

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a special meeting of the Council
held on 11 January 2012

PRESENT: Mr B. M Gray (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Mr A. Baker; Dr R. Boumphrey; Dr G. Brown; Mr J. R. Carr; Mrs G. Gardner; Mr G. Gardiner; Mr J. Hadfield; Professor G. Johnes; Mr L. King; Mr D. McGuire; Mr Gary Middlebrook, Mr G. Parker; Professor C. Ram-Prasad, Professor E. Rose; Professor H. Thomason; Mr R. Turner.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss F. M. Aiken; Professor S Bradley, Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Professor R. D. McKinlay; Mrs L. M. Wareing.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Ms L. Willis

CO.12/1 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.12/2 Student death

The Vice-Chancellor updated members of Council on the University's response to the recent tragic death of one of its postgraduate students during the Christmas holiday period.

CO.12/3 Possible Strategic Options for Lancaster

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the set of linked discussion papers setting out possible strategic directions for Lancaster for five to ten years hence which would potentially allow Lancaster to continue its impressive progress of the last decade.

PAPER 1: Some Global Perspectives, Trends and Challenges in Closer Institutional Interactions across the Higher Education Sector;

PAPER 2: Strategic Options for Lancaster University;

PAPER 3: Proposed Detailed Options Appraisal for Lancaster-Liverpool Interactions;

PAPER 4: Draft Proposed Timeline for Discussions of Lancaster Futures and Understanding Potential Partnership with Liverpool.

He explained that:

- Papers 1 and 2 set out the different strategic options for Lancaster University in the light of national and international challenges and consider how Lancaster University can best respond to these in the light of its stated strategic aspirations;
- Paper 3 sets out a process for examining closer collaboration with Liverpool through the establishment of three project groups on the themes of joint research, a joint Graduate School and integrated international activity;
- Paper 4 proposes a timetable for these important discussions which will give plenty of opportunity for all bodies, including Senate and Council, to play a central role;
- the Joint Project groups will be asked to examine the benefits and drawbacks of further collaboration in each area; in parallel with this work, all heads of academic departments across the two universities will be invited to carry out a detailed and joint analysis of the impact of collaboration before Lancaster departments produce reports for their respective disciplines from a Lancaster perspective;
- further consultation is also planned to collect the views of staff, students, alumni and external partners, and the Trade Unions and Students' Union will also feed into the reviews.

Council members were asked to consider whether the proposed approach, in terms of both the overall package and the individual elements, is appropriate and capable of achieving the desired outcome and of enabling a systematic and informed discussion of the issues from the Lancaster perspective.

During discussion Council members sought and received clarification and assurances on a number of points and also made a several suggestions for the incorporation of additional material and for changes of emphasis and clarification of specific points in the documents before circulation to the wider University community.

Council members voiced broad support for the proposed approach and timetable and welcomed the opportunity for a wide-ranging, informed and systematic debate within the University.

The Pro-Chancellor reported that arrangements have been made for a visit to Liverpool on 9 February 2012 by Lancaster Council members and also for a return visit to Lancaster by Liverpool Council members.

It was noted that during the consultation process, Council would receive regular progress reports and also:

- (i) a preliminary paper on governance models at its meeting on 23 March 2012;
- (ii) a report from the Joint Strategy Group at its meeting on 28 September 2012.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the proposals for considering strategic options for Lancaster and potential interactions with Liverpool.