

UNIVERSITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 20 May 2021 by MS Teams

Present: Mr G Donnelly (Chair), Miss F Aiken, Mr J Batty, Revd Canon C Butland, Mrs J Johnston, Professor J Lee, Mr I Looker, Ms M McConnell, Professor J Mennell, Mr C Nall, Pam Tatlow, Mr M Williams, Mr P Yates.

In attendance: Dr J Brown, University Secretary
Mr D Chesser, Chief Operating Officer
Professor Rob Trimble, DVC(Academic)
Professor B Webster-Henderson, DVC(Health Environment & Innovation)

20:91 Apologies for absence Verbal
Apologies were received from Mrs E Bales and Mr I Purdham.

20:92 Declaration of Interests Verbal
There were no declarations of interest made.

20:93 Minutes of the previous meeting UB20/52 a&b
The minutes and confidential minutes of the 18 March 2021 meeting and UB20/53a
the confidential minutes of the 28 April 2021 meeting were approved as an accurate record.

20:94 Matters Arising UB20/53b
The action log was noted and updates provided as follows:

20:74: The Chair of AGC confirmed that she had had a conversation with the Vice Chancellor regarding the ITT review.

18:53: it was agreed to remove this action from the log as it was no longer felt to be required.

19:150: It was noted that recruitment reporting was being enhanced in ways that would support the Board in its role. The action was to be marked as complete.

20:08: with the two webinars planned for the coming weeks, the first on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters, the second on academic standards, it was agreed this action would be marked as complete.

20:95 Chair's Business Verbal
The Chair set out the activities he had been engaged with in his role as Chair of the Board since the last meeting:

- Attendance at the AdvanceHE Governor Development Advisory Forum. It was agreed that the course brochure be circulated to Directors. **Action:** Uni Sec.
- Attendance at a CUC webinar where the USS pension scheme was discussed as was harassment and sexual misconduct. The key message from the latter was that it is very important that the right culture exists in the organisation to ensure that people feel comfortable raising issues where they exist.
- The last of the contracts for the paramedic apprenticeships had been signed.
- The University's submission to the Queens Anniversary Prize had been provided to him for information.

Received A report from the Vice Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor spoke to her report, starting by highlighting the ongoing work to respond to the challenges raised by the pandemic and preparing for the next period. She reported that the University was on track to meet, or exceed, budget for 2020/21. The recruitment position for 2021/22 was reported to be positive, with the position compared to the sector and the previous year set out.

The annual planning round was in progress, with meetings with the Institutes and Professional Services taking place over the coming weeks, the key areas of focus were set out. Priorities for 2021/22 were being discussed in line with the draft Towards 2030 strategy, a consultation session on which had recently been held with senior staff.

A staff led submission had been made for the Queens Anniversary Prize, with the opportunity having been taken to put forward a range of case studies. The submission would be circulated to the Board. **Action:** Uni Sec.

The Vice Chancellor gave an update on developments with Newton Rigg and with the Borderlands project, noting that a meeting was planned for the following week on the latter.

She noted that there were several matters of relevance to the University in the recent Queen's speech, with the University keeping abreast of developments to understand the impacts and opportunities of the proposals.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chancellor for her report, commenting that it was good to hear of business as usual work continuing in a positive manner. Areas of interest relevant to the University's strategy would be picked up in the strategy discussion prior to the 15 July Board meeting.

A question was asked as to whether the promotion of higher level vocational routes was good for the University or a threat. The Vice Chancellor responded that for some parts of the sector it would be an additional risk, however the University had been focusing on being employer informed, working with and through partners, for some time. She gave the potential Institute of Technology as an example, where there looked to be more opportunities than risks, through partnership working.

AGREED • To receive the Vice Chancellor's report

Received A report from the Student Director

The Student Director spoke to her report starting by providing an update on case work where she highlighted work undertaken to see if there was a correlation between those studying purely on-line versus those on campus, with no trend identified. She noted that there was a potential trend with respect to those with learning difficulties.

Other areas highlighted included the Representative Awards; the Student Trustee interviews; campaigns, including Expect Respect; mental health awareness week; events and activities; and the Students United Against Fees campaign. The latter was launched on 28 April 2021; it was noted that all students who provided input into the campaign praised their lecturers and the University for their response to the pandemic.

The Chair thanked the Student Director for her report commenting that it was good to see the Students' Union so active across so many areas and the positive feedback for academic staff and the University in general. He noted that the Board would be interested in updates on the Expect Respect campaign as it progressed.

AGREED • To receive the report

20:98 Academic Matters

UB20/56

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| Received | a) A report from the DVC Academic | a |
| | b) A report from the DVC Health Environment and Innovation | b |

DVC Academic

The DVC(Academic) spoke to his report. The NSS2021 was now closed with a response rate a little higher than in 2020. Detail was awaited from the OfS regarding what would be published and when.

With respect to academic delivery in 2020/21 he set out the phases of students returning to blended delivery, with circa 1000 remaining with fully on-line delivery. The guidance had changed so that from 17 May these students could have returned, however the majority of teaching had been completed the previous week and it was deemed to be inappropriate to change the method of assessment at this stage. Programmes where teaching continued post 17 May were being moved to blended learning. All students had received communications relating to their programme and were allowed to book study spaces on campus and access the library and student support. The extra activities being arranged for graduating students and new and returning students were detailed.

Whether there had been a change to the atmosphere on campus since the latest changes to lockdown rules was asked. The DVC(A) responded that there had not been any significant change, with those who wished to access campuses doing so through the period.

It was noted that the enhancement activities would link well with those being planned by the Students' Union; it was agreed that this would be followed up.

Moving on to academic delivery in 2021/22, the DVC(A) detailed the decisions that had been taken regarding the approach, with the timetable being worked up based on an increase to a notional 60% of time in face to face teaching. The benefits of planning in this way were set out, including the ability for the University to build on the good practice developed through the pandemic to date. Once the next stages of the government roadmap were announced the room capacities, which were being built on a '1m plus' social distancing basis, would be reviewed. It was noted that the University's approach was in line with many in the sector with there being some push back from students nationally which would be kept

under review. Students would be communicated with regarding the plans for 2021/22 over the coming weeks.

The balance of home and office working at other employers was asked; a Director responded that a 60% of time in the office environment was the most common arrangement being adopted.

The ratio of on-campus versus on-line delivery currently considered for the post-pandemic world was asked. The DVC(A) responded that due to the benefits of on-line delivery a return to 100% on-campus was not expected, the percentage would differ by subject area but 80% on-campus was a possibility.

An update was provided on the Turing scheme which replaced Erasmus Plus and for which the University had submitted a bid.

The DVC(A) concluded by providing a briefing on a new measure that the OfS had previously consulted on called 'Proceed'. The data for the measure had been published the previous day with the University in the middle of the rankings at circa 60%, drawn from multiplying 80% completion rate by 75% Graduate employment. The ways the metric may be used were noted.

DVC Health Environment and Innovation

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

Reporting on students within the Institute of Health, he noted that all students were now out of the paid placements that were set up to support the NHS. Work was ongoing to support students who had not been able to undertake required placement hours due to the pandemic to achieve their required competencies through a simulated placement project funded by HEE.

The Chair of HEE had undertaken a successful virtual visit to the University, with feedback being that he was very impressed by the innovation underway at the University.

A question was asked as to whether the students that had gone into the NHS on paid placements had been in the NHS pension scheme and thereby had death in service cover. The DVC(HE&I) confirmed that they were, with the only difference between the previous time when students had gone into the NHS on extended placements during the pandemic being that they were able to use the time to achieve competences.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

Moving on to the Institute of Sport, Natural Resources and Outdoor Studies, the DVC commented that it had been a challenging year for many in the Institute, albeit a good opportunity for students to develop on-line skills.

A question was asked regarding feedback from students in the Institute on practical courses. The DVC commented that he had not been made aware of reports of concerns, with the management of delivery undertaken well.

With respect to other areas within his portfolio, the DVC noted that the REF2021 submission had been completed with recruitment underway for new research programmes, and that Student Services had continued with a range of activity, including the distribution of the additional hardship funding from the OfS. He finished by providing an update on activity relating to the pandemic, with plans for the return of staff to campuses once the government guidance changed ongoing and testing of staff and students continuing, working to the current requirements.

The Chair thanked the DVCs for their wide ranging reports.

AGREED: • To receive the reports.

20:99 Internal Review of Compliance with Consumer Law

UB20/57

Received A report of the Internal Review of Compliance with Consumer Law

The DVC(A) set out the background to the review, which was a requirement of the OfS. The three areas that the review was required to cover were set out, with the University's assessment of compliance detailed. AGC had reviewed the report at its March 2021 meeting and it was agreed that there was no requirement to report to the OfS as the University had been in compliance with the requirements. It was noted that the OfS letter had also asked institutions to review communications with students and the approach to regulations, detail on these aspects had been included within the report to AGC.

The Chair of AGC commented that it was a very comprehensive report. The changes that had had to be managed through could not have been anticipated and the situation had been dealt with well. She recommended the report to the Board.

The Student Director confirmed that the Students' Union had worked closely with the University on the communications to students and that she agreed with all aspects of the report.

A question was asked regarding communications for 2021/22. The DVC(A) responded that the approach for 2021/22 was currently being formulated, with communications to students saying that delivery would be blended and that more information will be provided shortly. The challenge was that the University had to continue to be responsive to government requirements as they changed and how to manage this within the communications to students.

It was commented that signposting students to information to support them to make the most of blended learning and to enjoy their University experience was needed. The DVC(A) agreed, adding that clarity in communication to students about what they were going to receive was important.

The Vice Chancellor added that the University was focusing on thinking about students, staff and the business moving to being Covid-informed rather than Covid-led. There would remain aspects that the University would be required to comply with, however alongside this the value proposition going forward needed to be articulated to staff and students. Within this there would be emphasis on the University being campus based, with vibrant campuses needed and a high quality on-campus experience. The University would be taking the best of both face to face

and on-line delivery, maintaining and enhancing the University of Cumbria brand.

AGREED

- To receive the report on the internal review of compliance with consumer law, as required by the OfS;
- That the University had complied with the requirements as set out in the letter.

20:100 Revised University Inclusivity Statement

UB20/58

Received

A paper with a revised Inclusivity Statement and updated information regarding the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism.

Inclusivity Statement

The Chair of the Board introduced the paper confirming that at its last meeting the Board had agreed to have a University Inclusivity Statement. Prior to the approval of the Statement a legal review had been requested and a question regarding the explicit inclusion of gender identity asked to be considered.

The Chair of PPCC confirmed that the revised statement had been agreed by PPCC by circulation, with the changes in line with the advice from the solicitors.

The revised Inclusivity Statement was approved.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

AGREED

- To approve the University Inclusivity Statement as set out in the paper;
- A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

20:101 Management Accounts

UB20/59

Received

The Period 7 Management Accounts 2020-21

The COO spoke to the paper which had been presented to the recent meeting of FRC. He reported that the year to date financial position was positive, with income ahead of budget and expenditure lower than predicted. The year-end cash surplus was forecast to be higher than budgeted, although after accounting adjustments the financial statements would continue to show a deficit.

AGREED

- To receive the P7 accounts

20:102 Recruitment Report

UB20/60

Received

An update on the recruitment position for 2021-22 entry

The DVC(HE&I) gave an overview of the report, noting that overall it provided a positive picture. Work was now focusing on conversion and clearing. He noted that a re-forecast would be undertaken in the coming weeks, with the data being more accurate as time went on.

Whether it was known what was behind the better than expected position at the University and across the sector was asked. The DVC(HE&I) responded that there had been more interest in higher education due to the state of the economy however the data team were looking into the drivers in more detail.

AGREED • To note the update

20:103 2021/22 Budget Update

UB20/61

Received A progress update on setting and finalising the 2021/22 budget

The COO reported that the planning round for 2021/22 was well underway, with Institute and Professional Service plans for the year ahead being scrutinised and budgets being worked up. An indicative budget was presented, with commentary on key aspects and the next steps highlighted.

The Chair of the Board commented that the information presented highlighted the changing mix of the University's students, with diversification working its way through.

The Chair of FRC commented that the Committee were pleased to see the positive position as set out in the previous two papers and the indicative budget paper, particularly in light of the context of the pandemic. The increase in cash generation was welcomed.

The Vice Chancellor commented that in looking back to the start of the strategic planning period, confidence could be taken that the right strategy had been agreed and implementation had progressed well, providing a strong platform to build on.

AGREED • To note the update

20:104 Barrow Learning Quarter: Update

UB20/62

Received A progress update on the Barrow Learning Quarter project

The DVC(A) introduced the paper, noting that it had been presented to FRC. He went on to provide further information on the timeline for the bid submission and approval and the work ongoing on the drafting of the FBC. The project governance structure was noted.

A section of this minute has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.

AGREED • To note the update

20:100 APP Monitoring Return

UB20/63

Received The Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2019/20 Monitoring report

The DVC(A) spoke to the paper, noting that it would also be presented to AGC at its next meeting, with it coming to the Board first due to timing of completion and submission of the Monitoring Return to the OfS.

The APP 2019/20 was the first of the new format APPs and due to the timing of its drafting it retained a number of legacy KPIs and targets. He went on to detail the achievement of the targets within the 2019/20 APP explaining the difference between outcomes and activity targets, the latter no longer being within the APP from 2020/21 onwards. The vast majority of the targets had been achieved, with the reasons behind those not achieved in full set out, along with consideration of whether or not they remained ongoing areas of interest to the OfS. The DVC(A) went on to provide some information regarding the targets set for 2020 through to 2025.

In addition to the APP monitoring return progressing to the next meeting of AGC it was noted that some of the detail within the targets would be discussed at the webinar planned for June 2021 on Equality and Diversity matters.

A question was asked as to whether there was anything to be concerned about with respect to the targets not met for recruitment from Low Participation Neighbourhoods. The DVC(A) confirmed that these targets were a challenge, however it took time to make a difference so they were not a concern at this time.

AGREED • To receive the report

20:101 Estates Updates

UB20/64

Received An update on current estates matters

The COO gave an overview of the key aspects of the paper, noting that there was a lot of work progressing but that it was all positive.

AGREED • To note the report

20:102 AOP 2020/21 Update

UB20/65

Received An update on the delivery of AOP for 2020/21

The COO set out how the monitoring report provided an overarching assessment of delivery of the 2020/21 AOP. Most of the objectives were marked as amber at this point in the year, with those turned green since the last report detailed.

A question was asked about the People Strategy which was marked as red. The Vice Chancellor responded providing reassurance that the University continued to have a strong emphasis on staff morale and confidence, with significant work ongoing to enhance the position in this area, however this was not, at this time, captured within a strategy. How a People Strategy fitted with the delivery of the Towards 2030 strategy would be picked up at the strategy session on 15 July.

AGREED • To note the update

20:103 Governance Matters

UB20/66

Received - The proposed dates for University Board and Committees in 2021/22
 - Confirmation of the make-up of the Board for the remainder of 2020/21

The University Secretary noted that the proposed dates for the Board and its Committees were set out, with discussions to be held with the Chairs of Committees regarding whether some or all of the meetings in 2021/22 would be held face to face if guidance allowed this.

The second paper provided an up to date reflection of the membership of the Board, noting that Mr C Nall was an independent Director until the end of 2020/21 and would then become the Director appointed by the Board of Education of the Diocese of Carlisle.

The Chair Designate added that work was ongoing to recruit to the Director position that would become vacant for 2021/22 and to Associate Director posts; both skills mix and ethnic diversity of the Board were key considerations.

AGREED • To receive the papers.

20:104 Academic Board Reporting

AB20/56a

Received The minutes of the Academic Board held on 8th March 2021

It was noted that the majority of the matters had been covered by the DVC reports.

AGREED • To receive the minutes

20:105 University Board Committees

Received The minutes from the following Committee Meetings:

- Finance and Resources Committee – minutes and confidential minutes 4th May 2021 FRC20/41
- Academic Governance Committee – minutes 29th March 2021 AGC20/34

Finance and Resources Committee

The Chair of the Committee noted that, in addition to a number of papers that had also been presented at the meeting, a significant part of the meeting had covered matters relating to the Borderlands Project.

Academic Governance Committee

The Chair of the Committee reported that many aspects had been covered elsewhere in the Board meeting, however in addition to this the Committee had receive reporting in relation to quality assurance and academic integrity along with presentations on the response to the NSS results from two institutes.

AGREED • To receive the minutes and updates

20:106 Any Other Business

Verbal

The Chair outlined the additional meetings that had been arranged relating to the Borderlands project, and plans for the 15 July meeting of the Board where there would be a session on the Towards 2030 strategy, chaired by the Chair Designate, as well as the Board meeting.

A Director asked about the ransomware attacks at other universities and whether this had been discussed at FRC. The Chair of the Committee

noted that they had been discussed, with more information requested for the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair thanked all present for what had been a wide ranging meeting.

20:107 Dates of future meetings

Verbal

28th May 2021 – Additional meeting relating to the Borderlands project
15th July 2021