

**LANCASTER UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council  
held on 2 October 2009

**PRESENT:** Mr B. M. Gray (in the chair), Vice-Chancellor, Mr A. Baker, Dr L. J. Banton, Dr G. Brown, Dr K. Davidson, Professor P. J. Diggle, Mrs G. Gardner, Mr J. Hadfield, Professor S. Henig, Professor G. Johnes, Mr G. Johnson, Mr G. Middlebrook, Mr G. Parker, Mr M. Payne, Mr R. Pickles, Professor H. Thomason, Ms L. Willis.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Miss F. M. Aiken, Professor A. G. Chetwynd, Professor R. D. McKinlay, Mr A. C. Neal, Mrs S. Randall-Paley, Mr C. Thrush, Ms V. Tyrrell, Mrs L. M. Wareing.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Ms H. Child, Mr L. King, Mr G. Marsland, Mr R. Turner.

CO.09/67 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.09/68 Report of the Nominations Committee: lay membership of Council

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0013*

The report and recommendations of the Nominations Committee were before the Council.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to appoint Mr Gary Parker and Mr Francis Fitzherbert-Brockholes as members of Council for three years from 2 October 2009 and 10 February 2010 respectively;
- (ii) to approve the recommendation that Laurence King should become Chair of the Finance Committee from 1 August 2010.

CO.09/69 Presentation: University Secretary

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0127*

The University Secretary, Ms Fiona Aiken, gave a presentation on the Secretariat which covered:

- (a) the structure of the office and its relationship to the rest of central services;
- (b) its main areas of responsibility:
  - governance;
  - academic standards and quality;
  - compliance;
- (c) how the work of the Secretariat will support the University in delivering its strategic plan;
- (d) the main challenges:
  - to strike the right balance between quality with efficiency;
  - to eradicate unnecessary complexity;
  - to ensure consistency and equity without stifling innovation and creativity;
  - to balance the need to observe due process with the need for speed and flexibility;
  - to establish the Secretariat as a source of reliable, objective and disinterested advice;
  - minimising risk to the University.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report and to thank Ms Aiken for her presentation.

CO.09/70 Minutes: report of meeting on 19 June 2009

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0020*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes as set out.

CO.09/71 Current schedule of future business

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0128*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the rolling schedule of business.

*Document: VC/09/R086*

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to his written report and the following points.

- (a) The recent death of Professor Philip Reynolds, the second Vice-Chancellor of the University.
- (b) The complex refinancing project undertaken over the summer.
- (c) The large-scale and complex programme of new building and refurbishment work reaching completion over the summer.
- (d) The 2009 admissions process, noting that the University had not exceeded its HEFCE numbers target, although many other institutions may well have done so.
- (e) The recently announced comprehensive review of HEFCE commissioned by Lord Mandelson.
- (f) The likely publication of the Government's HE Framework towards the end of October.
- (g) The increasingly tight national budget context with public borrowing restrictions likely to impact more on HE than elsewhere.
- (h) The increased focus by Government on HE outcomes and accountability given that current investment levels, of around £10b, are considered to be unsustainable; and the consequent need for universities to:
  - improve the way in which they communicate their impact on national life and their cost/value ratio;
  - diversify income streams;
  - safeguard the quality of the student experience and the reputation of UK degrees;
  - differentiate between fair access and widening participation;
  - meet increasing international competition;
  - secure research funding and improve research governance;
  - work together to deal with the major problems of the era.
- (i) The likely emphasis in the REF on impact and greater industry involvement.

- (j) Problems with the new Points Based System for student visas.
- (k) The financial pressures currently squeezing the USS pension scheme.
- (l) The current state of national pay negotiations.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the Vice-Chancellor's report.

CO.09/73 Governance: Council Effectiveness

*Documents: SEC/2009/2/0031; SEC/2009/2/0103; SEC/2009/2/0080; SEC/2009/0035*

The University Secretary drew attention to the written report before Council and invited comments and questions.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report and approved the actions to be taken as set out.

CO.09/74 Finance

*Documents: FIN/09/51; FIN/09/50; COO/09/25*

- (A) **TREASURY POLICY**
- (B) **REFINANCING UPDATE**
- (C) **HIGH END COMPUTING PROVISION**

Council recorded its thanks to Mr Andrew Neal and Mrs Sarah Randall-Paley, and to their staff, for all their hard work in bringing the very complex refinancing project to a satisfactory conclusion over the summer.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to note and approve the updated Treasury Policy as set out;
- (ii) to note the contents of the Refinancing Update report and to approve the proposal that the existing Authorised Signatories Group for the refinancing project be laid down;
- (iii) to note the contents of the High End Computing Provision report;
- (iv) to approve and authorise the High End Computing facility fit out and commissioning project within a funding envelope of £1.753m.

CO.09/75 Risk Issues

*Document: FIN/09/47*

The Risk Policy was before Council.

The Director of Finance introduced the Risk Policy and invited comments and suggestions.

During discussion the following points were made.

- (i) The need to strike the right balance between risks within the immediate ambit of the University and those emanating from the wider world within which the University exists and operates.
- (ii) The need for University management to identify and assess accurately all the major risks to the University and to do everything reasonable and necessary to minimise them.

Members concluded that:

- (i) the risk policy is comprehensive and focuses on the right issues;
- (ii) the University is doing all it can to put itself into the best position to deal with the risks as identified.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to agree that the current risk profile of the University is appropriate and in line with Council's risk appetite;
- (ii) to approve the updated Risk Policy.

CO.09/76 University Appointments

*Documents: SEC/2009/2/0123; SEC/2009/2/0025*

- (A) **UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN**
- (B) **REAPPOINTMENT OF FURNESS COLLEGE PRINCIPAL**
- (C) **EMERITUS AND CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP**

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to approve a recommendation from Senate, approved under Chair's action by the Vice-Chancellor, that Ms Clare Powne be appointed as University Librarian from 19 October 2009;
- (ii) to approve the College Principal and Emeritus appointments as set out.

CO.09/77 LUSU President's report

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0021*

The LUSU President, Mr Michael Payne, drew attention to his written report and the following points:

- (i) the appointment of Jacqueline Whiteside to the LUSU Trustee Board;
- (ii) the very successful 2009 Intro Week which included the following events organised by LUSU:
  - a responsible alcohol campaign
  - an energy monitoring competition in student residences.

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

CO.09/78 Finance

*Documents: FIN/09/48; FIN/09/033 (previously circulated);  
FIN/09/038 (previously circulated); SEC/2009/2/0095;  
SEC/2009/2/0100 (part Commercial in Confidence)*

(A) **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

The Director of Finance, Mrs Sarah Randall-Paley, drew attention to the written report before Council.

During discussion it was confirmed that it had been agreed with the external auditors that the accounting treatment of the debenture refinancing costs should be reflected in the 2009/10 accounts.

(B) **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AS AT 31 MAY 2009 AND 30 JUNE 2009**

The latest Management Accounts had been circulated to Council members.

(C) **AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES GROUP MEETING OF 11 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The report of the Group was before Council.

(D) **Finance Committee meeting of 11 September 2009 (part Commercial in Confidence)**

The report of the Committee was before Council.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED

- (i) to note the Director's report;
- (ii) to note the Management Accounts as at 31 May 2009 and 30 June 2009;
- (iii) to note the report of the meeting of the Authorised Signatories Group on 11 September 2009;
- (iv) to note the report of the Finance Committee on 11 September 2009.

CO.09/79 Human Resources

*Document: SEC/2009/2/0101; SEC/2009/2/0098*

- (A) **REPORT ON POTENTIAL REDUNDANCIES**
- (B) **REPORT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) to note the report on potential redundancies as set out;
- (ii) to confirm that a continuing need for redundancies exists;
- (ii) to remit the detailed consideration of potential cases involving academic staff to the Redundancy Committee.

CO.09/80 Benchmarking for the future

*Documents: SEC/2009/2/0107; SEC/2009/2/0111*

- (A) **REPORT ON UNIVERSITY LEAGUE TABLES**

The report was introduced by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Colleges and the Student Experience who drew attention to the following points.

The University now has a much better understanding of how the various league tables are calculated.

There is a long lead-in time which means that it can take a year or two for changes and improvements to be reflected in the tables.

The tables now before Council were based on data from two years previously.

- (B) **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: GENERAL OVERVIEW FOR FUTURE REPORTING**

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report as set out.

CO.09/81 Review of current meeting

Council members expressed themselves happy with the arrangements made but asked that the structure of the agenda be considered further.

CO.09/82 Committee reports

*Documents: RES/09/11; RES/09/29; VC/09/R062; CR/09/10; SEC/2009/2/0024*

- (a) Knowledge Exchange and Commercial Affairs Committee: meetings of 19 February 2009 and 24 July 2009
- (b) Public Arts Strategy Committee: meeting of 13 May 2009
- (c) University and Students' Union Joint Committee: meeting of 12 May 2009
- (d) Senate: meeting of 27 May 2009

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the committee reports and to confirm the actions taken.