

Board of Governors

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020

Present:

Mark Mulcahey (Chair), Damilola Akhigbe, Lucie Armstrong-Kurn, Sue Dutton, Jeff Halliwell, Frank Jordan, Matthew Hanmer, Richard Horsley, Shivani Kaushike, Sami Khan, Rayna Miller, Nick Petford, Martin Pettifor, Nick Pitts-Tucker, Ivna Reic, Nick Robertson, Jon Scott, Paul Wood, Yeqi Zhou

Apologies:

John Skelton

In attendance:

Becky Bradshaw (Director of Estates and Campus Services), Jane Bunce for item 108, Emma Finlay (Governance Assistant), Mark Hall (Executive Director of Finance), Miriam Lakin (Clerk to the Board), Terry Neville (Chief Operating Officer), Jacob Saranga (Dean of Health and Society) for item 107, Shân Wareing (Deputy Vice Chancellor)

98/20 Welcome, Apologies and Quorum

98.1 The Chair welcomed those present, and in particular welcomed the new student governors. The Chair noted apologies and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

99/20 Declarations of Interest

99.1 There were no declarations of interest in addition to those already held on record by the Clerk.

100/20 Appointment of the Student Governors

100.1 The Board ratified the appointment of:

- Samiullah Khan (President of the Students' Union)
- Yeqi Zhou (Vice President of Education of the Students' Union)

to the Board of Governors.

101/20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

101.1 The Board approved the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020 as a true record of that meeting.

102/20 Action List and Matters Arising

102.1 The Board received and noted a paper on actions arising from previous meetings.

103/20 University Response to COVID-19

103.1 The Board received and discussed an operational update on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as at 19 July 2020, and a verbal report from the Director of Estates and Campus Services.

103.2 It was reported that an institutional risk assessment in response to COVID-19 had been completed and published on the University's website. The implementation of the control measures indicated by the risk assessment was nearing completion. Risk assessments were also being completed for each specific resource and specialist space in preparation for the physical reopening of the campus on 3 August 2020.

103.3 A film demonstrating how the physical environment would look and function was complete. It would be available on the University's website in the week commencing 20 July 2020. It was noted that whilst the buildings

would be open from 3 August 2020, the advice to staff was to continue working from home wherever possible.

103.4 The Director of Estates and Campus Services reported that government advice on face covering was being monitored and the institutional risk assessment would be updated if necessary.

103.5 It was noted that the University was working closely with Public Health England to develop robust processes in preparation for September 2020. A member asked about onsite testing for COVID-19. The Director of Estates and Campus Services reported that initially individuals would be signposted to testing arrangements. Onsite testing arrangements for students would begin from September 2020, and the University had worked with Public Health England on this.

103.6 The Chair thanked the Director of Estates and Campus Services and her team for their to ensure the safety of staff and students.

103.7 The Board noted Appendix A to the paper, which reported on the addition of a new risk to the risk register. This was a risk to student placements caused by the impact of the pandemic.

104/20 2020/21 Budget Mitigations

104.1 The Board received a paper on the options for the mitigation of the financial position in 2020/21, should this become necessary. The Chair noted that the Board was not required to make any decisions at this stage. The objective of the discussion was to consider the various options available and the implications of these for the University, its staff and students.

104.2 The Vice Chancellor introduced the paper. He reminded the Board that the budget for 2020/21 was based on cash flow scenario 0.5, as previously approved by the Board.

104.3 The Vice Chancellor reported that if the University experienced a significant drop in student recruitment and moved towards a different scenario, the paper set out a range of mitigations which could be applied, depending on the severity of the position.

104.4 The Vice Chancellor reported that the paper provided detail to offer the Board assurance about the University's ability to respond and to recover. However, he stated that the University needed to emerge from the pandemic with an organisational structure that would support recovery.

104.5 Five levels of mitigation had been identified, and the Board discussed each of these in turn.

Minutes 104.6 to 104.22 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

Development of the Paper

104.23 For the next meeting, the Board requested a development of the paper to include the impacts of each mitigation. A view of the impacts on value and future strategic growth would help to frame the conversation should the Board need to make decisions with long-term consequences.

Action: Executive Team

Minute 104.24 is in the confidential section of these minutes.

105/20 Organisation of Future Board Meetings

105.1 The Board received a paper on the organisation of future board meetings, including indicative agendas.

105.2 The Board agreed the following:

- An additional board meeting on 26 August 2020 to the latest student number position after clearing

- To review the latest student number position at the Board meeting on 25 September 2020
- To move the October Board meeting from 21 to 28 October 2020, when there would be more robust data on student recruitment.

105.3 It was commented that this would allow the Board to review the implications of student recruitment data, to monitor the financial scenario and, if necessary, to consider mitigating actions.

The Dean of Health and Society joined the meeting.

106/20 Faculty of Health and Society

106.1 The Board received a verbal report from the Dean of Health and Society on the Faculty's response to the pandemic.

106.2 The report covered:

- The internal response
- The external response
- The future direction of the Faculty

106.3 In terms of the internal response, it was reported that staff had pulled together to develop and implement some novel ways of teaching and learning online, for example use of virtual reality to develop clinical skills. The Dean acknowledged and praised the nursing, midwifery and other health profession teams for reconfiguring the curriculum to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the temporary loss of access to specialist facilities at the University.

106.4 Externally, there had been a call from Health Education England and the Department of Health to deploy students to the NHS frontline. Over one hundred students from nursing, midwifery and occupational therapy had answered the call.

- 106.5 The Dean of Health and Society confirmed that the Competency Testing Centre was due to re-open on 20 July 2020. Since announcing the re-opening, there had been a high number of bookings.
- 106.6 The Dean of Health and Society reported on the Faculty's work to influence policy nationally.
- 106.7 In terms of future planning, the Dean of Health and Society advised the Board that there had been an intense period of work. The Faculty now needed to pause and reflect on the last four months to ensure it learnt from the positive aspects.
- 106.8 The Dean reported that a key issue was the lack of available student placements in the NHS, due to the ongoing response to COVID-19. He reported that in response to this, the Faculty planned to increase the use of virtual simulation. The Faculty would also wish to increase capacity in nursing and midwifery but was limited by the number of available placements. It was hoped that the Faculty could overcome this by making use of simulation and through consultation with stakeholders.
- 106.9 The Chair thanked the Dean of Health and Society for his informative report. He acknowledged the remarkable response from the Faculty and on behalf of the Board he thanked the Dean of Health and Society and his team for supporting the response to the pandemic. The Dean of Health and Society acknowledged the contribution made across the Faculty.
- 106.10 A member asked whether the increased use of simulation training would meet the requirements of the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The Dean of Health and Society advised the Board that the cancellation of placements due to the pandemic had required the PSRBs to revise their requirements. Therefore, within regulations, simulation could be used to a maximum number of hours. There would be ongoing involvement with the PSRBs via the Council of

Deans to capitalise on the valuable lessons learnt during the pandemic to ensure that the future workforce was not compromised by a similar event.

106.11 A member asked whether the Faculty had the capacity to bid for additional student places. The Dean of Health and Society advised that it did and reported on a bid to increase the number of places.

The Dean of Health and Society left the meeting. Jane Bunce joined the meeting.

107/20 Town Centre Regeneration, Economic Development Plan, Promotion of the County

107.1 The Vice Chancellor introduced Jane Bunce, the former Director of Student and Academic Services at the University, in her capacity as the University's representative on several projects for the regeneration and development of the town and the county.

107.2 Jane Bunce gave the Board with an overview of four projects in which she was involved. These were:

- Northampton Forward (Northampton Borough Council)
- Economic Development Strategy (Northampton Borough Council)
- Britain's Best Surprise (County-wide)
- Royal and Derngate Theatre

107.3 Jane Bunce reported that all the projects interlinked. They were of importance to the University because they aimed to promote a vibrant and interesting town and county. This would have a positive impact on student and staff recruitment, and support the strategic direction of the University with particular reference to the Changemaker Challenges.

107.4 A member commented that recent changes to the planning system may create an opportunity for the University to consider the development of

accommodation in the town centre. Jane Bunce confirmed that there was an intention to build more of a residential community in the town centre.

107.5 The Board thanked Jane Bunce for the presentation. The Chair offered the support of the Board for the projects.

Jane Bunce left the meeting.

108/20 Vote of Thanks to Nick Robertson

108.1 On behalf of the Board, Nick-Pitts Tucker proposed a vote of thanks to Nick Robertson for his service to the Board over the past nine years. In particular, the Board valued Nick Robertson's skills in risk management and his experience in the community and region. He had made a significant contribution to the University and been a valuable supporter. All of those present thanked Nick Robertson for his contribution and work in support of the University.

108.2 Nick Robertson thanked the members of the Board. He acknowledged the excellent work of the executive team, the exceptional values of the University, the strength of the Board and its ability to attract a changing profile of members. He stated that he hoped to see the University continuing to increase engagement with local businesses.

109/20 Ratification of Amendment to the Minutes of 20 May 2020

109.1 The Board ratified an amendment to minute 65.5 in the minutes of 20 May 2020.

110/20 Review and Reapproval of the Students' Union Constitution

110.1 The Board received and approved the following;

- Amendments to the Constitution, which had been approved by the SU's Board of Trustees in January 2020
- Amendments to the Students' Union Code of Practice

111/20 Approval of Degree Outcomes Statement

111.1 The Board received and approved a statement on degree outcomes.

112/20 Terms of reference for the Nominations Committee

112.1 The Board received and approved the updated terms of reference for the Nominations Committee.

113/20 Board Peer Support Scheme

113.1 The Board received and approved a Peer Support Scheme.

113.2 A member asked about the Peer Scheme. The Clerk advised the Board that the Governance Assistant would match new Board members to a peer.

114/20 Ratification of signature Under Seal

114.1 The Board ratified the signature of a document under seal as set out in the paper provided.

115/20 Student Applications Update

115.1 The Board received and noted an update on the latest data on student applications.

116/20 University Services to Business

116.1 The Board received and noted a paper on the services provided by the University to business. The Vice Chancellor highlighted the range of

activities which the University was supporting in East Northamptonshire, and stated that a similar approach was being discussed for South Northamptonshire.

117/20 Senior Independent Member

117.1 The Board received and noted a paper requesting that any eligible Board member wishing to stand for the role of Senior Independent Member make themselves known to the Clerk.

118/20 Management Accounts

118.1 The Board received and noted the management accounts for the period ending 30 June 2020.

119/20 Receipt of Students' Union Financial Statements

119.1 The Board received and noted the Students' Union Financial Statements to July 2019.

120/20 Any Other Business

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

120.1 It was reported that the University had performed extremely well in the latest PRES, having been rated first for the overall satisfaction of postgraduate research students.

Anti-Racism

120.2 Noting that a paper would be brought to the Board in the next academic year, members encouraged the executive to involve them in this work.

121/20 Availability of Papers

121.1 The following papers were confirmed as confidential to the meeting:

- Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 17 June 2020
- 2020/21 Budget Mitigations
- Organisation of Future Board Meetings
- Review of Students' Union Constitution
- Ratification of Signatures Under Seal
- Student Applications Update
- Students' Union Annual Accounts

122/20 Dates of Forthcoming Meetings

Board of Governors Wednesday 26 August 9am – 12pm

Board of Governors Friday 25 September 8.30am – 9.30am

Board of Governors Away Day 9.30am – 4.30pm



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Approved by Chair

26/08/2020

Date