

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Wednesday, 24 February 2021 (meeting held via video conference)

Present: Mr Edward Astle (in the Chair), President and Vice-Chancellor (except item 21), Mrs Ann Barnes (Deputy Chair), Mr Nana Agyeman, Prof Claire Alexander, Mr Gary Buxton, Mr Michael Crick, Prof Danielle George, Mr Colin Gillespie, Dr Reinmar Hager, Mr Nick Hillman, Mr Kwame Kwarteng (General Secretary of UMSU), Ms Caroline Johnstone, Mrs Bridget Lea, Dr Neil McArthur, Mr Robin Phillips, Mr Richard Solomons, Mr Andrew Spinoza, Dr Delia Vazquez, Dr Jim Warwicker, Mrs Alice Webb, and Ms Ros Webster(22)

Apologies: Prof Steve Jones.

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (RSCOO) (left during item 21), the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (except item 21), the Chief Financial Officer (except item 21), the Vice-President and Dean of Faculty for Biology, Medicine and Health (except item 21), the Director of Compliance and Risk (item 9), the Vice-President for Social Responsibility (item 11), the Interim Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (item 11), the Associate Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students and Director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning (items 11 and 12), the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students (item 12) and the Deputy Secretary.

1. Declarations of Interest

Reported: there were no new declarations of interest

2. Minutes

Agreed: the minutes of the meetings held on 20, 27 and 29 January 2021 as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Received: an updated report on ongoing issues that had been raised at previous meetings.

4. President and Vice-Chancellor's report and update on campus reopening

Received: the report from the President and Vice-Chancellor.

Reported:

(1) The government had announced that all students whose studies include practical and practice based subjects (including some creative arts) can return to campus and resume those forms of teaching from 8 March. There will be a review in April to consider the return of other students for in-person teaching. A significant number of students had already returned to campus (estimate approximately 60%).

(2) Responses to Unit Evaluation Questionnaires were generally very positive and indicated strong levels of satisfaction with quality of teaching (many areas achieving satisfaction rates of over 80%); technical support was an area where there was scope for further improvement.

(3) Attrition rates for undergraduates were lower than at the corresponding time in the previous year, whilst postgraduate taught rates were slightly higher. Fee income was currently above target.

(4) Applications were 13% higher than at the corresponding time in the previous year and the University's position was better than the sector as a whole and the Russell Group. UK applications had increased by 7%, EU applications had reduced by 29% (students from the EU were now required to pay full international fees) with international applications up by 44% (China up 30%, India up 47% and USA up 75%, the latter from a low base).

(5) There was continued focus on student communications and engagement and this included investment in student mental health and wellbeing previously reported to the Board. There was mirrored by support for staff health and wellbeing and in recognition of continued staff efforts, two additional days holiday had been granted at Easter.

(6) The appendix to the Planning and Resources Committee report (item 17) outlined recent government policy announcements including consultation on Post Qualification Admissions and a proposed consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework. The government had also announced the launch of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA), a new independent research body to fund high-risk, high-reward scientific research.

(7) The Secretary of State had also written to all Universities following publication of a policy paper outlining measures to strengthen academic freedom and free speech in higher education which included a new registration condition and free speech champion. Universities had been encouraged to review existing practices. Sector commentary had questioned the relative priority of this at present in light of other demands.

(8) Recent press coverage about academic and research links to Chinese universities had included reference to the University and this area was covered in the appendix to the President and Vice-Chancellor's report. The President and Vice-Chancellor had a meeting scheduled with the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee which had been reviewing this area. The University had developed enhanced processes to ensure compliance with export controls regulations and recognised the potentially complex risks and issues arising from international research partnerships: ongoing work in this area was designed to provide assurance about potential new research partners.

(9) An external review of communications and reputation management had resulted in an action plan which had been considered by the Senior Leadership Team. Recommendations included development of a communications protocol, enhanced senior communications input at senior level, an anticipatory communications grid highlighting potential future issues, improving speed of response to social media activity (including a new social media listening tool), enhanced media training and developing and implementing a new student communications and engagement strategy.

Noted:

(1) The complex nature of relations with China were recognised given changing geopolitical dynamics; there was continued government encouragement to recruit Chinese students alongside increased scrutiny of new and existing research relationships and these were issues which the President and Vice-Chancellor would address in discussions with the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

(2) The Board agreed that there was merit in a more in-depth consideration of the University's relationship with China after further executive review and discussion; such a review had been postponed from earlier in the academic year because of pressure of other business, but was now scheduled for the July Board meeting. **Action: Deputy Secretary**

(3) In response to a question about recent press coverage regarding cash payments from international students, it was noted that the University had stopped accepting cash as a payment method for tuition fees in November 2019. Prior to that, on very limited occasions, it had accepted this form of payment but this represented less than 0.5% of direct receipts. The University had taken necessary precautions to ensure all financial guidelines and regulations were followed.

5. Health, Safety and Wellbeing report (Q1)

Received: the Quarter One Health, Safety and Wellbeing report.

Reported:

- (1) The quarterly report covered: key metrics and performance indicators and a summary of significant issues relating to health, safety and well-being (including any wider learning); and progress against key initiatives in the academic year 2020-21.
- (2) For some of the metrics and key performance indicators, baseline figures were given, as comparable data was not available for quarter one in the previous year.
- (3) The report noted that on 8th October 2020 a male first year undergraduate student was found deceased in halls of residence and the University was liaising with the Coroner’s Office. There had been no on-campus deaths since that date.
- (4) The Board welcomed the clarity of the revised approach to reporting.

Noted (in response to questions):

- (1) There was acknowledged under-reporting in the current system but available data showed that total sickness absence amounted to approx. 1% of the total paybill.
- (2) Greater Manchester Police had been proactive in providing proportionate assistance and response to incidents of behaviour breaching Covid restrictions.
- (3) The figures for students accessing student support was an overall, global figure and if possible, greater specificity would be helpful (as was the case for the “Together all” support resources for example).
- (4) Differences in baseline data and matters recorded meant that it was not always possible to provide benchmark, comparative data: the potential to include the accidents per 100,000 hours worked metric would be reviewed.
- (5) The General Secretary of the Students’ Union advised that a Student-Staff Wellbeing Group had been established.

Action: Deputy Secretary/Health and Safety Services

6. Financial Position

Received: a review of performance in year to date, setting out the latest outturn position in relation to budget.

Reported:



Redacted –

restricted information

(4) The report outlined risks and opportunities, with tuition fees and halls of residence income remaining as substantial risks: there was potential for the sector as a whole to be asked to consider reduction in tuition fees. Forecast attrition rates were prudent and there were indications that in some areas attrition rates were better than had been the case historically.

Noted:

(1) As discussed at earlier Board meetings, the current sector funding model was not sustainable in the longer term, given that most sources of income were static or in decline (with only international fee income offering real growth in the face of year on year increase in costs). The incoming

President of University College London had recently written on the hard choices facing his institution and the sector, noting that a model of continued, rapid growth was unsustainable.

(2) In response to questions, the University would be looking to consolidate on growth from this academic year, with potential for further growth in specific disciplines; easing of lockdown was unlikely to have any significant impact on the core other income budget.

Redacted – restricted information

(4) Work to address and reduce volatility in forecasting was ongoing and would be reported to Finance Committee.

Redacted – restricted information

(6) The following agenda item addressed the current version of the five year plan which was presented for submission to the Office for Students (OfS).

7. Office for Students Annual Financial Return (five-year plan)

Received: the annual financial return and accompanying commentary, for submission to the Office for Students (OfS).

Reported:

(1) The return had evolved from the version considered by Finance Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2021, building on reasonable favourable assumptions believed to be feasible and prudent in the context of current circumstances (noting that there was potential for assumptions to alter in relation to the pandemic). Revised assumptions included increased overseas tuition fee growth and cost savings. This version had been returned to OfS by the initial submission deadline of 1 February 2021 and would be returned as the final version to OfS, subject to Board confirmation, by the final deadline of 1 March 2021. The return would also be shared with Moody's credit rating agency, banks and other external stakeholders.

(2) Review of strategy and operating model in order to achieve long-term sustainability was ongoing and as a result development of the five-year plan would evolve further in the forthcoming months, enabling consideration of a revised position at the Board Strategy Session on 5 July 2021. The Chair reiterated that, as outlined in his report later on the agenda, it was imperative for the University to generate sustainable levels of surplus to ensure that strategic ambition was matched by financial capacity. This required prioritisation and the identification of measures to ensure delivery of strategic ambition with the goal of delivering a 10% operating surplus (before depreciation and excluding capital income) to provide sufficient headroom for investment in campus and facilities.

Agreed: to approve submission of the Annual Financial Return and accompanying commentary to OfS. **Action: Chief Financial Officer**

8. Faculty update: Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

Received: a report and presentation from the Vice-President and Dean of Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (BMH).

Reported:

(1) The presentation covered an overview of the Faculty's Strategic Framework and the Faculty's response to Covid (including pivot of research focus to Covid related activity and staff and student support for the NHS frontline).

(2) Challenges included maintaining essential research and permitted activities in a Covid-secure manner: the need to rapidly develop the approach to blended and online learning: increased

workload and the need to balance research and teaching priorities and address concerns for staff wellbeing, delivery of clinical requirements during the pandemic: stability of the research funding landscape: and maintaining strategic and financial focus in spite of the short-term demands of the pandemic.

(3) The Faculty had shown resilience in the face of demands of Covid through its demonstrable excellence in teaching, learning and the student experience, inter-disciplinarity in research, links to the NHS and Health Innovation Manchester (supported by the redesignation of the Manchester Academic Health Science Centre) and significant successes in Cancer Research UK and National Institute for Health Research funding.

(4) Areas where there was scope for improvement included student experience in some areas, use of data to support informed decision making, sub-optimal space in some areas, potential to improve relative share of Medical Research Council funding and strengthening succession planning.

(5) There were significant opportunities to challenge previous ways of working, e.g. further developing blended learning, flexible working, space utilization and rationalizing the Postgraduate Taught portfolio, exploring alternative sources of revenue and further enhancing interdisciplinary working.

Noted (in response to questions):

(1) In response to a question, in the initial stages of the pandemic, some Nursing placements had been terminated prematurely: action to mitigate the impact of this had been taken and lessons learnt for the future.

(2) There was recognition of the extraordinary efforts and response of the Faculty in the wake of the pandemic and there needed to be cognizance of the impact of this in the next phases of planning, including how the Faculty would contribute to the challenge of ensuring institutional financial sustainability. Prioritisation would need to protect areas of strength and this included the Faculty's significant contribution both to social responsibility and reducing health inequalities in the Greater Manchester region

9. Risk Register

Received: the latest version of the revised University Strategic Risk Register.

Reported:

(1) The Strategic Risk Register underwent a major refresh through 2020, both in terms of format and content and this was reported to the Board of Governors and Audit and Risk Committee towards the end of 2020. The update was timely given challenges posed by the pandemic and it enabled the capture of new strategic issues, risks and mitigations.

(2) The most recent iteration of the Risk Register integrated the previously separate Brexit Risk Register. Work was underway, with risk owners, to revise the current version of the Register to reflect the post-Brexit reality and this was informed by further work assessing implications and risks.

(3) The version of the Register before the Board was in the same format as the version seen previously. The intention now was to revert to the more standard reporting pattern to Audit and Risk Committee and the Board (i.e July and February presentation to the Board of Governors, with prior consideration by June and January Audit and Risk Committee meetings respectively). This would not preclude other and/or urgent matters relating to risk being raised where required at either Audit and Risk Committee and/or the Board of Governors.

Noted:

(1) In response to a question about the bunching of the majority of risks as displayed on the Risk Register, there would be further discussion with risk owners in the next iteration about likelihood and impact. This would ascertain whether it was possible to obtain greater differential and facilitate understanding of relative priorities in relation to risk (noting that definition of likelihood related to occurrence over the next three years approximately).

(2) There was merit in including a generic risk relating to future disruption or unrest caused by a major health or political event (in the context of, for example, the University's vulnerability to a significant reduction in the number of students from China).

(3) Enhancements to mitigations as currently recorded in the Risk Register would be considered initially by management and then by Audit and Risk Committee.

Action: Director of Compliance and Risk

10. Update on Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

Received: a report summarising recent changes to USS, providing progress to date on the 2020 actuarial valuation, next steps for employers once the valuation report was produced (including response to consultation), potential proposals for change and consultation with affected employees.

Reported:

(1) The Board was reminded that the USS was one of the largest defined benefit (DB) schemes in the UK and that the University was one of the largest participators in the scheme. The costs of DB schemes were rising for a variety of reasons and whilst the scheme now contained Defined Contribution (DC) elements, a proposal to move fully to DC in 2018 had been withdrawn and there was a history of industrial action in relation to proposed changes to USS.

(2) USS contribution rates had risen significantly in recent years for employees and employers (the March 2020 actuarial valuation was the third in the last four years): current contribution rates were 30.7% (21.1% employer: 9.6% employee) with a movement to 34.7% (23.7% employer: 11% employee) planned for October 2021 (implementation was subject to any agreement on future benefits and alternative contribution rates from the 2020 valuation).

(3) The next stage in the 2020 valuation was for the trustee to deliver the valuation report to the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC, comprising equal numbers of representatives from Universities UK and the Universities and Colleges Union, with an independent chair), including the contribution rate/rates required to meet the current benefit promise and the deficit. Current indications were that the required rate to meet the future benefit promise would be prohibitively high.

(4) Both the JNC and the Pensions Regulator were taking a prudent view and this was influenced by the recent withdrawal of Trinity College Cambridge from the scheme and the impact on the assets base of this and any future departures from a similar quarter (in the context of the USS "last man standing" rule).

Noted:

(1) The Board shared the concerns expressed about the sustainability of the current model, without any change to future benefits structure but recognized that the latter was likely to result in industrial action.

(2) There was little likelihood that the government would have the appetite to take over the scheme.

(3) The current levels of opt-out (20%) from the scheme meant that there were clear concerns about inter-generational fairness, with younger employees potentially significantly disadvantaged.

(4) There was a need to evaluate options once UUK launched the employer consultation (after the USS trustee had passed the report to the JNC): the University would be asked for a view on the rates quoted and benefit reform. Consultation would be launched imminently and last for seven weeks. Given its significance, the response would be put to the Board for review and approval.

Action: RSCOO/Deputy Secretary

11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) update

Received: an update on EDI, which included actions taken since the publication of the Race Matters report, an assessment of the current position and steps planned to effect further improvement.

Reported:

(1) There was a need to ensure a more strategic, proactive, impactful and cohesive approach, with fewer initiatives and more consideration and evaluation of outcomes. Effective leadership and a partnership approach with staff and students were vital components, as was clarifying roles and responsibilities and enhancing the governance structure supporting EDI.

(2) It was important for the evolving approach to take account of the lived experience of staff and students, including those who had been critical of the University's past approach.

(3) Given the importance of making progress and the need to maintain momentum, work on clarifying roles and responsibilities and the development of an outline strategy and action plan would continue in advance of appointment of the new permanent Director of EDI. This approach would not preclude the Director, when appointed, influencing the further development of strategy.

Noted: the Board welcomed the presentation and direction of travel and strongly endorsed an approach which would result in fewer, individual initiatives and a more strategic, cohesive approach resulting in greater impact.

12. Academic Governance Assurance

Received: the annual report on the University's undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. The report summarised the University's quality assurance and enhancement activity, reflected on the challenges caused by the global pandemic, and looked ahead to the opportunities provided via 'Our Future'.

Reported:

(1) The report was recommended for approval by the Board by the meeting of Senate on 3 February 2021. Many of the metrics reported in previous years were addressed in the annual report on Operational Priorities for 2019-20, which will come to the Board's March meeting.

(2) 2020-21 was a transition year given the roll-out of Our Future, the University's new vision and strategic plan and consequent development of new measures of success; furthermore, some national measures were in a state of transition (e.g. National Student Survey, Graduate Outcomes Survey). As a result, the report was largely narrative, though with reference to data throughout. The report was supported by detailed relevant "deep dive" information from the Annual Performance Review, a summary of the work of the Institute of Teaching and Learning and the Online and Blended Learning Tactical Project.

(3) As noted above, the outcome of the recent Unit Evaluation Questionnaire process was generally very positive. The annual review of learning and teaching had just been completed and had been student led, which had resulted in very useful insights.

Noted:

(1) The report referred to the success of the Emergency Hardship Funding campaign, the most successful of its kind in the UK. Money was still available to support students through the Living Cost Support Fund. The government had recently announced an additional £50 million funding to support students facing financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19, and the University's share of this was approximately £300,000.

(2) In response to a question, there had been a slight increase in incidents of academic malpractice since the onset of the pandemic. This matter had been considered at Teaching and Learning Group and national research suggested that development of inclusive, authentic (and less generic) methods of assessment were important factors in addressing the issue.

(3) There were established mechanisms for ensuring feedback to staff from Unit Evaluation Questionnaires.

Agreed: on the basis of Senate’s recommendation, to confirm that the report provided assurance of the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, noting that future reports would include a wider range of metrics and reference further independent assurance measures.

13. Governance Effectiveness Review

Received: a report advising the Board of the evaluation by Nominations Committee of two submissions from organisations interested in carrying out the external Governance Effectiveness Review.

Noted: as the Board had previously been advised, the scope of the review was much broader in scope than recent reviews and the Committee’s assessment was that Halpin had the breadth of experience, expertise and insight to fulfil the brief given successfully.

Agreed: on the recommendation of Nominations Committee, to appoint the Halpin Partnership to carry out the review. **Action: Deputy Secretary**

14. Chair’s Report

Received: a report from the Chair summarising the meeting of Committee Chairs on 17 December 2020, the EDI Advisory Group on 18 January 2021 and outlining the agenda for the Accountability Review on 23 March 2021.

Noted: that Board pairs would need to allocate some time to work together to prepare questions and to assist this process, supporting materials for the review (Annual Performance Review reports, Stocktake report and report on 2019-20 Operational Priorities) would be made available shortly after the meeting of Planning and Resources Committee on 2 March 2021.

15. Secretary’s Report

i) OfS Update

Noted: the update on matters relating to the OfS, including submission of two reportable events.

ii) Exercise of Delegations

Reported: the award of Emeritus Professorships as outlined in the report.

16. University-Union Relations Committee (21 January 2021)

Received: a report from the meeting of the University-Union Relations Committee (UURC) held on 21 January 2020.

17. Planning and Resources Committee (8 December 2020 and 2 February 2021)

Received: a report from the meetings of Planning and Resources Committee held on the above dates.

18. Board Committee reports

(i) Finance Committee (20 and 27 January 2021)

Received: a report from the meetings held on 20 and 27 January 2021

Reported:

(1) The Committee was advised that provided that the Revolving Credit Facility was in place, then the University would not need to draw down from the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF). The renegotiation of financial covenants with note holders alongside the RCF would establish greater financial headroom for the University. Finance Committee approved the club arrangement for the RCF, while the Board, at its 20 January meeting agreed to extend the delegation of power to enter into the RCF.

(2) The OfS Annual Financial Return was covered under item 7 above.

(3) In relation to Northern Gritstone, the Committee confirmed that the University can enter into a Framework Agreement and associated company Articles subject to satisfactory assurances being provided to the Chair of Finance Committee regarding the satisfactory resolution of several matters of governance and legal liabilities in relation to commercial aspects of the proposed investment vehicle.

(4) In relation to Manchester Graphene Company, final and full governance proposals would be presented to Finance Committee for approval in due course. The Committee recognised the importance of clarifying aspects of the governance of satellite entities and subsidiaries and this would be a standing item on its future meeting agendas.

(5) The 2019-20 Financial Statements had been approved by the Board meeting on 29 January 2021.

ii) Audit and Risk Committee (27 January 2021)

Received: a report from the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 27 January 2021.

Reported:

(1) Uniac had finalised and completed five substantive audits since the previous meeting of the Committee and this included a review of IT Services: Suppliers and Consultants. The report had identified significant opportunities for development in relation to effectiveness of design, and that implementation and economy and efficiency were both ineffective. The report noted weaknesses in the management of IT suppliers and in the implementation of the hybrid model of delivery and identified nine areas for improvement with agreed management actions and implementation dates.

(2) The report also provided details of an attempted fraud and outlined the Committee's consideration of the TRAC return: minor adjustments to the detail considered by the Committee had been approved via Chair's action.

(3) Ensuring timely recording of staff leavers continued to be an action highlighted in the external audit management letter: resolution of this was now a matter of some urgency and needed to be owned by leaders across the institution, requiring behavioural and cultural change.

(4) The Committee would meet later in the week (25 February) to consider expressions of interest in the external audit tender.

(iii) Joint meeting of Audit and Risk and Finance Committees (29 October 2020)

Received: a report which confirmed the outcome of the joint meeting of Audit and Risk and Finance Committees as reported verbally to the meeting of the Board of Governors on 29 January 2021 and recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

(iv) Staffing Committee (5 February 2021)

Received: a report from the meeting of Staffing Committee held on 5 February 2021.

Agreed:

On the Committee's recommendation that:

(1) The University enter into consultation with the campus trade unions about the Library Reshaping Project staffing proposals to reduce posts by a net of 9.37 (FTE) from an "at risk" pool of 103.45 (FTE) posts and, subject to consultation, progress with its proposals for voluntary severance;

(2) The University continued to take all steps highlighted to Staffing Committee to avoid the need for redundancy wherever this was possible and, in particular, to support the use of the University's Voluntary Severance Scheme in the affected areas;

(3) Staffing Committee should continue to oversee these proposals in accordance with Part II of Ordinance XXIII.

Action: RSCOO/Director of Human Resources

(v) Remuneration Committee (18 November 2020)

Received: the report from the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 18 November 2020, noting that key issues had been highlighted in the verbal report to the Board meeting held on 24 November 2020.

(vi) North Campus Working Group

Noted: an update on progress had been made to the Board briefing immediately before the meeting and details from this would be made available for members in the Diligent Reading Room.

19. Report from the Senate

Received: a report from the Senate meetings held on 4 December 2020, 5 January 2021 and 3 February 2021.

Reported:

(1) Senate had approved the annual assurance report considered by the Board as a discrete item (item 12 above).

(2) After a vote, Senate had rejected a motion submitted by a number of elected members to establish a Senate Task and Finish Group to work with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and groups that report to SLT with a focus on Covid and future strategy to manage the impact of Covid on key University activities, students and staff.

(3) Senate had received a paper inviting it (in accordance with the provisions of the University Charter and Statutes) to express an opinion on the wording of the proposed amendments to Statutes and Ordinances regarding the appointment of the Chancellor (Statute IV, and Ordinance I), and the method of seeking the staff member of the Board of Governors (Statute VI).

(4) Senate had previously been advised of proposals to amend these Statutes and the Ordinance, and comments received from members during a consultation in July-August 2020 were presented to Nominations Committee and the Board.

(5) Senate had agreed to conduct a ballot of members by e-mail on the wording of the proposed amendments. The outcome of this ballot was reported to the Board as below:

- i) Do you support the wording of the proposed amendments to Statute IV and Ordinance I, regarding the appointment of the Chancellor Yes 18, No 31, Recorded abstention 1, No vote 20
- ii) Do you support the wording of the proposed amendment to Statute VI, regarding the method of seeking the staff member of the Board of Governors. Yes 21, No 29, No vote 20

(6) Having heard the outcome of the ballot, the Board agreed to pause consideration of the proposed amendments to enable further reflection. The Board Nominations Committee would receive a full report of the outcome of the ballot, including comments received and would report to the Board.

Action: Deputy Secretary

20. Forward agenda for 2020-21

Received: the Board forward agenda for 2020-21.

At this point, the President and Vice-Chancellor and all other officers in attendance except the RSCOO and Deputy Secretary left the meeting

21. Any other business

i) Students' Union referendum on motion of no confidence in President and Vice-Chancellor

Reported:

(1) In parallel with the scheduled Students' Union elections (8-11 March 2021), and having obtained the required number of students in support of a referendum, the Students Union was holding a referendum on the following motion:

- "Do you support this motion of no confidence in Nancy Rothwell, Patrick Hackett, Simon Merrywest, Luke Georghiou and April McMahon?"

(2) As the subject of the referendum was a matter outside the control of the Students' Union; once the result was known Students' Union officers would write to the University to inform them of the result.

(3) Having briefed the Board on the background to the referendum, the RSCOO then left the meeting.

(4) Students Union members of the Board advised that they were focusing on ensuring that those participating in the referendum had access to all relevant information, in light of assertions and comments made in the manifesto of those campaigning in support of the motion.

(5) The Board considered a Board statement for potential issue once the outcome of the referendum was known. The draft statement recognised that the past year had been unprecedented for the University, the sector and wider society and the consequential impact on both student and staff experience. It also recognised that in the face of difficult decisions and choices, senior leaders had not got everything right, and where this had been the case they had taken swift action to ensure lessons were learnt and improvements made. The draft statement emphasised that the University's focus was on delivering the best learning experience possible and supporting the wellbeing of students, staff and the wider local community. The Board regretted the polarising and divisive nature of the motion.

(6) After consideration and contribution from members from all categories of membership, the Board unanimously confirmed its full confidence in the leadership of the President and Vice-Chancellor and the senior team and supported issuing of a statement to this effect, as required and depending on the outcome of the referendum (with final wording of the statement, if used, to be confirmed in consultation with the Chair)

CLOSE