

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018

Present: J Mennell (Chair), T Bampouras, T Barry, C Coghill, J Colclough, S de Freitas, A Fletcher, A Hampson, R Harrison-Palmer, S Henderson, R Hunter, A Lane, T Livsey, M Leek, E Lees, N Rourke, F Sapsford, I Sinker, K Small, K Watson

In attendance: J Whitfield (Committee Secretary), M Jones (for L Mansfield), A Lundbeck (for D Cox), D McGregor (for J Robinson) A Oakey (for L Nelson)

17:34 Apologies for absence: L Bates, S Booth, J Brown, D Cox, K Fox, L Kenward, L Mansfield, A Marshall, L Nelson, J Robinson, C Rouncefield, K Stuart Verbal

The Chair welcomed incoming Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Professor Sara de Freitas to the meeting and to Academic Board. The Deputy Vice Chancellor outlined her immediate priorities and areas of key focus, including core projects under the AOP, core academic delivery, quality and standards and teaching excellence.

It was confirmed that the outgoing DVC Academic would leave the institution in June 2018. During the interim period, her key portfolio would focus on health areas and activity, and the further development of the forward Health Strategy.

17:35 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018: AB17/27
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Actions from the meeting:

The action log was reviewed and noted. It was confirmed that the action relating to the Research & Enterprise Strategy had been formally passed to the Director of Research & Graduate School for progression via the Research & Enterprise Committee the following week.

Matters Arising:**Institute of Technology**

The Vice Chancellor reported that a decision had been taken regionally not to proceed with an Institute of Technology bid for Cumbria.

Ambleside Strategy and Portfolio Review

A comprehensive overview of the Ambleside Strategy and draft operating plan would be presented to Academic Board at the next meeting, alongside the outcomes of the portfolio review. A series of staff events at the campus were planned during the remainder of the academic year.

17:36 Deliberative Committee Memberships: AB17/28

Changes to deliberative committee memberships:

Changes to membership and representation on key deliberative committees were presented by the Administration & Governance Manager, as outlined in the paper.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the proposals for implementation.

Process and timescales for annual review of Committees 2018:

The Administration & Governance Manager outlined the proposed process and timescales for the review of Committees during 2018.

It was reported that the current year's review would be 'light touch', following the detailed review undertaken during the 2016/17 academic year. The focus was on ensuring the alignment of the Terms of Reference and Membership to key university business under the Strategic Plan and Annual Operating Plan for best fit.

It was confirmed that further clarification of Committee Chairs, memberships and approval lines would be provided following the departure of the outgoing Pro Vice Chancellor in April 2018.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the process, timeline and review questions for implementation.

Action: The Vice Chancellor, University Secretary and Administration & Governance Manager to devise plans for an Academic Board and Committees business planning away day in preparation for the 2018/19 meetings cycle.

17:37 Vice Chancellor's Report:

AB17/29

A summary of the key items contained within the Vice Chancellor's report was presented.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the University remained on track against its plans and the executive remained confident of delivering further and future sustainability and success. There were significant challenges within the external operating environment, in particular the establishment of the Office for Students and the associated registration process, and forthcoming funding review. A revised budget was being presented to the University Board Finance & Resources Committee the following week to ensure a working budget and operating plan was in place in advance of the sector changes and fees capping.

The opportunities presented to the university by the establishment of a new programme of scheduled flights from Carlisle Airport to Belfast, Dublin and Carlisle were discussed.

Outcome: Academic board received and noted the report.

Annual Operating Plan:

The summary of progress against AOP targets and key project strands was presented, as outlined in the paper provided.

Outcome: Academic Board received and noted the update.

17:38 Academic Departments' Report:

AB17/30

News and operational updates across academic areas were presented by Heads of Department.

An update on response rates and progress with regard to the National Student Survey 2018 was provided, and it was confirmed that Student Voice initiatives had proved successful in ensuring appropriate mechanisms and response times for addressing any student issues. It was anticipated that this would be reflected positively in the 2018 NSS results.

It was reported that an Ofsted inspection was expected during the 2018 year. The Department of Education was fully prepared and welcomed the opportunity for assessment prior to the introduction of a new monitoring framework in 2019.

Departmental initiatives and priorities with regard to recruitment and conversion were outlined, along with debate and activity taking place to

ensure teaching excellence and the maximisation of the student experience.

Key events, partnership and community involvement initiatives across departments were also presented, and discussion took place regarding current activity to establish the university as a strategic partner to the Lakes partnership initiative, and to embed partnership aims and values into Ambleside programmes.

It was confirmed that the Project Academy would now be formally included in the business planning round, and proposals were currently being explored to establish it as an independent operating entity.

17:39 Students' Union Report:

AB17/31

An update on recent developments and activity was provided by the UCSU Academic Officer.

UCSU elected officers and staff had undertaken a range of high profile campaigns, largely centred around health and wellbeing, in response to increases in the number of students experiencing mental health issues, behavioural challenges or other problems of potentially serious impact on performance, progression and overall wellbeing.

The Students' Union was also in the final stage of defining a new strategy based on member engagement conducted over the prior six months, internal workshops and analysis of ongoing feedback, university strategy and emergent trends.

Active encouragement of students to complete the NSS was ongoing, to position the survey as a primary consultation tool within a suite of opportunities to raise positive and negative feedback throughout their time at University.

Service reports were provided by area, with a particular focus on:

- Student experience and NSS
- Student academic representation – activity to ensure higher completion rates of representative training was confirmed, and it was proposed that sector benchmarking be undertaken to inform best practice.
- Democracy
- Student engagement
- Learning
- Volunteering
- Communications
- Campus vibrancy and community engagement
- Advice and support
- Student support and wellbeing

It was reported that student concerns had been raised with regard to the availability and scheduling of Social Work placements.

Action: The UCSU Academic Officer to meet with the Dean for Student Success and Head of Department HPSS to discuss actions being taken by the university to address the issue.

It was proposed that the use of technology and videoconferencing could support the work of the Students' Union to ensure visibility and reach at the London Campus.

The background and developments to date with regard to the HEFCE APR Action Plan were presented by the Dean for Student Success.

Changes within the university and externally, and the completion of many of the actions within the plan, meant that that it had largely fulfilled its objectives. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that HEFCE had agreed to a continuation of the institutional focus around student outcomes, as articulated by the plan. As the process of registration with the OfS had commenced, and continued progress would be demonstrated under this process, it had been agreed with HEFCE to close the existing APR Action Plan, and to redirect any outstanding actions to the LTA and OfS group. The final version of the plan was provided.

A Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) action plan underpinning the recently approved strategy, and informed by a more data-driven approach to improving student outcomes, was being developed. This would take forward elements of the closed APR action plan and the Annual Operating Plan, with any outstanding actions to be incorporated into relevant AOP projects.

It was reported that the consultation on the new regulatory framework and requirement to register with the Office for Students (OfS) had implications for the University's approach to driving improvements in student outcomes in the new operating environment. This work was being taken forward by an OfS Registration Task Group. Alongside, a Student Outcomes Data Group had been established to inform the LTA action plan and the work of the OfS group.

Outcomes: Academic Board:

- Formally noted the completion of the current APR action plan and endorsed the proposal to embed future actions in the LTA action plan and the work of the OfS Registration task group.
- Received and noted the final APR action plan.

It was confirmed that an update on OfS Registration was to proceed to Academic Board following the submission deadline of 24 May.

An update on the current status of development of the Academic Infrastructure Project was presented by the Director of SAAS and Dean for Student Success.

The Project was defined under the Annual Operating Plan as a mechanism to ensure that the university's academic infrastructure provided a framework and ways of working to deliver the institutional Strategic Plan.

The scope of the project was to review and revise the regulatory frameworks and associated operational processes for taught programmes, including progression and award regulations, programme design, validation and review, aspects of assessment, and the academic year, in order to secure:

- the effective use of resources, particularly staff resource, in both academic and professional services;
- consistency of approach across the institution through simplifying the number and complexity of the operational models;
- academic standards;
- the quality of the experience for students;

- alignment with changes in the external environment and current sector good practice.

The full contextual and scoping statement for the project was presented to Academic Board for noting and endorsement.

It was anticipated that the successful completion of the project would offer significant enhancement of the student experience, by providing:

- greater clarity, transparency and consistency in the operation of policies and processes which directly affect students;
- better use of systems to support academic-related activities, giving a more timely response to students;
- improved student satisfaction;
- enhanced reassessment opportunities to support progression and retention.

Outcome: Academic Board endorsed the contextual statement and project scope for the Academic Infrastructure Development Project.

Action: A rolling programme of visits to academic departments to update academic colleagues on project progress and deliverables was requested by Academic Board to ensure ongoing dialogue around and engagement with the initiative.

It was confirmed that nominations were still being sought for academic representation and involvement across a range of disciplines to input into key project elements.

17:42 Research Matters:

AB17/34

a) REF2021

The Research Development Manager reported that, following further consultation with the sector, HEFCE had published REF2017/04 in November 2017, confirming further decisions on staff and outputs. Key points included:

- Institutions would be able to detail processes to identify staff with 'significant responsibility for research' through a code of practice;
- An average of 2.5 outputs must be submitted per 1 full-time equivalent (FTE);
- Submitted staff would require a minimum of one output;
- There would be a maximum of five outputs allowed per person;
- Both the originating institution and the institution at which an individual was employed could submit an output, through a transitional approach to portability;
- A minimum of two impact case studies would be required per unit of assessment;
- A deposit exception would be introduced to the open access policy from April 2018 to allow deposit to be made within three months of publication, where it was not possible to do so at the point of acceptance.

In response, the Research & Enterprise Committee had reviewed in detail and agreed the assessment parameters and timeframes for the REF submission, using details from REF2017/0 and REF2017/04. This was provided for noting by Academic Board.

It was proposed to reinstate the REF Steering Group to support the development and monitoring of progress towards submission.

Ongoing work being undertaken in liaison with HR was highlighted, which was intended to establish a detailed database of colleagues within the university with responsibility for research. The development of an evidence base to demonstrate impact was confirmed, for forward progression under the re-established REF Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- Academic Board noted and endorsed the process and timescales for the University's REF submission.
- The proposal to reinstate the REF Steering Group was approved.

Action: A rolling programme of visits to academic departments to update academic colleagues on progress towards the REF submission was suggested. The Director of Research and Research Development Manager to consider.

Professors of Practice

The Director of Student and Staff Services outlined the proposal to confer ten Professors of Practice during the current academic year to support the institutional vision and aims of the Strategic Plan via:

- Contributing to teaching;
- Interacting with academics and students at a highly applied and/or strategic level;
- Helping facilitate teaching, research and enterprise impact and visibility.

A range of terms of engagement would be established with senior business, industry and third sector practitioners, eminently qualified academic, business, or government leaders and successful arts and culture leaders, who had made major impacts on fields and disciplines important to the university's programmes.

Each would contribute to the academic activity at the university by providing students and staff with a deeper understanding of the practical application of a particular field of study, and to help promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical experience from applied professionals.

Updates were provided at departmental level on the appointment, activity and impact of current Professors of Practice.

The outgoing Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic reported on the very recent appointment of Mr Marc Searle, CEO of HCPC as a Professor of Practice for Health, a very positive development for this area of the university's work.

Action: The Director of Student and Staff Service to produce a guidance note to inform the consideration and appointment of Professors of Practice in key operational areas.

Clarification was sought as to the differentiation between the role of Professors of Practice and Honorary Fellows. The Vice Chancellor confirmed that work was ongoing with Honorary Fellows to progress strategic opportunities to support the university through their connections and standing. It was confirmed that there may be instances where a Professor of Practice was also an Honorary Fellow. Specific clarification would be included in the guidance document.

Outcome: Academic Board approved the launch of the Professors of Practice initiative for implementation.

17:43

Cumbria Collaborative Outreach Programme:

AB17/35

The Head of Strategic Partnerships provided an overview of the background and aims of the Cumbria Collaborative Outreach Programme (CCOP) as follows:

- To double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education (HE) by 2020;
- To increase by 20 per cent the number of students in HE from ethnic minority groups;
- To address the under-representation of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE.

2018 represented the first full year of delivery under the Programme, and a decision was awaited at national level to confirm an additional two years of funding from December 2018.

The CCOP Manager presented the structure, operation and progress to date of the University's funded 'Hello Future' Programme and associated outreach activity, as outlined in the paper.

The work of the dedicated Evaluation Officer was outlined, and the value of this work in establishing a national evidence base was stressed.

Actions agreed:

- The Vice Chancellor requested global communications and cascade via team brief sessions to cover the current position, aims, activity and impact of the Hello Future Programme to ensure awareness of the programme and key statistics across the organisation.
- It was proposed that a conference could be planned to demonstrate the aims and impact of the programme for key leads and partners to enhance visibility.

17:44

Learning, Teaching & Assessment Action Plan:

AB17/36

The Dean for Student Success reported on the intention for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment action plan to become a key document in pursuing the aims of the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the student-related priorities identified in the Annual Operating Plan.

It was confirmed that specific data-informed numerical measures of impact would be added to the Action Plan where appropriate, aligned to AOP, departmental and service-level targets.

It was reiterated that, as the University's APR action plan was now closed a number of ongoing actions initiated by the APR action planning process had been carried forward to the LTA plan.

Outcome: Academic Board formally endorsed the LTA Action Plan for progression by the incoming DVC Academic.

Action: The incoming DVC Academic to review the Action Plan and to make recommendations to the VC for approval via Chair's Action.

17:45

Academic Governance:

AB17/37

Academic Departments AER Outcomes 2016-17:

Outcome: Academic Board noted the report and AER outcomes.

Action: The DVC Academic to conduct a further review of the data presented in liaison with the Director of AQD.

- 17:46 Minutes from Academic Board Committees:** AB17/38
- Agreed:** The following minutes and associated key points were noted:
- Research & Enterprise Committee 16 January 2018 a)
 - Academic Strategy & Planning Committee 24 January 2018 b)
 - Student Success & Quality Assurance Committee 30 January 2018 c)
- 17:47 Minutes of the University Board of Directors 16 November 2017:** AB17/39
- Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting were noted.
- 17:48 Next meeting:** Tuesday 24 April 2018, Lancaster Verbal