

The University of Manchester

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 26 June 2019

Present:

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

The President and Vice-Chancellor, the Chair of the Board of Governors, Mr Kwame Kwarteng (General Secretary, Students Union), Ms Gillian Adams, Mr Tony Aggarwal, Mr Kabir Ahmed, Councillor Shoab Akhtar, Mrs Catherine Barber-Brown, Mrs Ann Barnes, Ms Lily Barton, Mr Nicholas Bent, Professor Margaret Brazier, Ms Fiona Campbell, Dr Ronald E Catlow, Mr Brian Clancy, Ms Alison Clarke, Councillor Sandra Collins, Dr William Hamilton Craig, Ms Angie Dickinson, Dr Dawn Edge, Mr Berrisford Edwards, Mr Michael N G Evans, Canon Michael A Evans, Professor Colette Fagan, Councillor J Paul Findlow, Mr Matthew Foulkes, Dr Reinmar Hager, Mr Jim Hancock, Professor John R Helliwell, Dr Alastair Holt, Dr James Hopkins, Mr Robert Hough, Mr Michael Jayson, Mr Leslie Jones, Mr Gareth Lewis, Mrs Susan Lipton, Dr Vanessa May, Mr J Anthony McDermott, Mr Andrew Medd, Dr Paul Mitchell, His Honour Judge Tim Mort, Dr Alison Newby, Professor Mahesh Nirmalan, Dr Rodger Pannone, Dr Thurai Rahulan, Professor Richard Reece, Mr John Schultz, Mr Mark Scoular, Ms Adigail Shapiro, Dr Angela Sharma, Councillor Andrew Snowden, Ms Helen C Stevens, Ms Katharine Sullivan, Mr Matthew Taylor, Mrs Sandra Taylor, Mr J Peter Wainwright, Mr Roy Walters, Mr Andrew Watson, Ms Roz Webster, Ms Marie Wright, Mr Ishaka Yakubu, Mr Gerry Yeung and Honorary Recorder His Honour Judge Stockdale QC. (64)

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance, the Director of Social Responsibility, the Head of Engagement and the Deputy Secretary.

1. Minutes

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 and accompanying action report were approved.

2. Matters arising

Noted: following a recommendation from the Board of Governors at its meeting on 20 February 2019, Privy Council approved revisions to Statutes with effect from 1 May 2019. The Board also approved consequent amendments to Ordinances at its meeting on 20 February 2019, to come into effect once revisions to Statutes were approved.

3. Membership of the General Assembly

Noted: details of current membership of the General Assembly.

4. Election of staff member (other than academic or research staff) to the Board of Governors by General Assembly members

Reported: following the recent election, Roz Webster was re-elected to the Board of Governors for a three year term, commencing on 1 September 2019.

5. Report from the Nominations Committee

Received: a report from the interim Chair of Nominations Committee, Jim Hancock (the Pro-Chancellor Gillian Easson was on an extended visit to New Zealand and expected to return in mid-2019). The Committee had appointed Jim Hancock as Interim Chair for 2018-19 at its meeting in October 2018.

Reported: there were two principal items of business:

i) General Update

a) The Committee had spent time on reviewing its own composition, in the light of changes to Statutes and Ordinances now agreed.

b) The revised composition of Nominations Committee as set out in revised Ordinances was as follows:

The Chair of the Board, ex-officio, (in the Chair)

Three members of the Board in Category 2 (lay members)

One member of the Board in Category 3 (Senate member)

One member of the Board in Category 4 (staff member)

Three lay members of the General Assembly who are not members of the Board, one of who shall be the Pro-Chancellor appointed pursuant to Statute IV.7. (The President and Vice-Chancellor may attend but not be a member of the Committee.)

c) The Board of Governors will consider appointment of members in Categories 2, 3 and 4 at its meeting on 17 July 2019. In this context, General Assembly **noted**:

- The current Board of Governors lay member on the Committee, Andrew Spinoza had served two consecutive three year terms on the Committee and would therefore not normally be eligible for reappointment. The Board will therefore be asked to appoint to the three vacant positions.
- The current Senate member of the Committee, Professor Silvia Massini will cease to be a member of the Board on 31 August 2019, so a new Senate member of the Board will be appointed. An election for the one vacancy for a Senate member of the Board recently concluded and Prof Danielle George was re-elected for a further three year term from 1 September 2019. The Board now had six Senate members in line with the revised Statute. In addition to Prof George, these were: Prof Aneez Esmail, Dr Reinmar Hager, Prof Nalin Thakkar, Dr Steve Jones and Dr Delia Vazquez.
- The current staff member of the Committee, Roz Webster was re-elected to the Board for a further three year term from 1 September 2019, following an election process involving General Assembly members and as Roz was now the only member in this category of Board membership, the Board will be asked to confirm her reappointment to the Committee. In the medium to longer term, the electoral process for this position would need review, given the changes in composition of General Assembly.
- From 1 September 2019, one of the three General Assembly members of the Committee will be the Pro-Chancellor (ex-officio). Jim Hancock's current term of office runs until 31 August 2020, and he will therefore continue in membership

until that date. Earlier agreement to pause reappointment to General Assembly meant that Wakkas Khan and Catherine Barber-Brown will cease to be General Assembly members from 1 September 2019 (Wakkas Khan had also served the usual maximum Committee membership of two continuous terms of three years). Given the significant turnover of membership and to ensure continuity, General Assembly **resolved** that Susan Lipton be reappointed to the remaining vacancy for a General Assembly member on the Committee for the remainder of her term as a member of General Assembly (until 31 August 2021)

d) Thanks were extended to those members stepping down from the Nominations Committee at the end of the current academic year (Catherine Barber-Brown, Wakkas Khan, Prof Silvia Massini and Andrew Spinoza). Thanks were also extended to all members of General Assembly whose current terms of office end on 31 August 2019 and who, as a result of the changes to the composition of General Assembly will step down from membership at that time. The contributions of all members to either Nominations Committee and/or General Assembly were greatly appreciated.

e) The Committee had considered optimal skills for future membership and emphasised the importance of both a balanced and diverse membership and a clear and demonstrable commitment to equality and diversity amongst all members.

f) Other recommendations all endorsed by the Board included:

- Reappointment of current Chair of the Board, Edward Astle initially for a further term of two years (ie until 31 August 2021) subject to review.
- Appointment of Dr Neil McArthur for a further term of three years from 1 September 2019, as a lay member of the Board.
- That Paul Lee not be replaced as a lay Board member at the end of his third and final three year term (on 31 August 2019), to enable the Board to reduce membership naturally by one lay member, and achieve the total of thirteen lay members set out in the revised Statutes.
- Appointment of Trevor Rees for a further three year term as a co-opted member of Audit Committee, i.e. until 31 August 2022.
- Appointment of Vincent Wang to the time-limited Board North Campus Working Group (Mr Wang has extensive relevant professional knowledge and experience).

ii) Proposed framework for the reconstituted General Assembly

a) The report updated General Assembly on further work carried out on the review of General Assembly since the meeting in January 2019. By confirming a more streamlined and less prescriptive membership, the proposed framework was intended to ensure that General Assembly continues to play a key role in supporting the University's mission as a civic university. In the past year, more opportunities for proactive engagement with General Assembly members had been sought and it was intended that this should continue and be further enhanced with the reconstituted membership.

b) Building on earlier discussions at both General Assembly and Nominations Committee (including an agreed overall membership of between 80 and 100, with at

least two thirds of members external to the University) the proposed revised composition of General Assembly included the following:

- Internal membership of 25
- External membership of c65-70. This includes representation from the Alumni Association and members of designated bodies (18).
- The bulk of external members (40-45) to be individual appointments, with the aim of ensuring a balance of appointments from the following areas or sectors:
 - Health
 - Education
 - Arts/Culture
 - Digital/technological/Media
 - Third sector/voluntary
 - Environment/sustainability
 - Major Greater Manchester “anchor” employers.

lii) The interim Chair concluded his report with a brief account of an Alumni Association event he had recently attended in London. This had been inspirational and had illustrated the immense breadth of the activities of the University and its alumni.

Noted:

- (1) Within the constraints of the revised constitution as outlined above, Nominations Committee would give further consideration to future representation from General Assembly on the Committee in the next academic year.
- (2) When seeking new members (either as individuals or from designed bodies) it was important to give prior notice of the meeting schedule and usual meeting times, given that some prospective members may not be able to attend daytime meetings.
- (3) Whether the outcomes of the review of General Assembly outlined above had paid sufficient attention to the function and purpose of General Assembly (as well as structure).
- (4) The aim of the reform was to move towards a reinvigorated General Assembly playing a key role in supporting the University’s mission as a civic university, maximising engagement of members.
- (5) Whilst this review had been in progress, there had been parallel attempts to enhance engagement with existing members. For example, the session on the development of the University’s Vision held last October, where members’ contributions helped to shape the Vision and supporting strategic themes which were approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in May 2019. A further example was the briefing organised by colleagues in the Careers Service on student mentoring in December.
- (6) The agenda for the meeting included a presentation from the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer on the development of University Values.
- (7) There had also been attempts to enhance awareness of relevant events around campus which may be of interest to members. Two recent examples were the launch of the Panamanian wildlife conservation initiative at the Museum in April and the invitation to an International Women’s’ Day event in March. Members also continue to receive the regular e-Update with University news.
- (8) As noted in the Action Report which accompanied the minutes of the January 2019 meeting on the agenda, the University continued to welcome relevant advice and input from members on specific areas of expertise.
- (9) Digital developments, including access to video content, was a further method of encouraging engagement.

- (10) In seeking individual members, the importance of ensuring alignment with the University's developing strategy. The list of suggested areas/sectors outlined above did not preclude other suggestions, including individuals from professional bodies represented on General Assembly under the previous constitution.

Resolved:

- (1) Current members, including retiring members, be encouraged to submit suggestions for future General Assembly membership
- (2) Nominations Committee submit a further report on proposed membership to the meeting in January 2020.

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 2017-18* which had been circulated with papers for the meeting. (Copies of slides used during the meeting were subsequently circulated to members.)

Reported:

- (1) The Accountability and Planning Conference had reviewed performance against targets over the past year against each of the KPIs
- (2) Operational priorities for 2019-20 (i.e. Enable and empower our people; Progress delivery of our research and business engagement strategy; Improve key areas of teaching performance; Be distinctive in social responsibility; Enhance our financial sustainability; Deliver our major transformation initiatives).
- (3) Details of new investments, including 100 Presidential Fellows to be recruited by autumn 2020.
- (4) Major new research initiatives including interdisciplinary Research Institutes and the Digital Futures Network.
- (5) Major external research funding awards across the breadth of the University's activities.
- (6) Measures to promote, expand and enhance learning and the student experience (e.g. the first Stellify graduates would complete in July 2019, a review of shape and size of portfolio, measures to tackle differential attainment and the developing Student Wellbeing Strategy). The latter included student mental health and the University was part of a Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership initiative across Greater Manchester universities to provide a dedicated, fast-track service from September 2019.
- (7) External recognition for a range of activities including Stellify, Research Beacons, sustainable procurement, and a Gold Watermark for public engagement activities.
- (8) Activities to support business (University was ranked first in the UK for research income from UK business, seventh in Europe (and third in UK) for commercialisation of Intellectual Property and had the largest number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
- (9) Appointments of new Vice-Presidents for Teaching, Learning and Students and Social responsibility would be announced imminently.
- (10) A summary of staff survey outcomes; 69% of staff had responded, 92% of staff said that the University is a good place to work and 89% feel proud to work for the University. Areas to address following the survey were communications and SLT engagement, maintaining a positive working environment for all staff and management of change. Results were being cascaded through the organisation and action plans developed; shorter pulse surveys would in future supplement the triennial staff survey.
- (11) The external environment mean the sector continued to face change and uncertainty (e.g. Brexit and ongoing pensions issues). The Augar review of post-18 education had now reported, with the headline being a recommended reduction in the maximum fee to £7,500 (with the consequent funding gap being made up from government funds). There was general support for improving

the relative position of further education, although the extension of the loan payment period and the reduction in the loan repayment threshold were seen as regressive. The current political situation meant that implementation of the review findings in their entirety was now unlikely; any proposals to amend the current maximum fee level required parliamentary approval.

- (12) There was recognition of the impact of change on staff morale with major staff engagement initiatives (e.g the Inspiring Leaders programme and the Our Future dialogue) helping to address this.
- (13) Over 4,000 people had taken part in the Our Future engagement which had reinforced the importance of existing goals and highlighted “how we do things” as an area to address. The seven strategic themes were: Our People, Our Values, research and discovery, teaching and learning, social responsibility, innovation, civic engagement and global influence.
- (14) Student recruitment was healthy with applications, offers and acceptances 10% above the same time last year (with international increase of 20%). The likely reinstatement of the post-study work visa would benefit international recruitment.
- (15) A brief overview of current opportunities, including Devo Health, Northern Powerhouse, international developments, the data/digital environment and North Campus.
- (16) In December 2018, the Duke of York had opened the Masdar Building for the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre, a state of the art facility providing the world’s first graphene cluster, driving development in the city (potential contribution of £1.2 billion to Manchester’s GVA).
- (17) Other estates developments including the refurbished Alliance Manchester Business School incorporating the hotel and executive education centre, the Schuster Building extension, the completion of Brunswick Park which had significantly improved public realm, the Royce Institute (due to open in 2019, bringing together materials researchers from across the country) and the Manchester Engineering Campus Development.

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 (either before or at the meeting) were made available to members in a separate report.

8. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; the University’s social and environmental impact

Received: a presentation from Professor James Thompson, Vice-President for Social Responsibility and Dr Julian Skyrme, Director of Social Responsibility on the University’s approach to addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. (Copies of slides used during the presentation were subsequently circulated to members.)

9. Developing our University Values

Received: a presentation from Patrick Hackett, Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer and Rachael McGraw, Head of Engagement on the development of University Values. (Copies of slides used during the presentation were subsequently circulated to members.)

10. Date of next meeting of the General Assembly

Reported: That the next meeting of the General Assembly would be held on Wednesday, 15 January 2020 at 3.00 pm, with a further meeting on Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 3.00pm

11. Summation and close

Reported:

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. The Chancellor paid particular thanks to all members attending their final meeting. Their attendance, contribution and support for the University's work had been greatly appreciated and it was hoped that members would maintain their connection to the University in the years to come.

CLOSE.