

University of Central Lancashire

Unreserved Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 30th June 2022 commencing at 10.30am in the Conference Room, Adelphi Building, Preston campus.

Present :

David Taylor (Chair)

Graham Baldwin	Lesley Lloyd (via video-conference)
Zuleikha Chikh	Ruth Lowry
Nicky Danino	Anne McCarthy (via video-conference)
Jim Edney	Bill McQueen
Ridwanah Gurjee	Lorraine Norris (via video-conference)
Sue Ion	

In attendance:

George Charles (Chief Finance Officer)
Ruth Connor (Deputy Chief Executive Officer)
Ian Fisher (University Secretary and General Counsel and Clerk to the Board)
Carolyn Johnson (Executive Officer to the Vice Chancellor)
Ken Lee (Chief People Officer) via video-conference
Raham Odjegba (Students' Union President-elect)
Lisa Atty (Governance Support Officer) via video-conference
Peter McMellon (assisting the Clerk to the Board)
Fiona Winters (Head of Governance/Deputy Clerk to the Board)

UB1036. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Mr Raham Odjegba to his first meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Hext and Dr Armstrong. The Chair reported that comments received would be passed on to appropriate Vice Chancellor Group (VCG) member(s) and/or fed into the Board's discussions.

UB1037. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests other than those recorded under UB1046 below.

UB1038. Chair's Announcements

Board Members joined the Chair in congratulating Dr Ion on her wonderful achievement in being made a Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire.

UB1039. Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 19th May 2022

Resolved: That the Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 19th May 2022 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

UB1040. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising although it was noted that various matters from the previous meeting would be addressed further under the substantive items on the agenda.

UB1041. Vice-Chancellor's Update

Professor Baldwin presented his report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Baldwin advised that, as usual, there had been further developments on some matters since distribution of his report. He then commented as follows:

(i) Complete University Guide

The University's position in the recently published guide was slightly disappointing, although the negative impact of the 2021 National Student Survey (NSS) had been anticipated. By contrast, the 2022 Graduate Outcomes results showed a small but important yearly improvement. If the 2022 NSS results show improvement, then, combined with the 2022 Graduate Outcomes results, improved performance in the Times and Guardian league tables could follow.

Professor Baldwin reminded the Board about the critical impact of the NSS results and of student retention performance. The University's League Tables Group will look to optimise the data, but the overall focus will continue to be on improvements in the NSS performance and in student retention.

The University's improvements in its Degree Completion ranking (rising 15 places) and in Research Quality (rising 9 places) were noted. Professor Baldwin advised on the attention now being given to 'research intensity' consistency.

(ii) Graduate Outcomes

Although UCLan's improvement rate had exceeded the sector average, further improvement will continue to be pursued. The recorded improvement will assist in the next Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission. It was also pleasing to note progress in the closing of EDI characteristics gaps.

(iii) Regional and National Engagement

It is hoped that the Minister of State for Higher and Further Education (Michelle Donelan MP) will agree to a joint meeting (in autumn 2022) with UCLan and the Lancaster Campus of the University of Cumbria.

Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(iv) Levelling Up

There is concern across the sector about how the Government's Levelling Up strategy is being applied, and not least by the division of the funding available into relatively small amounts. However, UCLan continues to contribute to proposals as appropriate.

In response to Dr Ion's question about the involvement of other institutions in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund bidding process, Professor Baldwin explained the basis of joint bids and the use of 'nominal leads' where bids are from more than a single institution.

(v) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(vi) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(vii) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(viii) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(ix) Academic Update

The Government's concerns around 'grade inflation' have resulted in the suggestion that universities should commit to pre-pandemic classification levels.

With regard to the Post 18 Review of Education and Funding outcome on minimum entry requirements, it is not expected that the 'two 'E' grades or equivalent' requirement will impact negatively on UCLan. There are no plans for student numbers controls, but 'low quality courses' (based on course completion rates and graduate outcome performance) are threatened. It is accepted that Foundation Year studies will continue, although the Government has concerns that too low a tuition fee could lead to inferior quality intake. At UCLan, the Foundation Year tuition fee is £6,000.

(x) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(xi) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

(xii) Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

Resolved: That the Vice-Chancellor's Update Report be received.

(Mrs Norris joined the meeting at this point)

UB1042. Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

UB1043. Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

UB1044. Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

UB1045. Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Policy - 2023-24

Mr Charles presented his report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Charles confirmed that the report, which covered both the Tuition Fees Policy and the actual Tuition Fees proposed for 2023 entry, had been examined at the Resources Committee meeting on 6th June 2022. The Resources Committee had noted the work of

the Fees Governance Group and the progress towards standardisation of fees. The Committee had resolved to recommend approval of the revisions to the Policy and of the fees proposed for 2023 entry.

In response to Mrs Lowry's question, Mr Charles confirmed that 79% of newly enrolled students had received bursaries in 2021-22.

Resolved: That the draft Tuition Fees Policy 2023-24 and the Tuition Fees for 2023 entry be approved.

UB1046. Pensions Update

Interests were declared in respect of this item as follows:

- Mr Edney, Mr Fisher and Mrs Lowry - Members of the Local Government Pension Fund with no financial interest relating to the University's membership of the fund.

- Mrs Connor, Mr Charles, Mrs Johnson, Mr Lee, Ms Atty, Ms Winters and Mr McMellon - Members of the Local Government Pension Fund as employees of the University.

Mr Lee reported that, eleven months in to the new Defined Contribution pension scheme, 143 members had joined, this number considerably exceeding the original forecast. Feedback covering the administration of the new Scheme and the associated communications continues to be highly satisfactory.

Text Redacted - Reserved Minute

Resolved: That the report be noted.

UB1047. Research Integrity Annual Statement 2021-22

Professor Baldwin presented the report on the 2021-22 Research Integrity Annual Statement. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Baldwin reminded the Board about the University's compliance obligations. The Statement now recommended had been examined and endorsed by the Academic Board.

The Board examined the Statement. It was agreed that, in the event that amendments are called for (to reflect changes in circumstances during the remainder of the reporting period), any such alterations will be cleared with the Chair of the Board.

Resolved: That, subject to any amendments approved by the Chair of the Board in the remainder of the reporting period, the Research Integrity Annual Statement 2021-22 be approved.

UB1048. Annual Report of the Students' Union

Ms Chikh presented the Annual Report 2022. A copy of the Report is set out in the Minute Book.

Ms Chikh suggested that the Annual Report reflected the significant progress achieved by the Students' Union during 2021-22, acknowledging the consistent support which the VCG had provided. Progress on matters relating to international students, EDI issues and financial support had been possible as a result of the VCG's co-operation.

Ms Chikh then provided a short PowerPoint presentation.

(i) Recommendations to the Vice Chancellor's Group

The Board noted the updates on the SU's recommendations (to the VCG) from the previous year's report.

Professor Baldwin agreed that there continues to be much positive alignment, particularly with regards to student satisfaction and the student experience. Good progress on redressing NSS issues had been made. He added that, in his regular meetings with the SU President and SU Chief Executive, the exchanges were very much 'two-way' in nature. The extremely diverse make-up of the UCLan student body necessitated care in order to ensure that the needs and expectations of *all* categories and types of students are catered for.

Dr Ion considered that the 2022 report was very thoughtful and highlighted the SU's achievement effectively.

Dr Danino recommended that, when seeking to reach non-engaged students, it would be productive to consider subject areas rather than just entire Schools (since there would be variations within and between the different subject areas within each School).

(ii) SU presentations to the University Board

The Chair considered that the current arrangements and practices served the Board well. The SU representations were invariably positive. It was not always possible to accede to all SU requests or preferences, but by operating the existing channels of communications – both formal and informal – the good and productive relationship with the Board continues to be maintained.

Dr Ion considered that the quality of reporting by the SU had improved over the years. Contributions by the SU to discussions at meetings were obviously welcome. In general, the Board and its members were interested in hearing the views of the student body.

(iii) Future connection with the SU

It was agreed that there would be benefits for Board members to meet the wider SU leadership, and, to that end, arrangements for an informal meeting (probably timed for before or after a scheduled meeting of the University Board at Preston Campus) should be considered.

The Chair thanked Ms Chikh for the SU Report.

Resolved: That the Students' Union Annual Report 2022 be noted.

UB1049. Academic Board Annual Assurance Report

Professor Baldwin presented the Annual Assurance Report for 2021-22. A copy of the Report is set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Baldwin suggested that the very descriptive and comprehensive report served to provide the degree of assurance that the Board might seek with regard to the Academic Board's fulfilment of its key responsibilities (as specified in the Articles of Government).

The Board reviewed the Report and agreed that this provided assurances around the effective implementation of the University's academic strategies, the upholding of the quality and standards of teaching (undergraduate and postgraduate awards) and the processing of information received on major national and regional development and other matters of interest.

The business considered and the decisions made by the Academic Board and its sub-committees were noted.

It was also noted that, throughout the year, Mrs Lloyd and Dr Ion had attended meetings of the Academic Board as the University Board's representative, reporting back to the University Board as appropriate.

Resolved: That

- (i) the Annual Report of the Academic Board be noted;
- (ii) it be noted that the Academic Board has fulfilled its key responsibilities; and
- (iii) it be agreed that there is effective academic governance in place.

UB1050. Governance Matters including Board Members' Terms of Office

Mr Fisher reported as follows:

(i) New Board members

The Governance, Risk and Nominations Committee (GRN) had met on 1st June 2022 and had shortlisted five applicants for interview. Since it will only be possible to conduct the individual interview later in the summer, it is proposed that any GRN Committee recommendations to the Board for appointment should be presented via the Written Resolution process.

Resolved: That the Written Resolution process be applied to seek the Board's approval for any Board Members appointment recommendations from the Governance, Risk and Nominations Committee

(ii) Proposed Re-appointment of Existing Members

[Note: Each individual Board Member covered under this item took no part in the consideration of their own position]

Mr Fisher confirmed that, following full consideration, the Governance, Risk and Nomination Committee had recommended the re-appointment of the following Members. Mr Fisher also confirmed that he had spoken individually to the members concerned and that all had confirmed their willingness to accept the appointments proposed.

- (a) Dr Nicky Danino

That Nicky Danino be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

(b) Dr Ridwanah Gurjee

That Ridwanah Gurjee be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

(c) Mrs Lorraine Norris

That Lorraine Norris be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

(d) Mrs Anne McCarthy

That Anne McCarthy be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

(e) Mrs Ruth Lowry

That Ruth Lowry be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

(f) Dr Sue Ion

That Sue Ion be re-appointed for a further three years term of office from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025.

Resolved: That the re-appointments of Nicky Danino, Ridwanah Gurjee, Lorraine Norris, Anne McCarthy, Ruth Lowry and Sue Ion for further three year terms of office (1st August 2022 to 31st July 2025) be approved.

(iii) Appointment of Committee Chairs

Mr Fisher advised that, in anticipation of Mr Edney's completion of his final term of office as a Board Member, it is recommended that Dr Ion should be appointed as Chair of the Resources Committee.

Dr Ion would then cease to be Chair of Remuneration Committee and, in her place, it is recommended that Mrs McCarthy should be appointed as Chair of Remuneration Committee.

Resolved: That Dr Ion be appointed as Chair of Resources Committee and Mrs McCarthy be appointed as Chair of Remuneration Committee both with effect from 1st August 2022.

(iv) Deputy Chair of the Board

In anticipation of Mr Edney's departure, it is recommended that Dr Ion be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board and as a member of the Urgent Business Committee.

Resolved: That Dr Ion be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board and Urgent Business Committee with effect from 1st August 2022.

(v) Committees Meeting Dates - 2022-23

Finally, Mr Fisher confirmed that details of dates/times for Committee meetings in 2022-23 will be discussed with the respective Chairs and details agreed as soon as possible.

UB1051. Safety, Health and Environment Policy

Mrs Connor presented her report on the updating of the University's SHE Policy. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

It was noted that the updated version of the SHE Policy had been reviewed and approved by the Resources Committee on 6th June 2022. Mrs Connor advised that, in reviewing the document, the Committee had had to hand the SHE Compliance Enabling Strategy of the 2021-28 Strategic Plan.

Resolved: That the updated Safety, Health and Environment Policy be noted.

UB1052. Cyber Security Update

Mrs Connor presented the Cyber Security Update report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

The Board considered the arrangements for cyber defences and risk mitigations, both in place and planned.

It was noted that the report had also been considered by the Resources Committee on 6th June 2022.

Resolved: That the Cyber Security Update report be noted.

UB1053. Committee Chairs' and Independent Members' Updates

(i) Governance, Risk and Nominations Committee

Mr Taylor (as Chair of Governance, Risk and Nominations Committee) reported on the matters which the Committee had addressed at its meeting on 1st June 2022. In addition to the Board member recruitment and re-appointment matters already considered (UB1050 above), the Committee had also reviewed risk management arrangements and compliance with Office for Students duties.

(ii) Resources Committee

Mr Edney (Chair of Resources Committee) confirmed that several key matters considered at the Resources Committee meeting on 6th June 2022 had already been dealt with earlier in the Board's agenda. These included the Budget proposals for 2022-23 and the Tuition Fees Policy and fees for 2023-24.

The Committee had also discussed income generation and commercialisation options and had concluded that these would provide the basis for a productive session at a future residential event.

(iii) Audit Committee

Mrs Lowry (Chair of Audit Committee) reported that, at the Audit Committee meeting on 16th June 2022, there had been discussion about the processes in place for enabling the Committee to keep abreast of arrangements for the management of key risks such as cyber security attack exposure. The Committee had also noted the outcomes from the recent internal audit of the University's cyber security (selected controls) arrangements.

A plan for internal audit work in 2022-23 had been agreed with the possibility that an additional audit of fraud risk exposure will be added to the nine areas to be covered.

The plan for the external audit of the 2021-22 accounts was likely to cover similar risks to the previous year. However, a new timescale for completion of the audit is now having to be accommodated.

Finally, the useful 'Higher Education Sector Benchmarking Report produced by the external auditor (covering 35 institutions audited by KPMG) would be circulated to all Board members for information.

(iv) Academic Board

Mrs Lloyd reported that, at the meeting of the Academic Board on 8th June 2022, matters arising from the Queen's Speech (to Parliament) had been reviewed. On other matters, it had been interesting to note where disabled students had outperformed other students. Under Research Excellence Framework, it had been pleasing to note aspects where UCLan had performed better than Oxford and Cambridge universities.

In general (and as confirmed under UB1049 above), the Academic Board continues to operate effectively.

Resolved: That the Chairs' and Independent Member's Updates be noted.

UB1054. Any Other Business

(i) Jim Edney and Bill McQueen

At this, the final meeting for Mr Edney and Mr McQueen before their final terms of office conclude, the Chair thanked both for their excellent service during the last ten years. There could be no doubt that both had had to contribute to the leadership of the University during some particularly challenging periods. Both had chaired Committees of the Board and Mr Edney had also served as the Board's Deputy Chair.

A celebratory dinner as a gesture of the University's appreciation will be arranged.

Board members joined the Chair in thanking Mr Edney and Mr McQueen on behalf of the University.

(ii) Zuleikha Chikh

Ms Chikh's term as SU President and as a Board Member had also coincided with an extremely challenging period. However, Ms Chikh's constructive and balanced approach had helped to take forward relations between the SU and the Board, and, as a token of appreciation she was presented with a gift from the Board and the University.

All wished Ms Chikh well for the future.

I M Fisher
Clerk to the Board