

**Minutes of the Meeting
of
Fylde College Syndicate
Tuesday, 4th June 2013**

1. **Apologies**, Jordan Finneran, Joe Short, Jamie Rogers

2. **Matters Arising** – Recruitment 2013

Overall UG numbers still looked to be lower than hoped – although international recruitment was holding up well -and were currently about 100 down. It was likely that after A level results were in there would intense activity to recruit up to our targets.

3. **Senate**

Information items (oral reports)

• **New Planning Resource Allocation Process**

In the past, the budget allocation process had been supervised through the Budget Review Group (BRG) with Faculties playing a key role in determining strategic spending and income targets. Under the new system, the UPRG (University Planning and Resources Group) will supervise a process which expected departments to play a more active role in a process which was to be tied into the wider strategic academic planning objectives of the University. It was not clear yet exactly how student involvement was to be integrated in the process. Faculties would still be involved but would be required to co-ordinate activities via UPRG.

• **Interim Report on 2014/15 OFFA Access agreement**

As an agreement in charging £9k for fees the University had to undertake widening participation and would be allocating a £4.5 million fund to widen access rates from potential students from socio-economic and educational sector groups currently under-represented in Lancaster's student body.

• **Forward Schedule of Senate Business**

- Further discussion on University Strategy
- International Teaching Partnerships
- International Research Partnerships
- Student Employability Proposals
- Science Parks

The plan for the Science park adjacent to the University had been given the go ahead

- Complaints and Appeals

Currently the process is cumbersome and proposals were hoped to improve on this.

• **V-C's update**

Substantive items

• **Lancaster University Future Strategy**

There have been various meetings on Campus and in Town to discuss the future direction of the University to 2020. The future strategy document will be placed in the College Office for anyone interested. The Vice Chancellor has stressed that he is interested in feedback from everyone.

Lancaster has dropped to 11th in the Guardian rankings (from 7th last year). The university new strategy aimed to secure a regular place in the top ten of UK universities in all league table and to

move Lancaster into the top 100 universities in world rankings (as a key indicator of recognition as a World Class university which transforms students lives and engages the community and businesses).

- **Senate Effectiveness Implementation Plan**

The first Senate meeting of the Michaelmas Term will implement the changes agreed at an earlier meeting regarding the size and structure of the Senate. Colleges were no longer responsible for electing representatives through Syndicates. The overall size of the Senate had been reduced from 97 to 65, but a set of improvements to communication of Senate business and procedures had also been agreed. The 9 members previously elected by Colleges had been replaced by 4 independent members to be elected through Faculty processes.

On behalf of the Principal and the College, the Vice-Principal thanked the outgoing College Senate Representative, David Summers for all his support and advice during the period of his appointment.

- **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

Such courses are now a significant feature of provision at universities in the USA. The concept involves widening access to high quality courses provided by top class institutions for public good, but also to highlight the presence of such institutions in a global HE environment. Such courses do not count towards a degree programme. Fee levels are frequently “nominal” but courses can provide some financial return (probably in proportion to the academic status of the institution providing the courses. For example, a university such as Harvard is able attract significant numbers of students. One question was whether Lancaster could attract such an audience?

4. **Colleges Constitutions**

These had undergone final revisions in line with the Senate Effectiveness implementation plan and the revision of the University’s Disciplinary Code. As far as discipline was concerned cases would either be dealt with summarily by College Deans or could be escalated to be heard by the University Dean (still involving summary disposal). It remained possible for a student to invoke the right to be heard by a University Tribunal, either at the College Dean or University Dean summary disposal stages.

However, college disciplinary tribunals, convened by the Principal, for students who appealed the summary disposal of their cases by the College Dean would cease to operate. It was hoped this would standardise procedures across the university. Students would retain the right to appeal summary disposals by the College Dean, but all such appeals would be heard at the University level through procedures convened by the University Dean.

A question was raised as to whether, if the student had “a personal issue” with the College Dean, it seemed a little unfair that the only option would be to go to University level appeal. However, in reality if this were the case, the College Principal could hear the case.

[Principal’s Response in clarification:

It was already possible for the College Principal to stand in for the College Dean in hearing cases at the level of summary disposal in the college. He did not expect to have to do this in circumstances other than the College Dean’s absence due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. The Principal, hearing such a case, would simply be standing in for the College Dean and would not be hearing an appeal against an earlier college disposal. In such cases students would still be given the right to have their case heard through summary disposal or to have it escalated for primary hearing by the University Dean.

What is being removed from the constitution is the right of appeal to a College Tribunal after summary disposal by the College Dean. The Principal's role in such circumstances in the past had been to convene the Tribunal, not necessarily to hear the case, although the Principal was not excluded from sitting as a member of such a College Tribunal.

However, the current Principal would be very wary of introducing, by precedent, a student's assumed right to select the "magistrate" before whom he/she was summoned to appear. The University Rules are based on the assumption that all officers involved in disciplinary procedures are expected to act impartially and without bias or prejudice. The right of appeal to higher (university level) authority is designed to give a student the opportunity to challenge and prove that either procedural or personal issues had compromised the implementation of justice at the lower level.]

Next Meeting; Michaelmas 2013