

Board of Governors

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 February 2021 at 09.00am via Teams.

Minutes 6448 – 6548

Present: Mr J Hanley (Chair), Dr J Aldiss, Ms J Andrew (Senior Independent Governor), Mr M Brockbank, Ms R Collins, Professor C Egbu (Vice-Chancellor), Mr M Feely, Ms T Ford-Escobar, Mr A Gilliland, Mr A Grills, Ms C Grooby, Mr M Holden, Mr R Marchant (Vice-Chair), Ms E Reed, Ms E Richards, Mrs S Rix, Rt Rev M Stock, Ms A Wilson and Mr M Wilson.

In attendance: Mr D Butcher (Director of Finance & University Secretary), Mr P Dixon (Chief Operating Officer), Professor M Todd (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Mr C Williams (Clerk to the Board of Governors and Company Secretary) and Dr A Torn (Union Rep)

Apologies: Mr D Haslam, Mr P Southern and Mr V Verma.

Welcome & Opening Prayer

6448 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, advised all in attendance that the meeting was being recorded and Bishop Stock opened the meeting with a prayer.

Declaration of Interest:

6449 There were no declarations of interest. **Noted**

Minutes of Last Meeting

6450 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record. **Approved**

Matters arising, including progress on action log from previous meetings

6451 The table of actions was reviewed and noted. **Noted**

Chair's Report

6452 **Received** a report from the Chair of the Board of Governors (paper G 21/01) providing an update on key activity undertaken as Chair.

6453 The Board welcomed the report and noted the considerable work undertaken by the Chair to date.

6454 The Board noted the Chair's report. **Noted**

Health & Safety Update (Reporting by Exception)

6455 **Received** a verbal update from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) who confirmed that there had been no reportable health and safety cases since the last Board meeting on 26 November 2020 and that a full Health and Safety report would be presented the next Board meeting in March. **COO**

6456 The Board noted the verbal report. **Noted**

PERFORMANCE

Covid-19 Update University Response

- 6457 **Received** a detailed report from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) on the University's management of issues and implications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (paper G 21/02).
- 6458 The COO reported on the Current Position (with regard to operations and student testing), Academic Year 2020-21 (in relation to project structure and governance) and Plans for Learning: Teaching and Assessment.
- 6459 The COO expanded on the volume of work being undertaken by staff, on initial findings from the employee survey (reported under section 2.1.4 in the report), reported that the non-consolidated award had gone down well with staff, touched on staff pressures involved with working from home arrangements and made specific reference to the additional support being given to students.
- 6460 The Board thanked staff for their considerable contributions in supporting students, questioned how many students were on campus and how their needs were being met (especially out of hours support), questioned student feedback arrangements on any aspect of student experience, noted and welcomed the dialogue that is on-going with students and staff and queried the Chaplaincy work and mass arrangements during lockdown.
- 6461 The DVC expanded on the range and rich mix of feedback from students and the Board commended social media work with students and Ms Amy Wilson offered support with any further social media work.
- 6462 The COO expanded on work to support student mental health wellbeing that is on-going with a small number of students, outlined routes to a range of support and the referral processes involved and expanded triage and escalating referral arrangements (if necessary).
- 6463 The Board questioned whether students living at home can access mental health support and queried the number involved and the COO commented on consideration of data received and subsequent actions.
- 6464 The Board noted the report. **Noted**

Safety Net Policy

- 6465 **Received** a report and the Safety Net Policy from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (paper GR 21/03).
- 6466 The DVC updated the Board on the policy and the difference with the previous 'No Detriment Policy', changes as a result of consultations with academic colleagues, negotiations with the Students' Union, compliance with the OfS letter dated 14th January 2021, confirmed that the policy applies to all LTU students (i.e. those on apprenticeship programmes and those studying with partners) and that the impact of the policy will also be a key feature of next year's Annual Quality Report for Academic Board and the Board of Governors.
- 6467 The Board queried what has driven the relaxing of the number of extensions to assessments and the DVC commented on a range of scenarios given the unprecedented circumstances students are facing and how the policy reflects NUS best practice.
- 6468 The Committee noted the Safety Net Policy. **Noted**

Key Performance Indicators

- 6469 **Received** a report from the Director of Finance and University Secretary (DFUS) (paper G 21/04).
- 6470 The DFUS expanded on KPIs where the majority of supporting indicators are red.
- 6471 The Board questioned the latest position on recruitment and the DFUS expanded on the encouraging emerging indicators for 2021-22 recruitment.
- 6472 The Board noted the report on KPIs. **Noted**

Blended Learning Report

- 6473 **Received** a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (paper G 21/05) which updated the progress on blended delivery in 2020-21.
- 6474 The DVC expanded on Semester 1 Implementation, Semester 2 Implementation and Feedback and Next Steps.
- 6475 The Board reflected on the change in student experience as a result of required move to blended learning, when current circumstances require that 100% of learning is on-line and the DVC commented on the strategy to flip to comply with government requirements and made reference to strong progression and low withdrawal rates and reinforced how the model had given flexibility and engagement.
- 6476 The Board queried as to how the blended learning is assessed and the DVC commented on students' desire to interact and create a sense of community, commented on feedback received, work to address digital poverty and significant pastoral support.
- 6477 The Staff Governor expanded on the extensive range of on-line blended learning that is being delivered and shared his experience of the performance of students under blended learning arrangements.
- 6478 The Board questioned whether the University had considered additional learning opportunities over the summer (in a similar manner to what is being considered in the pre-16 sector) and the DVC commented on early considerations of summer 'boot camps'.
- 6479 The Board reflected on how current experience builds into delivery model going forward, the timings involved, how blended learning will apply to all students and the DVC commented on emerging plans for 2021-22 that are being worked up and which will build on the learning from 2020-21.
- 6480 The Board queried the impact of the move to blended learning on staff and staff well-being and the Staff Governor made reference to 'Trinity Wellbeing' which seeks to support staff through Teams to reduce feelings of isolation and encourage community.
- 6481 The Board noted the Blended Learning report. **Noted**

FINANCE & RESOURCES

Finance and Resources Committee: Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021

- 6482 **Received and noted** the minutes from the Finance and Resources (F & R) Committee meeting held on 27 January 2020 from the Chair of Finance & Resources Committee (paper G 21/06). **Noted**

6483 The Chair of F&R Committee made reference to recommendations to Board that are being considered in the following two agenda items.

6484 The Board noted the F&R minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2021. **Noted**

Updated Current Year Forecast

6485 **Received** a report from the Director of Finance & University Secretary (DFUS) which had been considered by F&R Committee on 27 January and which provided an updated forecast for the full year (paper G 21/07).

6486 The DFUS reported on Income and Expenditure and Assumptions and Sensitivities.

6487 [REDACTED]

6488 The Board queried what the anticipated level of students returning to campus might be (should guidelines be relaxed in the coming weeks and months) and it was noted that this is very difficult to predict at this stage.

6489 The Board noted the report. **Noted**

Full Financial Forecast for Submission to the Office for Students (OfS)

6490 **Received** a report and the proposed financial forecast for submission to the OfS from the Director of Finance & University Secretary (DFUS) which had been considered by F&R Committee on 27 January (paper G 21/08).

6491 The DFUS reported on Student Number Projections, Forecast Overview (excluding strategic investment), Future Strategy and Investment, Forecast for Submission, Risk and Opportunities, Sensitivity Analysis and OfS Forecast Submission and how the forecast informs future size and shape strategic planning discussions (especially with regard to investment and liquidity).

6492 The Board queried the nature of the detail requested by the OfS and the DFUS commented on the information that is supplied (no sensitivity requested but narrative assumptions are required) on which the OfS will make a judgement.

6493 The Board questioned the impact of foundation year and student fee cuts in the sensitivity analysis and the DFUS clarified the position.

6494 The Board queried as to how accurate our forecasts have been in recent years and the DFUS commented that the University has performed better than budgeted and that year four and five in the projections are more challenging to predict.

6495 The Board questioned the impact to the sector of the financial pressures involved with USS pension and international students and the DFUS reported that LTU is not in USS, that LTU has a very small overseas student population and that the key issue was the franchised provision and the need to manage costs.

6496 The Board approved the Full Financial Forecast for submission to the Office for Students (OfS). **Approved for submission to OfS**

GOVERNANCE

Governance and Nominations Committee: Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021

6497 **Received and noted** the minutes from the Governance and Nominations (G&N) Committee meeting held on 28 January 2021 from the Chair of Governance & Nominations Committee (paper G 21/09). **Noted**

6498 The Chair of G&N Committee made reference to recommendations to Board that are being considered later in the meeting.

6499 The Board noted the G&N minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2021. **Noted**

Nominations Advice

6500 **Received** a report and the Regulation on the Appointment and Re-appointment of Independent Governors from the Clerk to the Board of Governors as recommended by the Governance & Nominations Committee (paper G 21/10).

6501 The Chair of G&N Committee made reference to the background to the item, the work of its Task and Finish Group and thanked Ms E Reed, Mr D Butcher and Mr P Rogerson (Co-optee) for their work on revising the Regulation in light of Counsel advice.

6502 The Board questioned the companies involved with assisting the search for high calibre candidates for the pending vacancies Odgers, Peridot and Nurole and the Chair reported that he and the DFUS would be determining the preferred agency in due course. **Chair & DFUS**

6503 The Board questioned the current position with foundation partners nominees and the Chair indicated that he would report to members outside of the meeting. **Chair**

6504 The Board noted the report, approved the revisions to the Regulation on the Appointment and Re-appointment of Independent Governors and approved the Chair of the Board to seek the agreement of the founding partners to fill the remaining Independent Governor positions on the Board under the nominations clause in the Articles. **Noted Approved Approved**

Draft Policy on the Publication of Minutes

6505 **Received** a report and the draft Policy on the Publication of Minutes from the Clerk to the Board of Governors (paper G 21/11) as recommended by Governance & Nominations Committee.

6506 The Clerk reported on the background to the policy in terms of the Governance Effectiveness Review and OfS requirements and the work of G&N Committee in considering and recommending the policy to Board.

6507 The Board approved the Policy on the Publication of Minutes. **Approved**

Academic Board: Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020

6508 **Received and noted** the minutes from the Academic Board meeting held on 2 December 2020 from the Chair of Academic Board (paper G 21/12). **Noted**

6509 The VC expanded on considerations with regard to collaborative partnership approval process and the academic calendar for 2021-22.

6510 The Board questioned as to how the number of PhD students compared with benchmark Universities and the VC commented on the issues to do with comparing, the ambitions to do more (the issue is tied in with Research Degree Awarding powers and the need to increase staff's experience and capability to supervise PhD students).

6511 The Board discussed the need for a review of the academic portfolio in terms of market forces and demand and supply intelligence given pending discussions on the Strategic Plan at the Development Day.

AUDIT

Whistleblowing Policy: Annual Review

6512 **Received** the Whistleblowing Policy from the Clerk to the Board of Governors as recommended by the Audit Committee (paper G 21/13).

6513 The Clerk reported on the minor administrative changes to contact details.

6514 The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

Approved

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT & STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vice-Chancellor's Report

6515 **Received** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (VC) (paper G 21/14).

6516 The VC made reference to the more detailed report in BoardPacks, reported that the main focus remains on the health and safety of students and staff, reported on the key points arising from the suite of documents and consultations the government published on 21st January (and which are likely to impact on the HE sector) and raised a question for the Board over government's emerging position on how value for money is measured in HE.

6517 The Board noted the need to consider data at subject level when considering value for money, that we should consider an opportunity to collaborate with the Cathedrals Group on the question posed to bring more collective political weight to the issue and the VC expanded on plans for collaboration.

6518 The Board discussed possible collaboration with business and other economic stakeholders (LEP, CBI, Northern Powerhouse and local politicians) and the VC expanded on current activity in a variety of network settings.

6519 The Board touched on direction of travel involved with lifelong learning and changes in the nature of learning delivery for a diverse curriculum and student cohort.

6520 The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report

Noted

Strategic Objectives Action Plan for 2020/21

6521 **Received** a report on the strategic objectives action plan for 2020/21 from the Director of Finance & University Secretary (DFUS) (paper G 21/15).

6522 The DFUS reported on progress against the 48 objectives under 17 headings (Strategic Plan, Size and Shape, Apprenticeships, Partnerships, Quality Assurance, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Learning and Teaching, Human Resources – People Agenda, Information Services, Digital Skills and Curriculum Development, Library and Learning Resources, Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment, Student Support and Engagement, Student and Academic Services, Estates and Facilities and Financial).

6523 The Board discussed pending considerations on the academic offer going forward.

6524 The Board queried Governor involvement with the Apprenticeship Self-Assessment and the DVC outlined the proposed process that would bring the Self-Assessment through Academic Board and to Board.

6525 The Board noted the report.

Noted

Retention, Progression and Completion Strategy

6526 **Received** the draft Retention and Progression Strategy from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (paper G 21/16).

6527 The DVC reported on the key OfS measures and activity to deliver measurable improvements to student retention, progression and successful completion and commented on particular areas of focus (progression and part-time students).

6528 The Board queried the report's reference to issues with student engagement and the DVC commented on the issues and plans and the need to build on strong data.

6529 The Board discussed comparative drop-out rates and whether reference to families should be included in support for students (who are scoped into Student Support services provision).

6530 The Board queried which cohorts of students were included in the report, commented on the need to develop the report to scope in other provision appropriately and the DVC made comment on recent positive performance reviews with partners.

6531 The Board of Governors noted the report.

Noted

ITEMS FOR NOTING ONLY

Students' Union Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020

6532 **Received** accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020 from the Students' Union (paper G 21/17).

6533 The Board of Governors noted the Students' Union accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020. **Noted**

RESERVED MATTERS

The observers, Staff and Student Governors left the meeting for consideration of the reserved matters.

Remuneration Committee: Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021

6534 **Received and noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 28 January 2021 from the Chair of Remuneration Committee (paper G 20/18). **Noted**

6535

[REDACTED]

6536 The Board noted the Remuneration minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2021. **Noted**

Reserved item

6537 **Received** a confidential report from the Vice-Chancellor (paper G 21/19).

6538 [Redacted]

6539 [Redacted]

6540 [Redacted]

6541 [Redacted]

6542 [Redacted]

6543 [Redacted]

6544 [Redacted]

6545 [Redacted]

6546 [Redacted]

VC

Clerk and RemCo

Any Other Business

6547 The Chair briefed members on John Leach’s personal circumstances, and sought members support for his fund raising for the Brains Trust charity.

Date of next Meeting

6548 Thursday 25 March 2021 at 10am via Teams.

Meeting closed at 11:30