

CONFIDENTIAL

ACADEMIC BOARD

**AB17/65
CONFIRMED**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2018

Present: J Mennell (Chair), T Barry, L Bates, J Brown, C Coghill, J Colclough, D Cox, S de Freitas, A Fletcher, K Fox, A Hampson, R Harrison-Palmer, S Henderson, R Hunter, A Lane, M Leek, E Lees, L Mansfield, J Robinson, C Rouncefield, N Rourke, I Sinker, K Small, K Watson

In attendance: J Whitfield (Committee Secretary)

17:64 **Apologies for absence:** A Marshall, T Bampouras, L Kenward, L Nelson, F Sapsford, K Stuart Verbal

17:65 **Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2018:** AB17/52
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Actions from the meeting:

The action log was reviewed and noted.

The Head of Strategic Partnerships & Programmes provided an update with regard to the Cumbria Collaborative Outreach Programme (CCOP) actions agreed at the 15 March meeting, as follows:

To develop and issue global communications and team brief content for cascade to cover the current position, aims, activity and impact of the Hello Future Programme to ensure awareness of the programme and key statistics across the organisation: Global communications had been issued and web pages developed.

To plan a conference to demonstrate the aims and impact of the programme for key leads and partners to enhance visibility: The event was scheduled for the end of November 2018, with additional information to be reported to Academic Board in due course.

In addition, the Head of Strategic Partnerships & Programmes confirmed that institutional CCOP funding had been extended by 15 months, to enable the Office for Students (OfS) to position its priorities for the future of the scheme. It was hoped that the programme would then become a core OfS initiative rather than a time-limited one, supported by a strong evidence base of success nationally.

The Vice Chancellor reported on recent discussions at the Research & Enterprise Committee (REC) regarding the University's involvement in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It had been agreed to invite the Chief Executive of the LEP to attend a future meeting of REC to discuss potential joint plans and activity, including CCOP.

Outcome:

- To approve the minutes of the meeting held 24 April 2018
- To note the action log and close down the completed outstanding item

17:66 **Vice Chancellor's Report:** Verbal
The Vice Chancellor reported that, as the current period represented the end of the annual planning cycle, plans for 2018-19 were to be presented to the University Board of Directors at its July meeting the following week. These were to include: the Budget 2018-19;

Financial Forecasts 2019-20 onwards; the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2018-19; the forward institutional Estates Strategy; the Strategic Risk Register; and Capital Allocations and Staffing information. Following approval by the Board, all documentation would be communicated across the University, initially via the Team Brief before the end of the academic year, and additionally through a further round of staff conferences to be held in September 2018.

The University remained on track in terms of its performance against the targets set for the current year, and was starting to see the required signs of growth for longer-term sustainability. 2018-19 would yet be a challenging year, due to previous under-recruitment, but growth would begin in earnest in 2019-20, with more intensive growth the following year, as a result of the Phase 2 implementation of the Portfolio Development Programme.

It was confirmed that a new senior leader was currently being recruited for the Institute of Health, to focus exclusively on driving the success, profile and reputation of the University's Health programmes.

The Vice Chancellor offered thanks to all colleagues for their hard work, dedication and achievements during the 2017-18 year.

Outcome: To note the report

17:67 Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic's Report:

AB17/53

A summary of the key items contained within the circulated report was provided by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic:

- Validation documentation as part of the first phase of the Portfolio Development Programme was being progressed by AQD.
- The case for Cumbria Online had been approved by the Vice Chancellor's Executive (VCE) and was progressing for implementation.
- Work around accelerated degrees was underway, with further reporting from project leaders expected at the end of June.
- The Academic Leadership Group were holding a series of targeted focus meetings, and were next to meet with the Head of FE Partnerships & Skills to focus on FE progression and initiatives.
- The recent Learning & Teaching Fest had been a success, with an excellent keynote speech and high quality content throughout.
- The Deputy Vice Chancellor had attended a meeting in London regarding the Subject TEF, and had also met with Advance HE and the Chief of Staff at the Office for Students regarding the University's new initiatives in the area of blended learning.
- VCE had approved the establishment of a Task & Finish Group for Learning & Teaching leads across departments.
- Proposals to reimagine the Business School had been approved by VCE and work was ongoing.

The Director of AQD outlined plans to establish a new process for Periodic Review, to develop a more holistic approach to programme review across each subject area.

Detailed consultation was to take place during the summer on proposals to cluster programmes at subject level.

The periodic re-approval of programmes would be a key element of the new process, with revalidation taking place in any instances of substantial change. The intention was to create a more streamlined

process with a greater emphasis on programme enhancement, and it was aimed to hold the first periodic subject review in Spring 2019.

Updates on key activity and successes were then provided by the Heads of Department.

Congratulations were offered to the Business School, which had been ranked as 1st in the North West in the Guardian League Table, and 19th overall within the UK, and to the Department of Medical & Sports Sciences, which had been ranked 2nd within the UK in terms of graduate employability.

It was confirmed that the Institute of Education had not received an Ofsted review during the current cycle. A new inspection framework was being introduced during 2018-19, with new format inspections to follow during 2019-20.

Multi-service agency approaches were being adopted for Social Work and Policing, to encourage student number growth and to work to meet the skills and development needs for the region.

Activity was ongoing across departments to further embed research within teaching.

Action: It was agreed that Professional Services leads should be invited to contribute updates at future meetings for incorporation into the Deputy Vice Chancellor's Report – DVCA and DVCA's EA.

Outcome: To note the report

17:68

Students' Union Report:

AB17/54

An update on recent developments and activity was provided by the UCSU Community & Partnerships Officer, as outlined in the circulated paper.

After a changeover in staff and new priorities driven by the 2017 NSS results and the new UK Quality Code, UCSU was currently reviewing and adapting its student voice systems and changing the process behind its recruitment of Student Academic Representatives. It was also updating the way in which it recorded their engagement and recognised their commitment to the role. UCSU Officers were also working with Programme Administration to change the way Staff-Student Forums (SSFs) were administered, to allow Student Academic Representatives to take more of a leading role, and with the aim of re-aligning SSFs to focus on raising and resolving actions derived from student feedback. The work undertaken by the sabbatical team to resolve student issues and contribute effectively to the full range of enhancements to the student experience was welcomed and noted by Academic Board.

The Vice Chancellor offered thanks and congratulations to the Community Partnerships Officer and UCSU team for their work and achievements during the year, and in particular their critical input into the development of the Student Protection Plan for submission to the Office for Students as part of the institutional initial registration process.

Outcome: To note the report

Draft Annual Operating Plan 2018-19:

The Vice Chancellor provided an overview of the draft Annual Operating Plan for 2018-19, which was to proceed to the Board the following week for approval for implementation.

The number of institutional projects had been reduced from 35 in 2017-18 to 17 under the 2018-19 Plan, with key objectives focussing on:

- Continued portfolio development
- A focus on student recruitment
- The enhancement of the student experience and student outcomes
- The continuous need for systems enhancement
- Further growth initiatives
- Responses to the emerging requirements of the OfS regime

It was noted that adjustments had been made to some targets set the previous year, to recognise the performance seen during 2017-18. A number of NSS targets had been revised in line with the results achieved during 2017-18, to ensure realistic targets to drive improvement in results over time. Work was ongoing to establish appropriate targets for student attainment, based on the student profile of the University.

The Departmental Representative for BLPSS raised a number of questions with regard to the Pay & Reward elements of the AOP, including any potential use of teaching only contracts and adherence to the national pay framework. In response, the Director of Student & Staff Services reported on a series of stakeholder sessions planned for Summer 2018 to communicate the University's forward People Strategy. During these sessions, more detailed information would be provided to staff on workforce planning to develop a flexible workforce to align with the institutional student profile, sector best practice and the business needs of the University. The Vice Chancellor confirmed the University's ongoing commitment to the national pay framework, subject to review on an annual basis, in line with the sector.

Detailed plans around each AOP key project would be developed following the Board's approval of the Plan and its associated KPIs. A programme of reporting would then be fed into the business schedule for Academic Board.

Actions agreed:

- The Vice Chancellor to work with the University Secretary and Administration & Governance Manager to propose for the next meeting those areas of the AOP that Academic Board would need to be regularly sighted on.
- It was suggested that the staff experience could also be factored into the key outcomes of the Academic Infrastructure Project. It was agreed that this was already a key benefit of the stated aims of the project, but that it could be more explicitly referenced within the project specification – Directors of AQD and SAAS.
- Deep dive sessions to explore key project areas was suggested for inclusion under the forward schedule of business for Academic Board – Vice Chancellor/Administration & Governance Manager.

Students' Union support was confirmed for the generation of campus specific enhancement and vibrancy plans.

The Vice Chancellor reported that each campus would receive a Campus Vibrancy Fund, to be managed and led by the students. Feedback was welcomed from UCSU in order to progress the development of the initiative.

Outcome: To note the report

17:70

Proposed changes to Academic Regulations:

AB17/56

Full information as to the outcomes of student consultation were provided within the paper, including full details of the information provided to students to inform their feedback at this stage and the communication mechanisms employed.

All current Undergraduate and Postgraduate students had been asked the following questions:

- Whether they understood how the changes to academic regulations might apply to them.
- Whether they understood the rationale behind the changes in support of student success.
- Whether they would be likely to agree to the changes or request to opt-out and remain bound by the old regulations, or whether they required further information to make a decision. (It being noted that the actual choice would be made through re-registration.)

In total 9% of all Undergraduate and 18% of all Postgraduate students had responded to the consultation survey, of which 50.3% (UG)/73.7% (PG) were likely to agree to the changes, 6.3% (UG)/4.4% (PG) indicated they would choose to stay on the old regulations, and 43.5% (UG)/21.9% (PG) required further information to make a decision.

It was anticipated that with additional information and guidance which was planned the majority of continuing students would understand the benefits of the proposals and agree to the proposed changes. This was supported by analysis undertaken of the free comments provided within the returned questionnaires.

The UCSU Officer confirmed that the Students' Union understood the benefits of and were happy to endorse the proposed changes, subject to a further information campaign to students. UCSU were satisfied that the changes would be of benefit to students.

The forward Communications Plan for all students and staff (including colleagues and students from collaborative partners, PSRBs and external examiners) was outlined by the Director of AQD, and it was confirmed that it was the intention to apply the new regulations to all students from September 2018 (including collaborative provision). New students would not have the option to opt out, but would be informed that new regulations applied. All continuing students would be given the opportunity to opt out of moving to the new regulations as part of the re-registration process.

A clear rationale for the changes would be provided in plain English, alongside supporting evidence and clear communication of the benefits for students. A range of written, visual and multi-media/social media approaches would be used to communicate the

key messages, both before and during registration and re-registration.

All activity would be carried out with the support and engagement of the Students' Union.

Work was being undertaken to ensure that academic and professional services colleagues were able to provide accurate advice and guidance to support any cohorts with a mix of opt-out and opt-in students.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that all students would have the opportunity to talk through the changes in detail with a member of staff to inform their decision.

Actions:

- Academic Board noted the significance of ensuring an appropriate process and planning for communicating the rationale and changes to students and staff. A detailed Communications Plan to be presented to VCE for formal sign off, given the absence of a forward meeting of Academic Board until the new academic year – Director of AQD.
- For the first Academic Board meeting of the new academic year, a high level summary to be provided of the outcomes of communications activity, with a more detailed report on outstanding issues/actions and learning points to be presented at the following meeting – Director of AQD. Reporting to include detail of the implications and associated actions regarding any students who opt out of a more favourable outcome.
- Impact monitoring to return to Academic under its annual Schedule of Business – Director of AQD/Administration & Governance Manager.

[Secretary's note: at the close of the meeting, the Vice Chancellor confirmed that an Equality Impact Assessment into the regulation changes would be conducted, and that outcomes reporting would return to Academic Board in due course.]

Outcome: To approve the revised Academic Regulations for implementation, based on the outcomes of the student consultation

It was agreed at this point to re-order the agenda items to ensure sufficient time to cover key items before the end of the meeting.

17:71

Update on Research Excellence Framework (REF):

AB17/58

The Director of Research outlined the ongoing work of the REF Steering Group. A REF away day was taking place on 28th June 2018 to plan the development of submissions, with particular regard to the following elements:

- REF development processes to date, and learning from REF2014.
- REF2021 development and selection principles, including consideration of the code of practice for selection (identifying staff with significant responsibility for research) and proposed preparation milestones.
- Workshops:
 - Identifying potential impact case studies.
 - Developing the research environment.
 - Processes for selecting outputs from the eligible pool.

REF Development and Research Leads were now members of the extended Steering Group, as well as the Deputy Vice Chancellor.

The significant support offered to research activity across departments by the institutional Research Fund was highlighted and congratulated.

Outcome: To note the report

17:72 Debate Session - Student Outcomes: Current Position and Priorities for 2018-19:

Verbal

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented a new draft data set into the University student profile, numbers and demographics, alongside longitudinal data and initial suggestions for potential strategies for growth.

It was confirmed that the data represented initial work to bring together a key information set, and would be explored in detail with Departmental Heads and Professional Services leads at the forthcoming SLT Away Day. It was anticipated that, once finalised, the data would form the basis of the ongoing focus on student outcomes under the AOP, which would be regularly reported back to Academic Board for information and comment.

The intention to grow student numbers by 1000FTE over the coming three years was also outlined, and changes in national policy were noted for their impact on departmental recruitment, to be mitigated by the activity ongoing as part of the institutional Portfolio Development Programme.

The following key elements were highlighted during the presentation:

- Growth in transnational student numbers.
- Benchmarking on the age of full time students versus the sector average and MillionPlus data.
- The current numbers of students from Low Participation neighbourhoods (20%).
- The challenges of the student profile and the benefits to teaching and recruitment that could be gained from a thorough understanding of the student profile and persona and the development of a holistic approach to the University's broad range of student cohorts.
- Focal areas for the enhancement of student outcomes and satisfaction, including: teaching excellence; teaching, assessment and feedback; and academic support.
- Departmental breakdowns of NSS results and employability outcomes.
- Numbers of Firsts and 2:1s by Department.
- HESA continuation and completion figures.
- Priority streams of work within the academic portfolio.

It was also reported that learning gain metrics were anticipated from the OfS once data analysis methodologies were agreed. It was noted that this data would be of benefit to the University and could reflect well on its activity.

Actions agreed:

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor to share the presentation slides with SLT members following the Away Day session.
- Longitudinal data on NSS results over 3-5 years was requested by Heads of Department, as it was felt to be more beneficial than year on year NSS comparisons of potentially very different cohorts – Deputy Vice Chancellor.

Outcome: To note the presentation

17:73 Student Retention and Outcomes of OFFA Access Agreement Monitoring 2016-17:

AB17/57

The Vice Chancellor reported that, following the university's submission of its monitoring of the 2016/17 Access Agreement to the Office for Fair Access (Offa), it had received feedback from Offa raising concerns regarding the non-continuation of students from low participation neighbourhoods.

Offa's recommendation was that work to support the retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods be developed and prioritised in future access and participation work. The paper presented acknowledged Offa's feedback and outlined work already underway to develop a coordinated plan to bring together current retention interventions, data collection work and any new interventions. All projects already underway would be integrated, as outlined in the Access and Participation Plan, into a single framework, with a monitoring group chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic. The aim of this cross-university group would be to develop evaluation metrics and dashboards, monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the interventions and guide the development of any new interventions for 2018-19 and 2019-20 cohorts. The same group would have responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Access and Participation Plan, and would receive inputs from the Student Outcomes Data group, which was working to develop dashboards for managers and executives, and to develop institutional benchmarking data and metrics with which the efficacy of interventions would be measured and tracked.

The Vice Chancellor stressed that it was also important to view ongoing activity in the context of the significant piece of data development undertaken by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and presented in draft under item 17:72.

Outcome: To note the report

17:74 Deliberative Committees:

AB17/60

Outcomes of the Committee Effectiveness Review 2018:

The Vice Chancellor confirmed the outcomes of the 2018-19 review of committees, which had been one of refinement rather than further substantial change, following the previous detailed review undertaken during 2016-17.

Terms of reference were being reviewed and revised by individual committees and would be agreed at the first meetings of the academic year, for subsequent approval by Academic Board.

The Director of AQD outlined the significant changes to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Strategy & Planning Committee, to ensure closer alignment with the new OfS Regulatory Framework.

Changes to the frequency of meetings of the Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee were also presented, and it was noted that the Committee reserved the right to further review its Terms of Reference in line with the new OfS Framework.

It was confirmed that the body of Postgraduate student representatives had been expanded to ensure cross-campus representation on the membership of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

It was noted that meetings of the Research Ethics Panel had been reduced to one hour, with substantial work taking place virtually out with the meetings.

REF Steering Group Terms of Reference and Membership:

The revised Terms of Reference and Membership of the REF Steering Group were presented by the Director of Research and Head of Graduate School.

In addition to the changes outlined within the paper, it was also confirmed that it was the intention for the Deputy Vice Chancellor to also join the membership of the Group.

Any further changes resulting from the first cycle of meetings would return to Academic Board as appropriate.

- Outcome:**
- To note the outcomes of the 2018-19 Committee Effectiveness Review and to agree the proposed changes to Committee Terms of Reference and Membership as outlined in the report.
 - To approve the revised Terms of Reference and Membership for the REF Steering Group, noting and approving the intention for the Deputy Vice Chancellor to join the membership.

17:75 Committee Schedule for 2018-19:

The Vice Chancellor reported that work was ongoing to confirm the schedule of committee meetings and institutional schedule of business for 2018-19, to ensure alignment with and appropriate reporting to the University Board and Vice Chancellor's Executive, and in accordance with the new AOP 2018-19 and OfS regulatory framework.

Verbal

- Outcome:** To note the update provided

17:76 Honorary Awards Committee:

The nominations for the awards of Honorary Fellowships were presented to Academic Board for approval.

AB17/61

The nomination for Alumnus of the Year for presentation at the July 2018 graduation ceremonies had been approved by the Vice Chancellor via Chair's Action, and was presented for endorsement.

- Outcome:**
- To approve the nominations for the award of Honorary Fellowships
 - To endorse the nomination for the award of Alumnus of the Year

17:77 Collaborative Provision Relationship Management Strategy:

It was reported that the final Strategy document had been signed off by the Vice Chancellor via Chair's Action, as per the process agreed at the last meeting of Academic Board.

AB17/63

The relationship of the Strategy to the institutional assurance framework for managing Collaborative Provision had been clearly referenced within the document by the Head of Academic Partnerships & Skills, along with appropriate signposting to the institutional Quality Handbook.

- Outcome:** To note the Strategy as approved by Chair's Action

17:78	<p>Minutes from Academic Board Committees: The minutes and associated key points of the following Committees were received and noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 19 June 2018 • Academic Strategy & Planning Committee 20 June 2018 • Research & Enterprise Committee 12 June 2018 	<p>AB17/64</p> <p>a) b) c)</p>
Outcome:	To note the Committee minutes and summaries presented	
17:76	<p>OfS Initial Registration: The documentation submitted as part of the initial registration with the Office for Students was presented by the University Secretary, and it was confirmed that the key elements of the submission had been reviewed and commented upon in detail by the Academic Governance, and Finance & Resources Committee, and the Board.</p> <p>The OfS had confirmed receipt of all the necessary registration elements, and it was expected that outcomes would be known by September 2018.</p> <p>The OfS Group was now looking at the behaviours and expectations of the OfS in terms of ongoing activity, and the scheduling and direction of forward reporting and approvals through committees was under consideration.</p> <p>Further updates and interaction would take place at committee meetings at the commencement of the new academic year to ensure colleagues' understanding of the purpose and content of the documentation.</p>	<p>AB17/62</p>
Outcome:	To note the report and documentation submitted to the Office for Students as part of the University's registration submission	
17:80	<p>Next meeting: To be confirmed under the 2018-19 Committee Calendar</p>	<p>Verbal</p>