

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 7 October 2011

PRESENT: Mr B. M Gray (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Mr A. Baker; Dr R. Boumphrey; Dr G. Brown; Mr J. R. Carr; Dr K Davidson; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Mrs G. Gardner; Mr G. Gardiner; Ms J. Gaskell; Mr J. Hadfield; Professor G. Johnes; Mr L. King; Mr G. Parker; Professor C. Ram-Prasad; Professor E. Rose; Professor H. Thomason; Ms L. Willis.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss F. M. Aiken; Professor S. Bradley; Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Mr A. Clarke; Dr H. Hardie; Professor R. D. McKinlay; Professor T. J. McMillan; Mr A. C. Neal; Mr M. Power; Mrs S. Randall-Paley; Mr M. Swindlehurst.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr G. Middlebrook.

CO.11/71 Welcome to new members

The Chair welcomed Mr Andy Clarke, Ms Jemma Gaskell, Dr Hazel Hardie and Mr Matt Power to their first meeting of Council.

CO.11/72 Declaration of interest

Ref: CA.1

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.11/73 Minutes

Ref: CA.2; documents: SEC/2011/2/0860; SEC/2011/2/0862

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 1 July 2011 and 4 August 2011, subject to the correction of minute CO11/55 (c). This should report that an existing 501(c) company was now facilitating donations, rather than the establishment of a new company.

CO.11/74 Current schedule of future Council business

Ref: CA.3; document: SEC/2011/2/0913

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the schedule of future Council business.

CO.11/75 Vice-Chancellor's report

Ref: CA.4; document: VC/10/R011

The Vice-Chancellor presented his written report and drew attention to the following issues which had arisen since the previous meeting.

- (a) Lancaster had received a positive result in the National Student Survey, ahead of the HEFCE benchmark, although there were some departmental variances which would need to be reviewed. Facilities for students were important and we were exploring extending the Learning Zone.
- (b) The University and Colleges Union (UCU) had balloted their members regarding a strike action in relation to changes to the USS pension scheme, which was likely to result in a "work to contract" action. University management would keep abreast of the situation.
- (c) Agreement had been reached with UCU in pay negotiations with UCEA, but discussions were still ongoing with the other unions.
- (d) Lancaster had achieved a ranking of 131 in The Times Higher Education World Rankings published in October 2011. The University's international outlook had been classed in the world's top fifty, which was a testimony to the work of Professors Bob McKinlay and Steve Bradley.
- (e) The University Secretary was coordinating a response on behalf of the university to the paper from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on the regulatory framework for Higher Education.

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

CO.11/76 LUSU President's report

Ref: CA.5; document: SEC/2011/2/0896

The LUSU President drew attention to his written report as set out, and updated the Council on the successful events which had taken place during Intro Week, including the International Students' Evening and Freshers' Fair.

The Chair thanked the LUSU President for his comprehensive report.

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

CO.11/77 Strategy

Ref: CA.6; documents: VC/11/R010; SEC/2011/2/0887

(A) **LANCASTER-LIVERPOOL UPDATE**

The Council noted the development of the 'Green Paper' on collaboration with the University of Liverpool and discussed the consultation questions set out in the paper.

The paper set out the changing environment for research funding in Higher Education, and made the case that some action would be necessary in order to maintain the University's position in the top 1% of Universities in global rankings. It was noted that Lancaster's research funding had declined in 2011, and that research power was a key factor in many league tables and other measures of success.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council that the Academic Planning Committee had discussed the paper and that the relevant minute of their discussion would be circulated to members of Council shortly. The Green Paper had been made available to all staff, who could comment through a dedicated website. Some Faculty Planning and Resource Committees were also discussing the paper, prior to consideration by Senate on 12 October. Others would do so after Senate.

In the course of discussion Council members raised the following points.

- (a) Research would be a key differentiator for universities in future and it was important that Lancaster was well positioned in this regard.
- (b) Any action taken should include definitive additionality of research quality as well as size.
- (c) Collaborations with other institutions require a high level of trust and confidence between partners, in addition to a commonality in strategic position.
- (d) Any institutional level collaboration would not preclude individual collaborations on a departmental or sub-departmental level. Such collaborations would continue to be encouraged and increased in the future.

- (e) The Council should be mindful that the funding situation may change in the future, following a change in Government for example, and that other options may become preferable to collaboration in the longer term.
- (f) It was likely that there would be risks to consider when collaborating in off-shore international activities.
- (g) The use of the term 'LLU' was a misnomer, as it implied a unitary organisation formed by Lancaster and Liverpool Universities, which was not intended as a proposal within the paper.
- (h) The Senate would have to advise the Council on the academic issues, risks and benefits of any convergences with Liverpool.
- (i) Consideration should be given to the 'shape' and nature of future organisations when contemplating governance for any potential future options.

There was broad agreement that the changing environment required the University to refresh its strategy, and it seemed likely that institutional collaboration would aid in achieving its long-term objectives.

It was noted that in order for the collaboration to be successful, there would need to be additionality, and a willing partner with a strong record and experience of collaborations, such as Liverpool University.

Council noted that the paper did not propose a full merger as an outcome and supported this position. Council agreed that it would be helpful to have an alternative range of propositions to consider, including analysis of possible collaborations with alternative partners, along with different strategic options.

It was agreed that the Pro-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor-designate would hold discussions with Liverpool University regarding the proposals on collaboration. The discussions should not last too long, and should be complete before summer 2012.

It was agreed that in parallel to the joint discussions, steps would be taken to analyse the options and risks from Lancaster's perspective. A timetable of actions and a brief progress report would be brought to the next meeting of Council. The full analysis of alternative options would follow at a later meeting.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the development of the 'Green Paper' on collaboration with the University of Liverpool, and to communicate the outcome of their discussion to Senate.

(B) **GUANGWAI-LANCASTER UPDATE**

The Council received a progress report from the sub-group considering the proposal to establish Guangwai-Lancaster University.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the progress being made.

CO.11/78 Governance

Ref: CA.7; documents: SEC/2011/2/0895; FIN/11/59; SEC/2011/0886

(A) **REPORT OF NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Mr Rick Turner as a member of Council from 7 October 2011 to 31 July 2012.

(B) **RISK ISSUES**

The Director of Finance presented a document which outlined the annual review of the University's risk appetite, and informed the Council that substantial progress had been made in updating the University Risk Register.

The Council discussed the risk profile and made the following points.

- (a) The majority of major risks now originated from external sources, such as the HE funding environment, rather than from within the institution.
- (b) The risk of failure to achieve a successful transition to a new Vice-Chancellor had been reduced as a new Vice-Chancellor had been appointed, although members felt that there was still an associated risk surrounding the transition of leadership.
- (c) The risks relating to the potential collaboration with Liverpool University were not reported as the discussions were at an early stage.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) agree that the current risk profile of the University was appropriate and in line with Council's risk appetite;
- (ii) receive an extract from the latest University Risk Register.

(C) **UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The University Secretary introduced her report and drew attention to a proposal to remove Ordinance 14, in order to bring the Vice-Chancellor's terms and conditions into line with those of all other University staff.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) recommend to Senate that Ordinance 14 be deleted and invite Senate to concur with this recommendation;
- (ii) note the indemnity cover for members of Council.

CO.11/79 Chief Operating Officer's Report

Ref: CA.8; document: COO/11/40

The Chief Operating Officer drew attention to his written report and to the following key points.

- (a) The Business Process Review project teams had made significant progress in generating proposals and developing business cases.
- (b) The new Sports Centre was now open for business and Council members were invited to sample its facilities.
- (c) The information regarding student accommodation was set out in detail in order to aid Council's understanding of the rules and priorities used in the allocation of places. The University had met all of its guarantees for accommodation, despite the fact that student numbers had exceeded initial forecasts.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the Chief Operating Officer's report.

CO.11/80 Finance

Ref: CA.9; documents: FIN/11/58; FIN/11/43

The Director of Finance drew attention to her written report as set out, and informed the Council that HEFCE had changed its required submission date for the financial forecasts to June.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) note the report of the Director of Finance;
- (ii) note the Management Accounts as at June 2011.

CO.11/81 Human Resources: Redundancy Process continuation

Ref: CA.10; document: SEC/2011/2/0907

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to confirm a continuing need for redundancies and remit the detailed consideration of potential cases involving academic staff to the Redundancy Committee.

CO.11/82 Key Performance Indicators

Ref: CA.11; documents: SEC/2011/2/0915; PSU/2011/0093; PSU/2011/0094

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the fact that the number of PGRs as a proportion of the total student population was constrained by the funding from Research Councils, and suggested that the University should remain alert to that fact in relation to league tables.

Council members agreed that the repairs and maintenance of the Estate were important for the University, and agreed that the Estates Committee should consider the appropriate level of maintenance spend.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note:

- (i) the updated KPI balanced scorecard;
- (ii) the thematic report on the Lancaster experience.

CO.11/83 Emeritus and Continuing membership appointments

Ref: CA.12; document: SEC/2011/2/0863

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve:

- (i) on the recommendation of the Senate, the emeritus professorships as set out;
- (ii) the continuing membership appointments as set out.

CO.11/84 Review of current meeting

Ref: CA.13

Council members expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements.

CO.11/85 Standing Committee

Ref: CA.14; document: SEC/2011/2/0914

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report of the Finance Committee meeting of 16 September 2011.

CO.11/86 Chair's action

Ref: CA.15; document: SEC/2011/2/0864

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the decision taken by the Chair as set out.

CO.11/87 Any other business

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve a recommendation that Professor McKinlay should be appointed as Acting Vice-Chancellor during the interim period between the departure of Professor Wellings on 7 December 2011 and the arrival of Professor Smith on 1 January 2012.