

**University of Central Lancashire**

**Unreserved Minutes of The Board Meeting Held On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Commencing At 5.00pm In The Engineering Innovation Centre, Preston.**

**Present:**

David Taylor (Chair)

Fiona Armstrong	Ridwanah Gurjee
Graham Baldwin	Suntosh Kaur
Nicky Danino	Lesley Lloyd
Maria Darby-Walker	Ruth Lowry
Jim Edney	Anne McCarthy
Bill McQueen	

**In attendance:**

Michael Ahern (Chief Operating Officer)  
George Charles (Interim Finance Director)  
Ian Fisher (University Secretary and Legal Officer)  
Ken Lee (Executive Director for Human Resources)  
Lynne Livesey (Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic))  
Peter McMellon (assisting the Clerk to the Board)  
Anne Roberts (Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor)

**UB773. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and in particular Professor Graham Baldwin who was attending his first meeting of the Board since commencing duties on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019. The Chair confirmed that, with Professor Baldwin now in post, he looked forward to resuming his occasional one-to-one contact with other Board members.

The Chair thanked Dr Livesey and the other members of the Senior Executive Team for their valuable service during the period when the Vice Chancellor position was unoccupied.

Apologies for absence had been received from Andrea Adams, Richard Hext, Sue Ion and Lorraine Norris. The Chair undertook to bring into the discussion at appropriate junctures the e-mail comments received from absent members.

**UB774. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

**UB775. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair had no announcements to make.

## **UB776. Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Resolved:** That the Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **UB777. Matters Arising from the University Board Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

### **(i) UB771 – Marketing Strategy**

The Chair advised that, with progress being made in the updating of the Marketing Strategy, it is hoped that information on the developing position will be available at the Board's next meeting.

### **(ii) UB770 – Reporting to Office for Students (Financial position)**

Dr Livesey confirmed that a written report had been submitted to the Office for Students (OfS).

### **(iii) UB764 – SET Report – Student Experience Presentation**

It was noted that a 'student experience' presentation will be incorporated into the next residential event programme.

### **(iv) UB769 – Committee Chair Update (Nominations Committee)**

Mr Fisher reported that, following further discussion with Mrs McCarthy, it had been agreed she would not join the Audit and Risk Committee. Mr Fisher also confirmed that the Nominations Committee would undertake a wider review of all Committee memberships over the coming months.

## **UB778. Vice-Chancellor's Update**

Professor Baldwin thanked the Board for the welcome he had received. He confirmed that, in the months prior to his formal commencement of duties, he had spent considerable time familiarising himself with the University's operations and meeting colleagues.

Professor Baldwin advised that, although his initial Update will be a verbal one, future Updates will be in writing and distributed in advance of Board meetings. The Updates will cover both internal and external (including HE sector) developments, but will not duplicate issues addressed under other substantive agenda items. Reports on successes and achievements will also be covered. In seeking to ensure that there is a 'no surprises' relationship with the Board, Updates will include negative developments and difficult challenges as these emerge.

Professor Baldwin commented on his initial activities. He confirmed that the SET has been replaced by the Vice Chancellor's Group (VCG) and an early focus will be the re-establishment of effective communication within the University. In that regard, he reported on the 'meet the new Vice Chancellor' sessions attended by staff on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Professor Baldwin then confirmed that the other main focus of attention will be on the University's financial position and budget. He considered that UCLan continues to produce great outputs and that there is huge potential for further development. However, these can only be maintained or exploited on the basis of sound finances. In tandem with a new Strategic Plan for the University, there will also be a corresponding 'Financial Focus' (plan). It is recognised that all institutions have been hit financially by negative developments such as the pensions scheme additional costs and by tuition fees constraints, but such challenges are inevitable and the answer is to develop awareness, to act with agility and to ensure that there is in-built financial headroom to cushion adverse developments. Across the sector,

preparedness to accept change must become the norm. There needs to be a focus on core priorities at UCLan, with 'the student' consistently at the heart of all considerations and decisions.

Regarding student numbers, Professor Baldwin suggested that credit should be given to the staff who have led and contributed to a very good - particularly in comparison to recent years - student recruitment result. It seems likely that the ambitious income targets in the budget will be achieved. Furthermore, much productive work on cost reduction has been undertaken. The reductions are under both Pay and Non-Pay budget heads.

Professor Baldwin then briefly commented on other matters as follows:

- The UCLan Open Day on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019 had been highly successful and had demonstrated an effective 'whole University' approach.
- Significant changes (including the re-appointment of Chris Skidmore MP as Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation) have been made at the DfE.
- A response is awaited from the OfS following the University's answers to the 'Changes in graduate attainment' letter.
- League Table successes are in large part attributable to improved NSS scores. The recent emphasis on achievement of improving National Student Survey ratings must be sustained.
- **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**
- UCLan continues to be held in the highest regard across the HE sector for its international work. Specifically with regards to operations in Hong Kong, Professor Baldwin outlined the measures taken to ensure the safety and security of UCLan staff and students in the current situation.
- UCLan will cease to be a member of the University Alliance and, instead, give consideration to becoming a member of the 'Million Plus' organisation.

In response to Mrs Armstrong's question, Professor Baldwin advised that his proposals for a new senior management structure will be presented to the Remuneration Committee in the near future.

In response to Mrs Darby-Walker's questions, Professor Baldwin outlined how he would expect the VCG, the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Team and the Planning and Insight Unit to contribute towards ensuring that the University is tuned in to external developments which are likely to impact upon the University. He then commented on how a 'whole University' approach will be developed so as to ensure that student welfare receives priority attention. Mr Ahern provided further details on the very comprehensive student counselling arrangements offered by the University, including the availability of support services throughout the year.

The Chair thanked Professor Baldwin for his report.

**Resolved:** That the Vice-Chancellor's report be received.

## **UB779. Finance Update**

Mr Charles (Interim Finance Director) presented the Finance Update report. A copy of the Report is set out in the Minute Book.

The Chair reported the points raised in e-mails by Mr Hext, Dr Ion and Mrs Norris. It was noted that the points will be covered in Mr Charles's presentation.

### **(i) HEC 2018/19 Draft Operating Outturn**

Mr Charles advised that, although the audit of the 2018/19 accounts is not yet complete, no major changes to the information now presented are expected.

### **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

Finally, Mr Charles drew attention to the Summary section at the end of his report.

The Chair thanked Mr Charles for his informative but succinct report.

**Resolved:** That the Finance Update report be noted.

### **UB780. Academic Board Annual Assurance Report 2018-19**

Dr Livesey (Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)) presented the Academic Board Annual Assurance report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Dr Livesey reminded the Board about the Academic Board's contribution to ensuring effective academic governance in the University. She then summarised the main issues addressed by the Academic Board in 2018/19. The Academic Board's contribution to the University's recent successes in League Tables terms is worth highlighting. Improvements under teaching quality, the student experience and student employability are the main contributors to the rises up the League Tables. These improvements followed development of effective new strategies and careful implementation of change and new measures. There is still further work to be undertaken and working closely with the Students Union will continue as the University seeks to meet OfS metrics.

Dr Livesey advised that further detail will be provided at the forthcoming away-day event.

Mrs Lloyd then presented the report which she and Dr Ion had produced on their initial year of attending Academic Board meetings as the University Board's representative. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Fisher reminded the Board that the appointment of Dr Ion and Mrs Lloyd to the Academic Board provided additional assurance to the Board that academic quality issues in the University were being managed appropriately.

The Board then noted Mrs Lloyd's elaborations on the points in the report.

In considering both reports and supporting documentation provided under this item, Board members agreed that there was adequate evidence that the Academic Board is effectively fulfilling its responsibilities.

The Chair thanked Mrs Lloyd and Dr Ion for their report and their work at the Academic Board.

**Resolved:** That

(i) the Academic Board Annual Assurance Report be noted; and

(ii) the Governors' Report on the Academic Board be noted.

### **UB781. Annual Report of the Clerk to the Board**

The University Secretary and Legal Officer as Clerk to the Board presented his Annual Report on the 2018/19 academic year, including the final Schedule of Meetings for 2019/20 and the Register of Interest Form for 2019/20. Copies of the Report and the other documents are set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Fisher summarised the main matters covered in his report and he advised that there would be a further report to the next meeting of the Board on Committee Terms of reference and other governance matters.

**Resolved :** That the Annual Report of the Clerk to the Board be noted.

#### **UB782. Committee Chair's Update**

##### **Resources Committee**

Mr Edney (Chair of Resources Committee) reported on the matters covered by the Resources Committee at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Mr Edney confirmed that most of the Committee's time had been devoted to the budget and the financial challenges. He concurred entirely with the Chair's earlier suggestion that the University's finances are now being more effectively managed. He expected that the Board and the Committee will support the new team under Professor Baldwin, but will also challenge as and when necessary.

##### **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

In response to Dr Gurjee's question about the University's West Lakes campus, Dr Livesey reported on the progress made in boosting the site's recruitment rates and the management of other challenges. Together, these mean that West Lakes is now in a considerably stronger position.

**Resolved:** That the Resources Committee Chair's Update be noted.

#### **UB783. Confirmation of Completed Assurances Updates**

##### **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

**Resolved :** That the report be noted.

#### **UB784. Risk Register**

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented an updated version of the University Risk Register. A copy of the Risk Register is set out in the Minute Book.

##### **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

**Resolved:** That the Risk Register be noted.

#### **UB785. International Update**

Dr Livesey presented the International Update Report. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Dr Livesey drew attention to the significant successes in both student recruitment and in partnerships development included in the report.

It was agreed that the international work undoubtedly contributed to the diverse student base which results in the overall enrichment of the UCLan experience.

**Resolved:** That the International Update be noted.

## **UB786. Masterplan Delivery Update**

Mr Ahern presented the Masterplan Delivery Update report dated September 2019. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Ahern confirmed that students are most appreciative of the new spaces and facilities now available to them. This doubtlessly contributes positively to the marketing of the University and to student recruitment.

Regarding ongoing work, Mr Ahern confirmed that this is proceeding well following conclusion of the pre-contract stage. February 2021 currently appears to be the likely completion period.

Mr Ahern stressed the crucial importance of the collaborative approach to ensuring timely progress. He described how this approach allowed efficient resolution of problems (and he confirmed that challenges did, indeed, continue to surface). He intended presenting an updated programme to the Resources Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and this will confirm that the work continues to be on time and within budget (although all contingency amounts are now committed).

In noting the point raised by Dr Ion (on 'the risk of complacency'), Mr Ahern accepted that the team needs to guard against any relaxation of the standards and vigilance which have hitherto characterised their approach. He explained how, in order to minimise delay due to winter ground conditions, careful scheduling within the programme should mitigate against this very real risk. He elaborated further on the specific risks which required the most careful management.

### **Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

Finally, in response to Dr Danino's point about the maintenance and appearance of longer-standing buildings (alongside the impressive new builds), Mr Ahern confirmed that the need to maintain/raise all premises to the highest standard is an accepted target which is most likely to be achieved via new approaches to maintenance which are being introduced.

**Resolved** : That the Masterplan Update Report be noted.

## **UB787. Any Other Business**

### **(i) Safety of Students – Recent reports**

Mrs McCarthy asked whether, given recent media reports on harm to young people (including rape) in Preston, the University needed to respond in any way.

Mr Ahern confirmed that University Management are alive to the risks and he outlined some of the main provisions which are already operated in order to ensure students safety. He referred to the awareness and guidance (including the 'Welcome Programme') and to physical safeguards (including over 500 CCTV cameras on campus). The 'Ask Angela' campaign had been well received. The safety, health and security of all users of the University is a top priority.

### **(ii) Student pressure on staff**

Mrs Armstrong alerted the Board and University Management to reports of potentially inhibiting pressure being put on some staff by students. This may result in freedom of expression infringement.

It was agreed that this should be a topic for more detailed consideration at a future away day.

**(iii) Text Redacted – Reserved Minute**

**(iv) Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Development) and Registrar**

In confirming that Mr Scott Mulholland has now left the University, Professor Baldwin advised that arrangements for picking up the duties and responsibilities of that Pro Vice Chancellor post will be addressed in his ongoing review of the senior management structure.

**UB788. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019 (location to be confirmed).

**I M Fisher  
Clerk to the Board**