

The University of Manchester

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19 June 2024

Present: Nazir Afzal (Chancellor, in the chair), Jim Hancock (Pro-Chancellor), Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice-Chancellor), Raheel Ansari, Ann Barnes, Ian Brake, Adrian Bull, Gary Buxton, Karina Carter, Sandra Collings, Steve Connor (via video conference), Bill Craig, Gillian Easson, Zeb Farooq (via video conference), Simeon Gill, Matt Haworth, Tom A Jirat, Martin Lax, Rachel Massey, Mel McMahon, George Obolo, Rodger Pannone, Vicky Rosin, Ian Rutherford, Mark Scoular, Abigail Shapiro, Paul Sutherland, Niels Walet, and Gill Webber. (29 members)

In attendance: The Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, the Vice-President for Social Responsibility, the Director of Social Responsibility, the Deputy Secretary and the Governance Manager (minutes).

1. Introductory Remarks

Reported: The Chancellor welcomed attendees to the meeting. Members were invited to stay after the meeting for an event to celebrate the end of the President and Vice-Chancellor's term of office.

A number of University members had been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours List; Professor Paul Howarth, awarded CBE for significant contribution and service to the nuclear industry and to UK research and development, Professor Ian Hall, awarded OBE for services to public health, epidemiology and adult social care, Professor Richard Wakeford, awarded OBE for services to the advancement of the science of radiation protection, and Professor Paul Klapper, awarded OBE for services to viral diagnostic testing. The Chancellor also offered congratulations to University alumni and supporters who had been recognised in the Honours List.

2. Minutes

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were approved.

3. Matters arising

Received: there were no outstanding matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. Update on relevant matters from Nominations Committee

Received: a verbal update from the Governance Office supporting the circulated report which advised the following:

- (1) Details of recent vacancies and appointments to the General Assembly, including staff members elected to the Assembly. New members were welcomed to the meeting.

- (2) The Nominations and Governance Committee had reviewed attendance by members since the General Assembly was reconstituted in 2021-22 and had agreed a strategy for renewing membership.
- (3) A summary of findings from the recent survey of Assembly members was noted and further comment on the survey would be invited by correspondence. It was proposed that the General Assembly would consider the results of the survey, including any additional feedback, at its 15 January 2025 meeting. **Action: Deputy Secretary**
- (4) The Chair of the Board confirmed that a new member for the Nominations and Governance Committee would be sought from the General Assembly membership over the coming months. General Assembly members were encouraged to consider nomination. The Committee performed an important role, and had been instrumental in the process for selecting a successor to the President and Vice-Chancellor. Details of the role and the process for applying would be communicated to members. **Action: Deputy Secretary**
- (5) A member noted the potential for raising awareness of the role of the Committee more widely across the University community.

5. Update on the work of the University

Received: a presentation from the President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, providing an update on key developments. The presentation would be made available to members after the meeting, and included the following headlines:

- Challenges facing the University
- Performance Snapshot 2023-24
- Research Awards and Achievements
- Research Beacons and Platforms
- Postgraduate researchers and research staff
- Developments in Teaching, Learning and Students (TL&S)
- £400m Fallowfield Scheme – Student residencies
- TL&S Parallel investment in current estate
- Social responsibility & civic engagement
- Performance in The Times Higher Sustainable Development Goals table
- University News
- Supporting business
- Innovation
- Spinouts launched by year since 1997
- Priorities and opportunities

The Assembly welcomed the comprehensive report and in particular, thanked the President and Vice-Chancellor for her support for the University's work on carbon reduction.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Received: a presentation detailing the impact of AI on the work of the University. Because of illness, the Associate Vice-President (Digital Strategy and Innovation) was unable to attend the meeting. However, discussion took place around the report, which was warmly received by members. The following points were raised during the discussion:

- (1) A member proposed that the Assembly fully support a proactive approach to the use of AI at the University.
- (2) Concerns were raised about the possible negative impacts on the student experience, particularly in relation to the possibility of AI de-personalising the experience. It was recognised that there was an opportunity for AI to improve the student experience, by supporting on-line delivery which would allow additional time for students to carry out other, value-added activities.
- (3) Noting the importance of managed introduction, the University was now in the process of prioritising its deployment of AI. The first priority would be the student experience. The responsible use of AI would be promoted and students would be encouraged to use AI correctly, to avoid accruing penalties.

7. Concluding remarks

Noting that there would be other opportunities to recognise the achievements of the President and Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of the General Assembly, the Chair thanked the President and Vice-Chancellor, who had attended 27 meetings of the General Assembly in her 14 years at the University.

8. Date of next meeting of the General Assembly

Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 3.00pm. Venue to be confirmed.

General Assembly Actions from 19 June 2024

Minute	Action	Update
4 (3)	Deputy Secretary To invite further comment on the survey of members by correspondence, with the Assembly considering any additional feedback, at its 15 January 2025 meeting.	
4 (4)	Deputy Secretary To provide details, to the General Assembly members, of the process for applying to become a member of the University's Nominations and Governance Committee.	