


# Board of Governors minutes

<b>Description</b>	Board of Governors minutes for signing- 18 March 2021 meeting	
<b>Organiser</b>	Nikki Le Faou	
<b>Reviewers</b>	Mark Anderson	Done Review

## Documents for Review

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Meeting Minutes of 113th Meeting of the Board of Governors   | 1 |
|  Meeting Minutes of 113th Meeting of the Board of Governors.docx | 2 |
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# 1. Meeting Minutes of 113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors  
MS Teams  
Thursday 18 March 2021, 10:00 AM — 12:15 PM GMT

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<b>Present:</b>	Lynn Dobbs Anders Krohn Cathy McCabe Margaret Farragher Mark Anderson Renarta Guy Rolande Anderson Shefaly Yogendra Tim Cochrane Tricia Croasdell Chrystalle Margallo Rohin Aggarwal	Vice Chancellor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Chair of the Board Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Independent Governor Student Representative Independent Governor
<b>Also present:</b>	Amy Rogerson Owen Beacock Sarah Richardson Urmi Dutta- Roy Zainab Khan Eugene McCrossan Gary Davies  Don MacRaidl  Nikki Le Faou Donna Whitehead	Head of VC's Office Associate Director for Equity & Inclusion Head of Student Services Board Apprentice PVC Learning and Teaching Chief Operating Officer Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Recruitment and Business Development Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange Interim Clerk to the Board of Governors Deputy Vice Chancellor
<b>Apologies:</b>	Baron Anyangwe Cecile Tschirhart Rosemary Benson Frances Trought Mark Ellul Harini Iyengar	Independent Governor Academic Governor Staff Governor Independent Governor PVC Student Services Independent Governor

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

Apologies had been received from Independent Governor Baron Anyangwe, Staff Governor Rosemary Benson.

Independent Governor Margaret Farragher had provided advanced notice that she would be joining the meeting late.

Independent Governor Renarta Guy advised she would leave the meeting early, owing to a clash of commitments.

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 Anders Krohn declared an interest as co-founder and CEO of Aula Education, a communication platform for education, and; Independent Governor Tim Cochrane

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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declared an interest as ██████ was a partner at EY. *s.40(2) FOIA - personal information*

The Senior Independent Governor advised that as the University's Partnership activities developed it was likely that there would be additional conflicts of interest. Governors were advised that they should ensure declarations were clearly made, and that in some circumstances particular Governors may be required to recuse themselves from consideration and discussion of particular items. It was noted that one of the Governors likely to be impacted was the Chair of the Board, should he need to exit the conversations at any stage, the chairing of the meeting would be undertaken by one of the Vice Chairs.

## 1.1 Minutes of 21 January 2021 Board of Governors meeting

For Approval - Presented by Mark Anderson

The minutes of the 21 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

## 1.2 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

For Noting - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

## 2 Vice Chancellor's reports (incl. Student numbers update)

For Noting - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board considered the Vice Chancellor's update report. The key points were highlighted as follows;

**Return to campus:** All students on highly practical subjects had been taught face-to-face since 8 March 2021 (a return to the pre-December position). All other students would remain in remote delivery mode. The Government had indicated that students may be prohibited from returning to University campuses until September 2021, it was anticipated that a formal announcement would be made at a review point in early April.

The Government were expected to announce a graduate support package to address learning loss. It has also been confirmed that there would be another tranche of hardship funding after the financial year-end from Government.

**Institutional racism investigation:** Over the course of the past year, a number of current and former staff and students had come forward with historical allegations of racism in two schools in the University. The University commissioned independent consultants to work with staff and students in these schools so that externality would also ensure confidentiality. The summary of the investigation's findings would be made public as soon as possible. The investigation's recommendations had also been considered as part of the University's race equity strategy, and the Vice Chancellor had written to all individuals who had made allegations.

The Board requested that the publication of the investigation's summary be accompanied by a restatement of our policy and approach, to include a re-launch of the Race Equity Strategy. The Board highlighted the need for the University to be clear about our values and robust regarding the University's intent in this area.

**Student Recruitment:** The enrolment position for the spring intake had been very positive. The University had enrolled over 1,400 students, which was 22% up on last year and 38% ahead of budget. Given the increase in the student population, coupled with the rise in reports student well-being issues throughout the pandemic, the University had undertaken a review of student support services and increased the level of resource where necessary.

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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**Student Complaints about online learning:** The University had received its first formal complaint in relation to arrangements put in place in response to the pandemic. The complaint related to lack of access to studio facilities and had been received from students in the School of Art, Architecture and Design. It was noted that the University had not been able to allow this group of students access to the campus, as their courses were not part of the authorised list released by the Government. It was noted that the complaint was being addressed via the University's complaints procedure.

The Board requested that the next VC's report KPI appendix be updated to detail actions proposed for 2020/21 ahead of the next iteration.

**Conclusions:**

The Board noted the Vice Chancellor's update report.

**3 Academic matters and Student Experience**

For Noting - Presented by Donna Whitehead

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented an update on Academic Matters and Student Experience intended to support the Board in their role in relation to academic quality.

The key points were highlighted as follows:

**Academic Provision and student support during the pandemic:** The University's 'no detriment' approach had been modified since the last academic year as we had been able to factor in alternatives to assessments in advance of the start of the academic year. The approach had developed to be more proactive when compared to the response which had been necessary as a result of the emergency situation related to the pandemic, when changes had been made rapidly. Assessments had been modified, mitigation processes improved and following a positive campaign by the Students' Union, extensions to assignments had been given.

**National Student Survey (NSS) 2021, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2021 and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2021:** the current NSS participation rate stood at 77%- which was ahead of the same point last year. Results of the NSS were expected in July. The PTES and PRES were due to launch in March and April respectively.

*s.43(2) FOIA - prejudice commercial interests*

**Education for Social Justice Framework (ESJ) and blended learning:** timescales for roll out of the ESJ and blended learning had been revised to reflect the additional demands placed on staff as a result of the pandemic.

**Conclusions:**

The Board noted the report which would be a standing item for future meetings of the Board of Governors.

**4 Centre for Equity and Inclusion update**

For Noting - Presented by Zainab Khan

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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The Board considered a report which provided an update on the Centre for Equality and Inclusion.

**Access and Participation Plan:** The Academic Board had considered a progress update on the performance against targets outlined in the APP and Improvement plan. Progress had been positive, with the majority of activity underway. There had been a delay to some project activity, such as the provision of face-to-face specialist student support, which necessitates campus reopening.

**ESJ:** The timescale for roll out of the ESJ had been revised as a result of the impact of the pandemic on staff workload and wellbeing. It was intended that the University's timetable for introducing the Inclusive Behaviors programme to all student-facing staff this academic year would go unchanged.

**Race Equity:** The Race Equity Strategic plan had been launched by the Vice Chancellor in March 2021. The plan had received a positive reception from external observers including the Times Higher and other HEIs keenly following EDI developments at London Met.

The Board requested that details of terminology references related to the Centre's work be shared with the Board by circulation, or addressed in a future iteration of the report. The Board also requested that details of the Centre's events be shared with them.

It was noted that a session regarding the Board's role in advancing the Equity and Inclusion strategy was scheduled for late March - all were encouraged to attend.

**Conclusions:**

The Board of Governors noted the update report.

## 5 Access and Participation Plan

For Noting - Presented by Owen Beacock

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented details of the ongoing impact of the transformation to the Access and Participation Plan's (APP) governance structure, provided progress made against the activities detailed in the APP Improvement plan and highlighted changes made as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

**Conclusions:**

The Board noted the update report that had also been considered by the Academic Board at their meeting on 3 March 2021.

## 6 Collaboration models

For Discussion - Presented by Lynn Dobbs

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented an overview regarding various options for collaboration, and associated drivers for change. The report was intended to initiate discussions to establish the University's appetite for collaboration and drew on previous advice from ██████████ in 2018, work undertaken by HEPI in May 2020 and Jisc in December 2020.

*s.43(2) FOIA - prejudice  
commercial interests*

The Board requested that considerations regarding the University's approach to, and appetite for collaboration should be progressed via the Finance and Resources Committee.

**Conclusions:**

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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The Board noted the report and requested that further discussions regarding appetite for collaboration be progressed via the Finance and Resources Committee.

## **7 Digital Strategy**

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board considered a report which presented the University's Digital First Strategy. Since September 2020, the University had consulted on the development of the Strategy. During that time, the University had also been navigating the challenges presented by the Covid pandemic, whilst remaining cognizant of the speed of technological change and cyber threats posed by our new ways of working.

### **Conclusions:**

The Board approved the Digital Strategy and requested a further report be submitted to a future meeting to include detailed KPI information.

## **8 Estates Strategy**

For Approval - Presented by Eugene McCrossan

The Board considered a report which outlined the timelines for the development of the new Estates Strategy and provided an update on progress made to date. The report also requested Board approval for the establishment of an Estates Strategy sub-group which would report into the Finance and Resources Committee and the Board of Governors.

### **Conclusions:**

The Board approved the establishment of an Estates Strategy Sub-group and confirmed that the group would include the Chair of FRC, other Governors were invited to express their interests in joining the group to the Interim clerk to the Board of Governors by 26 March 2021.

## **9 Safeguarding reporting update**

For Noting - Presented by Sarah Richardson

The Board of Governors considered a report which provided an outline as to the University's current safeguarding policy and procedures. The paper also articulated recent improvements to the University's approach to safeguarding as well as recent trends and risk levels in the light of Covid-19.

The University had been praised by external practitioners for its revised approach to safeguarding and levels of confidence and awareness across the University in relation to safeguarding had increased. The report highlighted a number of next steps for consideration as part of ensuring continued safe practice, including; a mandatory e-learning safeguarding module for all staff, risk assessment, engagement with external stakeholders to look at how our safeguarding policies intersect and establish clear referral and action pathways, considerations to resourcing levels and out of hours provision.

The Board of Governors highlighted the need to consider risks associated with Health and Safety and safeguarding challenges related to home working throughout the pandemic and beyond.

The Board of Governors requested that a future update be submitted for their consideration to include the detail of a deep-dive into safeguarding data reporting by School and ethnicity.

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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It was noted that safeguarding related risks were currently recorded and monitored as part of the University's Covid risk register, the Board requested that the risk be reported in the Corporate Risk Register.

**Conclusions:**

The Board of Governors noted the Safeguarding update and proposed next steps.

**10 Student Governor's Report**

Presented by Chrystalle Margallo

The Board of Governors considered the Student Governor's report, which is a standing item.

The Student Union President highlighted that: the SU continued to deliver training, activities and events exclusively online; the Union was delivering an engaging and interactive refreshers plan for both returning and new students; Semester 2 student representatives were in place and had been invited to attend basic training which included use of the NSS, leadership skills and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion; co-creation of the Student Partnership agreement with the University had commenced and elections for 2021 had completed.

**Conclusions:**

The Board of Governors noted the report.

**11 Reports from Sub committees**

The Board received the reports of the:

- Remuneration Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee (inquorate meeting)
- Governance Committee
- Academic Board
- Audit Committee

**\*Financial Management Report and Financial Forecasts**

For Noting

The Board received the Financial Management report and Financial Forecasts.

**Governor appointments and Committee nominations**

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors considered a report which presented recommendations for Governors to be reappointed as they reach the end of their terms, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee. In correction to the report's recommendations, it was noted that Cathy McCabe had confirmed she would not be putting herself forward for reappointment.

**Conclusions:**

The Board approved the following reappointments:

- the reappointment for a second term of three years, until 2024, of Anders Krohn
- The reappointment for a second term of three years, until 2024, of Tricia Croasdell
- The reappointment for a second term of three years, until 2024, of Margaret Farragher, also



113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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continuing as Chair of the Governance Committee

- The reappointment for a second term of three years, until 2024, of Tim Cochrane, also continuing as Chair of the FRC

-The reappointment of Rosemary Lemon for a second term of three years, until 2024, as coopted member of Remuneration Committee.

### **Statement of Primary Responsibilities (to follow)**

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors was advised that the report had received approval by circulation from the Governance Committee, given the lateness of the approval ahead of the meeting the item was removed from the agenda and would be addressed by circulation.

## **11.7 Board Diversity and Equality**

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board considered a report which presented the summary of records held in relation to current Board and coopted members diversity and equality monitoring questionnaires. The report demonstrated clear progress in relation to Board diversity in recent years and sought approval to adopt a target of achieving at least 55% Black and ethnic minority representation on the Board and its sub-committees by 2025.

### **Conclusions**

The Board noted the report and approved the adoption of a target that, to reflect the London adult population, 55%<sup>1</sup> of the University's Board and its sub-committees will be from a Black or minoritised background by 2025.

### **\*Freedom of Speech Policy**

For Approval - Presented by Nikki Le Faou

The Board of Governors approved the revised Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

### **\*Audit Committee Terms of Reference**

For Approval

The Board approved the proposed revisions to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference.

### **\*Risk Management quarterly update**

For Noting

The Board received the Risk Management Quarterly update report.

## **12 \*Letters from the Office for Students**

For Reference

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

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Figure based on currently available census statistics regarding London's population

113th Meeting of the Board of Governors

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**13 Any Other Business and Close**

The Board noted newly adopted arrangements following the appointment of the Pro Vice Chancellor Student Support.

**Board Effectiveness Discussion:** The Board reflected on the effectiveness of its meeting. The Board noted:

- The high quality of discussions
- The high quality of the papers provided within the agenda pack. Board members advised that they felt well informed, in particular in relation to the University's key programmes.
- The need to investigate the use of a voting system for use at future online meetings.

**Update on actions from March 2021 Board of Governors meeting**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>	<b>For action by who</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Update on action</b>
<b>Centre for Equity and Inclusion update</b>	The Board requested that details of terminology references related to the Centre's work be shared with the Board by circulation, or addressed in a future iteration of the report.	PVC Learning and Teaching	June 2021 meeting	To be included in the June 2021 Centre update
<b>Centre for Equity and Inclusion update</b>	The Board also requested that details of the Centre's events be shared with them.	PVC Learning and Teaching/ Interim Clerk to the Board	ASAP	Details of events are available in MetConnect and Met Connect monthly events emails.
<b>Collaboration Models</b>	The Board requested that considerations regarding the University's approach to, and appetite for collaboration should be progressed via the Finance and Resources Committee.	VC/ Interim Clerk to the Board	June 2021 meeting	Added to work programme
<b>Safeguarding reporting update</b>	The Board of Governors requested that a future update be submitted for their consideration to include the detail of a deep-dive into safeguarding data reporting by School and ethnicity.	Head of Student Services	-	Added to Board work plan for October 2021 meeting.
<b>Safeguarding reporting update</b>	It was noted that safeguarding related risks were currently recorded and monitored as part of the University's Covid risk register, the Board requested that the risk be reported in the Corporate Risk Register.	COO	May 2021 Audit Committee	On agenda for May Audit Committee
<b>Statement of Primary Responsibilities</b>	The item was removed from the agenda and would be addressed by circulation.	Interim Clerk to the Board of Governors	ASAP after meeting	Circulated 18/03/2021
<b>AOB</b>	Investigate the use of a voting system for use at future online meetings.	Interim Clerk to the Board of Governors	ASAP after meeting	Completed- 'Forms' will be used via MS Teams. The app allows for live anonymised voting.