

**LANCASTER UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council  
held on 27 January 2017

**PRESENT:** Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Vice-Chancellor; Professor A. M. Atherton; Mr D. Barron; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr M. J. Dormer; Professor J. Garside; Mrs R. S. Georghiou; Professor S. Guy; Mr I. Johnson; Mr R. Johnson; Ms R. Llystyn Jones; Mr E. McLaughlin; Baroness Neville-Jones; Professor J. F. O'Hanlon; Mr S. Reynolds; Professor E. Ritchie; Dr J. Taylor; Mr J. Walker; Mr A. Warriner; Mrs V. Young.

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

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Professor N. Johnson; Professor K. C. Jones.

CO.17/01      Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CO.17/02      Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 November 2016

Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2016 (SEC/2016/2/1501).

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

CO.17/03      Vice-Chancellor's Update and Questions to the Executive

The Vice-Chancellor provided an oral update on activities of interest to Council, including:

- (i) the external policy and funding environment: progress of the Higher Education and Research Bill; arrangements for future Research and Development funding following the Autumn Statement were still awaited; consultations on Higher Education providers' registration fees for the Office for Students and the future arrangements for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), for which the University was preparing responses;
- (ii) that a new social work teaching partnership initiative between the University and Cumbria County Council had been awarded valued at £700k, which was a good example of a regional partnership;
- (iii) that the University had now made a submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the outcome would be known in May. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), LUSU and the TEF Steering Group were thanked for their work in preparing the submission;

- (iv) that the University was associated with two bids to Round Three of the Science and Innovation Audit;
- (v) that the University was well-placed to benefit from the proposals outlined in the recently published Industrial Strategy Green Paper, and would be responding to the consultation;
- (vi) that the headline results of the recent Staff Survey were positive, including when benchmarked against other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers surveyed by Capita (for example the University was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of 60 HEIs as an employer of choice and 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 408 employers, and 1<sup>st</sup> out of 54 HEIs as recommended place to work). The outcome report would be circulated to Council as part of the next month's executive report and there would be a report to Council including executive responses to the findings.

Council noted the report.

CO.17/04 President of the Students' Union: Report

The President of the Students' Union introduced the written report (SPG/2017/2/0052). Council noted the report.

Council also noted that the Jewish Society had provided feedback that it was content with the outcome of the recent visit by the NUS President. Council noted that discrimination would not be tolerated by the University.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL**

CO.17/05 Strategy

**(A) STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH: THE RATIONALE**

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the report (SPG/2017/2/0054), outlining the consultation process and also highlighting the support of the local community. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor gave an overview presentation covering: progress since 2013 and our 'Report card'; external drivers for change; and key areas we need to make progress, which were in relation to engagement and achieving a top 100 international ranking. The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance introduced questions for breakout group activity. The Pro-Chancellor provided an overview of the challenges for the University to achieve its strategic ambitions in the current operating context, particularly in relation to globalisation, issues of scale, and prioritising investment.

There was breakout group discussion and feedback included:

- (i) articulate the benefits of being a top 100 university and maintaining a top 10 UK ranking;
- (ii) focus on investment priorities to achieve objectives, and consider whether objectives can be achieved through incremental or transformational activity;

- (iii) areas requiring more detailed consideration included threats, opportunities and willingness to take risks, as well as the role of internal incentives and the strategy timeframe;
- (iv) potential engagement opportunities included: to become an international centre for 'thought leadership'; continue to build on local achievements; innovative development of international partnerships; drawing on stakeholder contacts and networks; and, establishing metrics.

(B) **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**  
*(Restricted and Commercial in Confidence)*

(C) **TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

*This item was covered under the Vice-Chancellor's update.*

(D) **STUDENT RETENTION**  
*(Restricted and Commercial in Confidence)*

CO.17/06 Governance

(A) **COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW: FINAL REPORT**

The Deputy Pro-Chancellor introduced the Council effectiveness review report (SPG/2017/2/0055), stating that the review outcome was generally positive about the effectiveness of Council, but there were some recommendations and suggestions to assist with enhancing the current arrangements, which ranged from general house-keeping matters to more complex issues. It had been beneficial to have the review undertaken by an external team in order to provide an objective assessment.

Following a query by the Vice-Chancellor, Council members suggested that the point at recommendation 7 concerning senior management bringing issues to Council for discussion during their formation period was based on previous practice and was therefore now redundant, but that the principle of the recommendation was agreed.

Council agreed that a sub-group would review the recommendations and come back with some thoughts on planned responses and actions to the next meeting, and agreed the suggested actions for immediate implementation.

The sub group would be chaired by the Deputy Pro-Chancellor with membership comprising Mr Robin Johnson, Dr Ruth Boumphrey, and Dr Jane Taylor. [Secretary's note: following the meeting the LUSU President, Ms Rhiannon Llystyn Jones, was invited to join the group.]

(B) **RISK APPETITE: RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS**

The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance introduced the report (SPG/2017/2/0057). Council noted the report.

Key points from the discussion included:

- (i) the role of risk appetite in relation to supporting achievement of strategic ambitions;
- (ii) that the executive should consider highlighting specific examples of where taking additional risk would be desirable.

(C) **REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016**  
***(Restricted and Confidential)***

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

Council noted the paper (SPG/2017/2/0059). In addition, it was noted that there was a change of date for the Council meeting and away day in May, a joint meeting of Senate and Council was being arranged for July, and that there would be a future report on international activities.

**ITEMS TO RECEIVE**

CO.17/07 Chair's Action

Council noted the decisions taken by the Chair since the last meeting as set out in the report (SPG/2017/2/0056).

CO.17/08 Standing Committees and Reports

Council noted the reports of:

- (i) Colleges and Student Experience Committee meeting held on 15 November 2016 (SPG/2017/2/0023);
- (ii) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting held on 26 October 2016 (SPG/2017/2/0028);
- (iii) Strategic Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 24 November 2016 (SPG/2017/2/0022);
- (iv) University and Students' Union Joint Committee meeting held on 30 November 2016 (SEC/2016/2/1554).

Council noted the discussions of the Estates Committee earlier in the day, covering the Management School, the Campus Masterplan and the Ten Year Capital Programme.

Council agreed that there should be a short report on student diversity to a future meeting.

CO.17/09

Date of Next Meeting

Council noted that the next meeting will take place on Friday 17 March 2017 at 10.30 a.m. in the Private Dining Room, County College.