

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 9 May 2014

PRESENT: Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Mr A. Baker; Mr D. Barron; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Professor J. Garside; Mr J. Hadfield; Mr L. King; Mr J. Pullan; Professor C. Ram-Prasad; Dr B. Szerszynski; Dr J. Taylor; Professor H. Thomason; Mr J. Thornberry; Ms L. Willis.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss F. M. Aiken; Mr P. Boustead; Professor S. Bradley; Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Dr H. Hardie; Ms N. C. Owen; Mrs S. Randall-Paley; Professor A. Ruckenstein; Mr M. Swindlehurst; Ms V. Tyrrell.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mr J. R. Carr; Mrs G. Gardner; Mr G. Parker; Professor E. Rose.

CO.14/32 Declaration of interest

Ref: CA.1

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.14/33 Minutes

Ref: CA.2; document: SEC/2014/2/0461

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2014.

CO.14/34 Current Schedule of Future Council Business

Ref: CA.3; document: SEC/2014/2/0462

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the schedule of future business, subject to changes made by the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor in light of the away-day discussions.

Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2014/2/0455

The Vice-Chancellor presented his written report and gave an oral update on the following points.

- (a) The University acknowledged the fact that its research grant income did not reflect its research reputation, and was keen to take action to improve this measure of success.
- (b) Two significant bids had recently been submitted: the Future Earth bid discussed at a previous meeting (*minute CO.14/22 7(B)*), and a bid for a c.£15M project relating to the Quantum Technology Centre. The Council would be informed of the outcome of these bids at the next meeting.
- (c) The Vice-Chancellor had so far met with around ten academic departments this year, and was pleased to note an overall high level of enthusiasm for the new strategy, and no common themes to report.
- (d) Several senior appointments had been made, with a high quality of applicants and chosen candidates. Professor Amanda Chetwynd had been appointed to the post of Provost, Student Experience, Colleges and the Library, and Professor Mike Wright had been appointed as Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.
- (e) The visit to Israel and Palestine had been a success, and the student cricket team's tournament in Pakistan had helped to raise Lancaster University's profile.
- (f) Two areas of the University had been awarded Silver Athena SWAN awards: Physics and the Faculty of Health and Medicine. The Council noted their congratulations.
- (g) The University had been ranked in the top ten of the THE Top 100 Universities Under 50, and was the highest ranked university in the UK in the list.
- (h) Lancaster had also been ranked at number 11 in the Complete University Guide 2014, with 12 departments listed in the top ten for their subject areas.
- (i) The Roses event had been a tremendous success, and the University congratulated the Students' Union on the victory.

Members asked about the publicity gained for the University regarding its activities in Pakistan and Israel, and were informed that the Press Office had actively publicised the events in the UK press, in various different ways.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Vice-Chancellor, and to congratulate Professor Chetwynd on her appointment.

CO.14/36 President of the Students' Union: Report

Ref: CA.5; document: SEC/2014/2/0467

The President of the Students' Union introduced his written report and thanked the University senior management team for their contribution to the success of the Roses tournament. He reported that a new external trustee for the Students' Union had been appointed, and thanked the Council for their support during his time in office.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the President of the Students' Union and wished Mr Pullan the best for his future career.

CO.14/37 Strategy: Innovation Campus – Business Delivery Strategy

*Ref: CA.6; document: SEC/2014/2/0495 (**Commercial in Confidence**)*

[This minute was Commercial in Confidence]

CO.14/38 Governance

Ref: CA.7

(A) **UNIVERSITY SECRETARY: REPORT**

Document: SEC/2014/2/0456

The University Secretary introduced her written report as set out, and reported that the Deputy Pro-Chancellor, Mr Hadfield, had discussed the CUC Code of Governance at a plenary of Council of University Chairs. It was noted that the matter would be brought back to Council after the next stage of the consultation process had been completed.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the University Secretary.

(B) **RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE: REPORT**

Document: SEC/2014/2/0478

The Council received and discussed the annual report of the University Research Ethics Committee, which focussed on ethics in research involving humans, in order to protect participants' rights and promote integrity.

In response to a member's question, it was noted that the University's research policy did not constrain research topics.

CO.14/39 Finance

Ref: CA.8

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

Document: FIN/14/34

The Director of Finance introduced her written report as set out and drew attention to the pleasing Standard and Poor's rating report, and the replacement of the Revolving Credit Fund with a new credit facility from Santander.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Director of Finance and to thank Mrs Randall-Paley, Mr King and Mr Fitzherbert-Brockholes for their work in arranging a replacement for the Revolving Credit Fund.

(B) **HEFCE GRANT ANALYSIS 2014/15**

Document: FIN/14/33

The Council received and commented on the HEFCE Grant Analysis for 2014/15. The Vice-Chancellor explained the timing of the decision process following the results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and informed the Council that the University would receive notification of its HEFCE Grant in March/April 2015.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

(c) **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTING PACK**

Documents: FIN/14/22 (previously circulated); FIN/14/32 (previously circulated)

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the Monthly Financial Reporting Packs as at February 2014 and March 2014.

CO.14/40 Estates: Report on the Library Project

Ref: CA.9; document: SEC/2014/2/0484

The Director of Facilities presented a paper requesting delegated approval of the capital project to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was noted that this would enable a letter of intent to be produced in order to engage the preferred contractor in June. The Council discussed the proposal and noted the potential liability should the project not go ahead.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) note the contents of this paper;
- (ii) agree to use of a letter of intent with limited liability to engage the preferred contractor in June;
- (iii) note that a full paper will be presented for approval by Council in July.

Action: MSw

CO.14/41 Human Resources

Ref: CA.10

(A) **REPORT ON POTENTIAL REDUNDANCIES 12 JULY TO 9 OCTOBER 2014**

Document: SEC/2014/2/0458

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.

(B) APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE NHS PENSION SCHEME (NHSPS)

Document: SEC/2014/2/0472

The Director of HR introduced a proposal to offer NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS) membership to relevant members of staff. Members discussed the proposal and noted that the pension scheme would help facilitate the recruitment of staff into the Lancaster Medical School.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to confirm that NHSPS membership could be offered to Lancaster University Staff, who satisfied the criteria set out in the paper.

CO.14/42 Chief Administrative Officer: Report

Ref: CA.11; document: SEC/2014/2/0494

The Chief Administrative Officer gave a report on updates within Professional Services since the last meeting, and drew attention to the following items.

- (a) The recent pay dispute with UCU had been resolved, as the union had agreed to an increased pay offer for 1 August 2014.
- (b) Council members would soon receive an email detailing forthcoming events to celebrate the University's 50th Anniversary.
- (c) The Roses weekend had been attended by around 500 alumni, which was higher than expected.
- (d) The University's application rate from home students had remained steady in comparison to the previous year, and efforts were being made to further build on the conversion rate.
- (e) The University's standing had improved in the results of the DLHE survey, and attempts were being made to attract more national employers to visit Lancaster.

The Council received and discussed a report on the counselling service, as requested at the previous meeting. The following points were noted during the course of discussion.

- (i) There had been a large increase in the demand for counselling services across the HE sector in the last academic year; possible reasons for this were described in the report.

- (ii) University counselling staff were aiming to prioritise face-to-face time with those in greatest need.
- (iii) Process changes had recently been introduced, which had provided some benefits, but the demand had continued to increase.
- (iv) It was difficult to recruit professional counsellors for the seasonal periods necessary, and an outsourcing solution was currently being trialled.
- (v) The University Planning and Resources Group had approved increased resource for the provision of one additional FTE, which would be filled as soon as possible.
- (vi) The counsellors were clear about their parameters, although they were concerned that the line between NHS mental health provision and university counselling was becoming pressured.
- (vii) The University had made representations at the local and regional level within the NHS, but with no positive response to date.
- (viii) College advisors could play an important role in helping to alleviate the problem by responding to students' pastoral needs at an early stage.
- (ix) College porters might be another significant resource for helping to deal with student issues outside the normal operating hours of the counselling service.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to thank the Chief Administrative Officer for the report, and requested that it receive regular six-monthly updates on the situation regarding the counselling service.

Action: NCO

CO.14/43 Key Measures of Success: Update

Ref: CA.12; document: PSU/14/0035

The Council received and noted a report on measures of success relating to the number of research students per academic and HEFCE widening access indicators.

Members noted that Lancaster was currently above its benchmark for all areas of widening participation, but that the University faces a challenge to remain above the benchmarks as A-level entry grades rise. The Chair commented that it was important to focus on attracting the students with greatest potential, not just the highest A level grades.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

CO.14/44 University Appointments

Ref: CA.13; document: SEC/2014/2/0463

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

CO.14/45 Review of Current Meeting

Ref: CA.14

Council members expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements.

CO.14/46 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) Colleges and Student Experience Committee, meeting held on 5 February 2014 (*SEC/2014/2/0449*)
- (ii) Equality and Diversity Committee, meeting held on 15 January 2014 (*SEC/2014/2/0447*)
- (iii) Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting held on 28 February 2014 (*SEC/2014/2/0448*)
- (iv) Senate, meeting held on 26 February 2014 (*SEC/2014/2/0445*)