

Confirmed record of the meeting on 25 September 2019

Present: Prof Sir Chris Husbands (Chair), Andrew Adegbola, Elaine Buckley, Dr Claire Cornock, Prof Roger Eccleston, Prof John Francis, Dr Elizabeth Freeman, Sean Hooley, Catriona Hynes, Dr Rebecca Mallett, Dr Neil McKay, Prof Alison Metcalfe, Sheriff Muhammed, Dr Christine O'Leary, Dr Vishal Parikh, Dr Lucian Tipi.

In attendance: Michaela Boryslawskij (Secretary), Carolyn Taylor (Head of Student Policy and Compliance), Harriet Travis, (Deputy Head of Academic Quality and Standards), Alison Wells (Director of Academic Services), Pete Sweeney (Minute Secretary).

Apologies for absence: John Freeman, Leopold Green, Prof Kevin Kerrigan, Bryony Lazenby, Prof Chris Wigginton.

Minute
reference

AB/19/22 **Opening Comments**

22.1 The Chair welcomed Andrew Adegbola, Michaela Boryslawskij and Alison Wells to their first meeting of the Academic Board.

AB/19/23 **Record of the Meeting on 9 May 2019**(paper AB/2/19/R)

23.1 The record was confirmed as an accurate account of the meeting.

AB/19/24 **Matters Arising and Other Urgent Business**

24.1 The following matters arising were reported:

- I. AB/19/16 (Access and Participation Plan): The Office for Students had accepted the University's Access and Participation Plan without comment. This was seen as a very positive outcome.
- II. AB/19/18 (Hallam Model): The development of the Model was progressing well under the four principles of Engage, Collaborate, Challenge and Thrive and implementation would gather pace for the 2020/21 academic cycle. The next milestone would be a stakeholder event on 21 October 2019 with over 100 participants from professional services, academic and student communities. An intensive communications plan was also being developed. The overall work was being overseen by a steering group which reported regularly to the Shaping Futures Pillar Board.

24.2 The papers for the previous meeting had included a call for expressions of interest in the vacancy for a representative of the Academic Board on the Board of Governors. A Selection Panel led by Lord Kerlake, Chair of the Board, had nominated Elaine Buckley for this role and the appointment had been confirmed by the Board at its meeting in July 2019. Elaine would also be serving on the Board's Academic Assurance Committee.

24.3 There was no other urgent business.

AB/19/25 **Ofsted Action Plan** (paper AB/2319/4)

25.1 The Academic Board received the Ofsted Action Tracker which had been produced as part of the response to an Ofsted inspection of apprenticeship provision that had graded the University as 'requires improvement' across all areas in the inspection. The Deputy Head of Academic Quality and Standards reported that:

- I. The re-inspection would take place between October 2019 and April 2020;
- II. At the present time, 56 apprentices were in scope. The programmes in scope were the Foundation Degree and NVQ in Engineering and the Operations Departmental Manager Level 5 higher apprenticeship.
- III. The response to the inspection was being led by the Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Steering Group;
- IV. External consultants had been hired to support this work.

25.2 In discussion, members expressed concern about the pace of progress and the potential risks in terms of the re-inspection. The Action Tracker gave no sense of what were the absolute priorities that needed to be addressed to demonstrate that progress had been made. Nor did it give any indication as to whether some of the actual timescales had been met. The scope of the inspection represented a small but important part of current provision. However, an unsatisfactory re-inspection could also have implications for the rest of the University's apprenticeship portfolio and therefore undermine the goal of becoming the world's leading applied university. It was essential therefore that the University addressed this situation as a matter of urgency.

25.3 The Chair reported that the University Leadership Team had expressed similar reservations at its meeting on 24 September and would be receiving a further update at its next meeting on 8 October.

AB/19/26 **Report on Honorary Awards 2019** (paper AB/3/19/5)

26.1 The Academic Board noted that fourteen honorary doctorates would be awarded in 2019 and received the names and brief biographical details of each recipient. Eight of the recipients were male, five were female and there was one group award. Two of the recipients were from ethnic minority backgrounds and none had a publically declared disability.

26.2 The Chair reported that the Honorary Awards Committee sought to achieve a representative group of award holders each year. However this had not always been achieved and overall, women and ethnic minorities were under-represented in the honorary awards process. A key step to addressing this was for the Committee to receive nominations from a wider range of backgrounds than it currently gets. Academic Board members were encouraged to contribute to this by considering suitable nominees and encouraging colleagues to do likewise.

Action: Academic Board members

AB/19/27 **Academic Organisation Project**

27.1 The Academic Board received an overview of the Academic Organisation Project which included the rationale for change, the design principles and the high level plan for 2019. The overview included details on the design work confirmed to date, including:

- Remodelling of PVC roles to create four new roles focussed on major cross University strategic themes;
- Introduction of three Dean of College roles and a Dean of Academic Strategy role;
- The decision to move from four faculties to three Colleges with the new structures to be in

place from January 2020.

27.2 Discussion focussed on the implementation of the new structures and how this might impact on the student experience. In response to comments and questions raised in the discussion, the DVC (Academic) stated the following:

- I. The need for synergy between Research Institutes and Colleges was essential and the key relationship to ensuring this happened was between Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) in Colleges and the Research Institute Directors. It was intended to keep Research Institutes focussed in terms of staff numbers, with the majority of research being conducted by staff within Colleges.
- II. Effective working across structures, which included an active academic leadership team linking between areas of activity, was essential to the success of the University.
- III. Students generally identified with their course and academic department rather than their faculty. As such, the launch of the new College structure mid-way through the academic year was not expected to have a significant impact on them.
- IV. The movement of academic departments from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Arts across two of the new Colleges would enhance links in some areas (for example between film production and writing for film) but may stretch some current links (for example between courses in Computing and Media, Arts and Communication). As ever, it remained important to find ways of working across disciplines.
- V. The increase in Associate Dean roles per College (from three to four) was necessary to enable the thematic PVCs to deliver their roles. The overall number of Associate Deans remained the same.
- VI. The implementation of new structures under PSOM had led to a different relationship between academics and administrative staff. This was necessary to ensure a consistent approach rather than four separate ways of working. It was important to ensure this did not create separation between academic staff and professional services staff as the team approach was essential. If members of staff were feeling any particular pressure points as a result of the changes, they should feed them into their Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching).
- VII. Delivery of student wellbeing functions now sat within Student Help and Advice. This enabled support to students to be delivered in a more effective and consistent way with each Hallam Help desk being able to provide the same range of services. The student support 'triangle' was now fully in place with each student having a named academic adviser, student support adviser and employability adviser.

AB/19/28 **Academic Plan**

28.1 The Academic Board received a presentation setting out the objectives, purpose, priorities, goals and schedule of the work taking place to consolidate plans, projects and initiatives into a single coherent Academic Plan. The Plan would include the Hallam Model, step-change initiatives, the Creating Knowledge Implementation Plan and continuous improvement. It would ensure a shared understanding of priorities and change processes, support the appropriate alignment of resources and facilitate alignment between PVC portfolios and College plans.

28.2 In response to comments and questions raised in the discussion, the DVC (Academic) stated the following:

- I. The immediate focus was on embedding the Academic Plan. It was however important to ensure it was coherent from a student perspective and consideration was needed as to how to manage those messages.
- II. The continued focus on 'consistently excellent across the student lifecycle' did not mean there was no room for innovation. However this had to be balanced within a consistent approach that included sustaining performance in depth.
- III. The student experience remained the University's primary focus and the Plan would give an opportunity to do things smarter within a constrained resource. Overall there would be very little change for the vast majority of students.
- IV. The need for a strong people plan was acknowledged and the schedule provided the opportunity to focus on this.

AB/19/29 **Review of the Meeting**

29.1 The Chair invited members to each consider the aspects of the meeting that had worked well and those where improvements could be made. In response, members welcomed the fact that the agenda had allowed time for sufficient consideration of the key items. This had enabled a good quality debate in which all members could contribute in an open discussion. In terms of improvements, members asked for more clarity in terms of what was expected from them. Suggestions included authors of papers being more specific about what they wanted from the Board and members being given more guidance about their role in communication and dissemination of the Board's business.

AB/19/30 **Forward Programme**

30.1 An agenda plan was being produced which would include an annual cycle of the items the Board should receive in order to fulfil its remit. This would be presented to the next meeting in January 2020.

Action: Secretary

AB/19/31 **Next Meeting**

29 January 2020