

SEC/2015/2/0858

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council  
held on 10 July 2015

**PRESENT:** Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Professor A. M. Atherton; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Professor J. Garside; Mr W. Hedley; Professor K. C. Jones; Mr E. McLaughlin; Baroness Neville-Jones; Professor J. F. O'Hanlon; Mr G. Parker; Professor C. Ram-Prasad; Dr B. Szerszynski; Dr J. Taylor; Mr A. Warriner.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Miss F. M. Aiken; Mr P. Boustead; Professor S. Bradley; Professor A. G. Chetwynd; Professor S. P. Decent; Mr S. Franklin; Dr H. Hardie; Professor S. R. A. Huttly; Ms N. C. Owen; Mrs S. J. Randall-Paley; Mr M. Swindlehurst.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Mr D. Barron; Mr J. R. Carr; Mr L. King; Mr J. O'Neill; Professor E. Ritchie; Mrs V. Young.

CO.15/35 Declaration of interest

*Ref: CA.1*

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.15/36 Minutes

*Ref: CA.2; documents: SEC/2015/2/0776; SEC/2015/2/0587;  
SEC/2015/2/0775; SEC/2015/2/0588*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the notes of the Council Awayday and the minutes of a formal meeting, both held on 22 May 2015.

CO.15/37 Vice-Chancellor's Update and Questions to the Executive

*Ref: CA.3*

The Vice-Chancellor gave an oral update on several matters which had been reported in the recent monthly reports from the Executive. He also reported the following points.

- (i) The political environment relating to the Higher Education sector had undergone rapid changes since the General Election. The new Minister for Higher Education had given his first policy speech on 1 July, in which he had announced plans to consider the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and greater emphasis on transparency to students.
- (ii) The Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced that it was planned to consider the replacement of maintenance grant by loans from 2016/17 onwards. It was not yet known what impact this would have on student application figures, and it was noted that a consultation would be held.
- (iii) Lancaster University had received several awards in recent weeks, including the best student accommodation for the sixth consecutive year, a National RIBA award for the Engineering building, and the College and University Business Officers (CUBO) award for best university catering.
- (iv) The latest HESA employability rankings placed Lancaster in 4<sup>th</sup> position in the UK, and the University was one of only six in the country to achieve positive variance from its benchmark.
- (v) The ongoing changes in the Higher Education sector provided an opportunity for Lancaster to be more involved in informing Government policy and good practice with regards to quality assurance and external examiner appointments.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the update from the Vice-Chancellor.

CO.15/38 President of the Students' Union: Report

*Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2015/2/0785*

The President of the Students' Union reported that the new team of Full Time Officers had recently met to set their priorities for the coming year, which would include building bridges with the University and the student body. He also reported that the Students' Union had received an award for the Green Lancaster initiative.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

*Ref: CA.5*

**(A) LANCASTER'S RESPONSE TO RESEARCH CONCENTRATION**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0782*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) introduced a report on progress regarding Lancaster's response to the increasing concentration of research funding in larger universities. It was noted that at Lancaster's current size, the level of research income and productivity was likely to continue to remain low compared with other institutions, in absolute terms.

Professor Decent reported that some progress had been made recently, and 38 additional research grants had been won compared with the same time last year. It was hoped that the University could build on and diversify its areas of strength.

The Council discussed the report in depth and noted the following points.

- (i) The University's research covered four out of the five priorities in the N8's research strategy.
- (ii) A large proportion of the research income was dependent on a relatively few grant holders, which was typical across the HE sector.
- (iii) Lancaster currently had the lowest research income per academic staff FTE in its comparator group, which was concerning, and steps were being taken to address this issue.
- (iv) The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lectureship appointments were designed to build on existing strengths and to increase the resilience of research excellence at Lancaster.
- (v) On page 17 of the report, the words "where appropriate" should be removed.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to request a further update report in the Michaelmas term, containing detailed figures to provide benchmarks, and to look at the spread of grant holders to understand our vulnerabilities.

(B) **RESEARCH INSTITUTES AT LANCASTER**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0784 (Confidential)*

[**CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE**]

CO.15/40 Governance

*Ref: CA.6*

(A) **UPDATE ON HER**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) provided an update on preparations for the University's Higher Education Review. The Council noted that UMAG had reviewed the first version of the Self Evaluation Document, and that the submission date for the final version was 12 August. It was expected that the review panel would request further information in October, prior to their visit in November 2015.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the update.

(B) **REVISED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0790*

The Council received the report of a review of Health and Safety governance at Lancaster, which was designed to provide a greater level of assurance for Council, via clearer lines of accountability and delegation. It was noted that this report had been through a rigorous consultation process; the trade unions had agreed in principle to the new governance structure.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) approve the new governance structure for the reporting of Safety, Health and Wellbeing;
- (ii) agree the proposal that the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee (SHaW) becomes a Committee of Council;
- (iii) agree that the Chair of the Committee should be an independent member of Council.

(C) **REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0801*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the recommendation of the Nominations Committee that Mr Andrew Warriner be appointed as the Lancaster City Council-nominated member of Council for three years from 10 July 2015.

(D) **CURRENT SCHEDULE OF FUTURE COUNCIL BUSINESS**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0791*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the schedule of future business, and requested that a discussion on the innovation and enterprise strategy be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

CO.15/41 Finance

*Ref: CA.7*

(A) **HEADLINE BUDGET 2015/16 AND FINANCIAL FORECASTS TO 2017/18**

*Document: FIN/15/35*

The Council received and discussed the Headline Budget for 2015/16 and the updated Financial Forecasts to 2017/18.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to:

- (i) approve the Headline Budget for 2015/16 and the updated Financial Forecasts to 2017/18;
- (ii) approve the submission of the Part 2 commentary and financial forecasts to HEFCE for the Annual Accountability return.

(B) **RBS LOAN AGREEMENT UPDATE**

*Document: FIN/15/39*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that the finalisation of the updated documentation for the RBS Facility Agreement for £44,676,077 be delegated to the Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee and Director of Finance.

(C) **PRINCIPLES FOR TUITION FEE SETTING**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0798*

The Council received and discussed a paper setting out the principles for setting variable tuition fees (overseas and postgraduate taught fees), which had been revised to increase transparency for applicants, and to bring forward the fee setting process to earlier in the application cycle.

It was noted that these principles had been discussed and endorsed by Finance and General Purposes Committee, UMAG, the Target and Tuition Fees Group and the Consultation Working Group with the Students' Union Full Time Officers.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the engagement on fees setting with the Students' Union would continue through the Joint Consultative Committee.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the principles as set out, subject to one minor amendment: the fifth bullet point would be changed to "set tuition fees in advance of recruitment commencement and normally by confirmation deadlines".

CO.15/42 Estates: Capital Programme 2015-19

*Ref: CA.8; document: FIN/15/37*

The Council received and discussed a proposed Capital Programme which covered the four-year period to 2019. It was noted that the Director of Facilities was developing a ten year Capital Plan, which would be brought to Council for approval in 2016.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the Capital Programme 2015-19.

CO.15/43 Human Resources: People Strategy Update/Progress Report

*Ref: CA.9; document: SEC/2015/2/0786*

The Director of Human Resources introduced a report on progress in implementing the People Strategy, following its approval by Council in June 2014.

The Council discussed the report and noted the following points.

- (i) 29 of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lectureships had been filled, and 44% of these were from global top 100 universities.
- (ii) A revised contract had been introduced, to enhance the reward and recognition for staff.
- (iii) The promotions criteria had been reviewed and updated to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the promotions process.
- (iv) A number of management development courses, including the Bonington programme, had been introduced to develop future leaders within the University.
- (v) A new HR and Payroll system had been implemented, which would create added efficiencies and provide more management information for Heads of Department and Council members.
- (vi) The key aims going forward within the People Strategy were the implementation of pension reforms and a review of the Performance & Development Review (PDR) process.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report, and to request the development of a strategic approach to apprenticeships, as an additional means to meet Lancaster's responsibilities as a socially responsible employer.

CO.15/44 University Appointments

*Ref: CA.10; document: SEC/2015/2/0780*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the emeritus professorship appointments as set out.

CO.15/45 Chair's Actions

*Ref: CA.11; document: SEC/2015/2/0779*

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the decisions taken by the Chair since the last meeting.

CO.15/46 Standing Committees and Reports

*Ref: CA.12*

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

- (i) Audit Committee, meeting of 5 June 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/0778*)
- (ii) Estates Committee, meeting of 27 March 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/0592*)
- (iii) Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 5 June 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/0799*)
- (iv) Senate, meeting of 29 April 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/0691*)