

110th Meeting of the Board of Governors  
MS Teams  
Thursday 8 October 2020, 9:00 AM — 12:00 PM BST

---

**Members present:**

Lynn Dobbs	Vice Chancellor
Baron Anyangwe	Independent Governor
Cathy McCabe	Independent Governor
Cecile Tschirhart	Academic Governor
Harini Iyengar	Independent Governor
Margaret Farragher	Independent Governor
Mark Anderson	Chair of the Board
Michael Murphy	Independent Governor
Rolande Anderson	Independent Governor
Shefaly Yogendra	Independent Governor
Tim Cochrane	Independent Governor
Rosemary Benson	Staff Governor
Chrystalle Margallo	Student Governor
Frances Trought	Independent Governor
Rohin Aggarwal	Independent Governor

**Also present:**

Eugene McCrossan	Chief Finance Officer
Gary Davies	Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Recruitment and Bu
Don MacRaid	Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Ex.
Zainab Khan	Pro Vice Chancellor for Outcomes and Inclusion
Donna Whitehead	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Nikki Le Faou	Interim Clerk to the Board
Urmi Dutta- Roy	Board Apprentice
Mark Ellul	Consultant
Matthew Brewster	Director of Estates
Kiran Bahra	Director of Planning & Insight

**Apologies:**

Anders Krohn	Independent Governor
Renarta Guy	Independent Governor
Tricia Croasdell	Independent Governor

**1 Welcome, Apologies, Announcements and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies were received from Renarta Guy, Anders Krohn and Tricia Croasdell.

Harini Iyengar and Frances Trought had sent advance notice advising that they would be joining the meeting late.

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; Independent Governor Michael Murphy declared an interest as an adviser to Lodestone strategy and communications firm, and; Independent Governor Tim Cochrane declared an interest as his wife was a partner at EY.

Nicola Le Faou, Interim Clerk to the Board would be asked to leave the call during the consideration of item 3- Review of University Secretary role.

## **2 Minutes, Matters Arising and Board Governance**

### **2.1 Minutes of 25 June 2020 Board of Governors meeting**

For Approval - Presented by Mark Anderson

The minutes of the 25 June 2020 Board of Governors meeting were approved as a correct record.

### **2.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere**

For Noting - Presented by Mark Anderson

There were no matters arising.

## **3 Review of University Secretary Role**

For Approval - Presented by Margaret Farragher

The Board considered the recommendations from the Governance Committee in respect of the University Secretary role options report prepared by Deloitte. Deloitte had prepared a desk-based report outlining how the role was managed across the sector. The findings of the exercise identified two main approaches to the delivery: i) Secretary with broader Senior Leadership responsibilities, and ii) Independent Secretary.

The Board indicated a preference for an Independent Secretary, without SLT responsibilities. It was anticipated that this model would allow the person more time to dedicate to the Board, because they would not have a wider portfolio.

### **Conclusions**

The Board approved the recommendations of the Governance Committee as follows:

- i) The current interim arrangements to be extended to the end of the academic year;
  - ii) the University should commence recruitment for an Independent Secretary with sufficient seniority to support the Board;
  - iii) The Job Description for the role would be reviewed to provide scope for engagement in ad hoc projects, whilst retaining a clear focus on the core duties of the role as University Secretary;
  - iv) the job advert should make it clear that the University would be flexible in terms of working arrangements.
- (i) Action: The University should commence the recruitment process for an Independent Secretary with sufficient seniority to support the Board. The Job Description for the role should be reviewed to provide scope for the post-holder to engage in

## **4 Vice Chancellor's report to the Board**

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board considered the Vice Chancellor's report to the Board.

The key points were highlighted as follows:

**Sector developments:** The Office for Students (OfS) had published guidance in September setting out measures to reduce unnecessary burden on universities. The OfS was planning to reduce registration fees, reduce enhanced monitoring and simplify a number of reporting and data collection arrangements.

**University matters:** Extensive plans had been put in place to prepare for the start of the academic year. The University had adopted a cautious approach, which would minimise face-to-face teaching and contact amongst people. Plans would continue to be reviewed in the light of any new guidance and advice from Public Health England. The Unions had been very much involved in planning for the start of term and were very supportive of the approach adopted by the University. The Board noted a letter of support received from Unison and GMB, and were advised that similar verbal support had also been received from UCU.

The Board noted a recruitment process to replace the departing Head of School of Art Architecture and Design had commenced, an interim post holder had been appointed.

**League tables:** The Board were advised that the Guardian and the Times/ Sunday Times had published their league tables in September. It was noted that, whilst steps were being taken to improve the University's performance within the league tables, changing the approach to improve performance against some of the indicators would be incongruous with the University's mission and commitment to social mobility and social inclusion. The Vice Chancellor would investigate ways to re-engage with The Times and The Guardian newspapers to advocate for adjustments to league tables, by highlighting the value of the work that the University does in relation to social inclusion.

### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the Vice Chancellor's report.

- (i) Action: The Vice Chancellor would investigate ways to re-engage with The Times and The Guardian newspapers to advocate for adjustments to league tables, by highlighting the value of the work that the University does in relation to social inclusion.

## **5 Recruitment update**

Oral update - Presented by Gary Davies

The Board received an oral update on student recruitment and enrolment, which built on regular updates provided to Governors by circulation.

It was noted that the position remained positive in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, as enrolment continued on a stable trajectory. Comparisons with previous academic years would be available at the census point in early December.

It was highlighted that admissions for the University was now a year-long activity. Significant intakes took place for the University in September and February, and in November, April and July for QA.

### **Conclusions:**

The Board noted the update on student recruitment and enrolment.

## **6 Health and Safety - Re-opening Campus**

Oral update - Presented by Eugene McCrossan and Matthew Brewster

The Board received an oral update on the work undertaken to facilitate the re-opening of campus ahead of the start of term, which had been delayed to 12 October.

The University had developed a number of initiatives to facilitate social distancing on campus over the summer, which included the installation of screens in receptions, signage to facilitate one-way systems, sanitisation units at entrances and touch-points and the implementation of a 'track and

trace' equivalent system - 'Tap and Trace'. The tracking system would enable the University to provide data to Public Health England in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak.

The Board acknowledged the work undertaken in very challenging circumstances to protect staff and students. They highlighted the importance of keeping University's approach under constant review, to ensure it was in line with developing Governmental advice and guidance.

Unions had been involved in risk assessments and the inspection of buildings following the completion of installation works. The Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Recruitment and Business Development had undertaken inspections of the buildings.

It was confirmed that open forums for staff and students had been held to communicate details regarding access to buildings. Online student forums would continue, and would be supported via messaging on the University's website and social media channels.

**Fire safety works update:** It was noted that the fire safety works were progressing well. However, whilst undertaking annual asbestos inspections, issues were identified in the Holloway Road Administration Block. These included the degradation of asbestos containing materials and the need for remedial works to address where very heavy data-cabling had been installed on lightweight ceilings. In order to facilitate further investigative works to establish the extent of the issue, and as a precautionary measure, the building had been temporarily closed. The Board would be provided with updates via the Senior Leadership Team in due course.

### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the oral update on Health and Safety.

## **7 Student Governor's Reports**

For Noting - Presented by Chrystalle Margallo

The Board of Governors considered the Student Governor's report which was a standing item. Key activities included: the use of an £85k Transition Grant provided by the University (which had predominantly focused on training and development of new officers, development and support of existing staff and a plan of work for the year ahead), plans for Welcome Week, the appointment for a new CEO and student voice work.

All SU activities were currently planned for online delivery. However, should in-person Learning Cafes take place, the Union was keen to be able to offer socially distanced, in-person support for which risk assessments had been developed.

The 2019-2020 National Student Survey results for the Students' Union had improved when compared with the previous year, the SU was ranked as third for student satisfaction within London.

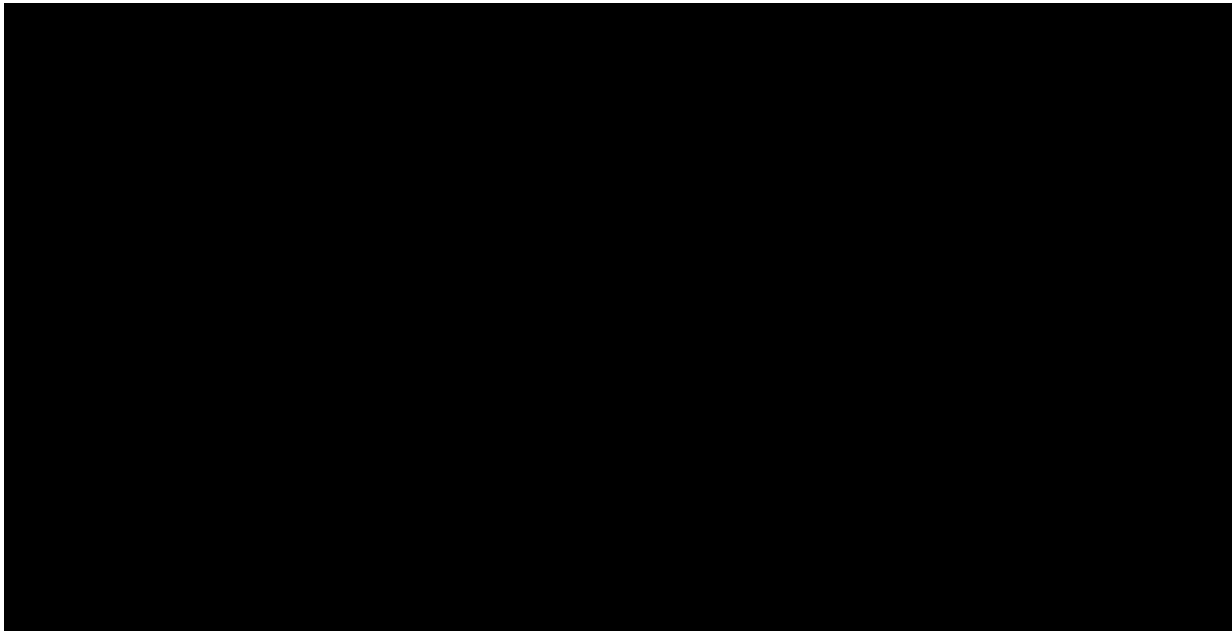
### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the Student Governor's report.

## **8 Facilities Management services- Procurement exercise**

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan and Matthew Brewster

The Board considered a report which detailed the progress of the procurement of a total facilities management (TFM) contract since the report had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee at their September meeting.



## **9 Reports from sub committees**

The Board:

- i) noted the reports from the Finance and Resources Committee, Audit Committee and the Governance Committee, and;
- ii approved revisions to the Financial Regulations
- iii) approved the Annual review of the Anti-Slavery policy and Anti- Slavery and Human Trafficking statement.

## **11 Strategy update session**

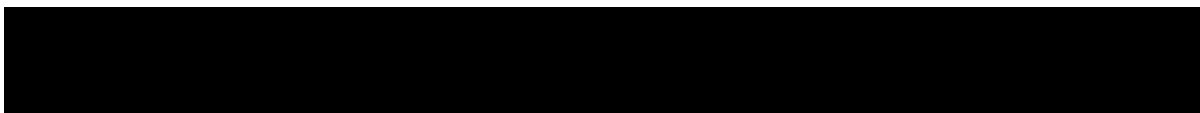
### **11.1 Strategic Plan progress report (including Update on latest Government Policy)**

Presentation - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board considered a report and presentation on progress against the University's strategic plan. The University's first-year performance indicated that without the Covid-19 pandemic it would have been well on-track to deliver the five-year strategy.

The University had hit all of the strategic indicators in the first year. However, it was highlighted that it was unlikely the University would be able to sustain improvements in results in a period of uncertainty - especially if it is some time before the virus is eliminated or eradicated. The report highlighted that staff and students had worked very hard in what had often been very difficult circumstances, throughout a challenging year.

It was noted that recent news articles had highlighted that 13 universities were facing financial difficulties. Universities had been asked to strengthen plans should they find themselves at risk of market exit by the Office for Students. The University remained in a strong financial position and whilst it was noted that mergers were complex and high risk, the Board requested that the issue of sector restructuring be added to the agenda for the November meeting.



The Board acknowledged that the University had made real progress in relation to its diversity initiatives, it was requested that consideration be given to potential areas for future investment and additional commitment to this area as part of the Board's next strategy session. The session should be supported by documentation detailing current investment plans, and an indication of what could be achieved should the cost envelope be increased.

### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the Vice Chancellor's strategy update.

- (i) Action: it was requested that consideration be given to potential areas for future investment and additional commitment diversity initiatives as part of the Board's next strategy session. The session should be supported by documentation detailing current investment plans, and an indication of what could be achieved should the cost envelope be increased.

## **11.2 Education and Social Justice**

For Noting - Presented by Zainab Khan

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the Education for Social Justice Pilot. Over the last six months an interdisciplinary group of 30 academics, professional staff, students and the Students' Union had worked to develop the University's Education for Social Justice Framework; a values-led vision of a curriculum which was reflective of the mission of London Met.

The Framework would be piloted this academic year across the six schools, in order to monitor the progress made and identify any barriers to its implementation. A total of 1,373 students were expected to benefit from the Education for Social Justice Pilots, out of a total of 7,828 undergraduate students forecast to register for the 2020/21 academic year. Courses had been identified for inclusion in the pilots based on their statistical significance, and where awarding gaps were particularly large. A review of the pilots would take place in the summer of 2021. Following any necessary amendments, a full institutional roll-out was planned for September 2021.

It was noted that training would be held for the staff delivering the courses selected for participation in the pilot. CPED would hold multiple sessions with course teams to familiarise them with the framework, identify changes needed from the areas of focus and deliver training to enable the changes to be embedded. From January onwards a wider suite of equity focused training would be run for course teams, the Board requested that this training be extended to Governors. It was confirmed that once the Centre for Equity and Inclusion webpages were launched, details would be circulated to the Board.

### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the update on the Education for Social Justice Pilot and requested regular updates regarding the University's work in this area be a standing agenda item for future Board meetings.

- (i) Action: From January onwards a wider suite of equity focused training would be run for course teams, the Board requested that this training be extended to Governors.
- (ii) Action: It was confirmed that once the Centre for Equity and Inclusion webpages were launched, details would be circulated to the Board.
- (iii) Action: The Board requested that updates on the work undertaken by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion be added as a standing agenda item.

### **11.3 National Student Survey**

For Noting - Presented by Donna Whitehead

The Board considered a report that presented an update on the University's NSS results.

It was noted that in 2019, the University had been behind benchmark in Overall Satisfaction, Academic Support and Learning Resources. In 2020, the University met benchmark in all areas.

#### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the improvement in the NSS for 2020 and acknowledged the potential adverse impact that remote delivery may have on results for the coming year.

### **11.4 Digital Strategy Consultation Timetable & Terms of Reference**

For Noting - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board considered a report which presented an update on plans for the development of a Digital Strategy for London Met.

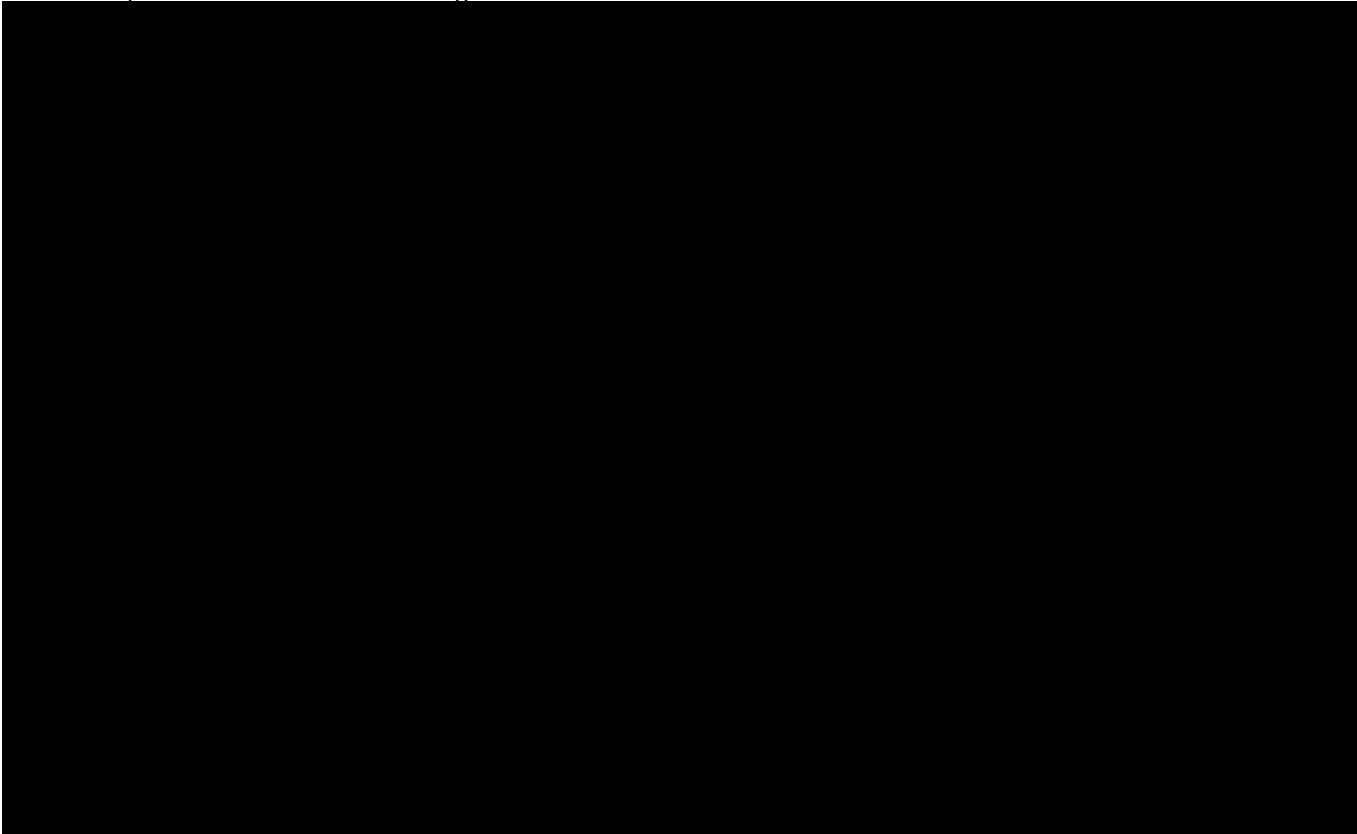
It was noted that the consultation process would include input from the Board, and that an additional Digital Strategy specific session would be scheduled to take place in February. The Board highlighted the importance of ensuring the project was appropriately resourced at the leadership level.

#### **Conclusions**

The Board approved the timetable and Terms of Reference for the Digital Strategy Consultation.

## **12. AOB**

It was noted that the next Board of Governors meeting was scheduled to take place on 26 November. A placeholder informal meeting would be scheduled for w/c 14 December.



## Update on actions from October 2020 Board of Governors meeting

Item	Paragraph	For action by who	By when	Update on action
Review of University Secretary Role	The University should commence the recruitment process for an Independent Secretary with sufficient seniority to support the Board. The Job Description for the role should be reviewed to provide scope for the post-holder to engage in	Vice Chancellor	TBC	-
The Vice Chancellor's report to the Board	The Vice Chancellor would investigate ways to re-engage with The Times and The Guardian newspapers to advocate for adjustments to league tables, by highlighting the value of the work that the University does in relation to social inclusion.	Vice Chancellor	TBC	-
Strategic Plan Progress report	It was requested that consideration be given to potential areas for future investment and additional commitment to this area as part of the Board's next strategy session. The session should be supported by documentation detailing current investment plans, and an indication of what could be achieved should the cost envelope be increased.	Pro Vice Chancellor – Outcomes and Inclusion	November 2020 meeting	Update on agenda
Education and Social Justice	From January onwards a wider suite of equity focused training would be run for course teams, the Board requested that this training be extended to Governors.	Pro Vice Chancellor – Outcomes and Inclusion/ CPED	January 2021	Scheduled for December
Education and Social Justice	It was confirmed that once the Centre for Equity and Inclusion webpages were launched, details would be circulated to the Board.	Pro Vice Chancellor – Outcomes and Inclusion	-	Completed
Education and Social Justice	The Board requested that updates on the work undertaken by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion be added as a standing agenda item.	Interim Clerk to the Board	ASAP after meeting	Completed