

The University of Manchester

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Tuesday 19 March 2024

Present: Philippa Hird (Chair), President and Vice-Chancellor, Ann Barnes (Deputy Chair), David Buckley, Gary Buxton, Anna Dawe (via video conference until item 10), Deirdre Evans, Prof Danielle George, Guy Grainger, Nick Hillman, Tom Jirat, Prof Paul Mativenga, Hannah Mortimer, Jatin Patel, Robin Phillips, Dr Hema Radhakrishnan and Prof Fiona Smyth (17 members)

Apologies: Dr Reinmar Hager, Caroline Johnstone, Tesnime Safraou and Natasha Traynor (Associate Member)

In attendance: Prof Duncan Ivison, President and Vice-Chancellor Designate, Patrick Hackett, Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (RSCOO), Prof Luke Georghiou, Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Carol Prokopyszyn, Chief Financial Officer, Prof Nalin Thakkar, Vice-President, Social Responsibility (items 6 and 7), Andrew Mullan, Acting Director of People and Organisational Development (items 6 and 7), Banji Adewumi, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (items 6 and 7), Prof John McAuliffe, Director, Creative Manchester (item 10) and Mark Rollinson, Deputy Secretary.

1. Declarations of Interest and welcome

Reported: the President and Vice-Chancellor confirmed that she had joined the [task force](#) to consider the regeneration of the area surrounding Old Trafford.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

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

Noted:

(1) Deeper exploration of student recruitment and student mental health issues would now take place at the Strategy Day (see item 9 below)

Action: Deputy Secretary

(2) There were no significant developments in the University College London Group Litigation matter since the previous meeting.

(3) The timeline relating to the revised approach to strategic change, noting that there would be a more substantive update in May.

(4) The Board had welcomed the thoughtful and balanced statement on the Israel-Gaza conflict issued by the Vice-President for Social Responsibility and circulated to the Board.

(5) Following discussion at the previous meeting, the University continued to gather intelligence about the likelihood of the Office for National Statistics seeking to reclassify universities as part of the public sector as part of its current review. Given the potential

impact on the sector's autonomy, it was important that the University along with other institutions influenced the debate: current commentary suggested that such a reclassification was unlikely, but nevertheless, this remained a significant potential risk and as such should be factored into consideration in the development of the next version of the University Risk Register.

Action: Director of Planning and Deputy Secretary

(6) The RSCOO outlined the approach to recruitment to the current vacancy for the Director of People and Organisational Development, following the [departure](#) of Adele McKinlay at the end of February, and the imminent vacancy for the Director of Equality and Diversity, following the recent [announcement](#) that Banji Adewumi would be leaving the University in June. Job descriptions for both roles would be revisited to ensure currency and the RSCOO reiterated management commitment to progressing equity, diversity, and inclusion, noting the significant progress evidenced in the report featuring later on the agenda (item 7). The Deputy Chair and Chair of People Committee, Ann Barnes would conduct an exit interview with the outgoing Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Action: Deputy Chair

4. President and Vice-Chancellor's report

Received: a report from the President and Vice-Chancellor, with a brief further verbal update.

Reported:

(1) The latest student data showed a slight year on year reduction in applications from home students for full time undergraduate programmes. Conversion of applications to offers was healthy and in some subjects, to manage the growth in applications seen over the last few years, entry requirements had increased. Nationally, recruitment to Languages and Nursing programmes continued to be a concern, although in relation to the latter, the University was bucking the trend and applications were in a strong position.

(2) The financial position continued to be challenging for the sector, with significant issues for some institutions.

(3) The timetable for completion of the report by the government's Migration Advisory Council on the graduate visa route had been accelerated and was now expected in May, and its recommendations had the potential for major impact on the sector. Concerns about the impact of other recently announced visa related changes (as reported to the previous meeting) and recent press coverage on the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for international students continued.

(4) Despite a slight easing of inflationary pressures, the next round of national pay negotiations was likely to be challenging.

(5) In the previous week there had been a joint meeting of the University's three major philanthropic advisory boards – the Global Leadership Board, the North American Foundation, and the Hong Kong Foundation, with many members travelling to Manchester. The week had also included a major event for donors and the annual Cockcroft-Rutherford Lecture, which featured the President and Vice-Chancellor in conversation with Nobel Prize winner, Professor Sir Andre Geim.

(6) The University and Students' Union had issued a [joint statement](#) confirming that acts of discrimination or intimidation would not be tolerated and where brought to light, will be reported to the police. This followed the discovery of antisemitic graffiti in the toilets of the Students' Union, which was quickly removed and reported to Greater Manchester Police. The statement confirmed the serious consequences of such actions which would lead to action under the University's disciplinary procedures and potential criminal prosecution.

Noted:

(1) The challenge facing sector wide bodies, in an increasingly difficult financial climate, in speaking with a single voice for the sector. It was clear that not all universities were impacted in the same way and had the same medium-term plans.

(2) In relation to pay, and notwithstanding the national pay framework, the University should continue to use discretionary tools (eg market supplements) where necessary and appropriate.

(3) In relation to the national level concerns about Nursing recruitment, relaxation of loan repayment thresholds for Nursing students had the capacity to have a positive impact on both recruitment and retention.

5. Student Context - Issues Challenging the Student Experience

Received: a report summarising key long-term and immediate issues affecting the student experience.

Noted:

(1) Protest surrounding a meeting organised by the Pro-Life Society on 29 February. A further in-person Society event involving an external speaker had been received, and would be considered in the usual way, in line with the University and Students Union process for considering requests for visiting speaker events.

(2) The importance of enabling freedom of expression within the law and respecting the rights of the student community with opposing views to peaceful protest. There was recognition of the practical difficulties and tensions involved in maintaining that balance in situations where views were polarised, but the Board emphasised the fundamental importance of ensuring that the University was a safe space for debate and expression of a range of opinions within the law.

(3) As set out in this [statement](#), the University and the Students' Union were organising an online open meeting to give students the opportunity to ask questions about freedom of speech on campus to Students' Union Executive Officers and senior University leaders.

(4) The annual Students Union Executive Officer election campaign had now concluded, with over 8,500 students voting and 40,000 votes cast. New and re-elected officers would begin their terms in July.

(5) Recognition of the careful and committed work of the Students' Union in supporting students at a challenging time.

6. People and Organisational Development Strategy: update on implementation

Received: a report and accompanying slide deck setting out progress in relation to implementation of the People and Organisational Development (P and OD) Strategy, and the five priority themes: Service, Leadership, Performance, Culture and Wellbeing. The material also outlined priorities, measures of success and emerging performance metrics.

Reported:

(1) There was recognition of major challenges and difficulties in the provision of operational services, but also acknowledgement of significant improvements in recent months in speed of operational services with key activities now falling, on average,

within published service level standards. Ability to track and report had also improved, leading to additional efficiency gains from improved accuracy and agility.

(2) Wherever possible, a continuous improvement approach was being applied, and short-term improvements to systems and processes were being pursued alongside exploration of a longer-term Enterprise Resource Planning platform report solution. There was recognition of the importance of ensuring necessary preparatory work to lay the foundation for a strategic systems solution while ensuring the risks associated with existing technologies reaching end of life were mitigated.

(3) Leadership development, role modelling values and culture, and supporting high performance were all integral parts of embedding and implementing the strategy.

Noted:

(1) At its most recent meeting in February, People Committee had reaffirmed its support for the Strategy and the evolving priorities, and the importance of solid transactional services and support as a fundamental underpinning, supporting transformation. People Committee was still on course to receive metrics, covering both organisational workforce performance and P and OD operational performance, for approval at its May meeting.

(2) Following the presentation to the previous Board meeting, the need to be conscious of the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI). P and OD were represented on the action group established to develop a prioritised action plan, which would in turn inform the work of Learning and Organisational Development team.

(3) Wellbeing was an integral part of the work of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and effort was focused on establishing a baseline of current practice against Health and Safety Executive management standards and taking into account the outcomes of the Wellbeing survey to be launched later in March 2024.

(4) Further work would take place to establish the relative importance of 2024 priorities, with the potential for some to move into 2025.

(5) The importance of developing a consistent understanding and framing of organisational culture, given its increasing significance in relation to external benchmarks and frameworks (e.g. Research Excellence Framework, Athena Swan, Race Equality Chartermark).

(6) The criticality of a robust and regular system of measuring staff engagement across the institution.

7. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy: update on implementation

Received: a report providing Board members with an update on implementation of priority areas within the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy based on activity across the University, as well as an update on statutory annual requirements.

Noted:

(1) The Board's appreciation of the extent of progress which was clearly demonstrated in the report, including evidence of awards and performance against national benchmarks. The Board placed on record its thanks for the work of Banji Adewumi who (as noted above) would be leaving the University in June 2024 to take up an equivalent role at the University of Greenwich.

(2) Underpinning the good progress made to date was effective leadership at local level, for example through Faculty academic leads and leads for the staff diversity networks. Ensuring delivery against agreed action plans was a priority at institutional and local level.

(3) The importance of continuing to encourage staff and students with disabilities to declare to ensure effective planning and implementation of reasonable adjustments.

(4) The Disability Advisory Support Service (DASS) was open to current and prospective students, disabled staff and all staff working with disabled students and/or staff.

(5) New starter and exit interviews were being held to ensure richer data and a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of staff with protected characteristics.

(6) Whilst the target for progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Professional Services (PS) staff to Grades 7 and 8 had been met, similar targets for progression for academic staff (ie to Senior Lecturer/Reader or Professor level) had not been met. There has been a 3.4% increase in overall BAME recruitment since 2019 (to 19.6% overall): however, because the increase had been less marked for more senior roles, the overall BAME pay gap (difference in average earnings between BAME and non-BAME staff) had slightly increased (compared to 2022).

(7) In the medium to longer term, recruitment of greater numbers of BAME staff would ensure a more robust and effective pipeline to senior roles, thus, in due course, reducing the pay gap. The importance of effective role-modelling and staff being encouraged to seek more senior opportunities was recognised. It was also important to understand the reasons for any significant differential between applications received and appointment.

(8) Fully understanding and scrutinising intersectional data (for example to consider over-representation of specific groups on fixed term contracts or holding Teaching Scholarship positions) was crucial. The Board asked for information mapping executive level scrutiny of relevant data (for example at EDI Committee and P and OD Sub-Committee).

Action: Acting Director of People and OD/Director of EDI/Deputy Secretary

(9) The Board reiterated its thanks to the Vice-President for Social Responsibility for the calm, thoughtful and measured statement on the Israel/Gaza conflict which evidenced the University's commitment to core values and its mission of encouraging independent thought, and the expression of a diversity of views. Both the University and the Students' Union recognised the importance of engaging with communities affected by the ongoing situation.

8. Campaign Lead Gifts

Received: a report on two potential substantial campaign gifts that could be delivered before the public launch of the campaign. Further details were set out in the report and final approval from the Board would be required, should the gifts come to fruition.

Noted:

(1) In both cases, donations related to University strategic priorities, namely innovation development and healthcare.

(2) The scale of the potential gifts was evidence of the ambition of the Campaign and the University's increased confidence in fundraising, as outlined in the briefing which had preceded the Board meeting. The Bicentenary had helped to catalyze discussions about the gifts.

(3) Whilst it would be important to take learnings from the process of engaging with both prospective donors, each relationship had unique components, driven by the interests and perspective of individual donors and how these linked to University strategic priorities.

(4) Both prospective donors had been approved by the University's Gift Oversight Group (which is always unaware of the scale of potential gifts) and had been subject to robust

due diligence, which had not raised any concerns (the Board would receive the due diligence reports as part of the formal approval process.)

(5) It was anticipated that both gifts would result in naming opportunities, which would be considered in accordance with agreed, relevant University [Policy](#).

(6) Confirmation that donations would not be contingent on any contractual or commercial relationship.

9. Board Strategy Day

Noted: Given imminent plans for a refresh of the current Strategy, the agenda for the planned Board Strategy Day in May would take a slightly different form, with external speakers providing overview and horizon scanning sessions from a variety of perspectives, and two focused sessions on student recruitment and student mental health. Suggestions for potential external speakers were discussed and a confirmed itinerary would be circulated subject to further liaison with the Chair and confirmation of availability of potential external speakers. **Action: Deputy Secretary**

10. Research Presentation: Creative Manchester

Received: a presentation from Prof. John McAuliffe on [Creative Manchester](#).

Reported:

(1) Creative Manchester had been initiated in September 2021, as part of the University's suite of interdisciplinary research platforms, drawing on existing good practice and developing relations with strategic partners internally and externally.

(2) Creative Manchester's vision and scope included development of community and capacity building in research, centred on creativity and creative practice and was strategically focused on three key interdisciplinary themes

- Creative Industries and Innovation/Createch (academic lead in Faculty of Science and Engineering)
- Creativity, Health, and Wellbeing (academic lead in the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health)
- Creative and Civic Futures (academic lead in the faculty of Humanities)

Noted:

(1) Prioritization decisions were based on alignment with the three key themes outlined above.

(2) The increased emphasis on engagement and impact in the Research Excellence Framework was conducive to the work of Creative Manchester.

(3) The importance of creativity across the curriculum, and the provision of spaces both physical and virtual to facilitate and promote interdisciplinary discussions.

(4) The platform provided a focus for constructive discussion and an environment in which colleagues were able and encouraged to disagree well at a time when wider social discourse was increasingly polarised.

(5) The work of those involved with the platform, alongside the cultural institutions was opening the work of the University to the wider community, helping to breakdown any "threshold anxiety" from people not previously involved with the University.

(6) The scope for AI to have a significant impact, particularly around Createch, was recognised and there were already examples of nascent work (e.g. in relation to archive collections).

(7) Particular success had been achieved in relation to applications for research funding by interdisciplinary academic teams which had been able to meet physically on campus at events organised by Creative Manchester.

11. Chair's report

Received: the latest version of the Board forward look.

Noted:

(1) The Board forward look for the remainder of 2023-24 and 2024-25 would be reviewed, the latter reflecting input from the incoming President and Vice-Chancellor.

Action: Chair, RSCOO, Deputy Secretary

(2) Tony Raven would rejoin the Board on 1 April 2024, following conclusion of his consultation role with University of Manchester Innovation Factory.

(3) A verbal summary of a recent CUC meeting, which included reflection on the current role and public profile of the body.

12. Senate

Received: a report from the meeting of Senate held on 14 February 2024

Noted:

(1) The Senate report included, as an appendix, the annual report on student appeals, complaints and student conduct and discipline cases.

(2) The report noted that, as in previous years, a high proportion of the overall number of academic misconduct cases involved Chinese and Asian or Asian British students.

(3) An Appeals, Complaints, Conduct and Discipline Network had been established and more than 150 colleagues were now registered on the Network and had access to a dedicated Teams space and SharePoint site containing guidance and training resources. This would include continued reflection on integration of international students from markedly different academic cultures.

(4) The guidance around good practice for students in using Generative AI was published in 2022/23. No data had yet been captured on cases of alleged misconduct involving AI, and this area continued to evolve rapidly.

(5) Senate had also discussed the theme of 'parallel lives' within the student community, and instances of limited integration between UK and international students. A selection of Senate members raised their concerns and outlined examples/experiences they were aware of.

(6) The complexity of the issue was recognised by Senate, together with 1) the importance of reinforcing existing initiatives (e.g. the work of the International Society to promote integration within the student community), and 2) intersection with socio-economic factors in relation to integration between UK home students. Senate agreed to revisit this important topic at a future meeting.

(7) The importance of ensuring that all students, including international students, received the excellent academic and student experience they were expecting.

12. Planning and Resources Committee

Received: the report from the meeting of Planning and Resources Committee held on 5 March 2024.

13. Nominations and Governance Committee (6 March 2024):

Received: the report from the meeting of Nominations and Governance Committee held on 6 March 2024, confirming the appointment of Saxton Bampfylde as the University's longer term recruitment partner for lay Board members.

14. Secretary's report

Received: the report on Exercise of Delegations covering the recent award of Emeritus Professorships, the use of the Seal and the appointment of a Director of the University of Manchester Superannuation Scheme.

15. Dates of remaining meetings in 2023-24

Noted: meeting dates in 2023-24 as below:

- Wednesday 22 May (Strategy Day, all day from 9am): Board meeting Thursday 23 May (am)
- Wednesday 24 July (timings for the Board briefing and the Board meeting will be adjusted to reflect timing of the celebratory event marking the end of Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell's term of office as President and Vice-Chancellor: further details confirming this to follow)