

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 18 May 2012

PRESENT: Mr B. M Gray (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Mr P. Aitchison; 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; Mr J. Hadfield; Professor G. Johnes; Mr L. King; Mr D. McGuire; Mr G. 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; Mr A. Clarke; Dr H. Hardie; Professor R. D. McKinlay; Professor T. J. McMillan; Mr A. C. Neal; Mrs S. Randall-Paley; Mr S. Smith; Mr M. Swindlehurst; Ms V. Tyrrell.

CO.12/35 Declaration of interest

Ref: CA.1

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.12/36 Presentation: University Secretary

Ref: CA.2; document: SEC/2012/2/0529

The University Secretary gave a presentation on the changing HE regulatory framework, and the University's responses to date.

In reply to questions, the University Secretary noted that private HE providers must charge less than £6,000 per student in order to access public funding, which could be expected to lead to a lower quality of education.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to thank the University Secretary and note the presentation.

CO.12/37 Minutes

Ref: CA.3; document: SEC/2012/2/0585

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2012.

CO.12/38 Current Schedule of Future Council Business

Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2012/2/0586

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

CO.12/39 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Ref: CA.5; document: SEC/2012/2/0547

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the new LUSU President-Elect and thanked the outgoing LUSU President for his valued contribution over the past year.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the following key appointments at the University.

- (a) Professor Nancy Wright had been appointed as the new Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, following an international search. It was noted that the search committee had been impressed with the calibre of the candidates.
- (b) Professor Bob McKinlay's term of office as Deputy Vice-Chancellor had been extended from 31 July to 31 December 2012, under Chair's action.

During the discussion of the Vice-Chancellor's report, the following points were noted.

- (i) The Vice-Chancellor had circulated two detailed notes concerning the Business Process Review to members of Council, and would continue to keep them up to date with significant developments within the University, in real time.
- (ii) The changes in the membership of the University Management Advisory Group appeared to have had a positive impact on its effectiveness.

- (iii) The University's Jubilee Campaign would be the subject of the next Council presentation, as part of the drive to raise its visibility.
- (iv) In 2010, the University Rules had been amended to allow the posts of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Deans to be advertised externally.

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

CO.12/40 LUSU President's Report

Ref: CA.6; document: SEC/2012/2/0587

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

- (i) Given the uncertainty of the future of postgraduate funding, LUSU were in the process of developing a new representative model for postgraduate students.
- (ii) Lancaster had won the Roses 2012 competition, which had involved over 1,000 competitors and around 2,000 spectators.
- (iii) The LUSU President had been impressed by the level and quality of student representation in the University, and hoped it would continue in the future.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the LUSU President's report, and to thank George Gardiner for his contribution during his term of office.

CO.12/41 Strategy

Ref: CA.7

(A) **STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The Council considered the outcomes of the informal joint meeting of Council and Senate on 15 May 2012. During discussion, the following points were noted.

- (i) The discussions with Liverpool University had been suspended through mutual agreement.
- (ii) Rather than responding purely to restrictive UK government funding policies, the University should consider presenting a global model which might create and inform a better UK funding picture. The federation

discussed with Liverpool would have been extremely innovative, and the University would continue to consider all options open to it, including blue sky thinking where possible.

- (iii) The joint meeting had been a good opportunity to reflect on the University's strategic direction.
- (iv) There was widespread recognition within both Senate and Council that the University was at an important strategic junction and that important decisions would need to be made.
- (v) The University's current strategic plan was halfway through, and it was an appropriate time to reflect on and reconsider Lancaster's strategic objectives.
- (vi) It might be helpful to consider the reasons for differences between the positions of Lancaster and other institutions which were established during the same decade, such as York and Warwick. Issues such as Lancaster's financial difficulties during the 1990s ought to be taken into account.
- (vii) One of the lessons which had been learned from strategic discussions to date was that greater communication was needed throughout the institution, to reduce the risk of uncertainty.
- (viii) Lancaster's reputation was based on its own merits, although there was concern that the recent expansion of the Russell Group might affect the government's medium term funding policies, to the detriment of Lancaster.
- (ix) A paper outlining the process for ongoing discussions in which all stakeholders could be involved would be circulated to Senate and Council.
- (x) The Council was responsible for providing a high quality setting in which top academics could prosper, and for establishing the University's strategic direction.

It was noted that the chairs of Council and all its standing committees would meet to discuss the issues raised, and would report back to the next meeting of Council. Members were invited to provide their own feedback to any member of that group.

(B) **ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEACHING-LED PARTNERSHIP IN GHANA**

Document: SEC/2012/2/0595

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) introduced an update report on steps being taken to establish a teaching-led partnership in Ghana with CMA Investment Holdings leading to the establishment of the University of Lancaster at Accra.

The Council received the report and noted that the risks of using senior management resources on these international partnerships had been carefully considered, and that the University did not accept every available opportunity. It was suggested that it may be worthwhile contacting ex-patriot Ghanaian academics who may wish to work at the establishment.

CO.12/42 Governance: Risk Register

Ref: CA.8; document: FIN/12/39

The Director of Finance presented the University risk register, which had been updated to show a representation of the changing risks over the longer term. It was noted that the work on the branding strategy was still ongoing.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

CO.12/43 Chief Operating Officer: report

Ref: CA.9; document: COO/12/27

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

- (i) The University had been ranked 2nd in a survey of student satisfaction with regards to residences.
- (ii) The supply and demand for future student accommodation was to be discussed by the Estates Committee.
- (iii) The contract for the wind turbine had been signed and the contractor had started on site.
- (iv) The University's increased engagement with social media was having positive results.

- (v) The meeting with City Councillors had been well attended, and supported by LUSU and the Colleges.

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

CO.12/44 Finance

Ref: CA.10

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

Document: FIN/12/38

The Director of Finance reported that the outcome of Standard and Poors' assessment was excellent, despite the difficult current climate. The assessment had taken into account the University's consideration of its strategic options. Lancaster was one of only four universities with a public rating, and was expected to achieve AA- if the improvement continued at the current trajectory.

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

(B) **HEFCE GRANT 2012/13 REPORT**

Document: FIN/12/45

The Council received and noted a report on the University's grant letter from HEFCE. The Director of Finance explained that the funding had been cut more heavily than expected, which was disappointing, but that the target 4% surplus for next year would not be affected.

(C) **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Documents: FIN/12/23 (previously circulated); FIN/12/29 (previously circulated)

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the Management Accounts as at February 2012 and March 2012.

CO.12/45 Human Resources: Redundancy Committee

Ref: CA.11; document: SEC/2012/2/0581

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

CO.12/46 Key Performance Indicators

Ref: CA.12; documents: SEC/2012/2/0570; PSU/12/0053

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) introduced a report on the University's achievements with regards to international key performance indicators. In response to questions, it was noted that the KPIs would be updated to reflect the University's current international strategy, and that research partnerships would form a key part of the next stage in the University's international approach.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the thematic report on International KPIs.

CO.12/47 University Appointments

Ref: CA.13; documents: SEC/2012/2/0594; SEC/2012/2/0593

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the appointments as set out.

CO.12/48 Review of Current Meeting

Ref: CA.14

Council members expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements.

It was noted that the Council Effectiveness Review Group would meet in July, and that the Chair would report back on his one-to-one meetings with members at the next meeting.

CO.12/49 Standing Committees and Reports

Ref: CA.15

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

- (a) Finance Committee, meeting of 30 March 2012 (*SEC/2012/2/0596* **Restricted**);
- (b) Senate, meeting of 22 February 2012 (*SEC/2012/2/0597*);
- (c) University and Students' Union Joint Committee, meeting of 13 March 2012 (*SEC/2012/2/0553*).