

## **University of Lancashire**

### **Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting Held on 17 September 2025 at 5.00pm in the Engineering and Innovation Centre, Preston Campus**

#### **Present:**

Anne McCarthy (Chair)

Graham Baldwin	Lesley Lloyd*
Jon Baldwin	Fiona Rayment
Jim Carter	Khalil Rehman*
Mick Cartledge	Rachel Robins
Richard Frediani	Lindsay Robinson
Victoria Hutchinson	Chak Yee

#### **In attendance:**

Lisa Brooks (Governance and Compliance Manager)  
George Charles (Chief Finance Officer)  
Ruth Connor (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)  
Craig Darlison (Executive Director of IT and Digital Services) – for Item 12  
Carolyn Johnson (Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor)  
Ken Lee (Chief People Officer)  
Fiona Winters (Deputy Clerk to the Board/Head of Governance)

\*via video conference

#### **UB1346. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all present especially new members, Mick Cartledge and Chak Yee, to the first University Board meeting of the new academic year.

Apologies for absence had been received from Lorraine Norris and Lis Smith.

#### **UB1347. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to any items on the Agenda.

#### **UB1348. Chair's Announcements**

##### *(i) New Name*

The Chair announced that this was the first Board meeting since the University had fully transitioned to the new name of the University of Lancashire. She paid tribute to the vision of David Taylor and the diligence of the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG) in re-branding the University to represent the County of Lancashire and position itself strongly for the future.

##### *(ii) Student and Staff Support*

The Chair raised concerns about rising tensions nationally and regionally, and the need to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the University's diverse body of students and staff at the Burnley Campus and elsewhere. Professor Baldwin gave assurance that the University was adopting a proactive as opposed to reactive stance in the face of national divisions, collaborating with external authorities via its Cohesion Group and promoting a range of supportive measures for students and staff, including the SafeZone app.

A brief discussion ensued, and the following points were raised:

- that further work could be undertaken via UUK to promote the benefits of universities through their diverse populations, in promoting cultural awareness and tolerance;
- that it was important to be aware of the broader hostile environment as concerns were raised across a variety of domains, and to ensure a 'joined up approach';
- that Burnley Council had launched a campaign to promote unity in the town;
- that the University had a tested Protest and Civil Disturbance Plan, supported by trained staff members working with the city and the police; and
- that the University might consider conducting risk assessments across all its campuses as part of a wider business resilience plan.

*(iii) Strategy Refresh*

The Chair reported that work was underway to refresh the University's Strategy in the context of the international market contracting, and the domestic market becoming increasingly competitive. The revised Strategy would be presented to the Board at its meeting in November. Members were encouraged to rigorously test the Executive and create the conditions for success, focusing on the key challenge of enabling real transformation, whilst retaining the legacy of proudly widening participation.

*(iv) School of Law and Policing*

The Chair recorded thanks to the Dean for an inspiring tour, which had demonstrated the real-world relevance of teaching and learning in the School of Law and Policing, which was driving employability.

**UB1349. Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the University Board Meeting held on 26 June 2025**

The Reserved and Unreserved Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2025 were approved as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair.

**UB1350. Matters Arising**

It was reported that:

- (i) the recruitment processes for a new independent governor with finance expertise and a new staff governor were being considered (Minute UB1344); and
- (ii) Dr Smith had been appointed as the Board Lead for Safeguarding and Prevent, alongside her role as Degree Apprenticeships Lead (Minute UB1344).

**UB1351. Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Vice-Chancellor presented his regular report which provided an overview of external factors affecting the University and a summary of ongoing internal activities. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

In summarising his report, Professor Baldwin focused on areas of strategic significance or where there had been further developments since the time of writing, as follows:

- (i) Preparations were underway for Welcome Week as the majority of new students arrived for the start of the academic year, and for the Vice-Chancellor's dinner where Board members would be welcomed alongside other distinguished guests.

- (ii) The Government reshuffle had resulted in skills being divided, as the DfE was responsible for Higher and Further Education and skills up to age 18, whilst Skills England became part of the new DWP, giving rise to concerns that the focus would be skewed towards level 3.
- (iii) The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) was due to launch from January 2027 with the aim of enabling individuals to upskill across their working lives. The University continued to explore ways of exploiting this source of funding via different modes of delivery.
- (iv) Ministers in attendance at the recent UUK Conference had encouraged universities to focus on individual specialisms and areas of strength. The University had strengths in both research and knowledge exchange. The prospect of concentrating research funding in fewer universities was a concern as the University benefitted from pockets of excellence in research.
- (v) In relation to the increased competition for diminishing student numbers, the UUK Conference had raised the expectation that universities should focus on the core business of educating students, recognising the range of supplementary activities undertaken for the benefit of students and staff. It was suggested that all universities should take a responsible approach to recruitment, ensuring there was adequate support for students.
- (vi) Two further key themes at the UUK Conference were collaboration and reputation. Regarding the former, the University recognised the need to take a lead within the region in terms of establishing key partnerships. Regarding reputation, the need to engage authentically with a different audience was acknowledged, as public opinion became increasingly averse to universities. UUK had launched its own reputation strategy, whilst the University's new regionally focused brand campaign had been well received.
- (vii) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.
- (viii) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.
- (ix) The University had performed well in recent surveys and rankings, with unprecedentedly high scores across all key indicators in the latest NSS; a steady improvement in graduate outcome scores; an upward trajectory in the Daily Mail league table; and ranking first place in the UK for Fashion and Textiles in the Guardian University Guide 2026.

(x) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.

(xi) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.

(xii) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.

**Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

(i) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.

(ii) Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.

The Chair thanked Professor Baldwin for his report and commended the results in the league tables.

**Resolved:** That the Vice-Chancellor’s Report be noted.

**UB1352. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1353. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1354. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1355. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1356. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1357. Reserved Minute – Text Redacted.**

**UB1358. Students’ Union Report**

The new Student Governor presented the regular report from the Students’ Union (SU), providing an update on strategic priorities and highlighting current student issues. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Yee reported that the new SU representation structure had come into effect at the start of the 2025/26 academic year. He was one of four part-time representatives elected to lead on the student voice across the University, whilst a new Communities Team had been assembled to support student groups and foster new communities based around academic subjects, faith and spirituality, nationality, and identity and inclusion. The SU looked forward to an ongoing productive partnership with the University.

The Chair stated that the Board welcomed the regular SU Report and looked forward to seeing the evolution and impact of the ambitious reform of the representation structure.

**Resolved:** That the Students' Union Report be noted.

**UB1359. Research Integrity Statement**

The Vice-Chancellor presented the Research Integrity Annual Statement 2024/25. Copies of the Statement and the covering report are set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Baldwin explained that the University was required to submit and publish a Statement annually, to demonstrate its compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Statement for 2024/25 had been endorsed by the Academic Board and commended to the University Board for approval.

Ms Hutchinson suggested that in the current climate, there was a need for a clear statement about the University's tolerance of diverse political opinions. Whilst confirming that all research was subject to ethical approval, Professor Baldwin undertook to consider the need for such a statement in relation to teaching and learning. In the meantime, the University's Code of Practice to ensure Freedom of Speech was being updated.

**Resolved:** That the Research Integrity Annual Statement be approved for publication on the external Research Integrity website from September 2025, with a link being submitted to the Research Integrity Secretariat.

**UB1360. Committee Chair's Updates**

**Resources Committee – 8 September 2025**

In his role as Chair of the Resources Committee, Mr J Baldwin reported that the majority of matters discussed at the Committee's meeting on 8 September 2025 had been covered earlier on the Board agenda. A brief written summary of the matters discussed at the meeting was available to view on the Board Teams site.

**Resolved:** That the update from the Chair of the Resources Committee be noted.

**UB1361. Annual Report of the Clerk to the Board**

The Acting Clerk to the Board presented his Annual Report which set out various changes to the membership of the Board and its Committees during the previous year and attached several constitutional documents. A copy of the Report and the attachments are set out in the Minute Book.

Whilst noting that the Report and the attachments were primarily provided for information, Mr Lee highlighted the following two points:

- (i) Members were asked to approve and sign the Code of Conduct for University Board Members, which had been updated to include reference to the new Staff and Student Personal Relationships Policy.
- (ii) Members were asked to complete the Declaration of Interests Form, which would be updated during the year to ensure compliance with incoming Office for Students (OfS) requirements regarding the definition of 'fit and proper persons.'

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that all the policies referenced within the Report were available via the University's website.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the Annual Report of the Clerk to the Board and the attachments be noted; and
- (ii) the updated Code of Conduct for University Board Members be approved and signed by all Members.

**UB1362. Any Other Business**

- (i) *Board Training*

Mr Lee reported that the University had made good progress with its work to ensure compliance with the new OfS Condition E6 regarding harassment and sexual misconduct. As part of this work, the Board was asked to appoint two of its members to undertake 'Trauma Informed Panel Member Training' in the event that a Board member was required to serve on a Panel to hear an appeal against a dismissal decision in a case involving sexual misconduct. Mr Rehman and Dr Robins had provisionally agreed to undertake this training.

**Resolved:** That the proposal to appoint Mr Rehman and Dr Robins to undertake 'Trauma Informed Panel Member Training' on behalf of the Board, be approved.

- (ii) *Reserved Minute – Text Redacted*

**UB1363. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was due to take place on 27 and 28 November 2025 as part of the Board Residential at the Belsfield Hotel Windermere.

F Winters  
Deputy Clerk to the Board