

116th Meeting of the Board of Governors
MS Teams- online only
Thursday 7 October 2021, 10:00 AM — 12:00 PM BST

Present:	Anders Krohn Harini Iyengar Lynn Dobbs Margaret Farragher Mark Anderson Renarta Guy Rolande Anderson Shefaly Yogendra Tim Cochrane Rosemary Benson Tricia Croasdell Urmi Dutta- Roy Rohin Aggarwal Yasmeen Bashir Rishi Trikha	Independent Governor Independent Governor Vice Chancellor Independent Governor Chair of the Board Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Staff Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Student Governor Academic Governor
Also present:	Eugene McCrossan Gary Davies Don MacRaidl Donna Whitehead Nikki Le Faou Zainab Khan Amy Rogerson Mark Ellul Valerie Leipheimer Matthew Brewster	Chief Operating Officer DVC (Student Recruitment and Business Development) PVC (Research and Knowledge Exchange) Deputy Vice Chancellor University Secretary PVC Learning and Teaching Head of VC's Office PVC Student Services Board Apprentice Director of Estates (for item 7)
Apologies:	Baron Anyangwe Frances Trought	Independent Governor Independent Governor

1 Welcome, Apologies, Announcements and Declarations of Interest

Announcements:

The Chair welcomed Valerie Leipheimer (Board Apprentice) attending her first meeting.

The Chair offered his thanks to Rolande Anderson (Senior Independent Governor) for her work in recent months and for acting as Chair at the June 2021 meeting.

The Board had approved the appointment of Denise Nurse as an Independent Governor at their June 2021 meeting, since which time she had taken the decision to withdraw.

Declarations of Interest: Independent Governor Mark Anderson declared an interest as a non-executive Director of Higher Education Partnerships and as a fellow of Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, and Independent Governor Tim Cochrane declared an interest as a family member was a partner at EY.

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Independent Governors Frances Trought and Baron Anyangwe.

1.1 Minutes of 24 June 2021 Board meeting

For Approval - Presented by Mark Anderson

The Board of Governors approved the minutes of the 24 June 2021 Board of Governors meeting.

1.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

For Noting - Presented by Mark Anderson

There were no matters arising.

1.3 Board of Governors forward look

For Noting - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors received their forward look for the coming year.

1.4 Board appointments

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors received an oral update on the outcome of the Staff Governor Elections which had taken place over the summer, voting was carried out electronically. All Academic and PSD staff employed for at least 6 months were eligible to vote.

Rosemary Benson had been elected as the Staff Governor, the Board reconfirmed Rosemary's appointment for a further term of three years in accordance with the requirements of the Articles of Association.

2 Vice Chancellor's report

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

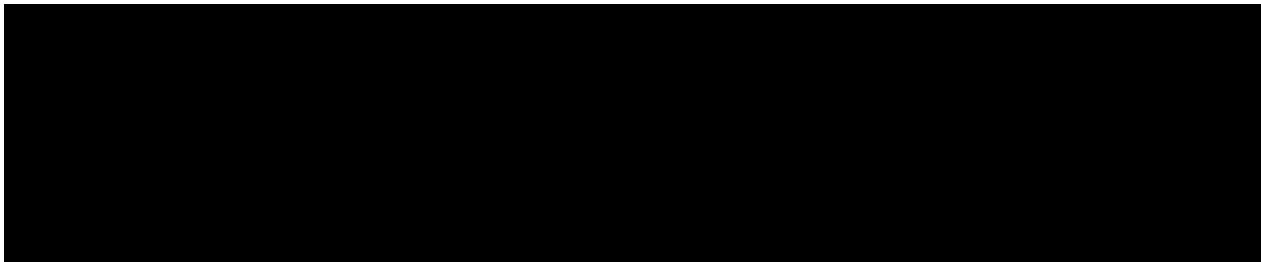
The Board of Governors considered the Vice Chancellor's report to the Board. In addition to the information provided within the report, the following was noted:

Finances: The University's financial position for the twelve months to 31 July 2021 had ended strongly, and the University was reporting an operating surplus of £3.3m.

National Student Survey: In 2021 the University succeeded the success of 2020, performing significantly above benchmark in 6 areas, which demonstrated that remote delivery had minimal impact on student satisfaction at London Met, with the exception of Learning Resources which scored low across the sector.

League Tables: The University climbed 25 places in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022 and the Guardian University League tables. While the success was testament to the hard work and dedication of the University's staff during a very challenging 18 months, it was also noted

that the scores had been impacted significantly by improvements in the value-added score (a consequence of the impact of the amendments made to the Academic Regulations as a response to the pandemic) and the NSS scores.



Conclusions

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The Board of Governors noted the Vice Chancellor's update report.

3 Academic Matters- NSS & PTES Surveys

For Noting - Presented by Donna Whitehead

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented a summary of the University's National Student Survey and Post Graduate Taught Experience Survey results.

National Student Survey: The Board noted that in 2021 the University had exceeded its success in 2020, performing significantly above benchmark in 6 areas.

Post Graduate Taught Survey: The survey took place from 29th March 2021 to 20th April 2021. The PTES had been designed to provide key information to drive the enhancement of the PGT experience within institutions and across the sector. [Redacted]

[Redacted] The Board considered the survey headlines and noted that the results would be used to inform actions for Post Graduate programmes.

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Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Academic Matters update on NSS and PTES.

4 Recruitment update

Oral update - Presented by Gary Davies

The Board of Governors was provided with an oral update on early indications for student recruitment in FY 22.

The Board was advised that recruitment had been subject to a relatively quiet summer owing to changes to deadlines, an upturn in the jobs market, the impact of Brexit, changes to clearing and a reluctance of some international students to travel as a result of the ongoing pandemic. Despite the challenging conditions projections indicated that the University would meet its recruitment targets for Autumn 2021.

It was noted that there had been some increases in international applications following recent changes to travel restrictions associated with the pandemic.

Applications to Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Programmes were relatively low as a result of a buoyant labour market.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the oral update.

5 Student Governor's Report

For Noting - Presented by Yasmeen Bashir

The Board of Governors considered the Student Governor's report which is a standing item. In addition to the information provided within the report, the Board particularly noted the work underway with the Advice Service Manager to implement a Suicide Awareness Campaign in the next academic year, which was to include care packages, panel discussions, talks and events.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the Student Governor's report.

6 Update on the Implementation of the Digital First Strategy

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board of Governors considered an update on the implementation of the Digital First Strategy following its approval by the Board at their March 2021 meeting.

Director of Digital Transformation: Following an unsuccessful recruitment campaign, the University was ready to return to the market following a number of changes with a view to sourcing a new field of candidates. In order to ensure sufficient coverage while the recruitment campaign was underway the University had appointed an Interim Director of Digital Transformation.

The Board of Governors requested that the Digital First Strategy be added as a standing item to future Board of Governor agendas, the updates should provide an effective way to monitor progress on the strategy's key performance indicators.

Conclusions:

The Board of Governors noted the update on the implementation of the Digital First Strategy.

7 Estates Strategy

For Discussion - Presented by Eugene McCrossan and Matthew Brewster

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented background to and progress on the development of a new estates strategy.

It was noted that the current estate is poorly configured, under-utilised, in poor condition and had experienced under-investment for many years. The estate compared unfavourably compared to competitor institutions and required £30M of investment to address the backlog of maintenance issues alone.

The Board was advised that following two rounds of internal consultation with a broad spectrum of stakeholders an outline of objectives for the Estates Strategy had been established. It was confirmed that the development of the strategy would also be informed with consideration to the University's strategic direction.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the update on the development of the new Estates Strategy. It was intended that a first draft of the strategy would be presented to the Board at the January 2022 meeting, with the intention of working towards final sign off in March 2022.

8 Strategy statement on collaboration models

For Discussion - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board considered a strategy statement on the University's approach to collaboration following a recommendation made by the Finance and Resources Committee at their June 2021 meeting.

The Board of Governors noted the Strategy Statement on collaboration models and requested that the following changes be made, and delegated final sign off to the Finance and Resources Committee:

The points of consideration section be amended to:

- i) 'Values **and** ESG fit';
- ii) include consideration to whether the University was in a position to assist the organisation in difficulty, and;
- iii) include consideration of the organisation's fit to the University's charitable mission.

The Statement should also be revised to reflect that initial discussions should take place between the Chair and the Vice Chancellor, ahead of consideration by the Finance and Resources Committee to enable the University to be agile and responsive to what is usually a time-sensitive situation.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the strategy statement which would be reviewed following discussion and submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.

9 Safeguarding update

For Noting - Presented by Mark Ellul

The Board of Governors considered an update on Safeguarding which included a deep-dive into the characteristics of students who had been subject to a safeguarding report following a request made at their March 2021 meeting.

The report identified an even distribution of safeguarding cases across key characteristics such as gender and ethnicity and an uneven distribution from those who had declared a disability (noting that this data included those with a diagnosed mental health condition). The Board also noted that there was over representation in the School of Art Architecture and Design and School of Computing and Digital Media. It was noted that 2020/21 had seen a significant rise in safeguarding reports, in part this was due to increased reporting as a result of improved signposting and as a consequence of the pandemic.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors noted the Safeguarding update.

9.1 Reports from Sub-committees

9.2 People and Remuneration Committee (minutes)

For Noting - Presented by Rolande Anderson

In presenting the People and Remuneration Committee minutes the Committee Chair drew the Board's attention to initial discussions regarding staff wellbeing following questions raised over the summer regarding staff support throughout the pandemic.

The Board of Governors received the 16 September 2021 People and Remuneration Committee minutes.

9.3 *Annual Remuneration Committee report to the Board

For Noting

The Board of Governors noted the Annual Remuneration Committee report to the Board.

9.4 Finance and Resources Committee

For Noting - Presented by Tim Cochrane

The Board of Governors received a report of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting which had taken place on 16 September 2021. In presenting the report the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee advised that a report to outline investment options was under development.

9.5 Financial Regulations

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board approved the proposed amendments to the University's Financial Regulations on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee. The key changes to note were as follows:

- i) updating the title of the former Chief Financial Officer to the Chief Operating Officer;
- ii) updating the financial regulations with authorised spending below £2m through delegation as stipulated in the Scheme of Delegation.

9.6 *Financial Management Report

For Noting

The Board of Governors received the July 2021 monthly Financial Management Report.

9.7 Modern Slavery Act: annual review of Anti- Slavery Policy and Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board approved the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2020/21 for signature by the Vice Chancellor on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee.

9.8 Audit Committee

For Noting

The Board of Governors received a report of the Audit Committee's 23 September 2021 meeting. The Chair of the Committee highlighted sections of the report which related to the Internal Audit annual report, the Health and Safety internal audit report and Staff Support and Wellbeing internal audit report.

Public Interest Disclosure ('whistleblowing') policy review

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented a review of the University's public interest disclosure policy, which had last been approved by the Board at their meeting in November 2019.

The proposed amendments presented on the recommendation of the Audit Committee included:

- additional examples of what constitutes 'public interest';
- examples of complaints that are not of a public interest kind, along with signposting to alternative procedures available to address these issues;
- Updates to the designated assessors, and;
- adoption of gender neutral terminology.

Conclusions

The Board of Governors approved the proposed amendments to the Public Interest Disclosure Policy ('whistleblowing').

9.10 Deep dive (Risk Management) feedback

Oral update - Presented by Shefaly Yogendra

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented an oral update on the Audit Committee's deep dive of the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite. In light of a recommendation made by the Internal Auditors it was highlighted that consideration to the University's Risk Appetite should be added to the Board of Governor's forward look.

9.11 *Risk Management Update

For Reference

The Board of Governors received the Risk Management update.

9.12 *Health and Safety Annual Report

For Reference

The Board of Governors received the Health and Safety Annual Report.

10 *Letters from the Office for Students

The Board of Governors received the letters from the Office for Students.

11 Board Effectiveness reflections

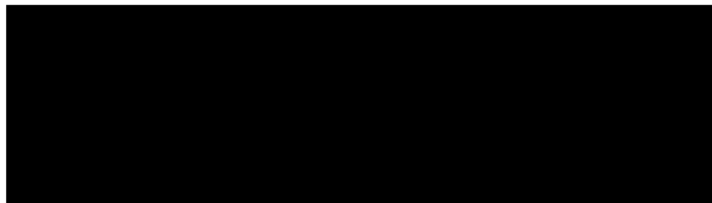
The Board reflected on the effectiveness of the meeting, in particular they noted both the high quality of the Board papers presented, and of the discussions.

12 Any Other Business and Close

The Board of Governors offered their thanks and well-wishes to Donna Whitehead (DVC) attending her last meeting.

Update on actions from October 2021 Board of Governors meeting

Item	Paragraph	For action by who	By when	Update on action
Update on the implementation of the Digital First Strategy	The Board of Governors requested that the Digital First Strategy be added as a standing item to future Board of Governor agendas, the updates should provide an effective way to monitor progress on the strategy's key performance indicators.	COO/ Director Estates/ University Secretary	ASAP after meeting	Added to Board of Governors Forward Look
Strategy Statement on Collaboration Models	The Board of Governors noted the strategy statement which would be reviewed following discussion and submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.	VC/ University Secretary	ASAP after meeting	Added to FRC work plan



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