

The University of Manchester

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 20 June 2018

Present:

Present: The Chancellor, Mr Lemn Sissay (in the Chair)

The President and Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Governors, Professor Clive Agnew, Mr Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Shoab Akhtar, Councillor Carl Austin-Behan, Dr Paul C Banford, Mrs Catherine Barber-Brown, Mrs Ann J Barnes, Ms Mumtaz Bashir, Dr Josie A Beeley, Dr Emyr Benbow, Mr Nicholas Bent, Ms Emma Bilsbury, Mr Carl Blake, Mr Christopher J Boyes, Mr Adrian Bull, Councillor Dylan Butt, Professor Jackie Carter, Dr Ronald E Catlow, Mr Brian Clancy, Dr William Hamilton Craig, Mr Peter J Dickinson, Professor Peter Eccles, Professor Susan Edwards, Professor Aneez Esmail, Mr Michael N G Evans, Canon Michael A Evans, Professor Colette Fagan, Mr Alan Ferns, Mr Peter J Folkman, Councillor Mr Colin Foster, Mr Matthew Foulkes, Professor Luke Georgiou, Mr Colin Gillespie, Mr Jim Hancock, Professor John R Helliwell, Miss Laura Hill, Dr Kamie Kitmitto, Mr J Anthony McDermott, Ms Brenda McMahon, Mr Andrew Medd, Ms Sandra Milne, Dr Paul Mitchell, His Honour Judge Tim Mort, Dr George Neisser, Ms Wilma Osuh, Mr Robert M Owen, Dr Thurai Rahulan, Mr Saqab Rasul, Dr John Roberts, Ms Abigail Shapiro, Dr Liane Smith, Canon Maurice Smith, Dr Shaun Speed, Ms Helen C Stevens, Ms Katharine Sullivan, Mr Tim Turvey, Mr Asrar Ul-Haq (60)

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance, the Director of Legal Affairs and Board Secretariat, Mr Mark Rollinson, Deputy Secretary. Prof Philip Withers, Chief Scientist, Royce Institute attended for Agendum 8.

1 National Honours

Reported:

- (1) On behalf of the General Assembly, the Chancellor offered congratulations to the following members of the University community, recognised for their achievements in the Queen's Birthday honours list:
- The University's Professor of New Writing, the acclaimed author, Jeanette Winterson (awarded an OBE in 2006) was made a CBE for services to literature. Jeanette also delivered the prestigious BBC Dibleby Lecture where she examined both the contemporary and historical fight for the equality of women.
 - Professor Jaswinder Singh Bamrah was also awarded a CBE, for services to mental health, to diversity and to the NHS. Professor Singh is a consultant psychiatrist at Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Trust and an Honorary Reader at the University.
 - Kidney specialist, Professor Donal O'Donoghue has been awarded an OBE. Professor O'Donoghue has worked at Salford Royal for more than 25 years, and has been recognised for his dedicated service to kidney patients. He is also Professor of Renal Medicine at the University.

- (2) A number of alumni had also been recognized for achievement in their fields and congratulations were offered to all those who had received awards.
- (3) The Chancellor also offered congratulations to a member of staff, Dr Robina Shah, who had been installed as High Sheriff of Greater Manchester.

2. Minutes

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 and accompanying action report were approved.

3. Matters arising

i) Review of the General Assembly

Reported: Following consultation and engagement with General Assembly members, the report on the review of General Assembly had been circulated on 24 May 2018 and a small number of comments had been received before the meeting (these were summarised in the agenda papers). The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer invited further comments from members.

Noted:

- (1) One of the key themes to emerge from the review was the importance of member engagement and finding mechanisms to facilitate this. The event on the development of the University's next strategic vision referred to later on the agenda was an example of how engagement could be extended and contributions encouraged.
- (2) The General Assembly benefitted from a rich and varied membership with members able to contribute and add value across a range of areas and it was important to harness and direct this.
- (3) Overall attendance rates were disappointing, with some persistent non-attenders and consideration should be given to addressing this.
- (4) Some people were members as they were nominated by a constituent organisation and this issue would be considered further in the review of membership.
- (5) The regulatory framework unequivocally placed governance responsibility and accountability with the Board of Governors although there was potential for others, including General Assembly members to be co-opted to Board committees (and the draft revisions to Statutes retained General Assembly membership on the Nominations Committee).
- (6) The suggestion that General Assembly members be provided with access to Board of Governors and Senate agendas would be given consideration.
- (7) Some members reported that they were not receiving the President and Vice-Chancellor's weekly updates and this would be addressed.
- (8) Further work to progress the recommendations of the review, including exploration of mechanisms to enhance member engagement would continue under the direction of Nominations Committee.

ii) Amendment to Statutes

Reported:

- (1) By the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer that the amendments to Statutes were proposed following the recommendations in the Governance Effectiveness Review; this included a reduction in Board size and simplification and de-regulation of Statutes with details transferred to Ordinance (the latter was being encouraged by the Department of Education to reduce the need for Privy Council oversight)

- (2) Amendment to Statutes would be considered by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 18 July 2018 and a rationale for changes was set out in the report distributed to General Assembly. Under Article IX of the Charter, General Assembly and Senate has the opportunity to express an opinion on proposed revisions. The same opportunity to express an opinion would be offered to the University's Senate the following week.
- (3) The Privy Council had been consulted and offered some initial and informal feedback indicating that it was content with the approach. The final version of revised Statutes would be put to the Privy Council for approval after Board of Governors ratification.

Noted:

- (1) As detail was being transferred to Ordinances (which were in the process of being redrafted) it would be helpful for the General Assembly to have sight of these once finalised.
- (2) The requirement for a lay majority on the Board had not changed from the previous version of Statutes. The Chair of the Board commented on the continuing requirement for the Board to be accountable to a range of internal and external stakeholders (including staff and students). The Board had given proactive consideration to the need to ensure diversity of membership (in terms of background and experience as well as gender and ethnicity) and this had been reflected in the recent Board recruitment round. The proposed changes to Statutes did not diminish the Board's accountability obligations.
- (3) The revised Statute retained the current method of election of the member of staff other than academic or research staff to the Board of Governors (ie election by General Assembly from amongst its staff members) and this merited further consideration.
- (4) The detail in the current Statute relating to the Auditors (Statute XIV) had been reduced but the University's obligations in this respect were retained in HEFCE and now OfS accounts directives.
- (5) The requirement for Privy Council oversight of Statutes and approval of any amendments was not efficient. However, given that changes to Ordinances was a matter for the Board (requiring a two-thirds majority), it was important to ensure that there were sufficient safeguards in place to ensure appropriate consultation before changes were considered by the Board.
- (6) The view that the proposals would benefit from further scrutiny.
- (7) In relation to (5) above, Statute XXII included a requirement for Senate to be offered an opportunity to express an opinion on any proposed amendment to Ordinances dealing with matters within the purview of Senate, and this remained unaltered in the proposed revision to Statutes.
- (8) The changes were consistent with the demands of the current regulatory framework; an environment of robust intellectual curiosity from the Board of Governors, Senate and the General Assembly were important elements of effective governance.
- (9) The revised Statutes retained General Assembly membership on the Nominations Committee and this was welcomed.
- (10) The Governance Effectiveness Review had recommended change to Nominations Committee, consistent with CUC guidance, so that it was comprised solely of Board members; however, the Board had recognised the importance of retaining an element of General Assembly membership.
- (11) The revised Statutes removed detail about the membership of General Assembly whilst retaining this detail for both the Board of Governors and Senate and further attention should be given to this; it was important that the Board was required to consult with General Assembly before any changes to General Assembly membership were made.
- (12) Comments from General Assembly along with any comments from Senate at its meeting on 27 June 2018 would be considered along with the proposed revisions by the Board at its meeting on 18 July 2018.

4. Membership of the General Assembly

Reported: by the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, that since the January 2018 meeting of the General Assembly the following have been elected, appointed or co-opted to membership.

In category 2

Dr Robina Shah MBE, DL, JP, High Sheriff of Greater Manchester
Councillor June Hitchen, Lord Mayor of Manchester

In category 8

Councillor Paul Dennett, Salford City Council

The current membership of the General Assembly is available on line at:
<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/governance>

5. Report from the Nominations Committee

Received: a report from Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the Nominations Committee,.

Reported:

- (1) Details of recommendations for appointment and re-appointment of Board of Governors and General Assembly members previously approved by the Board (including the extension of John Stageman's appointment to the Board exceptionally for a tenth and final year, along with recommendations for approval by the General Assembly (see below)
- (2) Recruitment to vacancies for lay members on General Assembly had been deferred pending completion of the review of General Assembly.
- (3) As noted above, notwithstanding the recommendations in the Lauwerys Report on governance effectiveness, the Board had endorsed the Committee's suggestion that Nominations Committee retain General Assembly members in its membership, and this was reflected in the revised draft Statutes.
- (4) It had been a very busy year for the Committee given its involvement in the review of General Assembly and Board recruitment; for the first time the Committee had engaged recruitment consultants in the Board recruitment exercise and this had resulted in an extremely strong list of potential candidates.
- (5) Membership of three members of the Nominations Committee expired on 31 August 2018, namely Professor Sir Robert Boyd, Catherine Barber-Brown and Susan Lipton. Professor Sir Robert Boyd had served the maximum of two consecutive terms of three years and was therefore not eligible for re-appointment. Given the ongoing review of General Assembly and proposed draft revision to Statutes, it was proposed to offer Catherine Barber-Brown and Susan Lipton a one-year extension to their current membership.
- (6) Thanks were extended to Professor Sir Robert Boyd for his past service to the Committee, to all current members of the Committee, the Chair of the Board and the President and Vice-

Chancellor for their work over the past year and to those involved in supporting the work of the Committee.

Resolved:

- (1) The following recommendations for re-appointment to the General Assembly in Category 10 be approved: some members were appointed for a fifth and final one year term (as indicated below) ending on 31 August 2019. For the others named, their three year term begins on 1 September 2018.

Mr Kabir Ahmed (one year appointment)
Canon Michael Evans (one year appointment)
Dr Kai Hung Lee (one year appointment)
Mrs Susan Lipton
Mr Ian Munro
Canon Michael Smith
Mr Asrar-ul-Haq.

- (2) In the interests of continuity, ongoing work on the General Assembly and proposed revisions to the future membership to Nominations Committee as part of the review of Statutes, that Catherine Barber-Brown and Susan Lipton be appointed to Nominations Committee for a further year from 1 September 2018.

6. Update on the work of the University

Received: The President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, reported on the key developments since the previous meeting, making reference to the *Stocktake Report 2016-17* which had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Reported:

- (1) A brief summary of the Accountability and Planning Conference, including performance against targets. In this context, the significant improvement in positive destinations for graduates was highlighted (ie 70% in 2010-11 , increasing to 83% in 2016-17) as was participation of almost 5,000 students (59% of year one undergraduate cohort in the Sustainability Challenge as part of the Stellify Programme).
- (2) The conference had noted the continued challenge to match the best in the sector in an external environment which is not benign, the need to focus resources, develop agility, continue to make sure the University's successes were known and celebrated and to ensure wider engagement on the University's future beyond 2020.
- (3) Actions arising from the Conference included providing further details to the Board on how the University is addressing equality, diversity and inclusion, providing a fuller picture on research funding, including indirect funding, providing further information on steps being taken to improve teaching quality, to update the Board on benchmarking and provide regular updates on the development of future vision.
- (4) The Conference had benefitted from an external perspective from Professor Glyn Davies, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Melbourne, who would take up an Honorary Chair at the University following his retirement from Melbourne.
- (5) Current risks included financial challenges, the review of post-18 Education and Funding (noting the significant detrimental impact of any recommendation for a reduction in tuition fees), Brexit, international competition, the continued difficult media environment, the pensions situation and the damaging effect of industrial action and generally increased demands and expectations.
- (6) Current opportunities included an increase in government research funding, expectation of a relaxation in relation to regulation of international students, the University's growing

international brand, breadth of international partnerships, benefits of regional devolution, the growing international profile of Manchester, the opportunities afforded by the North Campus development and the fact that the University remained the most popular university with students, with outstanding staff.

- (7) There had been some major new research investments, for example new Interdisciplinary Research Institutes (the Thomas Ashton Institute (on risk and regulation) and the Manchester China Institute as well as two institutes which were about to launch, the Work and Equalities Institute and the Lynda Becker Institute of immunology and Inflammatory Diseases) and the Digital Futures Network comprising over 800 academics across a range of research activities including cyber security, artificial intelligence and machine learning. 100 new Presidential Fellows, early career academics, would be recruited between now and autumn 2020 and Endowment funds were being invested in a range of new activities.
- (8) A number of major external research funding awards had been announced, including in the fields of social sciences, engineering, arthritis research; the University had enjoyed continued EU funding successes and the award of a Royal Society Professorship (to Prof Nick Higham).
- (9) In developing an outstanding learning and student experience, the University was promoting and expanding Stellify (including the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning, employment and placement opportunities, including opportunities for further study and online student support. There was a continued focus on tackling differential attainment, an ongoing review of portfolio (both overall size and shape) and a continued focus on the University of Manchester Worldwide Distance Learning Programme. New areas of focus included the new Office for Students regulatory regime and the subject level Teaching Excellence Framework, the Digital Learning Strategy and the Student Wellbeing Strategy, with a particular focus on student mental health.
- (10) The University had achieved major national recognition in a number of areas (for example, Silver HEIST (HE marketing) awards for Stellify and Research Beacon Initiatives, a global award for community engagement for the MyLearningEssentials programme and a number of national awards for the University's 10,000 actions sustainability initiative).
- (11) The University continued to be the only one in the UK with social responsibility as a core goal, with a range of initiatives, including The Works which had brought 3,226 unemployed people into work since 2011, and Equity and Merit scholarships which had enabled 223 students to benefit from free Masters Study since 2007. Under the University's School Governor Initiative, in 2016-17, 610 staff and alumni had volunteered as school governors in state schools.
- (12) The University's cultural institutions continued to be successful, having trebled visitor numbers to c1.2 million over the past decade. Both the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth had appointed new Directors (Esme Ward and Alistair Hudson respectively). Jodrell Bank had been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status, whilst John Rylands was regularly ranked as Manchester's best cultural visitor attraction on Trip Advisor.
- (13) In relation to business engagement and commercialisation, Manchester was UK industry's favourite University as measured by the value of research contracts from business and had risen nine places in the ranking of Europe's Most Innovative Universities in 2018, and was now ranked seventh in Europe and third in the UK. The £60 million Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre would open in autumn 2018 and enable scale-up of technology to market in 2-D materials, and bring industry partners on-site
- (14) Operational priorities for 2018-19 included improving colleague engagement, progress towards our research targets, improving key areas of teaching performance (with specific focus on subject level Teaching Excellence Framework, distance learning and wellbeing), improving equality, diversity and inclusion performance, particularly in relation to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic indicators, enhancing the University's financial sustainability (with focus on delivering the benefits of defined initiatives) and delivering major transformation initiatives.
- (15) The University's Capital Plan included the Alliance Manchester Business School and hotel, Manchester Engineering Campus Development (MECD), the Royce Institute building, Whitworth Gallery, student residences, Jodrell Bank and would include the development of North Campus once an agreed approach had been determined. In addition to the Presidential Fellows referred

to above, major projects included a focus on Digital and Creative, International Partnerships, major business links and the Inspiring Leaders Programme.

- (16) Following the announcement of Will Spinks' retirement as Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer on 30 September 2018, Patrick Hackett, currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Liverpool had been appointed to the role with effect from 1 October 2018. It was hoped that an announcement on the appointment of the new Dean of Biology, Medicine and Health (to replace Professor Ian Greer following his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast) would be made imminently.
- (17) There would be broad consultation with a range of stakeholders, including General Assembly, on the new strategic vision and the consultation document would include consideration of potential scenarios for the future of higher education and strategic questions facing the University.
- (18) The Prime Minister had visited Jodrell Bank in May 2018 to deliver a major speech on science technology and to confirm funding for the "First Light" gallery on site. During the speech, the Prime Minister unveiled four new missions, as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, tackling subjects such as healthy ageing, zero-carbon vehicles, home energy efficiency and using artificial intelligence to improve disease detection and prevention.
- (19) Key messages to take away included the University's global reach and impact whilst being firmly embedded in Manchester and proud to be part of the region, that the University was inclusive and aimed to provide a positive, challenging and transformative experience for students and to produce global graduates, that the University was research intensive, where both discovery was treasured and societal benefit was an aim and the University's commitment to distinctiveness.

7. Question and Answer Session

Reported: This item provided an opportunity for members to ask questions on any aspect of the University's work. The questions and answers provided at the meeting are enclosed in a separate report.

8. Henry Royce Institute

Received: a presentation from Professor Philip Withers, Chief Scientist at the Royce Institute, on the work of the Institute.

9. Opportunity for further engagement-strategic vision

Reported: General Assembly members were invited to an event as part of the process of developing the next strategic vision for the University; the event would take place on Monday 10 October 2018 from 2.00 to 3.30pm.

10. Dates of meetings in 2018-19

Reported: meetings in 2018-19 were scheduled as follows.

Wednesday 16 January 2018 at 3.00pm

Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 3.00pm

11. Summation and close

Reported:

- (1) The Chancellor expressed thanks to all the presenters and to the General Assembly members in attendance for the contribution they had made to the meeting.

- (2) Thanks and best wishes were extended to Will Spinks, Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer for his support and advice to General Assembly; this would be Mr Spinks' final meeting of General Assembly as he retired on 30 September 2018.

CLOSE.