

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council  
held on 31 January 2014

**PRESENT:** Mr J. Hadfield (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Councillor P. Aitchison; Mr A. Baker; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr J. R. Carr; Mr C. Edwards; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Mr L. King; Mr J. Pullan; Professor C. Ram-Prasad; Professor E. Rose; Dr J. Taylor; Professor H. Thomason; Mr J. Thornberry; Ms L. Willis.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Miss F. M. Aiken; Professor A. Atherton; Professor S. Bradley; Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Mr J. S. W. Dickinson; Ms N. C. Owen; Mrs S. Randall-Paley; Mr M. Swindlehurst; Ms V. Tyrrell.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Pro-Chancellor; Mr D. Barron; Mrs G. Gardner; Professor J. Garside; Mr G. Parker; Dr B. Szerszynski.

CO.14/01 Presentation on HEFCE developments

*Ref: CA.1*

It was noted with regret that Steve Egan had been required to cancel his visit owing to HEFCE's belated receipt of preliminary notification from BIS setting HEFCE's annual budget. It was agreed that the visit would be rearranged if possible.

**Action: Vice-Chancellor**

CO.14/02 Declaration of interest

*Ref: CA.2*

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.14/03 Minutes

*Ref: CA.3; document: SEC/2014/2/0059*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2013.

CO.14/04 Current Schedule of Future Council Business

*Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2014/2/0060*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the schedule of future business.

CO.14/05 Vice-Chancellor: Report

*Ref: CA.5; document: SEC/2013/2/1129*

The Vice-Chancellor presented his written report and drew attention to the following points.

(i) *Senior Management Roles reporting to the Vice-Chancellor*

Those senior management roles for which external candidates were being sought had been advertised. Interviews were scheduled to take place around Easter, following a discussion with the Senate in late February.

(ii) *Undergraduate Admissions*

15 January 2014, it was reported, was the main UCAS application deadline date. Overall UK applications were up 4% across the sector, while Lancaster were marginally down (2% for Home/EU and 1% for overseas), albeit against high numbers from last year. Conversion rates would be monitored, and reported back to Council in future meetings.

UCAS, it was noted, had recently released its five year historical trend data for 139 institutions. Taking 2009-2011, the period before the introduction of the new tuition fee arrangements, as a steady-state baseline, Lancaster had experienced a 5.7% increase in student numbers in 2013 compared to that baseline. In the same period seventy-three other universities had been seen growth while sixty-five had declined. Of the six universities identified as Lancaster's direct competitor set, three had grown and three reduced. This, the Vice-Chancellor noted, indicated the on-going volatility in the sector.

(iii) *Visits by Senior Figures in UK Higher Education*

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the recent visits to Lancaster from Mary Curnock Cook, CEO of UCAS and Professor Les Ebdon, Director of OFFA. Both had met with staff and students at Lancaster and both had commented positively on Lancaster's ability to ensure student numbers, including a strong track record in widening participation, without sacrificing quality or standards. In response to a question the Vice-Chancellor reported that Lancaster planned to continue in its strategy of steady but modest expansion in student numbers, but that it would continue to monitor the situation and would react to opportunities as they arose.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Vice-Chancellor.

CO.14/06 President of the Students' Union: Report

*Ref: CA.6; document: SEC/2014/2/0061*

The President of the Students' Union presented his written report.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the President of the Students' Union.

CO.14/07 Strategy: Update on Development of the Strategy Implementation Plan

*Ref: CA.7; document: PAS/14/005*

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the University was nearing completion of the first cycle of the new academic planning process. The process has intentionally not been linked directly to the full Strategic Plan in the first round. Four key embedded strategic priorities had been identified with Senate in September to be the focus of the current planning cycle, but the next cycle would more fully use the Plan as the framework. To this end the more detailed implementation plan in the Council papers had been developed. A mapping exercise was being conducted across the institution bringing together the planning process with the Strategic Plan; this would inform the development of the final implementation plan for the Strategy which would come to Council in July 2014 for approval.

In discussion the following points were noted.

- The reference to the University community within the implementation plan was primarily focused on those internal to the University, including students.

- Discussions were ongoing with LUSU to ensure there was a clear student voice in the implementation, including the matter being formally discussed at Senate and Council's joint committee for Colleges and the Student Experience.
- It was noted that the planning process had produced the benefit of earlier decisions regarding new academic posts which, in turn, was allowing a more co-ordinated approach to recruitment.
- It was noted that there were a substantial number of actions within the draft implementation plan, and Council welcomed the report that institutional leaders had been identified to take each section forward. They further noted that linking plans into the formal governance structures would be necessary, particularly as a means to identify and then monitor KPIs.
- It was confirmed that the Research and Enterprise Services was leading on the University's response to Horizon 2020 and other European funding opportunities.
- It was asked that the measures of success for the estate include an element of maintenance.
- It was noted that the PGT market was a volatile one, and one which was currently dominated by overseas students – while Lancaster recognised the need to attract the best students into its programmes, regardless of origin, nonetheless, where recruitment could be linked to meeting domestic economic needs these opportunities should be exploited.
- Finally, it was confirmed that the success measure that 60% of staff should be recruited from global top-100 institutions was primarily focused on academic staff.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

**Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor to produce final implementation plan for July meeting**

CO.14/08 Governance: University Secretary: Report

*Ref: CA.8; document: SEC/2014/2/0055*

The University Secretary presented her written report and drew attention to the following points.

- (i) The Council away day was confirmed for 9 May 2014, and the topic for the next Council dinner, on 20 March, was confirmed as Digital Lancaster.
- (ii) The University was proposing new governance structures to manage the institution's knowledge exchange. The intention was to make knowledge exchange, a recognised priority within the Strategic Plan, more visible to staff and subsequently more embedded in operation and practice. To this end it was proposed that the existing Council Committee, the Knowledge Exchange and Commercial Affairs Committee be laid down, and a new committee, the Knowledge Exchange, Enterprise, Innovation and Commercialisation Committee, a committee of the Senate, be submitted to the Senate for approval. Councillors agreed to lay down the existing committee and agreed the proposed terms of reference and membership of the new committee be modified to include two Council members in the membership and a review of the committee in twelve to eighteen months' time.
- (iii) Alongside the terms of reference for the new formal Senate Committee, Council received, for information, details on the establishment of a Business and Community Engagement Group; a body chaired by the Chief Administrative Officer which would report directly to UMAG, and which would oversee and support the University's business engagement interactions, local and regional community engagement and public understanding activities. Council welcomed the group and noted the following.
- Councillors were, themselves, members of the community and their expertise could be invaluable to the work of the new group.
  - The group should consider the best means to formalise community links into real benefits for students such as apprentice and intern opportunities.
  - To achieve significant gains in knowledge exchange and related engagement activities it was necessary to have a strong senior steer; the related actions to encourage this were therefore welcomed.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) approve the revised arrangements for governance of knowledge exchange as set out in item 2 and Appendix 1 of the document;
- (ii) note the remainder of the report.

**Action: University Secretary to amend committee terms of reference and submit to the Senate**

CO.14/09 Finance

*Ref: CA.9*

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

*Document: FIN/14/01*

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

(B) **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTING PACK**

*Documents: FIN/13/83 (previously circulated); FIN/13/90 (previously circulated)*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the Monthly Financial Reporting Packs as at October 2013 and November 2013.

CO.14/10 Estates: Update on Purchase of Land

*Ref: CA.10*

The Director of Facilities gave an oral update on the purchase of land; noting that discussions were progressing with the City Council.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note an oral report by the Director of Facilities, Mr Mark Swindlehurst.

CO.14/11 Human Resources

*Ref: CA.11*

(A) **REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

*Document: SEC/2014/2/0069*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the report.

(B) **REDUNDANCY REPORT**

*Document: SEC/2014/2/0081*

Council received a report on potential redundancies 13 April 2014 to 11 July 2014. It was noted that the terms of reference and membership of the Redundancy Committee had been reviewed and that a decision had been taken to maintain the current membership, but to keep this under review.

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.14/12 Chief Administrative Officer: Report

*Ref: CA.12; document: SEC/2014/2/0067*

The Chief Administrative Officer introduced her report and drew attention to the following points.

- (i) The University had received formal notification of strike action from the Universities & Colleges Union (UCU) in the form of two-hour strikes. Two of these had taken place already, with one more to follow. The University had also received notification from UCU that further industrial action could follow. The University had taken a proportionate approach and had deducted two hours pay from striking members, but had reserved the right to review these arrangements. Work had been undertaken to mitigate any adverse impact. In addition, the University had been notified that there would be a further one day strike by all the campus trade unions on 6 February 2014.
- (ii) The University would be welcoming Mr Stuart Franklin shortly as the incoming Director of Communications and Marketing.
- (iii) The University had entered into an agreement with Careers Group London to develop an in-house temporary employment service; this would provide a more structured approach to student employment and would align with related work in student placements and other employer-based activities.

In discussion the following points were noted.

- In relation to the industrial action, while UCEA regarded the negotiations as closed, this was not the view held by the unions. Lancaster was acting to minimise local disruption and was feeding into the UCEA discussions so as to best manage the situation.
- Lancaster's reported success in winning a £32M grant with the Regional Growth Fund to manage the Wave 2 Growth Hub project was welcomed and the University was encouraged to explore how it could secure additional research funding alongside this activity.
- Estates plans were in place for the future development of the annex building adjoining to FASS.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Chief Administrative Officer.

CO.14/13 University Appointments

*Ref: CA.13; document: SEC/2014/2/0074*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the continuing membership appointments as set out.

CO.14/14 Review of Current Meeting

*Ref: CA.14*

Council members expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements.

CO.14/15 Standing Committees and Reports

*Ref: CA.15*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive and note the reports, and confirm the actions taken on its behalf.

- (i) Finance Committee, meeting of 11 December 2013 (*SEC/2014/2/0076*)
- (ii) Senate, meeting of 30 October 2013 (*SEC/2014/2/0075*)
- (iii) University and Students' Union Joint Committee, meeting of 5 November 2013 (*SEC/2014/2/0077*)