

THE MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2020 VIA SKYPE

Present: Ms Vanda Murray (Chair)
Mr Sean Anstee
Dr David Birch
Ms Rowena Burns
Dr Darren Dancey
Mrs Janet Dawson
Mr Simon Duffy
Ms Lucy Follon
Mr Carlo Frondaroli
Mr Mohammad Habeebullah
Mr Norman Harrison
Professor Donna Lee
Mr Mike Perls
Professor Malcolm Press
Mr Miles Rothbury
Mr Mark St John Qualter
Ms Karen Varty
Mx Anna Welsh

In attendance: Ms Pam Aspden (Head of Governance and Secretariat)
Mx Bran Catron (Students' Union Education Officer Elect)
Professor Steve Decent (Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr Andrew Hewett (Director of Finance)
Professor Karen Moore (Chief Operating Officer)
Ms Evelyn Sweeney (Students' Union President Elect)
Professor Helen Laville (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education) for
minute 1885

1882 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Evelyn Asante-Mensah and Mr Neil Thompson.

Ms Evelyn Sweeney, Students' Union President elect, and Mx Bran Catron, Students' Union Education Officer elect, were welcomed to the meeting.

1883 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Board members were invited to declare any possible conflicts of interest on any matters being discussed at today's meeting. Mr S Duffy and Mrs J Dawson signalled their interest in the appointment of new Chair and Deputy Chair (minute 1888).

1884 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BRIEFING

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update (BG/20/26) on University and sector developments. The main points included:

1884.1 **Equality and Diversity: BAME**

Following the death of George Floyd and subsequent events across many countries, the University was working with students and staff and had issued a statement making clear its opposition to racism and its commitment to welcoming all students. The staff race forum was developing plans to address concerns and Professor Jenny Watling, UEG lead for equality and diversity, would be working with students, staff and the Board's Equality and Diversity Champion.

1884.2 **Complete University Guide Rankings Success**

The University had achieved its highest ever position in the Complete University Guide (CUG), ranking 54th in the 2021 table, which was a rise of 39 places in a decade.

1884.3 **Staff Pulse Survey and Communications**

A series of staff 'pulse' surveys was underway, the first of which showed that most staff felt comfortable with the way in which the University was supporting them during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some concerns had been raised about travel to campus which were being addressed.

Reassurance was being provided to staff, students, applicants and offer-holders that their health was at the heart of planning, together with information for students on how changes would be implemented in 2020/21 to ensure high quality teaching.

1884.4 **Student Recruitment and Preparations for Clearing**

An update was given on student recruitment and preparations for Clearing. It was acknowledged that the University was currently operating in a very uncertain and challenging environment. However, a great deal of work was taking place to try to meet student recruitment targets. Clearing was expected to be competitive and plans were in place.

1884.5 **New Head of the Manchester School of Architecture**

Professor Kevin Singh had been appointed as the new Head of the Manchester School of Architecture.

1884.6 **Award Successes**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development directorate had won the Organisational Development and Culture Change Award at the Universities Human Resources Awards 2020 for its work in shaping the 'One Professional Services' agenda.

The tenth annual Students' Union Teaching Awards had been held online with 1134 nominations, including 700 for the flagship 'Teacher of the Year' award.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1885 EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education presented an update (BG/20/27) on progress made with the University's Education Strategy.

1885.1 Current Position and Progress during 2019/20

An overview was given of the University's performance in the educational KPIs. The University had held steady on targeted recruitment and progression and had seen an above sector average score in 6 out of 10 categories in the National Student Survey (NSS) with an almost 3% rise in overall satisfaction.

Graduate outcomes remained challenging and the introduction of the Graduate Outcomes Survey 15 months after graduation meant that data were not yet available and would not be directly comparable to the previous Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) outcomes. New initiatives, e.g. 'Early Career Graduate', had been introduced as part of a new Graduate Outcomes Strategy.

Differential attainment remained challenging and was being monitored through the Education Annual Reviews supported by the Professional Services Academic Skills Team. Work on the Race Equality Charter Mark and community engagement were also important in support of this agenda.

1885.2 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Rapid changes had been required in response to the closure of the University in March 2020 including:

- Moving to online teaching.
- Introduction of emergency Academic Regulations.
- Arranging Degree Shows online.

Staff and students had responded positively to the changes but the impact on the NSS would not be known until 15 July 2020.

1885.3 Plans for Academic Delivery in 2020/21

The University was moving to block teaching for new and returning students, with blended delivery, flexible to navigate the challenges of the coming year through a student centred, creative approach and the opportunity for every student to have an on campus experience.

Strong student support mechanisms would be in place, particularly for mental health and wellbeing, with a philosophy of 'no student unknown'.

There was discussion about the management systems in place to support achievement of the metrics and the attainment of student nurses in light of their deployment during the pandemic, which would be monitored.

1885.4 Conclusions

It was concluded that a great deal of activity was taking place and that good progress had continued to be made since the Strategy had been approved by the Board in June 2017. The Covid-19 pandemic presented new challenges but the University was responding positively in the interests of students and was upholding academic standards.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1886 UNIVERSITY BUDGET FOR 2020/21

The Director of Finance presented for approval a proposed budget for 2020/21 (BG/20/28) as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 June 2020. Attention was drawn to the following points:

- The Covid-19 pandemic was creating significant uncertainty around student enrolments and associated income for 2020/21. Scenario planning had therefore taken place and the budget had been structured, both to provide flexibility to reduce costs if necessary, and to allow for investment where needed.
- The proposed budget included a contingency which would be deployed throughout the year in response to actual levels of student enrolment and the Covid-19 pandemic. This included delaying progress on some capital/IT projects without detriment to overall strategic objectives.
- Although cash balances under even the most difficult scenario remained positive, provision for short-term borrowings would be put in place to underpin cash flow and to provide minimum amounts of liquidity throughout the year. These would only be drawn upon if needed.

It was concluded that the University's strong financial position pre-Covid-19 and excellent financial management over many years meant that, whilst it was not complacent, the University was in a strong position to respond to the current and ongoing challenging financial situation.

RESOLVED

that the proposed budget for 2020/21 be approved.

1887 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REVIEW

The Director of Finance presented a report (BG/20/29) on the University's current financial position and the longer-term financial outlook and financial forecasts. It was noted that reductions in income, largely due to the release of students from term 3 accommodation contracts, had been offset by reduced consumption across campus, delays to some staff recruitment and the absorption of the majority of the pension increases.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1888 APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

Mr S Duffy and Mrs J Dawson withdrew from the meeting for this agenda item. The Chief Operating Officer presented a report (BG/20/30) outlining the outcome of the process for appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors and seeking approval for the proposed appointments as recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED

that the appointments of Simon Duffy as Chair of the Board of Governors and Janet Dawson as Deputy Chair from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2023 be approved.

1889 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Chief Operating Officer presented a report (BG/20/31) outlining proposals recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee relating to Board membership and future committee chairing arrangements. These included:

1889.1 New Board Appointment

The appointment of Professor Tim Brennan as the new Academic Board Nominee member of the Board from 27 June 2020 to 31 March 2022.

1889.2 Future Committee Chairing Arrangements

Committee	Chair
Audit Committee	Mark St John Qualter
Finance and Resources Committee	Sean Anstee

Nominations and Governance Committee	Simon Duffy
Remuneration Committee	Janet Dawson

1889.3 Committee Membership Changes

Name	Change
Sean Anstee	To join Finance and Resources Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee
Janet Dawson	To join Nominations and Governance Committee
Simon Duffy	To step down from the membership of Finance and Resources Committee
Mike Perls	To move from Nominations and Governance Committee to Remuneration Committee

1889.4 Other Key Roles on the Board

Role	Position held by
Equality and Diversity Champion	Evelyn Asante-Mensah
Academic Board Observer	Mohammad Habeebullah

1889.5 Honorary Awards Committee

The appointment of Evelyn Asante-Mensah and Mike Perls to the Honorary Awards Committee.

RESOLVED

that the proposals be approved.

1890 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2020

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

1891 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETNG

A report (BG/20/32) was submitted setting out actions to be taken following the meeting of the Board held on 27 March 2020 and progress made with regard to those actions.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1892 NOTES OF INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2020

The notes of the informal meeting held on 27 May 2020 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED

that the notes be received.

1893 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

A report (BG/20/33) was submitted providing an update on business conducted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 10 June 2020.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1894 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

A report (BG/20/34) was submitted outlining actions that the Chair had taken on behalf of the Board in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Articles of Government.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1895 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

A report (BG/20/35) was submitted by the Chief Operating Officer providing an update on risk management.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1896 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee – 22 May 2020 (BG/20/36).
- Finance and Resources Committee – 3 June 2020 (BG/20/37).
- Nominations and Governance Committee – 22 May and 3 June 2020 (BG/20/38).

RESOLVED

that the reports be received.

1897 DRAFT AGENDA SCHEDULE 2020/21

A report (BG/20/39) was submitted setting out the draft Agenda Schedule for 2020/21.

RESOLVED

that the report be received.

1898 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Items included:

1898.1 Board Effectiveness Survey 2019/20

The closing date for the Board Effectiveness Survey was 3 July 2020.

1898.2 Student Governors

This was the last meeting to be attended by Mx Anna Welsh, Students' Union President, and Ms Lucy Follon, Students' Union Education Officer. Both were thanked for their outstanding contribution to the work of the University and the Board.

Signature of Chair _____

Date _____