

UNIVERSITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

UNCONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2019

Present: Mr G Donnelly (Chair), Miss F Aiken, Mr D Allen, Mrs E Bales, Mr J Batty, 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)
Professor R Trimble (PVC Academic) (from 18:86)
Mrs J Whitfield (Administration & Governance Manager) (from 18:86)

Prevent Training Session

Prior to the pre-Board presentation and main meeting, Directors undertook a bespoke training session in relation to Prevent, delivered by the North West Region Higher Education Prevent Co-ordinator.

Pre-Board Presentation – Student Outcomes:

The PVC Academic provided a presentation on the institutional strategy and approach to improving student experience and outcomes, including:

- An overview of current performance and identification of gaps against institutional targets and the sector in respect of continuation, professional employment, attainment and the NSS.
- The key metrics for inclusion in TEF Year 5.
- The improvements made by the University to date in respect of attainment, and the evidence base to underpin these.
- The key reasons for student non-continuation and identification of those factors most likely to be positively influenced via appropriate interventions.
- The activity and strategy aligned to bringing about improvements in student experience and achievement.
- The importance of continual evaluation of activity and outcomes, in line with the requirements of the Office for Students.
- The requirement for early identification and intervention with students most at risk of non-continuation or academic failure, and the need to proactively provide additional support to students at key points across the academic year.
- The delivery of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy to achieve engaging and consistent academic learning and teaching via a focus on programme design, improvement and staff development, and through the establishment of a Centre for the Development of Learning & Teaching.
- Planned approaches to embed the generation and assessment of appropriate data throughout the institution. To achieve this, it was reported that a University Student Performance Group was being established.
- The further development of the Personal Tutor system to ensure effective monitoring, staff compliance with the process, and timely meetings and interventions.
- The introduction of a Student Engagement Dashboard, accessible to both staff and students to evidence and focus individual student engagement.

- The introduction of a pilot student peer support scheme for Level 3 and 4 students to aid the transition to Higher Education.
- The implementation of an Employability Framework to raise career aspirations and maximise the chances of students gaining employment following their studies.
- Proposals for activity to increase student engagement, including greater clarity and accessibility of student information, a Student Representation Policy and a review of the current student feedback process.
- The approach and timeframe for delivery of the overall strategy from September 2019.

Directors questioned and sought clarification on the following areas:

- What were the key blockers to the achievement of the institutional strategy in respect of student experience and outcomes.

The PVC Academic responded that a key consideration would be to ensure that the strategy could be embedded across the full breadth of delivery. It was anticipated that cultural barriers may be encountered, but the establishment of new frameworks, with, for example, a student experience lead in each institute, would ensure that activity could be driven throughout the institutes.

- Whether the planned initiatives outlined within the presentation represented fine tuning of existing activity or radical change, and what the scope of the challenge was.

The PVC Academic confirmed that, in many areas, it represented fine tuning, with a focus on ensuring consistency across programmes and campuses. The key change would be in respect of how student support was provided by Personal Tutors and how teaching, learning and assessment aims would be embedded across all academic areas.

It was highlighted that the roll out of a consistent cross-institutional approach was more complex at the University of Cumbria, given its multi-campus model.

- Directors stressed the importance of the Personal Tutor role and sought confirmation as to what extent there was an understanding across the institution of what the role of the Personal Tutor should be.

The PVC Academic confirmed that there was a requirement for the key expectations of the role to be documented. Communications and training would need to take place with academic staff to ensure appropriate implementation of the strategy and associated activity, which was being re-focused to make the best use of allocated Personal Tutor time and ensure student engagement.

The Board were supportive of the PVC Academic's reported intention to include worked examples of poor and best practice for academic colleagues, and it was confirmed that the development of enhanced Personal Tutor systems was a current area of focus across the sector.

18:81 Apologies for absence Verbal
Apologies were received from Revd Canon C Butland, and Mr C Bush.

18:82 Declaration of Interests Verbal
There were none.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

18:83 Confidential Minutes UB18/46a-b
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:84 Vice Chancellor's Confidential Update Verbal
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:85 Borderlands Verbal
This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

18:86 Minutes of the previous meeting UB18/46c
The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

18:87 Matters Arising UB18/46d
The action log from the previous meeting was reviewed and noted.

18:88 Chair's Business Verbal
The Chair drew the Board's attention to the University's recent successes in respect of the award of Research Degree Awarding Powers, the successful outcome following an Ofsted inspection of Apprenticeships provision and the WhatUni ranking. It was confirmed that a small number of Directors had been involved in the Ofsted inspection process.

The Chair reported on his recent attendance at Haverigg Prison on 13 May to celebrate the graduations of inmates successfully completing the *Learning Together Programme*. It was noted that this initiative was aligned to the strategic aim of the University to support the return to study of mature learners on a part-time basis.

The Chair also provided an update on the recent meeting of the Committee of University Chairs Pensions Group, and its intention to issue a position statement on sector pensions. It was confirmed that the Group had discussed in detail the requirement to make sector pensions financially sustainable.

It was confirmed that a further round of recruitment to the Board was due to commence shortly, as the terms of office of two Directors were coming to an end in July 2019.

The remainder of this item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:89 Vice Chancellor's Report UB18/47
Received: a) The Vice Chancellor's Report
b) Policy Update March – May 2019
c) Summary of the Vice Chancellor's activities and engagements

The Vice Chancellor highlighted the key elements of her report, starting with the achievement of RDAP.

The University had been delighted to welcome HRH Prince Charles to its Ambleside Campus on 8 April to take part in a Lake District land management summit convened by the Foundation for Common Land and hosted by the University.

It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing between the executive and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure the successful positioning of the University in the Local Industrial Strategy in the context of the business and industrial needs of the region.

In alignment with this and other strategically-focussed activity, the Annual Operating Plan 2019-20 was currently being finalised under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor's Executive.

The Pro Vice Chancellors would attend a future meeting of the Board to present on the rationale and focus of the new Institutes, which would see the University move from its current structure of 8 academic departments to 5 institutes, as outlined within the paper. Associated changes to academic leadership and roles would be undertaken to ensure a focus on key priorities, including the student experience.

In the discussion that followed, whilst noting the key requirement to grow additional income streams, the importance of ensuring sufficient staffing resource in support of development activity was stressed.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that size and shape activity was being phased during 2018-19 and 2019-20, to ensure that there was appropriate resource for ongoing delivery and development of new activities. The executive remained confident that the University was positioning itself appropriately in response to current sector challenges, and given resource and financial constraints.

Directors requested that once the new structures were in place financial reporting should provide high level comparisons between the current and new structures to allow consideration of the benefits of the changes, particularly with respect to areas that were not currently performing.

The Vice Chancellor responded that, while she agreed that there may be some benefit from comparison of performance to previous years, the measure of success of the structural changes should be through improvements in the range of institutional metrics.

Directors' attention was also drawn to the policy update provided within the papers pack, which provided an overview of key policy developments within the sector and in Government.

AGREED To note the report

18:90

Students' Union Matters

UB18/48

Received: A report from the Student Director

The Chair noted that this was the final formal attendance of the Student Director at a University Board meeting, although he would attend the July meeting of the Board in an advisory capacity alongside the incoming Student Director.

The Board extended sincere thanks to Mr Wisener for his contribution to the Board during 2018-19 and the quality of his reporting.

An update was subsequently provided on ongoing UCSU activity, as outlined within the paper.

The current position in respect of student representative elections and appointments was also presented.

It was confirmed that the UCSU was anticipating the successful achievement of a Bronze Green Impact award for its environmental sustainability and its activity to promote environmental sustainability to students.

AGREED To note the report

18:91 Academic Matters

UB18/49

Received: a) A report from the PVC Academic
b) A report from the PVC Health
c) A report from the PVC Region & Employer Engagement

PVC Academic's Report

The PVC Academic spoke to his paper, highlighting the process and outcomes of the recent inspection of the University's Apprenticeships provision by Ofsted. Identified improvement activity was now ongoing under the oversight of the Apprenticeships Steering Group.

It was reported that the University had successfully risen a further 7 places in the WhatUni student survey 2019, following its previous rise of 60 places in 2018. The survey was representative of the contemporary opinion of current students, and was therefore seen as a positive early indicator for NSS 2019 results which were to be published on 3 July.

It was confirmed that the NSS survey had closed on 30 April, and that the University had achieved a response rate of over 77%, largely in line with the previous year and above the sector average. This was felt to be a good indicator of student engagement.

It was reported that the institutional Access & Participation Plan for 2020-21 was currently in development, for submission to the OfS by 1 July 2019. The Chair confirmed that the Chairs of the Board, Academic Governance and Finance & Resources Committees would approve the final draft by Chair's Action prior to submission, with the final documentation being presented to the Board for noting at its next meeting on 11 July. The draft would be considered by Academic Board at its meeting on 19 June for recommendation to the Chairs for approval.

Directors noted that, as outlined within the Vice Chancellor's Report, the University's position within the Complete University Guide 2019 had improved slightly from 123 to 120. They sought confirmation as to why there was such a degree of variance between the outcomes of this league table and the WhatUni survey.

The PVC Academic confirmed that the Complete University Guide was based on historical data sets, and had therefore drawn on the University's less favourable outcomes from previous years. In contrast, the WhatUni rankings represented contemporary student opinion.

It was also noted that league tables such as the Complete University Guide drew on a range of data, such as entry tariffs and REF outcomes, which included some bias towards more research intensive institutions.

The Board noted the reports provided by the PVC Health and PVC Region & Employer Engagement, as outlined within the papers.

AGREED To note the reports

18:92 Management Accounts

Received: The 2018-19 Period 7 Financial Accounts UB18/50

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:93 Student Recruitment & Draft Budget 2019/20

Received: An update on the current recruitment position and the draft budget 2019/20 UB18/51

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:94 OfS Report

UB18/52

Received: The OfS Letter and Report on Financial Sustainability of Higher Education Providers in England

The Chair reported that the Office for Students had written in April to the Board Chairs at all HE institutions to introduce their report entitled *Financial Sustainability of Higher Education Providers in England*. A copy of the letter and report were provided within the papers pack.

Within the letter, the OfS had set out their concerns over the credibility of student number forecasts across the sector, stating that their analysis suggested that the sector was currently assuming a level of growth in student numbers that was not likely to be achievable. They went on to set out that the report had been circulated with the intention of assisting institutions and their governing bodies to assess the risk of non-achievement of institutional forecasts and develop appropriate contingency plans.

Directors discussed the findings of the report, and agreed that they underpinned the rationale behind the University's strategy. It was noted that the University was already able to demonstrate an impressive track record of income generation via a range of non-traditional income streams, despite the challenging sector picture. Further activity in this area, including looking into new opportunities, was discussed.

AGREED To note the letter and report

18:95 Risk Register

UB18/53

Received: The current assessment of institutional risk

The University Secretary presented an overview of the reformatted Risk Register, as outlined within the paper. Amendments had been made under the oversight of the Audit & Risk Committee.

It was confirmed that the majority of risks identified had been taken from the existing Risk Register, with the addition of certain new risk themes. The concept of the new 'watch list' was introduced.

The Board noted that the additional information required under the new template would be added to as the Vice Chancellor's Executive continued to develop the register and associated assurance framework. It was confirmed that risk profile definitions remained as previously set.

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee provided an overview of the committee's analysis of the presentation of risks and the required assurances in each area. It had initially agreed that Annual Operating Plan KPIs should remain under separate cover, but that further consideration would be given in due course as to whether to incorporate these into the Risk Register. The Committee had welcomed the enhanced scrutiny of the register by the executive.

Directors expressed satisfaction with the revised format of the Risk Register. Following discussion of the risks within the register, it was requested that Pensions be added and it was suggested that the interface between the executive and the Board should be referenced within the mitigating controls outlined in respect of key risk themes.

Minor changes to the Risk Appetite statement were suggested for Audit & Risk Committee's consideration.

Action: University Secretary.

- AGREED**
- To note the update
 - To endorse the revised format of the Risk Register, subject to the amendments outlined above
 - That ARC review the Risk Appetite Statement in line with the comments made

18:96 Prevent

UB18/54

Received: A report on the outcomes of the OfS Prevent Accountability and Data Return

The Chair of the Board confirmed that the OfS had regulatory oversight for ensuring that providers of higher education met their responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

It was reported that the University had submitted its accountability and data return in respect of Prevent to the OfS in the autumn of 2018. The OfS had subsequently determined that the University had demonstrated due regard to the Prevent Duty and was not at higher risk of non-compliance with Prevent in the future.

The OfS outcomes notification had, however noted that there were some areas of the University's implementation of the Prevent Duty that the OfS would like to explore further "as part of its strategy to mitigate the risk of non-compliance in the future". Institutional Prevent leads were currently awaiting further contact from the OfS to understand this and any required changes to the University's documentation and/or approach.

It was confirmed that the North West Region Higher Education Prevent Co-ordinator was working closely with the University and was satisfied with its regard to its responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. No issues had been identified with regard current or future compliance.

AGREED To note the report

18:97 Annual Operating Plan

UB18/55

Received: An update on progress against the AOP 2018/19 and on progress against Key Performance Indicators 2018/19

AOP 2018-19

An overview of key operational areas under the 2018-19 Annual Operating Plan was provided by the PVC Academic.

He highlighted the interventions established at departmental and programme level during 2018-19 to improve student outcomes, in addition to plans to develop a clearer framework and focus in this key area during 2019-20.

It was confirmed that the majority of identified actions in respect of the portfolio had been completed during 2018-19 as planned. Considerable work had been undertaken to validate new and revised programmes and moving forward, the academic focus and ethos for all delivery would be deepened, in line with a clear understanding of regional and sector demand.

Additional marketing of key pathways such as Integrated Foundation Years would be undertaken during 2019-20.

AOP 2019-20

The Chair of the Board introduced the draft Annual Operating Plan 2019-20 and asked the Board to consider whether it was addressing all of the key institutional areas identified for development and improvement.

The Vice Chancellor reported that the executive were confident the 2019-20 AOP was the most effective plan to date; it was fully aligned to the Strategic Plan, demonstrated clear accountabilities and reflected the balance required between the different income streams. Further work was ongoing to finalise the document, and to ensure it was appropriately referenced for key audiences.

Directors noted the comprehensive coverage of the plan, and sought assurance that it was not too ambitious. The Vice Chancellor responded that the executive had been constrained during 2018-19 as it had not had its full complement of members. The seven members of the new executive team were now felt to have the appropriate focus, coverage and breadth of expectation to deliver the Annual Operating Plan as presented.

It was confirmed that the final AOP 2019-20 would be presented for formal approval by the Board at its next meeting on 11 July.

It was agreed that aspects of the AOP would be circulated to Committee Chairs for review prior to the finalisation of papers for the July meeting.

Action: University Secretary.

- AGREED**
- To note the update on progress against the AOP 2018-19
 - To note the draft AOP 2019-20

- That aspects of the AOP 2019-20 be circulated to Committee Chairs for review prior to the finalisation of papers for the July meeting. **Action:** University Secretary

18:98 Pensions

UB18/56

Received: A paper on the outcomes and recommendations of the pensions review

This item was recorded as a separate confidential minute.

18:99 Estates Strategy Update

UB18/57

Received: An update on current estates matters

The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee provided an update on the Committee's consideration of the proposed Lancaster Campus Masterplan and the re-scoping of proposals for the replacement of the district heating system at the Lancaster site, as outlined within the paper.

It was confirmed that the Committee were recommending to the Board to approve the Lancaster Campus Masterplan for submission.

Directors sought confirmation as to whether the University had explored options for the sale of the SE corner of the Lancaster site to other regional HE providers in order to progress partnership working opportunities. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that discussions had been held, but that no interest had been expressed in the site. However, conversations were ongoing in respect of other opportunities for collaborative working.

The Board approved the Lancaster Master Plan for progression by the University's approved development partner. It was agreed that non-material changes to the Masterplan could be approved through delegation to the Chair of the Board and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, where required to maintain momentum.

It was confirmed that planning applications for the schemes outlined within the Master Plan were being developed, and would be submitted to the local authority following approval of the Masterplan. It was agreed that, where these were available outside the normal committee cycle, that they be approved through delegation to the Chair of the Board and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

AGREED

- To approve the Lancaster Masterplan for submission
- That the approval of non-material amendments to the Masterplan be delegated to the Chair of the Board and Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee
- That the approval of associated planning applications be delegated to the Chair of the Board and Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee

18:100 Office for Students

UB18/58

Received: An update on the conditions of registration

A summary of the ongoing conditions of registration, and the activity undertaken within the University to meet the conditions, was provided by the University Secretary, as outlined within the paper.

It was confirmed that the Audit & Risk Committee had responsibility for the oversight of compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration on behalf of the Board, and that the Committee had requested the Board's endorsement of the responsibilities delegated to other committees.

The Board considered and approved the proposed committee responsibilities for compliance oversight as presented.

It was confirmed that the Audit & Risk Committee had requested additional information on the assurances required in respect of each of the ongoing conditions of registration. A further working draft of the document had therefore been produced following the circulation of papers to the Board, for presentation to the next Audit & Risk Committee.

AGREED To approve the proposed arrangements for committee oversight of the ongoing conditions of OfS registration

18:101 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

UB18/59

Received: The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2017/18

The Chair of the Employment Policy Committee reported on the Committee's consideration of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2017/18.

The Committee had requested that additional work be undertaken by the HR team to ensure that unconscious bias could be avoided as far as possible in recruitment and interview activity. Revisions to the format of the report had also been requested for 2019/20.

It was agreed that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion should be the focus of a future pre-Board briefing.

Action: University Secretary.

AGREED

- To note the Annual Report
- To request that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion be covered in detail under a future pre-Board briefing

18:102 Governance Matters

UB18/60

Received: The Board and Committee meeting dates 2019/20

The dates and locations of the Board and Committee meetings for 2019-20 were approved and noted.

The Board's attention was drawn to the forthcoming recruitment round for new Directors, and the particular candidate requirements were outlined by the University Secretary. All Directors were asked to bring the applicant brief to the attention of their key contacts and stakeholders.

- AGREED**
- To agree and note the Board and Committee meeting dates 2019/20
 - To request that all Directors share the Director recruitment applicant brief with key contacts and stakeholders

18:103 Academic Board Reporting

AB18/33

Received: The minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 7 March 2019

The Board noted the key items of business covered by Academic Board at its meeting on 7 March 2019, as outlined by the PVC Academic as Chair of the meeting.

Academic Board’s detailed consideration and approval of the REF2021 Code of Practice was reported.

The Board sought confirmation that appropriate Intellectual Property protocols were in place institutionally for enhanced research activity. It was confirmed that these were currently under review by the PVC Region & Employer Engagement, and would be provided out with the meeting.

Action: Vice Chancellor.

It was confirmed that elected departmental representatives on Academic Board would attend future meetings of other senior deliberative committees as observers, to add value to their roles through enhanced involvement in key committee activity and to ensure the flow of information from committees to departmental colleagues.

AGREED To receive the minutes

18:104 University Board Committees

Received: The minutes of the following Committee meetings:

- | | |
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| • Finance & Resources Committee 28 February 2019 | FRC18/29 |
| • Nominations Committee 28 February 2019 | NC18/08 |
| • Remuneration Committee 28 February 2019 | RC18/11 |
| • Academic Governance Committee 18 March 2019 | AGC18/17 |
| • Audit & Risk Committee 28 March 2019 | ARC18/26 |
| • Employment Policy Committee 2 May 2019 | EPC18/22 |
| • Finance & Resources Committee 2 May 2019 | FRC18/36 |

The Board noted all minutes sets provided, and updates were presented by Committee Chairs as follows:

Academic Governance Committee 18 March

The Chair of the Committee provided an overview of the business of the meeting, as presented within the minutes. It was noted that an overview of academic life at the University would be beneficial for the Board at a future meeting.

Audit & Risk Committee 28 March

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that further guidance was awaited from the OfS in respect of any likely change of emphasis for future assurance reporting.

The Committee had noted it would increasingly be required to take into account value for money and student requirements from a consumer perspective in all its assurance reporting and oversight.

It was reported that the Committee had also received an update on UKVI matters.

Finance & Resources Committee 2 May

The Chair confirmed that the Committee had discussed and noted the ongoing importance of the University's recruitment initiatives, financial sustainability and estate.

AGREED To note the business of the Committees, as presented within the minutes and associated meetings updates

18:105 Any Other Business

The Chair confirmed that the programme for the next meeting of the Board on 11 July had been extended to enable the inclusion of two strategic sessions, and would be followed by an evening dinner.

18:106 Dates of future meetings

11 July 2019, Carlisle

Verbal