ACADEMIC BOARD   **AB19/35**

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2020

Present: Julie Mennell (Chair), Jean Brown, Colin Coghill, Colette Conroy, Karen Hadley, Ruth Harrison-Palmer, Signy Henderson, Lequane Johnson, Jess Robinson, Rob Trimble, Katie Walker-Small, Brian Webster-Henderson, Michelle Leek, Nigel Rourke

In attendance: James Bellhouse, James Hodge (for item 19:41), Rob Wilson (for item 19:42), Kate Dixon (for item 19:30)

Apologies for Absence: Ian Sinker, Amanda Lane, Diane Cox, Ian Todd, Alison Hampson, Steve Mccarthy-Grunwald, Chris Watson, Jeremy Colclough, Susie Wilson, Liz Bates, Alison Marshall, Kaz Stuart

19:25	**Minutes and actions the previous meeting**	AB19/18

The minutes of the 5 November 2019 meeting were approved as an accurate record.   The action log was reviewed and noted. The DVC(A) confirmed that actions relating to the Students Union (19:04) were being actioned; the first action in 19:05 relating to the Student Achievement Strategy had been completed, the second, relating to Academic Forums on each campus was awaiting the new Institute Directors all being in post before being taken forward.

a)
b)

19:26	**Institute Representatives**	Verbal

Received: Updates and feedback from Institute Staff Representatives

The DVC(A) introduced the item, for staff representatives within the Institutes to bring any matters for attention to Academic Board. Representatives noted / asked the following:

That staff feel significantly more involved in the University than previously.

That new staff were getting a better understanding of the assessment framework and the expectations of individuals, but that further training was requested. It was agreed that further training would be provided in relation to the assessment framework. **Action:** DAQD

Staff queried the status of the University's International Strategy and how this was operationalised, in particular with respect to monitoring attendance when students were on placement. It was confirmed that the International Strategy would be shared with Academic Board. **Action:** Uni Sec. The DVC(A) confirmed that there was also a policy relating to attendance monitoring when students were on placement, however if this was not widely known about awareness of it needed to be enhanced. He went on to note that the University had an audit from UKVI the following week. It was agreed that a wider session looking at the international strategy would be useful for Academic Board in due course. **Action:** DVC(A) / Uni Sec.

It was commented that in some parts of the Institutes there was a perception of the loss of subject identity; that the creation of the

Institutes was a good opportunity to reinvigorate links locally and regionally; and that ways to get the upward flow of information and involvement of colleagues in other Institutes also needed consideration. The Vice Chancellor commented that the new Directors of Institutes were in place to lead on and develop thinking across many of these aspects and that an engagement plan, both internally and externally, was being developed for the review of the Strategy.

Outcome: To note the updates

| 19:27 | **Students' Union Matters** | AB19/19 |

Received: A report on Students' Union matters

The Students' Union Academic Officer spoke to his report, starting by noting that a number of students were coming to the Students' Union asking about plagiarism. Student Feedback through the Panel had raised a number of matters including the quality and storage of placement uniforms.

The PVC(H) noted that he had met with the Students' Union and agreed actions in relation to plagiarism and that he would take up the matter of placement uniforms outside of the meeting. **Action:** PVC(H)

The Academic Officer went on to note that the Students' Union priorities for the year had been refined and would be finalised with the new sabbatical officers. The risk of losing momentum when the sabbatical officers change was noted; the Academic Officer stated that the new Officers would shadow the current team in their last month. The PVC(H) offered to meet with the Officers at handover, with the Dean for Student Success, to help facilitate the process.

It was agreed that, as the formal and informal relationship between the Union and University had progressed, it was an opportune time to agree a format for reporting to Academic Board versus matters for informal discussion. **Action:** Academic Officer / PVC(H)

The Academic Officer went on to speak about the work the Students' Union had undertaken on a new constitution. A consultation had been undertaken on the proposals, which had been supported by students. The main changes were outlined. The Vice Chancellor noted that the new constitution was going to University Board in March for approval and that a presentation to Academic Board on the constitution and what it means for the different Sabbatical Officer roles and the changes to the Student Voice would be beneficial. **Action:** Academic Officer / PVC(H)

Outcome: The Students' Union Academic Officer's report was received.

| 19:29 | **Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy Action Plan Progress** | AB19/20 |

Received: An update on delivery of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy Action Plan

The DVC(A) introduced the item noting that the Action Plan was approved by the last meeting of Academic Board and that good

progress was being made. The DAQD reported that the Super-Group had been established to bring together the objective owners and other key staff to ensure that the required progress was being made. It was noted that the update was a snap-shot in time, with a more detailed update progressing to SSQAC in March 2020. An overview of the key actions was provided.

The DVC(A) commented that a rolling programme was required, able to flex to pick up other items as required, and that wider communications were required with staff so that awareness of the activity was as required.

A question was asked as to how staff not engaging with the CPD days were being communicated with. It was commented that some elements will be made mandatory, for other aspects work will be undertaken with the Institute Directors to see how the Staff Forums in the Institutes can support dissemination of information, and that the CAPE toolkit was another potential mechanism.

It was agreed that a group academic induction for the four new Directors of Institutes would be worthwhile. **Action:** DAQD.

Outcome: To note the progress update

| 19:30 | **Development of Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas (HNCs and HNDs)** | AB19/21 |

Received: Proposal to develop Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas under licence from Pearsons

The DVC(A) introduced the item which the Head of Student Recruitment and Portfolio Development from the Institute of Business, Industry and Leadership then spoke to in detail. She set out how there was demand from the University's partners for the University to adopt HNC / D into the portfolio, the reasons for the introduction and how it would be delivered. In response to a question it was confirmed that the timelines were deliverable, and that the new qualifications could be set up on the student record system. It was noted that there were no plans to run the awards on the University's campuses at this point in time, delivery would be via partner Colleges.

After further confirmation of the strategic and operational fit, it was agreed to approve the proposal.

Outcome: To approve the proposal to develop Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas under licence from Pearsons as set out in the paper.

| 19:31 | **Academic Infrastructure Update** | AB19/22 |

Received: An Update on Academic Infrastructure

The DAQD gave an update on progress with delivery of aspects within the Academic Infrastructure project, starting with proposed changes to the Assessment Board processes, which had been subject to a detailed discussion at SSQAC. Following the SSQAC discussion, Academic Board's endorsement was requested before work on implementation is proceeded with. The aim of the changes was set

out to be to reduce the turnaround time for marks to get back to students and to provide the focus and space for quality enhancement. It was noted that the implementation plan would be critical to ensure the process was deliverable and that it was an opportunity to provide training for all staff involved.

A member of the Board commented on the importance of clarity over roles and responsibilities, and that the work-load model and role profiles needed to include chairing of Assessment Boards. It was agreed that how the changes are operationalised would be important; the work-load model could be reviewed; and it was noted that a review of role profiles was an action in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Action Plan.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the Module Confirmation Board was anticipated to be chaired by a programme leader and be Institute based. The membership of this Board was discussed, with different views, with it agreed that it had a processing role and may be better re-named.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the changes were in the right direction, however the first part of the proposed process required revisiting. The documentation also needed be explicit around the expectations of the staff who chaired the stages of the process and undertook other roles. An annual meeting of the Chairs of Board to look at key themes would also be of value. It was agreed that a revised proposal would be presented to the March SSQAC meeting following which an update would be provided to Academic Board. **Action:** DAQD / DVC(A)

Outcome:
- To support the direction of travel set out regarding the changes to Assessment Boards;
- That a revised proposal be presented to SSQAC and Academic Board.

19:32	**Student Retention**	AB19/23

Received: A report on 2018/19 student retention data

The Dean for Student Success (DSS) introduced the paper noting that a full review of the data and action plan was being discussed at the University Student Performance Group. She reported that there had been a small increase in overall retention, however there was variation in performance and progress with the majority of programmes requiring an action plan. The DVC(A) added that the top-ups in London had seen lower retention rates than other areas, which was the subject of more detailed review, as was the generally lower continuation of level 4 students.

It was noted that the reference in the paper to there not being an AOP target in 2018/19 was referencing there not being a target with a particular definition, rather than there not being a retention target.

In the discussion that followed it was agreed that there was merit in each Institute looking at outliers in their areas and presenting to Academic Board areas where performance was exceptional, and why, and where there were remaining challenges and why. The opportunity to look across the Institutes was agreed to be valuable. A further discussion was also agreed to be important regarding

retention within the University's Collaborative Partners. **Action:** DSS / DVC(A) to determine future reporting to Academic Board in reporting retention outliers and actions

Outcome:
- The report was received
- It was agreed that further analyses would be presented to Academic Board at future meetings.

19:33	**Student Achievement**	AB19/24

Received: A report on 2018/19 student achievement data

The DSS introduced the paper reporting that the overall student achievement rate had decreased from the previous year. The inclusion of the top-up students in London was discussed, with it confirmed that if these students were removed from the data the profile would be similar to last year. It was noted that it was not unusual for students on these programmes to perform less well than students who had been on campus for three years, however further work was required in order to support them to succeed.

Following a question, the role of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) was discussed. It was reported that EIAs were undertaken through the APP processes and data split by equality characteristics reported to the University Student Performance Group. It was noted that the EIA process was not well suited to the analyses required on student data sets. It was agreed that relevant reports, including by equality strands, could usefully be extracted into overarching data reports, such as the one under discussion.

The importance of retaining students and supporting them to succeed was noted, with the role of the Personal Tutor an important aspect of this support. A member of the Board commented that the work-load model allowance for personal tutor activity was not sufficient. The DVC(A) responded that the allowance was not out of line with the sector, but more importantly, before looking at the allowance work would be undertaken to see whether students and staff were properly engaged with the process.

Following the discussion, the Vice Chancellor tasked the Institute staff representatives with talking to colleagues about the Personal Tutor role and leading a session at the next Academic Board meeting on how the process is working, challenges with it, in the context of the current policy. **Action:** Institute staff representatives / DSS.

Outcome:
- To receive the report

19:34	**Access and Participation Plan 2019/20 Monitoring**	AB19/25

Received: A paper on monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan 2019/20

The DSS spoke to the paper, reporting that the Access and Participation Plan Steering Group was maintaining oversight of the action plan for the 2019/20 APP and the APP from 2020 onwards. Further work had been undertaken on achievement of targets with the full monitoring methodology anticipated to come from the OfS on the Autumn of 2020.

The DVC(A) confirmed the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the APP, noting that the metrics in the 2019/20 Plan were largely legacy and expectations were that these would largely be as required. The APP for 2020 onwards had monitoring and evaluation built into plans and activities.

Outcome: -   The update was received.

19:35   **NSS**   AB19/26

Received: An update on NSS Activity and presentations from the Institute of SNOROS and Institute of Education

The DVC(A) reported that the NSS 2020 was currently live, with staff having been briefed about their responsibilities not to inappropriately influence students and response rates being monitored. The communication of the survey to students, as set out in the communication plan, was being actioned. The limited use of posters was agreed to be followed up on. **Action:** DSS

The Institute of Science, Natural Resources and Outdoor Studies lead for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience gave an overview of work within her Institute on the delivery of the Institute Student Outcomes Action Plan. She detailed the central oversight and regular programme team meetings, which provide constant communication channels for students. Work with AQD and CAPE had led to enhancements, for example in feedback provided to students. Work with these teams was also ongoing looking at the quality and forms of assessments used. Programme plans were in place, with consistency and sustained delivery being the focus where areas were performing well.

The Vice Chancellor asked whether the successes in the Institute had been sufficiently well recognised by the University. It was noted that there had been recognition in a Global communication, but more could be done. Institutes were asked to feed in ways that success could be recognised. **Action:** Institute Directors

The Institute of Education lead for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience gave an overview of work underway in her Institute to consolidate and improve the NSS results from the 88% overall satisfaction score achieved in the last Survey. Activities included course consultative forums, timetabling changes to provide a full day for students to go into schools and including a conference as part of a module. Actions at the London campus also included enhancements to the library. Moving on to retention and attainment, it was noted that 97% of London top-up students achieved a 2:2 or above from low entry qualifications; good outcomes for these students.

A discussion around the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience roles followed, with feedback being that the last year has felt to be more stable, and that teams are understanding the Institute roles better.

Outcome: -   The updates were received.

19:40   **Teaching Excellence Framework Update (TEF)**   AB19/27

Received: An update on the TEF.

Outcome:	The update was noted.	

19:41	**Research Matters**	AB19/28 a)b)&c)

Received: An update on REF 2021; a paper on changes to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations; and on plans for the communication of the process for conferment Professoriate Titles

REF2021
The Research Development Manager spoke to the update on preparations for the REF. With respect to staff with significant responsibility for research he noted that eligibility was to be reassessed every two months so could change. An appeal process was in place, with no appeals received to date. He noted that some staff had declared individual circumstances, which would be handled within the institution, managing the number of outputs from each individual within the REF criteria. He went on to speak to outcomes from the internal and external reviews of the outputs, and the work ongoing on impact case studies and environment statements.

The report was agreed to be comprehensive and helpful, with the overview of the outputs a useful pointer for where staff development may be required.

Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations
The DAQD spoke to the proposed changes to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations, highlighted within the paper, which SSQAC had reviewed and approved. It was agreed that the changes be approved.

Conferment Professoriate Titles
The proposal to make the call for applications for professoriate titles be made in this academic year was approved.

Outcome:
- To receive the update on REF2021
- To approve the proposed changes to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations, as set out in the paper
- To approve that the call for applications for professoriate titles be made in this academic year

19:42	**Ambleside Business Plan**	AB19/33

Received: Draft Ambleside Business Plan

The Vice Chancellor noted the late circulation of the paper and recognised that members of the Committee would not have had chance to read it in full before the meeting. She set out that the intention of circulating the draft Business Plan for the campus was to raise awareness and to ask for the campus plans to be integrated into the broader planning process.

The Ambleside Campus Manager passed on the apologies for the Campus Director and gave an overview of the Business Plan – which was a five-year plan with a ten-year vision. He set out how the ambition was to increase student numbers using the campus and to expand programmes relevant to the location. The areas to be addressed to achieve the strategic aims were set out along with the

environmental principles. He concluded by noting that the document was still in draft form with meetings with the Institute Directors and more staff in Ambleside to be undertaken.

In the discussion that followed a question was asked as to whether the Institute of Arts delivery out of the Ambleside campus would require staff to move from Brampton Road. The Vice Chancellor responded that this was to be determined and confirmed that each Director of Institute would be working with the Ambleside leadership team so that each Institute Plan included Ambleside, albeit some more than others. **Action:** Director of IoA to determine locations of staff.

It was confirmed that the Business Plan would be approved through VCE, with SLF involvement to influence and input prior to approval, taking account of feedback that some of the timelines may require review. **Action:** PVC(Health) / PVC(DSSS) to arrange SLF interaction.

Outcome:	- It was agreed to note the draft business plan and the requirement for each Institute plan to align with it - It was agreed that Professional Services involvement was required in finalising the Plan, and that SLF was the appropriate forum for this.

19:43	**Collaborative Provision Annual Partnerships Report**	AB19/29

Received: To receive the annual report and note the partnership review undertaken

The DAQD spoke to the paper, noting that there was a good working relationship with the College that had been subject to a partnership review and no concerns had been raised through the review.

Outcome: To receive the paper.

19:44	**Validation of a New Partner**	AB19/30

Received: A report requesting approval of Hugh Baird College as a collaborative partner with the University

It was confirmed that the proposed partnership with the College had been through due process.

Outcome: The partnership with Hugh Baird College, as set out in the paper, was approved.

19:45	**Annual Operating Plan 2019/20 (JM)**	AB19/31

Received: The Annual Operating Plan for the year

Outcome: The Plan was received

19:46	**Senior Academic Board Committees**	AB19/32

Received:	a) Student Success & Quality Assurance – 24 October 2019	a)
	b) Student Success & Quality Assurance – 23 January 2020	b)
	c) Academic Strategy and Planning Committee - 22 January 2020	c)

d) Research Committee – 20 January 2020   d)

The minutes were noted.

19:47	**University Board Minutes**	UB19/14a
Received:	The minutes of the meeting of University Board meetings held on 8 October 2019, 21 November 2019 and 18 December 2019.	UB19/34a UB19/37a

The minutes were noted.

19:48   **Vice Chancellor's Report**   Verbal

The Vice Chancellor emphasised the importance of everyone asking, considering, thinking and working to continually improve all aspects of the University.

She noted that it was important to understand how the position of the University is set out and perceived by different audiences, and that in future communications more emphasis would be put on what the future looks like and the impact this may have on the current situation. This would be a core aspect of the upcoming Staff Forums and Team Briefs.

19:49   **Matters for Onward Communication**   Verbal
It was agreed these would be collated following the meeting.

Forward meetings: Verbal
15 April 2020 (by videoconferencing Carlisle and Lancaster)
22 June 2020 (by videoconferencing Carlisle and Lancaster)