

COUNCIL – MINUTES

13 March 2020

PRESENT: Pro-Chancellor, Lord Liddle (in the Chair); Professor S. Bradley, Interim Vice-Chancellor; Mrs R. S. Georghiou (lay member); Professor S. C. Guy (Senate representative); Mr I. Johnson (lay member); Professor K. C. Jones (Senate representative); Ms B. T. Morgan (student representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mr G. S. Nuttall (Students' Union President); Lord Price (lay member); Professor E. Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); His Hon. Judge P. Sycamore (lay member); Mrs V. Young (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor Dame S. M. Black (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement)) (*attended for item 3*); Mr P. T. Boustead (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development) (*attended for items 12-15*); Professor N. A. Davies (Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development)) (*attended for item 8*); Ms R. Dodds (Director, Mercer UK) (*attended for item 15*); Mrs C. Geddes (Committee Secretary); Mr D. Harland (Chief Executive, Eden Project International Ltd.) (*attended for item 3*); Professor A. L. Heathwaite (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)) (*attended for item 9*); Ms N. C. Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Mrs S. J. Randall-Paley (Director of Finance) (*attended for items 15-17*), Ms L. Taher-Bates (Head of Outreach and Student Success) (*attended for item 8*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member); Mr S. J. Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Ms A. M. Mullan (Senate representative); Mr S. N. Reynolds (lay member).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Council noted apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting. Declarations are recorded against items of business 8, 9, 15 and 16.

3. EDEN PROJECT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

PRESENTATION

3.1 Members received a presentation from David Harland, Chief Executive, Eden Project International Ltd. about the origins, values and strategy of the Eden Project and the proposition for Eden North to regenerate the area. Mr Harland stated that the University was regarded as Eden North's Senior Strategic Partner and Eden North was unique amongst Eden projects as, with the support of the University, education and learning had been completely integrated into the project from inception.

3.2 Members noted that the University's involvement and support to date, had been critical to bringing about the project and there was a synergy with University aims around public engagement, environmental sustainability and the wellbeing agenda particularly in areas such as the Health Innovation Campus and Environmental Sciences. On this basis the Memorandum of Understanding had been drafted and signed as previously agreed by Council.

3.3 Council noted the proposed route to funding the capital project was through a Government 5-stage process. It was anticipated that a response would be received in the Autumn at the time of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Forty percent of funding would be required to be raised through philanthropy and commercial activity and Mr Harland indicated he was confident the project would achieve this.

3.4 *Some Restricted and Confidential content*

4. MINUTES

PAPER A

4.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2020.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising discussed.

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

6.1 Professor Steve Bradley reported on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic including that:

- (i) the primary aim remained to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and students and then ensuring business continuity within the University;
- (ii) the response was being spear-headed using the emergency management teams structure. A Silver Team had been operational since January and the Gold strategic team was meeting frequently. Bronze teams were considering operational issues;
- (iii) international applications had been positive, but whilst China's education sector was in lockdown it was difficult to fully understand the impact of Covid-19. Scenarios were being tested and pressures points identified including an analysis of the headline impact of a downturn in overseas students and the range of a potential revenue gap;
- (iv) the University continued to follow Public Health England guidance and local guidelines were in development for campus social distancing and behaviours, reduced risk services and operations, and digital teaching, alternative assessment methods and submission. Particular consideration was required around the sciences and lab-based activity for the Summer Term.

6.2 Council noted the assurance that no student would be disadvantaged by the changes. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that mitigations were still being worked through to ensure students would achieve the same learning outcomes and be in a position to graduate, but there would be different forms of delivery.

6.3 The Vice-Chancellor reported that an interim replacement for the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and EDI) had been secured and Professor Maria Piacentini would start coterminous with Professor Huttly's departure to Nottingham Trent University.

6.4 Members received a brief update from Professor Bradley on the ongoing industrial dispute including its scope and scale, impact and the Lancaster-specific dimensions connected to a grievance. He went on to assure Council that there was no evidence of a systemic problem at Lancaster but he had commissioned two actions: an independent audit into the policies and procedures around bullying and harassment to ensure they were fit for purpose; and further consultation and engagement with staff around University values. Councillors expressed concern with how the action had progressed and endorsed the Vice-Chancellor's action in requesting an audit.

7. PRESIDENT OF LU STUDENTS' UNION: REPORT

7.1 No paper was received for this item on this agenda. The President provided an oral report which highlighted:

- (i) the election results for the Full Time Officer Team for 2020-2021;
- (ii) the potential disruption to student competitive sport due to Covid-19;
- (iii) plans to boycott applicant visit days due to concerns regarding the current student experience; and
- (iv) the resignation of another member of the existing Full Time Officer team.

8. CONTEXTUAL ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS PAPER B

8.1 Professor Ella Ritchie declared an interest as the Chair of Realising Opportunities.

8.2 The Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development), Nigel Davies, introduced the paper which proposed outline guiding principles for the University and the desire to take a holistic approach to recruitment and support, a key element of which was offering the prospective students' certainty.

8.3 Council considered the proposed approach and noted that it presented a clear position on contextual admissions. Members noted there was a tension in the OfS' approach of setting widening participation student numbers as a ratio and it was suggested that widening participation activity would ideally be part of expansion of numbers rather than a potential reduction in capacity to admit other students.

8.4 Members noted the level of the University's existing direct financial support activities (£2.3M) and on bursary and scholarship programmes, and expressed a desire to see the University further help address the issues in the local area and wider Northwest.

9. LANCASTER UNIVERSITY PREPARATIONS FOR REF 2021 PAPER C *Restricted and Confidential*

10. REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY PAPER D

10.1 The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations), Nicola Owen, introduced the delegation's framework and explained that this proposed the approach and structure. If agreed, the delegations themselves would follow after consultation with Chairs of Committees. Council approved the approach to delegations.

- 11. KPIs PERFORMANCE: MID-YEAR REPORT FOR 2019-20** **PAPER E**
Some Restricted and Commercial in Confidence content
- 12. STATUTORY REPORTING ON GENDER PAY GAP 2019** **PAPER F**
- 12.1 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Paul Boustead, highlighted that this was a statutory report for publication and gave an overview of its data.
- 12.2 Council considered the report and whether the action plan was having a positive impact but noted that Lancaster's gap was in part driven by the fact that it maintained its own internal services. Members also considered that there was still a relatively low number of women professors in STEM subjects. To close the gap, the University needed to address this imbalance which was the intention as the plan progressed. The aim was to move from 16% women professors by 2021 to 20% by 2023 which was the sector median.
- 12.3 Council approved the Gender Pay Gap Report 2019 for publication.
- 13. PAY NEGOTIATIONS** **ORAL UPDATE**
Restricted and Confidential
- 14. SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2019** **PAPER G**
- 14.1 The Chair of the Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee (CSHaW), Ella Ritchie, presented the report and recommended it to Council for approval. She reported that CSHaW had received assurance that health and safety management was working well in particular, against sector averages for accidents and incidents. Faculty-based arrangements were performing well in the most part. There were no areas of serious concern.
- 14.2 Members noted that there had been a review of asbestos management after a Health and Safety Executive report. This had resulted in a good outcome.
- 14.3 Council noted that a proactive approach continued to be made to improving the health and safety culture of the University and preventing accidents. In relation to this, members noted that RIDDOR reports had increased and this would be monitored, but may relate to progress made in raising the profile of these and in engagement in training.
- 14.4 Professor Ritchie confirmed that mental health and wellbeing continued to be an area of growing concern. An increase in sickness absence had been seen but it was unclear if this was due to an increased prevalence or better reporting. It was also noted that the University's performance was better than many other comparative sectors.
- 14.5 Council approved the Annual Safety, Health and Wellbeing Report for 2019.

15. **PENSIONS UPDATE** **PAPER H**
Restricted and Confidential
16. **OUTCOME OF AUDIT SERVICES TENDER PROCESS** **PAPER I**
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence
17. **ORAL UPDATE FROM THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING** **ORAL UPDATE**
- 17.1 The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Valerie Young, reported that the Committee had considered the outturn performance against the budget which had been on track. However, the members were conscious of the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee had discussed the various implications including students intercalating and the deferral of income. Members noted the capital programme may need to be reconsidered and projects postponed to off-set the impact.
18. **ORAL UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE** **ORAL UPDATE**
Restricted and Confidential
19. **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: RECOMMENDATIONS** **PAPER J**
Restricted and Confidential
20. **COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS (CUC) PROPOSED GOVERNANCE CODE** **PAPER K**
- 20.1 Members received an overview of the Code and its purpose from the Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) who explained the potential trigger for the change in approach (increasing concern about the effectiveness of higher education governing bodies) and that as part of OfS ongoing registration requirements, Council had to confirm annually that it was complying with Code provisions and it could be seen as a regulatory document.
- 20.2 Council considered and noted that the draft proposal and its main changes, and that the Code was likely to be adopted and would require further consideration. The main changes discussed were:
- (i) a shift in emphasis from Board processes to culture and behaviours, and an increased accountability at the Council level for Board and organisational culture;
 - (ii) a reframing of the equality and inclusion agenda;
 - (iii) the seeming downplaying of the role around academic governance however explicit reference to quality assurance and accountability for partnerships;
 - (iv) wider cognisance of the diversity of the student voice;
 - (v) the proposal for a Senior Independent Director (SID); and
 - (vi) engagement with stakeholders as a key element and the potential need for the University to consider the international dimension to this.
- 20.3 Council approved the draft consultation for submission.

- 21. APPOINTMENT OF COLLEGE PRINCIPALS** **PAPER L**
Restricted and Confidential
- 22. ESTATES COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE: AMENDMENT** **PAPER M**
- 22.1 Council approved the change to the Estates Committee terms of reference.
- 23. COUNCIL CHAIR'S ACTIONS** **PAPER N**
- 23.1 Council noted the decisions taken by the Chair since the last meeting including the approval of the OfS Reportable Events Delegations Framework.
- 24. WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS** **PAPER O**
- 24.1 Council noted the written reports.
- 25. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS** **PAPER P**
- 25.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.
- 26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 26.1 Members noted that the Council Away Day will be held from 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 14 May 2020, with the formal meeting from 9.30 a.m. on Friday 15 May 2020. The venue is to be confirmed.