



**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wednesday, 27 January 2021, at 4.00 pm
By Microsoft Teams conference call

MINUTES

PRESENT

Jane Andrewartha
Stella Beaumont
Abdul Bhanji
Professor Frances Corner
Sir Richard Dearlove (Chair)
Andrew Halper
Professor Paul Layzell
Kieran Murphy
Andrew Ratcliffe
Professor Stuart Reid
Malcolm Roberts
Mark Storey
Professor Wendy Thomson
Rosalyn Wilton (Deputy Chair)

APOLOGIES

Professor Sir Edward Byrne
Philip Clark

IN ATTENDANCE

Yasmin Ahmed (Head of Inclusion) (BTMM 5274-78 only)
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))
Ian Matthias (Principal Consultant, PA Consulting) (BTMM 5250-54 only)
Craig O'Callaghan (Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive, University of London Worldwide) (BTMM 5250-54 only)
John G Stewart (University Secretary)
Professor Mary Stiasny (Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching))

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 November 2020

5237 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020.

Matters Arising

Information at BTM 5238 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5238 The Vice-Chancellor updated the Board on the Collegiate Council's discussion, at its meeting on 11 December 2020, in relation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. This followed the approval by the Board, at its meeting on 25 November 2020, of the adoption of a statement on antisemitism (BTMM 5223-27 refer). []

Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 5239 The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report (BT1510, Confidential), including the update on the Vice-Chancellor's Main Activities and Meetings (Appendix BT1510C). The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following:
- (i) Ongoing challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, aspects of which were covered in more detail elsewhere on the agenda.
 - (ii) The Vice-Chancellor's objectives for the coming year, which had been agreed with the Chair of the Board. The objectives had also been considered by the Remuneration Committee and were provided for the Board's information (Appendix BT1510A, Confidential).
 - (iii) Key elements of the Brexit agreement with the European Union (EU), including early implications for higher education institutions, staff and students.
 - (iv) The range of announcements made by the Department for Education (DfE) on 21 January 2021, on post-16 and post-18 education reforms, including the publication of a Skills for Jobs White Paper. Members noted the associated letter of 21 January 2021 from Michelle Donelan, the Minister of State for Universities (Appendix BT1510B).
 - (v) The potential implications for the Member Institutions of the proposed changes to teaching grant funding (see also BTM 5240 below).
 - (vi) The update in the report on Member Institutions' applications for University Title.
- 5240 Members expressed concern about the changes to teaching grant funding proposed by Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, in a letter of 19 January 2020 to the Office for Students (OfS), including the loss of London Weighting and changes to funding of high-cost subjects. The proposed changes would see a 50% reduction in funding for those high-cost subjects that did not support the priority areas identified in the letter. While additional funding would potentially be available for specialist institutions, it was noted that a large number of students in subjects that would be affected, such as the creative arts, media studies, the performing arts and archaeology, were not based in specialist institutions. The Vice-Chancellor offered to convene a group, with membership from the Member Institutions, to consider the matter further and how best to represent these concerns to the OfS and Government as appropriate. Members noted that London Higher was also making representations in relation to the potential changes.

- 5241 Members noted the potential impact of the Brexit agreement on student recruitment from EU countries, and that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) was convening a meeting of Deans of Arts and Humanities from across the federation to discuss related matters.
- 5242 The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's objectives for the year (Appendix BT1510A). Further to comments at the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that she would consider whether additional reference to the School of Advanced Study (SAS) should be incorporated.
- 5243 **AGREED**
Further to the funding announcements referenced in the Minister of State for Universities' letter of 21 January 2021, and expected OfS guidance on the allocation of teaching grant funding for 2021-22, the Vice-Chancellor would convene a meeting of representatives from Member Institutions, to consider potential concerns and how the University might best represent these views to Government and the OfS.

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT)

Proposed Changes to the Institutes of SAS

- 5244 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) reported that SAS had recently completed a formal consultation as part of the ongoing process of organisational change. The outcomes would be implemented with a view to ensuring that the School was effectively configured to deliver the University's strategic objectives.
- 5245 Further to the outcomes of the consultation, a committee had been established to conduct an inquiry into the future of Commonwealth Studies at the University. The Board was updated on the membership of the committee, which was chaired by Sir Malcolm Rifkind. Members commended the University on securing representatives from a range of major stakeholders in this area to serve on the committee, including the Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning, Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The committee had recently held its first meeting and was expected to conclude its work by the end of June 2021.

Update on Other Activities

Librarian and Programme Director

- 5246 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) informed the Board that the post of Librarian and Programme Director had recently been advertised. Board members would be contacted as appropriate to assist with the recruitment process. Interviews were expected to take place in the week commencing 22 February 2021.
- 5247 Members noted that this was an important time for the Senate House Library (SHL). The candidate brief provided to potential applicants had stressed that the person appointed to the role would help to create and to implement a new vision for the SHL and its collections further to the outcomes of a recent

review, and provide leadership for the associated Library Transformation Programme. The candidate brief was available to any members interested in receiving a copy for information.

Collaboration with the UN Refugee Agency

- 5248 Members welcomed the news that the University had signed an agreement with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which would enable eligible UNHCR employees and affiliates working globally to obtain a 10% bursary for the University's MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies, with academic direction provided by SAS.

UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Future Leaders Programme

- 5249 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) reported that SAS had been part of the successful tender to provide training for the UKRI Future Leaders programme and would be leading on public engagement.

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (INTERNATIONAL, LEARNING AND TEACHING)

PA Consulting Review of University of London Worldwide

- 5250 The Principal Consultant, PA Consulting, and the Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive, University of London Worldwide (UoLW), joined the meeting for the duration of the item.
- 5251 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) introduced the report (BT1511, Confidential) on the recent review of UoLW by PA Consulting. UoLW was seeking to ensure that it was well-positioned to deliver against the strategic objectives within the University Strategy 2020-25 and, in this context, PA Consulting had been engaged to undertake a review of UoLW's operating model. The Executive Summary of the report of the review had been provided for the Board's information (Appendix BT1511A, Confidential).
- 5252 The Principal Consultant, PA Consulting, outlined the process followed in undertaking the review, which had included, *inter alia*, consideration of current procedures and processes, the review of relevant documentation, and a series of interviews with key stakeholders. He highlighted the main findings and recommendations arising from the review, which fell within five key areas: strategy and market focus; structure, leadership and capabilities; partnerships; processes; and technology and data. He considered there to be huge potential for UoLW, and that the proposals presented an ambitious roadmap for its development, including the potential to build on existing partnerships and to develop new ones.

Information at BTM 5253 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5253 The Board considered the outcomes of the review and the key recommendations. Members welcomed the potential identified by the review, to build on the good work undertaken by UoLW, noting in particular the

opportunity to strengthen and enhance the partnerships that UoLW had with Member Institutions and others. []

- 5254 There was discussion on the potential timeframe for implementing the recommendations of the report and the value of articulating a five-year vision for UoLW and plans for that period. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) confirmed that this would be a useful exercise and that further information would be presented to the Board in due course.

Update on Other Activities

UoLW

- 5255 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) reported on other activity within UoLW. Members were informed that recruitment to existing courses was healthy. In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, preparations for delivering online assessments, including proctored provision as necessary, were underway. Members noted that, as agreed at the Board's previous meeting, a range of new programmes would be developed during calendar year 2021 (BTMM 5218-22 refer).
- 5256 The Board was informed that, as was the case in 2020, there would be no UoLW graduation ceremony in London in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consideration had been given to holding a virtual ceremony, but it was clear that many students greatly valued and enjoyed the opportunity of attending a ceremony in London in person, and it was hoped that this would be possible in the calendar year 2022.

University of London Institute in Paris

- 5257 The University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP), was currently operating under different arrangements from the UK to handle the pandemic. Paris was not under lockdown conditions at present and students were using the ULIP building in socially-distanced settings, in line with local rules. ULIP would, of course, respond to any changing conditions and regulations as required. ULIP was also supporting students and staff to deal with changes that had arisen as a result of the Brexit agreement.

The Careers Group

- 5258 The Careers Group was progressing work in line with the University Strategy 2020-25, with a view to refining its offer and establishing a Centre for Excellence in Employability.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Annual Financial Return to the Office for Students 2019-20

- 5259 The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented the Annual Financial Return for 2019-20 (BT1512, Confidential). Members noted that the Finance Committee had considered the Financial Return Workbook (Appendix BT1512A, Confidential) and Financial Commentary (Appendix BT1512B, Confidential) at

its meeting on 19 January 2021, and agreed them for presentation to the Board for approval.

5260 **AGREED**

The Board:

- (i) approved the 2019-20 Financial Return Workbook and Financial Commentary;
- (ii) authorised the Interim Finance Director to respond to all verification questions from the OfS and to make such alterations to the Financial Return Workbook as might be required; and
- (iii) authorised the Vice-Chancellor to sign the 2019-20 Financial Return Workbook once verification questions had been resolved.

Management Accounts and Forecast at 31 December 2020

Information at BTM 5261 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5261 The Board considered the University of London Management Accounts and Forecast at 31 December 2020 (BT1513 and Appendix BT1513A, both Confidential). []

BTMM 5262-64 are considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Report from the Finance Committee

Information at BTM 5265 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5265 The Chair of the Finance Committee, Rosalyn Wilton, presented a summary of matters considered at the Finance Committee meeting on 19 January 2021 (BT1514, Confidential). Key discussions had concerned the financial position and forecasts, as covered earlier in the Board meeting (BTMM 5261-64 above refer). The Committee had also noted the emerging details of the proposed offer from Birkbeck, University of London (Birkbeck) to acquire a 99-year lease from the University of the Student Central building. The offer from Birkbeck appeared favourable for the University, against both financial and non-financial measures [].

Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2019-20

5266 The Board considered the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee (BT1515 and Appendix BT1515A) and noted the business transacted by the Committee. In addition to the matters covered within the report, the Director of Human Resources (HR) highlighted that the Committee had noted and commended the contribution of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Layzell, to the work of the University.

5267 Members noted that further work was being undertaken on the draft 2020 Gender Pay Gap analysis, which had been considered by the Committee at its recent meeting. The Committee had welcomed both the encouraging trends in the relevant data and the intention to undertake further analysis.

The Board noted that it would receive a report on the Gender Pay Gap analysis at its next meeting. Further work was also being conducted in relation to the Race Pay Gap analysis; the Board would be updated in due course.

Annual Status Report on the Exercise of Staffing Functions

- 5268 The Board considered the annual report on the staffing functions which the Board delegated to the Vice-Chancellor, presented in accordance with the requirements of Ordinance 6, Annex 2 (BT1516). The Director of HR informed the Board that he was giving consideration to the format of the report, which might be amended for future iterations.

Update on Other Activities

Information at BTM 5269 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5269 The Board received an oral report on other activities falling under the remit of the CFO. In terms of recent estates-related activity, fire-door survey works had restarted, as had the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Phase 2 refurbishment works. There was also significant work in the area of Residential Services. []

- 5270 Following the recent insourcing of a significant number of roles from external service providers, support was being provided to the staff in question to ensure a smooth transition; this was especially important at the current time, as many were working remotely.

BTM 5271 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5272 There had been some organisational change within the Finance Department, with consolidation of four teams. The recruitment process for a Finance Director would commence shortly.

- 5273 Members were updated on activity in CoSector and noted that the department was finalising its Strategic Plan in line with the University Strategy 2020-25.

PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (STRATEGY, PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS)

Annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2019-20

- 5274 The Head of Inclusion joined the meeting for the duration of the item.
- 5275 The Board considered the University's Equality and Inclusion Report 2019-20 (BT1517 and Appendix BT1517A). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) highlighted the strategic importance of this area of work. It was noted that the activity covered within the report pre-dated the University Strategy for 2020-25. Future work, which would build on this activity, would be progressed in support of the new Strategy. It was the intention that the report would be published on the University website.

- 5276 The Head of Inclusion drew attention to key areas of work during 2019-20, including work on gender equality and on inclusive academic practice. A new plan of work, which was being drawn up, would incorporate appropriate key performance indicators to assist in measuring progress.
- 5277 The Chair of the Equality and Inclusion Committee, Andrew Halper, drew attention to the work undertaken by the University's Race Equality Group (REG). He reported that the University would be participating in the forthcoming UK Race Equality Week and suggested that members of the Board might be interested in attending the REG panel event 'Exploring Structural Inequalities: a conversational approach', which would take part on 5 February 2021; details would be sent to members.
- 5278 Further to a query about staff engagement with, and support for, the activity in this area, the Head of Inclusion informed the Board of a number of mechanisms and activities which facilitated and encouraged staff-participation and contributions. An example was the range of race-equality awareness training courses that had taken place in recent months, in which a large number of staff had participated. The courses had proved successful and would continue to be offered to University employees. Staff would also be able to provide feedback through the next staff survey. Other activity included the review of policies and procedures, to ensure they remained up-to-date and fit for purpose. It was also noted that the University's preparations for its Athena Swan Charter award submission would provide useful information as the work covered a range of tangible and less-tangible elements of equality and inclusion activity and outcomes.

Strategic Risk Register

Information at BTM 5279 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5279 The Board considered a report on the revised University Strategic Risk Register (SRR) (BT1518 and Appendix BT1518A, both Confidential). Members noted that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) had considered the updated SRR at its meeting on 20 January 2021 and recommended it to the Board of Trustees. Attention was drawn, in particular, to the red risks on the SRR and the existing and planned mitigations. []

5280 **AGREED**

The Board approved the SRR.

Strategic Asset Management Update

- 5281 The Board received an update on strategic property developments (BT1519, Confidential).

Information at BTM 5282 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 5282 As reported to the Board at its meeting on 25 November 2020 (BTM 5209 refers), the University had sought expressions of interest from Member Institutions in respect of the lease of Student Central. []

- 5283 Members noted that the proposed granting of a long lease for Student Central had the support of the Estates Committee and was a strategic decision that supported the aim to drive best value from the property portfolio and to respond to Member Institutions' needs. Birkbeck had been selected as the University's preferred partner, with its submission considered favourable when assessed against both financial and non-financial measures (see also BTM 5265 above). It was noted that the University had sought assurance that the funds required in relation to the disposal were available to the Member Institution. Negotiations would continue with Birkbeck with a view to a request for formal approval being considered by the Estates Committee and the Board at their respective meetings in March 2021.

Update on Other Activities

- 5284 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) provided an update on work in relation to University student clubs and societies. Following an in-depth review of the future of the University's provision of clubs and societies, the Collegiate Council had considered a report, at its meeting on 11 December 2020, on the findings of the review. The Collegiate Council had approved the recommendations within the report, which included the transfer of as many of the existing clubs and societies as possible to the Students' Unions of Member Institutions. Any clubs or societies for which there was no such interest would be assessed to ensure they were sustainable and, where this was the case, their future would be considered in consultation with their members. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) thanked Stuart Reid for his work to date in chairing the review group; he had agreed to continue to chair the group as it progressed the next stage of its work.

Governance Review

- 5285 The University Secretary reported that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International, Learning and Teaching) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) were working on draft terms of reference for the new Academic Board, which would be established in line with the outcomes of the governance review. Further information would be presented to the Board in due course.

Amendments to Ordinances

- 5286 The Board considered a report on a number of proposed amendments to Ordinances (BT1520 and Appendix BT1520A).

5287 **AGREED**

The Board approved the proposed amendments to Ordinances as detailed within Document BT1520 and Appendix BT1520A with the addition, to Ordinance 25 *Sealing and Authentication of Documents*, of wording to enable those 'witnessing' the seal being affixed, to do so remotely.

New Year's Honours 2021

5288 The Board noted a report on awards in the New Year's Honours list 2021 (BT1521).

Business Transacted Since the Previous Meeting

5289 The Board noted a report on matters transacted under delegated authority that were not reported elsewhere on the agenda (BT1522).

Dates of Future Meetings

5290 The Board noted the dates of future meetings as follows (all to commence at 4.00 pm):

2020-21:

Wednesday, 24 March 2021

Wednesday, 19 May 2021

Wednesday, 14 July 2021