

Approved Minutes

The University of Manchester

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Tuesday 21 March 2023

Present: Philippa Hird (in the Chair), President and Vice-Chancellor (items 1-10), Ann Barnes (Deputy Chair), Samantha Bronheim, David Buckley, Gary Buxton, Prof Daniela Caselli, Anna Dawe (by Video Conference), Deirdre Evans, Prof Danielle George, Dr Reimnar Hager, Nick Hillman, Prof Paul Mativenga, Jatin Patel, Robin Phillips and Roz Webster (16 members).

Apologies: Caroline Johnstone, Dr Eric Lybeck, Tesnime Safrrou, Natasha Traynor (Associate Member), Dr Jim Warwicker and Alice Webb.

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (RSCOO), the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Communications, the Vice-President and Dean of Faculty of Biology, Medicine (item 8) and Health, the Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students, item 8), the Vice-President (Research, item 8), the Director of People and Organisational Development (item 8) and the Deputy Secretary.

1. Declarations of Interest

Reported: there were no new declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 and the minutes of the Joint Board-Senate meeting held on the same day were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

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

Noted:

(1) The engagement session with the Faculty of Humanities which preceded the meeting had been extremely valuable. This session and the earlier interaction with the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health and planned future interactions with the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering and Professional Services were helping to develop the Board's collective understanding of key institutional activities.

(2) The poster displays in the research showcase session had demonstrated the breadth and scope of activity within the Faculty and engagement with students (including postgraduate taught students) had also been extremely valuable. All student contributors had been impressive and their input provided real insight to the Board on priorities for students which included concerns about the impact of the cost of living. The role of the Students' Union and student societies in developing a sense of community and belonging had been clearly articulated.

(3) An update from the RSCOO on the student occupation of part of the Simon Building. A Court Order had been awarded on 20 March to enable repossession of the building (the

Possession Order covered the whole of the South Campus). This followed multiple requests to the small number of occupiers to leave and court hearing papers being served on them on 15 March. The University would take action to enforce the Order through officers of the Court shortly: it regretted this action, which was necessary because of the length of time of the occupation and significant disruption to students and those who work in the building.

(4) Both the engagement session before this Board meeting and the one that preceded the previous meeting had experienced shouted disruption from students supporting the rent strike. The Board recognised the cumulative, unsettling effect of multiple student occupations and related disruption on the University team.

(5) Those supporting the rent strike were claiming 350 students were withholding rent payment.

[REDACTED]

Redacted – restricted information

(6) The University continued to campaign for increases to the student maintenance loan and the agreed strategy was for the University to support students through cost of living payments as opposed to rent rebates which supported only those in University accommodation

(7) Over 9,000 students had voted so far in an indicative Students' Union referendum to gauge support for demands articulated by those supporting the rent strike.

(8) Over 10,000 eligible students would shortly receive a [second Cost of Living payment](#), as the next phase of the most comprehensive Cost of Living payment available at any UK University.

4. President and Vice-Chancellor's report

Received: the report from the President and Vice-Chancellor (noting that the latest position with the student occupation had been covered under the previous item).

Reported:

(1) In relation to ongoing UCU industrial action, no agreement had been reached on pay despite ACAS involvement, but there was a shared understanding between UCEA and the higher education trade unions that, in relation to pay, the dispute resolution procedure had been exhausted. The 2023-24 pay award would therefore be implemented (in summary at least 5% increase for all staff, rising to 8% for the lowest paid, with a proportion paid in advance, backdated to February 2023).

(2) On non-pay issues (e.g. pay spine, contract types, workload, pay gaps) there was a joint employer-Union commitment to review the pay spine, with a view to revision, and also a commitment to time-limited negotiation on contract types, workload and pay gaps.

(3) On USS, employers and UCU had agreed to prioritise the restoration of benefits to pre-April 2022 levels, to work together to improve and clarify future valuations and to build constructive dialogue with the pensions regulator and the Department of Work and Pensions.

(4) Despite an informal ballot of members voting by a clear (66%) majority for consultation and pausing strike action, the UCU Higher Education Committee had voted to continue strike action and not put the proposals to members.

(5) Earlier in the day, the President and Vice-Chancellor had given evidence to a House of Lords Select Committee reviewing the work of the Office for Students (OfS) and (along with others giving evidence) had questioned how the current approach of the OfS met its commitment to proportionate, effective and risk-based regulation.

(6) The position in relation to staff vacancies had eased, although in some specialist areas there were still concerns.

(7) Readmission to the EU Horizon Funding programme continued to be uncertain despite the introduction of the Windsor Framework.

(8) The Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced the creation of twelve investment zones (and three research and innovation areas), with Greater Manchester allocated one, receiving funding of £80 million over five years to drive innovation. The Chancellor had also [announced an annual £1million prize for the best British AI research to be named the 'Manchester Prize'](#) to honour the world's first stored programme computer, 'the Baby', created at the University.

(9) The [Pankhurst Institute Building](#) was now open and in use.

(10) Visitor numbers to the Museum since it reopened on 18 February continued to be exceptional (over 100,000 visitors since reopening).

Noted (in response to questions from members):

(1) Declarations from staff that they had taken strike action were lower than in some previous episodes of industrial action and in the past week the numbers of staff on picket lines had been low.

(2) A reduction in the proportion of good degrees (first and second class) reflected sector trends and a general movement closer to the position pre-pandemic.

(3) The potential impact of the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement on structure of programmes and related processes. Market response was uncertain and there was a long lead time for implementation of the policy (and to date no identified support from Treasury).

(4) Applications data continued to be healthy: it was too early to say whether the reduction in applications for Nursing was part of a longer-term trend (numbers of applications were now back to pre-pandemic levels), although the situation was being closely monitored. There was evidence to suggest that there was also a decline in take up of programmes leading to a career in Nursing at post-16 level.

5. Student context- Significant issues for the student experience

Received: a report summarizing key long-term and immediate issues affecting the student experience. Given the short lapse of time since the previous meeting, the report focused on the recent Student Union elections.

Noted:

(1) Turnout for the elections (22%) had been the highest for seven years. The referendum referred to above asked if students supported the rent strike demands and broader cost of living demands. The outcome would be indicative: the Union Affairs Officer noted that a significant number of students had indicated that they were sympathetic to the aims of the strike, whilst recognizing that implementation of the demands was challenging for the University (these demands included a 30% reduction in rent, with no further cost increase for three years).

(2) Once the referendum outcome was known and publicized, the University would respond with communications highlighting its sector leading student support package and the President and Vice-Chancellor's leading role in lobbying government for an increase in student maintenance support (Secretary's note: [statement published on 24 March 2023 here](#))

6. Chair's report: Board forward look 2022-23

Received:

(1) The updated Board forward look for 2022-23.

(2) The draft agenda for the Board Strategy Day in May

Noted:

(1) As noted at the previous meeting, a key focus for the Board Strategy Day would be consideration of the University of the future (a fifteen-year time horizon) through the lens of decarbonisation, which would impact across the range of University activity. This would not preclude consideration of the broad and diverse range of challenges facing the University (e.g. questions that need further consideration and work, including optimal resourcing, impact of any future plans for growth or consolidation, the nature of future growth).

(2) A full briefing pack would be provided before the Strategy Day and members were encouraged to submit material that would be potentially useful for consideration.

Action: Deputy Secretary

(3) The comment that it would be helpful to consider the impact of sustainability on the curriculum.

7. Major Projects

Received: an update on major change projects, setting out context (noting that focus was on the strategic change portfolio), status and progress.

Reported: ongoing resource challenges impacting on progress, further development of benefits realization activity, and proposed use of currently unallocated resource to develop programmes.

Noted: (in response to questions from members)

(1) Ensuring optimal and efficient use of scarce resource was a challenge in areas requiring specialist input and required regular prioritization.

(2) The RAG rating of the 36 programmes listed showed 14 as red and a further 10 undergoing re-plan activity. The scope and duration of replanning varied between projects (for example depending on the scale of specialist resource required). All programmes continued to be subject to rigorous programme governance scrutiny, with regular reports to Finance Committee (for example on Finance Transformation Programme and the Student Experience Programme, the current status of which was outlined in the report) and the scheduled deep dive into delivery at the April 2023 Audit and Risk Committee.

(3) As noted at the previous meeting, most staff were not opposed to change but had reservations about implementation and impact. There was recognition that change would not be uniformly welcomed and acknowledgement that earlier communications could have been more explicit about the challenges in successfully delivering complex change programmes,

(4) The People and Organisational Development strategic project was at a relatively early stage and initial delays reflected in the RAG rating would be recovered.

(5) A first draft of a benefits roadmap had been produced and would be shared at the April 2023 Finance Committee meeting for comment. Risks associated with activities on hold following the re-prioritisation exercise last year continued to be monitored.

(5) The Board recognized the extent of activity and would continue to receive regular progress reports and reflect on the deep dive review by Audit and Risk Committee, to be reported to its May meeting.

Action: Deputy Secretary

8. People and Organisational Development Strategy-Progress Update

Received: an update on progress since the People and Organisational Development (P and OD) Strategy was approved by the Board in July 2022.

Reported:

(1) The Strategy confirmed that over the next three years, there would be focus on delivering the following five strategic priorities: Service, Leadership, Performance, Culture, and Wellbeing.

(2) Since approval of the Strategy, the most significant progress had been with service and system improvement, with immediate examples of enhancement outlined in the report.

(3) The report outlined the current status of the other four pillars of the Strategy which once fully realised, would have long lasting and fundamental positive benefit on the University. The structure of the P and OD Directorate was being realigned to optimise delivery and support the consequent required cultural change.

(4) The Staff Survey outcomes had confirmed the importance of implementing the improvements outlined in the Strategy, across all five pillars.

Noted: (in response to questions from members)

(1) At Faculty level, the Strategy was embedded through discussion and consideration at leadership team and Faculty Committee, which enabled the Strategy to be understood and contextualised locally. Cross Faculty learning was facilitated by discussion between the three Deans (and other senior colleagues) and subsequent dissemination. The importance of co-creation between the central P and OD team and faculty colleagues was emphasised and this would be facilitated by the movement towards an Organisational Development model (and away from a Learning Development model).

(2) The draft measures of success were indicative (outlining proposed direction of travel) and would be subject to further review and refinement before finalisation.

(3) In relation to formal processes (e.g. grievances and appeals) the current position reflected the requirements of the relevant Statute and Ordinances, but there would be a future focus on informal resolution and mediation with recourse to the formal process seen as a last (albeit essential) resort.

(4) A clear message from the Staff Survey, particularly from Professional Services staff, was the importance of clear, recognisable career pathways: in this context, recent restructuring to deliver the Student Experience Programme had created job families and this alongside workforce planning and effective talent management would enable much greater clarity on potential career progression.

(5) There was recognition that implementation of change programmes delivering wider, long-term benefit to the University may be perceived negatively at a more local level because of consequent change to long-standing local arrangements and custom and practice (with potential impact on staff survey outcomes) and that it was important that the change delivered tangible benefits.

(6) Discussion about the merits of the current rotational academic leadership model: whilst it was important to ensure that (for example) Heads of School and Heads of Division retained academic credibility and full understanding of the relevant academic context, it was also essential that leadership potential was recognised and developed and supported through appropriate training. Whilst few academic staff were likely to enter the sector with the sole ambition of becoming a leader, facilitating pathways to enable colleagues with leadership potential to come forward was essential if the University was to thrive in the future.

9. Innovation Strategy and Performance

Received: a report on the University's Innovation activities for the year 2021/22 with some updates to Spring 2023, covering the following aspects of the Our Future Innovation Plan: Commercialization of intellectual property; business engagement; regional and local development; Entrepreneurship; and Graphene application and commercialization.

Reported:

(1) The report covered the following aspects of the Our Future Innovation Plan:

- i) Commercialization of intellectual property through spinouts and licensing via the UoM Innovation Factory and the Northern Gritstone investment company;
- ii) Business engagement (partnerships with large corporates and small and medium-sized firms);
- iii) Regional and local development, describing place-based initiatives, mainly in Greater Manchester and including ID Manchester;
- iv) Entrepreneurship, focussing on the Masood Entrepreneurship Centre and aspects of the Careers Service; and
- v) Graphene application and commercialisation, covering the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre and wider business engagement in and commercialisation of 2-D materials.

(2) As further introductory context, the report set out the rationale for the University's involvement in innovation, including a mixture of institutional (both financial and academic) and broader societal benefits.

Noted: (in response to questions from members)

(1) Discussion about the impact of the creation of the new Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to deliver on the ambition to make UK a science and technology superpower. Whilst there was little practical difference from previous arrangements, there was clear recognition of the major contribution of the University to technological innovation and the health of the economy.

(2) Consideration was being given to further increasing the reward share for inventors in the current Intellectual Property Policy (most recently revised and improved by the Board in 2021).

(3) The benefits to the University from its involvement in Northern Gritstone, the investment company established jointly with the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield.

(4) The importance of the University maximising financial and reputational benefit and leverage from its innovation activity, noting its already excellent standing in this area.

(5) Members' recognition of the excellence of work as outlined in the report

10. Stakeholder Mapping Review

Received: an internal and external stakeholder map prepared after discussion with the Chair of the Board.

Noted:

- (1) The map was deliberately high-level and reflected the broad swathe of activity the University was engaged in. There was recognition that planned and future activity should focus on delivery of University strategy.
- (2) There was recognition of the complex structure of the University and its influence across a diverse range of organisations, disciplines and policy areas (for example, through the work of [Policy@Manchester](#)).
- (3) The potential to harness and enhance the University's engagement and relationship with stakeholders, through coordinated and integrated activity maximising impact. In this context, the benefits of clear and shared understanding of optimal outcomes of engagement with stakeholders was recognised. Clarity of messaging would enable Board members to carry out their ambassadorial role more effectively.
- (4) The Board would receive further updates as work in this area progressed and developed.

The President and Vice-Chancellor left the meeting at this point.

11. Board Committee reports

i) Nominations Committee (15 March 2023)

Received: the report from the Nominations Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023, updating the Board on:

- i) the process to appoint to two lay member vacancies on the Board:
- ii) reappointments to the Board and appointments to committees: and
- iii) the ongoing consultation process on optimal experience, skills, competencies and characteristics for the next President and Vice-Chancellor.

Reported:

- (1) Consultation meetings on optimal experience, skills, competencies and characteristics for the next President and Vice-Chancellor had begun with approximately 20 further sessions planned over the next two months, including two dedicated student sessions and engagement with alumni and key external stakeholders.
- (2) The procurement process to secure an experienced search agent to assist with the recruitment process would commence shortly.
- (3) Confirmation of the timescale for appointment, culminating in Board approval by the end of the calendar year.

Noted: the Board's responsibility to ensure effective and appropriate support for the President and Vice-Chancellor during transition towards stepping down from the role in July 2024.

Agreed:

(1) To approve delegation of appointment to lay member vacancies to the Nominations Committee panel (after circulation and confirmation of recommendations by the Board by correspondence) to enable newly appointed members to attend the July Board meeting.

(2) To approve recommendations for reappointment to the Board (agreed by Nominations Committee) by correspondence after discussion between the Chair and relevant members.

Action: Deputy Secretary

12. Any other business

Noted: there was no other business.

13. President and Vice-Chancellor's Performance Development Review

Received: report summarizing feedback from Board members as part of the Performance and Development Review process for the President and Vice-Chancellor.

Reported:

(1) Commendation from the Board for the very strong leadership and accountability demonstrated by the President and Vice-Chancellor in the face of demanding objectives.

(2) The Board was appreciative of the President and Vice-Chancellor's open and transparent approach with the Board on challenges and opportunities, fully open to feedback and recognising where challenges remain: the Board also acknowledged the President and Vice-Chancellor's outstanding commitment to the University.

Noted: in the context of discussion about succession planning for senior leadership, the University had enjoyed a settled and stable senior team over the past few years. Transitioning to new leadership at the head of the organisation would potentially result in further senior leadership change and it was important for this to be managed well.

14. Secretary's report

Received: the report on Exercise of Delegations covering the recent award of Emeritus Professorships, appointment of Vice-Deans and Heads of School, and use of the Seal.