

THE UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 6 October 2006

PRESENT: Mr B. M. Gray (in the chair), Vice-Chancellor, Dr L. J. Banton, Councillor A. C. Bryning, Mr A. Dick, Mr P. R. Elliott, Mr R. Emslie, Mr J. Hadfield, Professor S. Henig, Mr G. Johnson, Dr M. M. Lee, Mr G. Middlebrook, Mr H. Morris, Ms S. Palmer, Professor A. Siewierska, Ms C. Smith, Professor D. B. Smith, Professor K. J. Stringer, Mr R. Turner.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss F. M. Aiken, Professor A. G. Chetwynd, Mr P. M. Graves, Professor R. D. McKinlay, Professor T. J. McMillan, Mr A. C. Neal, Ms V. Tyrrell.

CO.06/54 Welcome

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed members to the first meeting of the new Council, taking place in a new venue. He also welcomed Paul Graves, who would shortly be taking up the role of Director of Governance and Planning, and who would in future service meetings of the Council.

CO.06/55 Presentation: The Student Experience

Document: AR/2006/675

Professor Amanda Chetwynd, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Colleges and the Student Experience, made a presentation about the student experience. She highlighted the differences between the university's perception of itself and how it was seen by students who declined offers to come to it; and the diversity of the student population with its consequent changing needs in terms of college, social and academic facilities.

In response to a question, THE COUNCIL RESOLVED that there should be a report on progress in implementation of the 'Brand and Reputation' project to a future meeting of Council.

THE COUNCIL THANKED Professor Chetwynd for her report.

CO.06/56 Minutes: 16 June 2006

Document: AR/2006/647

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes as set out.

CO.06/57 Matters arising; rolling schedule of business

Documents: AR/2006/672; AR/2006/610

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note the matters arising and the rolling schedule of business.

CO.06/58 Vice-Chancellor's report

Documents: VC/06/R103; VC/06/R104; AR/2006/662

In addition to presenting his written report, the Vice-Chancellor gave an oral report on discussions at the UUK Residential meeting in Exeter, 12-14 September. These included:

- preparation of the UUK submission for the Comprehensive Spending Review, which is likely to focus on the need to protect the teaching unit of resource, to provide further investment in the teaching infrastructure, to seek matching funding for philanthropic giving, to seek continuation of support for third mission and to resolve the issue of pensions;
- the Leitch review of employer engagement with higher education;
- long-term strategy documents – the Vice-Chancellor will make a more detailed presentation on these at the next meeting;
- pay framework agreement – Lancaster was one of only 51% of institutions which had implemented the agreement by 1 August 2006, and its costs were in line with the sector average of 3.2%;
- RAE – 2008 would proceed as planned and discussion on future metrics were evolving.

The Vice-Chancellor also reported that the university had now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster City Council in respect of Bailrigg Science Park.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note:

- (i) the Vice-Chancellor's report;
- (ii) the report on the heads of agreement with Study Group International;
- (iii) the report on the Centre for Employability, Enterprise and Careers.

CO.06/59 LUSU President's report

Document: AR/2006/648

The President of LUSU, Ms Sooz Palmer, drew attention to her written report and asked the Council to note that the Union would be placing a high priority on campaigning against the removal of the cap on top-up fees. The highest priority for the sabbatical officers in the coming year would be ensuring that students understood the importance of LUSU representation and engaged with that.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the LUSU President's report.

CO.06/60 Finance

Documents: FO/06/90; FO/06/94; VC/06/R105; AR/2006/649

The Director of Finance and Resources introduced the following items.

(a) *Report of Director of Finance and Resources*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note the report.

(b) *Report on Phase 4 and Refinancing the Residences Project*

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the Council that while good progress was being made in developing the proposals for Phase 4, he was not yet in a position to ask Council to approve them due to the inclusion of the issue of refinancing in this phase of the project. It had originally been envisaged that refinancing would take place after completion of Phase 4, but it made good financial sense to consider it now. The delay in completing the proposals was putting pressure on the planned delivery of the Grizedale rooms in September 2007, but it would still be possible to complete them on time. It might, however, become necessary to instruct the contractors to begin enabling works prior to financial close of the project and the university might need to underwrite the associated costs for a short period.

He highlighted the fact that the current refinancing proposal involved an extension to the concession period from 38 years to 48 years, which represented a change from the present arrangements which gave the university an option either to terminate the Project Company leases after 38 years or to extend them for a further 10 years.

During the discussion, it was clear that there was general support for refinancing but some concern about giving up the right to terminate the leases after 38 years.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to receive and note the reports;
- (ii) to ask the Director of Finance and Resources to consider the alternative options and report back to Council via the Finance Committee;
- (iii) that the Authorised Signatory Group should have delegated authority to approve any preliminary work at Grizedale if required prior to the next meeting of the Council.

(c) *Finance Committee, 8 September 2006*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report and confirm the actions of the Finance Committee at its meeting on 8 September 2006.

CO.06/61 Corporate governance

Documents: AR/2006/656; VC/06/R091 (revised); VC/06/R086 (revised); VC/06/R092; AR/2006/673

(a) *Report of Working Group on Corporate Governance*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to receive and note the final report of the Working Party on Corporate Governance;
- (ii) to thank the members of the Working Party for their work;
- (iii) to commend Draft Ordinances 3 and 10 to the Senate for its consideration;
- (iv) to receive and note the arrangements for induction and training of Council members, making the point that the Pro-Chancellor's annual review with individual members should be regarded separately from induction training.

(b) *Report of the Nominations Committee*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report and approve the recommendations of the Nominations Committee.

CO.06/62 Human resources

The Pro-Chancellor reported orally on the meeting of the Human Resources Committee that morning, which had approved the People Strategy. This would be the subject of a fuller report at the next meeting.

CO.06/63 Estates

THE COUNCIL NOTED with pleasure that Phase 3 of the Residences Project had been delivered on time.

CO.06/64 Key performance indicators

Documents: VC/06/R078; VC/06/R105

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to note the register of legal disputes and claims, subject to the addition of a report on a further employment tribunal case which had been struck out;
- (ii) to ask that, if it were to receive future reports on legal disputes and claims, they should focus on trends;
- (iii) to note the report on the use of the University Seal since 7 October 2005;
- (iv) to note that the presentation of Key Performance Indicators was being reviewed in light of the new University Strategic Plan and that a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

CO.06/65 Key institutional risks

Document: FO/06/91

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note the report.

CO.06/66 Audit Committee, 11 September 2006

Document: VC/06/R106

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note the report.

CO.06/67 Appointments

Documents: AR/2006/650; AR/2006/681

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to approve emeritus appointments as listed;
- (ii) to approve continuing membership of the university as listed;
- (iii) to approve the reappointment of Professor M. W. Kirby as Principal of Graduate College from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2009.

CO.06/68 Review of current meeting

Members were generally content with the layout of the venue, noting that this arrangement would be reviewed when the John Welch Room was ready to receive meetings of Council. They also expressed a preference for the commencement of meetings at 1.00 p.m.