

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 10 February 2012

PRESENT: Mr B. M Gray (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Mr P. Aitchison (*for items CO.12/6 onwards*); Mr A. Baker; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr J. R. Carr; Dr K. Davidson; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Mrs G. Gardner; Mr G. Gardiner; Mr J. Hadfield; Professor G. Johnes; Mr L. King; Mr D. McGuire; Mr G. Middlebrook, Mr G. Parker; Professor E. Rose; Professor H. Thomason; Mr R. Turner, Ms L. Willis.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss F. M. Aiken; Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Mr A. Clarke; Dr H. Hardie; Professor R. D. McKinlay; Mr A. C. Neal; Ms K. Payne (*for item CO.12/6*); Mrs S. Randall-Paley; Mr M. Swindlehurst; Ms V. Tyrrell.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Dr G. Brown.

CO.12/4 Declaration of interest

Ref: CA.1

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.12/5 Governance: Membership of Council

Ref: CA.7; document: SEC/2012/2/0041

The University Secretary introduced a proposal to approve the nomination of Councillor Aitchison as a member of Council, and to amend Statute 9 to clarify the position vis-à-vis Lancaster City Council.

Miss Aiken explained that this was an opportunity to give the City Council greater flexibility, as their future nominations would not necessarily have to be a Councillor, although they could not be a member of staff or a student of the University.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED through a unanimous vote:

- (i) to accept the nomination of Councillor Paul Aitchison by Lancaster City Council until such time as the Privy Council approved a change to the Statutes, or his term came to an end, whichever was sooner; and
- (ii) in principle to amend Statute 9 to clarify the terms of the Lancaster City Council's ability to nominate a member of Council, and to submit the revised Statute to the Senate for consideration.

CO.12/6 Presentation: Director of Marketing and External Linkages

Ref: CA.2; document: SEC/2012/2/0237

The Director of Marketing and External Linkages, Ms Katrina Payne, gave a presentation to Council on the marketing and branding of the University. Ms Payne stated that the aim of the marketing effort was to support the University's strategic aims and to showcase its excellence in innovative ways.

Ms Payne also reported on some preliminary results of marketing exercises performed during her first twelve months in post, including the redesign of the University's website. Council members were invited to contact Ms Payne directly if they wished to receive more detailed results of the marketing strategy.

CO.12/7 Minutes

Ref: CA.3; documents: SEC/2012/2/0084; SEC/2012/2/0085

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2011 and the special meeting held on 11 January 2012.

CO.12/8 Current Schedule of Future Council Business

Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2012/2/0086

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

CO.12/9 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Ref: CA.5

The Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal report on his reflections following his first six weeks in office. The following key points were noted.

- (i) The memorial service for Anuj Bidve held on 21 January had been well attended and was a fitting tribute to his memory. A memorial book had been delivered to the Bidve family by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and a scholarship in Engineering had been established in his name.
- (ii) The Higher Education landscape was undergoing a period of unprecedented change. The HE Bill had been delayed indefinitely, although most changes signalled within the earlier white paper would not require primary legislation.
- (iii) The funding letter to the University from HEFCE had indicated figures which were similar to those previously estimated by Finance. The teaching cuts had been reaffirmed and moderation funding had been removed, which was expected to negatively affect the University. PGR funding had also been changed, however, and there was expected to be funding provided for PGT students.
- (iv) The number of applications to study at Lancaster had increased by 7% overall, against a sector average decrease of around -8.5%. This was largely due to an increase in the number of overseas applications of 70%.
- (v) The Vice-Chancellor had been impressed by Lancaster's imaginative diversification strategy, such as the University's innovative relationship with Study Group, and partnerships overseas.
- (vi) The Management School's MBA course had dropped in the Sunday Times MBA league table from 45 to 71, which was disappointing, and was a cause for concern. It was suggested that this may be due to a fluctuation in the salary of graduates having a large effect on the point rating within the league table matrix.
- (vii) The University had had several large scale research funding successes, which were mostly due to collaborative efforts, such as the BBSRC funding for doctoral training. The Vice-Chancellor also expressed the University's thanks to Mr James Carr for his help in securing funding for a studentship.
- (viii) The N8 Research Partnership had successfully launched the Industry Innovation Forum, led by Lancaster University. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Professor Trevor McMillan for his work on this project.

The Vice Chancellor concluded his report by reflecting on the following three current issues.

1. The undergraduate international strategy, in particular Lancaster's links with China. It was noted that he and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would be visiting Guangwai in China in three weeks time, and would report back at the next meeting.
2. The Business Process Review. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that this was an ambitious project, and that some negative messages circulating around the University community would need to be addressed. It was important to emphasise that this was not a cost-cutting exercise, and that the main driver was the requirement to demonstrate world-class administrative processes.

It was agreed that the Council would receive a presentation on the Business Process Review at the next meeting.

Action: VC, COO

3. The University's strategic future. The Vice-Chancellor had met with the academic community since the previous meeting, and had been questioned on the University's discussion with Liverpool University, and the departments' role within those discussions.

The Vice-Chancellor was keen to encourage Lancaster to think as imaginatively and proactively about its strategic future as possible.

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

CO.12/10 LUSU President's Report

Ref: CA.6; document: SEC/2012/2/0087

The LUSU President drew attention to his report as set out, and highlighted the following key points.

- (i) LUSU was grateful to the University for organising the memorial for Anuj Bidve, which had been well-attended.
- (ii) Representatives of LUSU were planning to meet with the Liverpool Guild of Students in the coming week, and the consultation documents on the discussions with Liverpool had been made available to all students.
- (iii) LUSU had been in consultation with Facilities regarding the possibility of allocating a new space for the Union's accommodation, and the LUSU President was hopeful that these discussions would progress further this term.

- (iv) Concerns had been raised at LUSU's annual general meeting regarding the Business Process Review, although these concerns had been alleviated following discussions with the Chief Operating Officer, and the Vice-Chancellor's letter to University members.

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

CO.12/11 Chief Operating Officer's Report

Ref: CA.8; document: COO/12/02

The Chief Operating Officer reported as follows.

- (i) The Business Process Review was on schedule, and additional time was now included for wider consultation, particularly in relation to the strand on student administration. All concerns raised would be taken into account, and it was hoped that a quality outcome would be reached, with robust proposals supported by all concerned.
- (ii) Facilities had been successful in a bid for funding from the Revolving Green Fund, for the installation of a 1MW biomass boiler.
- (iii) Further discussions were underway with Lancaster City Council regarding the development of the Science Park. Regular updates on this project would be received by the Knowledge Exchange and Commercial Affairs Committee.

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

CO.12/12 Finance

Ref: CA.9

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

Document: FIN/12/09

The Director of Finance stated that it was pleasing to report that the University was tracking ahead of the budgeted surplus at the five month stage. The research grant income had been reduced compared to last year, and payroll costs had been constrained in the Faculties due to delays in appointments being made.

It was noted that the results of the out-turn review would be considered by Finance Committee and Budget Review Group in February.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Director of Finance.

(B) **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Documents: FIN/11/74; FIN/12/01 (previously circulated)

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the Management Accounts as at November 2011 and December 2011.

CO.12/13 Human Resources: Redundancy Process continuation

Ref: CA.10; document: SEC/2012/2/0124

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.12/14 Risk Issues

Ref: CA.11; document: FIN/12/10

The Director of Finance presented a quarterly update of the University Risk Register. Following brief discussion, it was agreed that the Chairs of Finance and Audit Committees would review the Risk Register and consider if the way in which it was presented should be changed.

Action: LK, JH, VC, SR-P

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

CO.12/15 Key Performance Indicators

Ref: CA.12; documents: SEC/2012/2/0117; PSU/2012/0004; PSU/2012/0005

The Council received and discussed the updated KPI balanced scorecard for January 2012. It was agreed that the Council would no longer require this document at each meeting, but would instead receive an annual KPI report, with updates on any significant changes during the interim period.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced a thematic report on teaching. He noted that the deadline for undergraduate applications for 2012/13 had now passed, and that the University's application figures were above average. It was noted that applications for the EU had decreased, and had been overtaken by applications from overseas (non-EU) students.

The Council discussed the variation in applications between Faculties and noted that traditional degrees such as History and Law had increased in applications, while other subjects had seen a decrease in applications. It was suggested that this may be due to employers giving greater recognition to more traditional subjects.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note:

- (a) the updated KPI balanced scorecard;
- (b) the thematic report on teaching.

CO.12/16 Emeritus and Continuing membership appointments

Ref: CA.13; document: SEC/2012/2/0139

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve:

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

CO.12/17 Review of Current Meeting

Ref: CA.14

Council members expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements.

CO.12/18 Standing Committees and Reports

Ref: CA.15

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the reports from the following committees.

- (a) Colleges and Student Experience Committee meeting of 2 November 2011 (*SEC/2012/2/0108*)
- (b) Estates Committee meeting of 13 October 2011 (*SEC/2011/2/1216*)

- (c) Senate meeting of 12 October 2011 (*SEC/2012/2/0109*)
- (d) University and Students' Union Joint Committee meeting of 8 November 2011 (*SEC/2012/2/0106*)

CO.12/19 Any Other Business

(i) *Visit to Liverpool*

Council members discussed their recent visit to Liverpool University, to meet with the Council members at that institution. The following themes were discussed.

- (a) *Level of partnership:* it seemed clear that certain areas of the University would benefit from closer collaboration with the University of Liverpool, although for a federation, the level of collaboration necessary to achieve those benefits would affect most parts of the institution.
- (b) *Undergraduate teaching:* although the main subject of the discussions was research, it was widely acknowledged that undergraduate teaching was a key purpose of both institutions, as well as a financial driver, and should not be neglected during the negotiations.
- (c) *University brand:* it was agreed that the University should maintain its own brand and autonomy, while aiming to create a federation which would be recognised by the Research Councils as a single entity for funding purposes.
- (d) *Information:* it was agreed that it was vital to consider as much information about University of Liverpool as possible, since Lancaster's reputation could be negatively affected by their undergraduate fees or accommodation, for example.

The Council agreed that the visit to Liverpool had been worthwhile, and that they looked forward to the return visit from Liverpool University Council on 28 March.

(ii) *Layout of Meeting Room*

Council members were invited to provide feedback on the new layout of the meeting room to the University Secretary.