

Council Minutes: 28 January 2022 (hybrid meeting)

PRESENT: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); David Barron (lay member) (online); Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears (lay member); Professor Steve Bradley (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Hanah Burgess (lay member) (online); Anthony Carey (lay member); Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member); Ian Johnson (lay member); Claire Leitch (Senate representative); Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor) (online); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor) (online); Oliver Robinson (Students' Union President); Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone (Senate representative); Gayatri Shewani (student member) (online); His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member) (online); Valerie Young (lay member) (online).

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Boustead (Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness) (*for item 11*); Tom Buckley (Director of Recruitment, Admissions and International Development) (online) (*for items 8-9*); Claire Geddes (Committee Secretary); Simon Guy (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) (Global) (*for items 8-10*); Catherine Harrison (Associate Director of People, Culture and Inclusion) (*for item 11*); Dr Paul Harness (Director of Information Systems Services) (*for item 10*); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Ben Matthews (Head of Global Engagement) (online) (*for items 8-9*); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance); Professor Mark Stevenson (Cross-Faculty Associate Dean (Global Engagement)) (online) (*for items 8-9*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF COUNCIL AND SENATE: PAPER A **25 NOVEMBER 2021**

3.1 Council approved the minutes from the joint meeting held on 25 November 2021.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 26 NOVEMBER 2021 PAPER B

4.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2021.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 From its minutes of the 26 November 2021, Council noted the following matters arising.

5.1.1 **Item 6:** Students' Union President's Report: The Pro-Chancellor and Hazel Blears had met with the President of the Students' Union.

5.1.2 **Item 9:** The Annual Financial Statements had been submitted to the Office for Students in December after sign off from the External Auditors BDO.

5.1.3 **Item 19:** Joy Welch Gift: This matter was still in progress.

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

6.1 Council noted the written report from the Executive which had been circulated on 21 January 2022. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.

(i) The University's response to the lifting of Plan B Covid-19 restrictions and its continued management of the impacts of the pandemic.

(ii) UCU's ten days of strike action in February 2022 and the measures being taken by the University to mitigate the impact on student facing activity. Council noted the ongoing negotiations around the 2020 USS Valuation consultation and the implications of agreement not being reached by 28 February 2022 on pensions costs to the employer.

(iii) The University's response to an historic allegation of racism by an ex-student raised recently through social media. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Council of the due diligence undertaken in relation to the allegations, with no evidence to support a number of the claims relating to staff conduct. The Vice-Chancellor reported that Senior Management were satisfied that all appropriate steps had been taken at the time, although the individual had been invited to bring forward any further evidence and engage directly with the University.

The Council noted the support being given to staff directly affected by the allegations and that lessons learned and listening exercises were being undertaken, including working with Race Equality Charter Steering Group in order to continue to ensure that reporting processes were effective, and that any improvements to support Lancaster's diverse and inclusive community could be identified.

(iv) The likely timeframe for the Government's Higher Education white paper and consultation regarding reducing the financial burden of higher education on the public purse.

- (v) Research Councils' intention to bring forwards further advice and guidance to support universities' due diligence regarding secure and trusted research partnerships.
- (vi) Arrangements for the recruitment of new Divisional Directors for the Information Security Systems (ISS) and People and Organisational Effectiveness with interim appointments starting in mid-February 2022.

6.2 Council noted the report from the Vice-Chancellor.

7. PRESIDENT, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION: REPORT

7.1 The President of the Students' Union gave an oral report on the following:

- (i) his perspectives regarding the incident involving an historic case of racism including the need to acknowledge progress had been made by the University over the period, the continuing importance of EDI training for staff and students and that students would continue to campaign for further progress;
- (ii) an update on the Students' Union's proposed governance and democracy reforms highlighting the revised proposed amendments including appointment of external trustees, the introduction of a Union Assembly and a recall process for all trustees as well as the timeframe for seeking approval; and
- (iii) the Students' Union's financial position which was better than budgeted for the period.

7.2 Council noted the oral report.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8. ANNUAL REPORT TO UNIVERSITY COUNCIL ON COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS (UK AND OVERSEAS)

PAPER C

8.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) presented the report to Council highlighting the purposeful extension of the remit of the report to provide greater insights into regional and individual international teaching partnerships.

8.2 The Council noted notwithstanding the variations in partnership models, the systematic approach taken to quality assurance, how potential opportunities were identified explored, and the activity being undertaken to increase international teaching partner connectivity. Council considered and commented on the following:

- (i) the value of developing relationships such as Cardinal Newman and Lancaster University Maths School in relation to government and the Office for Students' agenda as well as recruitment pipelines;

- (ii) the learning and cross fertilisation opportunities through partnerships both subject based but also around issues such as digital transformation and level 7 education;
- (iii) whether more could be made of regional partnership activity in terms of reputation building.

8.5 Council noted the Annual Report to University Council on Collaborative Partnerships (UK and overseas).

9. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY: PROPOSAL **PAPER D**
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10. CYBER AND COUNCIL **PAPER E**

10.1 The Director of ISS gave a presentation to Council regarding the headline cyber security risks to the University, including why the threat continued to grow, the current organisation and arrangements to maintain cyber security (based on National Cyber Security Centre advice), assurance regarding the effectiveness of current arrangements and matters which the University and Council still needed to be concerned with.

10.2 Council considered the risk profile, mitigations in place, resourcing for cyber security and continuing areas of focus for cyber security and commented on the following:

- (i) that the pace and scale of activity required by the University to mitigate cyber security threats was only likely to intensify going forwards particularly with the National Cyber Force opportunity;
- (ii) the role of culture in lowering cyber risk with a need to ensure a proactive approach to cyber security including regular training and IT-related emergency planning exercises to engender a culture where everyone understood they had responsibility for cyber security;
- (iii) simplification of the complexity in some of the University's processes and systems through modernisation and standardisation would support cyber security; and
- (iv) Council members would value further support in ensuring their own practices are cyber secure.

10.3 Council noted the presentation and the NCSC Board Cyber Security Toolkit.

10.4 The Pro-Chancellor on behalf of the Council thanked the Director of ISS for his years of service to the University and wished him well for his retirement.

11. PEOPLE AND CULTURE PLAN **PAPER F**

11.1 The Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness introduced the People and Culture Plan for approval, highlighting its foundation in the new University Values, alignment with the Strategic Plan and that it had been informed by the Council's Sub-Group on Culture's work.

- 11.2 Council noted the proposed implementation activity including creating a baseline for culture (current and desired) to enable development of key performance indicators and the intention to embed values through a behavioural framework for staff.
- 11.3 Council approved the People and Culture Plan and indicated that it would be keen for further opportunities to engage with the implementation of the Plan and to see assurance regarding its progress.
- 11.4 The Pro-Chancellor on behalf of the Council thanked the Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness for his years of service to the University and wished him well with his new role at another university.
- 12. ORAL REPORT FROM FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2022** **ORAL REPORT**
- 12.1 The Chair of Finance and General Purposes provided an oral report from the meeting of the 28 January 2022 highlighting consideration of revolving credit arrangements linked to sustainability targets, a comparator report on student accommodation and rents which place the University in a favourable position and its approval of the purchase of land to the east of the University.
- 12.2 Council noted the oral report.
- 13. FINANCIAL FORECAST INFORMATION FOR THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN 2021 TO THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS** **PAPER G**
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- 14. UA92 INVESTMENT UPDATE** **PAPER H**
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- 15. COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS PROPOSAL** **PAPER I**
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- 16. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT** **PAPER J**
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- 17.* REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** **PAPER 1**
- 17.1 Council noted the report of the Redundancy Committee for the academic year 2020/21.
- 18.* RESEARCH INTEGRITY REPORT** **PAPER 2**
- 18.1 Council noted the Research Integrity Report prior to its publication in accordance with the Research Integrity Concordat.
- 19.* WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY BRIEFING** **PAPER 3**
- 19.1 Council noted the report on the University's Widening Participation and Social Mobility Briefing.

20.* WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS

PAPER 4

- 20.1 Council noted the following written reports of meetings:
Audit Committee (17 January 2022)
Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee (5 November 2021)
Estates Committee, (14 December 2021)
Finance and General Purposes Committee (23 September 2021)
Finance and General Purposes Committee (21 October 2021)
Estates Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee, joint meeting (19 November 2021).

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

21. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

PAPER K

- 21.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 22.1 There was no other business.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 23.1 The next Council meeting will be held from 09:00-13:00 on Friday 11 March 2022 in Training Suites 1, 2 and 3, Human Resources Building, with a presentation and dinner from 19:00-21:00 on Thursday 10 March in the Private Dining Room, County College.