

University of Sussex

April 2015

Independent Members of Council

Appointment details

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Introduction

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The University of Sussex is building on the success of its 50th anniversary year. Ranked 14th in the UK in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2014-2015*, over recent years it has seen significant achievements in delivering ambitious objectives outlined in its strategic plan, *'Making the Future'*. The University has over 14,000 students with staff and students from more than 120 countries.

By implementing our Strategy, we will build on our excellence in teaching and research to take the University's national and international standing to the next level. We are looking to appoint independent members to our governing body and are seeking committed, insightful, active Council members to join an already highly skilled group. Candidates will bring significant board level and governance experience, a strong intellect and a willingness to constructively challenge and interact with all members of Council. We are particularly seeking candidates with skills and experience in the areas of Treasury and Digital Technology.

The Council values diversity and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds and origins.



About the University of Sussex

The University of Sussex was the first of the new wave of universities founded in the 1960s, receiving its Royal Charter in 1961. Over the following years, the University has become a leading research and teaching institution, ranked in the top 20 universities in the UK and 111th in the world (*Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2014–15*). We currently have around 2,500 staff and turnover of £220 million a year. Sussex has developed a reputation for innovation and inspiration, attracting leading thinkers and researchers.

Research

Our reputation for research was reflected in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. Over 98 per cent of Sussex research activity was rated as world leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised, ranking the University 36th in the leading research universities in the UK, on a simple average across all scores.

The priorities set out by our research strategy are: to build strength in recognised centres of research excellence; to demonstrate research of international standing in all subject areas; to develop an infrastructure and culture that supports research quality; and to work to exchange knowledge and ideas nationally and internationally.

Teaching

The University of Sussex has over 14,000 students, of whom around a third are postgraduates. Creative thinking, pedagogic diversity, intellectual challenge and interdisciplinarity have always been fundamental to a Sussex education.

In the 2014 National Student Survey rankings, nearly 90 per cent of Sussex students were satisfied or very satisfied with the teaching on their course, ranking us 21st for universities across the UK for teaching satisfaction. Sussex teaching ranks among the leading research-intensive universities.

Staff

Three Nobel and one Crafoord Prize have been awarded for research conducted at Sussex. The University currently has 14 Fellows of the Royal Society, 16 Academicians of the Social Sciences, nine Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences, and 12 Fellows of the British Academy among its faculty.

International

From its foundation, Sussex has had an international perspective. The University attracts staff and students from more than 120 different countries across the world. Our research tackles major world issues, with leading areas of expertise such as climate change and development studies. The University has extensive links with many institutions worldwide, such as Peking University, National Taiwan University and Harvard in the USA.

Campus

Sussex is the only university campus in England that is entirely surrounded by a national park, set on the edge of the South Downs. The lively, friendly seaside city of Brighton & Hove is just a few minutes away, with its great leisure facilities and its rich cultural life.

Designed by Sir Basil Spence, the buildings that make up the heart of the campus were given listed building status in 1993. Falmer House is one of only two educational buildings in the UK to be Grade I listed in recognition of its exceptional interest. The University has recently completed a major programme of construction, adding two large academic and teaching buildings, a new housing complex, and renovating much of the existing campus estate. This autumn, the University will reopen the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, and is currently developing plans for a new Life Sciences building along with further residential buildings.

Student experience

Sussex continues to be a popular choice, with recent increases in undergraduate intakes from both the UK and internationally.

In 2012, Sussex launched its First-Generation Scholars scheme to support students whose parents have not been to university, and those from low-income families. As well as extensive financial support, the scheme includes free summer schools, funded placements, and a work-study programme. The scheme has had an excellent response and this summer will see the first cohort of these students graduate.

Strategic Plan: *Making the Future*

The University's Strategic Plan can be found at www.sussex.ac.uk/aboutus/ourstrategy



Independent Members of Council role description

The Council

The Council is the governing body of the University, responsible for setting the strategic direction of the institution, for ensuring proper accountability, and for the management of its finances, property and investments and the general business of the University.

The Council comprises independent, academic and student members appointed under the Statutes of the University, the majority of whom must be non-executive and independent. The roles of Chair and Vice-Chairs of Council are separate from the role of the University's Chief Executive, the Vice-Chancellor.

Council members

Overall the Council has decided that the following key areas of experience and expertise should be represented at the Council table:

- Higher Education Sector
- Business
- Public Sector
- Financial Services
- Arts/Creative
- Science
- NGOs/Charities/Third Sector
- Media and Technology.

However, the Council has identified that it would particularly like to strengthen its skills in the following areas:

- Finance (Treasury skills)
- Digital and Technology.

Underpinning the particular experience and expertise of individual Council members, we expect each individual to be able to:

- offer support and challenge to the management
- use their skills to help the University to advance
- be a critical friend to the University
- be able to hold and justify an opinion/view (using evidence/analysis)
- listen and learn in debate and discussion
- be an advocate for the University
- engage in the life of the University outside its committees – and to develop particular areas of interest in relation to the life and purpose of the University
- act with integrity
- think laterally
- use their network of relationships to support the University.



Formal responsibilities

Key responsibilities of an Independent Member of Council:

- to ensure that the responsibilities of Council are exercised in the best interests of the University
- to undertake the proper stewardship of funds from all sources and to ensure that these are applied towards the University's primary charitable purpose of teaching and research
- to agree goals for the University and the strategy to achieve them
- to ensure that the process of determining those goals and strategy was good – accountable and owned by the institution
- to monitor the performance of the organisation against its goals and agreed KPIs which Council signs off as robust, appropriate and measurable
- to hold the management to account
- to assess and sanction risk and risk appetite
- to act in a corporate manner for decision making. Unless authorised by Council to do so, members should not act individually or in informal groupings to take decisions on Council business on an ad hoc basis outside the framework of the meetings of Council and its Committees.

Independent Members of Council are expected to act in a corporate manner, rather than as a representative of any constituency, or group.

The University's statutory documents pertaining to the powers and functions of Council (Statute V and Regulation 5) are available on our website:

www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/govdocuments



The appointment process and how to apply

Terms and conditions

Two places on the Council become vacant on 1 August 2015.

The appointment of new Independent Members of Council will be made for a period of three years from 1 August 2015. The appointees will be eligible for reappointment, depending on circumstances obtaining at the time. The maximum term as a member of Council is nine years.

The time commitment associated with the office of an Independent Member of Council varies according to circumstances but is expected to be up to 15 days per year.

The Council meets four times a year, in Sussex. Occasional special meetings are also held.

The appointment does not carry any remuneration, but reasonable travel and other expenses incurred in connection with Council business may be claimed.

How to apply

Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae along with a covering letter of application, setting out the contribution that applicants believe they could make to the work of the Council.

**Completed applications should be sent to:
Ms Sharon Page, Interim Director of Planning,
Governance and Compliance, University of Sussex,
Sussex House, Brighton BN1 9RH by 9am (BST) on
Friday 8 May 2015.**

Informal enquiries can likewise be directed to Ms Page:
T 01273 877019 or
E sharon.page@sussex.ac.uk

Applicants are asked to provide suitable daytime and evening contact details. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend interviews at the University in early June 2015.

The final appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references.

The University values diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of society. It is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. The University aims to ensure that job applicants and members of staff are treated solely on the basis of abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, trade union membership or non-membership, socio-economic background or any other inappropriate distinction.

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