



**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wednesday, 19 May 2021, at 4.00 pm
By Microsoft Teams conference call

MINUTES

PRESENT

Jane Andrewartha
Professor Colin Bailey
Stella Beaumont
Professor Frances Corner
Sir Richard Dearlove (Chair)
Andrew Halper
Andrew Ratcliffe
Dr Michael Spence
Mark Storey
Professor Wendy Thomson
Roselyn Wilton (Deputy Chair)

APOLOGIES

Abdul Bhanji
Philip Clark
Kieran Murphy
Professor Paul Layzell
Professor Stuart Reid
Malcolm Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE

Rita Akushie (Chief Financial Officer)
Dr Ghazwa Alwani-Starr (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships))
Simon Cain (Director of Human Resources)
Lizzy Conder (Director of Strategic Planning and Performance)
Damaris Currie (Central Secretariat)
Professor Jo Fox (Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement))
Jamie McHugh (Director of Finance)
John Stewart (University Secretary)
Professor Mary Stiasny (Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching))

Welcome

5340 The Chair welcomed Jamie McHugh, the newly appointed Director of Finance, who had joined the University on 12 April 2021 and was attending his first meeting of the Board.

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 March 2021

5341 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021.

Matters Arising

- 5342 The Board noted the updates in the Matters Arising report (BT1538) on the Gender Pay Gap analysis and on the submission of the 2019-20 Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return to the Office for Students (OfS).

Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 5343 The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report (BT1539, Confidential), including the update on the Vice-Chancellor's Main Activities and Meetings (Appendix BT1539A).

Heads of Member Institutions (MIs)

- 5344 The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the recent appointment of Professor Kristian Helin as the new Chief Executive of the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR). Professor Helin, who was a world-leading cancer researcher with leadership experience in both academia and industry, would join the ICR on 1 September 2021, taking over from Professor Paul Workman, who would continue as Chief Executive until the end of August 2021.
- 5345 The Vice-Chancellor reminded members of the intention to hold a joint informal meeting of the Board and the Collegiate Council in person in the autumn term 2021; this would provide an opportunity for members to meet and engage with new Heads of MIs who had recently, or would shortly, take up their posts.

Other Updates

- 5346 The Queen's Speech, delivered on 11 May 2021, had made reference to the Government's reform agenda for post-16 education, and members noted key elements of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, including the introduction of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, which would give individuals access to the equivalent of up to four years' worth of student loans for level 4-6 qualifications that they could use flexibly across their lifetimes.
- 5347 The Vice-Chancellor reported that, further to the reference in the Queen's Speech to the intention to introduce legislation to protect freedom of speech, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill had been introduced in Parliament on 12 May. The Bill would place new duties on higher education providers and students' unions in England and introduce the role of Director of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom within the OfS. Members noted that the University would be reviewing its Freedom of Expression and Speech position statement as well as its existing policies and procedures to ensure that it was positioned to meet all the requirements of the forthcoming legislation.

Information at BTM 5348 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5348 The Board noted the update on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) UK Student Return 2020-21. The Vice-Chancellor reported that work was proceeding according to the required timescale [].

- 5349 Members discussed concerns within the sector about the early implications for London of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda and how the University could contribute to and influence debate in this area. The Vice-Chancellor reported that she was ensuring that the University was supporting London's interests in the sector, for example through her involvement with the Centre for London, London Higher and the civic university network.

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT)

Update on Activities

- 5350 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) reported on good progress being made to lay the foundations for the Library Transformation Programme (LTP), including work to deduplicate collections to release space in anticipation of the needs of the LTP. Work had also commenced on mapping digital opportunities that could provide benefits to MIs and to the University.
- 5351 The new Librarian, Catriona Cannon, was due to commence her appointment in late June 2021 and, together with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement), would be meeting with librarians across the Federation to discuss how the Senate House Library (SHL) might best support the MIs.
- 5352 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) highlighted a range of activity in London, including, in particular: a productive London Futures workshop hosted by the Centre for London on 18 May 2021; and work being undertaken by Professor in Practice – London, Ben Rogers, on several projects that would provide opportunities for liaison between the MIs and the Greater London Authority (GLA), and draw together researchers from across the capital.
- 5353 The School of Advanced Study (SAS) was keeping a watching brief on possible forthcoming changes for the humanities. There were concerns that Government changes to the tuition fee regime could ultimately have a detrimental effect on the accessibility of humanities research, and thereby on the next generation of potential researchers. In this context, SAS was facilitating an event for humanities leaders across the UK, to consider how best to influence discussion and policy in this area. In addition, MI Deans in Humanities were jointly considering what action could be taken at a more local level.
- 5354 The Board had been informed, at its previous meeting, of the adverse effect on SAS of the confirmation by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) of a reduction in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget. One of the affected projects was the RECAP (Research capacity strengthening and knowledge generation to support preparedness and response to humanitarian crises and epidemics) programme run in conjunction with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). An application had been made to use the unspent funding to bring the project to a successful conclusion; the outcome of the application was awaited.

- 5355 The Board noted that the inquiry into the Future of Commonwealth Studies at the University continued. The Committee conducting the inquiry, chaired by Sir Malcolm Rifkind, was expected to report in July 2021.

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (INTERNATIONAL, LEARNING AND TEACHING)

Update on Activities

- 5356 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) introduced a report on key activities within her portfolio (BT1540, Confidential).

Academic Integrity Charter

- 5357 The University had signed up to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) new Academic Integrity Charter to demonstrate the University's commitment to protecting academic integrity. Members noted the principles of the Charter as detailed in the report. It was noted also that the University's demonstrated commitment in this respect would provide assurance to overseas regulatory bodies.

University of London Worldwide (UoLW) Transformation

- 5358 Further to the PA Consulting review of UoLW, the resulting implementation of the new UoLW structure was progressing, with programme management support provided by the newly configured University Transformation Team under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Financial Performance and Budget Forecast

- 5359 Strong student recruitment in the first half of the financial year was indicating that student numbers would increase for many UoLW programmes and the UoLW income forecast had been revised upwards accordingly. Members welcomed the strong performance within UoLW and were reminded of the wide range of new programmes that would be launched during 2021-22, in line with the approval granted by the Board at its meeting on 25 November 2020 (BTMM 5218-22 refer).
- 5360 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) reported that the introduction of an application-handling fee across the range of programmes had discouraged speculative applications which had taken considerable resource to process. As a result, the conversion rate of applications to full registrations had increased.

The Careers Group (TCG)

- 5361 Members noted a range of activity in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), which continued to be a high priority for the Director of TCG, TCG's Senior Leadership Team and staff in the TCG community. This work included planning for a new Advisory Panel of TCG colleagues of diverse heritage, which would provide greater diversity of perspective to the strategic decision-making of TCG, while also offering opportunities for skill development in leadership and strategic planning for Panel members.

University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) Developments

- 5362 The Board noted the update on activity at ULIP. In line with French Government regulations, ULIP had been able to keep its building open since the start of the academic year, despite recent lockdowns. It was reported that ULIP was seeing a continuation of growth in applications for the academic year ahead.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Management Accounts and Forecast at 31 March 2021

Information at BTM 5363 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5363 The Board considered the Management Accounts and Forecast at 31 March 2021 (BT1541 and Appendix BT1541A, both Confidential). [].

BTM 5364 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5365 Further to queries regarding the extent to which the increase in UoLW tuition fee income had been anticipated, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the development of new and existing programmes (see also 5359 above) had been part of a step-change introduced prior to the outcomes of the review undertaken by PA Consulting. It was hoped that these outcomes would build upon and accelerate the progress being made. It was also noted that revenue projections had been cautious, due to the uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Members welcomed the progress being made, commenting that the increase in UoLW income was testament to the work of UoLW staff both before and during the pandemic.

Federal Subscription and Member Institution Charges for 2021-22

- 5366 Members considered the proposal for the 2021-22 Federal Subscription and Member Institution Charges (BT1542 and Appendix BT1542A, both Confidential), which had been considered by the Collegiate Council at its meeting on 7 May 2021 and recommended to the Board.

- 5367 The CFO highlighted the following changes:
- (i) an inflationary uplift of 1% had been applied for 2021-22 in line with consumer price inflation including owner-occupiers' housing costs (CPIH);
 - (ii) the final increase in the SHL charge (as agreed with Collegiate Council in July 2017) had been applied; this followed its deferral in 2020-21, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and
 - (iii) the grant for Student Clubs and Societies had been removed.

5368 **AGREED**

The Board approved the Federal Subscription and Member Institution Charges for 2021-22.

Office for Students Conditions of Registration D (Financial sustainability) and G (Accountability for fees and funding)

- 5369 The CFO presented a report on the OfS conditions of registration D and G (BT1543, Confidential). The Board noted the assurances provided within the report in relation to the University's compliance with these conditions of registration.

Report from the Finance Committee

- 5370 The Chair of the Finance Committee presented a summary of issues considered at the Committee's meeting on 4 May 2021 (BT1544, Confidential), noting that most of the key matters were covered elsewhere on the Board agenda. She reported that the Committee would be considering the draft University budget for 2021-22 at its meeting on 29 June 2021, prior to the budget's submission to the Board for approval.

Report from the Investments Committee

- 5371 The Board noted a summary of the key issues discussed by the Investments Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2021 (BT1545, Confidential). It was reported that there had been some discussion on the current investment return target; this would be the subject of further consideration at the Committee's away day later in 2021.

Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) - A Consultation

- 5372 The Board considered a report on the University's proposed response to the Universities UK (UUK) consultation on the outcome of the 2020 valuation of the USS (BT1546, Confidential). The Board noted the four key elements of the consultation: covenant support; contribution levels; opt-out rate; and benefit reform.
- 5373 It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG) had discussed the four elements of the consultation at its meeting on 5 May 2021, and that the basis of its discussions had been provided in Appendix A of the report. The Board's attention was drawn to details of the guiding principles around which VCEG had agreed the University's response should be framed, and also to details of the proposed approach to be taken in the response. The Board was content with the proposed way forward.

5374 **AGREED**

The Board endorsed the University's response to the UUK consultation.

Update on Activities

Information at BTM 5375 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5375 The CFO provided an update on the national pay negotiations []

5376 It was noted that increases to contributions to the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) pension scheme were expected – the Board would be updated in due course.

5377 The University had conducted a 'Life after Lockdown' survey, which had closed on 30 April 2021. Staff responses to the survey would be analysed in detail to inform discussions and planning around future ways of working.

Information at BTM 5378 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5378 The CFO updated members on the letting of rooms in Intercollegiate Halls of Residence for 2021-22. []

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (STRATEGY, PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS)

Report from the Estates Committee

5379 The Board considered a summary of the key issues discussed by the Estates Committee at its meeting on 19 April 2021 (BT1547, Confidential), including a report on lease agreements (Confidential Appendix BT1547A).

Information at BTM 5380 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5380 At its meeting on 24 March 2021 (BTMM 5318-21 refer), the Board had agreed to approve the Heads of Terms in relation to Student Central and that the University should grant a 99-year lease to Birkbeck for the Student Central building, with delegated authority to the Chair of the Estates Committee to agree any outstanding matters. [] The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) reported that agreement had been reached with Birkbeck on this [one outstanding] matter and it was anticipated that the lease would be completed by the end of the financial year.

5381 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) informed the Board of two priority areas of work for the summer period: an analysis of requirements for academic space both in respect of the University's needs and those of MIs; and strategic consideration of the University's student residential portfolio. The outcomes of this work would inform the Estates Committee Away Day in the autumn term 2021.

5382 A query was raised about scenario planning for the 2021-22 academic year in respect of student accommodation provision, for example in relation to potential requirements for students to quarantine. The Board was informed that Residential Services staff would be well prepared, having made arrangements for residents undergoing periods of quarantine in the current academic year, providing suitable support and designated areas that could be serviced appropriately. It was reported that the University was monitoring Government announcements and guidance closely, in relation to the forthcoming academic year.

Health and Safety - Governance Framework and Committee Terms of Reference

Information at BTM 5383 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5383 The Board considered a report detailing a new governance framework for health and safety and proposed new Health and Safety Committee terms of reference (BT1548 and Appendix BT1548A, both Confidential). [] The Board noted the details of the health and safety framework and was content to approve the new terms of reference of the Health and Safety Committee.

5384 AGREED

The Board approved:

- (i) the terms of reference, constitution (membership), and mode of operation of the reconstituted Health and Safety Committee;
- (ii) the appointments of: Professor Stuart Reid as Chair of the Committee with immediate effect to 31 July 2022 (concurrent with his term of office on the Board); and Rosie Russell and Douglas Searle as members of the Committee with immediate effect to 31 July 2024; and
- (iii) the amendment of Ordinance 6, Annex 1 to include the new terms of reference, constitution, and mode of operation of the Committee.

Update on Activities

BTM 5385(iii) is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5385 The Board considered an update on developments in Strategy, Planning and Partnerships (BT1549). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) highlighted the following:

- (i) Work to finalise the Members' Statement for 2019-20, which would be issued shortly. The Board had been provided with a copy of an associated presentation, made to the Collegiate Council at its meeting on 7 May 2021 (Appendix BT1549A). It was noted that MIs' input would be sought on the content of the 2020-21 Members' Statement.
- (ii) Ongoing work in relation to the University student clubs and societies in line with the recommendations presented to Collegiate Council in December 2020. Executive leads for MI students' unions and students' union chief executives had been invited to submit expressions of interest in hosting the clubs and societies. It was anticipated that recommendations would be presented to the Collegiate Council at its July 2021 meeting.
- (iii) []
- (iv) The University continued to provide a COVID-19 testing facility to 20 higher education institutions. This arrangement was expected to conclude at the end of June 2021, due to demand for the facility diminishing further to changes in Government guidance and the increased availability of home tests and community testing in London.

Report from the Nominations Committee meeting on 14 April 2021

5386 The Board considered a report on the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 14 April 2021 (BT1550, Confidential).

5387 AGREED

- (i) The Board confirmed the appointment of Christopher Rossbach as a member of the Investments Committee with the appropriate specialist expertise for a term of three years, from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024.
- (ii) The Board approved the appointment of Mark Storey as a member of the Investments Committee for a term of three years, from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024.

Minutes of the Collegiate Council Meeting on 12 February 2021

5388 The Board noted the confirmed minutes of the Collegiate Council meeting held on 12 February 2021 (BT1551, Confidential).

Business Transacted since the Previous Meeting

5389 The Board noted a report on business transacted since the previous meeting (BT1552).

Dates of Future Meetings

5390 The Board noted the dates of meetings for the remainder of the 2021-22 session and for 2022-23 as follows (all to commence at 4.00 pm); the date of the November 2021 meeting would be confirmed shortly¹. Outlook invitations for 2023-24 and 2024-25 had also been circulated to members.

2020-21:

Wednesday, 14 July 2021

2021-22:

Wednesday, 13 October 2021

Wednesday, 26 January 2022

Tuesday, 22 March 2022

Wednesday, 18 May 2022

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

5391 Subject to Government guidance, it was hoped that it would be possible to hold the meeting on 14 July 2021 in Senate House. Members would be updated nearer the time of the meeting.

¹ Post-meeting note: it was subsequently confirmed that the November 2021 meeting would be held on Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 4.00pm.