

University of Central Lancashire

Unreserved Minutes of The Board Meeting Held On 30th January 2020, Commencing At 5.00pm In The Conference Room, Adelphi Building

Present:

David Taylor (Chair)

Andrea Adams	Sue Ion (via speakerphone)
Fiona Armstrong	Suntosh Kaur
Graham Baldwin	Lesley Lloyd
Nicky Danino	Ruth Lowry
Jim Edney	Anne McCarthy
Ridwanah Gurjee	

In attendance:

Michael Ahern (Chief Information and Infrastructure Officer)
George Charles (Chief Finance Officer)
Ruth Connor (Chief Marketing Officer) – UB819 only
Ian Fisher (University Secretary and General Counsel and Clerk to the Board)
Ken Lee (Chief People Officer)
Lynne Livesey (Deputy Vice Chancellor)
Peter McMellon (assisting the Clerk to the Board)
Anne Roberts (Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor)

UB808. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, including Sue Ion who was in attendance via speakerphone.

Apologies for absence had been received from Maria Darby-Walker, Richard Hext, and Bill McQueen. The Chair undertook to bring into the discussion at appropriate junctures the e-mail comments received from Mr Hext and Mrs Darby-Walker.

UB809. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests other than those recorded under UB816 below.

UB810. Chair's Announcements

There were no announcements by the Chair.

UB811. Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 21st November 2019

Resolved: That the Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 21st November 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

UB812. Matters Arising from the University Board Meeting held on 21st November 2019

(i) UB791 – Chair’s Announcements – May 2020 Board Residential Event

The Chair reported that, following investigation, costings for the next Board Residential event (21/22 May 2020) using Burnley Campus and a nearby hotel were marginally lower than the previous venue.

It was agreed that arrangements for the event to be held in Burnley should proceed.

(ii) UB806 (iii) – Governance Portal

Mr Fisher reported on progress in use of the Governance Portal facility for meetings documentation. He confirmed that the facility was currently being used for Audit and Risk Committee meetings. Once the process has been adequately established for that Committee, use of the facility will be rolled out to the Board and the other Committees.

UB813. Vice-Chancellor’s Report

Professor Baldwin presented his report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Baldwin drew attention to the following:

- Political Landscape – as yet, no post-election change of Minister of State for Universities or of Secretary of State for Education. However, Emma Hardy MP has been appointed as Shadow Further and Higher Education Minister.
- Maritime Skills Commission – Professor Baldwin’s appointment as Chair of the prestigious Commission had been approved by the Chair. Separately, the University’s Remuneration Committee will consider an offer of appointment of Professor Baldwin to the East Lancashire Health Trust.
- Brexit – a state of readiness to respond is being maintained.

- Reserved Minute - Text Redacted

The Chair reported on his meeting with the recognised trade unions.

- Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

- International – Coronavirus – Professor Baldwin provided details on the University’s management of the current challenge. Travel to China (including Hong Kong) has now been suspended and the University is seeking to bring home UK staff and students. With a very high population of Chinese students, the University has had to respond to concerns and needs on campus in Preston. Mr Ahern confirmed that close adherence to Public Health England guidance was the basis for decisions on staff/student evacuation and other precautions. The promotion of healthy self-help practices is central to guidance given to all users of the University. While it is expected that the University’s campuses in the North West of the UK will continue to operate as normal, contingency plans have been developed in case the position changes.

In noting this update, the Board agreed that, particularly in the face of somewhat dramatic media messages, by monitoring developments closely, a disproportionate response can be avoided.

- Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

- **Reserved Minute – Text Redacted**
- Visits/Events – Winter Graduation Ceremonies had been successfully presented on campus. Professor Baldwin commented on other key visitors and events as listed in his report.
- Internal Communications with Staff – the practice of periodic face-to-face briefings by the Vice Chancellor is now established and is providing an effective vehicle for conveying key messages, such as the drive for more effective cost controls.

The Board then discussed aspects of the Vice Chancellor’s Report. Dr Ion’s advice on the need for the University to gear up in anticipation of opportunities emerging from the Government’s renewed interest in nuclear technology was noted.

Finally, and in response to Dr Armstrong’s request, Professor Baldwin confirmed that further work with the Chief Marketing Officer is expected to enable the systematic presentation of summaries of media attention to the University.

Resolved: That the Vice-Chancellor’s report be received.

UB814. Chief Finance Officer’s Update

Mr Charles presented the Chief Finance Officer’s Update report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

(i) **Reserved Minute – Text Redacted**

(ii) **Reserved Minute – Text Redacted**

In response to Mrs McCarthy’s question about purchase cards controls, Mr Charles reported on new controls and processes in place and on the enhanced automation scheduled for February 2020.

(iii) Quarter 2 Forecast and Other Priorities

Mr Charles reported on progress so far under the new approach to forecasting and reporting. He confirmed that adjustments to the 5 Year Plan will follow. He also confirmed that an audit review of the budget-setting process (by RSM – internal auditor) is scheduled to commence shortly. In response to a point raised by Mrs Darby-Walker, he confirmed that the Resources Committee had considered and had approved new Delegation of Authority Approval levels.

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

The Board then discussed Mr Charles’s report.

In response to Dr Gurjee’s point about year-end expenditure surges, Mr Charles confirmed that that tradition was recognised. Professor Baldwin confirmed that measures to monitor and to contain the tendency are in hand.

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

Dr Danino felt that there was broad appreciation among staff of the need to ensure that resources are directed to where current demand indicates.

Ms Kaur also reported on some small degree of ‘nervousness’ among students (where staff departures have occurred or are rumoured to be imminent). Generally, however, the student body is content so far with the way reductions are being managed. Professor Baldwin confirmed that the management of staffing changes sought to ensure that departures were mostly timed for when the academic year has ended.

Reserved Minute –Text Redacted

Professor Baldwin confirmed that, as Dr Gurjee had indicated, the University’s Recruitment Approvals Panel (for considering the filling of vacant posts) was contributing effectively, but intelligently, to cost control and to optimal use of resources.

In summarising the progress on the management and the rebalancing of the University’s finances, the Chair highlighted the importance of honest and open communication with staff as key to securing the necessary co-operation across the University.

Resolved: That the Chief Finance Officer’s Update report be noted.

UB815. Death in Service Scheme – Appointment of New Trustees

Mr Fisher presented the report recommending the appointment of Mr Charles with effect from 30 January 2020 as an additional Trustee. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Resolved: That

- (i) Mr George Charles be appointed as an additional Trustee with effect from 30 January 2020; and
- (ii) the Deed of Appointment be signed and sealed on behalf of the University Board.

UB816. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

UB817. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Annual Report

Dr Livesey delivered the Annual Report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Dr Livesey reminded the Board about the University’s publication duty (Public Sector Equality duty), and also about the extent to which the EDI data is used in the strategic management of all aspects of the University.

Having noted the main points from the Resources Committee’s consideration of the Annual Report (meeting on 14 January 2020), the Board then reviewed each section of the report.

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

It was agreed that the inclusion of national data (for comparisons) should be considered for future reports.

Mrs Adams’s advice on Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (used to avoid ‘unconscious bias’) was noted. Mr Lee confirmed that the University’s Human Resources team recognised the need for care in any use of AI tools. He also reminded the Board about the propensity for positive recruitment measures to bring about short-term worsening of statistics.

Finally, the Board noted Ms Kaur's agreed amendment to the section on 'Pride' (the first sentence of which should now read "SU Pride was part of Welcome activities for the second time and this is now planned as an annual event in conjunction with the University").

Resolved: That the Annual Report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion be approved.

UB818. International Update

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

With regard to the University's wider international operations and objectives, Professor Baldwin responded to Mrs Lowry's question by confirming that reports will be presented to the Board as the overall international strategy is reviewed and redefined.

(Dr Ion left the meeting at this point and Mrs Connor joined the meeting)

UB819. Marketing Update

Mrs Connor provided a PowerPoint presentation on progress of the ongoing review of marketing in the University. A copy of the presentation is set out in the Minute Book.

Reserved Minute - Text Redacted

Mrs Connor then elaborated on the key factors – internal and external – which provide the background to the review.

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

Finally, Mrs Connor outlined how her team was structured and how individuals are being deployed so as to provide the desired focus on key matters, including on the website improvements.

The Chair thanked Mrs Connor on behalf of the Board for her comprehensive and encouraging presentation.

(Mrs Connor left the meeting at this point)

UB820. Committee Chairs' Updates

Resources Committee

Mr Edney (Chair of Resources Committee) reported on the matters covered by the Resources Committee at the meeting on 14th January 2020.

Reserved Minute – Text Redacted

Mr Edney assured the Board that the University's financial performance will continue to be the main focus for the Committee and that, despite some positive indications of good progress, there will be no complacency in the drive to turning round the financial position as rapidly as possible.

Audit and Risk Committee

Mrs Lowry (Chair of Audit and Risk Committee) reported on the matters covered by the Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting on 30th January 2020.

The Committee had examined and approved for signature and submission the 2018/19 Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return. She confirmed that the Committee was satisfied with the accuracy of the return and that no significant issues are anticipated from the data and messages therein.

Mrs Lowry then explained that a request from the OfS to a minor change of wording to the University's Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee had been considered. Whereas the section in question had submitted read as follows:

"Subject to the resolution of the HESA Data referred to above, based on the information presented to the Audit and Risk Committee during the year, the Committee is satisfied with the overall reports and adequacy and effectiveness of the University's arrangements for:

- Risk management, control and governance;
- Data quality; and
- Promoting value for money"

the Committee had resolved to change the three bullet-points to read as follows:

- Risk management, control and governance;
- Economy, efficiency and effectiveness (VfM); and
- Management and quality assurance data submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Student Loans Company, HEFCE, the OfS, Research England and other bodies.

The Board noted the changes to the Committee's Annual Report.

Resolved: That

- (i) the Chairs' Updates be noted; and
- (ii) the amendments to the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee be noted and the revised version of the Annual Report be now submitted to the OfS.

UB821. Confirmation of Completed Assurance Updates

Dr Livesey advised that the systems noted by the Board (under her 'Overview of key returns applicable to UCLan' report at the last meeting) are being effectively managed with close monitoring ensuring that returns are submitted by deadlines.

UB822. Masterplan Delivery Update

Mr Ahern presented the Masterplan Delivery Update report dated 30 January 2020. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Ahern confirmed that, as noted by the Resources Committee following their detailed review of the ongoing work, there are no immediate issues and delivery on time and within budget of the final elements is now anticipated.

Mr Ahern described the challenges entailed in the erection of the complex steel structure for the new Student Centre.

Resolved : That the Masterplan Update Report be noted.

UB823. Any Other Business

Engineering Innovation Centre – Business engagement

Mrs Adams asked for an update on creation of a Resources Committee based panel/group designed to promote the University's business engagement objectives.

Mr Fisher confirmed that the terms of reference for such a panel had been discussed with the Vice Chancellor, the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Resources Committee and that a report and recommendations for appointment or co-option will be presented to the Board in due course.

UB824. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, 26th March 2020 in the Conference Room, Adelphi Building, Preston.

I M Fisher
Clerk to the Board