

**LANCASTER UNIVERSITY**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Council  
held on 30 January 2015**

**PRESENT:** Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Professor A. M. Atherton; Mr D. Barron; Dr R. Boumphrey; Dr G. M. Brown; Mr J. R. Carr; Ms L. Clayson; Mr F. Fitzherbert-Brockholes; Professor J. Garside; Mr J. C. Hadfield; Mr L. King; Mr E. McLaughlin; Mr C. Mang; Baroness Neville-Jones; Professor J. F. O'Hanlon; Mr G. Parker; Professor E. Ritchie; Dr B. Szerszynski; Dr J. Taylor; Mrs V. Young.

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

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Mr R. Newman-Thompson; Professor C. Ram-Prasad.

**CO.15/01      Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Professor A. M. Atherton as a full member, following the Privy Council's approval of the changes to Statute 9: The Council.

**CO.15/02      Declaration of interest**

*Ref: CA.1*

There were no declarations of interest.

**CO.15/03      Minutes**

*Ref: CA.2; documents: SEC/2015/2/0060; SEC/2014/2/1290*

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

CO.15/04      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 monthly reports from the Executive. He drew particular attention to the following points.

- (i)     He had commissioned an enquiry to ascertain how the situation at COMSATS had arisen, and this would report to him by 13 February 2015. However, it was unlikely that the situation could occur now as a result of changes in the way international teaching partnerships are undertaken and managed.

The Pro-Chancellor noted the anxiety this had caused senior managers and the efforts that had been required, particularly by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), to resolve it.

- (ii)    The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for USS had the previous day agreed to recommend proposals for changes to the USS pension scheme to the Trustees. It was now likely to be subject to formal consultation with all members of the Scheme. As a result of the agreement in JNC, the planned assessment boycott had been avoided.
- (iii)   HEFCE had now received its budget letter from BIS and there were no unexpected headlines. The budget would, however, only cover 2015/16, and could be subject to change following the General Election. Universities expected to receive their grant letters from HEFCE by the end of March.
- (iv)    The staff survey had now closed and UMAG had received preliminary results from Capita. A report would be brought to the next meeting of the Council, but the initial analysis showed that the University was substantially above sector norms for staff engagement and in being a good place work.

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

CO.15/05      President of the Students' Union: Report

*Ref: CA.4; document: SEC/2015/2/0069*

The President of the Students' Union, Ms Clayson, presented her written report.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report, and thanked Ms Clayson.

*Ref: CA.5*

**(A)      ANALYSIS OF REF 2014**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0062*

The Council received a very full report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Decent, and noted that the University had done well but was still not in the top 10. In the discussion which followed, three key issues were identified.

- (i)      The need to give careful thought to the nature of the University and what it wanted to be, rather than focus too much on league tables. The latest figures showed that Lancaster had the fourth highest proportion in the country of academic staff with research within their contract. There was a tension between this and introducing more teaching-only contracts or other steps to potentially improve league table standing.
- (ii)     The need to identify areas of real strength and how the University could invest in them relative to other areas.
- (iii)    the importance of multi/inter-disciplinary research, and the sense that this is where highly-rated research will be generated. The University was already identifying multi-disciplinary research centres and investing in them – a report would be brought to a future meeting.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to accept the report and discuss these issues, and the associated ones of research power and shape, at its Away Day.

**(B)      QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW (HER)**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0064*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Professor Huttly, provided Council with an introduction to the Higher Education Review which the QAA would be undertaking on the University in November 2015.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report.

*Ref: CA.6*

**(A) COLLEGE REVIEW: PANEL REPORT**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0067 (**Restricted**)*

**[RESTRICTED MINUTE]**

**Action: AGC**

- (B) THE CUC HIGHER EDUCATION CODE OF GOVERNANCE**
- (C) COUNCIL ASSURANCE**
- (D) CURRENT SCHEDULE OF FUTURE COUNCIL BUSINESS**

*Documents: SEC/2015/2/0054; SEC/2015/2/0047;  
SEC/2015/2/0061*

The University Secretary introduced a suite of papers relating to governance and in particular how Council fulfilled its role. She pointed out that next year Council would be asked to explain in its Financial Statements whether it had complied with the CUC Code and, if not, why not. The Council considered that it was already complying with the seven primary areas of responsibility within the Code, and in the discussion the following points were raised.

- (i) It would be helpful to circulate members with the terms of reference for Council sub-committees.
- (ii) There was already planned a review of Council effectiveness, but the committees should also be asked to consider their effectiveness.
- (iii) Council supported the inclusion of an item on environmental sustainability in its forward schedule.
- (iv) Members should let the University Secretary know if there were other issues they wished to incorporate into the forward schedule.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the CUC HE Code of Governance and noted the Council Assurance report and the schedule of future business, subject to the comments above.

**Action: FMA**

**(E) CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNIVERSITY**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0035*

The University Secretary introduced a paper explaining the current situation with continuing membership of the University and alternative ways in which retired members of staff could continue to be involved with the University.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to cease exercising its power to create continuing members of the University in anything other than exceptional circumstances.

**Action: FMA**

CO.15/08    Risk

*Ref: CA.7*

**(A) RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0068*

The University Secretary introduced the risk management framework, which contained the risk policy and details of the approach to risk management. These were similar to ones Council had approved in the past. The approach to risk appetite was, however, different and the discussion therefore focussed on this aspect of the framework. It was noted that the tolerance of risk determined by Council would provide an envelope within which the senior management would operate. The members discussed how conservative or otherwise the University should be, and what the table showed. There was some concern that under certain headings the tolerance for risk did not accurately reflect where Council felt it should be. There was support for the approach and a suggestion that all members be asked to re-do the form in light of the discussion.

It was also suggested that there should be more reference to the need not only for controls but also of mitigating action at all times.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to (a) approve the risk management policy; and (b) re-run the survey on risk appetite in order to update it in light of the discussion.

**Action: FMA**

**(B) QUARTERLY REPORT ON STRATEGIC RISK**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0063*

It was suggested that it might be more helpful to Council to see the full Register twice a year rather than once supplemented by quarterly reports. The Audit Committee would give some consideration to this suggestion.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the summary quarterly report on the strategic risks register.

**Action: FMA**

**CO.15/09      Estates: Health Innovation Campus Land Acquisition**

*Ref: CA.8; document: SEC/2015/2/0089*

The Director of Facilities, Mr Swindlehurst, introduced a report setting out the vision, aims and objectives of the Health Innovation Campus. He also set out the covenants associated with the land acquisition. These had been discussed in detail in Estates Committee that morning and the Chair of the Estates Committee confirmed that the Committee recommended that the land be acquired.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report and approved the acquisition of the land, subject to completion of due diligence on the legal papers.

**Action: MSw**

**CO.15/10      Human Resources**

*Ref: CA.9*

**(A) PENSIONS UPDATE**

The Director of Human Resources, Mr Boustead, reminded Council that it had established a working group to consider the impact of the changes to the USS pension scheme. This had met once so far and had agreed, in conjunction with two other universities, to challenge technical flaws in the process. A response was still awaited from USS on this.

When the proposals were available for consultation, the group would consider the impact of the reforms on the workforce and what mitigating actions the University could take.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to note the report.

**Action: PB**

(B) **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0066*

The Director of Human Resources introduced the annual report, and drew attention to the review of the Health and Safety Committee which was now under way. A report on the review would be brought to Council later this year. In the discussion which followed, there was support for formalising the link between the Committee and the Council, and a request that RIDDOR accidents be reported to Council in a more timely fashion.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the annual report on Health and Safety and agreed that RIDDOR accidents be reported to Council as they happened.

**Action: A Park**

(C) **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE**

*Document: SEC/2015/2/0072*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), as Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee, introduced the Equality and Diversity Annual Report and an update, noting as she did that in future the annual report would be brought to Council earlier in the year.

THE COUNCIL RESOLVED to receive the report.

**Action: RK/SRAH**

CO.15/11 Standing Committees and Reports

*Ref: CA.10*

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

- (i) Remuneration Committee Annual Report (*HR/RC/2014/37  
Restricted*)
- (ii) Equality and Diversity Committee, meeting of 22 October 2014  
(*SEC/2015/2/0075*)

- (iii) Estates Committee, meeting of 17 October 2014 (*SEC/2015/2/0074*)
- (iv) Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 30 October 2014 (*SEC/2015/2/0077*)
- (v) Senate, meeting of 5 November 2014 (*SEC/2015/2/0076*)