

Council Minutes: 7 May 2021 (via Teams)

PRESENT: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); Mr David Barron (lay member); Professor Steve Bradley (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Ms Hanah Burgess (lay member); Mr Anthony Carey (lay member); Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member); Mrs Bobby Georghiou (lay member); Mr Atree Ghosh (Student member); Professor Simon Guy (Senate representative); Mr Ian Johnson (lay member); Professor Kevin Jones (Senate representative); Ms Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Ms Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mr Oliver Robinson (Students' Union President); His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member); Mrs Valerie Young (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Paul Boustead (Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness) (*for item 10*); Ms Claire Geddes (Committee Secretary); Mr Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Ms Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Mrs Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance); Ms Sarah Rees (Head of Stakeholder Relations) (*for item 14*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Council noted there were no apologies for absence for this meeting.
- 1.2 The Pro-Chancellor noted that it was the final meeting for Atree Ghosh and on behalf of Council thanked him for his service.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 12 MARCH 2021

PAPER A

- 3.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2021.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 There were no matters arising.

5. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE AND QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported on:

- (i) the University Strategy launch on 13 May 2021 coinciding with the Lancaster Exchange event to which there was an open invitation for Council members to attend and that the new strategy was now publicly available via the University website;
- (ii) the signing-off of the UA92 annual accounts by its external auditors and the completion of the search processes for a new Chief Executive for UA92;
- (iii) the reduction of Government Overseas Development Agency (ODA) funding and the reprofiling of five University research projects due to clawback;
- (iv) the related short- and medium-term pressures on the Government's science budget due to the decision to join Horizon Europe and the impacts of Covid-19, but its continuing commitment to becoming a 'science superpower';
- (v) Lancaster University Management School's achievement of the Athena SWAN Charter Bronze Award;
- (vi) the signing of the commitment to the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (REC) on 28 March 2021, meaning the University had pledged to work towards achieving the standard within three years. Members noted the activity underway to ensure the REC was achieved and Council's oversight of progress through proposed revisions to EDI governance, subject to Council's approval in due course;
- (vii) the Government guidance on current students' return to study after 17 May 2021, the numbers of students now in residence on campus and the additional facilities that had been established to support permitted social engagement and welfare support;
- (viii) the postponement of the July 2021 Graduation Ceremonies after consultation with students and the increased scale of future ceremonies in December 2021 and July 2022 to accommodate 2020-21 graduands;
- (ix) planning for academic year 2021-2022 being undertaken on the anticipation of more normal operating conditions. Members observed that there was a possibility of a third wave of Covid-19 occurring in the UK despite the vaccine programme's success and advised that scenario planning be undertaken should some elements of Covid secure behaviours/requirements be retained or reintroduced in the future;
- (x) the success of the virtual Roses event with York University and offered his congratulations to the Students' Union and its Vice-President Sport for the organisation of the event;
- (xi) the University's very strong performance in the Knowledge Exchange Framework coming second within its cluster group; and
- (xii) the positive response by students to the fourth and final payment offer agreed by Council by circulation regarding campus residences fees as a result of Covid-19.

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| 6. | PRESIDENT, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION: REPORT
<i>Restricted and Commercial in Confidence</i> | PAPER B |
| ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION | | |
| 7. | KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: DRAFT FOR COMMENT
<i>Restricted and Commercial in Confidence</i> | PAPER C |
| 8. | UPDATE PAPER: UNIVERSITIES UK GUIDANCE: 'MANAGING RISKS IN INTERNATIONALISATION: SECURITY RELATED ISSUES' | PAPER D |
| 8.1 | The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance introduced the paper which outlined the University's proposed framework for responding to the UUK Guidance: Managing Risk in Internationalisation, which itself had been a response to increased government interest in how universities were engaging with foreign powers. He drew members' attention to Section 3.2 (a-e) of the Guidance which the Executive viewed as the focus for consideration and outlined the exercise which had been undertaken to aggregate these requirements into a more manageable form to enable a gap analysis to be conducted. | |
| 8.2 | Members considered the significant scope and scale of the guidance and the consequent leadership and awareness raising activity required at all levels within the Faculties to support a culture that managed the risks effectively. The meeting noted the related ongoing review of governance arrangements regarding research ethics and integrity processes and the stocktake being conducted on partnership activity. | |
| 8.3 | Council noted the UUK Guidance, was supportive of the approach and the progress made to date in mapping the University's position against the guidance and the proposal to provide Council with an annual assurance report regarding the identification and management of risks arising from the University's internationalisation activity. | |
| 9. | PROCEDURE FOR THE REVOCATION OF HONORARY AWARDS: INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION
<i>Restricted and Confidential</i> | PAPER E |
| 10. | UNIVERSITY SUPERANNUATION SCHEME (USS): A CONSULTATION BY UNIVERSITIES UK WITH EMPLOYERS ON THE INDICATIVE OUTCOMES TO THE USS 2020 VALUATION
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11. UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY REVIEW

PAPER G

- 11.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance presented the revised register which had been reviewed and updated in light of feedback regarding the sensitivity of risk realisation definitions from Audit Committee and Council.
- 11.2 Members noted that the University continued to operate in an environment with high levels of uncertainty but that some risks relating to the pandemic and Brexit had subsided or not been realised and had therefore been removed.
- 11.3 Council advised that the Executive may wish to consider if using risk scenarios would help inform forward planning especially regarding key risks and opportunities in delivering the Strategy and KPIs.
- 11.4 The Council noted the updated risk register.

12. ORAL REPORT FROM FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- 12.1 The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee provided an oral report from its meeting held on 6 May 2021. She highlighted that the Committee had: received a presentation by the External Auditor Partner from BDO on sectoral views and trends; considered budget setting parameters for 2021-2022, albeit there remained considerable uncertainty regarding aspects of the budget due to the operating environment; received a report from the Students' Union on its finances and had pledged ongoing support to it help navigate its challenges; received a report and proposals regarding a review of the University's investment portfolio to ensure alignment with environmental and social governance objectives; and that the Committee had approved the three year Tuitions Fee Strategy for 2022-25.
- 12.2 Council noted the oral report by the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

13. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL: RESIDENCES WIFI UPGRADE (UPP RESIDENCES)

PAPER H

- 13.1 Council considered the rationale for the UPP residences WiFi capital expenditure proposal (which was outside of the existing capital programme) noting that good connectivity was important to student satisfaction, the arrangement would enable timely delivery for students and that there was a mechanism by which capital expenditure could be recouped by the University through rental income.
- 13.2 Members noted the recommendation of Finance and General Purposes Committee that the capital expenditure proposal should be approved.
- 13.3 Council approved the capital expenditure of £1.750M to upgrade wi-fi in UPP Residences as outlined in the paper.

14. CONFERRAL CONTINGENCY PROTOCOL: REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS **PAPER I**

14.1 The Head of Stakeholder Relations introduced the recommendations to allow for the continuation of a more sustainable and flexible approach to degree conferrals after Council had been agreed a protocol for one year in 2019-20.

14.2 Council noted the longer-term aim to increase the number of Senior University Officers with delegated power to confer degrees and the University's plans to ensure all students graduating during the pandemic would be offered an in-person ceremony by July 2022.

14.3 Council approved the recommendation to renew the Conferral Contingency Protocol and its associated triennial review process.

15. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS **PAPER J**
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ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

16. WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS **PAPER K**

16.1 Council noted the written reports of:

Audit Committee, meeting of 8 March 2021;
Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee, meeting of 11 March 2021;
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, meeting of 17 February 2021;
Estates Committee, meeting of 5 March 2021;
Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 22 January 2021;
Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 11 March 2021;
Senate, meeting of 10 February 2021;
Student Experience Committee, meeting of 5 March 2021

17. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS **PAPER L**

17.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 There was no additional business to report.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19.1 Members noted that the next meeting will be an Away Day held from 4:00 p.m. on Thursday 8 July 2021, followed by further Away Day business from 9:00 a.m. on Friday 9 July and the formal Council meeting following on from 2:00 p.m.