

Academic and Governance Services

Council

20/31

It was noted

The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary reported on the University's

would have marked the end of their course. RUSU was looking to provide a virtual space which would allow finalists to come together to celebrate and offer a sense of closure.

Resolved:

'That the Vice-Chancellor's report on the current position of the University in relation to the Coronavirus emergency, now submitted, be received.'

20/35 Education: decisions taken by the University in response to the Coronavirus (Item 5)

The Council received a report on decisions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) (Professor McCrum) outlined the measures taken to mitigate the impact of the Covid-

guidance to students.

Resolved:

20/37 Financial effects of the Coronavirus (Item 7)

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Resolved:

‘That the report on the financial effects of the Coronavirus emergency on the University, now submitted, be received.’

20/38 The University’s support for the NHS (Item 8)

The Council received a report on the University’s support for the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor outlined the range of work to support the NHS, including research, support for frontline staff, the development of personal protective equipment, and the donation, loan and sourcing of critical equipment. She also referred to support for community organisations. The University had worked closely with the Royal Berkshire Hospital, building on the existing partnership.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that University had received a letter from the Universities Minister, expressing gratitude for its support in tackling the pandemic, and that there had been extensive media coverage, both national and local, of the University’s support for the NHS.

Resolved:

‘That the report on the University’s support for the NHS during the Coronavirus emergency, now submitted, be received.’

20/39 Update on the University’s research (Item 9)

The Council received a report on the University’s ongoing research activity.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (Professor Zaum) explained that the vast majority of academic and professional staff and research students were working from home. However, some research work in laboratories or field trials was continuing where social distancing could be implemented and where the research contributed to the national efforts against Coronavirus or where interrupting the work would cause significant delay (for example, where the work was seasonal). The University recognised the pressures created by home-working and other circumstances and their constraints on research work.

He reported that, notwithstanding the challenges, research divisions were maintaining a vibrant research culture, and several had started online seminars and discussion groups. Most notably, the Department of Economics had launched Reading Online Sports Economics, a series of weekly seminars with international speakers, normally attracting over 100 participants and 600 subsequent viewers on YouTube; it had been reported in the BBC and other media and was expected to continue beyond the current crisis.

Professor Zaum reported that the University’s research income in 2019/20 had been and remained strong, despite current circumstances. The University had received awards amounting to over £17m in Q1 and Q2 (compared with £10m in 2018/19), and this trajectory was expected to continue for the remaining quarters. [Redacted, section 43].

'That, given the ongoing exceptional circumstances, the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council be delegated to the President and Vice-Presidents up to the date of the Council's next meeting (6 July 2020) should an urgent decision be necessary.'

20/42 Further meetings of the Council in the Session 2019-20

The final scheduled meeting of the Council in the current Session would be held on Monday 6 July 2020 at 2.15 pm. However, in view of the current circumstances and the urgency of impending business, it was expected that an additional meeting of the Council would be necessary in the week commencing 8 June 2020.