

UNIVERSITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2019

Present: Mr G Donnelly (Chair), Miss F Aiken, Revd Canon C Butland, Mr D Allen, Professor L Challis, Mrs C Hensman, Ms J Johnston, Professor J Lee, Professor J Mennell, Ms J Stannard, Mr Matthew Wisener, Mr P Yates

In attendance: Dr J Brown (University Secretary)
Mr D Chesser (Chief Operating Officer) (From 18:66)
Mrs J Whitfield (Administration & Governance Manager) (From 18:66)

Pre-Board Presentation – Student Recruitment:

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:61 Apologies for absence Verbal
Apologies were received from Mrs E Bales, Mr J Batty and Mr C Bush.

18:62 Declaration of Interests Verbal
There were none.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

18:63 Confidential Minutes
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute. UB18/36
UB18/35a-b

18:64 Vice Chancellor’s Confidential Update Verbal
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:65 Borderlands Verbal
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

18:66 Minutes of the previous meeting UB18/35c
The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

18:67 Matters Arising UB18/35d
The action log from the previous meeting was reviewed and noted.

18:68 Chair’s Business Verbal

Nominations Committee business

The Chair noted that Nominations Committee was looking at the recruitment of new Directors and Associate Directors, renewal of Directors at the end of their terms of office and succession planning. He noted that conversations regarding the latter area would take place as part of the one to one discussions that the Chair had on an annual basis with each Director / Associate Director.

Board Effectiveness Review

The Chair reported that, following the discussions on the Board committee structure at the Board Strategy Day, the chairs of committees had met that morning to discuss a range of options.

The Chair reported that the chairs of committees had agreed to retain the existing committee structure. However, it was reported that Chair of the Employment Policy Committee would consider an alternative title for the committee in line with its remit. In order to ensure that all Directors felt that they could input on matters previously considered at a committee, the Chair noted that he would provide the opportunity for both the executive lead and the chair of the relevant committee to introduce an item at the Board and would ensure that Directors that were not members of the committee in question had ample opportunity to input.

Chair's Activity

The Chair reported on his attendance at the CUC Northern Group meeting on 11 March. Presentations and discussion fora had covered a range of themes, including mechanisms for the repayment of student loans, the Review of Post 18 Education and Funding (the Augar Review) and sector pensions.

The Chair reported that the outcomes of the Augar Review were currently anticipated during May 2019. Directors expressed concern that a prospective students may defer attending university in order to take advantage of any reduction in fees proposed in the Augar Review report.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that scenario modelling was being undertaken in advance of formal announcements on the review's recommendations. It was agreed that press coverage of potential fees cuts could already be impacting on recruitment.

The Chair reported that he was now a member of the CUC Pensions Group, to whom detailed updates had been provided on 11 March on the ongoing USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) dispute, and the current sector developments in respect of the TPS (Teachers' Pension Scheme) and LGPS (Local Government Pension Schemes).

18:69 Vice Chancellor's Report

UB18/37

Received: a) The Vice Chancellor's Report
b) Policy Update November 2018 – March 2019
c) Summary of the Vice Chancellor's activities and engagements

The Board noted the Vice Chancellor's Report, as presented within the paper.

AGREED To note the report

18:70 Students' Union Matters

UB18/38

Received: A report from the Student Director

The Student Director spoke to his report, noting that the focus of the activity of the Students' Union has been to drive improvements in the NSS results, as outlined within the paper.

A number of key staff vacancies had now been filled, and as a result the UCSU was at full capacity and moving forward to address key priorities.

Directors praised the detail and quality of the Students' Union Report and thanked the Student Director for his work to produce it.

Proposed changes to the formal handover process for incoming Sabbatical Officers were outlined by the Student Director and welcomed by the Board.

Directors sought clarification of the percentage of students that had completed the 2019 NSS survey to date. It was confirmed that a 58% of eligible students had completed the survey, but that an increase in the completion rate was anticipated shortly due to a large number of students returning from placements and being encouraged to take the survey.

Directors expressed satisfaction at the high number of student representatives currently operating, and endorsed the Students' Union's intention to attract two representatives per course in the future. It was agreed that the number of courses currently running at the University should be noted within the minutes of the meeting for information.

Action: Administration & Governance Manager.

[Secretary's note: Following the meeting a briefing was provided to the Board from the Student Director. The summary stated: The total number of Student Academic Representative positions for 2018/19 is 362. To date, 229 (63%) have been successfully filled. Many positions have been filled with more than one representative. As a result we have a total of 405 Student Academic Representatives registered with the Students' Union.]

Directors requested that the incoming Student Director had a detailed handover and that the outgoing and incoming Student Directors could both attend a Board meeting if that was useful and possible.

Action: Student Director / University Secretary.

AGREED To note the report

18:71 Management Accounts

Received: The 2018-19 Period 6 Financial Accounts UB18/39

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:72 Student Recruitment & Financial Planning 2019/20

Received: Forecasts for 2019-20 entry and details of the financial and student number planning process UB18/40

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:73 Estates Strategy Update

UB18/41

Received: An update on current estates matters

An update on progress in relation to the disposal of the South East corner of the Lancaster Campus site was provided by the Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Vice Chancellor. Decisions regarding the replacement of the William Thompson Tower with a new accommodation block more attractive to students were being taken forward separately.

A report was also provided on progress towards the replacement of the Lancaster district heating system. It was now proposed to implement a localised solution for each individual building, and a review of usage and occupancy was currently taking place to inform planning.

Directors were assured that remedial work undertaken over the Christmas break had de-risked the situation.

The Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Vice Chancellor reported that, following Finance and Resources Committee, properties had been identified that were surplus to the University's requirements: a student residence in Ambleside that the Board was being asked to approve for sale; and Mill Hall in Lancaster that the Board was asked to approve the sale or lease of.

Directors sought confirmation that the age and condition of the Lancaster heating system did not currently represent a significant risk to the student experience. It was confirmed that the worst affected area, the William Thompson Tower, was no longer in use as a student residence, which had significantly reduced the risk.

The re-roofing of the Sports Hall was queried. It was confirmed that this work has been required for some time and was now to be progressed.

Activity, progress and considerations in relation to other elements of the Estates Strategy were reported by the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee. It was highlighted that the lease for Stanwix House (Brampton Road Campus) was due to expire in 2020 and East India Dock Road (London Campus) in 2023. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that a review of leasing and contractual arrangements was currently being undertaken by estates leads.

As outlined within the paper, Board approval was sought and granted for:

- the disposal of the South East corner of the Lancaster Campus site;
- the disposal of the former tennis court site on the Lancaster Campus;
- the disposal or lease of Mill Hall at the Lancaster Campus; and
- the disposal of The Howes at the Ambleside Campus.

- AGREED**
- To note the updates provided
 - To approve the disposal of the South East corner of the Lancaster Campus site
 - To approve the disposal of the former tennis court site at the Lancaster Campus
 - To approve the disposal or lease of Mill Hall at the Lancaster Campus
 - To approve the disposal of the Howes at the Ambleside Campus

18:74 Data Centre Replacement

UB18/42

Received: The final business case for the replacement of the University's data centre for approval for implementation

The Chair reported that detailed consideration of the business case for the replacement of the University's data centre had been undertaken by the Finance and Resources Committee on 28 February, and that the Committee was recommending approval of the business case by the Board.

A presentation of the key elements and costs of the proposals, and the University's data requirements, was provided by the Director of Information Services. Ratings and mitigating factors in respect of identified project risks were reported.

The Chair briefed the meeting on the questions raised at Finance and Resources Committee in relation to there only being a single supplier eligible to tender for the project. Full details of the procurement exercise and considerations had been circulated to the Committee, who had confirmed their satisfaction that the University had made reasonable attempts to widen the supplier base, and that confidence could be placed in the selection process.

The Director of Information Services provided further detail relating to the procurement process, following which Directors noted their satisfaction that due process had been followed. They also welcomed confirmation that a dedicated project manager was being appointed to lead the project implementation, effective from 1 April.

The Board sought assurance of the performance of the current supplier during their previous contract period. It was confirmed that the supplier had been very good, with no outages of service, even during a period of extensive local flooding during 2015.

Directors asked whether the new data centre would improve data security. It was reported that the risks were different, but that the risk of hacking would be decreased. The Risk Register would be updated to reflect this once the project was implemented.

The Chair asked for Directors' view on whether or not to approve the expenditure – approval was unanimous.

AGREED To approve for implementation the final business case for the replacement of the University's data centre

18:75 Research Excellence Framework

UB18/43

Received: An update on progress in respect of REF 2021

The process and preparations for the next Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021) were presented by the Vice Chancellor, as outlined within the paper.

The Vice Chancellor reported that a steering group had been established to oversee preparations for the REF. The Group's current focus was on the development of the institutional Code of Practice, the focus of which is to provide the context for the University's decision-making in respect of eligible staff.

It was confirmed that the Academic Governance Committee would be considering REF related matters at its rescheduled meeting on Monday 18 March, and that the Code of Practice would progress to the May meetings of the Academic Governance and Employment Policy Committees.

AGREED To note the update provided

18:76 Annual Operating Plan

UB18/44

Received: The Quarter 2 progress report on AOP 2018/19 objectives

An overview of current progress against the AOP 2018-19 was provided by the Vice Chancellor, as outlined within the paper.

It was confirmed that the now complete Vice Chancellor's Executive was progressing as a key priority the achievement of AOP objectives and KPIs.

AGREED To note the progress report

18:77 Governance Matters

UB18/45

Received: a) The Board Effectiveness Review final report
b) An update on the follow up on Board Strategy Day outcomes
c) The revised Standing Orders for the Board

The Board received and noted the final report of the Board Effectiveness Review, which had been finalised following the Board's detailed discussions at the Strategy Day held on 15 January.

The Board noted the update from the Chair on the consideration of other Effectiveness Review and Strategy Day outcomes, provided under minute 18:68.

The revisions to the Standing Orders for the Board were noted and approved, as provided within the paper.

AGREED

- To note the Board Effectiveness review final report
- To note the update on the follow up on Board Strategy Day outcomes
- The revised Standing Orders for the Board were approved

18:78 Academic Board Reporting

UB18/46

Received: The minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 9 January 2019

The Vice Chancellor drew Directors' attention to the focus and activity of Academic Board and its role in driving improvements in student outcomes.

It was agreed that future reporting on key academic matters would be provided at each meeting of the Board by the PVC Academic, alongside the Academic Board minutes.

Action: University Secretary / PVC Academic.

AGREED That future reporting on key academic matters would be provided at each meeting of the Board by the PVC Academic

18:79 University Board Committees

Verbal

Received: Confirmation of recent meetings and the intention for reporting to progress to the next meeting of the Board

The Chairs of Committees confirmed that the following meetings had recently taken place, and formal reporting would progress to the next meeting of the Board in May:

- a) Finance and Resources Committee 28 February 2019 – the Chair provided a brief overview of items covered at the meeting not already covered in the Board’s agenda.
- b) Nominations Committee 28 February 2019
- c) Remuneration Committee 28 February 2019 – the Chair of the Committee provided an overview of the matters agreed at the Committee, including the approval of a formal deputy for the Vice Chancellor. It had been agreed that this role would, at this time, be taken by the Chief Operating Officer.

AGREED To note the recent meetings of Board Committees and that formal minutes would be presented to the next meeting of the Board in May

18:80 Dates of future meetings

Verbal

The Chair noted that consideration of the proposed dates for 2019/20 had taken place with the Chairs of Committees and the final schedule would be circulated shortly.

The dates of the forward meetings of the Board for the remainder of the 2018-19 academic year were confirmed as:

- 16 May 2019, Ambleside
- 11 July 2019, Carlisle