

ACADEMIC BOARD

Notes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017

CONFIRMED

Present: J Mennell (Chair), S Booth, D Cox, R Crehan, A Dickson, A Hampson, N Harris, R Harrison-Palmer, S Henderson, L Kenward, E Lees, S Longstaffe, L Mansfield, J Moses, S Pankhurst, T Pellegrino, J Robinson, C Rouncefield, N Rourke, F Sapsford, I Sinker, R Talbot, K Watson, M Weaver

In attendance: J Bigland – SAAS Representative for A Lane, J Whitfield – Committee Secretary

16:051 Apologies for absence: G Haigh, A Lane

16:052 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2016: AB16/28
The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

16:053 Action points: AB16/29
DVC and Committees Officer to review outstanding actions and update out with the meeting.

16:054 Vice Chancellor's Report: Verbal

Newcastle College Group Merger

Formal notification was provided that the merger of Carlisle College with Newcastle College Group was to move forward. The University was continuing to work positively with Carlisle College, with internal identification of associated risks and opportunities ongoing. The Vice Chancellor reported on a positive meeting with the Acting Principal, Steve Salkeld, with a meeting to be held with the Chief Executive of Newcastle College Group shortly. A review of HE pathways for College students was being undertaken by Associate Dean, I Sinker.

It was confirmed that consultants had been appointed to work on forward models for the Joint Venture Company to be established between the region's four FE Colleges and the University, in line with the FE Area Review.

Current developments

The Vice Chancellor outlined the wide range on ongoing activities cross-institutionally, and expressed thanks to all members of Academic Board for their efforts at a very busy time for the university.

Guardian

An update on the current applicant position was provided by the Registrar & Secretary, and the Vice Chancellor reported on recent coverage in the Guardian newspaper of end of cycle trend data and the significant decline shown in certain HEIs.

a) Strategic Plan development update:

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that development of the new Strategic Plan had been brought forward in order to position for 2017-18, respond positively to the challenging picture, and reduce dependency on key portfolio to enable diversification. Academic colleagues were strongly encouraged to attend the staff sessions being held to input into the development of the Strategic Plan.

Key focuses moving forward were identified, as follows:

- Extension of the University's learner base of both off-campus and on-campus learners via FE and strategic partnerships, regional and national routes to HE, the Apprenticeship agenda and wider workforce development, and international and trans-national partnerships.
- Extension of the portfolio, by growth in terms of STEM, the rural and visitor economy, business and professional services; undergraduate, postgraduate and workplace learning, and portfolio consolidation.
- Capitalisation on place: at the Ambleside Campus through the maximisation of national and international recognition and tie in to the envisaged World Heritage Status of the National Park; and in London through development of the workforce development and Apprenticeship agenda, with a focus on landscape, geography, operating environment and place leaderships across all campuses.

Ongoing preparation and planning was highlighted, to best respond to current challenges, and it was confirmed that a pragmatic and proportionate response to clearing would be adopted to enable a more strategic focus moving forward.

16:055 Deputy Vice Chancellor's Academic Report:

AB16/30

The DVC Academic expressed thanks to all colleagues for their recent focus and efforts.

Outcome: The report was received and noted by exception, with discussion focussing on the following elements:

- The proposed principles for the forward management of academic curriculum delivery were presented, and it was confirmed they would form part of a wider body of work to finalise the Academic Strategy for the University by the Spring/early Summer of 2017. It was confirmed that these did not replace the existing academic design principles, which had proven successful in facilitating programme re-validation. A merger of the two sets of principles was to be conducted by the Academic Strategy and Planning Committee following development of the new Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, and it was urged that this should include consideration of both academic and business focussed elements, and differentiation and definition of outcomes and measures which may be varied according to subject.
- The Deputy Dean confirmed that reported timetabling issues at the London Campus had been resolved, and a new timetabling model was to be adopted that week at the Ambleside Campus.
- Consideration was urged of the likely impact and outcome in terms of UoC objectives and recruitment outcomes against staff time and travel when planning to deliver sessions at schools and colleges.
- Forward celebration and promotion of the University's partnership with Robert Kennedy College was discussed, and it was confirmed that 1700 leaders from 120 countries had now completed the programme. The March 2017 revalidation was seen as an opportunity for promotion and communication of this activity.
- It was confirmed that recruitment for the permanent DVC Academic post was underway.
- The Director of Research commented positively on the embedding of research elements throughout the new format report.

a) To consider and agree revisions to the current Deliberative Committee Structure:

a)

The DVC Academic outlined the key recommendations resulting from the review, and the Terms of Reference for the streamlining activity. Particular reference was made to the requirement to align the work of deliberative committees to the development and forward initiatives of the institutional Strategic Plan, and to ensure a relevant flow of business and scheduling for APR reporting to University Board. Further work was being undertaken to develop a master schedule of business to support this.

The Director of Research confirmed the re-badging of research sub-committees to future proof and clarify elements relating purely to research activity and the Graduate School. A new Research Degree Examination Board would link to the Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee (Student Success Committee) once RDAP was awarded.

Heads of Department were supportive of the proposal to discontinue Departmental Quality Committees, and it was confirmed that student engagement and involvement would still be a focus via departmental team meetings and Staff Student Forums. A detailed mapping was being produced by AQD to track departmental AERs for reporting to the DVC's Academic Group and to ensure appropriate drivers of student achievement and outcomes.

It was agreed that International elements should sit across all key deliberative committees as appropriate.

Outcome: The revised Deliberative Committee Structure was approved, subject to the following amendments, inclusions and actions:

- The DVC Academic and Committees Officer to clarify the decision-making of each committee in line with the development of a master schedule of business.
- The DVC Academic to conduct a review of committee memberships to reduce numbers, avoid repeat representation and ensure the appropriate balance of representation from Programme Leaders, Heads of Department and academic team members.
- Student Union Sabbaticals to be identified as full committee members rather than in attendance.
- A Student Voice Facilitator to be added to the membership of the Learning, Teaching & Quality (Student Success) Committee.
- New protocols for the production of committee papers to be circulated to Academic Board by the Committees Officer.
- Heads of Department and AQD to ensure key business of former DQCs is picked up by appropriate ongoing fora, with appropriate documentation for audit.
- Executive administrative support for academic departmental and management group meetings to be reviewed by the DVC's Academic Group.
- A Dickson and J Robinson to produce a mapping for Heads of Department to ensure student representation and reporting on student experience at departmental meetings.
- A Dickson to agree appropriate frequency of reporting from SERC sub-groups, or an increased frequency of SERC meetings.
- The External Examiners Panel to be discontinued and replaced with a set of criteria applicable to each application.

Sign off to be given by AQD, with any issues escalated to the DVC Academic and confirmation reports to the Learning, Teaching & Quality (Student Success) Committee.

- TEL meetings to be paused pending implementation of the new LTAS. A review to be conducted at this stage and the committee to be tasked with focussed objectives.
- Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee – to be renamed the Student Success Committee.

b) To note the draft Committee Calendars 2017-18 and 2018-19:

b)

The calendars were noted by exception.

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE

16:057 Assurance reporting:

AB16/32

Outcome: Academic Board received and endorsed the following suite of documents for reporting to the March meeting of University Board:

a) Academic Departments' AER 2015-16 Outcomes Report:

a)

New actions incorporated from the current year's AER round were confirmed, along with red flag areas cross-institutionally. It was agreed that recognition of achievements and best practice could be better embedded and communicated at departmental and programme level and for use in TEF and other submissions. TEF criteria to be used as the basis for development of this tracking and reporting mechanism. The benefit of the AER to identify departmental, programme and institutional elements/issues was reported by Heads of Department.

Actions agreed:

- Director of AQD to devise system of feed in to institutional evidence base of good practice.
- Director of AQD to meet with Heads of Department to identify outstanding items for completion and removal. (It was confirmed that ongoing SAAS review would also resolve a number of outstanding issues.)

b) Retention, Progression & Achievement Annual Report 2015-16 (including Collaborative Provision):

b)

The item was deferred, pending further development.

c) Primary/Secondary Self Evaluation Document Summary Report:

c)

The Director of the Institute of Education reported on ongoing activities and headlines, Ofsted key focus areas and a snapshot of current status across operational elements. It was confirmed that the document was also presented to the regional schools working group to inform improvement plan elements, and that it was a key element for scrutiny by Ofsted.

Actions agreed:

- Registrar & Secretary and Committees Officer to confirm forward reporting requirements for this item and how to best gain assurance of academic quality and standards in this area, In essence, the academic risk register, with consideration of additional registering bodies such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

d) Minutes of the University Board of Directors – 17 November 2016:

The Registrar & Secretary confirmed that the University had passed the HEFCE oversight process with regard to the provision of Prevent Training. HEFCE's increased requirement of the University Board to demonstrate understanding and oversight of academic quality and standards was stressed.

LEARNING & TEACHING

16:058 Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy:

AB16/35

The DVC Academic provided a report on current development of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy via a 'co-creation' approach of active engagement of both academic and professional staff across the University and with key external partners, by a series of workshops and surveys. Heads of Department reported on vibrant workshops with high levels of engagement, and it was also confirmed that a student survey was also being conducted with responses to be available shortly.

Discussion took place regarding the need to include off-campus learning in any future strategy, and it was confirmed that diverse learning modes were a strand of development of the new LTAS.

Once the full programme of development workshops was completed, drafting of the forward strategy for consultation would begin.

ACADEMIC QUALITY & STANDARDS

16:059 Programme suspensions and withdrawals:

AB16/37

Outcome: Academic Board approved the programme withdrawals proposed following full scrutiny of the Academic Strategy & Planning Committee.

Action: It was agreed to consider a process for automatic withdrawal after an agreed period of suspension, as part of a full review of policy and procedure led by the DVC Academic.

16:060 Teaching Excellence Framework:

AB16/38

The submission of the final TEF Year 2 Provider Submission was confirmed. The Vice Chancellor and DVC Academic thanked all colleagues for their input and the positive outcomes and evidence base provided within the submission.

It was confirmed that a Bronze Award was likely at this stage, but that much future scope existed for improvement, and the University could be rightly proud of many of its current activities and achievements.

16:061 Collaborative Partners:

AB16/39

Outcome: Recommendations for the institutional approval of Shelley College and Coppice Primary Academic as collaborative partners were considered and approved.

Action: The Registrar & Secretary and Committees Officer to confirm the appropriate committee approval and reporting route for collaborative partners.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE & RETENTION

16:062 Student non-continuation:

AB16/41

The Associate Dean Quality and Student Experience provided an update on progress against each of the action points listed in the initial report on non-continuation presented to University Board in November 2016.

A draft framework of activities and interventions to minimise non-continuation was presented for endorsement, and additional reporting was provided on the work of the Data Improvement Task & Finish Group to consider data definitions and reporting timescales, engagement indicators and to develop a pilot scheme of student engagement monitoring. More joined up communication between SITS and other systems was seen as a key priority to ensure more up to date information was available in a timely way.

A detailed review of the Academic Regulations was also confirmed, to ensure that resource was primarily focussed on supporting student success and retention, streamlining student and academic procedures and processes and placing a greater emphasis on quality enhancement activities to deliver an improved service to students.

The Student Success and Retention Working Group (SSRG) had also developed a set of guidelines on a joint approach to student monitoring and support for students at risk of not achieving or leaving, which were to be embedded within the framework for minimising non-continuation.

The VC reminded Academic Board of the new operating model for quality assessment overseen by HEFCE and of the risk-based approach based on a range of performance indicators, including retention. The VC stressed, and Academic Board agreed, the need for demonstrable improvement in this area.

Outcome: Further development of the framework was agreed, to include elements outlined below. The framework to return to Academic Board for approval at the next meeting.

- Inclusion of feedback on formative assessment within the framework.
- Absence reporting and attendance monitoring.
Separation of review actions and the proposed framework interventions.
- Clarification of actions, responsibilities and oversight.

RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE & GRADUATE SCHOOL

16:063 16:007, 16:024 – Stern Review:

AB16/43

Active discussion and engagement within the sector was reported and it was confirmed that the institutional response was to be sent centrally to respond to the consultation, once approved by the DVC Academic. The response to also be shared with UUK, Cathedrals Group representatives and other bodies as appropriate for inclusion in group responses.

16:064 RDAP:

AB16/44

The Director of Research provided an update on progress towards the Research Degree Awarding Powers application for final approval at University Board on 2 March 2017. It was confirmed that the University had full confidence in its arrangements for governance, management, finance, and the quality assurance and standards of awards. A 100% completion rate of the Research & Scholarly Activity Survey had been achieved.

16:065 Proposal for new Research Centre for Education, Learning & Development

AB16/45

The proposal for a new research centre was submitted for approval, having been considered, revised and approved by the Research & Enterprise Committee in accordance with the University Research Centre Policy.

The rationale for the creation of a new research centre for education, learning and development was to:

- Strengthen the educational research environment to produce high quality research outputs and contribute to strategic aims related to research degree awarding powers and the research excellence framework.
- Build a brand for high quality provision of professional development across the sector.
- Strengthen the links between research and teaching across the University through the development of research-informed teaching.

It was confirmed that the intention was to open the new centre at the commencement of the 2017-18 academic year.

Outcome: Academic Board endorsed the proposal for final approval by the VC and Director of Research, on the understanding that:

- Further development work and agreement of financial and resourcing elements and an operational plan and timeline to be picked up under the current planning round.
- Further consideration be given to the centre name, to reflect the activity and intended outcomes.
- An emphasis on raising attainment, engagement and schools positioning the University as the lead for higher level skills as identified in the regional Higher Level Skills Plan.
- Thought and domain leadership – informing policy and practice – to be made more explicit within the identified themes for the centre.

16:066 Committee Minutes:

The following minutes were received and noted by exception:

- Academic Strategy & Planning Committee - 24 January 2017
- Learning & Teaching Committee - 31 January 2017
- Academic Quality & Standards Committee – 25 January 2017
- Academic Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee – 6 January 2017
- Minor Modification & Awards Panel – 25 November 2016 and 26 January 2017
- External Examiner Panel – 8 December 2016
Academic Board noted External Examiner appointments agreed by the Panel.
- Student Experience & Retention Committee – 28 November 2016
- Research & Enterprise Committee (REC) – 17 January 2017
- Graduate School Sub-Committee – 7 November 2016

16:067 Any Other Business:

It was agreed to include a new standing agenda item for Academic Board to receive reporting from the Students' Union Sabbatical Officer.

A presentation on the Industrial Strategy Green Paper and initiatives to be provided at the next meeting by the Pro Vice Chancellor Enterprise, Business Development & Engagement.

The Vice Chancellor thanked Deputy Dean S Pankhurst for her contribution to the University and wished her well for the future. Her significant role both internally across academic departments and externally in terms of STEM and raising attainment was highlighted.

16:068 **Next meeting:** Wednesday 26 April 2017, 2.00pm-4.00pm, Room AXB013, Alexandra Building, Lancaster Campus.

Verbal