



**Minutes
Board of Governors
19 January 2023
The meeting was held in the Waldegrave Room and Online**

Present: Mr David Brambell
Mr Jeff Cottle
Ms Caitlin Finn – Student Governor
Dr Fiona Gatty
Mr Dave Hartnett
Mr George Jenkin – Staff Governor
Mr Anthony McClaran – Vice-Chancellor
Ms Claire McDonnell
Dr Mary Mihovolovic
Rt Rev Richard Moth (Chair)
Ms June Mulroy
Mrs Deborah Streatfield

In Attendance: Mr Ben Andradi
Mrs Jo Blunden – Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Mr Andrew Browning – University Secretary (Minutes)
Professor Symeon Dagkas – Provost
Dr Adam Longcroft – Dean of Learning and Teaching
Mrs Adeola Oke
Mr Richard Solomon – Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)
Mr Andrew Whateley – Head of Data Analytics & Reporting

Apologies: Pietro Palladino

22/33	CYBER SECURITY PRESENTATION		
	At the start of the meeting there was a presentation from the Chief Information Officer on the issue of Cyber Security and what safeguards were in place at the University.		
	The Board asked about how secure the cloud was		

	for storing sensitive information. The CIO said that the Cloud was more secure than anything the University could provide. He said however the access had to be carefully managed using methods such as multi-factor authentication.		
22/34	<p>WELCOMES</p> <p>The meeting opened with a prayer.</p> <p>Ben Andradi and Adeola Oke who are prospective members of the Board of Governors were welcomed to the meeting as observers.</p>		
22/35	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>		
22/36	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting of 29 November 2022 were approved by the Board.</p>		
22/37	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>22/22 – KPIs – Strategic Planning will be producing a regular report on how the University is doing against the KPIs. The first report will be coming to the next meeting of the University Executive Committee and will then be a standing item at future meetings of the Board of Governors.</p> <p>The Provost gave a brief update on retention. He said that retention reports were being scrutinised by the Academic Development Committee. The first set of results showed that there had been an improvement on last year. At this time of year there was currently a period of assessment for most students which was regularly a point of higher attrition but actions had been implemented to try and mitigate against this.</p> <p>Year one undergraduates had shown an improvement in attrition of 2.1% from last year and 3.6% from the previous year. Retention in partnerships had also improved much of it being down to the teach-out of SMULIC.</p> <p>The Board asked what the Provost attributed to the improvement in retention figures. The Provost said</p>		

	<p>that the types of students being recruited internationally had changed and that the removal of Covid restrictions meant that the actions under the retention strategy were easier to implement. The Vice-Chancellor said that external market research was also being carried out in relation to retention factors.</p> <p>22/31 – Sale of 16 Strawberry Hill Road – This will be going to the meeting of the CES Management Board for approval ahead of it going onto the Standing Committee of the Bishop’s Conference.</p> <p>22/06 – The Board asked whether there was any update on Maryvale. The Vice Chancellor said that the discussions were still ongoing.</p>		
22/38	<p>TEF SUBMISSION <i>Paper 5 refers</i></p> <p>The Dean of Learning and Teaching presented the TEF submission. This was for approval by the Board.</p> <p>The Dean of Learning and Teaching said that work had been done across the University through the TEF Working group to produce the TEF submission. Support had also been given to the Students’ Union with their own submission.</p> <p>There were two focuses, one on the Student Experience the other on Student Outcomes. The Student Experience metrics were based wholly on the NSS and the University was likely to come out very well. The Student Outcomes metric was more mixed based on the TEF data which was already decided by the OfS. The Dean of Learning and Teaching felt that the University was likely to be awarded a silver.</p> <p>The Board asked when the result would come out. The Dean of Learning and Teaching said that a provisional rating would be sent out in July or August at which point institutions could challenge the rating that they had been given with the final rating being given in September.</p> <p>The Board approved the TEF submission.</p>		

22/39	<p>VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT <i>Paper 1 refers</i></p> <p>The paper was taken as read. The COO was asked to provide an update on the current industrial action which was taking place in the sector. She told the Board that the situation was very fluid at present. UCEA and the unions had made some progress in talks but these had stalled. An offer of 5% had been made with a 2% increase being given in February and a further 3% in August. This was unlikely to be accepted and the unions were balloting for a further 18 days strike action in February and March. She said that there was supposed to be a marking and assessment boycott however this was no longer going ahead. It was thought around 30 staff may go on strike and support would be given to students where necessary.</p> <p>The Vice Chancellor said that the first ministerial letter from Robert Halfon had been received which seemed to be encouraging universities to take students who had T-Levels and the creation of more degree apprenticeships.</p> <p>The Vice Chancellor has been elected onto the Executive Board of the Cathedrals Group.</p> <p>The Board were also informed that following a report on the organ in the chapel that the best option was to repair and refurbish the existing organ rather than replace it as originally thought. The fundraising by Msgr Vladimir Felzmann had meant that significant progress had been made in reaching the required amount for refurbishment and the University would be looking into other potential sources of funding.</p> <p>The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's report.</p>		
22/40	<p>STUDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE <i>Paper 2 refers</i></p> <p>The Provost provided an oral update on the current student recruitment position. He said that the January intake of students had performed better against target.</p>		

	<p>The University was currently 2% down from the previous year in terms of undergraduate applications. The sector average was at present 4% down and the University's competitor group was 11% down. The postgraduate programmes were outperforming with a high number of international applications.</p> <p>The new Computer Science programme had 50 applications. This was planned to have a first cohort of 35 and therefore this was a positive sign.</p> <p>There was a need for more CAS' for international students and the Director of Student Operations was discussing this issue with UKVI.</p> <p>The Provost said that it seemed that the "hydraulic effect" of universities further up the league tables recruiting lower tariff students was lessening as the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic were reduced.</p> <p>The Board asked whether the balance between undergraduate and postgraduate numbers was starting to change given the significant improvement in postgraduate taught recruitment. The Provost said that he felt that the balance was changing due to the University's location and the increase in recruitment by the University internationally. He said that the University would still be likely to have a majority undergraduate student population in the longer term.</p> <p>The Vice Chancellor said that while student recruitment of international and postgraduate students was encouraging there remained a decline in the number of domestic undergraduate students applying throughout the sector. He said that there was a need for the University to try and remedy that but the rebalancing of the number of postgraduate students was important as were efforts to increase the number of international students. He said that there was also a need to continue reviewing the University's portfolio and develop new partnerships.</p> <p>The Board asked whether the University could tap into the catholic schools network. The Vice Chancellor said that there was potential work that could still be done in this regard. More engagement was being considered with south east London schools.</p> <p>The Board noted the student recruitment update.</p>		
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22/41	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS <i>Paper 4 refers</i></p> <p>The management accounts to the end of November were presented by the CFO. He said the operating profit was £1.7m which was £0.2m ahead of budget with a net surplus of £0.1m. He said that these were positive signs but there were risks of student attrition in February following the assessment period and it may be necessary to spend on projects which were scheduled to start in the next financial year. He was however cautiously optimistic about the financial position of the University for the current year.</p> <p>The Board asked about the issue of vacancies being unfilled and the potential adverse effects of this. The CFO said that the University had a high staff cost to income ratio and that this was not necessarily a bad position to be in. The COO said there was consideration of this issue in the operational enhancement programme and that vacancies were being reviewed and whether some of those vacancies continued to be required. There was also consideration of how it would be possible to work smarter.</p> <p>The Board noted the management accounts.</p>		
22/42	<p>STUDENT UNION REPORT <i>Paper 6 refers</i></p> <p>The Student Life President said that the second phase of consultation on Student Heart was being undertaken and would be fed back to the University.</p> <p>The elections for next years student union were taking place in February and as well as the sabbatical positions there were also a number of non-sabbatical roles which students could stand for.</p> <p>Claire McDonnell said that she had met with the SU and the Director of Student Operations regarding the issue of how to tackle harassment and sexual violence. She said that the high response to the safety survey was good in that it would provide useful data for the University as to what improvements may need to be made to the estate. She said that it was important to highlight to the Board that the procedures for reporting sexual</p>		

	<p>harassment/ violence needed to be improved and further discussions of how to do this would be taking place over the coming weeks. The COO said that reporting needed to be simplified and a number of changes had been made around the University in respect of lighting and safety. The Vice Chancellor said that it was likely that the OfS would set a condition of registration regarding sexual harassment/violence</p> <p>The Board noted the Students Union report.</p>		
22/43	<p>MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT <i>Paper 7 refers</i></p> <p>The Board unanimously approved the modern slavery statement.</p>		
22/44	<p>MEDICAL SCHOOL UPDATE <i>Paper 4 refers</i></p> <p>The Vice Chancellor said that the intention of the paper was to pull together responses to the issues that had been raised by the Board regarding financial issues, impact on the university, regulatory and governance and the timetable. He said that the Programme Board had met for the second time and the main part of the meeting had been a presentation from Professor Cathy Jackson of UCLAN.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor said that the Programme Board had considered the governance of a medical school. Two options had been considered, “Option A” was setting up a separate medical school which would be wholly owned by the University “Option B” was the traditional model of having the medical school as a faculty forming part of the University. It was the view of the Programme Board that the faculty model was the preferable option.</p> <p>The Board were being asked to consider which option it wished to endorse. The University Secretary said that he spoken to the OfS regarding the potential option of setting up a separate subsidiary medical school with the ability to charge domestic student full fees, he said that the OfS had told him that other universities had been to them previously to discuss this option but to date no such schools or institutions had been set up on this basis.</p>		

	<p>He said that he had also spoken to the Charity Commission and they had no issue with the University adopting either model. The view of the University Secretary was that Option B was the better option as while there were benefits in Option A the time and work required to achieve this would be an unwelcome diversion of resources and financially there would be little to gain.</p> <p>The Board asked about the timeline. The Vice Chancellor said that 2026 seemed to be a more reasonable timescale within which to have the medical school accepting its first students.</p> <p>The Board expressed its wish that the University look at the fields of mental health and palliative care as part of its offering as a medical school. The Provost said that the University was already exploring these areas.</p> <p>The Board questioned whether the University would be able to move in time to catch the need for more medical students. The Vice Chancellor said that the insight from Professor Jackson at UCLAN was that recruitment of the first intake was the most difficult and that this may lead to some adjustment in the cohort planning for the first year. The Provost said that he believed that there would be a market for the University and his understanding was that UCLAN had 1200 applications for 200 places.</p> <p>The CFO said that the business case which had originally been to the Board had now been refreshed and more conservative assumption had been made. Further stress testing had been carried out and the financial case remained robust. He said that the financial case will be constantly reviewed and refreshed.</p> <p>Dave Hartnett said that the Finance and Resources Committee had welcomed the revised business case and had particularly welcomed the revised stress testing. The Committee were happier for the University to adopt the faculty model of governance rather than the separate subsidiary model. The Committee felt that the pace and the timeline was about right.</p>		
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22/46	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee which took place on 10 January 2023</p>		
22/47	<p>Dates of Next Meetings 23 March 2023 (Away Day) 20 April 2023 20 June 2023</p>		

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