022-23

Considered and approved: The budget for 2022-23, on the recommendation of Finance Committee.

Reported:

That the budget for 2022-23 was a working document, including some assumptions around pay increases, but that the university was still waiting for the funding letters from Office for Students (OfS) and Research England.

That the budget included costings for the recommendations from the Budget task and finish group and did not indicate any breaches of covenants.

The executive were questioned on how they proposed to prioritise the Capital spend of £4.5m in the budget. It was acknowledged that the limited budget only allowed for necessary spend for regulatory and statutory compliance, with very little left for investment purposes. Maintenance backlog costs were also not fully covered.

Discussed:

That the university was in a good position in relation to energy costs as it shared an energy producing centre with the Trust.

That the percentage of overseas students had dropped and no recovery seemed to be anticipated. It was explained that this was not pandemic related; but due to the international MBBS being in teach-out phase. It was noted that the cost of paying for clinical placements for INTU students had been higher than the income the students had provided the university.

That international medical student numbers were capped, but other courses were free to recruit additional students. A new appointment to the ECRM team was tasked with leading the growth of overseas students at the university.

That both the Portfolio 2030 project and the draft education strategy anticipated growth in student numbers and these would be included in the next iteration of the budget.

Agreed:

Council agreed the budget for 2022-23.

Paper Council/9/E

104. Long Term Plan

Received and considered: The draft long term plan.

Reported:

That the plan had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and it was noted it was a steady state forecast, which would be amended as the strategic plan was costed and developed at an operating level.

That the plan would come back to the October 2023 Council meeting for approval before it was submitted to the OfS in November 2023.

That some new courses in ethics, neuroscience and occupational therapy had been included in the forecast.

That capital had been kept static and the forecast had been run through the covenants and was compliant.

Paper Council/9/F

105. *This minute is confidential.*

106. *This minute is confidential.*

107. SGUL-SGUHFT Task and Finish Group

Received and considered:

- (i) a verbal report on the progress of the SGUL-SGUHFT Task and Finish Group.
- (ii) the draft Terms of Reference from the SGUL-SGUHFT Task and Finish Group.

Reported:

That this Group had been established following a number of issues being raised in the RHUL due diligence relating to the relationship with the Trust; e.g. unresolved financial disputes concerning estates and people.

That a Terms of Reference and the membership had been agreed at the first meeting and Sarah Wilton would be co-Chair with Dr Peter Kane, a Non-Executive Director (NED) on the Trust Board.

That the Group would not negotiate operational issues, but provide assurance that all matters in dispute were being tackled in a timely manner. The Group would provide a report after each meeting to the SGUL Council and the SGUHFT Group Executive.

That it had been agreed that there would be three workstreams: Finance, Education and Estates and Property.

That Andrew Asbury, the Director of Estates and Facilities at SGUH, had reported that the Trust were working very positively with the SGUL Director of Estates and Facilities on the estates items.

That the issues around the Energy Centre were not getting much traction but positively, there was now a process to follow.

Discussed:

That SGUL had made a written proposal around the Energy Centre and had not had a response. The Chair of SGUH said she would raise this issue with the relevant Trust staff.

Agreed:

That Council would receive a report on the progress of the SGUL-SGUHFT Task and Finish Group at the next Council meeting.

Action: Chief Operating Officer

Paper Council/9/I

108. Report from the Students' Union

Received and considered: A report from the President of the Students' Union.

Reported:

That Ayesha Patel had been elected as the new SU President.

That the current SU team were in the process of undertaking an early handover with the newly elected team.

Paper Council/9/J

109. Wellbeing and Student Support

Received and considered: A report and action plan from the Dean for Students and Academic Registrar.

Reported:

That the report was a collaborative effort between the Dean for Students and the Registry and Counselling teams, with valuable input from the SU, including via the SGUL-Students' Union Liaison Group.

That the report was as data driven as possible. It was noted that the data included in the report had not previously been routinely collected, and that there would be improved data collection going forward.

That the report included the ambitions of the team, alongside what could be improved using the current provision. One of the ambitions was to have a “hub and spoke” model, and the Student Experience team would be brought into the hub.

That some of the ambitions would require culture change, which would be facilitated by splitting the Dean for Students’ role into two roles – a Dean for Welfare and a Dean for Professionalism.

Discussed:

The Council thanked the Dean for Students, the Academic Registrar, the Head of Counselling and the Assistant Registrar for the report, which was comprehensive.

That Council endorsed the report and the recommendations, recognising the current challenges around resource.

That it was noted that the waiting list for Counselling Services was now one to two weeks, which was good news.

That the Chair of the SU and a student trustee had joined the meeting and were asked to comment on the welfare report, as well as the SU welfare survey, which they planned to share with students following Council. It was noted that although only 103 students responded, the Welfare report aligned well with the survey results and the SU supported the recommendations in the report. The importance of building communications into the new structure was noted, as all agreed that student welfare would continue to be a key issue in ensuring a positive student experience. All agreed that getting student feedback was crucial, acknowledging that there was a challenge with ‘survey exhaustion’.

That the Council asked why the Dean for Students role was part-time when it was a key role and crucially important. It was explained that most people in the Dean roles also wished to keep up their clinical work. It was discussed that the Dean roles could be job share roles, in order to have full-time capacity.

Agreed:

That Council receive a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Wellbeing and Student Support paper as a priority.

Action: Dean for Welfare

Paper Council/9/K

110. Update from the SGUL-Students’ Union Liaison Group

Received and considered:

- (i) Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 June 2022.

Considered and approved:

- (ii) Terms of Reference and Membership.
- (iii) A proposal to establish a University Council Liaison role.

Reported:

That the Chair of Council wished to thank all of the members of the Liaison Group for their engagement with the Group.

That the Group had received a presentation from Soosan Atkins, the Head of Operational Excellence Projects, on the legal obligations of Council with regard to the SU, and recognised the importance of moving swiftly to comply with legislation and establish a memorandum of understanding with the SU. A tender for an external review of governance was in process and it was anticipated the review would provide some recommendations which would be brought to the October Council meeting.

That the Group spent some time on the welfare report (discussed under minute 109 of today’s agenda) which had been helpful.

That the Council could support the SU President more robustly if a designated lead role was created. It had been agreed that an independent member of Council (Sue Rimmer) would undertake this role if Council agreed to establish it.

The Chair thanked the Head of Operational Excellence Projects for providing the group with administrative and executive support.

Agreed:

Council approved:

- (i) **Terms of Reference and Membership.**
- (ii) **A proposal to establish a University Council Liaison role.**

Paper Council/9/L

111. Ofsted Report

Received and considered: A report from the recent Ofsted inspection.

Reported:

That Ofsted had inspected the SGUL apprenticeship programmes and had given the university the grade of 'Requires Improvement', which was disappointing. There would be an action plan following.

To provide context, there are a small number of apprentices at SGUL; the largest amount on one course, 31 students, were on the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice course that will be closed next year as part of the Joint Faculty dissolution. This programme had some complex issues, which already had an action plan in place. It was noted that in the future this course would be SGUL only, streamlined, and would have a new course director in place.

That the quality team would be providing specific updates to Council on apprentices going forwards.

Agreed:

That the Ofsted action plan to be brought to Council, together with the forward strategy and approach to apprenticeships.

Action: Academic Lead for Quality and Partnerships

Paper Council/9/M

112. Access and Participation Plan

Received and considered: An update presentation on the variation to the 2023-24 Access and Participation Plan.

Reported:

That an OfS approved Access and Participation Plan was compulsory in order for the university to charge higher undergraduate fees. OfS had asked all universities to submit a variation to their current Plans, aligning with the OfS's new priorities for Access and Participation.

That the SGUL variation to the Plan would be received by Senate on 5 July 2022, following which Council would be asked to approve it by email, as the OfS deadline for submission was 31 July 2022.

That the Associate Dean for Access and Participation gave Council a presentation of the main changes needed, ahead of members receiving the updated Plan to approve by circulation.

Agreed:

That the amended Access and Participation Plan to be circulated to Council for approval.

Action: Clerk to Council

Paper Council/9/N

113. Student Conduct and Compliance Annual Report 2020-21

Received and considered: The Student Conduct and Compliance Annual Report 2020-21.

Discussed:

That this report was good and had been very helpful. Council asked for its thanks to be passed on to the team.

That having to have examinations online during COVID may have been the cause of more cheating, as there appears to be higher levels of assessment irregularities than usual. It was asked if the university were planning to stay online for assessments and, if so, how it was assuring itself that students would not be able to cheat. It was clarified that the university had put all of its assessments back in person from this coming academic year. There were two exams this year that had to move online because of the Omicron COVID variant.

That the Centre for Technology in Education team had worked hard to enable the exams to come back on site, as students had requested a switch from writing to typing.

Paper Council/9/O

Governance

114. Health and Safety

Considered and approved: The Health and Safety Policy.

Reported:

That the Policy was due to be updated, and required the Chair of Council's signature prior to publication on the SGUL website.

Discussed:

That Council had the responsibility for oversight of Health and Safety matters.

That the Policy had to be published on the SGUL website as soon as possible, as the one currently uploaded was out of date. The Policy needed further work and some updates, so would be agreed in order to publish a more current version, and a further iteration would come back to Council in due course. It was noted that it had been decided that SMC would report into Audit Committee, rather than directly to Council, going forwards; and this would need to be reflected within the Policy.

That Audit Committee would be looking at the Health and Safety governance and processes in order to give assurance to Council that the governance is working.

Discussed:

That Council thanked the Chair of Audit Committee and the Audit Committee members for their work so far in this area.

That the numbering in the Policy needed to be reviewed.

That the organisational chart in Appendix 1 needed to be clearer; e.g. there were some dotted lines where the lines should be solid.

That there had recently been an internal audit of Health and Safety with a number of recommendations made. A report would be presented at the next Audit Committee and findings be included within the regular Audit Committee update report to Council.

Agreed:

That Council requested a future presentation regarding Health and Safety assurance, focussed on section 14.0 of the Policy, "Council Members", and specifically on how Council discharges its responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety matters.

Action: Chief Operating Officer

Paper Council/9/P

115. University Title: Changes to Scheme and Statutes

Considered and approved: The Special Resolution amending the Scheme and Statutes as set out in Paper Q, following the university being granted 'University status' and any consequent changes required to the scheme and statutes.

Reported:

That in its discussions, Council was advised by Martin Priestley of Mills and Reeve, who advised that the Special Resolution would be signed by two members of Council and would then require the University of London (UoL) Board of Trustees to note it.

That there were some discussions about the requirements set out in the Scheme and Statutes with regard to Special Resolutions, but the resolution was passed in accordance with the requirements of SGUL's governing documents subject to not changing the trading name of St George's.

Paper Council/9/Q

116. Items for approval from the Sub-Committees

Considered and approved:

- (i) The revised Financial Regulations [Finance Committee].
- (ii) The appointment of Independent Members to the Council, Audit and Finance Committees [Nominations Committee].
- (iii) Policy on Award of Honorary Degrees [Nominations Committee].
- (iv) The revised terms of reference for the sub-committees of Council.

Paper Council/9/R

Matters for Report

117. Prevent accountability and data return conclusion

Received and noted: The Prevent accountability and data return conclusion for 2020-21.

Paper Council/9/S

118. Joint Faculty Dissolution update

Received and noted: An update on the Dissolution, for note.

Paper Council/9/T

119. Council and Local KPIs – final monitoring reports

Received and noted: The final monitoring reports of the Council and Local KPIs.

Paper Council/9/U

120. Sub-Committee Minutes and Reports

Received and noted:

- (i) Summary of the Nominations Committee held on 7 June 2022.
- (ii) Audit Committee report and minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022.
- (iii)
- (iv) Senate minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022.
- (v) Finance Committee minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022.

Paper Council/9/V

Paper Council/9/W

Paper Council/9/X

Paper Council/9/Y

121. Future Council Business

Received and noted:

- (i) The schedule of Council business for 2022-23.
- (ii) The draft agenda for the meeting of Council on 12 October 2022.

Paper Council/9/Z

122. Joint Strategic Board

Received and noted: A briefing paper regarding the SGH-SGUL Joint Strategic Board.

Discussed:

The Council thanked the Director of Quality and Partnerships for providing this report and welcomed periodic reporting from this Board going forwards.

Paper Council/9/AA

123. Student Cases

Received and noted:

- (i) A Fitness to Study or Practise Hearing Committee was convened to consider the case of a P Year MBBS student and determined that the student should receive a number of conditions and undertakings.

- (ii) A Fitness to Study or Practise Hearing Committee was convened to consider the case of a First Year OT student and determined that the student should be expelled with immediate effect.
- (iii) A Fitness to Study or Practise Hearing Committee was convened to consider the case of a F Year MBBS student and determined that the student should receive a number of conditions and undertakings.

124. Dates of Meetings in 2022-23

21 September 2022 – Council dinner
12 October 2022
29 November 2022
11 January 2023 – Council seminar
22 February 2023
28 March 2023
17 May 2023 – away day
27 June 2023

125. Any Other Business

There was no other business raised at this meeting.

CONFIRMED