

SEC/2015/2/1090

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a meeting of the Council
held on 25 September 2015

PRESENT: Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Professor A. M. Atherton; Mr D. Barron; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr J. R. Carr; Mr M. J. Dormer; Professor J. Garside; Professor S. Guy; Mr W. Hedley; Professor K. C. Jones; Mr E. McLaughlin; Professor J. F. O'Hanlon; Mr J. O'Neill; Mr G. Parker; Professor E. Ritchie; Dr J. Taylor; Mr A. Warriner; Mrs V. Young.

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 F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Professor N. Johnson; Mr L. King; Baroness Neville-Jones.

CO.15/48 Declaration of interest

Ref: CA.1

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.15/49 Minutes

Ref: CA.2; documents: SEC/2015/2/0994; SEC/2015/2/0857; SEC/2015/2/0993; SEC/2015/2/0858

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve notes of the joint meeting of the Council and Senate meeting held on 9 July 2015, and the minutes of the formal Council meeting held on 10 July 2015.

CO.15/50 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 National Student Survey (NSS) results for 2015 had been published, and the University's overall satisfaction rate had increased from 89% to 91%. The Vice-Chancellor particularly highlighted the outstanding work of Professors Chetwynd and Huttly, and Dr Brown, along with the contribution of departments and academics to the student experience.
- (ii) This year's student recruitment figures were on target, with a slight increase in undergraduate numbers. This was considered to be a satisfactory outcome, given the increasing competitiveness of the Home/ EU undergraduate market.
- (iii) The University had also improved its ranking in League Tables, including rising 39 places in the QS World University Ranking to 121st and to 11th in the Sunday Times University Guide. There had also been a very positive description of the University in the Sunday Times article. It was noted that there was still room for improvement in certain areas.

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

CO.15/51 President of the Students' Union: Report

Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2015/2/0995

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

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

Ref: CA.5

(A) STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Document: PAS/15/060

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an update on progress regarding the Strategy Implementation Plan. This document was intended to be used as part of the University's 3 year strategic development process, and departments had been asked to focus on key priorities in their planning reviews.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the update and to request further detail on progress relating to specific areas of strength and weakness, through the regular Measures of Success reports.

(B) INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES: AN UPDATE

Document: SEC/2015/2/0937

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) presented an update on current activities regarding international teaching and research partnerships. He reminded the Council that the current international strategy aimed to support the University's objective to become a globally significant university, through the leverage of current partnerships for Lancaster's benefit, and the development of new partnerships with high quality institutions.

The Council noted that there were currently more than 5,000 students studying Lancaster degrees overseas, contributing to the University's global reputation and League Table ranking. There were lessons to be learned from current international partnerships, including those with COMSATS and Goenka. The University was working alongside the Students' Union to enhance the internationalisation of the student experience at all Lancaster campuses.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the update and thanked Professor Bradley for the report.

(C) **REQUEST FOR APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO ESTABLISH A JOINT INSTITUTE WITH BEIJING JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY**

Document: SEC/2015/2/1005 (Commercial in Confidence)

[MINUTE COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE]

(D) **RESEARCH GRANTS**

Document: SEC/2015/2/1016; SEC/2015/2/0782 (for information only)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) introduced a paper which had been developed in response to members' questions at the previous meeting (*ref. minute CO.15/39*). The Council noted that the University had lower research grant income per researcher than similar institutions, and that this trend was more evident in some disciplines than others. The report showed that a cultural change was taking place, in that the number of grant applications and successes had improved over the past 12 months, although there was still work to be done in promoting the importance of grant applications by researchers at all levels in their career.

The Council discussed the concern that the University was dependent on relatively few sources of research income, and agreed that the statistics provided in this report should be more widely shared across the institution. The issue of research concentration was discussed, and it was agreed that the interdisciplinary research centres would help to create a critical mass of research output, which would enable Lancaster to diversify its potential research income sources.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the document, and thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) for the information.

(E) **RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

Document: SEC/2015/2/0996; SEC/2015/2/0784 (for information only)

The Council received and discussed an update to the paper on Research Institutes which had been considered at the Council meeting held in July 2015. The following points were noted during the course of the discussion:

- (a) academics would be incentivised to engage with a Research Institute through the opportunities to become involved with larger, more high profile bids;

- (b) the Director of Facilities had met with the Directors of the Research Institutes to discuss their space requirements, although the majority of staff involved in the institutes would continue to be located in their current department;
- (c) Research Institutes' advisory boards offered an opportunity for external bodies to engage with the research agenda at Lancaster, and to help to enhance the visibility of the institutes in the wider community;
- (d) the Director of the Materials Science Institute would be a key appointment, as they would be likely to specialise in a particular niche within the field;

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to approve the further development of the Institutes, but asked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) to discuss the document with Baroness Neville-Jones, following her comments at the previous meeting.

CO.15/53 Governance

Ref: CA.6

(A) REVIEW OF STATUTES AND ORDINANCES

Document: SEC/2015/2/0938

The University Secretary introduced a proposal to amend the Statutes and Ordinances, following a detailed review of the University's constitution.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED unanimously to endorse the amendments and to seek the concurrence of Senate on the proposals.

(B) APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Document: SEC/2015/2/0927

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report of the Nominations Committee and to approve the appointments of new members Council as set out in the document.

(C) CURRENT SCHEDULE OF FUTURE COUNCIL BUSINESS

Document: SEC/2015/2/1018

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the schedule of future business.

CO.15/54 Update to Measures of Success

Ref: CA.7; document: PSU/2015/0091

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report on the University's current progress against the measures of success and targets relating to employability, NSS student satisfaction and the Guardian University Guide Ranking. It was noted that the employability figures from the DLHE 2013/14 survey showed an improvement in positive graduate destinations, which was the result of ongoing work across the institution.

CO.15/55 University Emeritus Appointments: Proposals Under Statute 2

Ref: CA.8; document: SEC/2015/2/1019

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

CO.15/56 Report from the University Research Ethics Committee (2014-15)

Ref: CA.9; document: SEC/2015/2/0955

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report from the University Research Ethics Committee.

CO.15/57 Report on Use of University Seal

Ref: CA.10; document: SEC/2015/2/0997

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report on the use of the University Seal.

CO.15/58 Governors' Liability Insurance

Ref: CA.11; document: SEC/2015/2/0951

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the indemnity cover in place for Governors.

CO.15/59 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) Equality and Diversity Committee, meeting of 6 May 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/1022*)
- (ii) Estates Committee, meeting of 4 June 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/1021*)
- (iii) Senate, meeting of 17 June 2015 (*SEC/2015/2/1024*)